



CRUISE

First time
Cruisers
— Icon of
the Seas

THE DO'S AND
DON'TS OF
CRUISING IN SA

SOLO CRUISING
Below
the Deck

APRIL 2024

MSC Splendida
Editors' review

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Water Day on 22 March reminds us to save water to save the world.

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SAVE THE WORLD**
WORLD WATER DAY: 22 MARCH



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Editor's Note

One of the best things about being the editor of a cruising magazine is that we get invited to test the cruises that we write about and this was no exception. This month we got to talk to those behind the scenes, test the services, the salons and the cuisine. The entertainment, whats on offer and what the cruise director and event co ordinator do on board for 6 very long months.

We also look at why cruises are so successful but also there are somethings that really don't work, depending on what you are looking for. So before you book that fabulous cruise, check out our how to and what to guide which will make your cruise memorable.

See you on the dockside

Geniene Preston

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Moments with the Splendida team



WE ARE SAILING...

It was time to catch up on cruising! Having cruised on the Mediterranean and done several trips with MSC on the South African coast line, it was time to do another one as the Splendida was returning to Europe to make way for a newly refurbished MSC Musica - the MSC Musica had visited our shores before and always had great reviews.

We were a group travelling together and to make it easier on us all, we booked our flights from the different parts of South Africa to arrive roughly the same time and then to meet at the Mugg and Bean for breakfast. I must say totally impressed with that idea and the service and food was superb. I am not one to enjoy the "food chain" options but in this case, King Shaka Durban, with their had limited choices., this was a good one.

We were met by the Cruises transfer company, Cruising South Africa, with ice cold water and a clear blue sky. The coaches were well kept and so far our excitement was tangible as we were about to leave our troubles behind for a few days. No internet, no wifi and preferably no issues at home or at the office.

I expected chaos at the port terminal as loading maybe 3000-4000 people of all ages, shapes and sizes would be challenging but luckily MSC had arranged all their "hands on deck" as it were and no shortage of assistance or people willing to assist.

by Geniene Preston

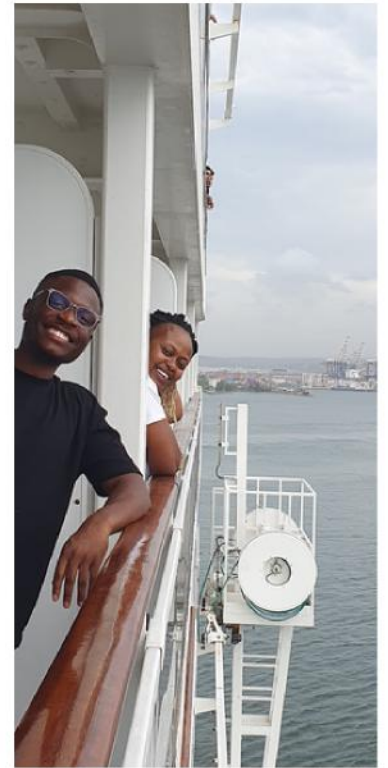
We booked balcony cabins because after all, unlike Europe, we can't get off every day in a different dock, so we upgraded to balcony cabins to enjoy the view whilst being a bit private too.

There is always that bubble of excitement when I get to go on a holiday whether short or long and the sight the ship was just breathtaking. To think I was going to spend a few days floating around the Indian Ocean with newly found friends and generally enjoying the services of the Splendida for which there have been some mixed reviews.

I couldn't believe there were still people bringing food on board and fighting with security as to why they couldn't bring it along. One elderly couple eventually decided that the security guard was asking for the food because he was hungry and needed to feed his family. No amount of protesting on his side, could convince this couple that its just about rules and regulations and not because he or his family needed to be fed. I watched that for a while as it was hugely entertaining but then had to move as the queue was moving. Assistance for disabled passengers was available as was for large groups. The queue moved relatively quickly although I must say, there could be some refreshments or advice to bring refreshments because the wait to board could be as long as 2 to 3 hours while you move from baggage, to customs to checkin and get your cruise card.

We finally made it on board and into our beautiful cabins.

Hint: Before boarding a cruise, always check the packages, the upgrades and what facilities are on board. Scour the menus and opening times of the speciality restaurants. We booked the Fantastica package and booked our packages for drinks and excursions before hand. Great discounts for planning! Visit this link for a layout and information on the Splendida. It was really useful for us.



[CLICK HERE](#) 



My balcony, although small, was an absolute delight. Watching the port disappear as we left for our 3 day journey to there and back (as my father would say, to see how far it is) I saw the helicopter come to fetch the pilot once we cleared the narrow port. And before you knew it, we were on our way!



To book the right cabin

CLICK HERE 

After the departure from the terminal, we showered and got ready for a fun evening. The group met at the Butchers Cut, one of the speciality restaurants on board. Hard to choose what would be good but eventually settled on a glass of Zandfliet Shiraz (I have a thing about ordering wine or drinks whose names I can't pronounce and SA Wines are always a win!) I ordered bone marrow starters, lamb chops and mac and cheese as a side finished off with strawberry cheesecake. Loved the bonemarrow and lamb chops which although quite fatty was juicy and palatable. Cheese cake a bit disappointing and mac and cheese not as expected. Plan was to visit the Theatre after dinner but we were enjoying the company so much and with everyone off their mobile phones, it was awesome to have uninterrupted conversation! The rest of the group disappeared off to the various night club offerings and I decided my cabin needed me....

Bed was welcome and had a fun time finding a channel besides safety (it's a new thing. No longer do we cluster on deck elbowing your way to stand to attention listening to a safety briefing by a crew member holding a megaphone and trying to find the right size life jacket... no its all changed. You have to clear the decks, head to your cabin, watch a video, then call a number on the cabin phone and rush to another floor to have your card acknowledged. You are now trained for an emergency).



To find the right speciality restaurant package for your cruise

CLICK HERE 

The morning started early with the sun streaming through the glass doors. I thought a breakfast on my teeny tiny balcony was a must. Told to order no earlier than 7:30am I picked up the phone and ordered a continental basket with coffee. It arrived 20 minutes later. Piping hot basket of muffin and croissants together with corn flakes, yogurt and coffee. Coffee a bit sludgy but that's something I expect when you're trying to serve 4500 people so no surprises there. But the rest was delightful. Dived into my mini bar but resisted the urge to drink so early! Just grabbed a mango juice and added it to the orange juice. The mini bar was in our package so it's a real spoil for me. Normally it's taped and sealed and nailed closed as the cost is more than the mortgage on our previous house!

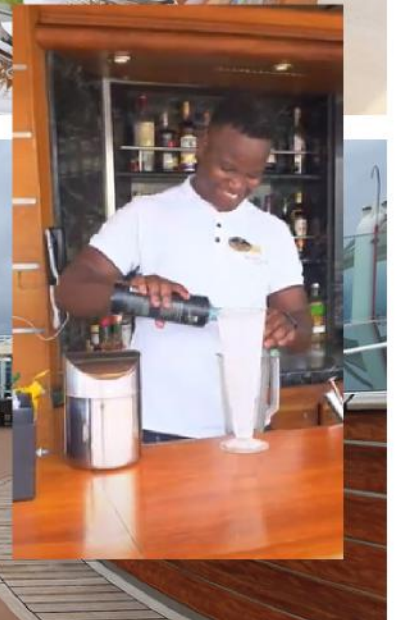
Dressed, showered and off to do an inspection on the ship. Booked my pedicure for tomorrow as we have a spa package included and I swapped mine. Beautiful spa and with a thermal hour included. I might do that if it starts to rain!



Formula 1 simulator, Kids Lego room, super tube for everyone and a 4D cinema. I had booked the theatre for the evening at 9pm and Bingo to follow. Sadly casino was out of reach as my card would probably refuse ... but I could always gamble in Rands back in SA as this was in Dollars. Lunch was interesting at one of the seated restaurants - Reggio.

Cruise ships the world over, hire people from all countries and all backgrounds. It does mean though, that sometimes being understood can take a bit of patience. Mostly their roles determine how much English is required and I was delighted to see how many countries in Africa were represented. From Kenya to South Africa. Just wonderful to see.. Not the most amazing fish and chips I've ever had, but quite palatable. The glass of red wine was just right and a South African KWV Merlot. This time I had a wonderful South African waitress whose smile lit up the toom and I think the ship. She is will definitely feature in our magazine.

In the afternoon I was invited to visit the exclusive Yacht Club area of the ship. Snacks served with cocktails and pina coladas. 2 Jacuzzi's and a warm pool with loungers and the best view on the Ship. While the crowds huddled around the buffets and the pool where myself and Keith (the current husband) normally hang out, we were at the top of the ship. I think my next booking is at the Yacht Club.



Time came to change and get ready for dinner in the Japanese restaurant where the sushi was fresh and we had food with names we couldn't pronounce. But overall a delightful meal. We then decided to explore the night life on the ship. And in the Aft bar was a private event with rugby players and Nadine singing as well as one guy whose name escaped me. But the sokkie dancing was fun to watch and it ended up being a late night.



The final day on the ship I woke up to a stormy sea. But it was beautiful to have breakfast on my balcony before heading off to Interview the Cruise Director and the Events Co Ordinator about the ship and the workings that make it an amazing place to be. It was good to have other journalists in the room as we all were able to ask questions and have differing points of view.

I then made my way to lunch at the yacht club upstairs to sample the offering for Yacht Club Passengers . A quick lunch and the lamb curry (Rogan Josh) was fabulous, never mind the starters of Parmalat ham and mozzarella balls. The afternoon flew as I spent 2 hours having my nails done and a pedicure I could come back for. My therapist, Judith Luvuno Kiti, was from Kenya and we laughed our way through many African tales.

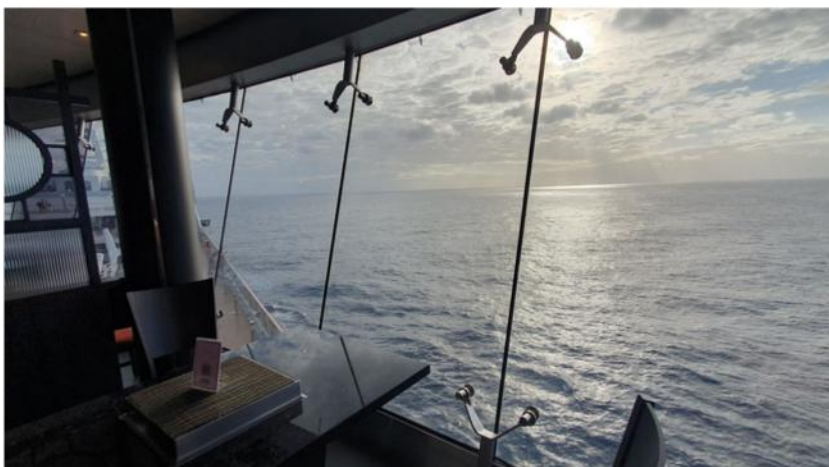


I found the perfect spot for me...the Ferrari formula 1 experience and 4D theatre. Flipping loved those two. Could have been my best experience on the boat. Driving that car in 3D mode I would have beaten Verstappen anytime!

On the last day I woke to the port being back outside my windows. Due to the timing and getting the shuttle back to the airport, I chose to have breakfast at the buffet. Nice to have bacon and eggs and pancakes and steaming hot coffee. The choices were endless. The group met up in the lounge as we chose to check out the night before to make the exit process a bit simpler.

Yup it was time to disembark and go home. But that's okay I decided I would be back. It was my 5th cruise and won't be my last. Having travelled the Princess Ruby in the Med to the MSC Symphony in South Africa in 1996, its still one of my favourite holidays. Cruises are great for singles, couples or groups of all ages. I've spent a fair amount of time on my own this trip and loved it. Spent time with the group too when I needed or wanted to. And Keith and I have always loved travelling on cruises as a couple.





Cruising could save your relationship

Life has a habit of catching up with us. And in terms of our daily lives, we rush to get kids to school, feed pets and family alike, work done and dusted before collapsing into bed. Weekends are filled with visiting, shopping, and much more. Cruising is a great way to take time out as Wifi and internet are both exceptionally expensive as they utilize satellite tours. So except for using your phone to take photos, put it away and enjoy the time away. Take time out to dance the night away, have breakfast in bed, read, talk, book time on the Solarium Sundeck as you don't have to watch the kids





Khulani Kumalo, Event Co-Ordinator and Kevin Crawford, Cruise Director share life on board for both the crew and the passengers aboard the MSC Splendida

Its great for retired couples

Retired does not mean dead. Funny how people think that when you retire, its time to just sit and wait for the sunset. Well on a cruise you can walk around the deck, enjoy the Solarium, watch the 4D cinema as many times as you like, drive like a mad man in the Ferrari experience and while away the hours making friends and drinking cocktails. Use the time off the ship to book into game lodges and other places in and around the ports whether Cape Town or Durban. It's a great excuse to chill.

Singles, groups and other reasons to cruise

What a lovely way to spend a weekend with a group where you can either do things on your own or with a group of friends or family.

Returning South Africans from the UK can book with their families and friends due to there being different prices and affordability. Getting to see everyone at the same time before heading off on a family holiday, makes life so much easier. The kids and their cousins can play together while the adults catch up on how things are going on both sides of the pond. Treating the local family to a night at a speciality restaurant or a lunch is affordable with the current Dollar to Rand rate.

Bridal parties where the girls and guys can party all night long and recover from hangovers late into the morning, is a great way to slide from being single into being married and responsible. School friends, work friends and even small conferences where partners have something to do while their partners are working. Business facilities are available throughout the ship.

Do's and Don'ts



DO'S



Book Early and if you can afford it, book a balcony cabin, great for chill time



Choose and pay for on board packages before hand



Book as a group its much more fun and use speciality restaurants for breakfast, it costs the same as a Wimpy Breakfast



If you taking kids take family so there is always someone keeping an eye on the little ones



Stick to your boarding time that is given to you. Saves hours of waiting in a queue



Tell those at home you are travelling, internet and airtime is very expensive. Its Satellite



Put limits on your cards and your childrens and anyone travelling with you. You could face an unexpected bill at the end. Do check your bill often at the accounting stands all over the ship

DO remember your passport, you are leaving the country!



DONT'S



Don't let your bill get out of hand. Buy packages up front. It controls your spending



Don't forget the sunscreen



Don't lose sight of your child.



Don't book just for the excursions. sometimes the weather doesn't play nice



Don't hog sun beds, its not fair to your fellow travellers



Don't wait until the end of the cruise to explore the ship. Do it on arrival! Then you won't miss anything.



Don't leave a disabled friend or family behind. The ship is designed for universal access



Don't spend your days at the buffet. Enjoy the cruise and eat normally.



Lastly don't worry about feeling sea sick. Those ships are so huge you don't even know they are sailing.

First Time Cruiser
Disabled Cruiser
Family Cruiser
LGBTQIA+ Cruiser
Single Cruiser
Senior Cruiser

First-Time Cruise Tips



Best Adults-Only All-Inclusive Cruises



Cruise Ship Rooms: What You Need to Know About Choosing Your Cabin



The Ultimate Printable Cruise Packing List



11 Best First Time Cruise Lines for Every Travel Style



The Best Cruise Destinations for Every Traveler



15 First Time Cruise Tips



What to Expect on a Cruise: Using a Cell Phone

First-Time Cruising

Finding reliable first-time cruise tips can be a challenge. Along with the excitement of planning your first cruise, there's a lot of lingo and plenty of decisions to navigate. Luckily, Cruise Critic's global team of cruise experts have decades of experience and thousands of cruises under their belts.

From choosing a cruise line and booking excursions to deciding what to pack for a cruise and how to pick a cabin, you'll find our tips for first time cruisers below. You'll also find expert ship reviews, itineraries, destination guides, port information and more to get the most out of your first cruise.

Whether you're interested in a cruise for couples, kid-friendly cruise, river cruise or an adults-only cruise, there are plenty of options for all travelers. You've likely heard of Royal Caribbean, Carnival and Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) -- all are popular picks for many first time cruisers -- but we'll also tell you about smaller cruise lines that might be right for your first cruise.

In addition to our expert articles and reviews, you can join the Cruise Critic boards community, which has an entire section dedicated to new cruisers. There, you'll find answers to your burning questions and can discuss all things cruising with first-timers and seasoned cruisers alike. To help you get started, we added a few tips from our existing members below.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIP HAS A FULL FLOOR OF LUXURY SUITES HERE'S A LOOK INSIDE

It's nice. But can you really get a five-star, private experience on the just-launched 'Icon of the Seas,' with 7,000 other passengers? The results were mixed

The eight-course tasting menu at the Empire Supper Club is the most exclusive offering on Royal Caribbean's newest vessel, Icon of the Seas. As the world's largest cruise ship, the boat can sleep over 7,000 guests. The Empire, styled like a hushed New York City jazz club with art deco influences, seems counterintuitive in this massive seaborne labyrinth, with features such as a Royal Promenade and five-story "Central Park" running through the center, along with dozens of decks, climbing walls, mini-golf courses, water parks, and 40 places to eat and drink.



By contrast, the Empire accommodates just three dozen guests each evening, in a single two-and-a-half-hour seating, placing diners in the voyage's top 0.5 percent. The dinner and show are a \$200-per-person upsell. Even for occupants of Royal's new over-the-top Star Class suites—which can rent for up to \$100,000 a week—a reservation at the Empire is not among the panoply of carte-blanche “inclusions.” When we walked up to the front door, the maitre d' already knew our faces and names.

“It's not really a restaurant. It's an experience,” says Jay Schneider, chief product innovation officer at Royal Caribbean, as he tours us around the ship during our three-night preview sail before its maiden voyage. “It's something that people have to want to do.”

The supper club is one of many Royal “revolutions”—endeavors new to the brand that have been included onboard—that Schneider points out as we wander the ship's 20 quarter-mile-long decks. Backed by consumer research, these upgrades are intended to elevate the onboard experience. The hope is to draw in elite guests from smaller boutique cruises, superyacht charters, or other trendy private vacation options to spend six-figures for seven nights onboard, while thousands in other “neighborhoods” have budget rooms that rent in the low four-figures.

Our room was a 450-square-foot Sunset View junior suite at the back of the ship, with neutral-toned fabrics, marble tiles, and birch-colored Scandinavian Modern-esque furnishings, including a bentwood headboard that could have been inspired by Alvar Aalto. It paled, at least in size, to the much-larger Star Class suites, which includes a private wooden balcony with hot tub and double-height ocean-view living rooms with white baby-grand pianos. But ours was still very nice.

City at sea: ‘The Icon of the Seas’ is the world's largest passenger cruiseship, with space for 7,000 passengers.
ROYAL CARIBBEAN



In a long career covering travel and transportation, I've stayed in all manner of high-end resorts. But I've never done a cruise before and wanted to see how it compares to other five-star experiences, especially on a vessel as vast and multifaceted as Icon. Could it really deliver the exclusivity and intimacy of a small private island or superyacht charter, with 7,000 other souls aboard?



“Neighborhoods” like the boisterous Surfside (top), designed for young families, are different than the more upscale Grove (bottom) for passengers in the Suites.
ROYAL CARIBBEAN

Certainly, Schneider's team is aiming for that goal. His list of "small wows" include a walk-up Champagne bar in the lush Central Park, a doubling of the budget for custom artworks, a grab-and-go sushi window at the Izumi teppanyaki restaurant, and a sizable increase in spa offerings and amenities.

Then there are the "big wows." Foremost among these is the Suite neighborhood on the ship's uppermost decks. Here, in the Grove, a private bar, pool, café, sun deck, lounge, and two-story restaurant are available only to those in premium residences. "The intent was to go even further with this concept than we ever have before and really have a dedicated space for Suite guests," Schneider says.

The aesthetic up here differs greatly from the ersatz "Island Time" driftwood and pastels of other neighborhoods, such as the family-friendly Surfside and the waterpark-like Chill Island. In the Grove, teak-colored, metal-ribbed decking, neutral boucle cushions, glazed forest-green mosaic tiles, and fabric-covered pergolas all come together to signal its heightened taste.



The exclusive Supper Club is limited to only the upper echelon of guests.

MICHEL VERDURE

Dedicated staff and even personal concierge “Genies,” drawn from experienced workers on other Royal ships, cater to whims: making reservations at dinners and shows, arranging adventures in port, and dealing with valet tasks such as laundry and pressing. Even the drinks are more premium: The Grove had the only bar with a proper margarita, made with top-shelf tequila, Cointreau, and fresh lime juice, instead of neon frozen slush or Cuervo and sour mix.

This reveals a core challenge for Royal, a company that prides itself, as Schneider says, on being an accessible, “E-for-Everyone company.” Can it really be all things to all people? If so, how can it elevate the experience for a select class of guests while remaining true to its egalitarian mission?

This is further complicated by one of Royal’s fundamental design goals with the Icon class of ships, which is enhancing the readily navigable connections between areas. “One of the things that we’ve been focused on is making sure that the flow of this ship, more than ever, is open, inviting, and easy to access for everyone,” Schneider says. This means ensuring guests can walk between decks and neighborhoods and major attractions without running into dead ends or having to double-back to the central elevators.



An interior of a Loft Suite shows the focus on space and design.
ROYAL CARIBBEAN

The Suite neighborhood, comprising just 7 percent of the rooms aboard Icon, is separated. It sits among the ship's highest levels. Smoked sliding-glass doors prevent access to its amenities unless your key card registers you as a resident. (We were also given access to the Suites and provided a Genie during our stay.) And the area overlooks, but doesn't connect directly to, other popular locales, dramatically reducing foot traffic. "We've gone to great lengths to essentially remove this area from the flow of the ship," Schneider says. "So much so that the average guest wouldn't know it's even here."

Occupancy on our preview sailing was around 70 percent of capacity, or nearly 5,000 guests. Despite all the people, the Grove felt separate and tranquil, with only a smattering of guests, uninterrupted views of the ocean, wait-less and higher-quality food, less boisterous background music, and pleasant glimpses down into the ship's hubbub.

This allowed us to feel connected to Icon's atmosphere of compulsory merriment, without the chaos endemic to its most populous regions—such as the Day of the Locust-esque trampling of thousands of dropped balloons we witnessed the first night on the main Royal Promenade. Royal Caribbean's images show small crowds, but many public spaces can get very busy.



When we docked for an excursion on the company's synthetic island fun park, Coco Cay, a similar exclusive vibe persisted at its Coco Beach Club, another new, Suite-level "inclusion" (or \$250 per person upsell.) It featured its own private pool, beach, restaurant, and over-water cabanas, all done up in a refined, Fiji-lite style. It wasn't Caneel Bay in its heyday, but it certainly outclassed the nearby Hideaway Beach, with its throbbing dance music, DJ, swim-up bars, and brightly colored chaises.

Back at the Empire Supper Club, a chanteuse in a gold-sequined dress sang a series of New York-themed songs. The Moët flowed. The caviar, langoustines, filet, and branzino were served. The fresh nutmeg was grated atop the final craft cocktail pairing, a take on an espresso martini. Service from the gray tuxedoed waiters was attentive but not obsequious; the platings were creative and replete with “small wows;” and many of the dishes tasted fresh and carefully created. The ambiance felt genuine. Overall, the experience felt personalized and unhurried, perhaps the greatest luxury of all.

By the end of the cruise, I still wondered: Are these white-glove details enough to draw in high-end consumers?





Standup comedy or a big concert in the Aquadrome are entertainment options at two ends of the scale.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN

My final opinion? Mixed. The overall experience is not exactly five-star—maybe more like four-and-change—and I’m not sure I’d attend another cruise. To be honest, we dislike crowds and prefer our travel and destinations to be more authentic. The artificial environments felt a bit like Disney World at sea. The Grove experience was certainly far more refined than I’d expected, and the efforts at upscaling and personalization were notable, and noticeable, throughout. But we couldn’t shake the fact that we were on a cruise ship with 5,000 other guests.

But, as Pedraza notes, there is an elite traveler who enjoys such opportunities. For its target ultrahigh-net-worth consumers, Royal’s strategies appear to be working. According to Schneider, sales on Icon are strong across the board, but the Suites have shown particular appeal. “I wouldn’t say [they’ve sold] more, because everything’s booked up,” he says. “I would say [they] sold first.”

This Cruise Line Just Announced More Than 300 New Voyages - With a 116-night Cruise Around the World Cunard Line will sail a 116-night itinerary on Queen Anne and a 108-night itinerary on Queen Mary 2.

By Stefanie Waldek Published on February 23, 2024

PHOTO: COURTESY OF
CUNARD

If you've been inspired by the world cruise that's been making the rounds on social media, you have two new itineraries to consider. Cunard Line, a historic British cruise line dating back to 1840, has just announced more than 300 new voyages for the 2025–2026 season – and that includes two world cruises with overnights in cities like Singapore and Sydney.



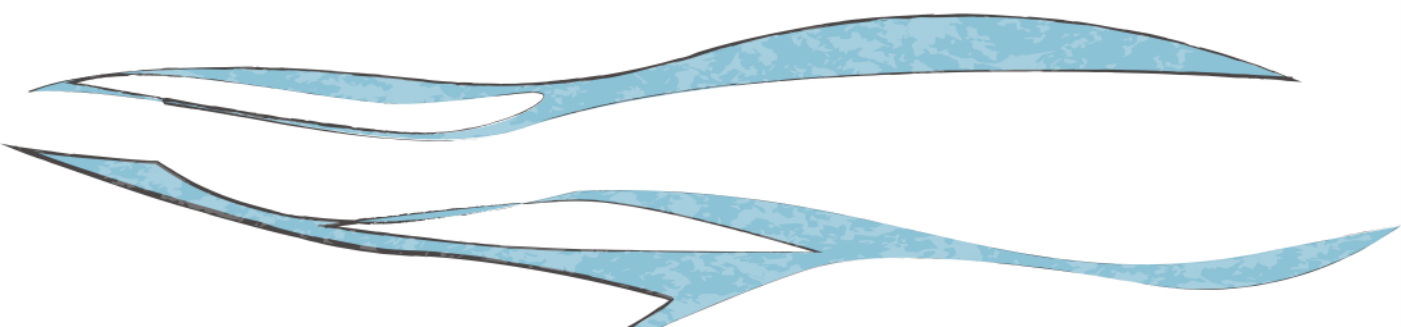
The first of its world cruises is a 116-night sailing on Queen Anne, Cunard's new ship scheduled to launch in May. The 3,000-passenger ship will depart from Hamburg, Germany, on Jan. 6, 2026, continuing through the Mediterranean and eventually the Suez Canal. From there, Queen Anne will journey through the Middle East before making for Southeast Asia. The itinerary continues to Australia, then loops back through the Indian Ocean with stops at Mauritius and Réunion Island. The final leg brings guests to South Africa; Namibia; the Canary Islands; Madeira; and Southampton, U.K., before disembarkation in Hamburg on May 2, 2026.

The second world cruise is a 108-night sailing on Queen Mary 2. Guests embark in Southampton on Jan. 11, 2026, and immediately sail a transatlantic leg to New York. From there, the ship makes its way south to Curacao before crossing the Panama Canal. After a few stops on the west coast of North America, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, it's time to explore the Pacific islands: Hawaii and French Polynesia are on the docket. After that is a segment sailing to New Zealand and Australia, followed by a journey through Southeast Asia. Next up is the Middle East, a transit through the Suez Canal, and a final leg across the Mediterranean. Guests will disembark in Southampton on April 30, 2026.

Think more than 100 days on a cruise is a little too much for you? Don't worry – you can also book shorter segments of the itineraries if any of the destinations pique your interest.

On both Cunard world cruises, you can expect an old-school atmosphere as a nod to the cruise line's heritage. For instance, Gala Nights onboard are a formal affair, and many of them are themed: Roaring '20s, Masquerade Ball, and Black and White, for example. But that doesn't mean the ships lack modern amenities, like onboard WiFi.

Rates for the full world cruises start from \$15,967 per person for the 116-night cruise and \$16,699 per person for the 108-night cruise; bookings open in early March.



The Clever Tip To Avoid At Least One Massive Crowd On The First Day Of Your Cruise

While many things are taken care of for you while you're on a cruise, there are still genius ways you can improve your trip when you're aboard. After embarkation, things can get a little busy as both staff and guests adjust to a new charter but there are strategies you can use to find some peace and quiet.

According to The Points Guy, you should avoid going to the cruise buffet on your first day at sea. This is because everyone goes to eat once they're onboard and it can be a stressful way to start your trip. They recommend going to one of the secondary eateries instead, as there will usually be another option open. It may also be a better way to begin your cruise in a table service restaurant instead of having to wait in line for the buffet. This is not the only way to skip the busy areas while you're cruising either.

Another tip from The Points Guy is to download your dedicated cruise app as this will tell you about every event that is happening on your trip. You can use this to your advantage as it will tell you which areas will be the busiest so you can choose to spend this time elsewhere. If there is a BBQ or show on during the day, it could be a good time to enjoy the sundeck while it is quiet.

JENNIFER SIZELAND





Since the pool can be one of the busiest places on the boat in the day, visit as the sun starts to set as this is when many people leave to get ready for dinner. The water will also be a lovely temperature as it will have been warmed by the sun all day. Morning or early afternoon is the ideal time to visit the spa as most people book their treatments for later in the day after their activities are finished. Aside from beating the crowds, there are other ways to make the most out of your trip.

Other ways to make your cruise more relaxing

One surprising cruise secret is that some liners don't charge for room service as they are just delivering food that is on the menu. If they do charge, it may only be for some items or the out-of-hours service so you can enjoy a quiet meal in your cabin if you choose to. Always keep a day bag packed to disembark quickly for excursions and even return early for a couple of hours of peace before other people return. When the boat is docked it can be a great time to do things onboard as many guests will leave to see the destination.

If you want to be a good cruise passenger then avoid doing the one thing that drives everyone crazy, and that is slamming your cabin door. The doors are heavy so they are surprisingly loud, and if other guests see you closing yours quietly then it might encourage them to do the same. If you do all of these things, then you're bound to have a more relaxing time than other guests who aren't aware of these top tips for a fantastic first-time cruise.



WILD HORIZONS

AFRICA'S GREATEST ADVENTURES



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ADVENTURES



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EXPLORE

TIKTOK'S TOP TIPS FOR PREVENTING SEASICKNESS ON YOUR NEXT CRUISE

BY CAMILA PÉREZ B/NOV. 14, 2023 7:30 AM EST



There are few things worse than an unexpected illness to ruin a holiday. Whether it's catching a stomach bug from something you ate, or coming down with a fever from a random virus, getting sick while traveling can easily dampen any experience. Now, imagine getting seasick on a cruise ship when you have nowhere else to go and there's no dry land in sight. It's pretty much what travel nightmares are made of.

If you've ever felt queasy out at sea, you're not alone. Seasickness can affect around one in three people at least once during a cruise. On top of this, there are also a lot of external factors that will impact everyone differently – from the size of the ship to the duration of the trip, to the route. All this to say: You never really know when seasickness is going to strike or if you'll be one of its unlucky victims.

Luckily, though, TikTok has come to the rescue. With dozens of videos related to the topic currently available on the platform, experienced creators are sharing their best tips and tricks to prevent and even cure seasickness while sailing across the ocean. All so you can go back to living your best life, cocktail in hand, as the horizon shrinks before your eyes.

Nip seasickness in the bud

Preventing seasickness is always better than trying to deal with it. With this in mind, there are things you can do before you even board the ship that'll help you keep seasickness at bay. The first tip, courtesy of user @ship_facts, has to do with choosing the right room on the ship. Ideally, if you're worried seasickness might be an issue, you'll want to book a cabin in the middle of the ship on a lower deck. Bonus points if you can select a room with a balcony, as the fresh air can also help reduce the symptoms.

Meanwhile, TikTok user @thelifeofacruiser suggests that a great way to avoid feeling seasick is by getting up and staying active. Moving around will help take your mind off the swaying motion and ease the feelings of discomfort as they start to appear. They also recommend getting your hands on either nausea wristbands or scopolamine patches, which most people refer to as "behind the ear" patches. While the wristband uses acupressure to relieve symptoms, the patches correct any natural imbalances and block signals to the brain that are to blame for seasickness.

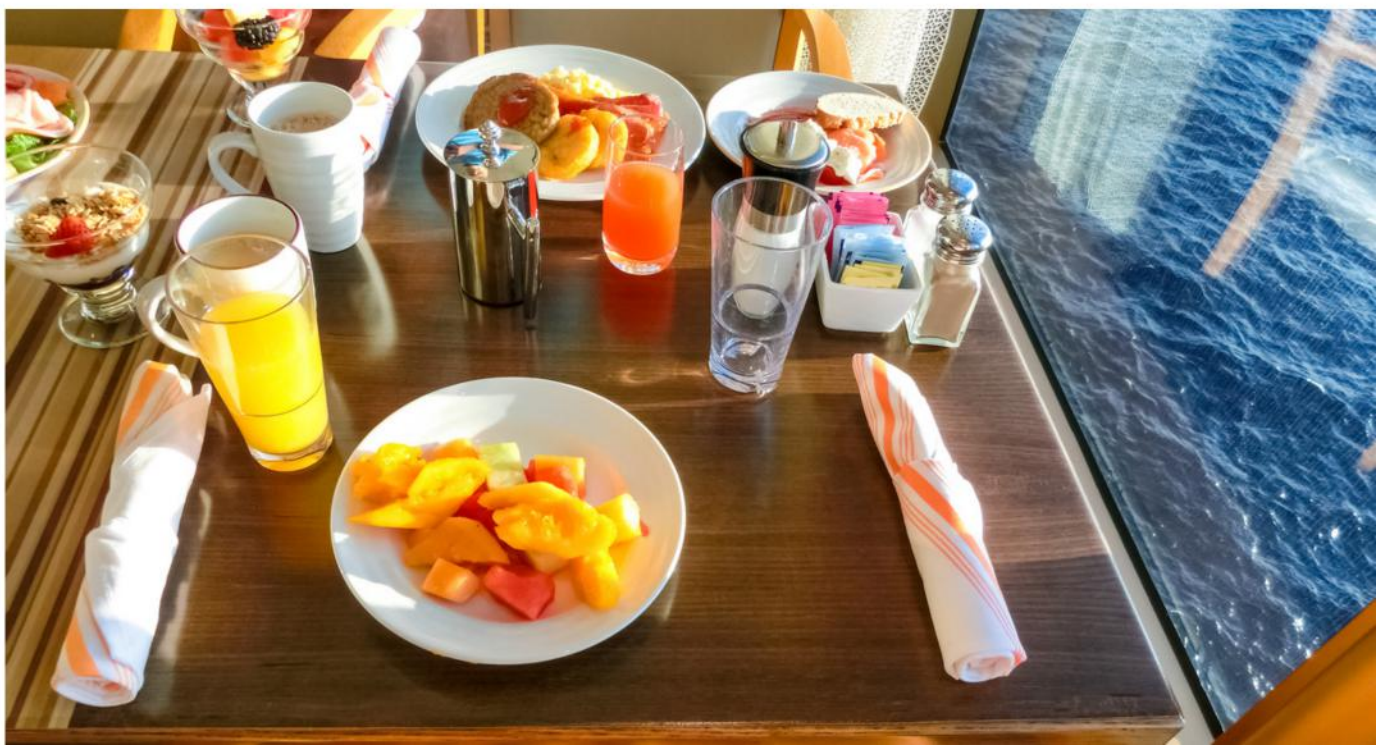


Give your body what it needs

Food is another great way to combat seasickness. Even if it sounds counterintuitive to eat before you board, keeping food in your belly will help keep things settled. User @covertrip recommends eating green apples because they're packed with pectin, a fiber that helps neutralize the acids in the stomach. Other popular choices include bananas, bread, or rice – and staying far, far away from spicy or fatty foods.



And if in spite of all the planning and trying you still happen to get sick on a cruise, there are added measures you can take to feel as comfortable as possible while the seasickness subsides. Some of the most recommended tips include taking over-the-counter medication like Dramamine, lying down with your head pointed toward the bow, drinking lots of fluids, avoiding strong smells that might trigger nausea or vomiting, and watching the horizon. The last tip is especially important since picking a stable point to watch will help reset your equilibrium – and potentially alleviate the disorienting effects of motion sickness for good.



As the industry reinvents itself in the wake of the pandemic, it's never been more important to have expert counsel, adds Spencer Brown. "At the end of the day, you're going on this trip to relax, have fun, learn something, and get away from your everyday world. I want that support system."

If something goes wrong, an agent can help rectify the situation faster than you may be able to if you go it alone. You won't be paying more for their service, either. Most make their money via commissions from the cruise lines. Leppert calls it "the best of the best" advice to go with a travel advisor.

What's the best time to book a cruise?

If you're looking to leverage new cruise deals, the best way to book a cruise is by starting early since prices continue to be robust. "There's so much pent-up demand. People haven't traveled for a year or more, so they're spending more money on the trips they're going on—upgrading to a nicer suite, perhaps," says Spencer Brown. This could make it harder to secure the cabin you want on the sailing you want.



Everything to Know Before Booking Your First Cruise

Seasoned travel experts share tips for navigating the dizzying assortment of itineraries, destinations, and ships to choose from.

BY MARK ELLWOOD AND RAMSEY QUBEIN

Approaching how to book a cruise for the first time has always been somewhat daunting, with a dizzying assortment of itineraries, companies, destinations, and ships to choose from. How can first-timers book a cruise without going wrong? We asked three Traveler-approved experts for their seasoned advice: Gene Sloan is cruise editor for The Points Guy; Jason Leppert is cruise editor for TravelAge West; Carolyn Spencer Brown is Cruise Media's chief content officer. All three are industry experts that have decades of experience across various types of cruises.

What's the ideal cruise length for a first-timer?

A week or so is the sweet spot for most first-time cruisers, which will offer three to six ports. Three-day sampler itineraries won't allow you to explore more than one or two destinations, and you can't decompress as thoroughly, either. Still, Leppert suggests a weekend trip could be enough for those that just want to try out cruising for the first time to see if you like it.



While that's a good idea for some, Sloan also points out that cruise lines don't always put their best ships on shorter runs. The ships on these itineraries can sometimes be older and have fewer of the bells and whistles that draw people to cruising in the first place. He says it is not exactly representative of the latest cruising has to offer, and the destinations on super-short cruises are not always the most unique offerings.

What's the best way to book a cruise?

Many may wonder: Is it cheaper to book a cruise direct? Sure, you can book a cruise online—but it's a rookie mistake. Smart cruisers know the best place to book a cruise is with a travel agent. Though agents' roles have diminished in the mass-market travel biz, they remain crucial for cruising. Not only can specialists offer seasoned advice, but they can also wrangle deals and promos: Ask them about shipboard credit, which is the ocean equivalent of a gift card to spend onboard—\$100 or so is a standard bonus. They may also have access to group rates, according to Sloan. Even if their prices are similar to those when booking direct, the volume of business agents do with cruise lines means you are more likely to score perks like a cabin upgrade or welcome bottle of Champagne when using one.

Leppert highlights Wave Season (January through March) for booking a future cruise since this is when cruise lines typically announce their best deals although last-minute bargains always pop up. Like Spencer Brown, he says that demand is outpacing inventory so it is best to book as soon as possible.

Sloan agrees and says people book cruises much further in advance than a hotel or flight, which means that inventory can get gobbled up quickly. Many cruise lines open up their reservation window as far as two years in advance, which means certain cabins can get snatched up. Don't forget that many travelers are looking to use leftover credits they have from the pandemic, which further compounds the demand.



Most major cruise lines offer the equivalent of a price adjustment—if the cost of your cruise drops after you pay a deposit, but before the final payment, you'll be protected, and refunded the difference. This means there is little penalty to reserving as early as possible.

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What are the best types of cruises for first-timers?

Opt for a winter sun trip in the Caribbean. It's easy and affordable to reach the boarding port, and shuttling between the clusters of islands offers a compact, convenient way to experience a multitude of cultures. "Think of a cruise as a tapas menu," says Spencer Brown—it allows you to sample destinations to which you might later return for a longer visit. Even handier, when on a Caribbean cruise almost every island accepts payment in dollars, so there's no need to juggle currencies. The waters also are largely calm, keeping seasickness to a minimum.

River cruising is another smart first-time choice, adds Spencer Brown. "You can literally walk off the ship into town, go to a park or ride a bike, or just sit on the top deck breathing the air—it's marvelous," she says.

Sloan offers another take saying that your travel budget should lead the way. If you are prepared to drop \$1,000 a night on a cruise, start out on an upscale line with smaller ships like Silversea Cruises or Seabourn. These will give you a taste of cruising with fewer passengers, and often to smaller, less-frequented ports.

If the budget leans more toward the \$100 per-day price point, try one of the newer mega-ships from Norwegian Cruise Line or Royal Caribbean. These newer ships can have a bustling resort vibe that will keep you busy no matter what your cabin type.



Understanding cabin categories

There's a dizzying array of options (and pricing) for staterooms, especially on larger ships. First-timers who simply want a place to crash often book the cheapest category, an interior cabin with no window or balcony.

If you fall for the trappings of a bargain-basement deal, that cheapie stateroom might be right across from the service area, with a door slamming shut 24/7 or underneath the kitchen, with heavy carts rolling at 6 a.m. Avoid cabins below frequently used passageways on the top decks where footsteps and the sound of deck chairs moving frequently can be annoying. Even higher category cabins can be one deck below the main deck so it is wise to ask about this when reserving.

There are several websites with exhaustive cruise deck plan maps that offer advice and user-generated feedback, almost like a sea-going counterpart to SeatGuru's airline seat maps. These can be a lifesaver when choosing a cabin type.



The scoop on shore excursions

For a first-timer, these can be confusing. Details aren't often added to an itinerary until six months or so before sail date; check back regularly, snap up a place on any excursions that are of interest, and book early—popular options can reach capacity long before sailing.

Still, some travelers choose to go off-menu and arrange private excursions, using independent companies, which can often be cheaper than the line's options. Just keep in mind that when taking an independent excursion, the ship won't wait for you if you're late. Staying with the cruise line's jaunts may be more expensive, but is a safer bet if you are not sure of a new destination.

Sloan says that it really depends where the ship is going. In some ports like Barcelona or Venice, it is easy to venture off on your own without an excursion. Others, however, may require longer drives or special access passes making excursions a safer bet.

Another consideration is to use port days to spend more time on the ship. Leppert notes that onboard amenities like pools, buffets and waterslides are less crowded when most people are ashore. If a particular destination doesn't appeal to you (or perhaps you have been many times before), it's ok to enjoy the ship instead.

What is a sea day?

Transits, when the ship is en route between ports, are known as sea days (like the term shore excursions, it's more cruise lingo); passengers, obviously, remain on board. Many newbies fret about wasting time at sea rather than exploring, but they're often a fun chance to explore the ship itself, as well as decompress between ports. Some travelers actually book cruises that have at least one or two sea days, especially if it's a larger ship with loads of amenities like water parks, race car tracks, zip lining, and multiple shows.





The mega ships are always primed to be the best first choice for families, whether Norwegian's 4,200-passenger Escape or the newest Oasis class of ships beginning with the new Wonder of the Seas. Their emphasis is on activities like adrenaline-rushing water slides, surf simulators, and three-tiered race tracks.

Disney Cruise Line is an obvious place to start for families, but it has a surprising number of activities and experiences for adults, too, including adults-only areas on board. Still, this isn't the line for an adult-only vacation unless you're a hard-core Disney fan.

How much does it cost to book a cruise?

You may be wondering how much does a 7-day cruise usually cost? The answer is that it depends. The time of year you travel (avoid school holidays, for example), the destination, and the ports of call can affect the overall cost.

Many travelers enjoy, for example, taking repositioning cruises. These happen typically as the seasons change and cruise lines move their ships from one region to another (between the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, for example). Sometimes, these cruises visit islands that are rarely frequented making them more expensive. Many experts say that they are not ideal for first-time cruisers, however, as there may be many sea days.

Shorter cruises that rely on drive-market travelers typically come with a lower price point than those in far-flung destinations. Special deals and repeat traveler discounts can also affect the overall cost.

What is the cheapest cruise ship to go on?

These are generally the shorter sailings from Miami or Port Canaveral, for instance, using the larger brands like Carnival, Princess Cruises, or Royal Caribbean, according to Sloan. The best deals are generally in the fall (the low season for Florida departures). Cruises to the Bahamas or the Caribbean tend to be more affordable than those to places like Europe or Alaska.

What to know about cruise insurance

Don't skimp on cruise insurance. Cruise vacations can easily fall prey to flight disruptions or storms that can snarl plans. Check online for insurance policies from places like VisitorsCoverage and Seven Corners, which have reasonable prices for comprehensive coverage.

If you're flying to the embarkation point, plan to arrive the day before—even the most perfect cruise won't wait if you're stuck in air traffic congestion all morning. Yet another reason to ensure you're insured.



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more about this great
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Below the Deck on a cruise ship

cruise.jobs

Top Interests of Job Seekers Looking to Work on Cruise Ships

Working on a cruise ship is an appealing option for many people who are looking for a unique and exciting career opportunity. It offers the chance to travel to exotic destinations, meet new people from all over the world, and gain valuable work experience in a variety of different roles.

However, for those considering a career on a cruise ship, there are several key factors to take into consideration. People who are looking for work on cruise ships are generally interested in a few key things, such as job opportunities, travel opportunities, work-life balance, professional development, and cultural exchange. Each of these factors plays an important role in determining whether or not working on a cruise ship is the right choice for an individual, and each comes with its own set of advantages and challenges.

People who are looking for work on cruise ships are generally interested in a few key things, such as:

1. Job opportunities:

One of the primary reasons why people look for work on cruise ships is to gain employment opportunities that are not available on land. They are interested in finding job openings that match their skills and qualifications, and that offer competitive pay and benefits.

2. Travel opportunities:

Another key factor that attracts people to work on cruise ships is the opportunity to travel and see new places. Cruise ship employees get to visit different ports of call and experience different cultures, which can be an exciting and enriching experience.

MSC VACANCIES

Take the first step towards joining the esteemed MSC Cruises seafaring family by applying today through Shosholoza Ocean Academy. As the exclusive Recruitment, Manning, and Training Agency for South African citizens working on the global MSC Cruises fleet, Shosholoza Ocean Academy holds a unique position. It's important to note that no other agencies represent MSC Cruises, and we act solely on their behalf.

In line with the Recruitment and Placement standards set by the Maritime Labour Convention, it is vital to adhere to the principle that no fees or charges for seafarer recruitment, placement, or employment should be borne directly or indirectly by applicants. However, please be aware that in order to join a vessel as a seafarer, International Maritime Law requires you to obtain certain STCW 2010 certifications and Seafarer Medicals which can cost you up to fifteen thousand rand. We will assist and guide you through these processes after a successful interview is completed.

At SOA, we prioritise integrity, ethics, and quality, and we strictly adhere to these principles. Rest assured, we will never charge any fee for providing recruitment or training services to our applicants.



Applicants are able to re-apply for positions after a 12-month period after the unsuccessful application.

At Shosholoza Ocean Academy, we are dedicated to providing support and guidance throughout the application process and beyond.

Prepare yourself for an incredible opportunity to embark on a rewarding career onboard.

HOW IT WORKS

- Search for and select the job position you are interested in applying for.
- Carefully review the job description to ensure that you meet the outlined requirements and apply.
- Our dedicated recruitment team will carefully review all applications.
- If your CV and qualifications align with the position, you may be contacted for a remote interview.
- To facilitate the interview process, please ensure that you have a stable internet connection for a virtual interview via platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Skype.
- If your interview is successful, our local Shosholoza Ocean Academy talent acquisition team will reach out to you to provide guidance on the next steps required to begin your exciting journey onboard.

Due to the very large number of applications received, we are unable to individually respond to all applicants regarding the result of your application. If you do not hear from us within 6 weeks of your application date, please consider your application unsuccessful.



ABOUT Shosholoza Ocean Academy

Empowering South Africa in the Maritime Sector

Shosholoza Ocean Academy (SOA) is proud to be the pioneering MSC Cruises manning and training initiative in South Africa, dedicated to tackling the nation's pressing challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. With a specific focus on the multifaceted maritime sector, ranging from marine tourism to cruise hospitality, SOA aims to equip and empower South Africans with the necessary skills and opportunities to thrive in the cruise ship industry.

At SOA, we offer exceptional training facilities that rival the best in the world. Our students have access to state-of-the-art replicas of three key areas found on MSC Cruises' ships: a fully functional bar, a sophisticated dining room, and a comfortable cabin. To ensure the highest standards of education, our instructors have received training from esteemed international educators at MSC Cruises. With each instructor boasting a minimum of four years of experience in specialised fields aboard cruise ships, our students receive guidance from seasoned professionals.

Join us at Shosholoza Ocean Academy and embark on a transformative journey towards a rewarding career in the maritime industry.





WHO WE REPRESENT

At Shosholoza Ocean Academy, we are proud to serve as the trusted representative of the renowned MSC Group Cruise Division in Southern Africa. This prestigious partnership allows us to provide exceptional opportunities and forge exciting careers within the dynamic world of MSC Cruises. MSC Cruises, a globally recognized brand, has a rich heritage rooted in seafaring excellence. With a vision to create outstanding cruise experiences around the world, MSC Cruises has achieved remarkable growth, expanding by an astounding 800% over the past decade.

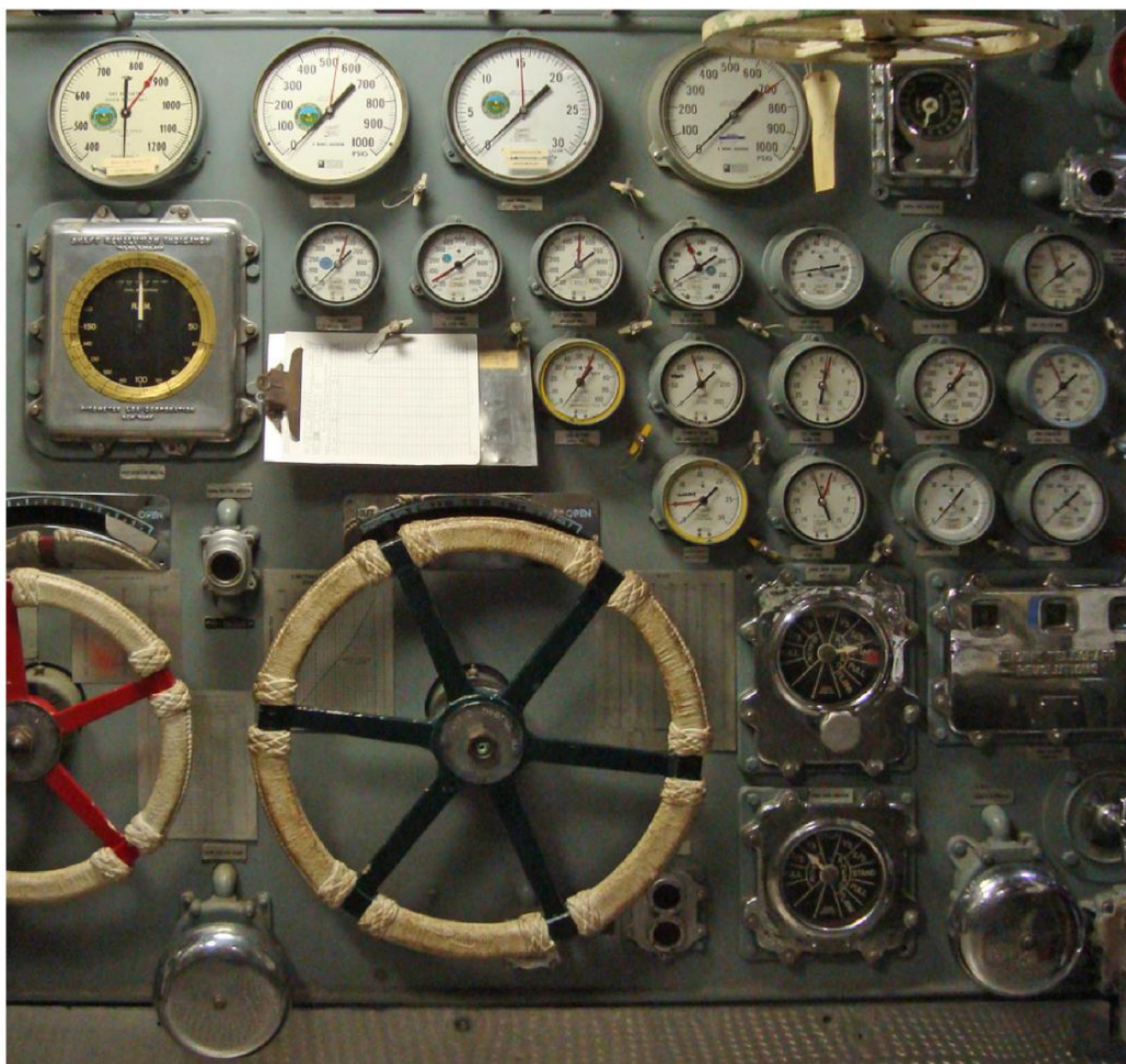
By aligning with MSC Cruises, Shosholoza Ocean Academy opens doors to a realm of unparalleled possibilities. We offer aspiring individuals the chance to embark on a transformative journey where personal and professional development is paramount. A career with MSC Cruises is not just a job; it's an immersion into a captivating, atypical environment where teamwork and initiative hold equal importance. As a family-owned company, MSC Cruises stands apart from its competitors. This distinctive quality lends an intimate and familial touch to both their approach towards staff and their business operations.

When you join MSC Cruises, you become part of a world steeped in family seafaring tradition and a commitment to excellence, fostering an environment where your talents are nurtured and celebrated. Through our specialised representation of MSC Group Cruise Division, Shosholozza Ocean Academy connects ambitious individuals like you with the vast array of opportunities available within MSC Cruises.

Whether you aspire to a career at sea or seek to explore the multifaceted realm of cruise hospitality on land, we are dedicated to supporting and guiding you towards realising your full potential.

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Take this significant step towards a rewarding career with MSC Cruises and join us in shaping unforgettable cruise experiences. Start your journey to an onboard career with MSC by completing a free 12-day hospitality training in Housekeeping, Dining or Bar departments with Shosholozza Ocean Academy.



HOW IT WORKS

Kindly complete the form provided on the website, ensuring that you meet the minimum requirements as specified. Successful candidates will undergo a comprehensive 12-day training course, specialising in either dining, bar, or housekeeping at our state-of-the-art training facilities located in Durban.

On completion of the training course, you will possess the required skills to secure a position onboard. Exceptional candidates may qualify for a position onboard MSC Cruises.

Please anticipate a minimum waiting period of six weeks for communication and confirmation.

REQUIREMENTS

Successful enrolment in to the Shosholza Ocean Academy requires the below:

Minimum of 1 year hospitality experience working in a 3 or 4-star establishment.

Proficiency in English, both written and verbal.

Well presented, reflecting the professionalism expected in the hospitality industry.

Matric certificate with relevant hospitality qualification – advantageous.

Available for 12 consecutive days to attend the training, located in Durban at the candidates' expense.

Must be a South African Citizen

Shosholza Ocean Academy ensures that our training programs uphold the highest standards and delivers a transformative learning experience.



IS THE CRUISE INDUSTRY READY FOR THE RISE IN SOLO TRAVEL?



Due to an increased appetite for solo travel, cruise operators are stepping up, from cutting single supplements to offering solo itineraries.

By Abigail Butcher
January 14, 2024

This article was produced by National Geographic Traveller (UK). The pandemic has a lot to answer for, not least creating an insatiable appetite among travellers to see more of the world – alone or accompanied. As travelling without a companion becomes increasingly easy, one of the fastest growing markets for solo travel is cruising – and with the industry embracing this demographic, it's easy to understand why.

“Solo travellers love the freedom to leave the ship and explore, but with the safety and comfort of returning to the crew and fellow travellers at the end of the day,” says Hazel McGuire, general manager of Intrepid Travel, which caters for the solo market. “It’s a misconception that all solo cruisers are single. Many just have different interests to their partners.”

Cruising aside, solo travel has exploded and shows no signs of being a post-pandemic fad. Skyscanner reports that more than half of its users (54%) this year were considering travelling alone, while similar research by rival travel search engine Kayak shows 36% more searches for solo flights in 2023 compared with 2022. And when it comes to cruising, independent cruise agency Planet Cruise recently released data to show a 36% increase in solo cruises in 2023 – with more than half of those people seeking adventure.

Men and women travel for different reasons, according to search engine Opodo, with men wanting to meet new people and women on a voyage of self-discovery, as well as wanting to explore.

In 2010, Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) was one of the first to offer solo 'Studio' cabins and accompanying Studio lounges for single travellers. In January this year, NCL published research that showed two-thirds of respondents booked solo trips either to 'have a break' or 'treat themselves'. One in five (17%) had booked a solo cruise to reconnect with themselves after a relationship breakdown and a similar number cited reasons such as not having to deal with annoying habits of companions. Gary Anslow, head of UK and Ireland business at NCL, said: "We can see from the survey that enjoying the beauty of travel on your own enables a truly authentic experience and provides for self-discovery and growth. Plus, meeting fellow solo travellers can even lead to long-lasting friendships."





For the most part, solo travellers equal frequent travellers, so cruise liners are working hard to capture this growing audience by reducing or dropping single supplements, building ships with single cabins and introducing activities and hosts specifically for independent travellers.

“Cruising is a holiday type where solo travellers have been well catered for,” explains Dave Mills of tour operator Iglu Cruise. “Once upon a time, this might have been dance hosts to provide companionship, or shared cabins for single travellers, but now, there’s so much more. The larger companies are expanding single cabin options, as are the more boutique lines, too,” he adds. Jeremy Clubb, founder of Rainforest and Antarctica Cruises, says single travellers are now being considered properly.

“Historically, I think it’s fair to say single travellers got the short end of the stick – not just from a financial perspective but also by being allocated small cabins and generally being considered second-class citizens,” he says. “Thankfully, this is becoming a thing of the past as the booming trend in solo travel, especially post-pandemic, has caused operators to take note of the benefits of having solo clientele in their passenger mix.

He goes on to add that these days, the latest vessels are being designed to feature single cabins, offering solo travellers the same level of service, privacy and comfort at the same price as anyone else.

“Some ships now even choose to dedicate double cabins for single occupancy – particularly on cruises in the Galápagos National Park where there are strict guest-to-guide restrictions.”

Looking more closely at the numbers, options on single cabins are encouraging. Norwegian Cruise Lines is still out ahead, offering 128 Studio cabins on Epic, 82 on Bliss and 59 on Breakaway; adults-only line Virgin Voyages has 40 interior cabins for singles on its superyacht-style ships Scarlet Lady, Valiant Lady and Resilient Lady; with Fred Olsen now offering 65 single cabins on Balmoral, 49 on Borealis and 43 on Bolette. These solo cabins aren't only increasing in number but also variety, with accommodation on premium decks and featuring balconies. Sizes still vary though; NCL's Studios are an average 100sq ft (many without windows), while Holland America Line's newest ships, the Koningsdam, Rotterdam and Nieuw Amsterdam, offer staterooms between 127 and 172sq ft, and Royal Caribbean International has staterooms for solos of up to 199sq ft – sometimes offered without single supplement fees, too.

The UK's largest river cruise provider, Riviera Travel, sells sole-occupancy cabins with no single surcharges across its entire collection, and also dedicates entire ships for solo travel. In 2024, it'll run eight solo traveller itineraries across 11 departure dates, including voyages down the Rhône, Rhine, Danube and the Seine.

“Our experience is that people of all ages are increasingly travelling the world alone for the first time because solo exploration and adventure can grow self-confidence whatever stage a person is at in their life,” says Riviera Travel CEO Phil Hullah. The range of organised social events and activities from quiz nights to hikes is a big draw for solo travellers, as is the safe atmosphere on the ships and camaraderie of fellow passengers.



Just before the pandemic, Keith Perry, now 60, took a two-week cruise to Greenland with Quark Expeditions where, he says, everyone was like-minded.

“We had ages ranging from 30-80, but everyone had a spirit of adventure. Every morning, we’d look out at a new scene and would chat excitedly over breakfast about what the day had in store.

“I also loved meeting people from different backgrounds. And watching the Northern Lights – albeit at 3am – was the best ‘fireworks’ show I’ve ever been to.”

The new kid on the block, luxury cruise line Explora, has devised its Solivagant Society for independent travellers, a complimentary group to connect solo travellers for various activities, events and experiences throughout their journey. One of the biggest barriers to solo travel is the cost. Having to pay the same price – or more – for a cabin designed for two is out of reach for many and while solo cruises are becoming more affordable, just beware of the small print.

Some, such as Hurtiguten, offer select voyages with no single supplement at all, while others market single cabins for solo travellers but still charge double what they would a couple. A sea view cabin on the Virgin Voyages French Riviera and Ibiza Nights cruise, for example, costs from £320.29 for one guest, while the same cabin costs from £160.14 based on two sharing. Among those slashing their single supplements on selected sailings are Silversea Cruises and Azamara, both of which offer single supplements of between 25-50% of the double occupancy rate. And then there are the special promotions worth looking out for – often run between a cruise line and a particular travel agent. But Dave Mills of Iglu Cruise explains how to get the best price for a solo cruise – either book early or late.

“Either book when the brochures are launching and itineraries are just going on sale, or wait until the last minute when cruise lines will offer empty double-occupancy cabins without a single supplement,” he says. “Of course, both options have their pros and cons and both can be daunting, but do your research and work with a good tour operator and you’ll find the right trip.”



Travel Ideas

If you are from inland SA. Africa or somewhere else and you are taking a local cruise from Durban or Cape Town - check out your pre or post cruise options!



Durban



Cape Town

Every



Drop



Counts



World Water Day, held on 22 March every year since 1993, is an annual United Nations Observance focusing on the importance of freshwater. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis.

A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Every year, UN-Water – the UN’s coordination mechanism on water and sanitation – sets the theme for World Water Day. In 2023, the focus was on Accelerating Change. In 2024, the theme will be Leveraging Water for Peace. Previous themes can be found here:

World Water Day, 22 March

World Water Day is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. Leading up to 22 March, UN-Water runs a public campaign and people all over the world hold events.

The United Nations World Water Development Report is launched on World Water Day itself, focusing on the same theme. The theme of World Water Day 2024 is **‘Water for Peace’**.



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