

101

Useful Cruise Tips & Hints



DECK CHAIR CRUISING

Need-to-know

Before Booking



1. The minimum age to travel on a cruise ship is generally 12-months. Many cruise ships are unable to accommodate infants younger than this due to limited neo-natal facilities on board and at ports of call.

2. The season in which you choose to travel will essentially affect the cost of your cruise. It will greatly determine cabin prices, with the high season and school holidays generally being more expensive. If you are on a budget, you may want to consider cruising in the off-peak season.

3. Don't forget to ask about a past passenger discount. If you don't know your past passenger number, don't worry we can find it!

4. Defence Force benefits are also available for Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel currently active as well as retired or disabled servicemen and women.

5. If you prefer a kid free cruise, try to travel outside of school holidays. Some ships have caps on the amount of children allowed onboard however school holidays are the busiest time for families.

6. If you are cruising with more than two children, often two cabins are required. More and more cruise lines are offering connecting rooms and suites can often house 5 or more people.

7. If you are travelling with children or in groups, make a meeting point and time to stay connected as there is no reception out at sea.

8. Want to test the waters of cruising? Many cruise lines offer 2-5 day sample or short cruises out of all major Australian cities.

9. Look at the amount of sea days before booking. Some cruises love spending day at sea, others enjoy port intensive trips stopping at a different port each day.

10. Check your visa and passport requirements before you book your cruise. These documents can take some time so you will need to ensure they will be ready and available before you set sail.



11. Verify with your doctor any vaccinations you may need before you cruise.

12. If you are not departing from your home port, get there the night before and enjoy a more relaxing holiday. Many cruises miss the boat due to delayed flights, traffic or bad weather.

13. Size does matter! Before booking your cabin, decide how much room you are going to need to feel comfortable in, and what kind of bed you wish to sleep in.

14. Unless you are on a tight budget or all other cabins have sold out, opt for an outside cabin or balcony for longer cruises. Being able to have breakfast with an ocean view is spectacular.

15. Get orientated on your first day by taking a self-guided tour from top to bottom. It will save you a lot of hassle when trying to find the specialty dining or when you are rushing to make the start of a show.



16. Try to avoid the elevators on the first and last day. They will be very slow due to the amount of crew ferrying around luggage.

17. Head up to the top deck for the sail away party. You will have amazing views, a party spirit and it is a great way to start your holiday.

18. Cruise passengers travelling with their family and/or young children are best to select the earlier dining time options. There are plenty of options for snacks and meal in the evening for peckish adults.

19. If you don't like to rush while eating, it's best to choose the later dining time. The second seating is usually slower paced and more relaxed as the staff don't have to prep another seating.

20. Not an early riser? Choose the second seating to dine for breakfast and enjoy the extra hour or two to sleep in, or choose a ship that offers "My Time Dining."

21. Book as early as possible to ensure you get the cabin you want and the dining times that suit you best.



Boarding Time
stops **1 Hour**
before **Departure**,
be sure you are
there in time

22. Pre-book into any shore excursions or onboard activities to avoid missing out.

23. Check the times of arrival and departure of shore days before booking. Some companies stay for much longer than others, even including overnight stays. If there is a particular port you don't want to miss it's important to know how long you will have.



24. If you choose to opt for self-guided tours, remember to leave yourself plenty of time to return to the ship. The ships will not wait for you and you will need to make your own way to the next port.

25. You will be given an identification number sticker for shore excursions to let you know what departure group you are in. This is able to be removed once you are on shore.

26. As much as you would love to bring your furry friends along, most cruise ships do not accommodate pets.

27. Thinking of cruising by yourself? Cruising is a great way to meet new people, however be prepared to pay slightly more for a single cabin. Keep an eye out in our packages section for singles deals.

28. On many cruise ships, anyone aged under 21 must be accompanied by an adult.

29. Tie a big bow or ribbon to your luggage before you board. It will make your luggage stand out from the crowd.

30. Book a cabin on the port side of the ship to ensure you get the first view of the ports of call you are visiting.

31. If you have any specific dietary requirements, let the cruise line know in advance so they can accommodate to your needs.

32. The boarding time for a cruise ship stops 1 hour before departure. It is best to arrive at the port several hours before the ship is set to sail. You can start to enjoy the ship as soon as you embark.



33. If your flight is delayed, you get caught in traffic and you don't make it in time for departure, chances are, the cruise ship is not going to wait for you. You will need to arrange a flight to the first port of call and this will usually come at your own expense.



34. Sea days are a great opportunity to sleep in, relax by the pool and rejuvenate yourself for your next shore excursion.

35. Essentials to pack in your hand luggage when both embarking and disembarking include your duty-free purchases, GST tax invoices, valuables and fragile items, medications and prescriptions and your travel insurance policy, visa and passport details.

36. As with every other type of holiday, buy your insurance as soon as you have paid your deposit to cover yourself for any unexpected cancellations or adjustments.

37. Pack a spare pair of clothes and anything you may need on the first day of your cruise. If your luggage is slow to arrive on the first day, you won't be put out.

38. Don't be concerned if your bag doesn't arrive immediately. With so many passengers onboard it can take up to 3 hours for your bag to arrive.

39. Fill out all your travel forms and documents before you arrive at the embarking port and check-in online. This will speed up the process of getting all of the passengers onboard.

40. Alcohol is generally not allowed to be taken onboard a cruise ship. Alcohol purchased at ports of call during the cruise will be retained until the completion of the cruise. Some cruise lines allow you to consume the alcohol in restaurants or state rooms; however a hefty corkage fee applies.

41. Passengers can bring their own sporting equipment along (i.e. snorkelling gear, tennis racquets etc.). But first, check out the ship's rental availability and prices to see if it's worth using up all that extra room in your luggage.



Don't forget to pack your sunscreen...



42. Baby equipment is available onboard family friendly ships, but you should bring your own necessities like diapers and baby food.

43. If you are travelling with children, a nightlight for your cabin will help them to orientate themselves in new surroundings.

44. It is a good idea to review the ship's deck plans before embarking to familiarise yourself with your cabin location. Once onboard a daily itinerary for activities with location information is provided.

45. Take a camera that has rechargeable batteries. The cost of batteries onboard can be quite exuberant.

46. Each cabin has just one electrical outlet, which only has two plugs. If you think you are going to need more than two at one time, bring your own power board, surge protector or extension cord. Check at the time you are booking your cruise as to the type of electrical sockets onboard and if you would be required to bring your own adaptor.

47. Some people are happy to unpack their bag as they need it, others prefer to hang everything up as soon as they get onboard. If you can spare the room in your luggage, bring a few extra clothes hangers as usually there are only about 5-10.

48. One of the best things about cruising, compared to staying in motels, is that you only have to unpack once!

49. There is no need to bring beach towels along on your cruise. These will be provided for your use both on the cruise ship and at shore locations

50. Don't forget to pack and use your sunscreen. Bad sunburn will make for an unpleasant cruise and the price of sunscreen on board is almost twice as much as you would pay at home.

51. An insulated/travel mug with a lid will keep your coffee hot as you laze by the pool. Fill it at the beverage station or buffet and you won't even have to worry about spills.

52. Pack a small flashlight to ensure you don't get lost late at night. You never know when it may come in handy.

53. Place all items you think may leak in a plastic, zip-top bag to ensure your clothes and luggage stay in good condition.

54. A hairdryer is available in every cabin. Save space in your luggage and don't bring your own from home.

55. As much as you will want to take your brand new DSLR ashore at a port of call, sometimes it isn't the best idea. Unless you are going to be carrying it around your neck the whole time, it is better to take a disposable camera to capture your time here. This is especially the case if you are getting someone else to take a photo of you.

56. Avoid carrying belongings in a "bum bag" when exploring ports of call. It makes you stand out as a tourist like a sore thumb, making you an easy target for thieves and pick-pockets.

57. Research your ports of call before departing on your cruise. Eight hours is a lot of time to fill and a three-hour shore excursion just might not cut it. On the other hand you might want to see multiple sites that would take longer than 8 hours.

58. Shore tours run rain, hail and shine. Unless there is something drastic on the horizon, be prepared to undertake the tour no matter what the weather conditions.

59. Photocopy all important documents before you set sail and take these ashore on ports of call, instead of the originals

60. Be aware of water quality at your destinations. Play it safe and take bottled water ashore. It would be horrible to spend the remainder of your cruise cooped up by the toilet.

61. Ask the cruise staff about tipping policies at your port of call destinations. Proper etiquette is expected when visiting these places.

62. If you decide to hire your own taxi to be shown around the township of your port of call, make sure you both agree on a price before you depart. This way you won't get ripped off!

*Photocopy all
important
documents before
you set sail*

**Ask about Tipping
Policy onboard..**

64. Each cruise ship will have at least one medical centre on board. To save time, bring your own medications, supplies and prescriptions

65. Most cruise ships offer childcare centres from early morning to late at night. Afterhours care can also be arranged for an additional cost.

66. Prevent burns by avoiding to iron your clothes in your cabin. There are plenty of self-service laundries onboard. Alternatively pack clothes that don't require ironing.

67. The initial safety drill IS mandatory. Don't try to sneakily hide in your cabin...you will be found!

68. Don't be afraid to meet other cruisers! Most cruisers are friendly and there to have a good time. It's a great opportunity to make a new happy hour buddy or friend to karaoke with.

69. Each ship attracts cruisers of different ages. For example, if you cruise on a Cunard ship outside of school holiday, expect a lot of mature cruisers. If you travel on a Carnival ship during school holidays expect younger families and couples.

70. Make an effort to live without Facebook and Twitter while cruising. Roaming fees on mobile phones can be costly and using the internet on computers at onboard internet cafes comes at an astronomical price.



71. Tipping is highly recommended, in fact expected. Each cruise line's gratuity policies vary, so be sure to check these out before sail, to work them into your onboard budget.

72. Avoid motion sickness or seasickness by taking travel tablets, in case you need them, you don't want to be walking through the ship looking for the shops.

73. Book onto larger ships if you are concerned about seasickness as they are more stable than smaller ships.

74. Cabins mid-ship on lower decks are best for people who may suffer from sea sickness as they are more stable than rooms at the front or back of the ship.

63. Most cruise ships offer passengers the convenience of being able to charge all of their expenses to their cabin. An itemized statement will be delivered to your cabin number prior to disembarkation

75. Smoking is permitted onboard most ships but only in designated areas.

76. Adults only areas exist on most ships, some for free and some for a fee. They are a great place to escape the hustle and bustle of large ships on sea days.

77. Befriend the person who cleans and makes up your room – they may give you chocolates on your pillow or make you a towel animal.

78. Make sure your cabin door is properly shut before heading off for the day. Most doors are self-closing, but just like any other holiday you don't want your valuables to be exposed to passers-by in case the door doesn't shut properly.

79. Make use of the safe in your room to store important items like passports and jewellery.

80. Hand sanitizer can be found throughout most ships so that you can hit the buffet or grab an ice-cream any time of day.

82. Most food onboard is free so make the most of it and indulge, you are on holidays after all.

83. Yes, room service is available at all times! However between 12pm – 5am a small surcharge can apply.

84. There is no open beverage rule onboard. Feel free to grab a cocktail from the top deck and head to your room, a cosy deck chair or the casino! This goes for food too.

85. Be aware that bottled water is not free onboard unless you purchase a drinks package. Bring a water bottle onboard with you to fill up at the buffet.

86. Formal nights are truly a spectacle, most passengers will wear their best suits or tuxedos and a formal dress or gown. Although you don't need to dress like red carpet royalty, ties and collar shirts are expected for men and smart-casual or cocktail attire is expected for women. If dressing up isn't your thing, there are parts of the ship where no formal attire is required.

81. Be prepared for crowds in the main dining and bar areas around dinner time. You may have to share a table at the main food court or dining area, however cruisers are a friendly bunch and will gladly let you share their spot.

87. Many cruise ships offer spa discounts on first-day and port-day treatments.



88. Be aware of the dress codes of destinations. For example, although Noumea is surrounded by beaches, it is not socially acceptable to head to the shops in just your bikini or board shorts. Take a light cover-up with you, even if you are just heading up to buy an ice-cream.



89. Contracting Noroviruses on cruise ships is actually not as common as one may think. The best way to avoid getting sick is to frequently wash your hands

90. Nine out of 10 outbreaks of Norovirus take place at land-based locations, usually in places like hospitals, schools and day care centres.



91. Professional photographers will be onboard for family portraits, however be aware that prices for these services can be sky-high.

92. Avoid hanging items to dry on the balcony. If the ship is sailing they will disappear over the edge, if it is a port day a scheduled balcony clean could see your swimsuit sailing away on its own journey.

93. You will be asked to place your luggage outside your cabin the night before you disembark. Ensure you have packed a spare pair of clothes in your hand luggage so you aren't wandering around the final day of your cruise in your PJ's.

94. Don't pack too much. While ship cabins make the most of small spaces, unless you are staying in a suite there is not enough room for your whole summer wardrobe.

95. Take time to unpack at the start of your cruise. It will save you time looking for your spare sarong and will make your room feel more relaxing.

96. Each cruise company has their own daily newsletter detailing all of the activities onboard, show times, bar opening times etc. Don't worry if you lose it though, staff throughout the ships will have spare copies.

97. Save some time and avoid the crowds at the end of the cruise and pay your onboard account

98. If you utilise the cabins safe, leave a reminder on your phone or beside your bed to check it before leaving.

99. Remember that a lot of ships will charge in US Dollars. Check the exchange rate before departing so you can calculate how much everything costs in your local currency.

100. Note that duty free shopping is closed on shore days. So stock up before you dock.

101. Enjoy! Whatever happens remember that you are on holidays. The staff are there to help and are more than happy to assist in any way possible.



Proudly brought to you by:



Deck Chair Cruising Australia

Phone: 1800-839-499
+61 7 3442 2990

Mail: PO Box 270
Springwood
QLD 4127
Australia

Web: www.dccruising.com.au

Email: reservations@dccruising.com.au



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www.dccruising.com.au

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