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What Singles Should Know About Taking a Cruise

By Susan Dunn

What Singles Should Know About Taking a Cruise by Susan Dunn, The EQ Coach

Singles are underrepresented on cruises, but unless meeting someone is the sole purpose of your vacation, a cruise can be your best choice if you keep these things in mind.

The Carnival line is the only cruiseline that offers a "singles" rate. The others offer you, but you have to take a stranger for a roomy, or pay double. (Did I miss something? Is that a singles rate?)

Some of the cruise lines (Radisson, Costa, Cunard) offer gentleman dance hosts. If you're a single male, you travel for pennies and it's your "job" to meet and dance with the single women on the ship, 8 pm to 1 am nightly. If you're female, there are 4-5 men aboard, proficient in waltz, rumba, jitterbug, cha cha, polka, and congenial conversation who are "on call" every night to dance with you.

Choose a large table for dining. It will water down the effect of any uncongenial dining companions. Ask to change tables if you need to. If you like the day activities, take the late seating. If you're hot for the night-life, take the early seating.

Shore excursions booked through the ship are safe and scheduled, but cost more. Most ports have cabbies lined up waiting to take you to the same places for less. (We got a 3-hour tour of St. Maarten for \$10 pp instead of \$50pp.) However, think twice before you hop into a cab alone. Try and hook up with fellow passengers, even dance hosts.

If you can avoid the gambling and liquor, a cruise can be very affordable. Cruise lines make their money off the gambling and liquor. That's why they can feed you fabulous food 24 hours a day at those low last-minute rates. Sail from a port that doesn't require airfare, and you can live in luxury for around \$80 a day. You couldn't stay in a hotel and eat steak and lobster for that.

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Cruises have been proven to be good for our health. For instance, don't you think at least 25% of our daily stress comes from car hassles? On a ship there's no parking problems, traffic jams, or road rage to interfere with your relaxation.

Shopping? Wait till the end of the cruise to shop onboard; they reduce prices. Check with friends or the ship's shopping expert on what to buy where. Each island has its specialities. For instance, braids are \$150 in Key West, \$75 in Cozumel, and \$35 on Grand Cayman.

Prescription drugs are sold cheaply OOT in Cozumel, etc. Bring CASH so you can stock up on Keflex and avoid doctor's fees. Many of the best bargains require CASH or TRAVELER'S CHECKS. For other items, get off the beaten track. Stores that pay for space in the port generally charge that

privilege back to you.

Check with friends who've actually been on these ships to see what your fellow-passengers will be like. Each ship has its own flavor. If you leave from Galveston, expect 90% Texans (scary). If from Port Everglade, more of a mix – North, Northeast, Midwest, Europe. If you travel in late summer, expect lots of kids and teenagers.

Maybe you care less about people, and more about the quality of food. Decide what your priorities are. Then ask someone who's been on that line. The quality of different amenities varies, and each cruise line has its plusses and minuses.

Most cruise ships have Internet service but it's expensive and not always available at sea. However, most ports now have Internet cafes which are quite affordable—\$5 an hour, for instance, in Cozumel, right on the dock. You can check your email anywhere on www.e-mailanywhere.com. It's FREE.

One last suggestion. If you like to speak, consider being a presenter on a cruise ship. As I say in my ebook, "How to Get to Present on a Cruise," being an enrichment gives you extra visibility and maneuverability for socializing, as well as new people to tell about your services.

Bon voyage!

(c) Susan Dunn, The EQ Coach, is a frequent speaker for cruise lines on stress management and life enrichment. She offers coaching and Internet courses and is the author of "How to Get to Present on a Cruise" (<http://www.webstrategies.cc/development.htm>). Visit her on the web at www.susandunn.cc. [Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for FREE ezine.

Single Cruise

By Martha Vasquez

What Singles Should Know About Taking a Cruise

When it comes to cruising, you can't blame the single traveler for feeling a bit neglected. Solo cruisers must pay "single supplements" if they wish to have their own cabins, which can be as much as double one's cruise fare.

And once aboard, singles find themselves in the minority, as their fellow passengers are largely comprised of families and couples. The fact is, cruise lines haven't made much of an effort to attract singles.

"Single travelers are a growing, important part of the market that can't be ignored," says Kari Lee, coordinator of Vacations To Go's singles cruises.

"There are more and more organizations that bring singles together; why not do that on a cruise ship?" says Lee. An energetic host or hostess is always on board to organize singles-only activities. These include poolside sail-away parties, private cocktail mixers with complimentary drinks, games and "single-mingle" dining. On some itineraries, singles shore excursions are available for an additional fee. They may include swimming with stingrays in the Bahamas and Cayman Islands and a beach party in Mexico.

Single cruises have proved to be popular. More than 2,000 travelers sailed the same year. Vacationers who reserve a cruise gain access to a private chat room where they can meet fellow singles traveling on the same itinerary. The chat rooms can get very active. Two ladies who signed up separately for the same cruise found out through the chat room that they live in the same town. They've already gotten together a few times before their cruise.

Solo cruisers can avoid the single supplement by bringing a friend, which pairs same-sex singles in one stateroom. But for those who prefer more privacy, single-occupancy cabins are available at the single-supplement rate.

Of course, some singles don't really want to meet someone else special while cruising and that's alright too. There is plenty on board to keep a single person busy and involved without having to mingle socially including the beautiful swimming pools, spas, jacuzzis, elegant dining and more.

So if you always thought that you couldn't go on a vacation cruise because you were single that is just not true anymore. There is plenty that modern cruise lines have to offer both singles who want to meet other singles, and those who are just want to stay single but still have a great time.

Martha has written many articles about luxury travel, you can find her website at



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