

# WHY TAKE A CRUISE VACATION?

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You don't have to be a parent of teenagers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to realize that the world around us is moving at an ever-increasing speed. Our daily schedules are cram-packed with errands, activities, meetings, and events that require us, almost, to have to be in more than one place at a time! Technology claims to help relieve some of the strain but, so far, has...at least in some people's mind...only served to increase demands on our already over-stressed lives.



And speaking of stress, it is a well-known fact that stress-related health problems are on the increase, and most Americans are doing little to reduce the source of those issues. Most people have relatively little understanding of how stress adversely affects their lives...and the lives of those around them. Learning how to ward off the many stressors we face each day and discovering how to handle stress will undoubtedly improve our day-to-day lives and, for many folks, contribute to an increase in lifespan.



For a good portion of Americans, one way we attempt to "get away from it all" is through a periodic activity we commonly refer to as a VACATION. Now, some of these pursuits are little more than a long weekend spent around the house doing nothing. In contrast, others might be more elaborate with out-of-town trips, sightseeing, shopping, visiting with friends, or other seemingly less-stressful endeavors. Just how much these getaways actually do to provide relaxation and escape from our regular routines is a matter of perception and personal opinion. It is not unusual for people to

express their assessment in a statement such as, *"I had to go back to work just to get some relief from my vacation!"*.

Even with some of the frantic activities associated with most vacations, it is still a worthwhile effort in the war against the headaches of most daily routines. However, to get real rest and relaxation during our often too-short holiday periods, those escape events need to be much more beneficial than what most Americans consider a vacation. Our goal of a typical vacation is to provide a respite from our everyday routine. However, it's often difficult to actually carry out this endeavor when your vacation requires you to be even more stressed about all the details; who's going to drive, what restaurant to eat at, choosing entertainment for the evening, getting everyone together at the same time, ...and, ultimately, having to make compromises to accommodate a variety of tastes and preferences.



Fortunately, there is an excellent alternative to the hustle and bustle of a typical land-based vacation...an ocean cruise! We know that bodies of water have long been associated with calm and relaxation. Property values are always higher when the site is on a lake or stream, beach-front condos are in high demand because of their ocean view, and many Americans choose to enjoy the laid-back leisure activities of boating and fishing. Ocean cruises offer an even better opportunity to experience the calming nature of the water. Especially when you consider all the advantages to an ocean cruise, it's easy to see just how different it is when compared to a land-based alternative.



First and foremost, cruises are the ultimate way to enjoy the world's oceans' natural attraction. Like countless others before you have discovered, these massive waters have a way of drawing you into their soothing environment. Even if you've never been on a boat of any size, you can easily imagine how the ship's gentle movement could be incredibly relaxing. When you add to that all the extra amenities you find on just about every cruise ship today, it's not too hard to see where a cruise vacation could be a significant improvement over the land-based vacations you may have taken in the past.

Variety is a crucial element in helping us enjoy our leisure time. Doing things that are different from past experiences adds excitement, fun, and enjoyment to our vacation, allowing us to move beyond holiday routines that may have become boringly redundant. Some people have even gotten into a deep rut when it comes to taking a vacation. Going to the same location, staying in the same hotel, eating at the same restaurants, seeing the same sights (and on and on) are obvious indicators that your vacation style may need a serious itinerary adjustment. An ocean cruise is just the ticket!

Cruising takes advantage of its unique format by allowing guests to experience a genuinely relaxing and enjoyable vacation. Most, if not all, of those land-based details and decisions, are set aside, and passengers are free to wind down, chill out and settle back into a time of real rest and relaxation. This single component is far from the main attraction most people cite as their top reason for taking an ocean cruise. When it comes to battling the day-to-day stresses most of us experience, ocean cruises are, without a doubt, the best choice of vacation options.



Typical cruise itineraries almost always involve one, two, or more days "at sea," where the passengers are at the pinnacle of the most relaxed part of the vacation. For most passengers, time onboard during these leisurely days may be spent doing very little in activities. Yes, there are always opportunities for those that need something to do (pool, gym, spa, casino, movies, reading, and games), but many folks chose to find an empty deck chair and watch the waves roll gently by. As you will find out, these "sea days" will become your favorite time for just doing nothing but absorbing the calm, comfortable ocean atmosphere.



On "port days" (when the ship is docked at one of the scheduled cruise stops), activities MAY increase somewhat, but it's everyone's individual choice. The options are as varied as the different locales being visited, from a leisurely stroll along the seashore to a full-blown sightseeing tour. Some like visiting the historical and cultural sites; others enjoy the markets and shopping for local, hand-crafted gifts, and souvenirs. Still, others head for the main beach and take in all the sand, sun, and water they can absorb during the hours the

ship is in port. The key is to remember that it's all up to you! You can do as much or as little as you want, and, like some people, you can just stay on board the ship and have another low-stress day of total and complete relaxation.

Often, one of the biggest attractions to a cruise vacation is the FOOD! Cruise ships are known for serving premium quality meals at no additional cost. 24-hr buffets, once a main attraction for the food lover, are victims of the recent pandemic and most cruise line have revised this venue to a safer, less crowded experience. However, one of the most appealing features is that there are many other dining venues on each ship, and passengers can choose where to eat at every meal. Parents can enjoy the more upscale and refined culinary fare in the ship's main dining room while the kids can eat their fill of 'burgers, pizza, or other choices from a vast selection of restaurants around the ship.



For some, the meals on a cruise offer an opportunity to sample unusual or unique entrées that they might not otherwise be inclined to try. Exotic dishes are routinely offered on most itineraries, and this is a great time to indulge yourself with a new culinary experience. Standard menu items almost always include choice beef, excellent seafood, and vegetarian selections (even vegan or other special menu requests). Surprisingly, many ships even allow you to order multiple entrees if that's your choice. In any case, finding what you want to eat on a cruise ship is not going to be a problem, even for those that are 'picky' eaters.

Safety and security on cruise ships, in light of recent incidents, is at the top of most everyone's mind. Concern for individual health and an assurance of personal protection is a critical element in deciding whether or not to take a cruise. Most cruise lines have health and safety policies and programs in place that go well beyond what other vacation venues offer. Even for decades, cruise lines have considered the welfare of their clients to be a primary concern. Unfortunately, recent circumstances have placed cruise lines in an unfavorable light and brought the entire industry into question regarding passenger safety. However, significant additional steps have now been implemented that go to extraordinary lengths in providing an even greater level of passenger care and well-being. Today's cruise lines are likely to be the safest and best-maintained environment for vacation options available to you now.

Finally, one of the prevalent misunderstandings is that cruise vacations are costly. In a valid number of cases, cruises can be less expensive than your typical land-based vacation when you honestly include all the related costs (food, accommodations, transportation, entertainment, and individual activities) of a non-cruise vacation. Although not totally "all-inclusive," cruise fares cover the full cost of the cruise, shipboard accommodations, daily entertainment, and, of course, meals. Optional activities are always available, but the choice to participate (and pay) is totally up to you. Most first-time cruisers have discovered that cruise vacations, even if they do turn out to be a little more expensive, are by far a better, more relaxing vacation experience.



A recent article by the Miami Herald stated that cruise fares are now an even greater value than they may have been in the past, primarily because of recent upgrades in both services and ship improvements. Cruise line operators are frequently improving their ships to keep up with the competition, and the passengers are the big winners. For most land-based holidays, very few vacationers can afford the high-end accommodations and the grandeur of totally exquisite surroundings at a five-star resort. Still, they will find that these features are standard on most of today's cruise ships...and it's all included in the basic cruise fare.

As you will see, cruising is a special kind of vacation. Yes, it's a great way to celebrate significant occasions (honeymoon, anniversary, graduation, birthday, etc.). Still, it's also one of the best choices to experience a vacation that is a little more unique, a little more exciting, and a LOT more fun! Why not start right now to make plans for a super-exciting cruise for your next vacation!!



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**RM CRUISES LLC** is a cruise-only travel agency with offices located in Cleveland, TN. We have been coordinating travel arrangements for singles, couples, seniors, families, groups, and businesses since 2015. You may find complete details about our agency at [www.RMCruises.com](http://www.RMCruises.com).

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