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CRUISE AS A SPECIAL TYPE OF MODERN WATER TOURISM

The seas are important tourist resources. They form a favourable microclimate, decorate the landscape, give tourists the opportunity to relax on water and be engaged in water sports. Recently cruises have become increasingly popular among tourists due to the development of passenger ships, an increase in their comfort and safety. People prefer to spend their holidays on the ship, choosing sea cruises. Only sea voyage offers such a varied program of relaxation and pleasure.

The aim of the study is to describe the types of ships, specify features of organizing tourist service on vessels of sea transport. According to the aim the following tasks have been set: to give analyses of the information about cruises and develop recommendations for the selection and formation of cruise tours.

One of the most common types of water trips are cruises offered by the company Sea Cruise. Usually the journey is organized in a vicious circle with radial journeys from ports to inland areas of countries. A cruise is a sea or river trip with a visit to port cities of several countries. The most common cruises abroad are in the Caribbean area (Grenada, Antilles, Virgin Islands - in winter), in the Mediterranean Sea (May - October), the Baltic Sea and around Scandinavia (May - August). Also cruises are popular in the Far East, in the Indian Ocean, Australia, Alaska, and Antarctica.

The largest supplier of cruise tourists is the US market. Americans mainly use the services of the largest cruise company Royal Caribbean, operating in the tourist market for more than 25 years. The company has its fleet of unique ocean liners of the highest class and carries about 800 thousand tourists annually.

While visiting foreign countries passengers of cruise ships do not use the services of hotels and catering, therefore, according to WTO standards, they are

considered to be excursionists with a special immigration passport regime. In most cases, for transit countries where passengers come ashore, no special visa is required; however, their term of staying usually must not exceed 72 hours.

A big advantage of cruises is that they don't require visas. The only visa you need to get is the visa of the country from which the cruise starts. When a port is visited by tourists, special cards of cruise passengers are issued when they come ashore, which are handed over to the captain upon returning to the ship.

Recently, there has been a trend towards the construction of large cruise ships. Until recently, the 17-deck Voyager of the Sea, owned by Royal Caribbean, had been considered the largest cruise ship. Its displacement is 142 thousand tons; the number of passengers can amount to 2,200 tourists and 1,180 crew members. The dimensions of the vessel are unique: it is 311 m long, 47 m wide and 70 m high. A feature of this liner is that for the first time an ice rink and a real promenade street under a glass dome were built on board the ship. In January 2003, the new largest ocean liner Queen Mary II was launched in Southampton. Its displacement is 150 thousand tons, 70 meters from the water line. The new liner took on board 2,620 tourists.

Cabins on sea cruise ships differ greatly concerning their big variety of the area, an interior design, a set of conveniences and all these aspects are reflected in the price. An important feature of cruise tours is the organization of entertainment on board. Various clubs work on cruise ships, actors are invited to perform, shows are held, gambling clubs and casinos operate. As a rule, the cruise tour is organized in an "all inclusive" system which refers to food, the use of sports halls and equipment, and an entertainment program. The biggest disadvantage of cruises is their rather high price. But recently budget cruise companies have appeared.

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