

# EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CRUISING



The International Cruise Council (ICCA) wants to help you plan your next - and best - holiday... a cruise holiday. The ICCA represents 27 of the world's finest cruise lines working in affiliation with more than 1000 professional travel agents in Australia & New Zealand

This information sheet aims to answer your many questions about cruise holidays. We recommend that you consult an ICCA member travel agent to select and book

your cruise. ICCA Accredited or Master Accredited Cruise Agents are specially trained cruise experts who aim to match you with the perfect cruise.

Everyday, more and more people discover the inclusive benefits of a cruise holiday. And everyday more singles, families, couples, honeymooners, second honeymooners and groups of friends are sailing away on the holiday of their lives.

When you add it all up, it's easy to see why.

- The price of your cruise includes your accommodation, meals, activities and entertainment.
- Large cruise ships are like floating resorts, with all the things a fine resort has to offer and more. Smaller ships offer unique destinations.
- The hassles of an ordinary holiday are completely eliminated. A cruise is one convenient package. No hunting to find a restaurant, no running to make flight connections and importantly no constant packing and unpacking as you travel from one destination to another.
- You can lie back and be completely pampered or be on the go non-stop. Dine like never before, enjoy one great show after another, visit interesting places and let your cares float away

**It's no wonder that more people are taking cruise holidays than ever before and once they get a taste of cruising, they come back for more again and again.**

## **ANSWERS TO THOSE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **IS CRUISING AFFORDABLE AND A GOOD HOLIDAY OPTION?**

Cruising provides the best holiday value! There are cruise holidays to suit every budget. Your cruise fare includes accommodation, on board activities and entertainment, most meals, plus transportation from port to port – your hotel comes with you!

### **HOW LONG ARE CRUISES?**

As long or short as you like, ICCA's member lines offer itineraries that range from three

days to more than three months.

## **WHERE CAN I GO?**

Wherever you like! Cruises visit more than 500 ports worldwide and practically every destination accessible by water. You can embark on your cruise holiday from ports close to home or exciting and exotic locations around the globe.

## **HOW DO I BOOK A CRUISE?**

Visit or call an ICCA member travel agency. These professionals will help you choose the cruise that fits your holiday schedule, taste and budget. They can make all the arrangements to get you from your doorstep to your ship and back. To find a ICCA member travel agent visit [www.cruising.org.au](http://www.cruising.org.au)

## **ARE ALL SHIPS FAIRLY SIMILAR?**

Far from it! ICCA member lines' ships range from intimate and yacht-like to vessels stretching longer than three football fields. You can sail with fewer than 100 fellow passengers or with more than 3,000. Enjoy atmospheres ranging from casual to formal, contemporary to classic. Enjoy the endless activities offered on a contemporary resort-style cruise, or immerse yourself in the culture of a destination on a special interest cruise.

## **ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRUISES?**

There are cruises designed to suit virtually every interest and personal preference

- Luxury cruises with globetrotting itineraries
- Large, contemporary ships with a fantastic array of recreational facilities
- Classic ships evoking the time honoured traditions of cruising
- Special interest or exploration voyages specialising in unique destinations with a focus on cultural enrichment
- River cruises using waterways to sail into the heart of a destination.

## **WHAT IS A FLY/CRUISE PACKAGE?**

A fly/cruise or an air/sea holiday package includes, along with your cruise fare, a subsidised or reduced airfare to and from the ship's port of embarkation.

## **DO I NEED A PASSPORT?**

In most cases – YES but depends on the type of cruise and your destination. You will always need some proof of citizenship and identification. You'll receive complete information on required documents well in advance of your departure.

## **ARE THERE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF SERVICE?**

The vast majority of today's cruise ships are "one class". Everyone can use all of the ships facilities and the price of your cabin is based primarily on its size and location.

## **WILL I GET BORED OR FEEL CONFINED?**

Being at sea gives you a feeling of total freedom that no land-based resort can offer. There's plenty of room and it will probably take you two or three days just to discover

everything onboard. Cruise ships are like floating resorts with all the choices fine resorts have to offer. You can lie in a lounge chair, enjoy the sea air and soak up the sun or read books. If you're more active, join in the exercise group or dance classes, practice your tennis stroke or golf swing or take in the fresh air on the jogging deck. Or make the most of the facilities onboard and attend an enrichment lecture, play backgammon or bridge or see a movie.

## **WHAT CAN I DO IN PORT?**

You can explore on your own or take a guided tour (referred to as a shore excursion).

Each port you visit will have a multitude of things you can do to get a real feel for the destination. Search ancient ruins or hunt for shopping bargains. Ride a raft over river rapids, a bicycle down the side of a 10,000-foot volcano, or a horse across hills and beaches. Climb a waterfall or pyramid. Follow the footsteps of history or the wake of a water-skiing boat. If there's still time, play golf or tennis! Learn how to windsurf. Sun and swim at some of the world's best beaches. Catch a record marlin. Sail, snorkel or scuba dive. Take a cable car to the top of a mountain. Explore dark catacombs. In short, cruising is the perfect way to sample a number of new destinations and try all the things you've ever dreamed of doing, without worrying about having to pack and unpack!

## **DO CRUISE LINES WELCOME FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN?**

A cruise holiday is the only kind where everyone in the family is able to enjoy a break! Most cruise lines provide plenty of supervised activities for youngsters, especially during school holidays. If your children enjoy swimming, sports, games, movies and the adventure of new places, they'll love a family cruise. You'll find that children adapt to shipboard life with ease. The youth staff will help keep them busy and entertained and you won't have to wonder what they're up to every minute. Ships even offer youth camps that cater to all ages, from toddlers to teens. Best of all, children generally travel at a substantially reduced rate.

## **WHAT IS THERE TO DO AT NIGHT?**

When the stars come out, cruise ship life really comes into its own. There's often a choice of dancing, live entertainment, nightclubs, lounges, casinos and movies to enjoy.

## **IS THERE A CHARGE FOR ENTERTAINMENT?**

Never. On a cruise holiday, the entertainment is on the house. There's no cover, minimum, or charge for an admission ticket. The shows are live, the films are first-rate and all are included in your cruise fare.

## **WILL THERE BE PEOPLE LIKE ME?**

There's no such thing as a typical cruise passenger. All kinds of people take cruises now... all ages, from all walks of life. Just ask your ICCA member travel agent for advice on the best ship for you, based on your tastes and lifestyle.

## **WHAT SHOULD I PACK?**

It's a good idea to pack as you would for any resort. Cruise holidays are casual by day, whether you're on the ship or ashore. In the evening, ships vary as to dress. Ships often offer the opportunity to dress for dinner and some will even have formal or black-tie nights while onboard. At the Captain's Gala, for example, you'll probably want to wear

something more formal, such as a dark suit, or cocktail dress; perhaps even a dinner jacket or gown. Your ICCA travel agent will be able to advise you on any special dress codes.

### **CAN I USE MY HAIR DRYER OR SHAVER?**

Most ships have 110-volt outlets in the staterooms. Always check with your ICCA affiliated travel agent to be sure. Most ships offer a hair dryer in your cabin.

### **WHAT ABOUT MEAL TIMES?**

Some ships' dining rooms can accommodate all passengers at the one time or "seating". But many ships have two seating's, typically at 6.00pm or 8.30pm. All you need to do is decide whether you prefer to dine early or late then have your travel agent request your preference when you book your cruise. Remember that one of the best ways to make new friends is to ask to be seated on a large table. In addition, some ships offer alternative dining rooms, such as Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Grill-themed restaurants, separate from the main dining room. More and more cruise lines are opening up their informal lido areas to evening dining, where the dress and dishes are casual. An increasing number of ships also offer the option of romantic dinners in your cabin.

### **IS CRUISE SHIP DINING AS GOOD AS I'VE BEEN TOLD?**

Everything you've heard about cruise ship dining is true. You'll find a varied selection of dishes (appetizers, salads, soups, vegetables and desserts) on offer every time you sit down. And there's virtually no limit on what or how much you can order. But, just because your cruise ship offers plenty of delicious food, doesn't mean you'll come home out of shape. You can choose low-cal, spa, vegetarian or fitness menu selections that are just as tempting as the regular menu. Best of all, the one thing you'll never see on a cruise ship menu is a price. Because all your meals are included!

### **WHAT IF I HAVE A SPECIAL DIET?**

Most cruise ships can accommodate salt-free, low carbohydrate, low cholesterol, diabetic or other diet preferences. However, this request must be made in advance, so be sure to advise your travel agent when you book your cruise.

### **WHAT ABOUT DINING COMPANIONS - WILL I SIT WITH MY SPOUSE AND FRIENDS ONLY OR WILL I MEET OTHER PASSENGERS?**

Experienced cruisers say they prefer sitting at a table with several other diners and some lifelong friendships have been made this way. Cruise lines are geared to accommodate every guest's wishes, so in the unlikely event that you do wish to change your dining companions speak with the maitre d' who will make every effort to assist you.

### **ARE THERE NON-SMOKING AREAS?**

Onboard dining rooms and even some entire ships are now totally smoke-free, reflecting passenger requests. Check with your ICCA travel agency regarding the individual cruise line's policies.

### **CAN WE CELEBRATE A SPECIAL OCCASION ONBOARD?**

Absolutely! Most cruise lines will even treat you to a complimentary cake and a chorus of "Happy Whatever" to honor the occasion. Your birthday or anniversary can be made more

festive with champagne, flowers or canapés. You can even arrange for a private party onboard. All you have to do is advise your travel agent in advance.

### **IS CRUISING RIGHT FOR HONEYMOONERS?**

Without a doubt! Cruising offers an atmosphere that's just right for romance...intimate dinners for two, strolling on deck at sunset, dancing the night away (even under the stars). Most lines provide special services - from Sunday or Monday departures to champagne and breakfast in bed. Also some ships offer special programs for performing a marriage ceremony or renewing your marriage vows.

### **CAN WE STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD?**

Maybe too easily! Most staterooms are equipped with televisions and have satellite or cellular phones. You can even use your own mobile phone on some ships where a mobile service is available. Many cruise ships are now Wi-Fi enabled, so that you can check your emails on your laptop in your stateroom or go to the on board computer café for internet access. Most ships have a daily newsletter with news, headlines, and selected stock quotes and sports scores.

### **WHAT ABOUT TIPPING?**

Tipping policies vary across all cruise lines. Some will include it as part of your total cruise fare and others may offer a "tipping not required" policy. Some will add a dollar figure (usually US\$10 per person per day) to your onboard account to take the hassle away from you when deciding who and how much to tip. No matter what the policy of the cruise you choose, tipping is a matter of individual preference and entirely at your discretion.

### **ARE THERE MEDICAL SERVICES ONBOARD?**

Almost all cruise ships (except for some smaller vessels operating in coastal waters) have a fully equipped medical facility onboard and staff capable of handling almost any emergency.

### **ARE THERE LAUNDRY SERVICES ONBOARD?**

Almost all cruise ships have laundry facilities and many provide dry-cleaning services. There is, however, an additional charge for professional laundry and dry-cleaning services. Many ships also have self-service laundrettes.

### **DO CRUISE LINES ACCEPT GROUP BOOKINGS?**

Most lines will work with groups - often at special rates depending on how many people are involved. Policies vary from company to company and the time of year. Consult your ICCA travel agent for details.

### **ARE THERE MEETING ROOMS ONBOARD?**

Nearly every full-size ship has public rooms or a conference centre to offer as meeting space for groups. If you'd like to make such arrangements, ask your travel agent to contact the cruise line's group sales department to coordinate schedules and organise any catering. Your ship may also be able to offer audio-visual equipment.

### **CAN I EXTEND MY CRUISE HOLIDAY?**

Many cruise lines feature special pre or post-cruise hotel packages allowing you to extend your holiday in either the port where you begin or finish your cruise.

### **IS MOTION DISCOMFORT A PROBLEM?**

Rarely! Popular cruise itineraries boast some of the calmest waters in the world. In addition, stabilizers on modern ships, advanced availability of accurate weather information and development of effective preventative medications have, for the most part, eliminated the incidence of motion discomfort.

### **IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! IS IT?**

The one major complaint we hear over and over again is that cruises end far too soon! Beyond that, it's hard to find any negatives. All you have to worry about is relaxing and enjoying your holiday. Most importantly, every crew and staff member on board is dedicated to making your cruise the best holiday of your life (until you top it with your next cruise!).

### **WHO SHOULD I SEE IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?**

Ask your travel agent. If you don't have one visit our website at [www.cruising.org.au](http://www.cruising.org.au) or [www.cruising.org.nz](http://www.cruising.org.nz) and click the Travel Agent Search. All you have to do is type in your postcode or suburb and the ICCA travel agencies in your area will be displayed.

ICCA travel professionals are knowledgeable about all the cruise options available for your holiday. In fact, you'll find that most have been on more than one cruise, so they can advise you from personal experience.

Many ICCA affiliated agencies even have Accredited and Master Cruise Consultants on staff. These are individuals who have successfully completed a variety of cruise training programs and have visited or sailed on many of the ships you may be interested in.

\*All information outlined above has been put together as a guide to provide a broad look at cruise holidays across all different types of cruise lines. Please check with your ICCA Travel Agent Member that the information is relevant to the cruise you are considering.