# Cruise Travel information

If you have never taken a cruise before, you’re in for a wonderful experience. Cruise travel is the most luxurious form of travel. Imagine a floating resort, created just for your vacation pleasure. Imagine days of sparkling ocean vistas, nights of first-rate entertainment, exotic tropical ports of call, non-stop pampering, and fabulous cuisine.

There are cruises that sail the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Greek Isles, and the British Isles; and cruises that sail to ports in China, Australia, India, and Africa. There are 7-day cruises of Mexico, 10-day cruises of Alaska, 11-day cruises of Hawaii, 20-day cruises of South America, and 99-day cruises around the world. There is a cruise for everyone.

The Staterooms

What was once a cabin with a porthole is now a stateroom—spacious, elegant, and fully equipped for all your needs.

Amenities Staterooms are like hotel rooms, with a TV, a private bathroom with a shower (some have a tub and a shower), a desk, a closet, and, of course, the bed(s), which are either stationary or fold-down. Deluxe staterooms generally come with a refrigerator and additional furniture, such as lounge chairs, tables, and a sofa bed.

Size Staterooms can sleep anywhere from one to four people, depending upon the room. Standard-size rooms generally have two lower beds or one double bed. Deluxe rooms may have a sitting room or a full living room with a sofa bed.

Price Staterooms range greatly in price. Generally, the lower the deck, the less expensive the room. Outside rooms are more expensive than inside rooms.

Food and Drink

Food on cruise ships is plentiful and of the finest quality. Meals are included in the cruise price. Alcoholic beverages are not included, and may be charged to your room.

Main Meals Generally, passengers make their reservations in advance for the time they prefer to eat their main meals, which are served in the dining room. You will also select a smoking or non-smoking section. You are then assigned a table that will be your regular table throughout your cruise. You can choose the first or second sitting for lunch and dinner.

Special Diets Cruise ships make every effort to accommodate your dietary requests. Let your travel agent know your needs at least two weeks prior to sailing. Once on board, you can discuss your dietary needs with your waiter or headwaiter.

Dress Code

Generally, the dress code is casual. Pack as you would for any resort destination, including bathing suits, cover-ups, sandals, workout wear, and active-wear. Comfort is important.

Most cruise ships have one or two formal or semi-formal occasions, such as a Captain’s Welcome Aboard Cocktail Party or a Captain’s Farewell Dinner and Dance. For these, men can wear what is most comfortable to them, from jacket and tie, to business suit, to tuxedo. Ladies can wear a cocktail dress or other appropriate evening dress, as they prefer.

Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion. Some ships have a true “tipping not required” policy, while others recommend it. A sample guideline is:

Cabin steward $3 per person, per day

Waiter $3 per person, per day

Busboy $1.50 per person, per day

Maitre d’ At your discretion

Headwaiter At your discretion

Electrical Appliances

Staterooms are equipped with 110-volt, 60-cycle alternating current. This means you can use most hair dryers, electric shavers, and other small appliances. Converters are not necessary.

For safety reasons, ships do not permit ironing in the staterooms. An ironing room is available, as well as valet service, if desired.

Passports

For U.S. Citizens Some form of proof of citizenship is required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. This could be either a passport, certified birth certificate, or certified naturalization document.

Non-U.S. Citizens Alien residents must have their Alien Registration Cards (Form I-551). Foreign passengers who are not residents must carry a valid passport and an applicable visa. See your travel agent for details.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required for most cruise ship destinations. Double-check with your travel agent.

Seasickness

Believe it or not, this is not a problem for most people. Most cruise ships are equipped with stabilizing “fins” that counteract the roll of a ship. If the ship encounters rough seas, chances are you will not notice it! Many people find sleeping on a cruise ship a uniquely relaxing experience, buoyed by the ocean and its rhythmic movement.

Medical Services

Cruise ships are equipped with medical facilities that are staffed by a physician and a registered nurse. If you become ill during the voyage, and the physician is not able to care for your needs on board, you will be transferred to medical facilities on shore.

Types of Cruises

There are cruises to suit every type of person. Not only do cruise ships sail around the world, but they often have special themes to suit special interests on board.

Theme Cruises Many cruise lines schedule sailings around special themes. For example, musical themes are popular, such as a Big Band Cruise, a Country-Western Cruise, or a '50s and '60s Cruise. Other cruise themes include Comedy Cruise, Halloween Cruise, Tennis Cruise, Golf Cruise, Fitness and Beauty Cruise.

Short Cruises These are generally three- or four-day cruises, for those with only a few days of leisure to spare. These mini-vacations are very popular, and while they’re short on time, they are rarely short on fun or variety. Cruises of three or four days often go to the Bahamas from Florida or to Mexico from California.

Sample Itinerary—Los Angeles to Mexico

Day 1 Los Angeles

Day 2 Catalina Island

Day 3 San Diego

Day 4 Ensenada, Mexico

Day 5 Los Angeles

Weeklong Cruises Seven-day cruises can cover a great many nautical miles. There are weeklong cruises of the Greek Islands, of Scandinavia, of Hawaii, and of Alaska. For these you would fly to the destination to begin the cruise. Weeklong cruises of the Caribbean begin from Florida or San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Sample Itinerary—The Caribbean

Day 1 San Juan

Day 2 Cruising

Day 3 Martinique

Day 4 Barbados

Day 5 Antigua

Day 6 St. Maarten

Day 7 St. Thomas

Day 8 San Juan

14-Day Cruises For more leisurely cruise vacations, two-week cruises sail from Ft. Lauderdale to Barcelona, from Athens to London, from Venice to Nice to Lisbon, and from Hamburg to Reykjavik and back again.

Sample Itinerary—The Mediterranean

Day 1 Athens

Day 2 Athens

Day 3 Cruising

Day 4 Naples

Day 5 Livorno

Day 6 Cannes

Day 7 Barcelona

Day 8 Cruising

Day 9 Gibraltar

Day 10 Tangier

Day 11 Lisbon

Day 12 Cruising

Day 13 Cruising

Day 14 Paris

Day 15 London

Long Cruises If you have time to spare, there’s a 24-day cruise from the U.S. to India, Burma, and Thailand. In 21 days, you can sail from New York to San Juan to Aruba, Acapulco, and San Diego. In 50 days, you can sail from Florida, around South America, and back again. And, of course, there is actually the cruise around the world in 99 days—the cruise of a lifetime.