

World's new largest cruise ship will sail from PortMiami



Rendering of Royal Caribbean Cruises' Terminal A at PortMiami, slated for opening in October 2018. Royal Caribbean Cruises

By Chabeli Herrera

The world's new largest cruise ship is coming to Miami.

At a groundbreaking ceremony for its new Miami terminal Wednesday afternoon, Miami-based Royal Caribbean International announced that its new 5,494-passenger Symphony of the Seas, which will be ever-so-slightly larger than current record holder Harmony of the Seas, will debut in Miami in November 2018.

The ship, which will have [many of the same features as sister ship Harmony of the Seas](#), will sail seven-night eastern and western Caribbean itineraries beginning Nov. 17, 2018.

Symphony of the Seas' arrival will coincide with the opening of Terminal A, Royal Caribbean's new state-of-the-art mega terminal in Miami, in October 2018.

Royal Caribbean's 4,074-passenger Allure of the Seas will also sail from the terminal beginning late next year.

Parent company Royal Caribbean Cruises [announced the development](#) of a massive terminal in Miami in June, which would be built to accommodate the company's Oasis-class ships, among the biggest in the world. In July, Miami-Dade county commissioners unanimously passed an agreement with the cruise company for a contract lasting at least 20 years and as many as 60 years.

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Richard Fain, chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Cruises

Previously, Royal Caribbean International's mega ships sailed from Fort Lauderdale, which built a terminal in 2009 to welcome Oasis of the Seas, the first of the line's Oasis-class ships. Oasis started sailing out of Orlando's Port Canaveral last year and is scheduled to remain there at least through spring 2018. Royal Caribbean's newest ship, Harmony of the Seas, will remain in Fort Lauderdale.

The \$247 million terminal project will be largely financed by the cruise company and bring the county \$7.5 million in annual rent. The terminal is expected to bring \$500 million in annual economic impact and create 4,000 jobs.

“Terminal A reinforces our unwavering commitment to our hometown, the city where our company started nearly 50 years ago,” said Richard Fain, chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Cruises, in a release.

Dubbed the “Crown of Miami,” the angular glass facility will be large enough to accommodate a 1,300-foot long ship. That means there's room to grow — Symphony of the Seas clocks in at 1,188 feet.

Royal Caribbean International's new 5,494-passenger Symphony of the Seas and 4,074-passenger Allure of the Seas will sail from PortMiami after the new terminal is completed in late 2018.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL'S NEW 5,494-PASSENGER SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS AND 4,074-PASSENGER ALLURE OF THE SEAS WILL SAIL FROM PORTMIAMI AFTER THE NEW TERMINAL IS COMPLETED IN LATE 2018.

The new facility will increase the number of Royal Caribbean passengers that come through Miami from 750,000 annually to 1.8 million a year. That will bump Royal Caribbean's share of Miami cruise passengers from 15 to 30 percent.

That spells good news for downtown, said Alyce Robertson, executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority, in an interview. The new terminal is coming in at a time when downtown is

booming [with new hotels](#) and new attractions, including the long-awaited [opening of the Frost Museum of Science in May](#).

“Downtown's growth and the port's growth have been complimentary to each other ,” Robertson said. “Now

people are booking a day or two before or after (their cruise) to enjoy the destination of downtown.”

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Robert Hill, general manager of the InterContinental Miami

Robert Hill, general manager of downtown’s InterContinental Miami, is prepping for the continued growth of cruise business from the port. For the last three to four years, Hill said, the hotel has seen more cruise passengers who extend their vacations by adding a hotel stay, ultimately having a more direct impact on the local tourism economy.

The hotel added a cruise package for passengers, which includes breakfast and transfer to the port, because of the increase demand.

“Where else can you literally cruise out of a major international city by just crossing across the bridge?” Hill said. “(The new terminal) is just continuing to grow that.”