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How To Book Your First Cruise

By Mary Hanna

For those who are thinking about getting on board a cruise ship, here are five considerations for your first cruise.

1. Cruise lines have distinct personalities. It's good to know which crowd each line caters to. Discriminating travelers pay a premium to indulge aboard such luxury lines as Radisson Seven Seas and Silversea. More affordable luxury can be found aboard Crystal. Holland America ships are refined and exude class. Princess is both posh and pioneering. Disney beckons the whole family. Carnival boasts a fleet of "fun ships".

2. Timing is everything. The time of year you cruise dictates a lot. Cruises during summer and holiday school breaks will always have more children and families. Booking cruises well in advance of their sailing date can often translate into significant savings. Sailing in a region during its slow season (i.e. the Caribbean in summer) is usually less expensive as well.

3. Ship size matters. Smaller ships (500 passengers or less) provide an intimate environment that often features highly personalized service and unique itineraries. Medium-size ships (between 500 and 1,000 passengers) have a fair amount of onboard activity and entertainment without the volume of people found aboard a mega ship. Large ships (1,000 passengers or more) cater to travelers who crave great, diverse amounts of organized entertainment, high-tech facilities and plenty of new friends.

4. Different regions have a different focus. Canada/New England cruises are perfect for exploring the historic towns along the east coast. Nature lovers fall in love the first time they cruise Alaska. The Mediterranean is perfect for diving into other cultures. Adventure abounds along the Panama Canal. Fun and sun can always be found in Hawaii and the Caribbean.

5. Voyages come in all lengths. According to the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), nearly one-third of all cruises are out to sea for five days or less. Short trips are economical, great for first-time cruisers who want to test the waters and increasingly popular. Most trips last a week or so, but some last as long as a year. More often than not, the shorter the cruise is, the younger the crowd will be.

It's not hard to find the best price. Just a little of your time is required.

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- * Determine what cruise line you may be interested in.
- * Visit a local travel agent and pick up several cruise brochures.
- * Find the area that you want to cruise.
- * Often, a good quote that you'll receive will be 50–60% off brochure prices.

Royal Caribbean, Carnival, NCL, Celebrity, and Princess are the most popular First Time Cruiser's choices.

Cabins are not all alike. Depending on the ship, they range from just bigger than closet-sized spaces without windows (commonly referred to as inside cabins) to apartment-sized suites with verandahs and hot tubs. And, of course, they are priced accordingly.

When you have decided what cruise line you would like to go on,

- * You need to decide what ship to go on.

- * Decide the type of cabin that you would like to stay in.

- o Inside cabins (no window) are the least expensive

- o Outside cabins will have a window. After that, come the

- o Balcony cabins. These are very desirable and will cost a little more. If you have one, you may never want anything else.

- * For example you can get breakfast through room service (room service is always free on a cruise) and enjoy it on your own private balcony.

- o After the balcony cabins come the suites. They always have balconies and are the largest cabins on the ship. They usually come with a larger bath with a tub.

Avoid close proximity to possible noisy locations such as the engine room, disco and show lounge.

When you decide all the details of your cruise, but before you choose your cabin, tell your Travel Agent you want to book the "CATEGORY OR Better" which is called an open booking by category. You have a better chance of an upgrade within that type of cabin (Outside, Ocean view, Balcony or Suite) or a jump up in category. You will NEVER be down graded by the Cruise Lines! But, when receiving an upgrade find out where the cabin is located. It might be a higher category but you don't want to be under the basketball court.

If you must have a specific ship, sailing date or accommodations, book as early as possible to avoid disappointment. What sells out first: Christmas/New Years, Presidents Week in February, Spring Break, Easter Week and July/August sailings when the children are out of school. To get the space you want on the cruise and necessary air arrangements, don't hesitate to book 9 to 10 months in advance if possible. The remainder of February, March and April sailings usually starts to fill up once the weather starts to turn cold in the Northeast and Midwest. You can usually find bargains both in advance and at the last minute. But if you want a specific type of cabin, you may consider booking as early as possible. If you're flexible, consider waiting for a "deal" to show up.

Cruise travel agencies will often book blocks of cabins from the cruise lines. An agent that has one of those blocks for your sailing date can give you a better rate than one that does not.

Now that you know how to book your cruise, set sail!

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Plan Your Cruise For Convenience And Fun

By Barney Garcia

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

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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.

<http://www.cruises-for-you.info>

and

<http://www.cruises-galore.info>

and

<http://www.perfect-resorts.info/sitemap.php>



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