

# Essential Cruising



## Cruising myths debunked

I recently discussed cruising with several people who have yet to experience this wonderful type of vacation. Perhaps because I have been on so many cruises, I initially wondered how they could have such misconceptions. Then, I remembered that I myself had a totally inaccurate sense of what cruising was all about. Forced bingo and a rigid schedule had defined cruising for me, even though I had never been on a cruise. These preconceived notions of mine were entirely unfounded and delayed my entry into the world of cruising. It is interesting how we can get certain baseless ideas stuck in our heads. (Hey, my excuse is that the internet was in its infancy then and social media was basically non-existent and I never knew anybody who cruised.) Trying to spare potential cruisers from these misgivings, I have compiled a list of some of these misconceptions and have given my take on them. If you have any suggestions or comments, feel free to contact me @cruisewriter

### ***Myth #1 Everybody gets sick while cruising.***

#### **My Take**

Consider the number of people on a cruise ship at any given time. Combining the number of passengers and crew adds up to thousands of people in a relatively confined space. That does make the possibility of transmission of disease a bit higher, but think of these points first:

- Cruise ships are required by the [CDC](#) to report any outbreak of Norovirus or any other illness. So, obviously it might sound like everybody gets sick on ships. Schools, hospitals, office buildings or other places where thousands of people gather are not required to report disease outbreaks.
- Cruise ships also have [inspections](#) by the CDC that check on the cleanliness of the ship. I bet that you rarely see a headline that says that a ship received 100% on that inspection.
- When you register at the cruise terminal, you will be given a health form to fill out. One of the questions asks whether you have had diarrhea, fever or vomiting recently. Unscrupulous passengers lie on this form and possibly contaminate other passengers on the ship.



### What you can do

Be sure that you are healthy before your cruise. Some people recommend taking acidophilus as a prophylactic before traveling. Wash your hands frequently. Pay attention to other passengers who might not be health conscious and avoid them. Several cruise lines serve from the buffet to reduce the

risk of food contamination. I can't tell you how many times I have seen people touch food at the buffet and then toss it back into the food container.

### **Myth #2 Cruising is for the rich.**

#### My take

This is very true. Cruising is also for those who aren't rich. In fact, it's probably one of the best vacation values that there is. It often doesn't cost much more than what it costs to stay at home for a week. There are all sorts of promotions and types of cabins and strategies for cruising cheaply that make this form of vacation suitable for different budgets.

### What you can do

Find a good travel agent who can give you an idea of costs and can work within your realistic budget. If necessary, plan for a cruise a few years out. Start a cruise fund to save. It's possible to make regular payments before your cruise date as long as it commences far enough into the future.

### **Myth #3 - Cruise lines nickel and dime you to death.**

#### My take

It's true that there are some things that will cost you extra on your cruise, but even without spending an extra nickel or dime, you will still have food, accommodations and entertainment included. Cruise lines do charge gratuities for their crew and that fee should be considered part of the cost of vacation. When you eat out at home, don't you leave a tip or buy drinks in addition to ordering a meal? Iced tea, water, tea and coffee are included beverages. Alcoholic beverages, carbonated beverages, specialty coffees and some juices are not always included. (This varies by ship and luxury level of ship. If you are on a luxury ship or have a



special beverage or dining package or are sailing on a special promotion, you may have everything included) It's possible to have a bill with a \$0 balance after just the gratuities are paid. Some promotions even cover your gratuities. Sorting it all out is most efficient with a good travel agent.

### What you can do

Educate yourself and be sure that you understand what is included and what is not included. Watch for packages that include beverages, specialty restaurants or onboard credit.

### *Myth #4 I will feel trapped.*

#### My take



This totally depends on your personality. Do you suffer from [Cleithrophobia](#) or [Agoraphobia](#)? Do you prefer being alone? Even if you do, there are solutions that will help. Be assured that ships offer plenty of space to get away from the hustle and bustle of the ship if you find that necessary. Personally, I have always found a quiet place to read a book or enjoy the view. You aren't required to engage in group parties, demonstrations, bingo or other activities. For Cleithrophobia, engaging with other passengers in the aforementioned activities might take your mind off your aversion to enclosed spaces. Open decks might become your favorite place on the ship. If you suffer from both phobias, a cruise might not be for you.

### What you can do

Find a smaller, more intimate ship. Book a cruise that has fewer sea days so that you can get off the ship more frequently. Avoid long and portless repositioning cruising.

### *Myth #5 I will get sea sick.*

#### My take

Don't assume that if you get seasick on a small fishing boat or even if you get car sick, that you will get seasick. Ships are more stable than ever now, but that is not to say that you won't get sick or that you shouldn't take the possibility of seasickness into account. Some people do get seasick, but take prophylactic measures to prevent motion sickness. A river cruise might be a good option.



## What you can do

Speak to your doctor about prevention. Some people take pills or use a patch, while others use ginger, acupuncture or acupuncture. If you do tend to get seasick, choose a cabin on a lower deck and in the middle of the ship. Less motion is felt there.

\*\*\*\*\*Bonus\*\*\*\*\*

## Myth #6 Pirates will attack the ship.

### My take

Anything is possible, including aliens attacking the ship. And it is true that pirates did attack a cruise ship. Remember that everything comes with a bit of risk. Do you drive a car? Check out that risk compared to other types of transportation.

## What you can do

Evaluate your risks, in the end, if you are not comfortable or will constantly worry, you may be better off staying at home. Do your research and see how many cruise ships have actually been attacked by pirates.



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