

Cruise: Black Sea Voyages

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Sara Macefield researches for more Black Sea cruise options

Cruise sales to the Black Sea have been steady rather than spectacular in recent years. Several lines offer voyages to the region, which tends to attract an older clientele drawn to the area's rich history. Sailings are mostly in the early or late summer and autumn, when temperatures are better for sightseeing.

As voyages start and end in the Mediterranean or farther afield, they generally last for at least 12 nights and follow the same route as there are a limited number of cruise stops. David Selby, **Tui UK**'s director of cruising, said the market for the Black Sea was constrained by its small choice of ports and flights to serve them. "It is somewhere people can go to on a cruise that they would otherwise not be able to do on a beach holiday," he said.

Pieter van der Schee, head of brand marketing for **Princess Cruises**, which has featured the Black Sea for more than 15 years, feels the region is a very attractive option for Britons because of close historic ties. "People who have cruised before want to try new places and to go farther afield, and this is a new adventure," he added.

While **Yalta** and **Odessa** are the must-see stops during any Black Sea cruise, other ports can vary according to the itinerary. These can include Nessebar in Bulgaria, Sevastopol in Ukraine, Trabzon, Sinop and Canakkale in Turkey, and Constantza in Romania.

Lines offering cruises to the region include MSC, Crystal Cruises, P&O Cruises, Swan Hellenic, Seabourn, Fred Olsen, Costa Cruises, Princess Cruises, Holland America Line, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Thomson Cruises, Oceania Cruises and Cunard. Companies such as Page & Moy, Viking River Cruises, Cosmos Tourama and Scenic Tours also offer river sailings to the Black Sea.

Speak to an Uncommon Cruises Advisor about any one of these cruise companies and their strong points and possible shortcomings.

