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# Top 10 Cruise Lines and Ships

CRUISE LINE & CRUISE SHIP | CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE | JASON LEPPERT | JANUARY 04, 2018



*PHOTO: Carnival Cruise Line's Carnival Vista docked in St. Kitts. (photo by Jason Leppert)*

A panel of cruise experts—yours truly included—and USA Today 10Best editors nominated lines and ships for [Readers' Choice 2017](#), and the winners have been revealed across nine categories. Let's take a look at each below.

## Best Ocean Cruise Line

1—Carnival Cruise Line

2—Viking Ocean Cruises

3—Princess Cruises

4—Costa Cruises

5—Seabourn Cruise Line

6—Crystal Cruises

7—Windstar Cruises

8—Royal Caribbean International

9—Celebrity Cruises

10—Holland America Line

[Carnival Cruise Line](#) coming in top certainly speaks to the brand's ubiquity and resonance with a broad clientele. It came out ahead of standard competitor Royal Caribbean International in seventh place and Norwegian Cruise Line and MSC Cruises surprisingly not making the list at all.

As a relative newcomer moving the dial in second, Viking Ocean Cruises continually proves to be a force to be reckoned with—especially having bested luxury companies Seabourn Cruise Line and Crystal Cruises.

## **Best River Cruise Line**

1—Viking River Cruises

2—AmaWaterways

3—American Queen Steamboat Company

4—American Cruise Lines

5—Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours

6—CroisiEurope

7—Emerald Waterways

8—G Adventures

9—Avalon Waterways

10—Crystal River Cruises

Comparable to Carnival on the oceans, Viking River Cruises remains the most ubiquitous brand on the rivers leading it to first place. Not forgotten, though, are the likes of AmaWaterways and Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours internationally and American Queen Steamboat Company and American Cruise Lines domestically. The latter two show that cruises closer to home are increasingly popular.

## **Best Boutique Cruise Line**

1—Windstar Cruises

2—Paul Gauguin Cruises

3—Sea Cloud Cruises

4—Variety Cruises

5—American Cruise Lines

6—Star Clippers

7—Seabourn Cruise Line

8—Azamara Club Cruises

9—Crystal Cruises

10—Lindblad Expeditions

Small cruise lines also make a splash, and Windstar Cruises takes the crown with its unique fleet of sailing ships and motor yachts navigating the globe. Given it only has one ship, Paul Gauguin Cruises following immediately behind is impressive.

## **Best Cruise Ship for Dining**

1—Viking Sea

2—Carnival Vista

3—Royal Princess

4—Viking Star

5—Viking Sky

6—Star Pride

7—Seabourn Encore

8—Crystal Serenity

9—Marina

10—Crystal Symphony

Viking Ocean Cruises again reflects excellence, this time in the culinary category, by having every one of its first three ships on the board including in first place. Only Crystal comes close with its Crystal Serenity and Crystal Symphony both making the list.

As other upscale and luxury ships, Pride, Encore and Marina are anticipated contenders, but standard Carnival Vista and premium Royal Princess deserve attention for their inclusion.

## Best Cruise Ship for Entertainment

1—Carnival Vista

2—Regal Princess

3—Carnival Breeze

4—Nieuw Amsterdam

5—Allure of the Seas

6—Koningsdam

7—Disney Dream

8—MSC Divina

9—Harmony of the Seas

10—Oasis of the Seas

Carnival Vista and Regal Princess are more expected in the highest slots for entertainment, and Carnival impresses for showing Breeze as well. Royal Caribbean also did well by getting three of its ships in the top ten as did Holland America Line with two of its own. MSC getting noticed for Divina is a good sign for the company's North American future.

It is, however, surprising to see Disney, well known for its production shows, only mentioned for a singular ship.

## Best Cruise Ship for Families

1—Carnival Vista

2—Carnival Breeze

3—Carnival Magic

4—Carnival Dream

5—Regal Princess

6—Royal Princess

7—Disney Dream

8—Disney Fantasy

9—Allure of the Seas

10—Disney Magic

Disney Cruise Line returns to the forefront with three of its four ships winning among families, but a larger quartet of Carnival ships actually swept the lead with its two newest ships in first and second.

Princess' latest domestic pair also came ahead of Disney with only Royal Caribbean infilling with one more. Remarkably, it wasn't even the line's freshest Harmony of the Seas but its preceding sister-ship.

## Best Cruise Line for Millennials

1—Carnival Cruise Line

2—G Adventures

3—Princess Cruises

4—Windstar Cruises

5—Quasar Expeditions

6—Lindblad Expeditions

7—Royal Caribbean International

8—Azamara Club Cruises

9—Costa Cruises

10—Norwegian Cruise Line

As a millennial myself, I agree with Carnival as an all-around good time at sea worthy of first place. It's also nice to see Norwegian finally get some love here. Likely to make the list next year will be the newly introduced [U by Uniworld](#), specifically servicing the younger demographic.



## Best Cruise Line for Solo Travelers

1—AmaWaterways

2—Carnival Cruise Line

3—G Adventures

4—Princess Cruises

5—Crystal Cruises

6—Norwegian Cruise Line

7—Seabourn Cruise Line

8—Azamara Club Cruises

9—Royal Caribbean International

10—Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection

Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection does make it this year for solo travelers along with AmaWaterways. The two traditional river brands bookend a diverse collection of ocean and expedition operators.

With accommodations specifically designed for individuals, Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean International deservedly win spots, but Cunard Line is curiously absent.

## **Best Adventure Cruise Line**

- 1—Adventure Canada
- 2—Lindblad–National Geographic
- 3—One Ocean Expeditions
- 4—Quark Expeditions
- 5—G Adventures
- 6—Aurora Expeditions
- 7—UnCruise Adventures
- 8—Zegrahm Expeditions
- 9—Windstar Cruises
- 10—Quasar Expeditions

Rounding out the winners are a mix of well-known and lesser recognized companies providing adventure travel to cruisers. Adventure Canada beating out universally acknowledged Lindblad–National Geographic is certainly the most impressive underdog win of the bunch.