

Cruisin”

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I start?

Contact our “Cruise Specialist” **Joan Wirtanen at 218-262-5101** or e-mail sbeck@mchsi.com to discuss cruise options.

2. Are all cruises the same?

No! Cruises can last a few days to months. Cruise ships vary in size from fewer than 100 guests to over 2000.

Cruise ships range from casual to formal; contemporary to classic. You can book a “fun cruise,” “family oriented cruise” or a “special interest cruise” designed to introduce you to and educate you about new countries and cultures.

Ask our Cruise Specialist about all the options available to you. They are limitless.

3. Do I need a passport?

Passport regulations have been tightened over the past year. If you are traveling anywhere outside the United States you will need a passport.

You can apply for a passport by going to: <http://travel.state.gov/passport> or your local post office will have applications.

It is advisable that you apply for a passport six months prior to your travel date.

4. What types of activities will I find on-board? I don't want to get bored!

Cruise ships are floating resorts with all the amenities a land-based resort may have. You can lounge by the pool, participate in exercise or dance classes, sports contests, jogging on-deck; swim, take advantage of the sauna, work out in the gym or practice your tennis or golf swing. The options are almost limitless!

You can choose to attend a live show, see a feature film, attend an educational lecture given by experts, or play bridge. This is not an exhaustive list of entertainment activities.

If you want to be pampered, take advantage of the spa services. Enjoy a facial, an individual or couples massage, pedicure or manicure.

There is so much to do, your biggest challenge will be choosing what to do each day.

5. What should I pack?

While many resort cruises have a more casual and relaxed atmosphere you will still find cruises where dressing for dinner and formal parties are part of the overall fun.

Pack like you would for any resort vacation. Cruises are normally casual during the day, whether you are on the ship or ashore.

Evening attire varies depending on the activity and ship you are on. For 3-5 night cruise except one formal night, for 6-7 night cruises expect two formal nights, for 8-13 night cruises expect three formal or smart casual nights. Formal occasions require suit and tie, tuxedo, or dinner jacket for men and a cocktail dress or gown for the ladies. However, there are always alternatives to formal dining on most cruises.

6. Do I have to pay to participate in shipboard activities or to take advantage of entertainment options?

No. Entertainment and shipboard activities are included in the price of your cruise.

7. What extra costs can I expect?

There will be a fee for any salon services, alcoholic beverages, specialty coffee shop, internet services, purchases from the shipboard boutiques or gift shops, shore excursions, gratuities to the provider of the services plus your cabin steward, dining room wait staff. These are normal charges you would expect at any resort.

8. What are my options for rooms/level of service?

Cabin Categories:

Inside Room: These rooms are normally the smallest on the ship with no windows. This is the perfect room for the individual or couple who do not plan to spend much time in the room.

Outside Room: These cabins have either a porthole or window. However, always check on the location of these rooms as a lifeboat, pole, or other ship apparatus may obstruct the view.

Balcony: *This is a higher category of room with a balcony. If you select a cruise such as the Alaska Inside Passage or Panama Canal, both of which have incredible scenery. Your balcony will provide limitless photo opportunities or a comfortable place to relax and enjoy the fresh sea air and unbelievable views.*

Suite: *This is the highest category of cabin. Suites normally include a balcony and butler service.*

Within each of these categories are sub-categories where prices are determined by a cabin's location on the ship.

9. Are there non-smoking areas?

Smoking is permitted only in designated areas and outdoors. These areas are usually on the starboard side of the ship. Smoking is not permitted in any dining venue, theatre, hallway or any stateroom. However, depending on the cruise line, smoking may be permitted on private oceanview balconies of the balcony/suite stateroom.

10. What if I get sick? Are there medical services available?

Virtually every cruise ship, with the exception of smaller coastal cruises, has a medical facility and health care professionals on staff to handle almost any emergency.

11. What if I have a special medical condition?

If you have a special medical condition that may put you at risk or requires special supplies or equipment let your "Cruise Specialist" know at the time of booking. You will need a letter from your doctor stating you are able to travel, a list of medications you are on and any special equipment required to ensure your cruise is an enjoyable experience.

11. Are there business service centers so I can stay in touch with family and friends back home?

You can stay in touch with family and friends quite easily. You can make ship-to-shore calls from your stateroom 24 hours a day. The cost is approximately \$ 8.00 per minute. Most ships have computer cafes with Internet access for email. Staterooms have televisions and many have satellite for your cellular phone use.

12. What about tipping?

While tipping is discretionary, the normal rule of thumb is to tip your room steward, dining room waiter, and busboy on the last night of your cruise. Other shipboard personnel can be tipped for special services at your discretion.

