



MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES Announces Name of New Cruise Ship - MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA; Continues 140 Year-Legacy of Maritime History and Cruise Travel

**Japan-Based Cruise Line Appoints Captain and Executive Chef of
MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA, Debuting in Late 2026**



MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES has appointed Captain Satoshi Ninomiya one of the Masters of the newly named MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA, the Japan-based cruise line's next vessel, launching in late 2026.

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[Tokyo, Japan – August 19, 2025] – MOL Cruises, Ltd. [Tsunemichi Mukai – President]: MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES, the time-honored cruise line in Japan and operated by MOL Cruises, has announced its new cruise ship will be named "MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA," and begin operating as a Japanese-flagged ship in late 2026. Former Nippon Maru Captain Satoshi Ninomiya has been appointed one of the ship's Masters, and Executive Chef Katsutoshi Nakayama, also from Nippon Maru, will lead the culinary team.

Origin of the Name MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA (Japanese notation: 三井オーシャンサクラ)

“Sakura,” a flower long cherished in Japan, continues to captivate people with its beauty. This beautiful name was also given to the two cruise ships that the cruise line once operated, the Sakura Maru and the Shin Sakura Maru, which both provided cruise vacations around the world. The name "MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA" is therefore in honor of Sakura, which symbolizes the beauty of Japan, and the cruise ships loved by many people.

mitsui ocean sakura will offer a wide range of itineraries, mainly short to medium length cruises, departing from and arriving at various ports in Japan. As a small luxury ship at 32,477 tons carrying 458 guests, MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA will visit a variety of ports, large and small, as did her predecessor, Nippon Maru. This includes visits to remote islands in Okinawa and Hokkaido. The ship will also offer cruises themed to the seasons, featuring local festivals, fireworks, music and food. Inaugural itineraries of MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA will be announced and go on sale in early 2026.

“While passing on the ‘spirit of omotenashi’ cultivated through past cruise ships operated by our company, including Nippon Maru, MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA will maintain our 140-year legacy and connection with the people and ports of call around Japan, showcasing the special experiences in those places,” said Tsunemichi Mukai, president and executive officer of MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES. “Our loyal and experienced crew will extend heartfelt hospitality, and our chefs will continue to delight our guests with the praise of delicious cuisine for which we are famous.”

mitsui ocean sakura guests will enjoy the cruise line’s sense of Japanese beauty and traditions on this ship with comfortable, large suites with balconies, new and varied dining and entertainment options, and a peaceful feeling of time and space enjoyed on the ocean.

mitsui ocean sakura Fast Facts

Gross tonnage: 32,477 tons

Total length: 650 feet

Total width: 84 feet

Number of guest suites: 229 suites

Guest capacity: 458 guests

Introduction of Captain of MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA

Satoshi Ninomiya (にのみや さとし)

Captain Satoshi Ninomiya joined Mitsui O.S.K. Passenger Line, Ltd. (currently MOL Cruises) in 1993, and boarded Fuji Maru as junior third officer. After that, he gained experience with Shin Sakura Maru and Nippon Maru. He became chief officer in 2006, and was promoted to captain in 2017, serving as captain of the Nippon Maru. In 2024, he became head of the Safety Operations Group in the Fleet Operations Department, which oversees ship safety.

Captain Ninomiya said, “I am very honored to be in command of a new cruise ship carrying on the history and tradition of our company, which has offered cruising for more than 140 years, including its days as a passenger carrier ship. Since the days of Mitsui O.S.K. Passenger Line, Ltd., I have been involved with multiple cruise ships, have given top priority to safety. I’m honored to take guests to beautiful destinations in Japan and around the world onboard MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA, filled with the many memorable encounters and surprises only cruise travel can deliver.”

Introduction of Executive Chef of MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA

Katsutoshi Nakayama (なかやま かつとし)



In 1990, Chef Katsutoshi Nakayama joined Mitsui O.S.K. Passenger Line, Ltd. (currently known as MOL Cruises) as a cook and oversaw the bakery section when Nippon Maru went into service the same year. After that, he also started cooking bread and desserts in the same section on Shin Sakura Maru and Fuji Maru. He was promoted to Senior Cook in 1996, and Senior Assistant Chef in 1998. In 2011, he boarded Fuji Maru as the executive chef for the first time. Since 2012, he has been the executive chef at Nippon Maru, creating a variety of menus. In 2024, he became the first executive chef of MITSUI OCEAN FUJI.

Chef Nakayama added, “It is my great privilege to be able to serve meals onboard MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA as executive chef, taking advantage of my experience as executive chef on many of our company’s cruise ships, including the Fuji Maru, Nippon Maru and MITSUI OCEAN FUJI. When we serve meals, we are very meticulous of the process and believe we can deliver our passion to our guests through our dishes by carefully handling the ingredients with our hearts, using our skills and experience, to devise menus incorporating traditional dishes unique to our Japanese cruise line.”

Announced earlier this year, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines. Ltd. purchased this second luxury cruise ship from Seabourn, currently trading as Seabourn Sojourn. Soon-to-be MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA, the ship will transition to the MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES brand in 2026, after completing its Seabourn deployment. Sister ship, MITSUI OCEAN FUJI launched in December 2024 and is currently sailing inspiring Japan voyages that connect international guests to the people, natural beauty and cherished traditions of the region – authentically experienced alongside Japanese guests and crew.

More details about MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES, including voyages currently on sale aboard MITSUI OCEAN FUJI, can be found at www.mitsuioceancruises.us.

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About MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES:

Rooted in Japanese heritage, nature and traditions, from the blue sea, MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES connects people with the wonders of nature and Japanese culture to enrich people's lives and secure a happier and more sustainable future. MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES is the brand of the MOL Cruises, Ltd, the time-honored cruise line in Japan and is part of the Mitsui O.S.K. Lines. Ltd. (MOL) group of companies. It currently operates cruise ships NIPPON MARU and MITSUI OCEAN FUJI and in 2026, will welcome MITSUI OCEAN SAKURA to the fleet.

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