

NEW TO CRUISE GUIDE



There is a cruise for everyone

cruising.org

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WELCOME TO THE CRUISE INDUSTRY





HELLO THERE!

One of my first jobs, some years ago, was as a travel agent – selling holidays over the phone, and trying to keep up with destinations, airports and resorts through training and personal recommendations. As cruise holidays were starting to get more popular, so too were the number of enquiries – and I didn't really know where to start...

With that in mind, I am delighted to offer you the CLIA New to Cruise Guide, packed with useful advice from experts, resource material and guidance – created to help with your enquiries, to give you key information at your fingertips, and to add to the huge amount of resources we already offer via cruising.org.

CLIA is here to offer you unique resources, certified learning and inspiring events – so keep CLIA close, and with it our cruise community of over 45 cruise lines. We hope to see you at a CLIA event soon, and in the meantime, happy cruising!

ANDY HARMER
Managing Director
CLIA UK & Ireland



STAY CONNECTED

With CLIA membership you are part of the world's largest cruise community, allowing you to keep up to date with the latest industry news through exclusive online resources and events, created exclusively for CLIA travel agent members.

Hear from industry experts in the **CLIA Cruise Podcasts** and **Webcasts**, learn about sector changes and put your questions forward in the **CLIA Live Webinars** and join our **Virtual Showcase events** where engaging speakers share sector updates and inspiring sales advice alongside the chance for virtual networking.

CLIA also provides a host of exclusive online resources, providing agents with current industry insight, trends and statistics.

BE PART OF THE CRUISE COMMUNITY
VISIT CRUISING.ORG



@CLIAUK



CLIAEurope



CLIAEuro



CLIAEurope

CRUISING.ORG

TOP TIPS

Get the most from your membership & Grow your Cruise Sales



1. JOIN IN

CLIA runs a whole series of events, live training sessions, and webinars – and our advice is to join in as much as possible. Come and join CLIA, the cruise lines, sponsors, and other travel agents as the whole community comes together at our events, where the chance to network with colleagues and make new contacts can be just as important as the inspirational speakers on stage!

2. EXPLORE SHIPS

We include ship visits as part of some of our annual events, and we offer stand-alone ship visits too. Seeing ships, comparing styles and amenities, and getting a feel for the onboard experience are all important parts of building your cruise knowledge.

Remember to record your experience with video and/or photos and make notes of things that may be useful when talking about the ship.

DID YOU KNOW?

In place of in-person visits, we are hosting a series of Virtual Ship Tours, and you can watch these back online at the [Webinars OnDemand](#) page.

3. COMPLETE THE TRAINING

The e-learning modules that CLIA hosts on the website are written for you! Each module is in bite-sized chunks and takes you from cruise novice to expert. Make notes as you go to remind you of key points – and set yourself a goal of when you would like to reach the 'Accredited' level.

REMEMBER: Many cruise lines offer great online learning programmes and others have shorter versions on the CLIA website by way of introducing you to their product. Take a look and invest some time in reviewing the resources that they offer.

4. KEEP UP TO DATE

The great thing about the cruise industry is the fast-paced nature of change and innovation, steaming ahead of other holiday types. But that means that you need to keep up to date with those changes so you can offer the best possible advice to your customers.

You can keep up to date with the latest news stories via our website ([Cruise Daily](#)). Plus, be sure to listen to the CLIA Cruise Podcast, where you can get the inside track on upcoming cruise plans and hear from experts within the industry.

Make sure you're receiving our eNewsletter so you can have your weekly dose of CLIA news and cruise updates sent straight to your inbox.

Make sure to follow the CLIA social media channels where we post the latest news every day. Request to join the CLIA Travel Agents' Facebook group to find deals and offers from cruise lines.

5. USE THE MYCLIA DASHBOARD FOR UNIQUE RESOURCES

Your MyCLIA Dashboard on the CLIA website is built to give you the resources that you need to find the right cruise for your customer. Check out the [Brochure Search](#) if you need to see the latest material produced by cruise lines and [Agent Resources](#) houses all CLIA-produced Guides, Factsheets, Reports or Presentations. The section also includes our [Cruise and Ship Search](#) so you can review the options for your customer, as well as our [FAQs](#) and [Destination Factsheets](#).

6. TAKE A CRUISE!

Seems obvious – but understanding the joys and benefits of taking a cruise holiday are only really revealed once you set sail yourself. It is of course a wonderful way to take a holiday anyway – but when you see it as research it is even better!

DID YOU KNOW?

You can get discounted cruise rates through our colleagues at Touchdown (check out their page on the CLIA website, [cruising.org](#))



10 Reasons why your customers should choose cruise

There are hundreds of reasons why you should recommend a cruise to a first-timer – ranging from your customer’s personal interests, to the endless amount of onboard and ashore experiences.

We’ve narrowed it down to a top 10 to help show why your customers should choose a cruise over a land-based holiday.



1. AFTER THEIR FIRST CRUISE, THEY’LL BE BACK FOR MORE

Research conducted by CLIA found that nine in ten people who take a cruise will cruise again within 12 months. This extremely high number illustrates that the cruise experience draws holidaymakers back time and time again. So, as long as you sell the right cruise to the right customer, chances are they’ll be back to book again. This is not only great for repeat business but it also means that you’ll have a satisfied customer whom you’ve introduced to an exciting new way to travel.



2. INNOVATION & INVESTMENT KEEP THE CRUISE INDUSTRY ADVANCING

No other sector in travel focuses as heavily on innovation as the cruise industry. Billions of pounds are invested into developing cutting-edge technology, ship design and onboard and ashore amenities to ensure that guests have the very latest experiences at no extra cost. Such advanced technology creates better-connected voyages, ranging from complex infrastructures to build ‘smart ships’, to apps travellers can access on their own devices to order food, drinks and services. Check-in and check-out processes become streamlined and guests can enjoy the latest gadgets, such as voice activated requests from their cabin.



3. EXPLORE INCREDIBLE DESTINATIONS AND ONLY UNPACK ONCE

A cruise offers the most stress-free and relaxed way to travel to multiple destinations in one holiday. A cruise takes away the hassle that land-based travel inevitably brings, such as having to navigate how to get from A to B, where to dine in each new location, and having to keep repacking. Instead, the ship and its crew do all the hard work for you. During the day, you can discover a new port, take a guided tour, or simply relax by the pool. At night, enjoy dinner with five-star service followed by fabulous entertainment and a comfortable night’s sleep, before waking up the next morning at your next destination.



4. DON’T LIKE FLYING? REMOVE THE NEED FOR AIRPORTS

Going on a cruise from a home country port – such as Southampton, Dover, Dublin or Portsmouth means you can start your holiday straight away. Simply arrive to the terminal with as much, or as little luggage as you wish and board the ship. No airports, no planes and no long transfers. Simple!

Of course, starting a cruise from a home port isn’t always an option and depends on your customer’s preferences on destination, cruise line and/or ship.



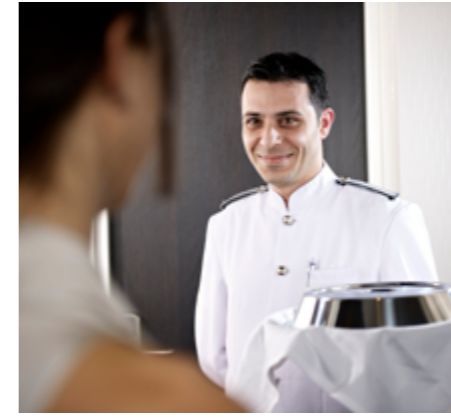
5. THERE IS A CRUISE IS FOR EVERYONE

The cruise industry has evolved beyond recognition in recent years. Now with over 50 cruise lines offering something unique to their guests, there truly is a cruise for everyone.

From megaships that hold thousands of guests and boast attractions including waterparks and rock-climbing walls to small ships that cater for a few hundred guests and have a one-to-one ratio of crew to guests. From luxury and expedition, river cruises, ships built for families, or couples, to adults-only or themed cruises, there is a cruise out there for everyone.

TOP TIP: The destination is one of the most important decisions when booking a holiday. Investigate popular cruise destinations and research the key ports, particularly the important turnaround ports (where a cruise begins) to sell with confidence. You can also suggest to customers to extend their holiday and book on a pre or post-cruise stay.





6. EXPERIENCE UNIQUE MOMENTS ASHORE

Imagine taking a ride in a helicopter over the Alaskan glaciers; enjoying time as a family as you learn about the remains of Pompeii; taking a Spanish cooking class in Las Ramblas; or kayaking down the longest Fjord in Norway. The list of unique and fascinating excursions on offer is endless – experiences that your customers wouldn't ordinarily get the chance to do.

TOP TIP: Do you know which ports serve Pompeii or Las Ramblas? Find out the popular attractions in some of the key cruise ports and share your expertise with customers!

7. FABULOUS ENTERTAINMENT, ALL INCLUDED IN THE COST OF THE CRUISE

Entertainment on ocean cruises has come on leaps and bounds over the last decade. As with all other aspects of the cruise experience, the shows and productions have benefited from significant investment and innovation. The cruise industry now boasts an amazing programme of theatre, singers and performances, totally unrivalled to any land-based package holiday.

The well-equipped entertainment spaces are incredibly diverse – beautiful theatres, poolside stages, aqua-theatres, skating rinks, comedy clubs, TV and lecture studios, jazz clubs, pubs and much more. The choice of show is equally diverse, from Broadway shows that are household names, to crew shows, new global acts, singing sensations, up and coming comedians and awe-inspiring magic acts.

When it comes to river ships, guests should expect smaller venues and less choice than on the bigger ships, however that's not to say there isn't any! River lines will often invite local performers onboard for evening entertainment. For expedition, lines are likely to revolve around guest lectures and evening briefings regarding the cruise itinerary.

TOP TIP: The vast majority of onboard entertainment is included in the cruise fare – a huge saving on the price of shows your customers may have enjoyed in the West End!



8. INCREDIBLE DINING OPTIONS

Dining has also benefited from a huge amount of investment in recent years. Cruise line guests can enjoy a sumptuous breakfast, lunch and dinner – and often a complimentary afternoon tea, room service and snacks in-between. All ships will cater to all dietary requirements and offer healthy options.

What will vary between the cruise lines is the number of restaurants. Some larger companies strive to have as many options as possible.

Note that not all dining options are included in the cruise fare, and some require pre-booking pre-cruise; but you cannot fail to be impressed with the dining options onboard ships. You will not find this choice or quality of dining on a normal land-based holiday.

Some cruise lines offer foodie themed cruises (sometimes with Celebrity Chefs), and others have spaces onboard where guests can take part in cooking classes and demonstrations.

9. THE CREW

Research shows that guests really appreciate the incredible service provided by crew. They go the extra mile every day, on every sailing.

This includes the room stewards and stewardesses who clean rooms twice a day; restaurant and bar staff; those responsible for excursions; receptionists; officers and the Captain – the whole crew on cruise ships bring an added quality to the holiday which is difficult to put into words.

The number of crew will vary according to the size of the ship and the style of cruise chosen, with luxury and ultra-luxury ships providing a one-to-one crew to passenger ratio to give a more individual experience.

10. A CRUISE HOLIDAY SUITS ALL TASTES AND AGES

With all groups being catered for, a cruise is arguably the best type of holiday for families. Whether it is just the parents and children travelling together, or multigenerational / skip-generational families (grandparents travelling with grandchildren), a cruise offers something to suit all ages and interests.

When it comes to keeping the young ones entertained, on many ships you will find nursery facilities, babysitting services, kids clubs and specific dining options. On the larger ships there are even waterparks, amusement arcades, ice-skating, zip-lines, cooking schools, sports parks and rollercoasters!

Ashore, there's plenty for the family to do thanks to the wide variety of shore excursions in each port.

TOP TIP: As a general rule of thumb, the bigger the ship, the more family activities you will find – but remember that facilities may vary, and the interests of families will vary too. Furthermore, some cruise lines who do not have permanent kids' clubs onboard will often add child-friendly activities at certain times of the year, namely school holidays.

10 tips to book the best family cruises



1. FAMILY FRIENDLY: Most of the main cruise companies have family-friendly ships, but you need to study facilities carefully as each ship is different, even within the same cruise line. Some are better suited to younger children, with separate pools for young tots and water play areas, while others have waterslides and chillout zones that are ideal for tweens and teens.

2. LOCAL PORTS: With young children, it may be easier for families to cruise from a UK port, where they simply step aboard and avoid the stress of flying. The lack of airline luggage limits also enables families to take more child-related paraphernalia. Pushchairs are generally available on-board, but there can be a fee for these.

3. KIDS CLUBS: Cruise lines do not take babies under six months and the starting age for kids' clubs is generally from three years upwards. Most ships also have parent and child play areas for younger children.

4. FACILITIES: Customers with babies in tow need to request a cot when they book and should choose a ship with a nursery where babysitting is provided. Check individual lines as some only offer evening baby-sitting while others have daytime sessions too, though sometimes there is a charge for this service. In-cabin babysitting is occasionally offered.

5. DAYCARE: Examine the kids' clubs aboard, how different age groups are split and the themes they have. Check if children can be left in the clubs on port days while parents go ashore, as some lines do not allow this. Kids clubs are free of charge, but some companies charge for port days and evenings. Parents need to register their children on the day they embark as places are on a first-come, first-served basis.

6. EXCURSIONS: Family-friendly excursions are often highlighted in excursion booklets and typically focus on water parks and animal attractions or involve boat rides and submarine trips. Some shore activities are themed as scavenger hunts or involve learning a skill, such as cooking or surfing, which children can do on their own or as a family.

7. DINING OPTIONS: Flexibility is key, especially when it comes to dining. Buffet restaurants offer an impressive selection of dishes to tempt the fussiest eaters and some have family areas with a TV, along with child-size plates and cutlery, plus food fashioned for younger palates. Older children will relish novel speciality restaurants such as Japanese teppanyaki with entertaining showman-style chefs.

8. CABINS: Family-friendly cabins come with sofa-beds or bunks that drop down from the ceiling and these are put into position every evening by the cabin steward. There are also inter-connecting cabins, plus suites that have one or two bedrooms which can accommodate parents and children.



9. GRATUITIES: Check individual cruise companies to see what their gratuity policies are as some charge the adult rate for children while others charge a reduced rate or do not charge for under-12s. Each line has a different policy.

10. SHIP CHOICE: Having older children makes it easier for families to travel further afield to the likes of Alaska, the Galapagos Islands and Asia. With less reliance on kids' clubs, they can opt for smaller ships that cater for tweens and teens, but do not have the wraparound facilities of larger vessels. River cruising is a classic example and a number of lines cater for family, and particularly multi-generational, groups.



EMBARKATION PORTS

Europe

SOUTHAMPTON (UK)
 Currency: Pound Sterling
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: n/a
 Key attractions: **Medieval City Walls**, Tudor House and Garden, SeaCity Museum

MARSEILLE (FRANCE)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: French
 Flying time from London, UK: 2h 0m
 Key attractions: **Basilique Notre-Dame de la Garde**, **Cathedrale La Major**, Le Panier

BARCELONA (SPAIN)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: Catalan / Spanish
 Flying time from London, UK: 2h 10m
 Key attractions: **Sagrada Familia**, Las Ramblas, Parc Guell

PALMA (SPAIN)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: Spanish
 Flying time from London, UK: 2h 25m
 Key attractions: **La Seu Cathedral**, Bellver Castle, Es Baluard Museum

COPENHAGEN (DENMARK)
 Currency: Danish Krone
 Language: Danish
 Flying time from London, UK: 1h 50m
 Key attractions: **Tivoli Gardens**, Christiansborg Palace, Amalienborg Castle

PIRAEUS (ATHENS)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: Greek
 Flying time from London, UK: 3h 40m
 Key attractions: **The Acropolis**, Byzantine Museum, National Archaeology Museum

VENICE (ITALY)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: Italian
 Flying time from London, UK: 2h 10m
 Key attractions: St. Mark's Square, St. Mark's Basilica, **Grand Canal**

CIVITAVECCHIA - ROME (ITALY)
 Currency: Euro
 Language: Italian
 Flying time from London, UK: 2h 30m
 Key attractions: Colosseum, **Trevi Fountain**, Sistine Chapel

EMBARKATION PORTS

Caribbean

HAVANA (CUBA)
 Currency: Peso
 Language: Spanish
 Flying time from London, UK: 10h 0m
 Key attractions: **Old Havana**, Malecon Lighthouse, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

NASSAU (BAHAMAS)
 Currency: Bahamian Dollar
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: 9h 20m
 Key attractions: **Atlantis Paradise Island**, John Watling's Distillery, Queen's Staircase

COZUMEL (MEXICO)
 Currency: Mexican Peso
 Language: Spanish
 Flying time from London, UK: Connect via USA / Mexico
 Key attractions: Stingray Beach, Discover Mexico Park, **Punta Sur Eco Park**

GRAND CAYMAN
 Currency: Cayman Islands Dollar, US Dollar
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: 11h 55m
 Key attractions: **Seven Mile Beach**, Pedro St. James, Cayman Crystal Caves

SAN JUAN (PUERTO RICO)
 Currency: United States Dollar
 Language: Spanish, English
 Flying time from London, UK: 9h 0m
 Key attractions: Viejo San Juan, **Castillo San Felipe del Morro**, San Juan National Historic Site

ST MAARTEN
 Currency: Netherlands Antillean Gilder, US Dollar
 Language: Dutch, English
 Flying time from London, UK: 11h 50m
 Key attractions: **Maho Beach**, Simpson Bay Lagoon, Seaside Nature Park

OCHO RIOS (JAMAICA)
 Currency: Jamaican Dollar
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: 9h 45m
 Key attractions: **Dunn's River Falls**, Rose Hall Great House, Bob Marley Museum

CASTRIES (ST LUCIA)
 Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: 9h 0m
 Key attractions: Pigeon Island, **The Pitons**, Diamond Botanical Gardens

BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)
 Currency: Barbadian Dollar
 Language: English
 Flying time from London, UK: 8h 45m
 Key attractions: **Andromeda Botanic Gardens**, Arlington House Museum, Harrison's Cave

EMBARKATION PORTS

Alaska & Western Seaboard



SKAGWAY (USA)

Currency: US Dollars
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: Connect via Seattle or Vancouver
Key attractions: Jewell Gardens, **White Pass & Yukon Route**, Klondike Gold Rush National Park



JUNEAU (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: Connect via Seattle or Vancouver
Key attractions: **Mendenhall Glacier**, Tongass National Forest, Mount Roberts Tramway



KETCHIKAN (USA)

Currency: US and Canadian Dollars
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: Connect via Seattle or Vancouver
Key attractions: **Creek Street**, Totem Heritage Centre, Alaska Rainforest Sanctuary



VANCOUVER (CANADA)

Currency: Canadian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 40m
Key attractions: Capilano Suspension Bridge, **Stanley Park**, Queen Elizabeth Park



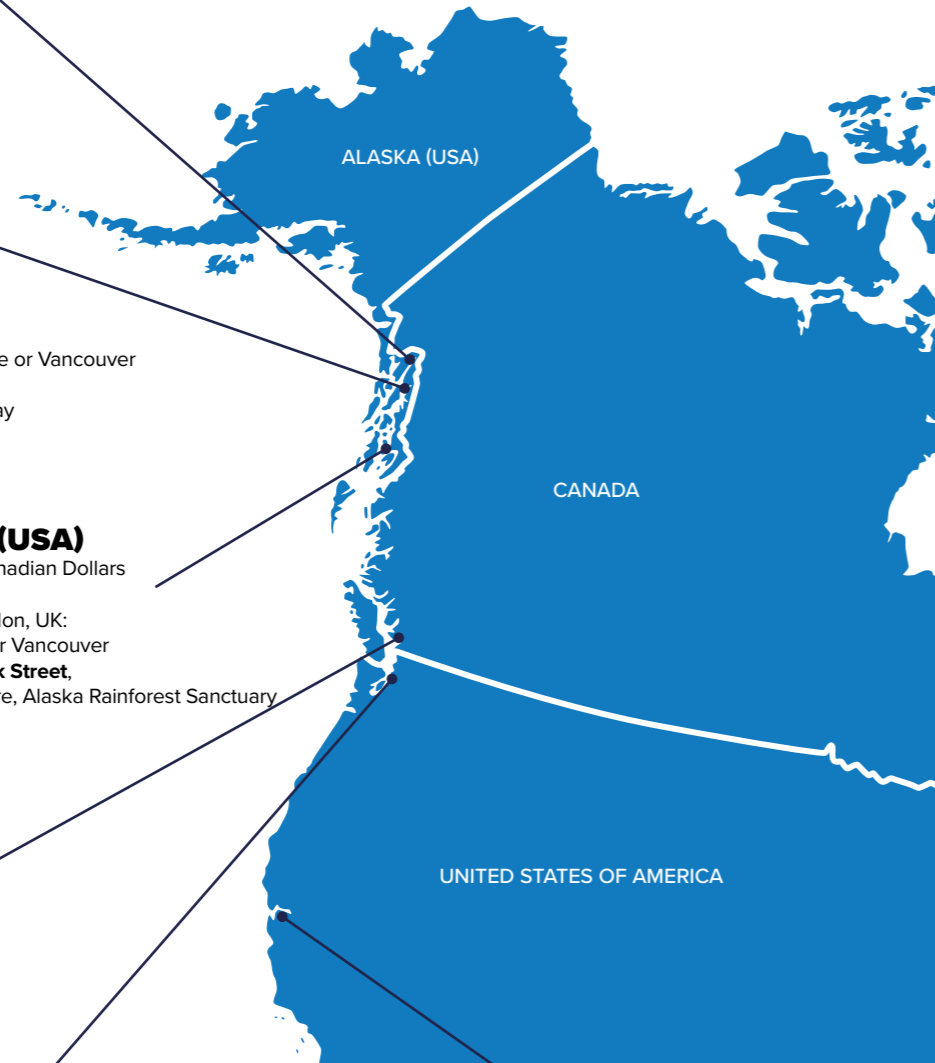
SEATTLE (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English, Spanish
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 50m
Key attractions: **Space Needle**, Pike Place Market, Chihuly Garden and Glass



SAN FRANCISCO (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 11h 0m
Key attractions: Alcatraz Island, Fisherman's Wharf, **Golden Gate Park**



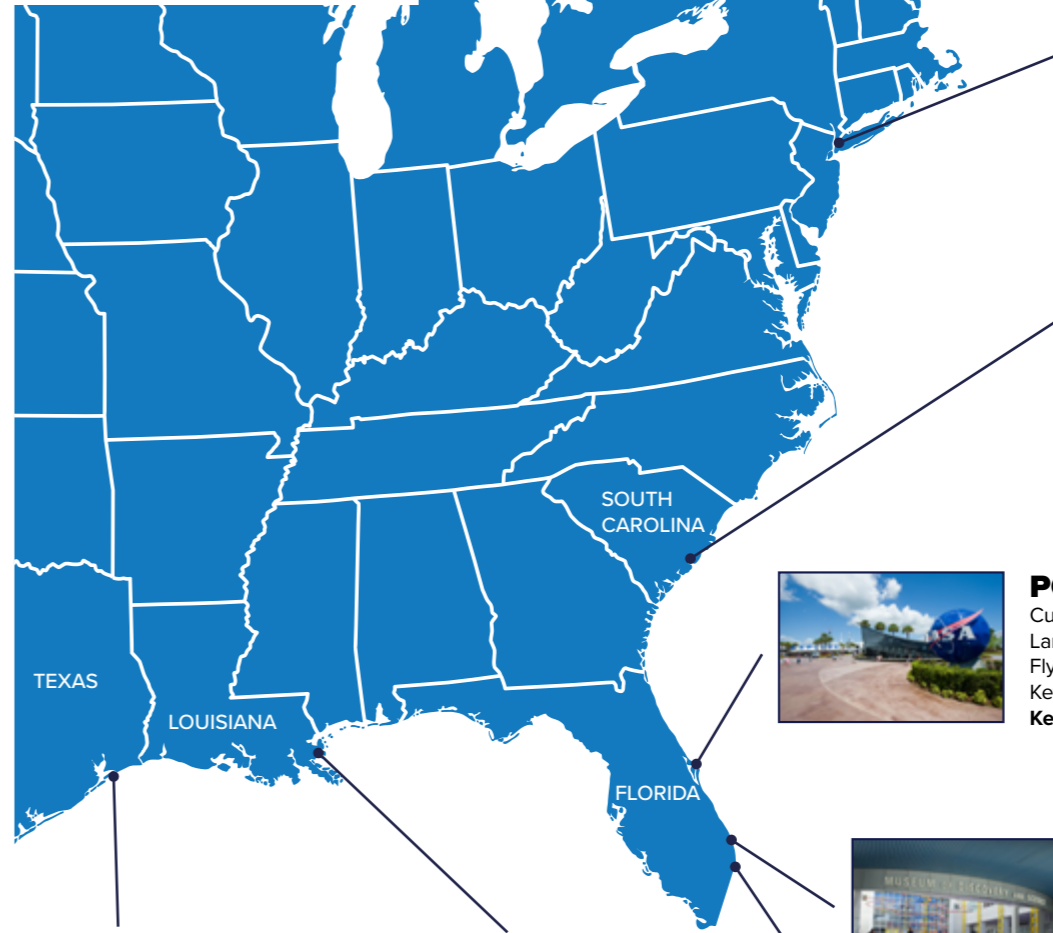
EMBARKATION PORTS

Usa & Eastern Seaboard



MONTREAL (CANADA)

Currency: Canadian Dollar
Language: French / English
Flying time from London, UK: 7h 20m
Key attractions: Mount Royal, **Notre-Dame Basilica of Montreal**, Montreal Botanical Garden



NEW YORK (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 7h 55m
Key attractions: **Empire State Building**, Statue of Liberty, Central Park



CHARLESTON (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 0m
Key attractions: **Magnolia Plantation and Gardens**, Waterfront Park, Historic Charleston City Market



PORT CANAVERAL (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 20m
Key attractions: Jetty Park, **Kennedy Space Center**, Florida Beer Company



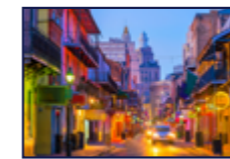
PORT EVERGLADES (FORT LAUDERDALE, USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 25m
Key attractions: LauderAle Brewery, **Museum of Discovery and Science**, Las Olas Boulevard



GALVESTON (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 10h 15m
Key attractions: **Bishop's Palace**, Galveston Island State Park, Galveston Railroad Museum



NEW ORLEANS (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 55m
Key attractions: **French Quarter**, Jackson Square, The National WWII Museum



MIAMI (USA)

Currency: US Dollar
Language: English, Spanish
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 25m
Key attractions: Ocean Drive, Vizcaya Museum & Gardens, **The Everglades**

EMBARKATION PORTS

Australasia

EMBARKATION PORTS

Asia



FREMANTLE - PERTH (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 16h 45m
Key attractions: **Fremantle Prison**, Fremantle Markets, The Roundhouse



CAIRNS (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time: Connect via SYD / MEL
Key attractions: **Skyrail Rainforest Cableway**, Barron Falls, Cairns Botanic Gardens



BRISBANE (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time: Connect via SYD / MEL
Key attractions: **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary**, Queensland Cultural Centre, South Bank Parklands



AUCKLAND (NZ)

Currency: New Zealand Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 23h 50m
Key attractions: **Sky Tower**, Waiheke Island, Auckland War Memorial Museum

NEW ZEALAND



SYDNEY (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 22h 5m
Key attractions: **Sydney Opera House**, Bondi Beach, Darling Harbour



ADELAIDE (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time: Connect via SYD / MEL
Key attractions: Adelaide Zoo, Adelaide Central Market, **Adelaide Botanic Gardens**



MELBOURNE (AUS)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time from London, UK: 21h 45m
Key attractions: Royal Exhibition Building, **Royal Botanic Gardens**, The National Gallery of Victoria



WELLINGTON (NZ)

Currency: Australian Dollar
Language: English
Flying time: Connect via AKL / SYD / MEL
Key attractions: Wellington Cable Car, **Museum of New Zealand**, Museum of Wellington City & Sea



BEIJING (CHINA)

Currency: Chinese Yuan
Language: Mandarin
Flying time from London, UK: 9h 55m
Key attractions: **Great Wall of China**, The Palace Museum, Summer Palace



FUKUOKA (JAPAN)

Currency: Japanese Yen
Language: Japanese
Flying time from London, UK: 13h 0m
Key attractions: Canal City Hakata, Kushida Shrine, **Ohori Park**



SHANGHAI (CHINA)

Currency: Chinese Yuan
Language: Mandarin
Flying time from London, UK: 11h 15m
Key attractions: The Bund, Yu Garden, **Nanjing Road**



HO CHI MINH CITY (VIETNAM)

Currency: Vietnamese Dong
Language: Vietnamese
Flying time from London, UK: 12h 30m
Key attractions: War Remnants Museum, **Cu Chi Tunnels**, Independence Palace



TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

Currency: New Taiwan Dollar
Language: Mandarin
Flying time from London, UK: 13h 45m
Key attractions: Taipei 101, National Palace Museum, **National Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall**



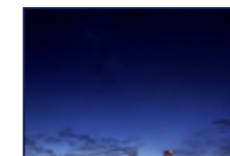
PHUKET (THAILAND)

Currency: Thai Baht
Language: Thai
Flying time from London, UK: 14h 35m
Key attractions: Old Phuket Town, Phuket Trickeye Museum, **Khao Rang View Point**



PORT KLANG/KUALA LUMPUR (MALAYSIA)

Currency: Malaysian Ringgit
Language: Malaysian
Flying time from London, UK: 13h 5m
Key attractions: Laguna Park, **Tanjung Harapan**, Parklands City People's Park



SINGAPORE

Currency: Singapore Dollar
Language: Malay, Mandarin, English
Flying time from London, UK: 13h 10m
Key attractions: Sentosa Island, **Gardens by the Bay**, Merlion

ONBOARD EXPERIENCES

A Day in the Life

Taking a cruise is quite unlike any other type of holiday and that is its greatest USP, but for the uninitiated it can also be the biggest mystery.

Yet it needn't be because the cruise experience can be broken into three distinct days: sea days, port days and turnarounds.

This last term covers changeover days when different groups of passengers depart and arrive at the ship.

Those embarking are normally given a time window to come to the port. On arrival, their luggage is taken by porters and loaded on to the ship separately, appearing outside their stateroom door a few hours later; sometimes even after the ship has sailed.

Guests then continue into the terminal where they check-in and pass through security before embarking the ship and locating their cabin where they will find the daily programme of activities.

New arrivals can enjoy settling in as they familiarise themselves; go for a drink at one of the bars, grab a snack in the buffet restaurant, or take a dip in the pools and hot tubs (remember to take bathing suits in hand luggage).

Embarkation day is also an ideal time to make speciality dining reservations, reserve spa treatments and book excursions.

Quite often, the first and final days of a cruise may be sea days. These are occasions when the ship is at its busiest with everyone onboard.

All facilities are open and there is a really lively atmosphere, with a full programme of activities that starts early morning with fitness classes and continues throughout the day and into the evening.

Lectures, port talks, dance classes and other workshops will be scheduled on these days, while out on deck live bands will keep up the musical tempo interspersed with games sessions on the main pool deck.

These are ideal days to make most use of the ship facilities, whether this involves relaxing in the spa and thermal suites, racing down the waterslides or simply relaxing by the pools.

The obvious drawback of sea days is that the outside decks can be crowded, the pools very busy and empty sunbeds may be hard to find, but there are often tucked-away spots that are quieter, along with adult-only areas and private decks.

Port days are different again as the ship empties out when guests go ashore. Those on tours may have early starts and be off the ship by 8am, while passengers without specific plans tend to disembark later.

This leaves the ship virtually empty apart from the crew and a small number of passengers who decide to stay aboard.

It is the polar opposite of a sea day. Everything is peaceful and not all facilities are open, but it's easy to claim a sunbed by the pool (which will be virtually empty) and spa prices are often discounted too.

For passengers with no desire to go exploring, port days can be one of the best times to enjoy the ship and revel in having it to themselves.

Disembarkation days normally command an early start as most cruise lines require passengers to vacate their staterooms by 8am, regardless of what time they are leaving the ship.

Luggage has to be left outside staterooms late on the final evening, when the crew takes it to a storage area, ready for unloading the following morning when the ship docks.

Guests are given coloured luggage tags which correspond to the time they've been given to depart the ship. They need to keep overnight items with them and a change of clothes for the following day.

The main buffet restaurant and some suite restaurants will be open for breakfast and guests either disembark immediately afterwards or sit on deck or in one of the lounges until their disembarkation group is called over the ship tannoy.





Staterooms

There can be a bewildering choice of accommodation on cruise ships, with some of the mega-ships offering more than 30 different stateroom types. But it is worth noting that these break down to four basic categories.

Inside/interior staterooms, which do not have a window or porthole; **outside/ocean view staterooms** that have a porthole or window; and **balcony/veranda staterooms** which are the most popular choice.

The most expensive, and luxurious, category is **suite accommodation** which has separate sleeping and living areas split into different rooms or in one large room, but separated by a curtain.

Junior suites tend to be entry-level grade and on some cruise ships may simply be a more spacious version of a balcony stateroom. At the other end of the scale are owner's suites that come with acres of space, opulent décor, balcony hot tubs and butler service.

Most cruise companies, especially US lines, also describe their accommodation as staterooms whereas other lines may call them cabins, which is the more traditional term. Regardless, there is no difference between them.

Rather like hotel rooms, all cabins come with a selection of fixtures and fittings as standard that include a TV (normally flat-screen), and sometimes a DVD, a minibar or fridge, and hairdryer. The majority of cabins also have private safes.

There is clothes storage with wardrobes and/or drawers, and guests can generally stow their luggage beneath the bed. There is usually a dressing table area and perhaps a small table with a chair.

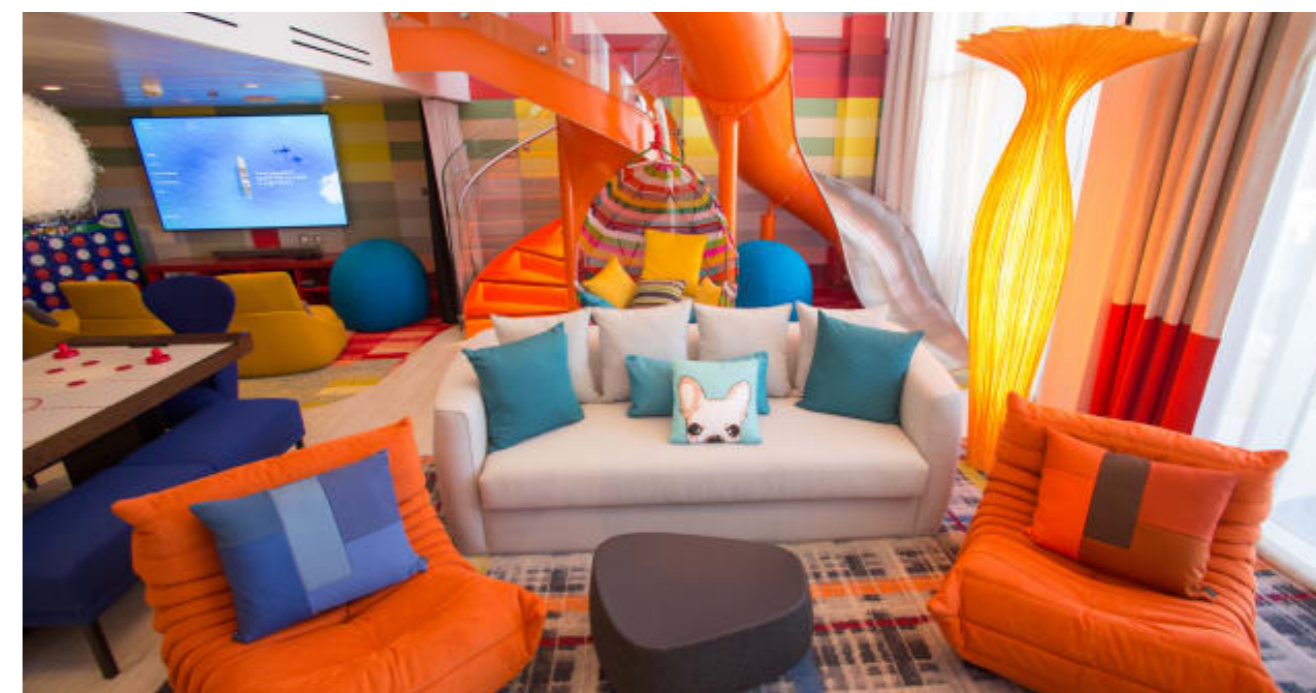
All cabins have ensuite facilities that include a shower, though some higher-grade accommodation will also have a bath too.

Among the stateroom variations are spa suites/cabins which have the same distinction as those listed above, but come with a package of amenities and are close to or have direct access to wellness facilities.



Virtual inside cabins are a new phenomenon on a handful of ships that have “virtual balconies” or “virtual portholes” – special screens showing real-time footage from the ship via external cameras.

The rise in family-orientated ships has also ushered in more family-friendly accommodation, with cabins offering additional space with extra beds that slot down from the ceiling or bunks that fold out from sofas. Inter-connecting cabins for families with older children are another good option.



While the accommodation grade determines the price, another influencing factor is its location on the ship as staterooms on lower decks are cheaper while those on higher decks – which enjoy better views and are closer to facilities – cost more.

Families may want a location closer to children's clubs, while passengers susceptible to seasickness should opt for a midship cabin which is less affected by ship movement.

Anyone sensitive to noise should avoid accommodation just below the main lido deck, entertainment areas or on low decks close to the ship's engines, while passengers with mobility issues should opt for staterooms close to the elevators and restaurants.

While many cabins are doubles or twins, a growing number of cruise lines are catering for solo travellers with single staterooms – though such is the demand, these are always among the first to sell out.

In addition to suites, there has been a rise in premium-category cabins that have access to their own private areas, whether it's an exclusive lounge where snacks and drinks are served, selected restaurants, or a VIP deck area. Some ships have pushed this concept even further with “ship within a ship” complexes, that have their own private entrances and cannot be accessed by other passengers.



Dining

Cruises have a mouth-watering reputation for the quality and quantity of cuisine they offer, and deservedly so.

Passengers can tuck into food virtually 24/7, starting early morning and continuing throughout the day to past midnight, while taking their pick from a rich variety of venues – most of which are included in the price.

The larger the ship, the greater the choice with up to 30 or so dining spots on the largest vessels, ranging from poolside burger bars, hotdog stands and pizza counters to classy haute cuisine restaurants and exclusive chef's table experiences.

On larger ships, in particular, diners can expect to find first-class speciality restaurants ranging from Japanese teppanyaki to American-style steakhouses or French bistros and Italian trattoria.



Some cruise lines have teamed up with speciality chefs such as Nobu Matsuhisa, Jamie Oliver and Marco Pierre White who have opened their own onboard restaurants with prices at a fraction of what they are ashore.

All ships have either a single main restaurant or a cluster of them offering different themes and these are the focal point of the onboard dining experience, where guests are generally free to take their main meals whenever and with whoever they wish to.

Traditional set dining times and shared tables are still offered for those who want them, but freedom and flexibility are key ingredients, and this is also reflected in the extensive buffet restaurants found on nearly all ships, and virtually open round-the-clock.

Cruises bring the flavours of the world together with the likes of Japanese sushi bars, English pubs and Brazilian steakhouses along with the fulsome flavours of Mexican and Tex-Mex, Asian fusion and continental cuisine.



In addition, special dinner shows bring an engaging backdrop of acrobats and entertainers, while supper clubs serve up a sophisticated vibe where singers and musicians inject musical flair into each course.

Exclusive tasting menus and private dining experiences add to the mix, along with the thrill of eating on deck at open-air grill restaurants, hot-stone dining where guests cook their own meat on slabs of volcanic rock, and full-on deck parties with mouth-watering barbecues.

Alternatively, anyone wanting more private al fresco moments can take breakfast on their balconies or enjoy dinner served course by course – sometimes by their own butler.



More ships now have their own culinary centres and show kitchens where guests can rustle up their own masterpieces under the guidance of a professional chef, having accompanied them to markets ashore to gather local ingredients.

There's no shortage of healthy-eating options too, with menus highlighting dishes low in salt and/or fat, plus low-sugar desserts. Special dietary needs are also catered for, from vegan and vegetarian to diabetic and gluten-free requirements.



It's not all about the food either as ships boast impressive wine cellars serving some of the best vintages and have also tapped into the craft beer craze with a growing selection of ales and lagers. Some even have their own onboard breweries, while others offer dedicated bars serving champagne, different-flavoured gins or exotic mojitos.

Additionally, a growing appetite for epicurean experiences has sparked growth in food and wine themed cruises with classes and talks plus wine and food-tastings that tie-in with excursions ashore to areas such as Bordeaux or the Iberian Peninsula.



Onboard Activities & Entertainment

There's no time to get bored on cruise holidays as ships are buzzing hubs of activity with the largest vessels resembling floating resorts.

While guests are free to do as much or as little as they please, they will not be short of choice especially on sea days when the ship becomes the main attraction with a full programme of classes and activities that run from early morning until late at night.

Sea days are when ship attractions come into their own (though sometimes it's even better to experience them in port, without queues, when many passengers are ashore).

Aside from numerous swimming pools, hot tubs and water play areas that nearly all ships now have, there are a host of high-adrenaline thrills that range from waterslides and zipwires to surfing simulators and climbing walls. Passengers can also pound top-deck jogging tracks while admiring the views, tap into their competitive streak on sports courts or even serve up games of paddle tennis.

Cruises can be ideal for guests wanting to dabble in more unusual pastimes such as fencing classes or learning how to scuba dive. If it's simply a matter of keeping fit, nearly all ships have gyms and exercise studios where pumping iron is accompanied by classes offering everything from aerobics, yoga and Pilates to meditation, body sculpting and Zumba.

Anyone after less energetic diversions can browse the onboard libraries, attend fascinating lectures by eminent speakers or pit their wits in brainstorming quizzes. Alternatively, art enthusiasts can bid for a favourite painting during auctions in the ship's art gallery or relax on deck while watching a film on a giant movie screen.

When it comes to learning a new skill or perfecting existing ones, there are numerous options. Many ships now have state-of-the-art show kitchens for cookery classes, while some have craft studios where enthusiasts can brush up their artistic talents.

Singing workshops and onboard choirs along with dancing classes inject a musical theme, while budding techies can brush up their knowledge on the latest innovative kit or sign up to digital film-making tutorials.

But it's evenings when ships really come alive with glitz and glamour. Ultra-modern ships boasting hi-tech facilities now stage interactive shows full of breathtaking special effects with acrobatic displays, ice-skating spectacles and West End and Broadway shows such as *Mamma Mia!*, *Hairspray* and *Kinky Boots*.



Cruise lines have also adapted hit TV shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing*, *The Voice* and *Pop Idol* with their own versions, while others have partnered with international names including *Cirque du Soleil*, Liverpool's *Cavern Club* for Beatles tribute bands, and *BB King's Blues Club*.

Larger ships have dedicated comedy clubs where alternative-style adult-only and family-friendly comic acts take to the stage, while some ships fly in top comedians or magicians (sometimes straight from Las Vegas) for one-off performances.

Ship theatres are still the main hub for evening entertainment with cabaret productions that generally pay tribute to musical styles and eras, though there are quieter alternatives in smaller cosy venues with classical recitals or folkloric displays by local artistes. The larger the ship, the bigger the choice of nightspots, with piano bars providing everything from soothing selections to lively singalongs and duelling piano blowouts, lively karaoke evenings or silent discos.

Dining can also be given added sparkle with themed dinner shows and live musical performances in cosy supper clubs and the beat can rumble on into the small hours at onboard nightclubs and late-night cabaret bars.



Evenings are not just about adult entertainment as dedicated cinema rooms or giant outdoor screens will show movies, and even provide popcorn, while youngsters can also enjoy special family-friendly game shows and contests.





Spas & Wellness

Cruise ship spas have taken personal pampering to new heights with ever more extravagant facilities and plush surroundings.

The latest generation of new ships has ushered in a rising roll-call of indulgent temptations with expansive spa areas that often stretch across two decks and offer an increasing selection of therapies.

Much of this has tapped into the growing trend for healthy living, gathering pace to such an extent that many spas afloat easily rival those on land and are headlined by leading names such as Champneys, Elemis and Canyon Ranch, but come with the added bonus of ocean views and sea breezes.

Guests can while away hours in thermal suites of sizzling hot hammams, Arabian-inspired rasuls, herbal saunas and steam rooms before retiring to plush lounges, full of crushed velvet sofas, chaise longues and swinging chairs.



Some ship spas even have snow rooms full of fluffy white flakes, along with bubbling thalassotherapy pools and relaxation suites where guests can laze on heated mosaic spa beds amid calming music and a diet of glossy magazines and healthy drinks.

The choice of treatments continues to grow, from Swedish and aromatherapy massages to those with exotic twists such as hot stones and bamboo sticks or scented poultices and delicate shells.

There's also an assortment of wraps and scrubs, while facials can be pepped up with opulent touches that include caviar and even 24 karat gold.

Most spa complexes also include a full-service salon offering hair treatments and make-up consultations plus manicures and pedicures, though more life-changing options include makeover packages, metabolism and toxin tests, tooth whitening or even Botox treatments and dermal fillers.

Additionally, many offer cellulite reduction, such as ionithermie, and weight-loss therapies, along with acupuncture (which can also be a convenient cure for anyone suffering from seasickness), reiki and reflexology

Booking a treatment generally guarantees free use of the thermal suites, though passengers not wanting to do this can pay to spend a full or half day in the facilities – or even buy a pass for the duration of the cruise. Some cruise companies offer multiple treatments for a special price and most lines promote special deals on port days when passengers go ashore.



Couples are catered for with special spa treatment rooms and, on some ships, guests can even choose to have al fresco pampering in a deck cabana or in the privacy of their own balcony.



Most spas offer male grooming services that include wet shaves or facials, along with massages. In addition, there may be joint father/son and mother/daughter treatments, while children can relish treatments aimed at teenagers, with some larger ships featuring dedicated kids and teen spa areas.

Wellness scores highly on ships with enrichment seminars that focus on weight loss and lifestyle, which include nutritional counselling, detox and cleansing workshops, plus skin and body clinics. This lifestyle theme filters beyond the spas on some ships with dedicated healthy-eating restaurants, spa cafes and juice bars.



A growing trend in recent years has been the growth of spa cabins which come with a package of benefits and are located conveniently close to the spa so passengers can simply pad down in their robe and slippers.



Shore Excursions

Exploring ashore on cruises is more varied than ever thanks to the increasingly diverse selection of tours now offered.

Cruise lines have upped the ante to feature a host of exciting and insightful experiences guaranteed to help passengers get the most out of every port they visit.

Aside from basic sightseeing coach tours that have always formed the backbone of destination programmes, guests can also choose from any number of shore activities designed to appeal to all tastes and ages. Most generally last for a full or half-day, though some involve overnight stays away from the ship too.



Intrepid travellers can sign up for thrilling zip-wire rides or kayaking trips; animal-lovers can join wildlife tours; and cultural fans can revel in after-hours visits to leading cultural attractions such as St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum or Venice's Doge's Palace.

In keeping with the growing trend for more adventure, cruise companies have pumped up the thrills with glacier hikes, powerboating trips and helicopter rides, while a rising roll-call of culinary-led tours feed into increasing interest in epicurean options.

These come in a variety of flavours, encompassing trips to local markets with the ship's chef to buy ingredients, learning how to make regional specialities at a local cookery school, gastronomic extravaganzas at top-flight restaurants or even dining on homemade dishes in a local home.

It's not all about masses of passengers being herded on to coaches as selected options may involve small more personalised groups and, in some cases, guests can pay to have their own car and driver or a special tour organised by their cruise ship concierge.

Families can choose from child-friendly trips visiting water parks, animal attractions or iconic sporting sites such as Barcelona's famous Camp Nou football stadium. Some lines even organise family-friendly scavenger hunts, and most of these options feature reduced prices for youngsters.



With cruises visiting more far-flung destinations, the choice and scope of tours continues to expand. Travellers wanting to get under the skin of the places they sail to can also visit schools or meet local families in their homes, while those wanting to donate their time can participate in voluntourism excursions by helping out at animal charities or community projects.

With ships staying later into the evening in selected ports or even docking for one or more nights, there are tours that sample the local nightlife or travel further afield to notable attractions on overnight trips.

Cruise companies have also become more adept at organising one-off exclusive experiences for guests which, in some cases, may be included in the price of the cruise, though tours to special concerts, cultural performances or dinners generally carry an extra charge.

At the other end of the scale, there are no-frills transfer options that enable guests to pay for trips to beaches or cities, such as Rome, where they are then free to explore on their own.



As some shore excursion have limited places, it is worth booking them online in advance of the cruise departure and this is generally possible as cruise lines detail tours for each sailing on their websites. The next best option is to book on embarkation day.



One of the biggest advantages of cruise ship tours is peace of mind as the lines work with reputable and experienced operators. Another crucial factor to remember is that ships will always wait for their tour groups to return, even if they're running late, and will not sail without them.

SHIP TERMINOLOGY

AFT - towards the stern (back) of a ship

ANCHORAGE - a location at sea where the ship can lower its anchors.

BERTH - berth can mean either a bed or a place where the ship is docked.

BOW - the forward part of a ship.

BRIDGE - the elevated, enclosed platform at the bow from which the captain and officers direct operations and steer the ship.

BULBOUS BOW - a protruding bulb at the bow of a ship, just below the waterline. The bulb modifies the way the water flows around the hull, reducing drag and thus increasing speed, range, fuel efficiency and stability.

DECK - floor of a ship.

GANGWAY - a raised platform or walkway providing a passage to embark / disembark.

GALLEY - another name for the ship's kitchen.

HULL - the main body of a ship, including the bottom, sides and deck.

KEEL - the ship's backbone which runs lengthways along the middle of the bottom of the vessel.

LIQUID NATURAL GAS (LNG) - many cruise ships being built will be LNG-powered. LNG offers cleaner emissions with virtually zero sulfur emissions and therefore is better for the environment. LNG has up to 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

MUSTER DRILL - a muster drill is a mandatory safety exercise with the objective to familiarise all guests and crew with the location (muster station) where they are to assemble in the unlikely event of an emergency.

PORT – left side of a ship.

STARBOARD – right side of a ship.

STERN – the back of a ship.

ONBOARD

ANY TIME / FLEXIBLE DINING – just like a restaurant at home, anytime dining enables guests the freedom to dine when and with whom they wish, at any time between 5:30 PM and 10 PM. Reservations are available through an onboard dining hotline, but not required.

CRUISE CARD – a cruise passenger ID card is a cruise line's way to keep track of passengers, ensure security and provide a way for passengers to sign for purchases without needing to carry money. It typically also functions as the key to guests' staterooms.

DRINKS PACKAGES - drinks packages allow cruisers to pay one base price that covers most of their non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks onboard.

EARLY SEATING / LATE SEATING - whether guests opt for traditional dining or choose to eat anytime, if they want to eat in the main dining room, they have to make a choice about cruise dining times: early seating or late seating. Guests can eat at the buffet almost any time of day or make a reservation at a speciality restaurant, but to dine in the main dining room just about every cruise line will require guests to arrive at either a set time or during a limited window.

GRATUITIES - the tips that are automatically charged to a guest's onboard account for the service they have received onboard.

EMBARKATION / DISEMBARKATION - process of passengers boarding the ship / leaving a ship.

SPECIALITY DINING - while many of the meals on the ship are included in the cruise fare, not all of the dining options onboard are complimentary. Speciality dining carries a small cover charge and often serves select menus.

TRADITIONAL / FIXED DINING - traditional dining in the ship's main banquet-style restaurant means that cruisers must decide between an early or late set seating time for dinner, which they'll then stick to for the entirety of their sailing. Typically, an early dinner begins anywhere between 5:45 and 6:30 p.m. (depending on cruise line and itinerary) and lasts for about two hours. Late seating usually begins around 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. Guests may request to dine with their own party, or can opt to be sat on larger tables with other guests. Your assigned table, table companions and waiter will remain the same throughout the cruise.

ONBOARD CREDIT (OBC) - onboard credit, also referred to as onboard spend (OBS), can be thought of as a gift card of sorts for a specific cruise - money that you can use on your cruise for any number of things, including beverages, shore excursions, retail purchases and more.

GUEST AREAS

ATRIUM - the atrium is typically the first thing passengers see when they embark and is like the ship's town square. Most now have bars as well as live music, and shops, lounges, and guest services desks fanning out from the various levels.

GUEST SERVICES – the guest services desk is the heart of the ship and the customer experience. It is usually found near the atrium and is where guests can go for any queries they have.

MAIN DINING ROOM – main dining rooms are found on just about every ship – a large, opulent space that serves as the 'default' dinner venue for guests. The meals are included in the cruise fare and typically it's the main option for guests who want to have a sit down dining experience rather than a buffet but do not want to book a speciality restaurant.

PROMENADE - the promenade deck usually extends from bow to stern, on both sides, and includes areas open to the outside, resulting in a continuous outside walkway.

STATEROOMS – the ship's cabins.

TITLES

CRUISE DIRECTOR – a cruise director is a high-ranking or senior officer of a cruise ship with responsibility for all onboard hospitality, entertainment and social events, who acts as the public face of the company.

GODMOTHER - The cruise ship godmother is selected to bring good luck and protection to the vessel. The duties are simple; godmothers attend their ship's ceremonial ship launch and naming ceremony, where they bless and officially name the ship.

HOTEL GENERAL MANAGER - the hotel general manager is one of the most senior people on board, reporting directly to the captain. They oversee lots of departments, including entertainment, food and beverage, customer services, and housekeeping.

PURSER - A first point of contact for any queries you have onboard, pursers (otherwise known as the guest services assistant) can be found at the guest services desk.

ITINERARIES

EX-UK – ex-UK cruises refer to a cruise that starts from a UK port.

MAIDEN VOYAGE - the first sailing of a new ship.

WORLD CRUISE – typically lasting between 40 and 120 days, a world cruise takes guests around the world, often divided into a number of sectors.

REPOSITIONING CRUISE (REPO) - when the seasons change, ships tend to relocate (or reposition) to warmer climates - for example, moving from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean. When ships sail across oceans or change seasonal homeports, their one-off, one-way itineraries are known as repositioning cruises. Guests can sail a new, offbeat route, often at a lower-than-average price as the cruises often involve a high number of sea days.

SEA DAYS - a sea day is a day spent in transit while the ship is sailing to its next destination. Without a port stop, these days are typically marked with extra programming and dining to accommodate all guests onboard.

TRANSATLANTIC CRUISE - any sailing that crosses the Atlantic Ocean.

TENDER PORT – when the ship is not able to pull up to the pier or dock, usually because the water is too shallow, it will anchor just outside the port. Passengers will then be escorted off the ship on to a small boat (normally the ship's lifeboats), called a tender.



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