

Cruise Passengers: Q3/2026

NR 193/2026

Tourism

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News

Data

Methodology



Salient Points

- Total cruise passenger traffic during the third quarter of 2026 amounted to 325,681, a decrease of 7.0 per cent over the same quarter of the previous year.
- There were 139 cruise liner calls during the third quarter of 2026, a decrease of 1 when compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous year.
- The United Kingdom, Italy and Spain were the top three markets for the third quarter of 2026.
- Total cruise passenger traffic during the three quarters of 2026 amounted to 647,237, a decrease of 6.4 per cent over the same period last year.
- There were 298 cruise liner calls during the first three quarters of 2026, an increase of 4 when compared to the same period in the previous year.

Commentary

Total cruise passenger traffic during the third quarter of 2026 amounted to 325,681, a decrease of 7.0 per cent over the same quarter of the previous year.

There were 139 cruise liner calls during the third quarter of 2026, a decrease of 1 when compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Transit passengers accounted for the absolute majority of total traffic, reaching 268,114 (82.3 per cent). On average, every vessel that berthed in Malta carried 2,343 passengers, 159 less than the previous year (Table 1).

Passengers from EU Member States comprised 56.2 per cent of total traffic. The major markets were Italy, accounting for 18.3 per cent of the total passengers, followed by Spain, with 12.7 per cent. The total number of passengers from non-EU countries stood at 142,541, where the United Kingdom accounted for 20.8 per cent of the total passengers and 10.6 per cent came from the United States (Table 1).

On a gender basis, female passengers made up 51.8 per cent of the total. The largest share of passengers fell within the 40-59 age bracket (33.0 per cent) and were followed by those aged between 60 and 79 years (29.8 per cent) (Table1).

January-September 2026

During the first three quarters of 2026, total cruise passengers stood at 647,237. Of these, 50.2 per cent came from EU Member States (Table 2).

The majority of the passengers were females amounting to 344,589 or 53.2 per cent of the total. Most passengers were between 60 and 79 years old, totalling 231,022 (35.7 per cent). These were followed by passengers aged 40-59 years, reaching 194,679 (30.1 per cent) (Table 2).

There were 298 cruise liner calls during the first three quarters of the year, with an average of 2,172 passengers per vessel, compared to 294 calls and an average of 2,351 passengers per vessel in the comparative period of 2025 (Table 2).

Chart 1. Total cruise passenger traffic by period

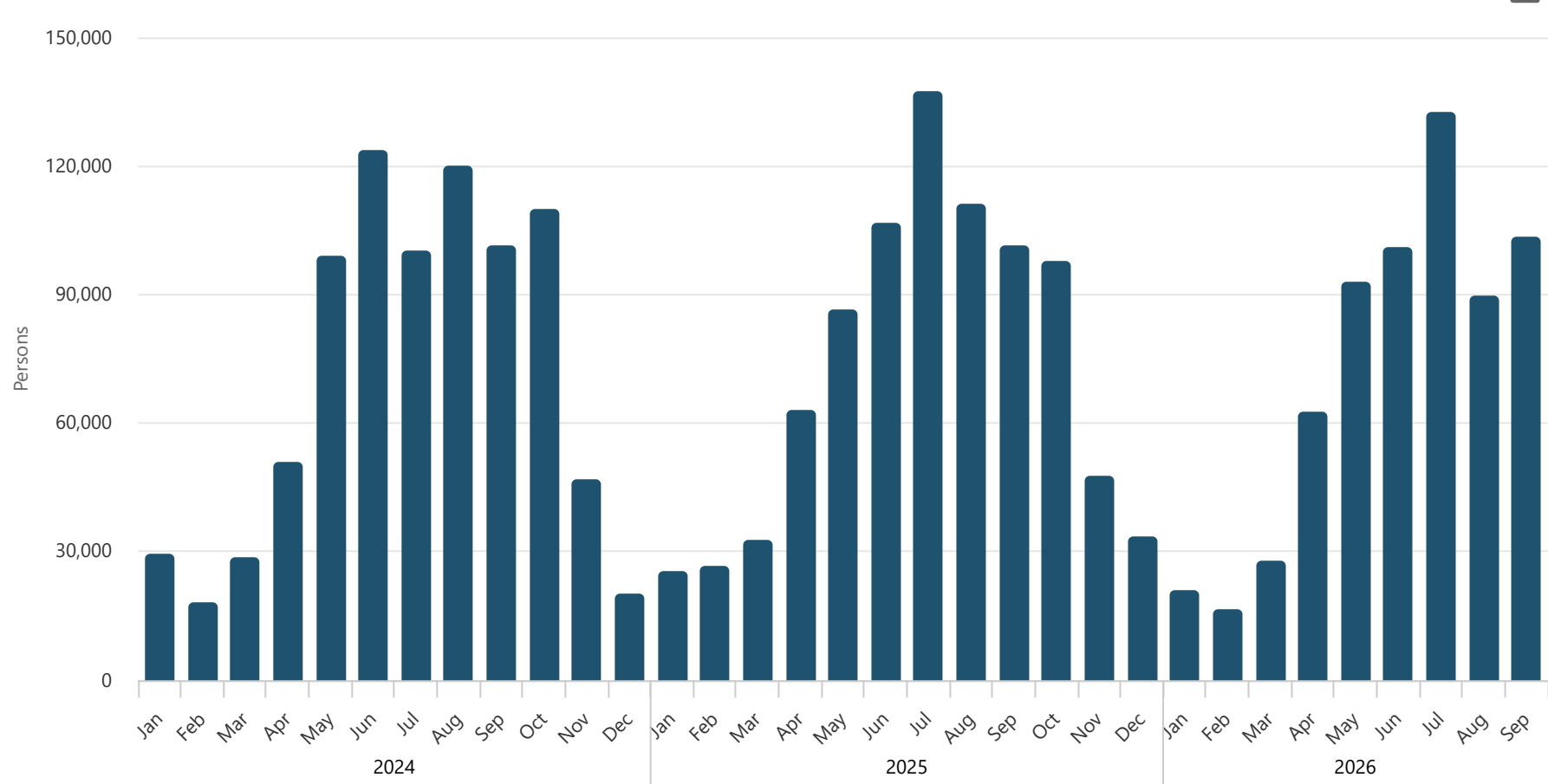


Table 1. Cruise passengers by period and passenger characteristics

Characteristics	July-September			Change	Percentage change
	2024	2025	2026	2026/2025	
Total traffic¹:	321,814	350,338	325,681	-24,657	-7.0
Transit	271,268	294,501	268,114	-26,387	-9.0
Landed	50,546	55,837	57,567	1,730	3.1
<i>of which:</i>					
Passengers on cruise liners anchored off Mgarr, Gozo	4,470	4,100	1,376	-2,724	-66.4
Passengers staying overnight	6,455	7,232	7,628	396	5.5
Country of Nationality					
EU	143,690	175,911	183,140	7,229	4.1
<i>of which:</i>					
France	9,375	14,328	16,241	1,913	13.4
Germany	27,492	23,983	25,862	1,879	7.8
Italy	56,083	66,572	59,576	-6,996	-10.5
Malta	7,539	9,160	9,751	591	6.5
Spain	24,163	36,302	41,483	5,181	14.3
Non-EU	178,124	174,427	142,541	-31,886	-18.3
<i>of which:</i>					
Australia	7,783	7,986	4,181	-3,805	-47.6
Canada	14,304	12,016	6,942	-5,074	-42.2
Japan	635	1,080	1,198	118	10.9
United Kingdom	65,553	64,633	67,586	2,953	4.6
United States	64,557	56,969	34,451	-22,518	-39.5
Sex:					
Males	149,884	162,088	156,855	-5,233	-3.2
Females	171,930	188,250	168,826	-19,424	-10.3
Age group:					
0-19	54,256	60,190	56,760	-3,430	-5.7
20-39	54,532	60,463	54,468	-5,995	-9.9
40-59	105,377	115,652	107,532	-8,120	-7.0
60-79	99,203	104,670	96,958	-7,712	-7.4
80+	8,446	9,363	9,963	600	6.4
Cruise liner calls	124	140	139	-1	-0.7

¹ See methodological note 4.

Table 2. Cruise passengers by period and passenger characteristics

Characteristics	January-September			Change	Percentage change
	2024	2025	2026 ^R	2026/2025	
Total traffic¹:	672,276	691,261	647,237	-44,024	-6.4
Transit	568,630	588,163	540,458	-47,705	-8.1
Landed	103,646	103,098	106,779	3,681	3.6
<i>of which:</i>					
Passengers on cruise liners anchored off Mgarr, Gozo	11,643	7,155	3,658	-3,497	-48.9
Passengers staying overnight	16,889	34,105	36,570	2,465	7.2
Country of Nationality					
EU	288,418	324,633	325,068	435	0.1
<i>of which:</i>					
France	29,108	35,303	36,180	877	2.5
Germany	54,279	49,133	48,029	-1,104	-2.2
Italy	106,181	114,673	99,218	-15,455	-13.5
Malta	10,895	12,108	13,197	1,089	9.0
Spain	46,004	60,468	65,226	4,758	7.9
Non-EU	383,858	366,628	322,169	-44,459	-12.1
<i>of which:</i>					
Australia	16,562	15,946	10,279	-5,667	-35.5
Canada	24,707	21,921	18,059	-3,862	-17.6
Japan	2,241	2,968	2,644	-324	-10.9
United Kingdom	134,899	128,895	138,651	9,756	7.6
United States	137,913	117,915	83,296	-34,619	-29.4
Sex:					
Males	311,705	322,107	302,648	-19,459	-6.0
Females	360,571	369,154	344,589	-24,565	-6.7
Age group:					
0-19	98,367	104,664	92,681	-11,983	-11.4
20-39	108,680	113,445	102,797	-10,648	-9.4
40-59	208,308	214,145	194,679	-19,466	-9.1
60-79	235,340	235,046	231,022	-4,024	-1.7
80+	21,581	23,961	26,058	2,097	8.8
Cruise liner calls	271	294	298	4	1.4

^R Revised: refer to methodological note 3.¹ See methodological note 4.

Methodological Notes

1. The data in this release is compiled on the basis of administrative records supplied by Transport Malta.
2. Cruise liners calling at both Malta and Gozo during a single voyage are recorded as one cruise liner call.
3. Cruise passengers data for the month of June 2026 has been revised from the source.
4. The majority of passengers embarking on cruise liners from Malta generally end their trip at the same destination. Embarkations are therefore not included in total traffic figures, in order to avoid double counting. This measure was adopted as from [News Release no. 079/2013](#), dated 23 April 2013. The referred news release also includes figures for 2011 and 2012.
5. For clarity, embarkation figures for the period under review are being provided:

Embarkations	2024	2025	2026
July-September	49,943	55,147	55,307
January–September	103,386	104,582	103,336

6. Definitions:

- **Cruise passenger traffic:** comprises transit passengers and passengers who land in Malta.
- **Embarkations:** comprise all cruise passengers who are either Maltese or who are foreigners who arrive in Malta by other means of transport.
- **Transit passengers:** comprise all cruise passengers who arrive in and leave Malta on the same cruise ship.
- **Landed passengers:** comprise all cruise passengers who arrive in Malta on a cruise ship and leave by other means of transport, or alternatively, stay in Malta.
- **Passengers staying overnight:** comprise passengers who spend at least one night in the Maltese Islands, either onboard the cruise ship or on land.
- **Average number of passengers per vessel:** computed by dividing total cruise passenger traffic by the number of cruise liner calls.

7. A detailed news release calendar is available [online](#).
8. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately. For guidance on access and re-use of data please visit our [dedicated webpage](#).
9. For further assistance send your request through our [online request form](#).