

WARNING:
Don't Take a
Cruise
Without This
Information!

**Helpful Tips for First Time and Seasoned
Cruisers...**

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We know from personal experience that before you take your first cruise you have a lot of questions. Where to go? What to take? What to be aware of? What NOT to do? (We all like to have a greater understanding and control, don't we)?

This report has been prepared to provide important information regarding cruising, one of the most affordable and value-packed travel experiences. We hope this report will help you gain comfort and confidence in handling the various situations you may encounter on your cruise experience.

We would love to hear from you if you have any questions after reading this report. We will personally answer your question. And who knows, your question (and our answer) just might make it into the next edition of this special report!

Our goal is help you customize your travel experience to fulfill your dreams and exceed your expectations.

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GUIDE FOR FIRST TIME CRUISERS

Cruising is a good vacation value and a unique travel experience. When you add all of the expenses of a land vacation, cruising is one of the most economical types of travel experiences. Cruising has an all-inclusive price that covers accommodations, **multiple dining options, entertainment, nightlife activities and fitness activities.**

PASSPORT

Passports are required for all travel outside the United States. You may secure your passport through the Post Office. To obtain a passport you will need an original birth certificate with the State's Seal affixed, a passport picture and passport fee (approximately \$60). These documents are sent to the State Department. You should receive your passport within 60-90 days. Your Official Birth Certificate will be returned to you with your passport.

EMBARKING

Getting on the ship is a multiple step process.

1. Check in on line and print your boarding documents and luggage tags.
2. Tag your luggage with the tags provided by the Cruise line or downloaded via your computer
3. Upon arrival at the Cruise Terminal leave your tagged bags with a Terminal Porter who will transfer your luggage to the ship
4. Arrive at least 2 hours before Sailing time
5. Upon entering the Cruise Terminal you will go through security check
6. Enter the check in process at the Cruise Terminal where your documents will be verified, credit card swiped and a special Credit Card/Cabin Key will be issued for your use on the ship. You will not use any cash money on board the ship except in the Casino. All charges will be placed on your Credit Card/Cabin Key.
7. Prior to going on board the ship, you will stop once or twice for boarding pictures
8. Upon boarding, you may want to find your cabin location, before going to lunch and taking a tour of the ship

ABOUT THE SHIP

Each ship has multiple decks some for entertainment, dining, activities, and others for accommodations. The left side of the ship when facing the front of the ship is "**PORT**" while the right side of the ship is "**STARBOARD**" while facing the front of the ship.. The front section of the ship is the "**BOW**" while the back section of the ships is "**AFT**".

STATEROOM

There are several stateroom types (Inside, Ocean View, Balcony and Suites). Many first time cruisers prefer an outside cabin with a view. However, you may spend so little time in your stateroom and decide the cost difference could be better used on Shore Excursions or Spa Services. The average Inside Stateroom is 185 sq ft. The layout features a twin/king bed configuration and ample closet space for two guests. The bathroom has a shower along with a complimentary basket of toiletries.

FITNESS/SPA

All ships have a Fitness Center/Spa. Here you can enjoy Stairmasters rowing & hydraulic weight machines, elliptical walkers, stationary bikes or treadmills. There is a jogging track on the one of the top Decks (15 times around equals a mile). Saunas and Steam rooms are available for both women and men. Spa and Salon services are also available.

CUISINE AND DINING OPTIONS

Once on board you will be treated to a Welcome aboard Menu. Tea, juice, water and coffee are complimentary. Sodas, wine, beer and alcoholic beverages are separately charged to your Sign & Sail Card. The usual dining options include the Buffet, one or more elegantly appointed dining Rooms, Specialty Restaurants, Self-serve ice cream and frozen yogurt stations, 24 hour Room Service, and Specialty Restaurants. A Cover charge will be assessed when dining in a Specialty Restaurant and reservation and jackets for men are required.

TIPPING

Daily gratuities are \$10 – \$12 per passenger per day (depending on the Cruise Line) which the Cruise Line allocates to the Dining Room Staff, your stateroom steward and .50 for the service in the alternate dining room. You may pre-pay this charge when booking or it will be automatically added to your Sail & Sign Card. A 15 percent gratuity is automatically added to all beverages tabs. Gratuities for room service, spa, casino and other staff are at the passenger's discretion.

ENTERTAINMENT

Along with a variety of featured entertainers (magicians, comedians, jugglers, ventriloquists, and various types of musicians), Carnival's main entertainment is its Vegas-style show. This multi-million production includes two singers, five male and nine female dancers, along with special guests. The costumes alone cost a half millions bucks.

ATTIRE

During the day casual attire is the norm, but no shorts or jeans are permitted in the dining room after 6:00 p.m. On some cruises there may be one or two formal nights, but most men wear dark suits rather than tuxedos.

DEBARKING

The two procedures that are used for getting off the ship include:

A. Carrying your own luggage

When you use this disembarking procedure, you are responsible for taking your own luggage through the disembarking process. This is the fastest way to leave the ship, but you will encounter congestion and other guest luggage as you move to the departure level of the ship.

B. Luggage Picked up at your stateroom door

The alternative to carrying your own luggage is to have it picked up the last night of your cruise. You will be issued colored baggage tags which are used to organize an orderly

deboarding process. Place the colored on your luggage and set it outside your stateroom by the specified time. Some time during the late evening cruise staff will pick up your luggage and upon docking, deliver it to the Baggage Area in the Cruise Terminal. When you luggage Tag Color is announced you will proceed to the debarkation area. You will pick up your luggage in the Cruise Terminal/ **It is extremely important to remember, to leave out sufficient clothing for your departure.**

...OK, now that we have the basics covered, where shall we go?...

THE TOP 10 CRUISE DESTINATIONS

The Top 10 Cruise destination rankings, according to well respected travel authorities, are shown below. The Cruise ranking for the top 10 cruise destinations are based on the quality of the cruise experience, and not on popularity.

Alaska

According to some UK cruise writers and industry experts, Alaska has become the world's greatest cruise destination. Alaska is the place for you if you enjoy exploring ice-tipped mountains, getting up and personal with magnificent glaciers, hiking on trails or just sampling the rustic life there. The cruise season for Alaska is May to September. However the weather can be nippy the first and last month of the season, but the cruise cost may cost less.

Galapagos

Observe unique wildlife. Best time Mid April to mid-May (clear skies, warm weather and calm seas)

Antarctica

This destination is special because you will see soaring glacier cliffs and icebergs. Best time would be mid-December to late February. Cruise ships do not operate during the winter months (March to September).

South Pacific

This destination includes the lush tropical paradises of Polynesian and Fiji Islands. The South Pacific covers a broad area. The large number of days at sea between islands is not for everyone.

Mediterranean

Many exciting areas are included in European Cruises. You will get to see Venice, the French Riviera, Italy, Spain and other ports in many countries. Some ports of call can be packed with tourists in summer. The best time to go is May to September. The worst time is November to March. If you love history, this is the cruise for you.

Caribbean

In the Caribbean, you can visit many different nations' islands and the trips between ports are relatively short. The weather is nearly perfect every day in January and February. Mid- June to early December is the hurricane threat period.

Hawaiian Islands

The tropical lushness is inviting and relaxing while the green-clad volcanic cliffs dropping down to the sea is breathtaking. A cruise from the USA mainland is a long trip. Almost anytime is a good time to visit Hawaii.

Baltic Sea

You will visit a smorgasbord of Scandinavian cities (Copenhagen, Helsinki, Stockholm and Tallinn) plus St. Petersburg in Russia. June to August is the best time and it cold in the winter.

Mexico

The Mexican Riviera offers thousand miles of beautiful beaches and is convenient and accessible to west coast travelers. November to April is less humid and not quite as hot as the summer period.

MOST POPULAR CRUISE DESTINATIONS

One of the best ways to spend a vacation is taking a cruise. Many people are apprehensive about being on water and feel that a cruise ship is unsafe. Cruise provides an affordable getaway and it mostly all inclusive. You don't have to worry about dining, entertainment, exercise in the fitness center, enjoying the nightlife, relaxing by the pool. If you are considering a Cruise, it is a great idea to know the popular destinations that you can cruise to.

The Caribbean:

Caribbean cruises are one of the most popular cruise destinations for travelers. The Caribbean consists of over 7000 islands in total. When you board a Caribbean cruise, you can expect to see some of the most memorable sights of your life including spectacular beaches, amazing rain forests and unbelievably beautiful islands.

All Caribbean destinations are equally stunning, however southern Caribbean probably have a slight edge over east and west Caribbean. Needless to say Caribbean is a must for anybody who is into cruising. Choosing where to sail – the eastern, western or southern Caribbean – is one of the first decisions made when choosing a cruise vacation. Listed in the table below are some of the “HOT” Caribbean destinations.

Southern Caribbean

Eastern Caribbean

Western Caribbean

Antigua	Bahamas	Jamaica
Aruba	St. Thomas	Cayman Islands
Barbados	St. John (Us Virgin Islands)	Belize
	Puerto Rico	Cozumel, Mexico
Curacao	St. Maartan	Dominican Republic
Dominica		Costa Rica
Martinique		Key West , Florida
San Juan, Puerto Rico		
St. Lucia		

Most cruise ships sailing to **Eastern Caribbean** on a 7-night itinerary, embarks from Florida Ports of Call. The islands are smaller, relatively close together, and shore excursions tend to be more geared to beach or water activities. The Eastern Caribbean Cruise will allow more time for shopping and enjoying fantastic beaches.

Cruise ships sailing to the **Western Caribbean** depart from Florida, New Orleans or Texas. Ports of call on the Western Caribbean are farther away from each other, which take longer to get to each port destination, so you will have more time at sea and less time in port. The shore excursions will be more varied. You can explore ancient Mayan ruins, hike the rain forests, and go snorkeling or scuba diving in some unforgettable locations.

The Mexican Riviera:

The Mexican Riviera with Ports of Call to Cabo San Lucas, La Paz, Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta makes a perfect cruise destination with its long miles of beautiful beaches and scenery.

Mediterranean Destinations:

Mediterranean Sea has been one of the most heavily trafficked shipping routes throughout history. It is one of the most popular cruises available. The Mediterranean region is well known for its tourist attractions. Mediterranean cruises are preferred both by first time travelers or the more frequent ones because of the diversity they offer. France, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Monaco and Dubrovnik are some of the most popular destinations in the Mediterranean region.

AREA	Ports of Call	
Baltic Sea	Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm and St. Petersburg	
Western Europe	London, Paris and Amsterdam, as well as the wine country of France and Spain.	
Western Mediterranean	Italy, Spain and France	
Eastern Mediterranean	Italy, the Greek Islands and Turkey.	
Trans-Atlantic	May visit such places as Bermuda, the Azores or the Canary Island. The Trans-Atlantic for most cruise lines is seasonal repositioning between the Caribbean and Europe and usually happens at the end of April or May, ships end their winter season in the Caribbean and shift somewhere in Europe for the Summer. Then in September or October they will return to the Caribbean	

Alaska:

An Alaska Cruise is just awesome because of the indescribable beauty, glaciers and animals. The icy majesty found on an Alaska cruise is what draws people from around the world.

... Have you decided where you are going? Good. Now, I am sure you don't want to "make any mistakes." Here is a quick list of things you SHOULD be careful to NEVER do on a cruise...

TOP 10 THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD NEVER DO ON A CRUISE

1. **Arrive at the Cruise Terminal without Passport.**

Passports are required for all travel outside the USA.

“Don’t Leave Home without it”

2. **Take Food onboard in your Carry on Luggage.**

Any food in carry on luggage must be consumed before boarding. If storage space is available wines will be stored and returned at the end of the cruise.

3. **Arrive late from your Shore Excursion and find the ship leaving.**

You may have to fly to meet the ship at its next Port of Call.

4. **Stuff yourself when there is ample food everywhere.**

You’ll feel miserable during you cruise and may not enjoy your travel experience.

Also, you may not be able to lose the pounds gained.

5. **Doing something “ILLEGAL OR DUMB” on the ship and thinking there are no consequences.**

If caught shoplifting from a ship boutique, you may be kicked off the ship at the next port with passport and luggage. Cruise security authorities may hold passengers in a cell and turn you over to port authorities at the next port.

6. **On the last cruise night forget to leave out clothing before you place your luggage outside your stateroom for pick up.**

It is devastating and embarrassing to find yourself without enough clothes.

7. **Arrive 1 hr late for 6:00 pm Dinner Seating and expect great service.**

Most formal dining rooms on board have designated early or late meal times. If you happen to be late for some reason, you may choose to enjoy dining in the buffet or at a specialty restaurant.

8. **Board a cruise ship with outstanding warrants.**

If you have outstanding warrants, Law Enforcement will greet you at the ship when you return to your departure port.

9. **Attempt to use “CASH” instead of the Ship’s issued Credit Card.**

Cash is not used for purchases (beverages or merchandise) on board the ship, except in the Casino.

10. **Flush the toilet while seated.**

You may experience a serious injury.