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### » **Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. Announces Expansion of its Middle East Cruise Season in 2011/12**



Caribbean International announces the extension of its third consecutive season in the Middle East with 18 round-trip 7-night sailings and two 12-night sailings from Dubai to India starting in November 2011 through to April 2012.

The move is part of the deployment of a historic number of cruises by the global cruise brand which has 22 ships currently in service, offering unique cruise tour land packages in Alaska, Canada, Middle East, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

A recent survey of the Cruise Line International Association saw agents report that cruising has earned the #1 ranking in consumer interest compared to other types of travel. Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. - with its three global brands: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises - has yet again increased its fleet size to accommodate its demand that is growing at unprecedented rates.

For its 2011/12 season Royal Caribbean International's Brilliance of the Seas is offering seven-night cruises in the region, which will start in Dubai, sail to Fujairah and dock in Muscat. She then continues via Abu Dhabi back to Dubai. Due to the high demand, Royal Caribbean International has also extended its Middle East season for two months starting in November 2011. The interest in the two itineraries to India, which were introduced in 2010, was enormously high and therefore will be implemented again in the 2011/12 season. The two 12-night India itineraries will start in Dubai, sail to Mumbai, Goa, New Mangalore - which is a new port this season - and call into Cochin. After two days at sea the ship will arrive in Muscat and then sail back to Dubai.

Helen Beck, Regional Director, International Representatives, EMEA, for Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises says that Brilliance of the Seas has just concluded a successful second season sailing around the Gulf.

"We've received great feedback from our guests on the new 12-night itineraries sailing to India that we introduced this year. We are happy to bring Brilliance of the Seas back to Dubai in November starting her longer third season in the region."

When hotel rates in Dubai came under pressure with decreasing numbers of inbound tourists, the increasing number of cruise travellers helped the industry bounce back. In 2005, there were only 13 ships serving travellers; but this figure almost doubled the following year, further increasing to 55 ships by 2007, and 87 ships by 2009, whilst in 2010 there were 103 ships that carried 390,255 passengers and the Department of Tourism is expecting to receive 135 ships in the year to 2012. That number is likely to increase to approximately 180 by 2015 as the number of cruise travellers continue to increase in the region.

"The interest and awareness of cruise travel both within the region and throughout the rest of the world is increasing exponentially among travellers from within the Middle East itself. There is a huge potential for

cruising in the region, and we are already predicting yet another record breaking year as we gear up for next year's season," Helen Beck concludes.

Outside of the Middle East region, Royal Caribbean International unveiled its 2012 Europe cruise and cruisetour season, upping the ante from its 2011 lineup of 11 ships to 12 for 2012, which will again include two Freedom-class ships, the largest and most groundbreaking in the line's fleet to sail European waters. Amsterdam will debut as a homeport, for a total of 12, with ships calling into 101 ports in 34 countries on itineraries ranging from three to 16 nights.

In addition to the 12 homeports from which guests can choose, Royal Caribbean is also offering eight "interports" - where guests can board itineraries en route - creating 20 options for embarkation and disembarkation, including Toulon, Marseille and Le Havre in France; Genoa, Messina (Sicily) and Bari in Italy; Valencia, Spain; and Kusadasi (Ephesus) in Turkey. Maiden calls will also be made at Arhus, Denmark; Klaksvik, Faroe Islands; and Leknes (Lofoten) in Norway.

Celebrity Cruises is also strengthening its summer/autumn season for 2012, when it will offer vacationers more opportunities to enjoy premium European cruises than ever before, with five ships visiting 70 ports in 22 countries, sailing from six departure ports, and featuring 19 distinct Mediterranean itineraries. Celebrity's fleet currently consists of nine ships, with two additional Solstice Class ships scheduled to join the fleet.

The season will include a variety of premium cruise vacation opportunities to enjoy Alaska, Bermuda, Canada and New England, and a series of immersive cruise-tours in Europe and Alaska.

Some extended overnight stays and eight new ports will add even more depth to Celebrity's already broad European offerings, including Klaksvik, Faroe Islands; Akureyri, Iceland; Bari, Catania and Ravenna, Italy; Skjolden, Norway; Koper, Slovenia and Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands. Travellers can enjoy these and the 62 other ports Celebrity will visit in Europe in 2012 in ultra-premium style, as the company is deploying four of its award-winning Solstice Class ships to sail full European seasons in 2012.

Guests who wish to deepen their European experience can take advantage of Celebrity's cruise-tour offerings, which combine a cruise with a three- to five-night pre-cruise escorted land package in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe. The packages, exclusive to Celebrity Cruises, immerse guests in culture-rich destinations such as Amsterdam, Venice, Paris, the Italian Lakes, Florence, Madrid, London, and Cappadocia in Turkey.

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#### About Royal Caribbean International

Royal Caribbean International is a global cruise brand with 22 ships currently in service. The line also offers unique cruise tour land packages in Alaska, Canada, Dubai, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand. For additional information or to make reservations, call your travel agent, visit [www.royalcaribbean-arabia.com](http://www.royalcaribbean-arabia.com) or call +9714 3314299.

#### About Celebrity Cruises

Celebrity Cruises' iconic "X" is the mark of the world's top-rated premium cruise line, with spacious, stylish interiors; dining experiences elevated to an art form; personalized service, with a guest-to-staff ratio of nearly 2:1; unexpected, trendsetting onboard activities, all designed to provide an unmatched experience for vacationers' precious time. Celebrity sails to Alaska, Australia/New Zealand, Bermuda, California, Canada/New England, the Caribbean, Europe, Hawaii, the Pacific Coast, Panama Canal, South America, and year-round in the Galapagos Islands. Celebrity also offers immersive cruisetour experiences in Alaska, Australia/New Zealand, Canada, Europe and South America. One of the fastest-growing major cruise lines, Celebrity's fleet currently consists of nine ships, with two additional Solstice Class ships scheduled to join the fleet: Celebrity Silhouette in July 2011, and Celebrity Reflection in Fall 2012. For additional information or to make reservations, call your travel agent, visit [www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com) or call +9714 3314299.