



CRUISE

Posted by: [Jan Ross](#)

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Peggy's Cove Lighthouse in Nova Scotia; Seen on an NCL Cruise

I received an invitation to visit an all-inclusive resort the other day and I carefully saved that email as I thought why, *yes, I would love to visit an all-inclusive resort*. Because they are completely wonderful in every way.

Located in beautiful, tropical locations like Mexico and the Dominican Republic, all-inclusive resorts are often described as a cruise on land and it has been my experience that they are very much like that. When you think about it,

this description is pretty accurate. So why would you ever want to go on a cruise? Conversely, why would you ever want to go to an all-inclusive resort instead of a cruise?

How can you possibly choose? Which is best?

Well, as with any vacation choice, a great deal of the decision comes down to personal choice. But maybe this will help.

1. **Food.** If you all about the food when you travel, either of these choices are excellent. You are going to find lovely buffets, fast food options and, at both choices, you will find wonderful restaurants which require a reservation. We cruised recently up the East Coast with [NCL](#) and had some of the best food we have ever tasted – we still talk about the mashed potatoes. I tasted really good sushi for the first time on a [Carnival](#) ship because they all have a free sushi bar! But we have



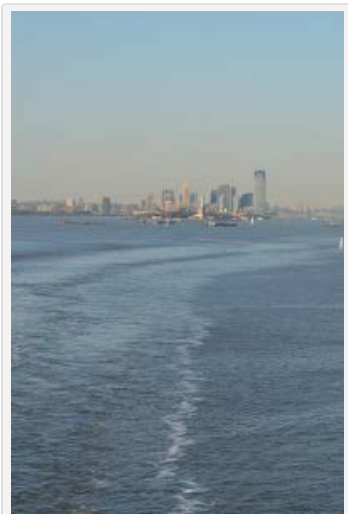
Lunch on the Beach at Dreams Resort in Puerto Vallarta

stayed at the [Dreams Resort in Puerto Vallarta](#) and we still talk about their homemade coconut ice cream. Why yes, *yes we do enjoy food when we travel*. You will hear people complain about the quality of the food on both cruises and at all-inclusive resorts but those people have not explored every option because there is wonderful food to be eaten at either choice. The two choices have a tie on this one.

2. **Entertainment.** There are lots of entertainment choices on a cruise ship and many of them are free but, once you leave the ship, you are going to pay for any sort of shore

excursion and it will not be cheap. We really enjoyed the shorter version of “Jersey Boys” on our NCL cruise – so much so that when we were in New York recently, we went to see the show on Broadway. There will also be lots of entertainment choices at an all-inclusive resort. Many have free shows with local entertainment such as dancers, singers or musicians and there is almost always free non-motorized watersports. For example, snorkeling is usually free and they provide you with equipment. At the [Punta Cana Princess](#) you can just pick up your snorkeling equipment and snorkel right off the beach. Contrast that to how much you would pay for a snorkeling experience on a cruise. Since you can do so much and do it much more cheaply, the all-inclusive resorts win this one.

3. **Accommodations.** At [Zoetry Paraiso de la Bonita](#) in Riviera Maya, we had an absolutely huge suite with a private splash pool on our private terrace. On our last cruise with [Disney](#) we also had a huge suite with two bathrooms and a large verandah. But the suite at the all-inclusive resort was a great deal cheaper. It makes sense – the ships only have so much room. The all-inclusive resorts can spread out over acres of beautifully landscaped land. If the accommodations are important to you, an all-inclusive resort can offer more. They win this one.
4. **Room to Move.** Some of the new cruise ships are absolutely huge – cities on the water – in fact, the Allure of the Seas from [Royal Caribbean](#) is the largest cruise ship in the world – but there is no way they can compare to the size of some of the all-inclusive resorts. When we stayed at the [Paradisus Punta Cana](#), we had to ride trams all over the place because it covered miles and miles of land. There’s usually plenty of room to stroll around on a cruise ship but, at some point, you reach that deck railing and the stroll is over. All-inclusive resorts definitely win this one as they have room to spare.
5. **Getting sick.** There have been several recent cases of sickness aboard cruise ships and they are spending tons of money disinfecting ships after the passengers disembark. But all-inclusive resorts are not without their problems as well. After staying at one resort and accidentally ingesting some tap water, I had the worst bacterial stomach ailment I have ever experienced. But I also got a bad cold when I cruised once. So, basically, there are germs everywhere. Beware. Wash your hands often and be wary of buffets that have been set up for a while. This one is a draw.
6. **Cost.** Cruise lines and all-inclusive resorts are in the business of filling up their rooms so their guests will spend even more money on the ship or at the property, so they both have some incredible deals, especially if you can travel at the last minute. Since you can get such great deals with either choice, this one is a draw as well.
7. **Travel.** On a cruise ship, you can see the world. Literally. There are cruise ships that travel the globe. We’ve been on cruises to the Caribbean, Mexico, Bermuda, Alaska, the Eastern coast of the United States, Canada and Europe and only unpacked once. When you visit an all-inclusive resort in one country, that’s it – you are only going to see one country. On the other hand, you can really spend time seeing the country you are visiting instead of disembarking and embarking in the space of a few




Cruising Away from New York City

hours.

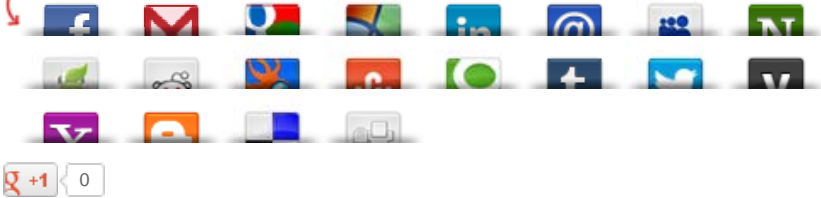
So it looks like there is no clear winner here – it just depends on what sort of travel you want to do.

That’s really what it comes down to – what sort of travel you want. In these *highly official findings*, it appears that the all-inclusive resorts come out slightly ahead. But you might have your heart set on sailing the high seas. If that’s true, a cruise is the perfect vacation for you. So whether you want a cruise on the sea or a “cruise on land” – have fun. And have some of those great mashed potatoes for me? Or maybe the coconut ice cream...



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For twenty years, I worked as a librarian in an elementary school but finally decided to get serious about travel writing and devote all my time to it. Now, I travel the world and write all about it. I can't imagine a more fabulous or fulfilling job. I write a regular travel column for two regional, Central Kentucky magazines and contribute regularly to other magazines and online travel sites, such as The SavvyGal, A Luxury Travel Blog and

The Vacation Gals. I'm an avid reader and stay active with Yoga, Pilates and Zumba classes. My favorite place in the whole world is a beach - any beach. I have been married for 34 years and my husband is my favorite travel companion. I also rely on him for his excellent photography skills. We have two grown children and the best grandson in the world. Slowly but surely, we are visiting all the places we have dreamed about. Hopefully, the next one will be the one you want to read about!

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