

How Big is an Oil Tanker?



How big is an oil tanker? Oil tankers carry large amounts of oil over long distances. To be more efficient, these ships have been built bigger and bigger over time. Ludwig Nobel of Sweden was responsible for the design and construction of the first oil tanker. Oil tankers are unique because unlike barges, the oil is not contained in barrels. This allows the tankers to carry more oil and reduces the need for expensive oil barrels. Modern oil tankers are separated into six categories based on the Flexible Market Scale: Product Tankers, Panamax, Aframax, Suezmax, Very Large Crude Carriers, and Ultra Large Crude Carriers. New oil tankers sell for \$43 million to \$120 million.

The *Knock Nevis* is currently the longest oil tanker in use. It was originally used as a traditional oil tanker, but is now used for floating storage and offloading. The *Dong Fang Ocean*, formerly the *Exxon Valdez*, is the most famous oil tanker because of its catastrophic oil spill off Prince William Sound, Alaska. Almost all oil is hauled on an oil tanker at some point, usually from the drilling site to the processing site.

To get an idea of how big these tankers are, use the following chart and measure the distances outside. Grab a meter stick and a measuring tape and measure the distances of the tankers,



marking off the lengths with chalk. Use different strategies to measure each tanker. Compare the lengths of the *Knock Nevis* and the *Dong Fang Ocean*.



What is the difference in length of these two tankers? How long does it take to run the length of each tanker in the chart? What other objects compare in size to the tankers? How many strides long is each tanker? Would these tankers fit through rivers, the English Channel, or the Suez Canal?

Name	Ships in Class	Length	Tonnage	Status
<i>Knock Nevis</i>	1	485.5 m	564,763 DWT*	FSO*
<i>Batillus Class</i>	4	414.2 m	550,000 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Esso Atlantic Class</i>	2	406.6 m	516,000 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Berge Emperor Class</i>	2	380.8 m	423,700 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>TI Class</i>	4	380 m	441,600 DWT	In Service
<i>Globotik Tokyo Class</i>	3	378.9 m	484,000 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Esso Mediterranean Class</i>	2	378.4 m	456,368 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Jarmada Class</i>	2	373.5 m	390,000 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Aiko Maru Class</i>	6	365.9 m	413,000 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Hemland Class</i>	2	363.7 m	372,200 DWT	All Scrapped
<i>Dong Fang Ocean (Exxon Valdez)</i>	1	301 m	110,831 DWT	In Service

*Deadweight Tonnage

*Floating Storage & Offloading Unit



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