

2 MSC ships setting sail for South Africa this cruise season

Global cruise line MSC Cruises is bringing two ships to South Africa's shores for the 2022/2023 cruise season. This will mark the first time that two MSC Cruises ships of different classes, the MSC Orchestra - which is part of the Musica class and MSC Sinfonia - which is part of the Lirica class, will be deployed in the country simultaneously providing additional cruise capacity to cater for the demand for cruise holidays in South Africa.



MSC Sinfonia. Source: Supplied

The 2021/2022 local cruise season saw MSC Cruises carry in excess of 40,000 guests to various destinations with new health and safety regulations to ensure the safety of guests. MSC has now confirmed that both unvaccinated and vaccinated guests are now able to cruise and stipulated the following conditions:

- Vaccinated guests are no longer required to provide a Covid-19 test before departure
- Unvaccinated guests five years and older are still required to provide a negative Covid-19 PCR test, 48 hours prior to departure in accordance with the local government regulations in South Africa
- Children under age 5 are not required to provide a Covid-19 test

Investing in Africa's tourism industry

MSC Cruises said that its plan to bring two ships to South Africa in 2022 is part of the company's commitment to investing in South Africa and African tourism at large.

The cruise line's focus on improving South Africa's tourist infrastructure has been particularly noteworthy in its development of the Durban port terminal over the past few years. The R300m terminal was designed, developed, constructed and financed by the Kwa-Zulu Cruise Terminal Consortium, in partnership with the South African chapter of MSC Cruises and empowerment investment entity Africa Armada Consortium.

This project is a significant undertaking for the consortium and represents MSC Cruises' commitment to the South African economy, the company said. It is hoped that the terminal will help promote the country's image among cruise passengers and provide jobs to many citizens.

"In addition to our commitment, our investment has included infrastructure development in Mozambique – a popular cruising destination for South Africans – and continued collaboration with the Namibian government, as Walvis Bay is one of the ports that MSC Cruises sails to. There are also knock-on benefits for the tourist industries in the destinations that MSC Cruises sails to, which have been enhanced by increased passenger volumes," MSC Cruises noted.



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Variety of cruise holiday options

MSC Orchestra, a well-known vessel by local cruisers, will return to South African waters in November 2022, with approximately 40 sailings to Mozambique and to local destinations. Alongside MSC Orchestra is MSC Sinfonia, which will operate approximately 22 sailings out of Cape Town to Namibia and other local destinations.

The itineraries will vary from two to seven-night cruises, offering guests a wider choice of options to book their cruise holiday. The ships will alternate routes, providing South African cruisers with a wider choice of options to suit their holiday needs with more cruise destinations and packages on offer.

"We are delighted to be bringing two ships to South Africa this upcoming season and we reaffirm our commitment to affordable and safe cruise holidays for South Africans," explained Ross Volk, MD for MSC Cruises South Africa.

"Our dedication to playing our part in the recovery of the tourism sector in South Africa, has made it possible for us to create a second cruising hub in Cape Town. MSC Sinfonia will be permanently positioned in Cape Town for the duration of the cruise season and will serve our guests seeking a more cultural experience with our cruises to Namibia.

"For guests wanting to explore more of our South African destinations we have cruises to Mossel Bay and for guests simply wanting to take time to rest and relax, our 'no-destination' cruises at sea provide the perfect getaway to enjoy the Indian and Atlantic Ocean sunrises and sunsets," continued Volk.

Guests wishing to experience an MSC Cruises holiday in the 2022/2023 season can already book any cruise on any of the two vessels.

"We continuously strive to bring bigger and better offerings to this country, enriching our itineraries and making cruising more accessible, to more South Africans who are realising that a cruise is an affordable, convenient and exciting holiday option," concluded Volk.

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