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How to Cruise as Cheaply as Possible

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Cruises and budget travel may not seem to go together, but you actually don't need to spend a fortune to sail the seas. Here's how to make your next cruise easier on the wallet.



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Years ago, cruising was only for the rich and famous. Nowadays, anyone can cruise. But cruising is still expensive—right? Wrong. Great deals can be found for cruises and the advantages to cruising are many, including the fact that one price covers your entire trip and you only have to unpack once. These money-saving suggestions may help you make cruising an affordable alternative.

- 1. Don't get an expensive stateroom.** You get pretty much the same experience in any stateroom on the ship. You are going to be in that stateroom for a week or more, so just choose what is going to make you comfortable.
- 2. Don't pay to eat or drink.** All the cruise lines now have restaurants on board where you have to pay for your meal. They are a little fancier; you have to make a reservation and the food is a little better, but with all the free food choices on board cruise ships, this is not necessary. Fancy drinks from the bar cost a lot, so a cruise is a good time to just abstain, or save the drinks for a special night or two. Also, plan to drink iced tea, which is often free, rather than ordering soft drinks, which can really add up.
- 3. Don't pay for shore excursions.** One of the most expensive things on the ship will be the shore excursions, and you don't have to do them. Book them on your own, just make sure you plan carefully and get back to the ship in plenty of time before they leave.
- 4. Don't pay for spa experiences or go to the casino.** The ship's spas often have great specials when the ship is in port, or well into the voyage, so be alert and you might get a great deal. If you must go to



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the casino, set some limits and walk away when you reach them. If you happen to win, pocket your winnings!

5. Don't shop on board. Be prepared to pay a lot more than you would on land. If you wait until later in the voyage, the shops will have sales and that's the best time buy some gifts to take home.

6. Don't include airfare in your cruise fare. It is much cheaper to find a deal on your own airfare.

7. Don't pay to cruise in the high season. If you can possibly arrange your travel for the "shoulder season"—the period between the low and high seasons—you are going to get a much better deal.

8. Don't pay for transfers. The cruise line will transport you from the airport to the ship, but it probably won't be cheap and you may have to wait for other flights to arrive. Just check into making your own way to the dock and you will probably find it cheaper and more efficient to go on your own.

9. Don't pay for photos. If there's a great shot, it might be worth paying for the ship's photographer's work, but those photos get expensive. Bring your own camera, take your own pictures, save a lot of money.

10. Don't pay for internet or laundry. Internet on a cruise ship is horribly expensive and usually not that great. There are often internet cafes in many of the ports, so you can still stay in touch. And don't pack anything that has to be dry cleaned!

Be smart when booking your cruise and have a fabulous trip for a reasonable amount of money.

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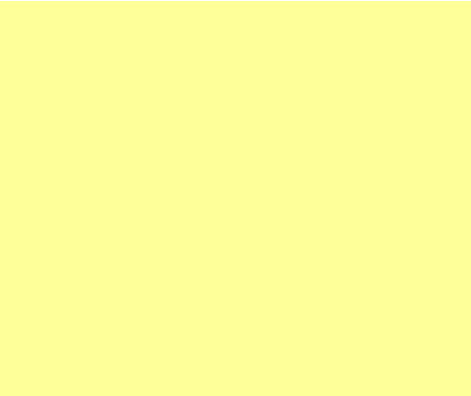
JAN ROSS




After a lifetime of travel, Jan Ross can pack a bag and hit the road with very little notice, although she will always have a little black dress and some snazzy shoes in there. She loves to travel with her husband of more than 35 years as he is a great photographer and she is often way too busy having fun to think about taking pictures. Active travel or relaxing, she is up for it all!


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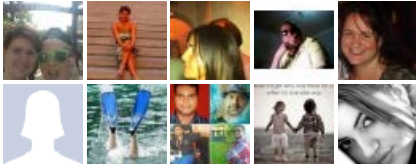





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