

# A Floating Palace: The Royal Yacht “Britannia” [B2]

Per quasi cinque decenni lo yacht Britannia è stato il palazzo galleggiante e il mezzo di trasporto preferito della regina Elisabetta II e di suo marito, il duca di Edimburgo. Attualmente questa nave è un'importante attrazione turistica ormeggiata a Leith, vicino alla capitale scozzese.



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On 16 April 1953, Queen Elizabeth II began her relationship with probably her favourite home with the words, “I name this ship Britannia. I wish success to her and to all who [sail](#) in her.” Forty-four years later, on 11 December 1997, when the Queen [stepped ashore](#) from the Royal [Yacht](#) Britannia after her final trip, her normal composure left her and she [shed a tear](#). The exact moment — 3:01pm — is [displayed](#) on all the ship’s clocks.

## A ROYAL NECESSITY

At the ship’s [launch](#), the Queen explained the need for a Royal [Yacht](#), the 83rd in the Royal Family’s history. She felt “that a yacht was a necessity and not a luxury for the Head of our great British Commonwealth between

whose countries the sea is no barrier, but the natural and indestructible [highway](#)."

## ONE MILLION MILES

Britannia spent forty-four years in the service of Britain and the Commonwealth, making almost a thousand official visits. It [sailed](#) more than one million miles and [called at more than six hundred ports](#) in 135 countries. It served as a [means](#) of transport, a [theatre of state](#) and a home.

## PALACE AT SEA

The Queen and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh (a naval officer), participated in the ship's design and decoration. So the royal apartment was a clear guide to the couple's interests and tastes. The Queen's bedroom had a modest single bed, but the [dated back linen](#) to Queen Victoria! Britannia was over 125 metres long. The Queen's royal apartment occupied one-third of the ship. The rest was a working Royal Navy [vessel](#), although the ship was really a floating palace, with even telephones identical to those in Buckingham Palace. The [crew](#) numbered 220 under the command of twenty-one officers, and included a Royal Marine band.

## SPECIFIC SHIP RULES

Britannia had its own specific rules. To avoid excessive noise, the [crew](#) wore [gym shoes](#), and there was no [tannoy](#) system or [shouting](#) — telephones and hand signals were used to communicate orders. The yacht also had a garage for the Queen's Phantom V Rolls Royce, but [bumpers](#) had to be removed to permit the car to [fit](#).

## TIME FOR RETIREMENT

By the late 1990s, Britannia was showing its age. On June 30, 1997, it performed its final state role in the [handover](#) of Hong Kong to China. It returned to Britain to be [decommissioned](#) at Portsmouth. In line with its

long, illustrious career, the world-famous ship was allowed a dignified retirement. Britannia [sailed](#) into the tourist world and can now be visited in Edinburgh as Scotland's most popular tourist attraction. More than 350,000 people visit the iconic ship every year.

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# Glossary

- **highway** = autostrada
- **means** = mezzo
- **dated back** = risalire
- **gym shoes** = scarpe sportive
- **bumpers** = paraurti
- **stepped ashore** = sbarcare
- **tannoy** = megafono
- **sail** = navigare
- **Yacht** = yacht
- **theatre of state** = scenario nel quale vengono prese decisioni politiche
- **vessel** = nave, barca
- **handover** = restituzione
- **decommissioned** = smantellare
- **shed a tear** = piangere lacrime
- **displayed** = esporre
- **launch** = varo
- **called at more than six hundred ports** = fare scalo in un porto
- **linen** = biancheria
- **crew** = equipaggio
- **shouting** = grida
- **fit** = avere lo spazio sufficiente