

5 reasons why luxury local cruising should be your new favourite way to travel

With Oceania's Nautica departing Cape Town for Singapore on the 3 February, we recently caught up with Riet Goetschalckx, Sales Director for Mainland EU, Middle East and Africa. Based in Belgium and boasting a stellar career in the cruise industry, Goetschalckx offered us the inside scoop on why South Africans should take to the seas on a luxury local cruise.



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1. Skip the travel admin

Flying scores top marks in terms of speed and accessibility, but Goetschalckx believes that cruising is a strong contender for anxious flyers, or those who want to skip multiple check-ins.

She explains that luxury cruises along South Africa's coast are the epitome of a worry-free holiday, "where you can move from one destination to the next without constantly feeling like you're always on the go."

And she's right. On a local cruise, passengers can find themselves sipping a crisp beverage on their private balcony or indulging in a spa treatment just minutes after boarding. Instead of the constant cycle of going from hotel to vehicle to plane, you could be out at sea and dining with friends, or sleeping in comfort as the ship effortlessly transports you to a new destination by the time you wake up.

2. Enjoy the ship's facilities

While airlines have taken great strides in developing their in-flight experiences, cruise ships offer an exceptional selection of activities and entertainment features available to all guests, regardless of their ticket class.

Goetschalckx explains that during sea days, journeying between ports, the ship itself becomes very much a part of the holiday, especially with the more luxurious cruise lines.

"An Oceania cruise offers absolute comfort, understated elegance and fine dining for all those on board," she says. "With luxury suites, a country club, and free dining, Oceania's Nautica will hit the sweet spot as a 'home away from home' for South African travellers."

3. Bring as much as you like

For some travellers, peace of mind means knowing that you've remembered to turn off the stove. For others, it's knowing that you've packed that extra jacket or camera charger.

"Cruising allows you to bring as much luggage as you like – without paying extra fees," says Goetschalckx. "If you like to have numerous outfit options, you won't find yourself having to unpack and repack each time you depart or arrive at a new destination.

"Nowadays, suites and staterooms on luxury cruise ships are ultra-spacious, offering copious closet and drawer space to keep his collared shirts from wrinkling and her shoes from being tripped over," she adds.

4. More add-ons and inclusions

When it comes to value-adds, a local cruise holiday includes almost everything. "While there are exceptions to what comes extra, like your beverages and shore excursions, cruise lines are big on their promotions, which offer even more inclusions," says Goetschalckx.

She cites Oceania's 'OLife' deals as the perfect example, as they allow South Africans to take advantage of various 'freebies', including dinner at special restaurants, internet packages, shore excursions and even onboard credit.

"On a local cruise holiday, you'll generally find that you'll have all your bases covered, like transport, food and accommodation, without having to add these all individually to the final cost," she adds.

5. Added travel routes

According to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), by the end of 2019, 30 million people will have taken to the seas, and with luxury cruise holidays growing in popularity in South Africa, there is a whole range of ships and cruise lines to choose from in 2020.

"Instead of a somewhat whittled-down choice of routes to get from A to B, there are all sorts of itineraries set to depart from local ports in the New Year," says Goetschalckx.

"Increasingly, South Africans will not need to fly to reach their favourite Indian Ocean, visa-free destinations like Mozambique, Mauritius and the Seychelles. And, if you live along the coast of South Africa, chances are you're already within driving distance of a cruise ship port," she concludes.

Oceania's Nautica departed Cape Town on 6 and 20 January 2020 before skirting up and down our coastline between Walvis Bay and Maputo and is set for the same 14-day voyage on the 5 and 19 January 2021.

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