

With new ships, new ports and new delights, cruising is like nothing on earth. Read and take this Inside Scoop with your documents; it's packed with tips to calm all waters.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

One terrific attribute on cruises? Service is unfailingly polite. Above all, travel with a positive attitude—with extra time needed for security clearance (flights, ships and when in port), having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience! We strongly recommend Maritime Travel's cancellation/interruption and medical insurance.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn your dreams into first-rate cruises. Ask your counsellor about any trip details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- necessary arrival procedures
- who, what & when to tip
- your ports & what currency
- health and preferences e.g. vegetarian or diabetic meals.

Maritime Travel
We Know Travel Best.™

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Inside Scoop: *Cruising*

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

A warm breeze through your hair, sun on your face, a cool drink in hand—no it's not the brief Canadian summer—it's your long-awaited trip on a floating paradise. Although you want to start relaxing now, remember:

- Although it sounds carefree to book last minute, plan well ahead for benefits like the best cabin for you/airline seat selection. Arriving at your port the day prior avoid pressures such as weather delays affecting airlines.
- In balancing choices with your budget, relax and enjoy. If your dream is to step outside your room onto your private balcony, tell your counsellor as these are the quickest to sell out (at fees less than you think). Have an inside room? Don't worry! There's lots to do on deck and funds saved on your room can be used on board.
- Travelling solo? A cruise is one of the best choices; major decisions have been made, you'll meet other travellers (some dining seats you with other cruisers) and most ships have singles events—you'll still have time to relax solo.
- Log your reservation number into the cruise line's website and complete *all* check-in documents *at least 7 days* prior to departure. Besides saving time, it smooths check-in as the advance info is legally required, otherwise, you may be denied boarding. Talk to your counsellor about booking tours, birthday decorations and specialty dining ahead.
- Cruise lines ask for a credit card on file; register these in your online account. **Tip:** use a different card for kids to track expenses.
- For cell phone use check with your carrier for on board/in port use (it can be expensive). Internet access is usually available at package fees: connection time can be very slow.
- Gluten-free, vegan or kosher? There are many options, besides the benefit and assortment in buffets. Pace yourself as you'll never go hungry, especially with 24hr room service!

Your Airline

As your plane might be coming from elsewhere, register online for flight notifications to your email or texted to your cell phone. Transport Canada can prohibit items considered security risks www.catsa.gc.ca: "Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and **contact their airline for further information...**" Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior. Due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure; if late, you're not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. **Baggage:** Size/weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies: check with your airline—they usually charge for checked bags.

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags: put coloured tape or a ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. You must carry a valid passport, www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport.

In carry-on pack all travel documents, cash, valuables such as jewellery, over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers. Check your ship's dress code—one or two nights you'll need something dressy (think shawls, also to ward against breezes and sun); you don't have to dress formally or—so to speak—go overboard.

In taking a plane to your ship, pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags) as due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre. You may take baby formula, food and milk with a child aged 2 and under (0-24 months). In carry-on, pack in a notebook/pen, disinfectant hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, dairy, meat or veg over borders). Permitted in carry-on; cell phones, laptops, nail clip-



pers and canes. Items to pack in checked bags include skates! (some ships have rinks, skates supplied unless you're fond of your own) Some lines allow you to bring a bottle or two of wine

when you *first* board. If you find a great deal on duty-free (such as rum in a port) you must check it when reboarding—it will be returned to you to pack before you disembark.

Tip: Pre-pay gratuities when booking your cruise, take small bills for when in ports: \$ for US sailings, € for European cruises.

Embarkation (arriving)

Documentation depends on your departure point and likely includes your passport—ask your counsellor. Fill out cruise luggage tags and affix when you get to port (not at the airport). Some lines want your bags inside, some outside; pier porters are not cruise staff so expect to tip. Keep all travel documents, ID and what you'll need for the first few hours (swimsuit?) in carry-on as there's no access to luggage until its delivered to your room. If you smoke, there's no smoking on your balcony; only use smoking areas. **Tip:** when you board, go to a restaurant to eat, *then* explore the ship. Set your watch to ship time (even if local time differs. Your cruise:

- might expect you to leave your passport with them, secure in an onboard safe for border clearance or carry it with your room card for port visits (then your safe);
- needs credit card information on file for onboard expenses. If they ask to convert your bill to a currency other than Canadian, decline—your bank has the best rate;
- will provide a map/deck plan of your ship at check-in or in your cabin. Deck plans are around the ship and by elevators;
- might have a spa (pamper yourself) with offerings such as thalassotherapy (take an old swimsuit, while fabulous for your body, it's not for your suit). Book spa treatments early or watch for specials.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips at www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops

- Your sense of adventure & humour!

Accessibility & Comfort

Cruises provide an easy and pleasant getaway for those requiring heightened accessibility, especially those who use wheelchairs. Ships have been undergoing major renovations with barrier-free design. New ships have wider gangways, fully accessible staterooms with roll-in showers/benches, grab bars and amenities such as lower shelving and captioned televisions. With accessible public areas and washrooms throughout, decks have elevators and spacious dining areas with attentive staff. Theatres, spas and recreation facilities have been well planned including lowered counters, reserved seating and Braille. Depending on the ship, accessibility varies; ask your counsellor.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadian citizens: Emergency? See <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>. Contact Global Affairs 1-800-387-3124 in Canada/US or 1-613-996-8885 (collect if needed), sos@international.gc.ca.

You're Finally on Board !

No matter what room you've selected, you'll spend the most time on deck or at activities. Staff will ensure you have a pleasant and pampered experience. If anything in your cabin needs to be fixed, notify your room attendant. On the first day, you must attend the lifeboat drill, called to your "muster station" for standard precautions. Don't miss that (or the sail away party).

Shore tour spaces are limited—if you didn't pre-book, visit the excursion desk. You're guaranteed a reputable company; cruise lines rate activity levels so you can easily match your abilities. Check for shows, movies, theme nights, bingo and karaoke. Check photo displays for souvenir snaps taken during your trip. Read the ship's daily newsletter packed with information, delivered to your cabin each night. Onboard libraries welcome books: borrow a book and leave one. Activities are inclusive and fun, at each individual's comfort level and for kids and teens, offer time away from you. Use your cabin safe for storing travel documents and valuables such as jewellery. If you need an iron, ask your attendant (irons are restricted due to fire regulations, besides you *are* on vacation...).

Did We Mention Food?

Most main dining room meal seating times are confirmed in advance. As well as traditional set times, many lines offer flexible times seated with others. To change a reservation see the maître-d' or use your tv ordering. Many ships offer specialty dining with limited seating at lunch and dinner (extra fee). While you won't be disappointed with regular options, special restaurants can offer higher end food and dining with more intimacy. Bar waiters roam decks especially by pools; alcohol and sun don't mix and tabs quickly add up. If you order non-alcoholic drinks from servers, you're billed (including gratuities). As well as alcoholic packages (no you can't share), some sell unlimited refills and specialty coffee packs; estimate how many you would quaff a day to make it worthwhile. You might be given a special drink holder that's coded to machines to release drinks. Yes, you can take that delicious lemonade out of a restaurant.

So now we talk exercise...jog, walk laps, swim, take yoga, hit the treadmills or dance floor. Oh look, we're out of space....

In Port

Departing ships will not wait for you! Most cruise lines use passenger passes (room cards), loaded with your personal information—always keep these with you.

Enjoy local food and drink moderately: drink bottled water and wash your hands often. Avoid uncooked food, street food vendors and animals (rabies). Heed your ship's rules on what you can't bring on board. Don't wear valuable jewellery ashore and cover up beach attire in town particularly on Sundays; take off ball caps in restaurants. Keep your money out of sight (a hidden fanny pack) and pay with small bills and coins. If you're approached and not interested in buying something be firm but polite—avoid timeshare pitches. Although on vacation, your common sense can't be: don't buy or accept anything that may be taken from you; plants, narcotics, meat/animals, wood or endangered species parts. Also know your limits and exemptions in returning to Canada, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html.

Disembarkation (leaving)

The final night's newsletter will give you the details to disembark (also on your room's tv system). Disembarkation is in priority often starting with express walk-offs where passengers transfer their own bags and those flying out first. Otherwise, your ship will likely ask you to leave luggage outside your door by midnight (picked up by porters); claim your bags after leaving the ship.

Disembarkation time might seem early but with thousands of people (one up to 6,200...) to disembark, the ship also prepares for the next tour (unless you're on a back-to-back cruise; ask your counsellor). You'll go through border clearance with your passport. Going to an airport or hotel? A porter can take your bags to the taxi stand. Ships are on tight timelines to sail back out so you'll likely make your flight—no need to stay on shore a night, to extend your vacation ask your counsellor!

Tips: check your bill the night before leaving so there's time to fix anything. Whether you take your bags or leave for a porter, keep all documents, clothes and medication with you in carry-on for the next day. Do a cabin sweep for belongings.

Now, think about your next cruise with zip lines, waterparks, private islands, luxury...

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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