



Helsinki once again attracts record number of cruise visitors

This summer Helsinki attracted around 437,000 international cruise visitors, setting another new record. International cruise tourism is experiencing rapid growth worldwide, and the profile of cruise visitors is changing.

Helsinki enjoyed another record cruise season this past summer. Between May and October 254 international cruise ships called on Helsinki, carrying with them 437,000 international cruise visitors – 17,000 more than in 2014. Next year the number may climb even further.

“This shows how Helsinki is still one of the most attractive destinations in the Baltic Sea,” says Noora Heino, Cruise Manager at Visit Helsinki.

Visitors from Germany represent the biggest share of cruise visitors to Helsinki, followed by visitors from the USA and Great Britain.

International cruise tourism growing and changing

International cruise tourism is going through a period of rapid growth and transformation at the moment. Never before have so many new cruise ships been built. While the biggest growth right now is in Asia, Finland and Helsinki are expected to attract their own share among the increasing numbers of cruise visitors. At the same time, cruise operators are actively seeking new consumer segments to fill their cruises, as a result of which the profile of cruise visitors is changing.

“These days the different consumer segments and their special needs are taken into consideration already during the design and construction phase of the new cruise ships. Cruise operators are also profiling more and providing more specialised services onboard,” Heino adds.

The profile of international cruise visitors is constantly changing. According to research commissioned by the City of Helsinki*, cruise visitors spend more money on tours and increasingly book tours in advance. In addition, they increasingly book tours through other channels rather than from the cruise operator.

“Cruise visitors are no longer such a cohesive group as before. They are also more independent and keen on seeking alternative ways of experiencing the cities they visit. These days cruise visitors often book tours up to a year in advance, well before they begin their cruise,” Heino explains.

Cruise tourism is being actively promoted in Helsinki through cooperation between Visit Helsinki, the Port of Helsinki and local service providers. The Helsinki Cruise Network currently includes 58 companies and other partners.

* The European 2014 Cruise Passenger and Crew Survey was carried out by G.P. Wild among 1498 international cruise visitors and 489 crew members in summer 2014. The previous such survey was carried out in 2011.

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Visit Helsinki is a marketing name used by Helsinki Marketing Ltd, a city-owned company that is responsible for the city's marketing operations.

