

86,300

New Zealanders cruised in 2023

New Zealand cruise market on track for recovery

The number of New Zealanders taking cruise holidays has risen to more than 80% of pre-pandemic levels, with 86,300 taking an ocean cruise in 2023. The result is down on the 106,300 New Zealanders who sailed in 2019, but in line with the cruise recovery seen in other parts of the world.

CLIA's 2023 Source Market Report for New Zealand shows demand for cruise holidays has gained pace, despite New Zealand being one of the last countries to reopen to international cruising. By the final quarter of 2023, the number of New Zealanders cruising had risen above the same quarter of 2019, suggesting demand is on track for recovery.

Key trends in the New Zealand market in 2023 include a strong demand for close-to-home itineraries, a continuing fall in the average age of New Zealand cruisers, and a slight reduction in the average duration of cruises.

Key Trends



Demand for close-to-home itineraries



Decrease in average passenger age



Slight decrease in average cruise duration

New Zealanders cruising

● 2019 ● 2023

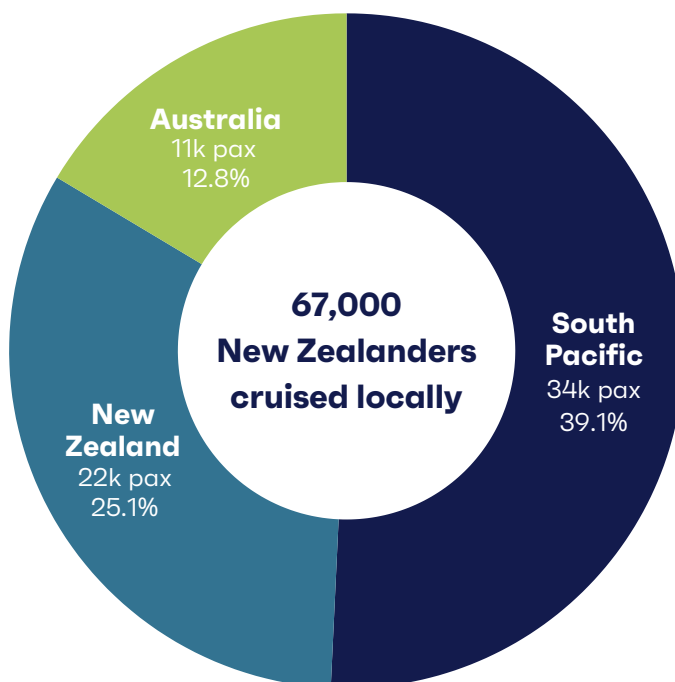


Local cruising leads recovery

New Zealanders showed a clear preference for cruises within the local region during 2023. About 77.0% of passengers sailed within Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, a considerable rise on the 60.3% who sailed locally in 2019.

New Zealanders sailing in Australasia & South Pacific

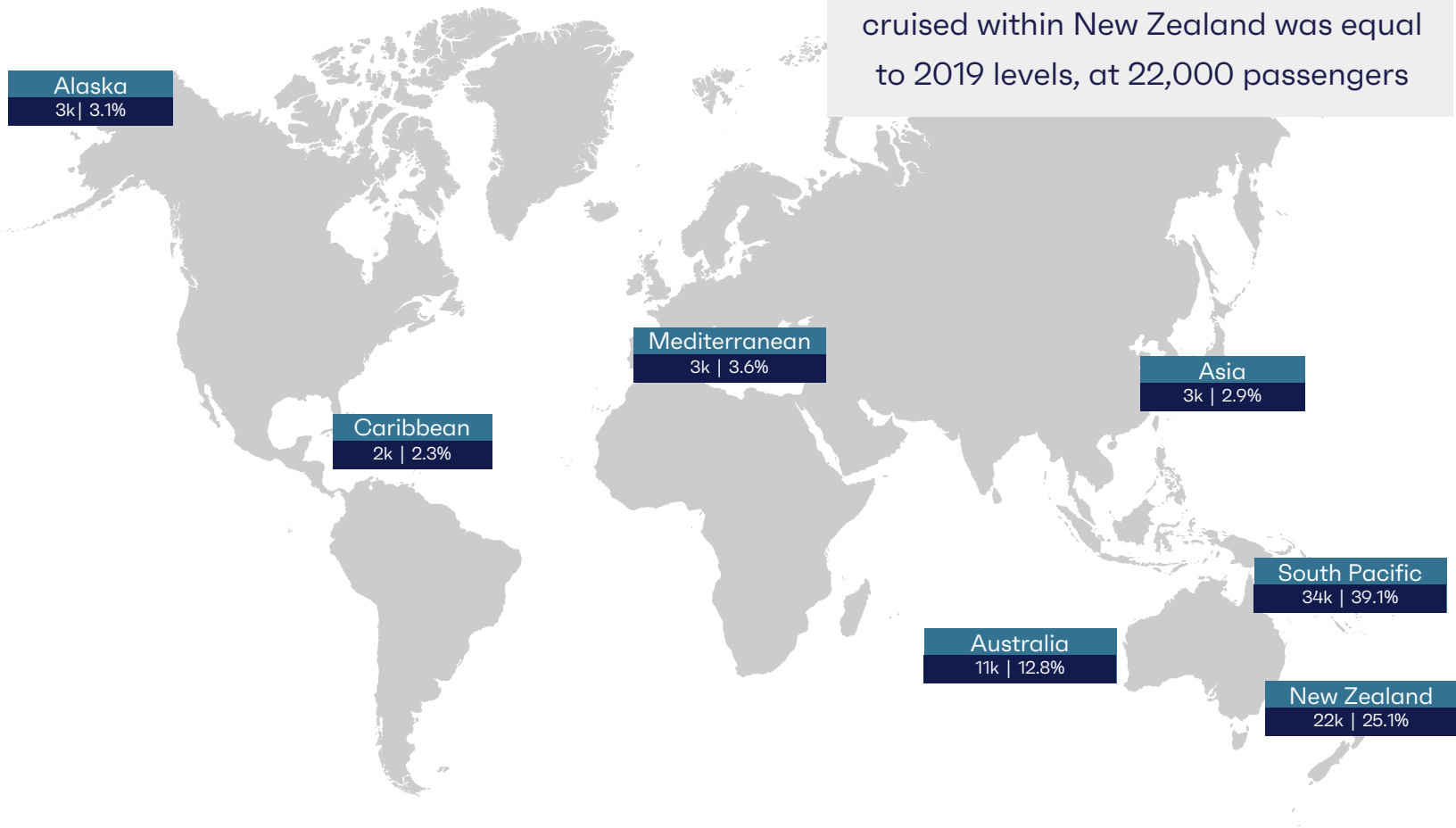
● 2019 ● 2023



Where did New Zealanders cruise?



The number of New Zealanders who cruised within New Zealand was equal to 2019 levels, at 22,000 passengers

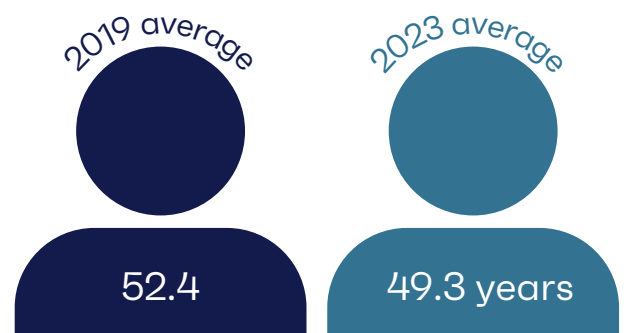


While the vast majority of New Zealanders (77.0%) cruised within the local region, a revival in international travel allowed many to sail in fly-cruise destinations in other parts of the world.

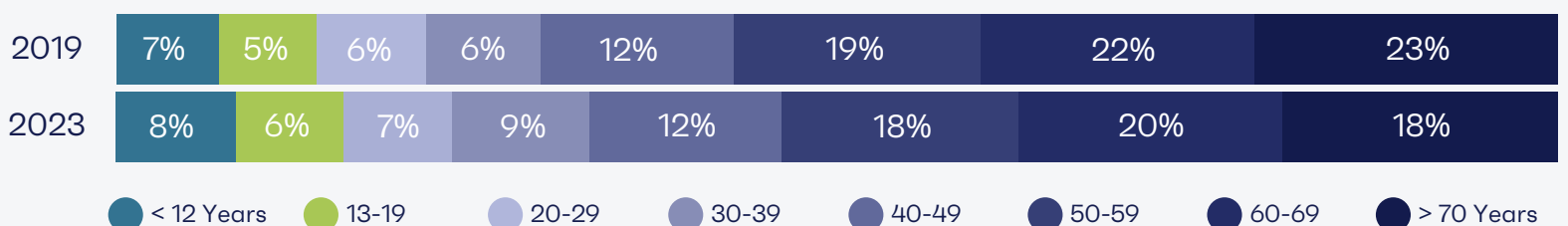
The Western Mediterranean was the most popular choice outside the local region (3.6%), followed by Alaska (3.1%), Asia (2.9%), and the Caribbean (2.3%).

New Zealand cruise passenger age groups

The typical age of a New Zealand cruiser has fallen further as the sector continues to attract younger generations. The average age of a New Zealand cruise passenger was 49.3 years in 2023, down from 52.4 in 2019, while almost one third of cruisers (30.0%) were aged under 40.



% by age range



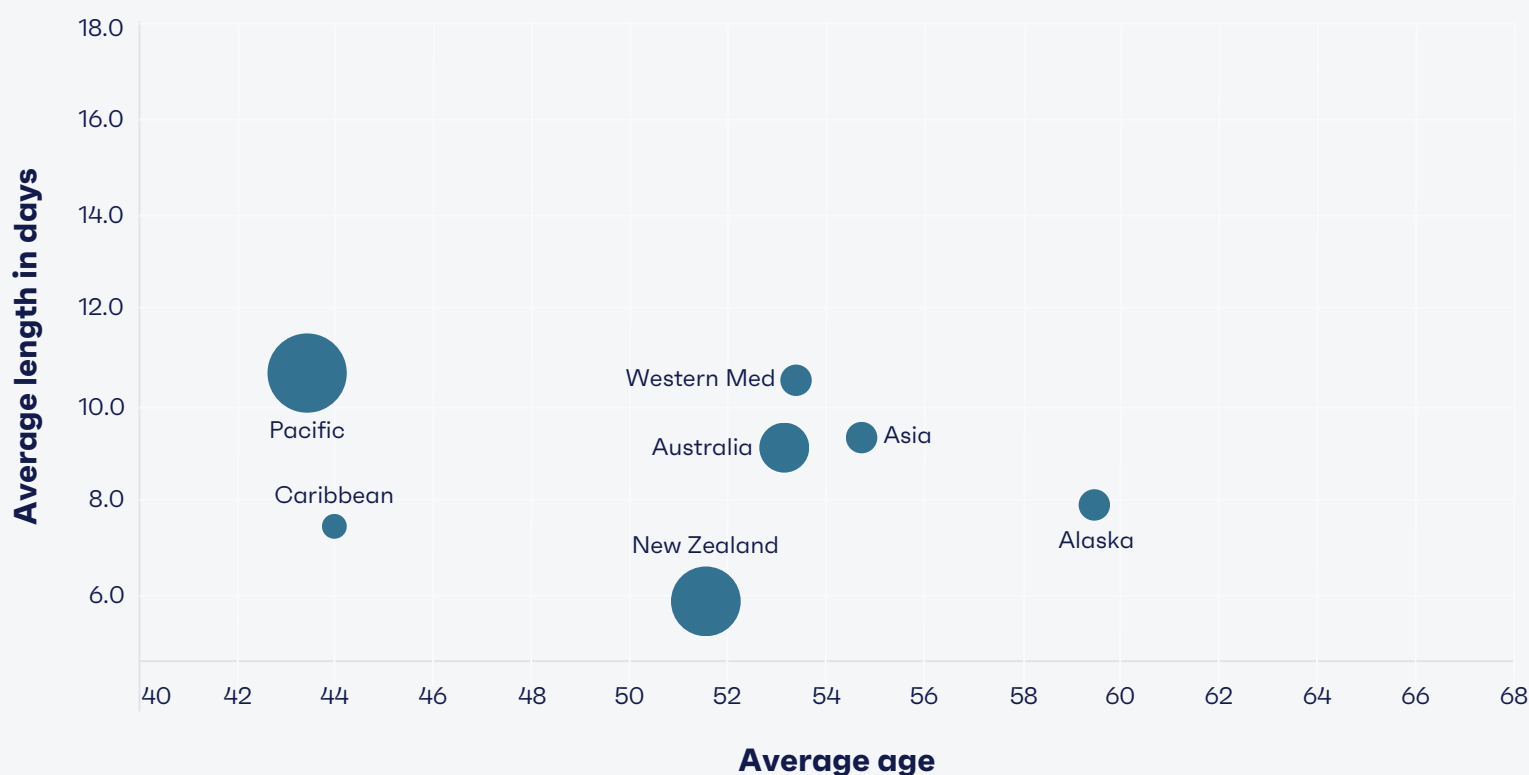


Cruise itinerary duration

The average duration of an ocean cruise taken by New Zealanders in 2023 was 9.2 days, slightly down from 9.6 days in 2019. This reflects the rise in short-break cruises offered by cruise lines.

The age of guests continues to influence the duration and destination of cruises. Younger travellers favour shorter itineraries close-to-home, while older travellers tend to longer itineraries in fly-cruise destinations in Europe, Asia and Alaska.

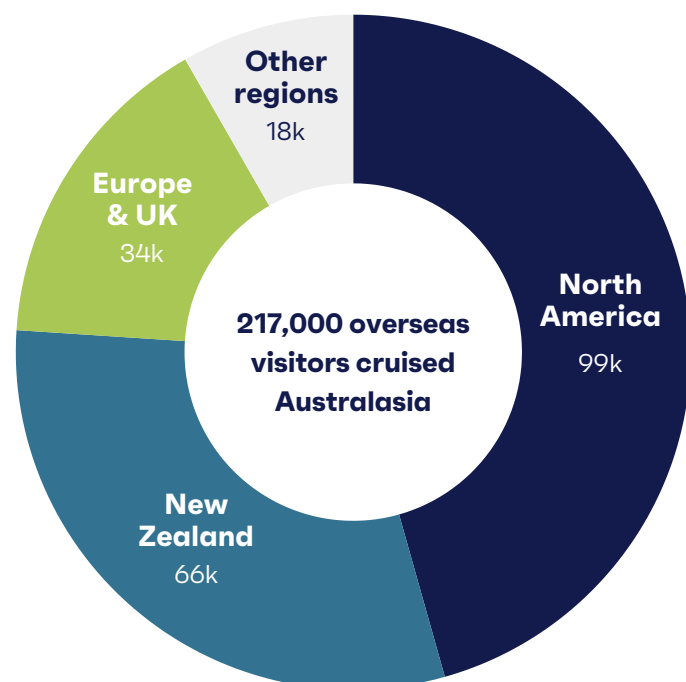
Average age and cruise length by trade route



Who cruised in Australasia

The number of overseas visitors who cruised in the local region (Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific) reached 217,000 during 2023, a similar level to 2019.

The largest portion of overseas visitors came from North America (99,000), followed by New Zealand (66,000), Europe & UK (34,000), and other regions (18,000).

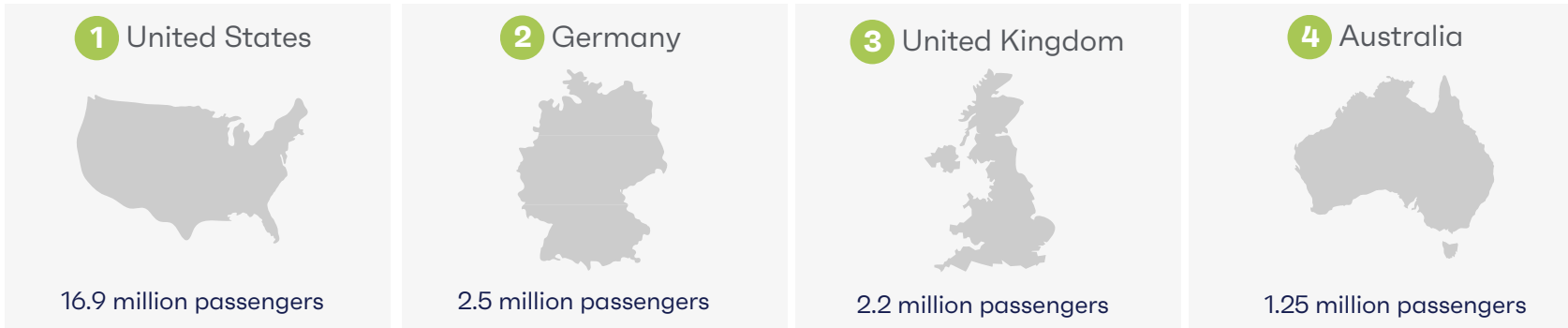


The world perspective

Cruise tourism overtook pre-pandemic levels at the global level during 2023, with a new record of 31.7 million passengers reached, an increase of 6.8% on 2019.

Global passengers

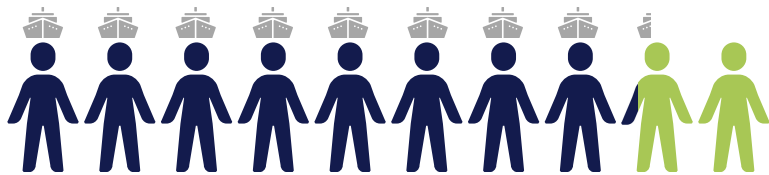
● 2019 ● 2023



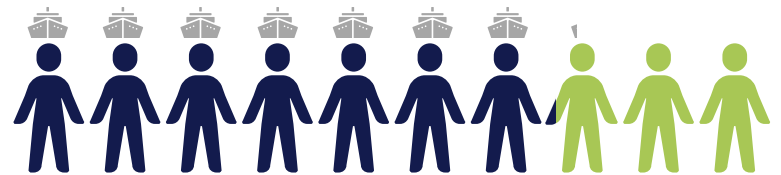
The United States remained the world’s top source market in 2023, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom. Australia replaced China as the fourth-largest source market during the early stages of China’s cruise revival.

CLIA forecasts show a continuing increase in global passenger numbers over coming years, including 35.7 million in 2024, rising to 39.4 million in 2027.

The outlook is supported by ongoing strength in consumer sentiment.



Of those who have cruised before, 82% say they are likely to cruise again



Of those who have never cruised before, 71% say they would consider a cruise

Future potential

While the New Zealand source market has shown a solid revival, total passenger numbers were still down from 2019 and well below the record 112,000 passengers achieved in 2018. Pre-pandemic numbers were exceeded at the global level during 2023 and in other key markets such as Australia, North America and Europe.

Global forecasts suggest a continuing rise in passenger numbers over coming years, in line with increasing cruise line capacity internationally. However, in New Zealand future passenger numbers may be restricted because of an anticipated decline in local cruise ship deployment.



GLOBAL

Continuing rise in passenger numbers



GLOBAL

Increasing cruise line capacity over coming years



NEW ZEALAND

Anticipated decline in local cruise ship deployment