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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines takes you 'closer' in 2019/20, reaching 219 destinations in 75 countries

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is excited to announce that, in 2019/20, its fleet of four smaller, more intimately-sized ocean ships – *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch* – will be visiting no fewer than 219 destinations in 75 countries around the globe, covering 79 areas of scenic cruising.

Complementing the UK departure ports of Dover, Southampton, Liverpool, Newcastle and Edinburgh (Rosyth), there is an expanded programme of exotic fly-cruises. Fred. Olsen's new 2019/20 itineraries will be released on general sale from Monday 12th March 2018.

Mike Rodwell, Managing Director of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

“Based on the extensive knowledge of our team, thorough research and valued feedback from our guests, this new set of itineraries features some of the world's best destinations and experiences, all available from the UK or fly-cruising to exotic locations around the globe.

“We were recently awarded 'Best for Itineraries' by Cruise Critic experts, for the third year running, something which the whole team at Fred. Olsen and I are very proud of. Our four smaller, friendlier ships have all benefitted from extensive refits as part of our multi-million Pound improvements. These have delivered more restaurants, refreshed guest rooms, enhanced lounges and refurbished public areas, making the entire experience on board more enjoyable.

“Ready for adventures to come, our upgraded fleet – sailing our award-winning itineraries – will ensure that we will continue to stand out from the

crowd, offering an unrivalled cruise holiday.”

Fred. Olsen’s new 2019/20 ocean cruise programme will include the following 13 maiden calls:

Agios Nikolaos, Crete, Greece / Alotau, Papua New Guinea / Ambon, Maluku, Indonesia / Broome, Australia / Ermoupoli, Syros, Greece / Galway, Ireland / La Romana, Dominican Republic / Lembar, Lombok, Indonesia / Patras, Greece / Penneshaw, Kangaroo Island, Australia / Sabang, Weh Island, Sumatra, Indonesia / Svolvær, Lofoten, Norway / Wewak, Papua New Guinea

In 2019/20, ‘**closer**’ cruising remains at the fore of the Fred. Olsen cruise experience. By making the most of its smaller-sized ships – which can sail right into the heart of the destination, where many larger ships cannot reach – Fred. Olsen is able to feature more river, fjords and scenic cruising. An important part of a well-balanced itinerary, scenic cruising is rated as highly as the ports of call – and sometimes even higher. Notably, every port on every *Braemar* cruise from the UK is ‘closer’ – where the ship’s dimensions ensure that guests can access the heart of vibrant cities and towns, without the need for long transfers or shuttle buses.

Fred. Olsen will also be offering guests more of its signature **Fjords** itineraries in 2019/20, showcasing the spectacular scenery of these dramatic destinations, which is often better experienced from a ship...and, of course, Fred. Olsen’s long Norwegian heritage means that the cruise line can treat guests to an awe-inspiring tour of its historic homeland like no one else! As well as Norway, Fred. Olsen will also be taking guests to uncover the untouched beauty of the Greenland Fjords, and even the Fjords of Musandam in Oman, which are only accessible on a special dhow boat cruise.

Fred. Olsen has put more emphasis on **global exploration** cruises in 2019/20, giving the chance to discover exotic cultures and remote destinations, experiencing what life is *really* like all over the globe. *Boudicca*’s innovative Indian Ocean fly-cruises are complemented by exciting new once-in-a-lifetime adventures: cruising the Great Barrier Reef, heading out on a magical African safari, uncovering the ‘lost city’ of Petra, taking in the eerie atmosphere of Spitsbergen’s abandoned mining towns, island-hopping in Indonesia... not to forget *Braemar*’s perennially-popular Caribbean programme, always a favourite with Fred. Olsen guests.

In 2019/20, Fred. Olsen will be operating **five-night 'taster'** cruises from all five UK ports – to the Norwegian fjords and along the scenic Seine, for instance. These enable 'new-to-cruise' guests to get a feel for the three main elements of a Fred. Olsen holiday: *destination* exploration, *scenic* sailing, and the on board experience – all of which combine to make a Fred. Olsen cruise such an enjoyable way to see the world! Moreover, Fred. Olsen's regional UK departures mean that guests can see the best of Norway in only five nights: the perfect short break, or the chance to try Fred. Olsen for the first time.

Fred. Olsen will also be building on the success of its inaugural European river cruise season with an expanded programme on *Brabant* in 2019/20. Guests can discover the beauty of the Danube, Rhine, Main and Moselle rivers with Fred. Olsen's warm, welcoming style of cruising, taking in charming cities, small towns and landscapes decorated with vineyards, castles and picturesque villages.

A key theme at Fred. Olsen is giving guests the opportunity to visit destinations at the optimum time of the year to maximise their enjoyment. Examples of Fred. Olsen's **'Best Time To Go'** itineraries in 2019/20 are: *Braemar's* 14-night 'Mediterranean with Lavender in Provence' cruise in July 2019; *Boudicca's* 14-night 'Baltic with Tallinn Song & Dance Festivals' sailing (cultural events which only take place every five years); *Braemar's* 12-night 'Spain & Portugal with the Seville Fair' experience in May 2019, where guests can take part in the 'Feria de Abril' and enjoy the spectacular fireworks; and *Black Watch's* 14-night 'Northern Norway with Sami National Day' in January 2020, which features traditional festivities and 'yoik' folk choirs.

Highlights of Fred. Olsen's new 2019/20 cruise programme include:

- Three magical **'Mystery Cruises'**, where only the Captain will know where guests are going! *Boudicca* will be undertaking an eight-night mystery sailing in March 2019, for adults only; *Braemar* a seven-night mystery itinerary in September 2019; and *Balmoral* an 11-night unknown adventure in September 2019, for adults only.

- More cruises to **'Scandinavia & the Baltic'**, from April to November 2019, giving guests the chance to: glide through the Stockholm archipelago; explore the grandeur of St. Petersburg's palaces and cathedrals; enjoy the Russian ballet; walk through Tallinn old town; and take a transit of the fascinating Kiel Canal.

- *Braemar's* range of '**Closer Rivers & Waterways**' itineraries utilise the ship's size advantage to take in some of Europe's most scenic, tidally-restricted rivers, such as the Garonne and Garonde to Bordeaux, or the Guadalquivir to Seville.

- *Black Watch's* '**A Taste of Iceland**' cruise in June 2019, presenting the chance to watch Humpback Whales from Akureyri, to see the breath-taking Geysirs, Gullfoss and Godafoss waterfalls and visit the world-famous Blue Lagoon.

- *Balmoral's* '**Isles of Scotland in Five Nights**' short break in August 2019, featuring scenic cruising past The Needle and the Old Man of Hoy sea stacks, an overnight stay in Kirkwall, capital of the picturesque Orkney Islands, and a call into Lerwick, on the remote Shetland Islands.

- *Braemar's* unforgettable transit of Greece's Corinth Canal – one of the world's greatest engineering feats – in Autumn 2019. The highlight of this sell-out 25-night '**Corinth Canal & Greek Islands**' itinerary on *Braemar* is sailing through the spectacular canal, which narrows to less than 25 metres wide at its narrowest, lowest point. Fred. Olsen will be breaking the record for the largest ship ever to pass through it.

- *Boudicca's* '**Iconic Australia with Sydney New Year**' voyage, capturing the legendary New Year's Eve celebrations under the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge. This high point is complemented by the natural wonders of the Great Barrier Reef, along with Kangaroo Island's native wildlife, and the cultural delights of Melbourne.

- *Boudicca's* 14-night '**Islands of Indonesia**' exotic fly-cruise in Winter 2019, from Phuket, Thailand to Bali, Indonesia. See the lush Lombok landscapes, fearsome Komodo Dragons, Bali temples and authentic rice terraces.

- There is another chance to enjoy Fred. Olsen's ground-breaking '**You Choose Your Cruise**' concept, this time on *Black Watch* from Liverpool in November 2019, taking in the highlights of Portugal and Spain. Guests will vote for the next port of call as the cruise progresses, with two choices each time, from **Oporto (from Leixoes)** versus **Lisbon, Malaga** versus **Cádiz, Barcelona** versus **Tarragona, Palma, Mallorca** versus **Ibiza, Alicante** versus **Cartagena**, and **La Coruña** versus **Vigo**.

- In April 2020, all eyes will be on the 'Garden Island' of Madeira, as the Fred. Olsen ocean fleet comes together for the third time, to celebrate '**Four Fred.s in Funchal**'. This follows on from Fred. Olsen's hugely-successful 'Four Ships in Bergen' event in July 2015, when the Fred. Olsen fleet first came together, and the 'Captains in Cádiz' celebration, which will be taking place in September 2018 in the stunning Andalusian city, to mark Fred. Olsen's 170th anniversary.

For further information on Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, visit the website at www.fredolsencruises.com

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

Contacts



Georgina May

Press Contact

Acting PR Manager

Public Relations

georgina.may@fredolsen.co.uk