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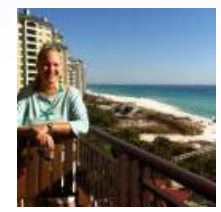
Travelling Extensively with No Money
 by Georgina Young

How to Cruise as Cheaply as Possible

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 23 June 2014 | [0 Comments](#)



Travelled By Jan Ross



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

Years and years ago, cruising was only for the rich and famous. Sumptuously furnished ocean liners traversed the oceans of the world and gorgeously dressed, wealthy individuals sipped champagne and mulled over how best to spend their millions.

Not so much anymore.

Pretty much anyone can cruise now and thousands of people are traversing those same oceans swilling tropical drinks with a little umbrella in it and trying to forget that they have to go right back to work when they get home.

Cruising is for singles looking to meet their future life partners, newlyweds, families with babies or teenagers, and it's also just perfect for baby boomers. But cruising is expensive – right?

Wrong.

There are great deals to be had for cruises going pretty much anywhere you want to visit and the advantages to cruising are many, including the fact that one price covers your entire trip and you only have to unpack one time.

This is a good time to use a travel agent as they will know about the best possible deals and might also get you extra amenities at no extra charge, such as a bottle of wine in your room. And surely by now everyone knows that you don't pay the travel agent anything – they make their money from the cruise lines. There are a few agencies out there that are starting to charge for their services but just avoid them. There are many more that don't charge a dime. There are also agencies that specialize in cruise travel and these are the best places to start your planning. You can also get pretty much the same price by dealing directly with the cruise lines if you would prefer to go that route and you can also get a better deal if you are a repeat customer with the same cruise line so



it's to your advantage to find a cruise line you like and stick with them.

So, now you have chosen your cruise, you have the best possible price and you are booked. That should be all the money you have to spend unless you just have to bring back a souvenir. But the cruise lines just hate to even think you might not spend more money while you are traveling with them. One of the main reasons you can book a trip so cheaply is that they know you will spend plenty more money with them. But you don't have to.

Here's how not to.

1. Don't get an expensive stateroom.

We have stayed in fancy suites, staterooms with a verandah and inside staterooms and you get pretty much the same experience in any stateroom on the ship. Same food, same pool, same everything. There are some extra amenities associated with suites such as free laundry but you can easily do without them in order to save money. On the other hand, we will pay more to get a verandah because we have discovered we love the extra room and being able to enjoy the scenery. You are going to be in that stateroom for a week or more – choose what is going to make you comfortable.

2. Don't pay to eat.

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 perhaps the food is a little better. Don't do it. With all the free food choices on board any cruise ship, you are going to find something you like, I guarantee.

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. If you must pay for tours, snorkeling trips, etc. just book them on your own. They will be much cheaper. Just make sure you plan carefully and get back to the ship in plenty of time because they sure won't wait for you. Another option is just to enjoy the location by leisurely walking around, which is completely free.



4. Don't pay for drinks.

My husband and I can easily go a week without any liquor but, if you can't, you are going to pay a lot for those drinks. You can buy bottles of liquor onboard and in many of the ports, but they will take them from you, pack them away and give them back to you when you disembark. So, forget about making your own drinks. It might be possible to bring your own liquor onboard in your suitcase but they will scan your suitcase and confiscate any liquor. So not really a good idea.

5. Don't pay for wine.

Most cruise lines will allow you to bring wine or champagne onboard and only charge a "corking fee" when you drink it with meals. That fee is much less than you would pay for a bottle of wine on the ship – and your wine will probably be much better than what they have to offer onboard.

6. Don't pay for non-alcoholic drinks.

We usually just switch over to iced tea while onboard since it's free and cruise lines charge for soft drinks but if you can't do without them for a week, most cruise lines have special deals where you pay a set amount and can drink as many soft drinks as you can consume in a week. It's a whole lot cheaper than paying per drink.

7. Don't pay for spa experiences.

You can pretty much charge a captive audience whatever you want and a cruise ship is no exception. Massages, facials, mani/pedis, wraps – all are exorbitantly overpriced on a cruise ship. However, they often offer great specials when the ship is in port or later in the week so be alert and you can get a great deal. The offers will be in

the cruise newsletter or in the form of handouts so just watch for those. You can also find very inexpensive spa experiences in many of the ports; just do a little research and book those before you leave on your trip.

8. Don't shop on board.

Again with the captive audience idea. If you just have to buy a candy bar or need some aspirin, be prepared to pay a lot more than you would on land. And this is not the place to buy gifts to take home. However, if you wait until later in the week, the shops will have sales and that's when you want to buy. Many of the cruise lines also have special sales such as everything for \$10 and I have bought some great pashminas, jewelry, etc. at these sales.

9. Don't include airfare in your cruise fare.

When we first started cruising years ago, the cruise lines had great deals on airfare. It was much cheaper to just package up your trip than to try to find a deal on your own. That is no longer the case so never package your trip; arrange your own airfare. And don't ever pay a travel agent to do this – that is actually one of the things they charge for – it's way too easy to make your own arrangements online.



10. 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. Alaska in September is still beautiful.

11. Don't pay for transfers.

The cruise line will transport you from the airport to the ship, but it probably won't be cheap. Not only that, you are the mercy of everyone else on the bus and may have to wait for other flights to arrive, then crowd onto a small bus. Just check into making your own way to the dock and you may find it's cheaper and certainly much more relaxing to just go on your own.

12. Don't pay for photos.

You might want to buy one of the ship's photos if it's an especially great shot of your family, but those photos get expensive and do you really need them all? Probably not. Bring your own camera, take your own pictures, save a lot of money.

13. Don't pay for Internet.

I'm giving you this good advice, even though I don't take it myself because we have to stay connected. 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.

14. Don't go to the casino.

This is not a problem for us since we couldn't possibly care less about gambling but if you do go to the casino, just set some limits for yourself – and put your winnings (if there are any) in your pocket and hang onto them!

15. Don't pay to have clothes laundered.

If it's something you absolutely must wear, just rinse it out in the sink yourself and hang it on the clothes line in the shower. If it's something that has to be specially laundered or dry cleaned, you shouldn't have packed it anyway!

16. Don't pay for medicine.

Cold medicine, seasickness medicine, band aids, etc. should all be in a little first aid kit you have packed in your suitcase. If not, you are going to pay a great deal for them on the ship.

17. DO pay for travel insurance.

Even if you have planned the most economical cruise vacation in the history of man, if you have to cancel at the last minute because of an emergency, it's still money down the drain. Travel insurance is inexpensive compared to the cost of your trip, so spring for it.

Remember that the cruise lines are in the business of making money and will try to get you to spend as much as they possibly can while you are onboard. On the other hand, they also have hundreds and hundreds of staterooms to fill so that put the balance of power in your hands when it comes to booking your cruise. Just be smart when booking your cruise and enjoying your vacation and you can have a pretty fabulous trip for a very reasonable amount of money.

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