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**TRAVEL AND TOURISM**

**9395/32**

Paper 3 International Business & Leisure Travel Services

**May/June 2015**

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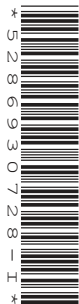
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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

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Fig. 1 for Question 1

## **Belfast, Northern Ireland to create purpose-built cruise facility in the Titanic Quarter**

Belfast Harbour recently announced that it is to invest £7 million in creating a purpose-built cruise facility in the Titanic Quarter, birthplace of the Titanic and now the site of numerous visitor attractions linked to the ship's history. It is also home to five hotels and a range of entertainment and leisure facilities.

Over recent years, Belfast has become a popular destination for international cruise companies as a port of call. In 2012, 45 cruise ships and approximately 75000 passengers and crew visited Belfast and it is estimated that £3.9 million was generated in visitor spend. In 2013, this rose to 60 cruise ships, bringing 100000 visitors to the port. This contributes both to the GDP of Northern Ireland and the multiplier effect within Belfast itself.

Northern Ireland's Tourism Minister said, "Since the first cruise ship docked in Belfast in 1996, our local cruise sector has become a thriving industry. This announcement is particularly exciting because it will ensure that Belfast is equipped to handle cruise ships with a carrying capacity of over 4500 passengers and crew. It will also enable passengers to disembark within walking distance of the Titanic Quarter's visitor attractions."

The continuing success of Belfast as a cruise port of call is due to the Cruise Belfast Initiative, a marketing activity between Belfast Harbour and the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), which promotes Belfast internationally as a destination for cruise ships. Belfast is also Northern Ireland's principal passenger ferry port with 1.3 million ferry passengers each year.

The Tourism Minister added "There are valuable opportunities for tourism organisations if they can find ways to connect with the cruise market. Belfast is an ideal location for cruise ships, as no part of Northern Ireland is more than one and a half hours away by road for visitors. All of our tourist attractions are easily accessible." The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) plays an important role in marketing Northern Ireland as a tourist destination, running marketing campaigns each year.

NITB also awards Quality Grading Scheme accreditation to a number of visitor attractions, such as Titanic Belfast in the Titanic Quarter, the first visitor attraction in Northern Ireland to gain a five-star accreditation for the quality of its visitor services. Combining nine state-of-the-art interactive galleries telling the story of the Titanic, and a number of suites, offering conference and meeting room facilities, Titanic Belfast is a unique leisure and business tourism venue. The Titanic Suites offer the largest banqueting space in Belfast and Northern Ireland. The main visitor complex provides a choice of restaurants and cafes, a souvenir shop, ATMs and coach and car parking facilities. Titanic Belfast attracted over 750000 visitors from 128 countries in its first year of opening, exceeding its target of 450000 visitors.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2 for Question 2

## Free airline upgrades will soon disappear

The economy passenger's dream ticket, a free upgrade at the departure gate, is becoming increasingly rare.

Online upgrade auctions that allow travellers with cheap tickets to make bids for unfilled business class seats are increasing in number, as airlines across the world catch on to this innovative way of making extra money.

Austrian Airlines has become the latest carrier to start taking bids for seats, following in the footsteps of Air New Zealand, El Al of Israel, Etihad of Abu Dhabi and Virgin Atlantic.

In future, passengers buying cheap tickets for long-haul flights via Vienna are invited to bid for an upgrade to the business class cabin. If successful, they also get fast-track security, access to business lounges and improved catering.

These airlines are all aiming to fill seats that would otherwise be empty. They want to earn more money from economy passengers. When a passenger buys a ticket on a flight that is predicted to have empty business class seats, he or she will be invited to bid for an upgrade. Airlines do not disclose the average additional cost of 'winning bids' for fear of setting a price which may persuade existing business class passengers to switch to this new bidding system.

It is claimed that airlines benefit from both increased earnings and happier passengers, but not everyone booked in an economy seat is eligible to take part in the auction. Some airlines insist that bids are placed at least a week before departure. Successful bidders are contacted at least three days ahead of departure.

The result is that aircraft are flying fuller than ever before. International Air Transport Association (IATA) figures for 2012 show an average load factor of above 79%, meaning that on a typical flight only one in five seats was empty. In recent years, average load factors have varied between 70% and 75%.

More tightly packed economy cabins mean the attraction of business class increases. The premium price that passengers pay for business class is huge. For example, the cheapest Virgin Atlantic ticket from Heathrow to New York costs approximately US\$715 in economy but US\$8350 in business class – more than 11 times as much.

Fig. 2

**Fig. 3 for Question 3**

Big Bus Tours is the largest operator of open-top sightseeing tours in the world, providing sightseeing tours in thirteen cities across three continents. Each open-top bus tour provides a hop-on, hop-off facility at a variety of interesting locations.

**The Night Tour of Dubai**

Book a trip on one of our famous double-decker buses and enjoy the spectacular sights of Dubai by night. From the moment the bus departs you will see the beautiful views of this city as the sun sets and watch Dubai come to life at night.

Our two-hour city tour features live commentary from a registered guide who will point out the sights of this wonderful city. The tour departs from Deira City Centre at 19.30, returning at 21.30, or from Souk Madinat Jumeirah at 20.30, returning at 22.30.

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Big Bus Tours is keen to ensure that the latest, up-to-date technology is installed on all of our buses. Currently half of the buses in Dubai have a system installed, allowing passengers to receive a high quality tour experience in their native language. Languages to choose from include English, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian, Farsi and Hindi.

Enhance your sightseeing experience in Dubai with the ***Big Bus Tours App***.

Continue your discovery of this vibrant city by using the app to find out interesting facts and information on attractions, landmarks, shopping and dining.

Find your chosen destinations with ease and locate the nearest bus stop to you, using our unique 3D map. The app helps you to make the most of your time in Dubai and acts as a useful guide to assist you in planning your day.

**Save up to 15% off fixed date tickets online or buy your ticket from the driver.**

**The Day Tour includes entry to Dubai Museum and Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum's House, and a free Dhow Cruise.**

**Free Sharjah Tour with 48-hour tickets**

Certificate of Excellence

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Big Bus Tours

**Fig. 3**

**Fig. 4 for Question 4****Business Tourism in Malta**

Malta, a group of three small islands in the Mediterranean, has been attracting business tourists for decades. The Maltese islands offer a variety of magnificent castles, palaces and forts as function venues. Other unusual settings include theme parks, village squares, luxury yachts and converted traditional farmhouses. State-of-the-art conference hotels are also available for events of any size, and include the Mediterranean Conference Centre, housed in a 16<sup>th</sup> Century former hospital building.

An English-speaking environment, good access links and hospitable people make Malta a perfect destination for your business event.

The islands' Destination Management Companies (DMCs) have extensive experience in responding to the high standards demanded by business travellers. They cater for every need from arranging accommodation, meeting facilities, tours and restaurants to providing entertainment and special events. They will ensure that guests see Malta's remarkable historic sites and places of natural beauty during their visit. Many of these DMCs meet the requirements of the Malta Tourism Authority 'Quality Assured' scheme, which demonstrates the company's commitment to high levels of quality and professionalism.

If you need assistance in staging your event, there are many DMCs specialising in a range of services from lighting and sound systems to providing interpreters.

If you are planning a business event or sales trip and would like to know more about how Malta can be your meeting place, contact the MICE team within the Malta Tourism Authority.

The Malta Tourism Authority is a member of Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA).

ICCA membership offers a network of specialist suppliers of international meetings in 88 countries, offering assistance with:

- venue selection
- technical advice
- delegate transportation
- full convention planning services

**Fig. 4**





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