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USA Today Unveils 10Best Readers' Choice Winners for Top Cruises

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PHOTO: The Regal Princess, the first of the Medallion Class ships. (Photo courtesy of Carnival Cruise Line)

An array of cruise experts, including yours truly, contributed lists of the world's top cruise lines and cruise ships for consideration, and now [USA Today](#) has revealed the 10 Best Readers' Choice picks for cruises in the year 2016.

Best Ocean Cruise Line

Coming out on top is Princess Cruises, besting Viking Ocean Cruises as the first runner-up. While Viking's excellent new seagoing brand was expected to come in high as it continues to launch six planned vessels, Princess is a bit of a surprise win with no new ships introduced last year. It just goes to show what one of the industry's best loyalty programs means to voting travelers.

Behind Princess and Viking came Carnival Cruise Line, Costa Cruises, Cunard Line, Celebrity Cruises, Hurtigruten, Holland America Line, Royal Caribbean International and MSC Cruises rounding out the top ten. High kudos go to the adventure line Hurtigruten for breaking into the list of otherwise mainstream competitors.

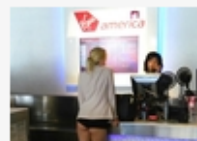
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Best River Cruise Line

Where Viking did win is in the river cruise category with its seemingly ubiquitous Viking River Cruises brand. In second through tenth places are AmaWaterways, Blount Small Ship Adventures, Avalon Waterways, CroisiEurope, Scenic, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, Victory Cruise Lines, Emerald Waterways and A-ROSA River Cruises.

Another big hand goes to Blount Small Ship Adventures and Victory Cruise Lines as lesser-known brands for moving the dial among voters, especially ahead of the likes of American Cruise Lines, American Queen Steamboat Company and UnCruise Adventures that didn't make the final list.

Best Boutique Cruise Line

Looking to expedition-like cruises, Windstar Cruises won for best boutique line followed by Variety Cruises, Star Clippers, Quark Expeditions, Hurtigruten, Paul Gauguin Cruises, Seabourn Cruise Line, Azamara Club Cruises, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection and Crystal Cruises, which is clearly making waves with its recent foray into yacht voyages. Azamara is a bit of an oddity here as it's not traditionally considered an adventure player.

Best Cruise Ship for Families

Carnival Cruise Line's brand new Carnival Vista has already resonated with families as the best for multi-generational groups. Other individual ships just behind it are Crown Princess, Regal Princess, Carnival Breeze, Carnival Magic, Royal Princess, MSC Divina, Disney Dream, Disney Magic and Disney Wonder. Although Disney Cruise Line was absent from the best ocean cruise line winners list, three of the four of its ships are not surprisingly included here.

Best Cruise Ship for Entertainment

Princess again comes out on top with its newest Regal Princess winning for the best cruise ship for entertainment followed next by another in the fleet, Crown Princess. From there, Carnival Vista, Carnival Breeze, MSC Divina, Carnival Sunshine, Allure of the Seas, Koningsdam, Norwegian Epic, and Crystal Serenity fill in behind. It's nice to see Holland America Line's new Koningsdam and the smaller ship Crystal Serenity both get some much-deserved love in this category.

Best Cruise Ship for Dining

Remarkably, the Royal Princess wins Princess another crown for best cruise ship dining followed by both of Viking's new ships, the Viking Star and Viking Sea, which do indeed excel in the culinary arts. Slots four through ten then go to Carnival Vista, Celebrity Reflection, Carnival Sunshine, Paul Gauguin, Celebrity Solstice, Koningsdam and Anthem of the Seas. Again, it's great that the Koningsdam, which has been surprisingly omitted in best lists elsewhere, did well here.