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Pack List for a Cruise—and other Travel Tips

By Joan Dann

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What you bring on a cruise depends a great deal of the kind of ship it is.....casual or elegant.....and your plans for "fine dining".

If you are sailing a ship with all the elegant evenings, this takes special forethought on your part. Even though they say that its two formal evenings, three informal and two casual.....you are sitting in such elegant surroundings and eating a wonderful 5 course meal.....you may want to look your best ! Consider that this will be like a fabulous dinner party every evening ! When I pack for cruises my husband asks me if I had left anything in my closet.....well.....I wear absolutely everything I pack.

Here are some of my thoughts.....some ships provide robes, beach towels (both on deck and if you are going ashore to the beach) and hair dryers...all depending on your level of accomodation. Check on this for your particular accomodations.....and if they are provided then leave these items at home.....that's half a suitcase right there !

Ladies——If you are planning on "fine dining"———Think thru 7 wonderful evenings of dinners and cocktails beforehand. Think Black !! Black or cream flowy pants or skirts topped with several different jackets, dressy dinner jackets, big satiny tops.....if you pack separates you will have so much more milage. Bring several evenings handbags.....a nice selection of jewelry.....several different pair of dressy shoes.....several bright colored Pashmina-type shawls are PERFECT.....lots of color over your basics.....different little accessories to mix and match. These little things that do not take up much room but will make all the difference. Remember.....half the beauty of cruising is that you have these elegant evenings. Basically.....if you think you want it.....bring

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it. O a recent cruise, I brought 4 jackets with me of different colors and fabrics.....and really did not feel it was enough. In addition to dinner, we had lunch in the nice dining room three times, breakfast there twice and High Tea one afternoon. All worked over basic bottoms. For casual clothes, you will want fun things.....some wrap skirts.....bathing suit and coverup, flip-flops.....fitness workout clothes.....

Kids-----Remember no shorts or jeans in the nice dining rooms ! I have found that kids really love these nice evenings. Where else can they have 5

courses of anything they want ?? Shrimp cocktails and lobster always a hit. Teenage boy still hungry ?? What else would he like ? Another lobster tail ? (Take lots of pictures--this can be great family time !)

Men---Quite Easy ! (Of course !) Tuxedo --optional.....but very nice for the formal evenings. (Certain ships it is not optional) You may consider bringing two tuxedo shirts. Navy or basic blazer and dress pants...dress shirts...neckties....dress shoes.....khaki pants....knit shirts.....basic shorts....workout clothes...casual shoes..sneakers...bathing suit. Hawaiian type shirt for fun ! Discuss with your agent. So much depends on the kind of cruise ship you are sailing ..and your personal dining plans. Overall--plan on dressing for "Country club elegance".

You can check two bags with the airlines and carry on one more.....my carry on was a garment bag and a very full large purse. Bring some sort of granola bars with you on the plane.....airport and runway delays are all too common and food is no longer served onboard as it once was.

Other Good Basic tips.....

**Pack a pad of Post-It notes to leave messages for your cabin steward (you get to know him !), family, and shipboard friends.

**Have plenty of one-dollar bills handy for tipping airport skycaps and porters at the pier.

**Don't pack photo film in checked luggage as new airport screening equipment could ruin it. Put it in your carry-on instead. Even if you don't think you'll need them, bring along extra camera batteries and change them before you think the old ones are "dead." Don't forget film !

**Put a rubber band around wallets in your back pocket will inhibit pickpockets. Some "ports of call" have large pick-pocket communities....unfortunately.

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**Toss a few empty plastic bags into your suitcase. You may need them later to pack dirty or damp clothes.

Tap water on your ship is perfectly safe to drink; purchasing bottled water is only necessary if you prefer the taste.

**Tuck fabric softener sheets between garments as you pack to keep clothing fresh during travels.

**Bring your own travel alarm clock; most staterooms do not have them.

**If you live in a colder climate are traveling to a warm weather cruise...When you put your summer wardrobe away for the winter, set aside the casual outfits, sandals, swimwear, and sleepwear you want to wear on your cruise and store them in the suitcase you plan to

use. You'll be at least half packed and won't be hunting down an outfit or a pair of shoes later. You will also free up some drawer and/or closet space at the same time. Hang your evening clothes in a separate area of your closet and pack them when you're ready to leave for your trip

**Pre-address stick-on labels for postcards to the folks back home & you won't have to carry along a bulky address book.

**Make two copies of your passport, driver's license, and credit cards before leaving home—in addition to your Cruise Documents, and Trip Travel Insurance. Leave one set of copies in a safe place on your ship. If the ship's purser holds your passport (which is often the case, to expedite clearing the ship in foreign ports), carry the passport copy ashore with you. Leave the other copies with a friend or family member at home.

**Binoculars ———lightweight, small ones.....particularly for Alaska, Hawaii, Europe !

**Print cards with your name, address, phone number, & email address to share with new friends. Having your cards handy sure beats hunting for pens & scribbling on scraps of paper to swap addresses. Fun, inexpensive, colorful cards can be ordered online from a company called www.vistaprint.com. (Allow plenty of time to order and receive these !)

** Leave any paperback novels you've finished for the crew library. You'll have more room in your suitcase and crewmembers will have fresh reading material—they will really appreciate this !

**Don't forget to pack and USE your sunscreen. Why take the chance of a

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nasty sunburn ruining a great cruise vacation? Protect your skin from injury and aging. Throw in something for Sunburn too. People have a way of overdoing on vacation.

****Check the balance of your on-board account before the end of your cruise. Straighten out any discrepancies immediately and avoid a long line at the Purser's Desk that last morning after your final bill arrives (try to do the final the last night...try to beat the rush !)**

****You are all dressed for dinner and you look fabulous !! Have a family portrait taken to preserve the memory. There's no obligation to purchase any photos you don't care for.**

****and my all time favorite.....depending on what type of trip, ship, elegance level etc etc.....bring t-shirts you might want to work out in.....sleep in.....tour in..that you will wear and leave behind as they are dirty.....this will give you room in your suitcase for purchases while traveling.**

Joan Dann can be reached via her website at www.Dann-Online.com and email her at dann@dann-online.com She is President of Great Explorations ! Travel and a Cruise Expert. She is also Co-Owner of Dann Mens Clothing (www.Dann-Online.com) with husband Dennis and has spent many years in the Men's and Womens Clothing Industries as well as the Luggage and Leathergoods Industry.

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

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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.

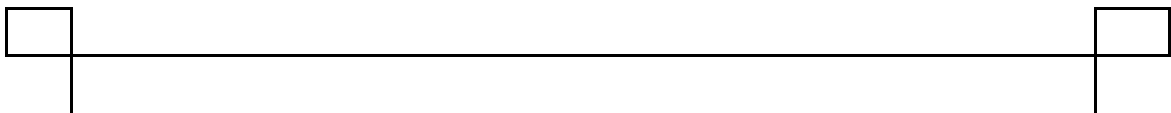
Barney Garcia writes about many different topics. He is a proud contributing author and invites you to his websites.

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