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Sun, Sea and Samba await as Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines launches its 2016 'South America Explorer' cruise

For 2016 Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' guests will have the chance to experience the excitement and vibrancy of South America on board *Balmoral's* 46-night 'South America Explorer' cruise, L1602, which departs from Southampton on 19th January 2016. This wonderful cruise takes in 16 destinations, with seven of those ports of call in the 'country of the moment' – beautiful Brazil! Hosts of this year's FIFA World Cup, home to the globally famous Rio Carnival and

to the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, there has never been a better time to visit this lively and impressive part of the world.

Nathan Philpot, Sales and Marketing Director for Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

“This extraordinary cruise is bound to appeal to even the most seasoned traveller! The backdrop is simply stunning – lush rainforests, peaceful islands, volcanoes, mountains, sun-kissed beaches and iconic landmarks. As landscapes go, there aren't many places on earth that offer such a diverse opportunity for adventure!

“Plus with an overnight stay in Brazil's colourful Rio de Janeiro, guests will be able to soak up the electric atmosphere of the Rio Carnival – a mix of pulsating Brazilian Samba sounds, richly decorated floats and imaginative costumes. This cruise really is the perfect chance to create memories of a lifetime!”

In addition, for guests who book this cruise by the 31st August 2014, Fred. Olsen is offering a choice of either free door-to-door transport, to those guests within 250 mainland miles of Southampton, or up to £250 per person on board spend*.

This 'South America Explorer' cruise departs from Southampton and arrives first in Madeira. Stopping in the capital city, Funchal, guests will be surrounded by the colours and scents of subtropical flowers and fruit.

Next *Balmoral* will visit Santa Cruz, Tenerife. From here guests will be able to explore the Pyramids of Guimar before arriving in Praia on the Cape Verde Islands.

Balmoral will then cross the Atlantic Ocean and arrive in the mighty continent of South America. Fortaleza in Brazil is the first of many stops in this diverse part of the world. As a top holiday destination for Brazilians, it is this year's World Cup host city and is home to the Centro Dragao do Mar de Arte e Cultura – an exciting mix of cinemas, performance spaces and museums, all connected by elevated walkways.

Next stop is Fernando de Noronha also in Brazil – a maiden call for Fred.

Olsen. A famous UNESCO protected eco-wonderland, this archipelago is framed with wide stretches of white sand beaches and has an abundance of wildlife. With only one flight out to the island per day, carrying a very small number of tourists', guests will experience a very peaceful and tranquil atmosphere.

Balmoral will then set sail for Brazil's second largest city, Rio de Janeiro, the world's 'carnival capital'. With an overnight stay in this, aptly nicknamed, 'Marvellous City' guests will have plenty of time to discover the plethora of iconic sites, including Sugar Loaf Mountain, 'Christ the Redeemer' and the soft sands of Copacabana Beach. Fred. Olsen is also offering guests two very exciting tours, a chance to book tickets to the official Rio Carnival or visit the Maracanã Stadium, which will host the 2014 FIFA World Cup final.

The port of Ilha Grande, in Brazil, is the next stop on this special cruise. It is another maiden call for Fred. Olsen and was once a hideout for pirates. Home to the 'Mata Atlântica' or Atlantic Rainforest, Ilha Grande is famous for its tropical beaches, waterfalls, caves and rivers. It has one of the richest ecosystems in the world and is a hotspot for biodiversity and conservation, containing many endangered species.

Balmoral will then arrive in Montevideo in Uruguay. Guests can take a stroll along the Ramblas – the seafront promenade, complete with restaurants, street entertainers and local craft shops or visit the old city of Ciudad Vieja to see the mix of Spanish and African influences.

Next stop is Buenos Aires in Argentina – famous for the traditional dance, the Tango. Fred. Olsen is offering guests the chance to take a tour to experience a thrilling Tango dance show and the opportunity to have a private dance lesson. Guests looking for something a little different can visit one of the many coffee houses or jazz clubs.

Balmoral will then sail onto Punta del Este in Uruguay – a very glamorous resort, ideal for people-watching and admiring the many luxurious waterfront homes. Guests can spend a day relaxing on the harbour front or enjoying the sunshine on the Playa Brava beach.

Next, guests will arrive in Rio Grande, back in Brazil. This wonderful destination, which is another maiden call for Fred. Olsen, is located at the mouth of the Lagoa dos Patos, the biggest lagoon in Brazil. Rich in culture,

with a lively historic centre, guests can explore the charming colonial and neoclassical architecture.

Balmoral will then call at Ilhéus in Brazil, the final maiden call for Fred. Olsen on this exotic cruise. Famous as the birthplace of the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado, guests can immerse themselves in the history and culture of this delightful destination. A visit to the San Sebastian Cathedral in the heart of the area is highly recommended.

Guests will then arrive in Recife, known as the 'Venice of Brazil', because of its many beautiful waterways and bridges. From here guests can take a tour to the UNESCO world heritage city of Olinda, which is home to many 16th and 17th century ornate churches and monasteries.

Balmoral will then depart from South America and call at Mindelo on the Cape Verde Islands, where a vivid influence from Portuguese and African heritage is apparent in the local architecture and culture.

Next, *Balmoral* will visit Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, before arriving in Lisbon in Portugal. With a delightful mix of palaces, art-nouveau cafes, museums, gardens, ancient castles and splendid bridges, Lisbon is the perfect destination to complete this fantastic cruise. *Balmoral* will then sail back to Southampton in the UK.

Prices for the 'South America Explorer' cruise, start from just £3,499 per person, based on two adults sharing a twin, 'Inside' cabin, and include accommodation, all meals and entertainment on board, and port dues.

Fred. Olsen is proud to be the only UK travel company to receive a coveted 'Gold Award' from leading consumer review website Feefo, having achieved a 95% service rating of 'Excellent' or 'Good' in over 8,000 genuine, independent guest reviews.

Fred. Olsen was also delighted to be voted 'Best Affordable Cruise Line' and runner-up 'Best Cruise Line' in the '*Cruise International* Awards 2013', and 'Best Value for Money' in the Cruise Critic 'Editors' Picks UK Awards 2013'.

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

Contacts



Georgina May

Press Contact

PR Manager

georgina.may@fredolsen.co.uk



Georgie Long

Press Contact

PR Executive

georgie.long@fredolsen.co.uk