



Attending Major World Events Is Seamless on a Cruise

By Erica Silverstein

Taylor Swift put a spotlight on event-based travel, but cruise lines have long been offering guests front row seats to major world events, such as the Monaco Grand Prix and Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, and nature-based delights such as Japan's cherry blossom season.

"Cruising makes attending major world events seamless," says Nico Corbijn, Chief Administrative Officer of Azamara Cruises. "Transportation, accommodations, dining, and curated experiences are integrated, allowing travelers to focus on the moment itself instead of the planning complexities that often accompany these high-demand events."

Taking a cruise to a major event eliminates for guests the need to book overpriced hotels months in advance or navigate the complexities of ticket booking systems. It also embeds the big-draw event within a larger exploration of the region. The shipboard enrichment team typically offers programming to give context to the events on land, enhancing the experience.

These event-themed itineraries benefit the cruise lines as well, as they often attract new-to-cruise and new-to-brand guests. "Travelers are drawn in by the event or passion point first... and only secondarily by the idea of cruising," says Corbijn. "That reframes the purchase decision and brings in people who may not have otherwise considered a cruise."

Cultural events

A great way for travelers to immerse themselves in a destination's culture is to experience its festivals, religious events, and national holidays. Members of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) take note to align itineraries with these experiences.

As an example, cruise lines make it easy for guests to experience the brightly colored, high-energy spectacle that is Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. Silversea Cruises, for one, offers excursions that include transportation to the stadium where the Samba Parade takes place, with either grandstand or box seat tickets to the popular event. In addition to Carnival, Azamara Cruises also plans sailings around Holy Week in Brazil.

Cruise lines also go beyond the big-name celebrations. "We bring guests to iconic moments, but we also go further, opening the door to the traditions, festivals, and everyday cultural moments that are known mostly by locals," says Bert Hernandez, President of Silversea Cruises. These include Andalusia, Spain's weeklong Feria de Málaga summer fair and Japan's Awa Odori dance festival. "These lesser-known celebrations offer an intimate window into local life," Hernandez says.

River cruise lines deliver easy access to Europe's famous Christmas Markets. Guests visit multiple iconic holiday markets along the Danube and Rhine, the ships often docking within walking distance of the main attractions.

Sporting events

The most popular worldwide sporting event to cruise to is the Monaco Grand Prix. Silversea Cruises, Crystal Cruises, Windstar Cruises, and Azamara Cruises are among cruise lines offering sailings to the iconic Formula 1 race. Explora Journeys' 922-passenger Explora I will take up residence in Monaco's Port Hercule from June 3 to 8, 2026, and offer guests three-day Grandstand or F1 Paddock Club access to all the races.

Golf fans can cruise to events too. Azamara Cruises, in partnership with PerryGolf, for instance, offers access to the British Open, as well as tee times at top courses in the U.K.

Cruise lines such as Carnival Cruise Line and Princess Cruises plan cruises around tennis's Australian Open.

Nature-based events

Solar eclipse travel has exploded in popularity and many cruise lines are putting ships in position for the August 2026 eclipse. Cruise ships are the ideal base for eclipse viewing because the ships can adjust their position at sea to be directly in the path of totality. Princess Cruises, Virgin Voyages, Crystal Cruises, and Royal Caribbean International are among lines providing guests opportunity to watch this year's celestial show off the coast of Spain. Celebrity Cruises, Holland America Line, and Cunard will base ships in Icelandic waters, while guests on expedition line Quark Expeditions can watch from Greenland.

Attractions such as Japan's cherry blossoms and the fall colors in Canada and New England also draw cruisers. Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Seabourn, and Princess Cruises are among the lines positioning ships in Japan for peak bloom, while Holland America Line and American Cruise Lines have long offered fall foliage cruises in North America.

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