



Costa Cruises and AISM: Tours Now Also Accessible to Guests with Disabilities for the First Time

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The new "Adagio Tours", available for Mediterranean cruises on the flagship Costa Diadema from January 2019, will also allow guests with impaired mobility to take part in group shore excursions. The programs have been planned with the help of 15 women with multiple sclerosis, thanks to an initiative promoted by the Costa Crociere Foundation and AISM.

Genoa, September 27, 2018 – [Costa Cruises](#), [AISM](#) (Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association) and the [Costa Crociere Foundation](#) present the results of joint project aimed at making **vacations increasingly accessible** to people with **impaired mobility**. For the **first time in the world in the cruise sector** guests with disabilities will be able to participate in **group shore excursions**, at no extra cost, with accessibility verified by AISM, in accordance with the most advanced international good practices.

The new tours, called "**Adagio Tours**", will be available for booking from January 1, 2019 for Mediterranean cruises on the flagship **Costa Diadema**. At every port of call, at least one group excursion will be offered that is accessible to everyone, including guests with impaired mobility, and this is available at no extra cost. The list of tours currently includes visits to the cities of Genoa, Marseilles, Barcelona, Palermo, Rome, Palma de Mallorca and Cagliari. "Adagio Tours" have been developed considering the needs of all our guests who want to enjoy their chosen destinations at a slower pace, with more time to discover and rediscover them. They are therefore particularly suited to parents with strollers, elderly guests or people with permanent or temporary mobility impairments.

The programmes for these excursions have been devised, tested and checked with the contribution of **15 women** with multiple sclerosis, trained and selected by AISM thanks to the "WAT! Women Accessibility Tourism" program funded by the Costa Crociere Foundation. These women - some with no permanent disability, others who are students, recent graduates or part-time workers, all passionate about travel and tourism - attended a specific 160-hour training course on land and on board Costa ships, benefiting from the experience of AISM and a team of excursion experts from Costa Cruises. Following this training, starting with a few excursions already included in the Costa offer, they contributed to planning the tours, testing them first hand and taking into consideration every detail relating to accessibility, route mapping, tourism experiences, making the most of local attractions. The skills gained will also help the 15 women find employment in the field of sustainable tourism.

"AISM has been about people, rights and research for 50 years. Our aim of achieving a world free of multiple sclerosis also means ensuring full inclusion and the opportunity for everyone to live their life beyond multiple sclerosis. This is why the priorities in our Agenda for 2020 include access to stable employment and the right to inclusion, which also means accessible tourism. AISM is working to achieve change with a real impact on people's lives. The social value of our actions, as an Association, lies in achieving changes that benefit everyone with a mobility impairment and everyone in the community with similar problems. Change has to be contagious and applied to civil society as a whole", explains **Mario Alberto Battaglia**, President of AISM.

"With the cooperation of AISM and the contribution of our Foundation, we have tackled the subject of accessible tourism in a responsible way, with the aim of making significant changes to people's lives. This project, which is a real innovation in the world of cruises, is an important step forward towards including people with disabilities and ensuring that there are no more differences and that everyone can share the same experiences when on vacation. I hope this initiative can be extended to the whole sector in future. We certainly undertake to extend it to the other ships in our fleet." - says **Neil Palomba**, President of Costa Cruises.

The Adagio Tours supplement the other services Costa already offers guests with disabilities on board its fleet. All company ships include appropriately fitted cabins with all the comforts required and free of any architectural barriers. Guests who need special assistance can also benefit from free travel for an accompanying person staying in the cabin with them. Priority boarding and landing services and reserved seats at the theatre, on the pool decks and in the buffet restaurants are also guaranteed.

AISM is the only organization in Italy dedicated to all aspects of multiple sclerosis. It takes an overall approach to its work that encompasses the rights of people with MS, social services and healthcare and the promotion, guidance and funding of scientific research. It has been operating since 1968. It is a not-for-profit social promotion association with local branches and volunteering activities across Italy. For the last 50 years, it has been the most authoritative and closest point of reference for all MS sufferers, their families, health care staff and social workers, operating across the country thanks to a network structure with 98 provincial sections, regional coordination offices, more than 60 operating groups and over 13,000 volunteers. Since 1998, AISM has been working with FISM, the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, which promotes and supports innovative basic and applied research aimed at improving quality of life and treatments and, in the long term, identifying a definite cure for multiple sclerosis. FISM is the third biggest private funding organization for research into MS in the world, second only to the US and Canadian associations, and on an equal footing with the British one.

Costa Cruises is an Italian company that is part of Carnival Corporation & plc, the largest cruise group in the world. For 70 years the ships of the Costa fleet have been travelling the world's seas offering hospitality and authentic Italian style holidays, distinguished by exquisite food, fine wines, unique shopping experiences, and a comprehensive selection of famous Italian brands. Currently the Costa fleet has 14 ships in service, all flying the Italian flag. Two new latest generation vessels are expected in 2019 and 2021. They will be fuelled by liquefied natural gas (LNG), the world's "cleanest fossil fuel", and a real environmental innovation. Costa represents Italian excellence, and every day surpasses the expectations of its guests with a unique and unforgettable holiday experience. It does this thanks to the approximately 19,000 employees around the world who work to provide the best of Italy on board, with 140 different routes, 250 destinations and 60 ports of embarkation.

Costa Crociere Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organization founded in 2014 to defeat the most urgent social and environmental problems that impact on the communities of the countries where Costa Cruises operates. The Foundation operates through social projects for women, young people and

the weakest members of society, and through an environmental program for the protection of the sea. Over 17,000 people have benefited from the 24 projects currently being run.

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