



The Maryland Port Administration

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR O'MALLEY APPLAUDS DECISION FROM CELEBRITY CRUISES TO BEGIN WINTER SAILINGS IN 2009 FROM MARYLAND

Cruise line to offer 12 and 9-night excursions to Eastern Caribbean and Bahamas

(BALTIMORE, MD) --- Governor Martin O'Malley welcomed the decision today from Celebrity Cruises to begin sailing from the Port of Baltimore in November 2009. The Celebrity *Mercury*, a 1,898-guest ship, will call Baltimore a homeport from November 2009 through February 2010. Celebrity will offer five 12-night Eastern Caribbean cruises that will visit St. Thomas; St. Kitts; Antigua; St. Maarten, and Tortola. They will also offer five 9-night cruises visiting Charleston, SC; Key West, FL; and Cococay and Nassau, Bahamas. The first cruise scheduled from Baltimore is a 12-night excursion beginning November 9, 2009.

"Celebrity's decision to offer cruises from Maryland confirms once again that the international cruise industry recognizes Maryland as a viable departure location," said Governor O'Malley. "Our hospitality industry, attractions and diversity provide another exciting element to one's vacation at the beginning or end of their cruise. Equally important is the location of the Port of Baltimore and the easy access to our quality cruise terminal and parking that sits right off of I-95."

The Celebrity *Mercury* began sailing in 1997. It is a 77,713-ton vessel with 949 staterooms, two-thirds of which have ocean views. The 10-deck ship also offers many dining and entertainment options and age-appropriate programs and activities for children of all ages.

The Port of Baltimore is the closest East Coast drive-to port from Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Chicago. Baltimore is also within a four-hour drive from the New York City metro area. The Cruise Maryland cruise terminal is only 2.5 miles from Baltimore's world famous Inner Harbor, 10 miles from BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and little more than an hour from three other major airports. In total, about 40 million people live within a six-hour drive of Baltimore.

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Celebrity Cruises Coming to Maryland in 2009

Maryland's median household income of \$68,040 is the highest in the nation. Baltimore is also located within a four-hour drive of ten of the wealthiest counties in the U.S. The Baltimore-Washington DC-Northern Virginia region is recognized as one of the most affluent in the nation and ranks fourth nationally in retail sales and effective-buying income. The region is also the fourth most populated area in the U.S.

In June, it was announced that Carnival Cruise Lines would begin year-round cruises from Baltimore starting September 2009. That will be the first time in the Port's 30-plus year cruise history that it will offer year-round cruising. In addition to Celebrity and Carnival, the Port of Baltimore will also be served by Royal Caribbean and Norwegian cruise lines in 2009. In 2008, the economic impact of cruising from Maryland was approximately \$63 million. Combining embarks and debarks, about 100,000 passengers cruised to or from the Port of Baltimore in 2008.

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