

COVID cases halt Canaries-bound cruise for 3,000

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Some 3,000 passengers, mostly Germans, saw their Canary Islands-bound cruise halted Monday after a COVID-19 outbreak forced them to disembark in Lisbon, Portuguese authorities said.

The first passengers to test positive on the German-built AIDAnova were transferred to a bus bound for Lisbon airport before dawn, Lisbon's chief of maritime police Diogo Vieira Branco said. He added the remainder were set to follow by the end of the afternoon.

The vessel with 2,844 passengers and 1,353 crew aboard docked in Lisbon after arriving from the northwestern Spanish port of La Coruna.

It had been due to sail on to Spain's Canaries via the Portuguese island of Madeira.

After the first positive cases emerged Wednesday, operator AIDA Cruises Sunday elected to halt the cruise "in the interest of the safety and health of its guests and crew," a spokesman told AFP.

By Monday, the vessel had logged 68 positive virus cases—60 of them among the crew.

"They tried to find replacements for the [crew members](#) but could not so we had no option other than to leave," one [passenger](#), Ulla Lingnau, told AFP.

Branco said those who tested positive were either asymptomatic or had slight symptoms, adding most were being put up in hotels in Lisbon to respect quarantine restrictions.

AIDA Cruises stated that "all guests on board AIDAnova from the age of 12 and our [crew](#) are fully vaccinated" and tested via antigen tests prior to arrival and also prior to boarding with PCR tests in the cruise terminal.

The 5,200-capacity AIDAnova, which went into service in 2018, was due to sail out of Lisbon on Wednesday afternoon.

Its next cruise booking is a January 15 departure from La Palma to the
Canaries.

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