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Cruising With Children - Cruise Tips & Answers To All Your Questions

By Mary Hanna

Are there onboard activities for children on cruises? Absolutely! A very high percentage of those cruising are families. Here are cruise tips and cruise reviews on the cruise lines for your comparison.

Families with young children are welcomed and encouraged to cruise. In fact, certain cruise lines cater to young people, offering cartoon characters the whole family knows and loves! Many have special supervised programs and special menus, t-shirt and face painting, scavenger hunts, video game contests, film festivals, dance lessons, shore excursions and much more.

Children quickly adapt to shipboard life, and you will feel comfortable knowing where your children are and what they are doing. So come cruising with your family. You'll find it to be a rewarding experience for everyone.

Cruising is a wonderful family experience where you can come together and still have separate activities during the day and night.

Families love cruising. Children's programs, kid-friendly menus and tours of the ship will keep your children happy, while affording you some time alone.

On Cruise lines with full youth programs, parents can plan their vacation knowing they will be able to relax and enjoy themselves while their children are being well taken care of, making new friends, and having fun.

Carnival Cruise Lines: The Fun Ships feature play areas with spin- and sand-art machines, video walls for movies and cartoons, and at least three swimming pools and a water slide. Dining options include children's menus and 24-hour pizza and ice cream. Babysitting services are available.

Celebrity Cruises: In a Family Cruising Program, kids are separated into four age groups for summer fun. Among the activities is Celebrity Science Journeys, a hands-on, age-appropriate program that encourages children to learn about science and nature.

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Costa Cruises: Costa Kids Club offers scavenger hunts, Italian language lessons, "coketail" parties and karaoke. Costa Teens Club has activities for ages 15–17. Caribbean cruises offer "Parents Night Out," where children are supervised during evening activities.

Crystal Cruises: On the Crystal Harmony's 12–day Alaska cruises, children under the age of 12 sail free when sharing the stateroom with two adults. The Junior Activities program for summer cruises offers a playroom, teen video arcade, games and activities. The line's Cotillion program teaches kids such social skills as dancing and etiquette.

Cunard Line: The Queen Mary 2 has children's facilities for three age groups. Children's Tea is served in the Kings Court. There is a children–only Minnows Splash Pool, Children's Disco, ball pool and Xboxes in the Zone and Play Zone.

Disney Cruise Line: Children's programs in five age groups include a kids–only pool, teen club and activities on Disney's private island. Adults whose kids are involved in these programs can enjoy an adults–only pool, night time entertainment district, secluded beach with massage cabanas and a specialty Italian restaurant.

Holland America Line: The premium line is expanding Club HAL facilities on its entire fleet to match those on Vista ships; the project is set to be completed by 2006. Half Moon Cay, the line's private island, offers such new features as a waterpark area for kids and adults.

Norwegian Cruise Line: The "Kid's Crew" program has expanded hours and a year–round program for children ages 2–5. Kids 2–17 enjoy a four–tiered lineup of supervised parties, scavenger hunts, wacky cooking classes, tee–shirt painting and onshore activities.

Princess Cruises: California Science Center and National Wildlife Federation programming are part of the extensive kids' program on Princess. Placemats feature children's menu choices as well as interactive games and facts about the ship or destinations.

Radisson Seven Seas Cruises: A Club Mariner (ages 6–17) program is offered on many voyages including summer cruises on Seven Seas Voyager in the Baltic, Seven Seas Mariner in Alaska and Seven Seas Navigator in Bermuda.

Royal Caribbean International: The Mariner of the Seas offers more children's options, among them the Challenger's Arcade, scavenger hunts, sports tournaments and art and science workshops. Teenagers can hang out at The Fuel nightclub, The Living Room or The Back Deck private teen deck.

Following are some basic questions you should ask your travel agent and/or find out from the cruise line when selecting a cruise for a family with children:

1. Basics

- a. What are the age restrictions for the cruise line?
- b. Do my children's ages qualify them for a discount?

- c. Are the special activities and child care/teen center available at the time we wish to cruise?
- d. Will my children find the ports of call interesting? If not, is there enough to keep them happy on the ship?
- e. Are discounts available for a 3rd and/or 4th person in our cabin?
- f. If there a special place or playroom dedicated for children? For teens?

2. Cabins

- a. Are cribs and/or day beds or cots available to put in our room? If so, is there a rental fee?
- b. Are adjoining cabins available?
- c. How big are the cabins?
- d. Are guardrails available for bunk beds?

3. Dining

- a. Does the menu offer food my children will eat?
- b. If not, are pizza and burgers and hot dogs and such available?
- c. Is early seating available or does the ship have "open" seating so that we can eat at a time close to when the children normally dine?

4. Activities

- a. What activities are planned for children?
- b. Is there a children's-only pool available on the ship?
- c. Will there be special movies or live entertainment that children will enjoy?
- d. Are there any shore excursions scheduled that are geared toward children?
- e. Is there a babysitting service available? What Hours and how much?

5. Child Care Center or Teen Center

- a. What are the requirements for placing a child in the center such as age, vaccinations, or potty training?
- b. How are the children's areas supervised? Is the teen center supervised?
- c. What are the hours, costs, and restrictions on the centers?
- d. What security methods are used when a child is picked up from the center?
- e. What is the ratio of children to adult staff in the children's center?

Answer these questions and you will be able to choose the Cruise Line that is right for you and your family.

Happy Cruising!

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Cruise In The Caribbean With Caribbean Cruise Lines

By Louise Wasa

The weather is one of the most beloved features of the Caribbean Islands. You can expect to have the perfect weather here almost the year around. The best way to enjoy the Caribbean's lovely weather is to travel with a Caribbean Cruise Line.

Yes, you can always take a plane to the Caribbean if you are in a hurry. That is the quickest and probably the cheapest way to reach your island destination. If you want to combine transportation with leisure views of the islands from the ocean a Caribbean cruise is best. There is no better way to enjoy an island paradise than from the deck of a luxury cruise line ship. It also great to unpack once and still reach many destinations.

About two million persons take a Caribbean cruise line each year to enjoy the cruising, the beautiful beaches and a warm weather. The cruises are very popular also because of the activities and amenities that are available on board. Most of these ships cruises and make stops at various islands along the way and that gives you a chance to enjoy several aspects of the islands all for the price of one.

If you decide to take a Caribbean travel cruise you should take some time and plan ahead. Not only because of the price as a Caribbean cruise are on the expensive side compared with all inclusive and other packages. If you plan well and choose the right season you can get a great deal with many of the Caribbean cruise lines. For example, cabins may get fully booked months before the Caribbean travel cruise is scheduled to depart. If you want to make it your chosen cruise, you should book early. You can also work out the details of your own Caribbean travel cruise through an online travel agent.

On the internet you can check for several great cruise lines. For example, if you are taking a Caribbean cruise line with your kids, you should stick to the Disney cruise because if anything, this is guaranteed to have activities designed specifically for children. When traveling as a couple, then look for one of those romance-themed cruises that provide you with a quiet atmosphere, like the Princess cruise for

instance. On the other hand, if you want to sail on board the most luxurious ships, then look to liners known for their top notch Caribbean travel cruise services, such as Crystal, Silver Sea or the new Queen Mary II.

Louise Wasa always writes about valuable news & reviews. A related resource is

<http://the-caribbean-cruiseline.info/>

Further information can be found at

<http://more-on-home.info>

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