

BEST KEPT SECRET IN CRUISING:

BOOK YOUR NEXT CRUISE WHILE YOU'RE STILL ON BOARD YOUR CURRENT CRUISE

by Rick McCormick

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Cruise travelers are always looking for ways to save on their cruise vacations. Some swear that booking early gets them the best deals. Others claim that last-minute bookings have the ultimate savings available. Still others watch for periodic cruise line sales and promotions in hopes of grabbing their biggest discount opportunity. However, we know that there's one other booking occasion that, typically, tops all these in providing the best cruise fares, exceptional perks and, in most cases, some on-board cash to spend on the cruise.

We're talking about BOOKING ON-BOARD!

Every cruise line afloat has some provision for enticing their customers to continue their loyalty to the brand by establishing an opportunity for them to book THEIR NEXT CRUISE while still on-board their present cruise. In most cases, a cruise line staff member, usually known as the "Future Cruise Consultant" or some similar title, has a workspace (desk, office, etc.) with scheduled hours for any passenger to stop by and view the cruise line's brochures and contemplate a wonderful, new voyage itinerary that they might wish for in the future. Of course, the objective is that the passenger will not only pick a new cruise to consider but will actually make a commitment for that trip sometime during their current sailing.



Typical Royal Caribbean "Next Cruise" office.



Our experience says that on-board booking a future cruise is a win-win situation; giving the best fares and benefits to the customer and, at the same time, providing future sales for the cruise line. About the only downside to the whole idea is that the passenger has to spend another few hundred dollars they might not have included in their current cruise budget, just to make the required deposit for the future sailing. However, in a good number of examples, even the deposit amount is discounted for on-board bookings.

Typical enticements to encourage a future booking include discounted fares, discounted deposit amounts, on-board spending credit, drink and entertainment packages and the list goes on and on. On Holland America, we've actually seen a

special drawing held for all those that booked future cruises, with the prize being an additional \$150 on-board credit for their next sailing. (Yes, we were lucky enough to win that drawing!)

Well, what if you're not quite ready to make a next-cruise commitment right now? Does that mean you have to pass on all those "can't-be-beat" perks offered for booking on-board? Well, not necessarily. In many cases you have at least two other options.

First, some cruise lines (Carnival, for instance) allow you to take an extra two weeks AFTER the end of your current voyage to make up your mind and book the future cruise. You still get all the special pricing and perks offered while you were on-board; you just have an extended period to make that final choice. Secondly, several cruise lines allow you to just make

a deposit on ANY future cruise and, with Holland America for instance, have up to four years to nail down that next cruise itinerary...still maintaining all the offers and amenities extended during the current cruise.

So, there you have it. Today's best kept secret in cruising. Book your next cruise while you're still on-board your current cruise and you'll get some terrific perks, discounted pricing and (we didn't mention this before) instead of feeling sad because your current cruise is ending, you'll now have another fabulous cruise on the horizon to keep your anticipation peeked and spirits looking forward to your new cruise adventure.



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RM Cruises LLC is a cruise-only travel agency located in Cleveland, TN and has been doing travel arrangements for singles, couples, seniors, families, groups and businesses since 2015. Complete details about our agency can be found at www.RMCruises.com.



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