

Contemplating Taking a Cruise? Here are Some Myths and Facts.

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By Susan Dunn

Contemplating Taking a Cruise? Here are Some Myths and Facts. by Susan Dunn, author of

"How to Get to Present on a Cruise"

"A cruise has been proven to be good for your health," announces the captain on the RCI at the end of the cruise." I am nodding my happy and relaxed head in agreement.

Many of us who take cruises think that's true. I haven't been able to find any documentation, but ocean passage has long been considered the traditional cure for anything from heartbreak to consumption.

There's something about staring at the ocean, and being rocked to sleep at night (barely noticeable with today's stabilizers, but it's happening), and the xtreme quietude of the well-chosen inside cabin.

If you've never cruised, you've probably heard lots of rumors. Here are some myths about cruising, and the facts.

1. It's too expensive.

How about 4 days from Galveston to the Caribbean for \$299? And because it's a package, you can budget. Included in the base price are all meals, your room, and all activities on board, and you can calculate the tips (and to me, the recommended gratuity is at least half what they should get). It is NOT cheap to drink and gamble (that's how they make their money – doh) and expenditures on shore excursion and personal services such as massages can mount. You can find cheaper shore excursions negotiating yourself with the cab drivers who line the ports waiting to offer you a better deal. There are also "serendipities" such as massages for \$20 an hour on a Russian River Cruise (Uniworld). Cheapest rates BTW are between the end of August and up to Christmas, but also many "last minute" deals. Get your passport ready so you can take dvantage of these specials.

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### 2. Takes too long.

Cruises come in all lengths, from 2 days (the Cruise to Nowhere) to months.

### 3. They don't go anywhere I'd want to go.

That's hard to believe. According to ACLI, cruises visit 1,800 ports worldwide and go practically everywhere accessible by water. The Caribbean, Bahamas, Alaska, Bermuda, Europe, Hawaii, Tahiti, the Orient and more. And don't forget the River cruises - the Volga, the Danube, the Mississippi...

### 4. I'm not free during the month of \_\_\_\_.

Cruises go out all the time! The Caribbean is wonderful year `round, but some locations have restrictions. According to the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA), you can only cruise Alaska between May and September; to Europe between April and November; to Bermuda between April and October; the Panama Canal, between September and April.

Don't miss local specialties such as the famous White Nights in Russia – end of summer.

### 5. It's too risky because of hurricanes.

Official Hurricane Season is June 1 - November 31st. That's half the year. The CLIA states that "ships are equipped with state-of-the-art weather equipment that keeps the crew fully aware of a storm's position and if there's any danger, they simply change course." Personally, I cruised during Isabel, and it was safer than being anywhere on land in the vicinity. We changed course and outran it.

My friend Ken, who "cruised" during Vietnam says they would dip in and out of a hurricane in order to wash the ship.

Your Captain knows what he's doing and, you know how it goes, with a trillion dollar ship at stake ... Of course you may end up in Belize instead of Grand Cayman, but you'll be out of harm's way.

### 6. I'm not sure I'll choose the best cruiseline.

Having cruised on several lines, I'll tell you they were all good experiences and each had its pluses and minuses. Go online and look around. Consider price, ports, ships (size, age, accommodations), and passengers (number, interests, ages, etc.) I've never spoken with anyone who'd been on more than one line who had a "favorite".

### 7. Those ships are too big oo small, the atmosphere is too casual oo fancy, it's all boozing and gambling/all high brow culture and museums.

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Cruise ships come in all sizes, from under 220' to over 1000', carrying anywhere from 100 to over 2600 cruisers. Some are casual, some old-world luxury. Some have endless activities like at a resort, while others focus on culture. Many offer enrichment lectures (I have served as one many times) with topics from Renaissance art, to self improvement, to strategic financial planning.

8. You get treated differently if you can't afford 'first class.'

Doesn't exist any more. All passengers can use all facilities. The price of the cruise is based primarily on the cabin size and location, and no one knows which is yours when you're out and about. Dining is the same, and all services just as courteous no matter where your cabin is.

9. It's too complicated.

Ask someone who's actually cruised to explain to you what it's like in reality. For instance, dress is mostly casual, shore excursions are easy to set up, there are multiple dining options (you can even

avoid "formal night" if you like and still eat!, you can get laundry and dry cleaning, there are activities for your children, your bags are delivered to your cabin door ... to me, cruising has all the benefits of a trip without about 90% of the hassle - no parking problems, no need to pack and unpack, lots of guidance and people to help you, and you can always drink because the Captain is always driving.

On our recent River Cruise in Russia (Uniworld), we were absolutely "pampered." Everything was taken care of; no stress. For instance at the Hermitage, with the lines stretching to eternity, we were ushered in a side door. Also incredibly healthy meals.

10. All you do on a cruise is eat.

The "average" weight gain on a cruise is 8 lbs., but I have lost weight on some cruises. It's a matter of choice because there are more healthy food options available than you'd find in an onshore restaurant, exercise programs and equipment, and rigorous excursion options. Make smart choices and you can come back more fit than when you left, both physically and mentally.

(c)Susan Dunn ( <http://www.susandunn.cc> ), a coach, is a regular speaker for cruiselines. She is the author of "How to Get to Present on a Cruise", <http://www.webstrategies.cc/acruise.html> which gives you explicit tips on how to get chosen for this great opportunity and how to succeed once you're chosen. [Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for FREE self improvement eZine.

### **Plan Your Cruise For Convenience And Fun**

**By Barney Garcia**

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In order to ensure that you have fun and relax on your cruise, it is essential that you plan your cruise meticulously. You go on a cruise to have fun on water. The cool sea breeze and the spectacular view of the vast expanse of water in front of you can really intoxicate you with pleasure. Since you spend so much on a cruise, you should ensure that you enjoy every minute of it. Planning is the first thing you should focus on if you are going on a cruise.

**Pick the Best Cruise Liner** The first step in planning a cruise is to choose the best cruise line and the destination. Study the offerings of the various cruise lines and base your decision on what you really want from the cruise. It is also important to decide the duration of your cruise.

You can choose from any of the world famous cruises such as the panama cruise, Mediterranean cruise, carnival cruise, Caribbean cruise, Europe cruise, Alaska cruise, and Norwegian cruise.

**Check with People Who Have Gone On Cruise** Check out with other people who have experience in such cruises and then decide on the cruise line. You should also check the facilities being offered by them and whether these are in consonance with your aspirations. The next step is to check if the cruise that you select operates to the destination that you want to visit.

**Booking the Cruise** Having selected the cruise line and the cruise, you should make the booking for the cruise either through a travel agent, or through online sources. You should also select the type of room that you would like to have and book the same with the cruise booking. If you want to avail of shore excursions or other off-ship activities you should also book these early.

A good planning will really stand you in good stead and you can have all the fun in the world on your cruise. A good planning will ensure that you come rejuvenated from the cruise and ready to face the realities of life once again.

Barney Garcia writes about many different topics. He is a proud contributing author and invites you to his websites.

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