



Learn 7 Top Cruise Tips for Senior Travelers

Description

Baby boomers and elderly cruise passengers are challenging to categorize. Seniors are a diverse group, spanning a wide age range (the 50s to 90s), talent level, and hobbies, and we bet the majority believe they are too youthful (or too young at heart) to be dubbed an “older” or “mature” cruiser.



So-called seniors are just as likely to be drinking afternoon tea or listening to an expert discuss archeology as they are speeding down a massive waterslide or entertaining fellow passengers in the karaoke bar.

They can be spotted on a tour bus exploring Paris or dog sledding in Alaska when it's time to explore a port. They could be traveling alone, as a couple, or as part of a multigenerational group. However, specific travel issues are especially pertinent to this demographic, such as discounts for cruise tourists 50 and older or the significance of trip insurance and accommodations for people with dietary or mobility restrictions.

If you're new to sailing or your travel demands are changing as you approach retirement, these cruise recommendations for the over-50 set can help you have a wrinkle-free holiday.

Senior discounts and isolated cabins help you save money.

Through special senior prices or promotions, seniors might obtain discounts unavailable to younger cruisers. Inquire with your travel or booking agent about cruise lines that offer senior discounts.

Norwegian Voyage Line, for example, gives up to \$100 off the price of a cruise or a 5% discount if you book at least nine months in advance. The offer is only available to AARP members and valid on certain cruises to Alaska, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Europe, and Hawaii; seek sailings with a red “A” mark.

Senior discounts on some cruises are also available from Royal Caribbean Cruises and Carnival Cruise Line for tourists aged 55 and over. Typically, accommodations are meant for double occupancy, and a single traveler pays nearly as much as two individuals.

On the other hand, seniors traveling alone can save money by booking on a ship with single-occupancy accommodations. P&O Cruises’ Azura, for example, has 130-square-foot single cabins with a large single bed and writing desk.

The studio cabins on Norwegian Cruise Line are single accommodations with access to an exclusive studio lounge where lone travelers can connect while enjoying complimentary coffee, espresso, and pastries. Single rooms are becoming more common on the newest cruise ships.

Always purchase travel insurance.

A delayed connection, misplaced luggage, or an unexpected illness may derail a trip. When something goes wrong, travel insurance might help you save money.

It can compensate you for travel cancellations, pay for medical evacuations in the event of an emergency, or provide access to a helpline if you become trapped and need to rebook flights or hotel rooms.

While we recommend that everyone buy comprehensive travel insurance for major excursions, it’s essential for seniors, who are more likely to have medical difficulties arise before or after a cruise, or who may not feel as comfortable making new arrangements on the fly if something goes wrong.

Even if you have health insurance, don’t assume you’re covered while traveling. Most policies do not protect you outside of the country, and many do not cover you on a foreign-flagged vessel.

Medicare does not pay medical expenses outside of the United States. The cost of travel insurance is decided by several criteria, including your age, the trip’s length, and the trip’s price.

Many medical and travel cancellation policies will cover you if you have a pre-existing condition. However, the insurance must generally be obtained within a specific time range.

To get optimum coverage, purchase travel insurance within a week of making the first payment toward a trip. Before scheduling a cruise, it is best to consult a trained specialist about your insurance needs.

Create Your Pharmacy

Preparing for unexpected illness or injury on a cruise holiday can save you money and time. Many cruise lines, for example, supply free motion sickness medication to passengers, but other sorts of seasickness cures, such as wristbands and patches, may not be available.

Purchase such goods at home for easy access if you become ill. Pack common over-the-counter medications and first-aid supplies such as Band-Aids or an Ace bandage.

Also, bring prescription drugs from home and pack extra if the trip is prolonged. You don't want to rely on the ship's pharmacy to have your specific pills on hand or to pay out of pocket for an onboard refill.

If you are traveling with prescriptions that require refrigeration, inquire with the cruise line 30 to 60 days before departing to see what arrangements may be made. Not all minifridges are cold enough to retain medications safely.

The infirmaries on major cruise lines are limited to mild non-emergencies and stabilizing patients with life-threatening conditions. There are payments to see the doctor, just as at home; however, unlike at home, the ship's doctor will not accept your health insurance.

Save yourself a trip to the hospital by being prepared with vital drugs and visiting only when necessary.

Select Shore Tours You Can Take

Every port has arranged shore excursions provided by cruise lines. Swimming with stingrays and whale viewing are fee-based activities, as are coach trips and cooking workshops.

Join a shore trip if you wish to leave the organizing to someone else. Just make sure your physical abilities are sufficient for the excursion.

Usually, cruise lines provide a brochure or online material outlining the many excursions available at each port, the duration of the activity, and a sign indicating the physical ability required for each tour.

Royal Caribbean, for example, categorizes all of its tours as light, moderate, or demanding and marks wheelchair-accessible terms. Tour descriptions warn potential tour participants of long hours of walking or standing, rugged walking terrain, and activities that may not be appropriate for passengers with pre-existing medical concerns.

If you overestimate your abilities, you can end up paying for a tour you don't entirely appreciate. Passengers who use wheelchairs or cannot walk up steps should consult with the cruise line's special needs department and the excursions department. There are very few excursions that are wheelchair accessible.

Take Your Time

While it may be tempting to overindulge in food and booze while on a cruise, both can be detrimental to your health and enjoyment. (Remember, you're no longer 21!)

Balance your meals with energizing walks or enroll in one of the many workout classes available. Combine unique delights like steak and large desserts with healthier meal options (often denoted with a special symbol).

Know your drinking limitations, and follow a boozy night with a more sedate day. It's also tempting to overdo it with too many activities, especially when long days of touring are followed by late nights of entertainment on the ship.

Spend a few minutes perusing the ship's daily newsletter, which is usually available each night, to decide which of the following day's activities sounds the most intriguing. If you stayed up late dancing on the terrace, sleep in and request room service.

Tired from a long day of touring? When the ship is in port, stay onboard and unwind at the spa or poolside away from the crowds.

If You Have Special Needs, Plan Ahead of Time

For passengers with special needs, cruise ships offer a variety of help, services, and accommodations, but options vary from one cruise line to the next and even from ship to ship within the same fleet. MSC, for example, provides a diabetes-friendly menu, while Celebrity Cruises has pool lifts (a chair that transports a person into the water) on all of its ships.

Before planning a vacation, passengers with disabilities should check with the cruise operator to determine what alternatives and rules apply to their condition. Cruise ships, like hotels, have a limited number of accessible staterooms, so book early if you require one.

Some cruise lines require disabled people to travel with a partner. To minimize disappointment, prospective single travelers should contact the cruise line's special needs department before booking.

If you have difficulty walking long distances but do not usually use a wheelchair, you may want to try hiring a chair or scooter. The cruise ship has a limited number of wheelchairs available for customers experiencing a medical emergency.

Mobility assistance and oxygen and breathing aids can be rented from a company like Special Needs at Sea. Another big worry, particularly for passengers with mobility issues, is port access.

Many destinations need the use of a tender, which is a small boat that carries people from the cruise ship to the dock area; getting in and out of a tender requires some agility, and the boats are not usually wheelchair accessible.

When booking, search for ports that do not require tendering and become acquainted with your cruise

line's accessible tendering policy. You don't want to be stranded aboard the ship when you intend to explore ashore.

Make New Pals

One of the many benefits of cruising is the numerous opportunities to meet new people, whether you're going alone or with others. Strangers you meet at breakfast may become lifelong friends and travel companions.

Start a conversation over cocktails while playing a trivia game, or invite a nice pair to dinner. Visit the Roll Call forums on Cruise Critic's discussion boards to get to know your fellow passengers before you leave.

A themed cruise or one with a particular event is another method to meet like-minded people. Consider a hobby, celebrity, or activity you adore, and there is almost certainly a cruise that caters to that specific passion.

Foodies, for example, might enjoy a cruise with a guest chef, cooking demos, and excursions to local restaurants. You can find yourself swapping e-mail addresses and planning to meet again on your next vacation while trading recipes with a new acquaintance.

Category

1. Lifestyle

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