

ANSWERS TO HOW TO HAVE A GREAT CRUISE

Guests often ask, "What do I pack for a perfect cruise?" We recommend bringing one suitcase, one carry-on, your valid passport, a hat, sunglasses, sun screen and your smile. "Traveling light with a valid passport means you go quickly through the lines. And when you smile you're invited to all the parties. Follow these tips and you will have a fun and easy time at sea."

- 1.) Are all meals included?
- 2.) How do we pay for alcohol and sodas on board ship?
- 3.) How do we pay gratuities? May we use coupons?
- 4.) How do we pay for our personal expenses on the ship?
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- 17.) What if I leave my toiletries at home?
- 18.) Will my cell phone/lap top/iPad and iPhone work on the ship?
- 19.) Is there Internet access?
- 20.) Who do I call if I forget something on the ship, if I want to complain or compliment?
- 21.) Is smoking allowed on board ship?
- 22.) Is there a minimum age for children?

1.) Are all meals included? Each cruise includes all dining on board ship, as well as 24 hour room service. Order what you want at no extra charge. Whether you want to taste everything, or follow a special diet, you can have it all when you cruise. It is customary on most cruise lines to give a small cash tip for any delivery made to your cabin, whether it is for food or laundry or anything else you requested. It is the only time during a cruise you give cash to a crew member. You can give crew members cash at the end of the cruise, but not during your cruise, except when tipping for room service. If you are a vegetarian, or want a gluten free diet, or if you are diabetic, indicate this when you book so your reservation can be marked accordingly. Also write out your personal menu requests for your table waiter the first night of your cruise. S/he and the kitchen staff can then plan a special diet for you. You will also find every ship has a selection of specialty restaurants which charge a nominal fee to dine there. Meals served in the formal dining hall are included in your cruise fare. There is no extra charge for formal dining and it is a highlight of cruising.

2.) What about alcohol and other beverages on board ship? The policy on most cruise lines is that distilled water, hard liquor and beer consumed during a cruise must be purchased on the ship. No one is to board ship with distilled water bottles (there are some exceptions to the water requirements so please ask us), liquor bottles or beer cans packed in their suitcases or carry-on's. Such liquids are confiscated when passing through pier security because the cruise lines can not be sure such liquids are truly water, liquor or beer. However, most cruise ships will allow a single bottle of unopened wine (750 ml bottle or smaller) packed in his/her carry on. Guests may not bring on board multiple bottles of wine, but one bottle of wine is permitted per person. That single bottle of wine per person is best enjoyed in your stateroom. Guests who bring personal bottles of wine into the formal dining room of either cruise lines are charged a fee to open and serve the wine. When buying any liquor on shore (including wine) you must check (leave) such bottles with the ship's security crew upon returning to the ship. Your liquor purchases are returned to you at the end of the cruise. But don't forget you may not take any liquid weighing more than 3 oz's onto an airplane in your carry-on when flying home. Do not let TSA take your expensive bottles of liquor away from you at the airport. Always pack unopened bottles in your checked luggage when you fly home. Because soda cans cause an environmental problem at sea, cruise lines charge extra for any soft drinks you drink on a ship. A soda can or bottle costs more than \$3 (three dollars) each if you buy one at a time. Do not open up soda cans, water bottles, or anything else found in your stateroom or mini bar, unless

you agree to pay for it. Each ship sells a selection of water, soda or wine packages for your cruise. You can pre-pay for drink packages by contacting us or the cruise line. You need your booking ID to make an order. However, we recommend you buy drink packages only on the ship. This is because if you want to change any part of your order during your cruise you cannot do so if you bought your drink package on-line. Internet sales and ship sales are separate businesses. We recommend making all purchases for your cruise (including shore excursions) literally on board ship because by doing this you will have financial recourse if you change your mind or are dissatisfied with any service or product. The Internet does not tell you this, but we do. Specialty coffee bars on any ship also sell for extra cost. Be careful about what drinks you pick up where. And pay attention to each ticket you sign. Most cruise lines already include your gratuities (generally \$12-\$15/per person per day) though you can either pre-pay these when booking your cruise, and once on board, you can reduce the amount if you are not happy with service by going to the Guest Relations office. Watch for the extra line asking if you want to give another TIP. By signing it initially you already agree to pay an additional tip. If you add another tip where it asks for one you will be "double tipping." Tea, lemonade, juices, coffee and milk are always free throughout your cruise and no tip is expected.

3.) How do I pay dining room and stateroom gratuities? Do you accept coupons? Cruise lines will automatically charge all tips each day for your attendants and waiters to your onboard credit. They average \$12-\$15/person per day total for all tips on both cruise lines for all length of cruises. You are welcome to pay additional cash to your attendants at the end of your cruise. The cruise attendants will lay envelopes on your bed the last night at sea asking for tips. You can write on the envelopes that you have already pre-paid your tips. Or, you could put in extra cash too. It is customary to give a small cash tip to any attendant or waiter who delivers any item to your cabin throughout the cruise, such as food or drinks or laundry. There is no need to tip waiters who serve you alcoholic or specialty drinks on either cruise lines because a 15% gratuity (cruise line average) is automatically added to your tab when you are served any specialty or alcoholic drink. This includes being served a soda or gourmet coffee too. During any Royal Caribbean cruise you may visit Guest Relations to adjust your tip amounts either up or down. It is very much appreciated when you leave extra cash in your envelopes at the end of the cruise for attendants who were particularly helpful. Many guests leave behind the foreign currency they accumulated at the various ports of call since attendants will have more opportunities to use the foreign money than guests who are returning home.

4.) How do I pay my expenses on board ship? Before boarding ship you will be asked for a credit card, a debit card, a pre-paid credit card or to deposit a minimum of \$500 cash. An imprint of your credit/debit card is taken or you deposit \$500 cash. You are then issued an onboard card (each cruise line has their own name for this card), which looks like a credit card. All your purchases on the ship are charged to the onboard card. There are no cash transactions allowed on the ship, other than paying cash tips for room service. Charges you make on the ship go on to your onboard card. Throughout the cruise such charges are passed through to the credit card you gave when you boarded ship or they will be drawn from your \$500 cash deposit. Guest Relations notifies passengers during the cruise when their cash deposits are running low and/or when their credit cards have reached their limits. Be prepared with a back-up plan to replenish your money sources, if needed. In most cases, the only way now to obtain cash on board ship is to use an ATM machine, which is usually out of money because other guests will drain it quickly upon boarding. Ships do not service their own ATM machines. They are serviced by contractors on shore. Plus any amount drawn out of an ATM machine on the ship has at least a 5% service fee. Crew members cannot assist you when an ATM is down. On some cruise lines, Guest Relations, is permitted to cash one personal check drawn on an American bank or cash one traveler's check no larger than \$200 while you are on the cruise. The best way to travel with cash is to bring small bills which you keep in your stateroom's safe and use only as needed. We recommend bringing at least fifty (50) \$1 bills to make exact change. No cabbies, no shore attendants and no crew members make change. Carry your own \$1 bills to pay exact amounts on shore. On the last morning of the cruise an itemized statement of your cruise charges will appear in your cabin. Any questionable charges must be settled at the Guest Relations Desk before leaving the ship! No charge can be contested after you leave the ship. A better plan is to periodically go to Guest Relations during the cruise, or on many of the cruises lines, this can be accessed on your in cabin television system and ask for a print out of your entire cruise account. Be sure every charge is correct. If you find a mistake be sure to obtain a receipt from Guest Relations for any refund or canceled expense they agree to give you. In fact, always get a receipt for EVERY transaction you make on any ship! Be smart. Be careful. Be sure. Get a receipt! You may need it for documentation after you return home and find charges on your credit card were incorrect. You can not get back any monies from the ship. But you can ask your credit card company to stop payment if you have your receipt(s) to back up your claim. Always insist on having a written receipt if it is agreed by Guest

Relations that you will have credit back. Do not leave Guest Relations without written proof on some kind of corporate letterhead that you have credit forthcoming, if you do. Without that written proof of credit it is doubtful you will ever see it.

5.) What do I wear? Favorite seasonal outfits are fine. On any ship there are no changing rooms near the swimming pools. Guests usually wear shorts or robes over their swim suits when walking to and from the pools. Guests dress nicely for dinner each evening. There will be 1 formal night on this 5-night cruise. Minimum formal attire for a lady is a cocktail outfit. Gentlemen are encouraged to wear a dark dressy suit with a tie. Men may not have open collars, or pull over shirts, or short pants in the formal dining room. Men who wear tuxes are a big hit on formal nights. Some cruise lines offer renting of tuxes. Call at least two weeks before departure to assure availability. Cost is reasonable. Some cruise lines offer public laundry rooms, for a fee. And room service does offer dry cleaning and ironing for a small fee. The list below can help you plan your cruise wardrobe. A guest may not dine in the formal dining room in jeans on any night. Shirts in the formal dining room must have stitched sleeves and collars, regardless of whether the meal is breakfast, lunch or dinner. Polo shirts are not proper attire in the formal dining room. Why must guests dress up? Guests who dress well behave well. This is important when thousands of people are traveling in a confined space and drinking alcohol together in the middle of an ocean. Officers and crew will be the best dressed and most courteous. Shorter cruises to the Caribbean do not require elegant formal evening wear because the islands are very warm. On these occasions the minimum attire is country club cocktail for ladies and for gentlemen a dressy sports coat and tie. Persons who do not want to participate in formal dressing may dine in other eateries throughout the ship on the two formal nights. Casual attire in those eateries is fine. But again, when dining in the formal dining room be sure to dress formally for the evening. A notice in your cabin each morning (or the evening before) advises what is the day's dress code for the formal dining hall that same evening.

WHEN DINING IN A FORMAL SETTING: Throughout each cruise courteous wait staff attends to your every request. They are trained to set and serve formal tables: The bread plate is to your far left with its own butter knife. Your salad fork is first on your left (outside), followed by an appetizer fork (middle). The meal fork lays beside the dinner plate. At right

is a knife (outside) for simple salads, a spoon (middle) is for soup and a sharper knife beside the dinner plate for is for select cuts of meat. Wine and water glasses are placed slightly to the upper right for easy reach and return. A spoon to stir an after dinner coffee is placed above the dessert spoon and fork sitting atop the dinner plate. Desserts may be pudding, ice cream or a choice of gourmet pastries. There is a utensil for each possible dessert. Formal dining during a cruise is an elegant event. Upon returning home you can still enjoy elegant dining. Simply remember: The order of the utensils is determined by the order you would use them taking first from the outside, then moving inward toward the plate. Each cruise offers 'culture seminars' to teach guests how to prepare exquisite meals, how to serve the finest wines and how to set elegant tables. They are always very well attended.

6.) Are there medical staff and facilities? Why do you recommend insurance? Yes. Excellent clinics, doctors and nurses are on every ship, but most are not licensed American medical staff. They are accredited from their own respective countries, but not usually the USA. Guests who have pre-existing conditions requiring specialized treatment will want to review carefully what medical care is and is not available on each ship. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid payments are not accepted for payment on any ship. Also American health insurance companies rarely provide medical coverage on cruise ships. Whenever medical care on a ship is administered to you the charge for it goes immediately to your onboard credit. Travel reimburses you for most such medical care costs up to \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars), but only after you return home and file a claim. This policy also protects guests from a price increase if at the last minute your roommate cancels for a qualifying reason. Note: There is normally no charge for Dramamine. Nor usually is there a charge for speaking to a nurse. There is a charge for speaking to a doctor. If you're diabetic, have MS, sleep apnea, or carry oxygen when traveling, make it known when you book your cruise that you have special needs. In many of these cases prior clearance must be approved for you to board ship, especially if you are transporting oxygen. If you require a refrigerator in your cabin to keep medications cold be sure to book the category of cabin having this accessory, which is a balcony category or higher. Notify the cruise line at least 30 days before departure to report what special medical equipment or medications you want to carry



onto the ship. Guests may not board ship until such items are cleared. Persons who are diabetic, have MS, or require daily shots must carry their doctor's note in their travel kit verifying the need to use needles. It is usually required for each guest who books a handicap cabin to fill out medical forms verifying the need for such a cabin, along with presenting a letter from his/her doctor requesting the special needs cabin. Paperwork to book a handicap cabin is sent to each guest when s/he initially reserves it.

Always keep your hands washed, especially after using stair railings, pushing elevator buttons or opening cabin doors. Washed, clean hands contribute most to a healthy cruise. Be safe. Always wash your hands before eating. The diagram below shows the best way to wash your hands. It does not matter whether you use cold or hot water when you wash, but it is imperative to use soap to destroy bacteria.



7.) What about passports? While not required when sailing from and returning to a U.S. Port (for U.S. Citizens) it is highly recommended that you should have a valid passport to board ship. The easiest way to obtain a passport, or to have one renewed, is to visit your local Post Office for assistance. They're valid for 10 years. U.S. citizens without a passport CAN use an official government-issued birth certificate and laminated government-issued picture ID, denoting photo, name and date of birth. However, If someone gets ill or has an emergency and has to fly home from one of the ports of call, they need to have a passport to board the plane. Anyone who travels without a valid passport does so at their own risk.

Any non-U.S. citizen who travels with an INS Permanent Resident Card must produce it before boarding ship and again upon returning stateside. Any non-U.S. citizens requiring a visa, or any other travel document, for

international or domestic travel, has the sole responsibility to obtain that required visa or travel document for him/herself every time. Ventures in Travel is not responsible for either advising or obtaining visas for any club member. No one may board a cruise ship departing the United States without being cleared by U.S. Homeland Security. Ventures in Travel does not have any responsibility whatsoever to advise, assist or obtain visas or any travel document for any guest at any time.

AMERICAN PASSPORT INFORMATION: <http://travel.state.gov> Ask your local post office how to obtain a new, or renewed, U.S. passport. These links can help: Passport123.com•PassportsAndVisas.com•PassportExpress.com
•PassportNation.com



National Passport Center toll-free number is 1-877-487-2778. Its E-mail is NPIC@state.gov Customer Service is M-F 8 AM-8 PM EST. A preparation fee is charged per passport. When returning to the United States it is common for U.S. Customs to scrutinize any passport having less than six months validation on it. Why? Because such passports are often stolen abroad. A U.S. passport number is good for only 10 years. When a U.S. passport expires so does its number. Every new passport has a new number. Aliens can easily enter the country illegally with a tampered American passport that's about to expire. Be sure to travel on a passport having more than 6 months validation. This precaution reduces the chance your passport will be stolen. No one is exempt from being questioned by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The most innocent looking grandmothers are often questioned to prove the U.S. government is not profiling travelers. And when re-entering the USA always keep on your person all your receipts for any expensive jewelry you bought abroad. Customs is known to ask for such receipts when Americans are re-entering their country. Be safe. Be sure. Keep receipts you have when buying jewelry abroad on your person. Carry your proof of purchase. If you are carrying foreign made merchandise with serial numbers (cameras, expensive watches, etc), stop by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and complete a CBP4457 registration form as proof of ownership prior to your trip. Take the merchandise with you to CBP so they can verify the serial numbers. Or, take a photocopy of the invoice (indicating serial number) with you to show that ownership prior to the trip.

8.) How do we sign up for shore excursions? You can book shore excursions on the Internet in advance of your cruise utilizing the cruise lines' web site and by using your personal booking ID number to gain access. Or we offer discounted excursions by click on this link ([Shore Excursions](#))

Have a credit card ready to pay when you book on line. It is wise to preview shore excursions before arriving to the ship. Many shore excursions now have age and weight limits for every guest taking a shore excursion. We don't recommend booking shore excursions on the ship as they may be sold out before you get onboard. Guests should book exotic tours, like helicopter rides or fishing expeditions, on-line early because spaces for such tours are limited. However, sometimes it is better to book general shore excursions on the ship because if you change your mind, if the weather becomes foul, if you become sick, or if the excursion is canceled by the ship, you will be refunded all monies immediately that you'd paid for that tour. Another easy way to enjoy shore excursions is for a group of at least 4 or 5 guests to rent a van and driver for the day on your own at the pier. Ask for an English speaking driver. There will be English speaking drivers wherever you dock. Your small group can tour faster and see more this way. But remember, if you take excursions on your own the trip insurance you bought with the cruise lines does not cover you if something goes wrong. To be safe travel in groups of at least four whenever you're off the ship. Stay together. Never go off alone. An excellent rule of safety is this: "Always stay on paved roads. Never go on a dirt road when walking or driving. "

9.) What should I pack? Bring as little as possible. Pack with dry cleaning plastic bags to reduce wrinkling. Stateroom closets are very small. Store carry-on's inside your suitcase. Do not bring anything you personally cannot lift up and carry for yourself. There will rarely be anyone who can help you. In fact, most cruise ships now encourage guests to carry their own luggage off the ship, especially if they need to disembark quickly. This is not true when embarking (boarding). Luggage is taken from you at the pier when you arrive and delivered to your cabin. Always put your cruise luggage tags on before leaving home. Hotel and airport personnel know what they are. Luggage tags will arrive with your boarding documents. Luggage on rollers is best. Bell caps are expensive. Take your carry-on with a pool outfit, sweater, make-up, medications, sun glasses, sun screen, walking shoes, camera, jewelry, your valid passport and your ship boarding ticket in it. And don't forget your hat! Wear your jacket in route to the ship to reduce the weight of your suitcase. Pack two swim suits and two pairs of shoes. Keep your camera and spare batteries in your carry-on. Batteries may not be packed in checked luggage. And never bring any irons. Regardless of their size the cruise lines will seize them as soon as you arrive to the pier. Irons are considered a fire hazard. When flying domestically your checked bag cannot weigh over 50 lbs. And your carry-on limit is 40 lbs. When flying over seas you may usually check two bags at 50 lbs each. Any carry-on when flying

overseas is still limited to 40 lbs. A woman may fly with a purse in addition to her carry-on. Any fluid container in her purse or carry-on is limited to 3 oz's. Men may bring satchels in addition to briefcases on airplanes. They too are limited to 3 oz. liquid containers

10.) Is there long-term car parking at all piers? What about our luggage? Yes. The parking fee is usually about \$15 to \$18 per day, or more depending on the port of departure. You must pay the parking fee when arriving to any pier by cash or credit card. Shuttle buses drive through the lots taking guests and their luggage to the ship. You are not allowed to carry luggage onto the ship. Crew members will deliver it to your cabin. Do keep your carry-on bag with you because your luggage may not appear at your cabin until after dinner. The first night's dinner on any cruise ship is casual. What you have on when you board ship is fine for dinner, except that shorts, jeans and T-shirts are never allowed in the main dining room. Be prepared to dress for both cool and warm weather on any cruise day. Layers are best. Be prepared for rain too. Keep your hat handy. On the last night of your cruise you should leave your packed luggage outside your cabin door ready for the ship's crew to take it below ship by midnight. Colored tags will be given to you to tag your luggage. Colored tags allow you to easily identify your luggage on the pier in the morning when you dock. Or, if you must get off the ship very quickly when it docks keep your luggage to take it with you off the ship. You must pre-arrange for your early disembarkation at the Guest Relations Desk in order to take your luggage with you. Make this arrangement whenever you can during your cruise. It must be pre-arranged.

11.) What about flying? When booking flights: You may normally begin boarding ship by 12 Noon on your day of departure. Pick up your luggage at your airlines' carousel. If you and your cabinmate arrive to the pier simultaneously check-in together with the same crew person at the counter. This saves you both valuable time. Otherwise, board alone as soon as you can. When your cruise ship returns it may not be able to dock early because of fog. Or maybe U.S. Customs is delayed. It usually takes two hours to disembark. Plus you must be at the airport two hours before your plane departs. For all these reasons we say never book an early flight home. The rule is: Board ship by 12 Noon and fly home only after 12 Noon.



STAYING FIT: INFLIGHT FLEXIBILITY



Knee Flexion: Lift knee toward chest, decreasing the amount of joint space at back of the knee. Repeat with other leg.



Dorsiflexion: With heel on floor, point toes upward, decreasing the angle between the foot and front of the leg. Repeat with other foot.



Eversion: With foot flat on floor, gently roll the foot inward. Repeat.



Knee Extension: Straighten knee, increasing the amount of joint space at the back of the knee to its full range. Repeat with other leg.



Plantar Flexion: Lift the heel and keep toes pointed toward the floor, increasing the angle between the top of the foot and front of the leg. Repeat with other foot.



Inversion: With foot flat on floor, gently roll the foot outward. Repeat.

Keep a cell phone or iPhone photo of all your suitcases and carry-on. If lost, you can show the airport agent exactly what they look like. Carry all your jewelry on your person. Do not ever pack jewelry in checked luggage. Put cruise luggage tags on your suitcases BEFORE leaving home. This provides the best chance for your luggage to have quick, safe delivery to your ship. Airlines and hotels know what to do when they see them.



Helois

Hefty luggage. To avoid injury from monster suitcases, push luggage, don't pull, and lift with your legs, not your back. Use suitcases with wheels, if possible. Or pack two small bags instead of one big bag, and carry one in each hand to keep yourself balanced.



CONSUMER REPORTS ON HEALTH APRIL



Airlines General Luggage Polices:

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS: Phone your carrier before departure to learn its latest luggage policy. Usually a purse or briefcase may be taken onto a plane free, in addition to one carry-on. Persons flying First Class should be able to check two bags without having to pay any extra charge. Checked bags usually cannot exceed 50 lbs. each. There is no charge for a carry-on, which must fit under your airplane seat or overhead bin. Checked bags must meet certain linear dimensions requirements. *(see below)

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS: It is best to phone your carrier to learn its latest luggage restrictions. Usually a carry-on and your purse or briefcase may be

brought onto the plane at no extra charge. A checked bag usually can not exceed 50 lbs. A carry-on flying international must fit under the airplane seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. All luggage must meet linear dimensions requirements.*(see below)

Checked Bag going anywhere cannot exceed 62" linear dimensions. *

Carry-On Bag going anywhere cannot exceed 51" linear dimensions.*

*(Width + Length + Depth = Linear dimensions)

Any liquid in checked bags should be double wrapped in plastic and sealed.

Any liquid in a carry-on container cannot exceed a 3 oz. and must be wrapped with all other such containers in a clear, sealed bag. (See below.)

Obey the airlines—and still look great when you land

The latest regulations from the Transportation Security Administration: You can bring any kind of personal product onboard (including liquids, lotions, aerosols, and gels)—you just aren't allowed to carry very much of anything. The rules: Your max for liquids is 3 ounces per product, and all toiletries must fit comfortably in a zip-top quart-size plastic bag that you show at Security. If your toothpaste is full-size, that's a no, even if it's technically under the limit because you've already used half of it. Here, some goodies that come in the right size and do the job.

How to... Pack a suitcase!

Want to fit more clothes in your luggage, prevent wrinkles and keep everything in easy reach? Pack smart with these expert tips!

- Fewer folds = fewer creases!** Fold shirts in half lengthwise, so sleeves match up, then fold sleeves over at the shoulder seam; stack one on top of the other. Toler—a neat rectangular bundle that'll use very little space and have very few creases. Image: Sarah Giedt, an editor at Fodor's Travel Publishing. Similarly, fold pants and skirts in half lengthwise and stack or roll them from the bottom up.
- Fill your shoes!** You wouldn't pack empty boxes, so why pack empty shoes? Stuff them with socks, then place in plastic bags to keep clothes clean.
- Don't pack air!** Knits take up 33% less space if placed in zipper-top plastic bags and the air is forced out before sealing. Don't fold belts, suspenders and lay them around the edges of the suitcase.
- Thin clothes** Place items to wear first around the suitcase to disrupt it. Don't pack heavy items like shoes or heavy sweaters with reverse discarding.

Did you know? A full—but not overstuffed—suitcase also helps keep clothes wrinkle-free!

Woman's World 06/14/05 -Bt

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12.) Should I take my good jewelry? Whatever you do, do NOT pack jewelry in checked bags you will give to the airlines, hotel bell caps, or cruise lines' crew. Always keep your jewelry on your person, in your carry-on, or in your purse when flying anywhere at any time. If you'd be destroyed because you lost any piece jewelry, do not bring it. When on the ship passengers do wear lots of gold and nice jewelry, especially on formal nights. All cabins have a safe to store jewelry, money, passports, etc. You can take your favorite fine pieces to wear on the ship, but do not wear them in port. Don't be afraid to over-dress during the cruise. Colorful costume jewelry is always fashionable. When you purchase jewelry during a cruise always keep it and its receipts on your person to declare when returning home the United

States. U.S. Customs & Border Protection often asks to see both the jewelry and the receipts proving you paid for it when you're bringing home new, expensive jewelry. They do this because foreign jewelry stores and the cruise lines work with U.S. Customs & Border Protection to ensure folks who bought expensive jewelry during their cruise do not return home to file false insurance claims declaring their new jewelry was stolen when they were on the ship. U.S. Customs & Border Protection wants to confirm that you have your new, expensive jewelry with you before you return home to the U.S.A.

13.) Is there gambling on the ship? Yes! A recent Yale study found  that casinos were healthy places because they require players to perform cognitive acts if they are to win, thereby delaying dementia. Most of the cruise ships have slot machines and gaming tables that include Roulette, Poker, Black Jack, Texas Hold'em and Craps. All are available every night when a ship sails to its next port of call. Guests may normally charge up to \$2,000 per day for gaming chips. Casinos no longer allow guests to draw out cash on their Sea Passes, credit cards or debit cards. They must use on board ATM machines that charge a minimum 5% service fee if one pulls out cash. Guests may also cash one personal check for no more than \$200 at Guest Relations one time only during the cruise, if they need cash to go on shore.

14.) Why book a cruise so far in advance? Booking a low cost cruise is like booking low cost air. When an airline first announces its new flights it has low fares to promote sales. There are not many low air fares available for new flights, so it's important to book any low cost air early. It's the same when booking a cruise. The best staterooms/prices sell out first. While airlines announce new flights every 3 or 4 months the cruise lines open up new itineraries a year ahead of departure. Just as you want to reserve the best price/seat on an airplane, so too you will want to reserve the best price/stateroom on a cruise ship. Experienced cruisers with mid-ship staterooms near elevators book a year ahead of departure knowing if they cancel anytime up to 100 days before the cruise departs they can usually get a full refund. Airlines do not give refunds. If you do not initially have a roommate still make a full deposit and add your roommate's name closer to departure. Because you booked early any roommate you invite will have your same low price. You can also change the name of your roommate within a week of departure without penalty, as long as you book early! By putting down a deposit, you are guaranteed the price won't go up, but if it

drops before the final payment is made, we will do everything we can to insure you get the new, lower price.

15.) Why can't I book on the Internet? Ask the invisible Internet the following questions: "Are port expenses included? Are international, federal, local and state taxes included? Is my stateroom mid-ship? Is it non-smoking? If a cabin category is not available when I initially book will you call me later when one opens up? Does this price include travel insurance? Is travel insurance even offered? Will you help me if I must file an insurance claim when I return? Is my deposit 100% refundable if I cancel? Will I receive a written confirmation within 48 hours verifying my stateroom number, deck location and sailing date? Will a Travel Host be with me to assure my cruise expectations are fulfilled? Does this cruise have private exercise classes for me and my friends led by certified fitness experts who I know and trust? Will someone provide me with packing tips, explaining the ship's dress code and advise me of what customs I should observe in each country we visit? Will I have dinner each evening with my own friends at our own private dining table? Do I have early security clearance? Early boarding? Early disembarkation? Do you offer fully escorted pre-and post cruise tours? Do you make hotel arrangements if I want to fly in a day or two early to our port of departure? What if I need flight arrangements? Can you help me with currency exchange questions and to obtain foreign currency? Will you book transfers for me to the pier and back to the airport? If I have a problem preparing for my cruise may I call you with my questions? Where exactly is your Internet office? What is your Internet phone number? Who is my Internet contact person? If I become sick on the ship will you be sure I get home safely? Will you obtain clearances for me to bring my CPAP machine on board ship and provide whatever medical assistance I may need for it to work? What if I need a handicap room, connecting staterooms or to change my cabin's location? If someone in my family needs me for an emergency at home will you notify me on board ship? Is your office located in the United States paying local taxes and employing American citizens? What if, at the last minute, my roommate can not go? Will you allow me to change names without a penalty? What if the cruise lines drops its prices? Will you voluntarily pass them through?"

16.) How can I be reached if there's an emergency? Your family can call the emergency number for the cruise line. It is usually available from the cruise line website but we are happy to provide it if someone needs it. The cost of either call is \$7.95 USD a minute. It can be charged to an American Express, Visa or Discover credit card. Be sure to tell your family the name of your ship and your cabin number. But it must be a life threatening situation before she can call.

Save Space in Cabin by sharing what you bring:

- * Hair dryers in cabins are often attached to bathroom walls. Good to bring a spare hair dryer.
 - * Travel irons are not permitted, nor made available to guests. Room service can iron for you for a fee.
 - * Because they are a fire hazard, Security will confiscate all irons from your luggage when you board.
 - * Ships usually offer a Wake-Up Call Service, but bring a travel alarm to be absolutely sure.
 - * Wooden clothes pins are best to hang swim suits in shower. Plastic ones can not hold up wet suits.
 - * Shower has a clothes line, but not always a shower cap. Bring a shower cap to be sure you have one..
 - * Do not bring extra hangers. Ship has plenty. Just ask. But do bring closet and/or hanger extensions.
 - * Cruise ship provides all towels for your bath, pool and beach visits. Do not bring towels.
 - * Cameras? Pack them in your carry-on only. Do not pack them in checked luggage. They'll be x-rayed!
 - * Photo shop on ship sells selection of flash cards, batteries, camera and tech supplies.
 - * General stores on ship have sun tan lotions, toothpaste and most all known toiletries.
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17.) Finally.....

If you forget a toothbrush, or another personal item, don't worry. Such items are available in any ship's general store. And stewards do their best to help you find whatever you need. But remember your cabin steward may not always be available. Be sure. Bring whatever you think you may need. There is no limit to how much luggage you can bring onto a ship. The trick is to get it past the airlines which now request you travel with one suitcase (not to exceed 50 lbs) and one carry-on. And you must store everything in your own Stateroom, which has limited space. Other than that, bring whatever you like, and remember you must be able to carry it for yourself.

18.) Do cell phones work? Check with your phone service before cruising, but these days cell phones almost always work when you're docked in port. Roaming rates apply. And cell phones usually work in the public areas on a cruise ship too. The cost to your phone is usually \$2 to \$3 per minute. If you purchase an Internet package on the ship, your cell phone most likely work in your stateroom or in other enclosed areas on the ship too. That package fee is about 75 cents per minute. If your family has an emergency they can leave a message for you on your cell phone for you to retrieve when you're docked. Or they can call 1-800-273-7607 and we will notify the ship to have you call home. However, the ship will not accept any emergency call unless it is a true life or property threatening emergency which must be specified before we can make the call. Be sure to leave your family the name of your ship, which cruise lines it is and your stateroom number.



19.) Is Internet service available? Yes, ships do have Internet service, but don't rely upon it for business. Weather conditions can impact satellite access. While ships do have computers for passengers to use 24/7, Internet access sometimes is not available because of poor satellite visibility. Every port of call has Internet cafes within walking distance of where any ship docks. They are not expensive. And YES....for 75 cents a minute wi-fi can be available in your cruise stateroom, if you buy a pre-paid package on the ship. However, as your Travel Coordinator, I emphatically recommend you think twice before bringing your lap top or iPad on your cruise vacation. There are too many ways it can be lost or stolen or forgotten. Do not bring any item that would devastate you if you lost it. Too much is going on during your cruise to keep track of everything. 24/7 there's Internet access in the ship's public computer room. You can stay in touch with home easily. Be safe. Use the ship's computers for 75 cents per minute. Leave yours at home.

20.) Who do I call if I forget something on the ship or if I have a post cruise comment? The Lost and Found Department for most lines is open 8 AM to 6 PM every M-F and 9 AM to 6 PM on Saturday. Know your

cabin number, sail date and ship when you call. Credit card questions/issues can be discussed at this same number.

21.) Is smoking allowed on the ship? As of Jan. 1, 2014, cruise guests may no longer smoke in any stateroom on any Royal Caribbean. It is a fire hazard to smoke in any ship's Stateroom, including out on any Balcony. The only places where smoking is permitted is: top deck, Casino Bar, starboard side of outdoor pool and in any of the Cigar Clubs.

23.) Is there a minimum age for children? Each cruise line has their own regulations but in general, an infant must be at least 6 months of age at the time of sailing, if the ship has no more than 2 consecutive days at sea. If the ship will have 3 or more consecutive days at sea, then normally an infant must be at least 1 year of age on the first day of sailing. For young adults, or for specific information on an individual cruise line, please see our link for "AGE REQUIREMENTS".

Most important of all.... Do not forget your smile and valid passport. More than anything else these two items will help assure you have a wonderful and safe cruise vacation. We thank you sincerely for taking your vacation with us. Your cruising pleasure is ours.