

Cruise Vacations



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Basic questions to get you started

- **Have you ever cruised before?**
- **What dates are you planning to travel?**
- **How many nights do you want to cruise?**
- **What stateroom type do you prefer?**
- **Will you be driving or flying to the port?**
- **Are you celebrating a special occasion?**
- **Do you prefer early, late or anytime dining?**
- **Do you have any dietary restrictions or special needs?**
- **Are you aware of the benefits of purchasing travel protection?**
- **What is your budget?**
- **Are you aware of what is NOT included in a cruise vacation?**
- **Do you have the proper proof of citizenship that is mandatory?**

Have you ever cruised before?

- If the answer is yes, ask about their cruise history. If the answer is more than one cruise line, inquire if they have a preference and why? *This simple question will give you the insight as to what cruise lines to research first.*
- Obtain the client's past guest account numbers, date of birth, current or prior military service and state of residency because when checking rates there may be special rates.
- If the client has not cruised before explain why a cruise is one of the most affordable vacations and give examples:
 - All meals are included except for Specialty Restaurants which will have an upcharge
 - Basic beverages (coffee, tea, juice and non-bottled water)
 - The onboard entertainment, impeccable service, outdoor activities at the pools and children's programs
 - The ability to experience different cultures in each port
 - Visiting multiple locations but only unpacking once

What are your travel dates?

- Encourage your client to be as specific as possible.
- If your client has no idea, they just 'want a good deal' depending on the destination, provide when the best rates are typically available and why:
 - The Caribbean, simply put, Hurricane Season (Jun – Nov)
 - Alaska, the beginning of the season (May) and the end of the season (Sep)
 - Europe, again, the beginning of the season (May) and the end of the season (Oct)

How many nights do you want to cruise?

- The previous cruiser most likely will have an idea of their next desired itinerary. Additional options can be suggested such as a longer cruise, adding on a cruise-tour, pre or post cruise packages, a back to back sailing or a European river cruise for something completely different from ocean cruises.
- For the first-time cruiser who is unsure suggest a 4 or 5-day cruise. 3 nights is too short and 7 nights may be too long.

What type of stateroom do you prefer?

- There are 4 main stateroom accommodations available:
 - Interior
 - Ocean View
 - Balcony or Verandah
 - Suite
- Don't automatically assume your client wants the most economical cabin on the ship.
- Always offer options. If your client is interested in an interior cabin, price an ocean view cabin. Many times, there is not a huge difference. Offer your client the choice while explaining the differences.
- Try to up-sell without being 'pushy' which will increase your commission.
- If your client is worried about getting seasick, offer an ocean view stateroom, mid-ship on a lower deck.

Will you be driving or flying to the port?

For the client who is flying:

- Offer to book their airline tickets either through the cruise line or through another source. Check both because sometimes the cruise lines can offer discounted rates.
- If the client is booking their own air make sure to advise the cruise line's guidelines regarding arrival and departure time policies.
- Offer to add airport transfers to and from the ship.
- Suggest flying in a day early in case of travel delays and offer to book a hotel that offers transfers to the port.

For the client who is driving:

- Offer to book a hotel for the night prior to the cruise at a hotel close to the port in case of a delay.
- Many hotels will permit a client to park their car at the hotel without charge if they are staying one night (either pre or post cruise) and offer a transfer to the port. This service may not be complimentary and typically the hotel requires the guest to sign up for a transfer time at check in. Contact the hotel directly for complete details.
- Note some hotels cannot pick-up at the port on the return so check if the transfers are round trip or only one way. If they are not round trip advise the approximate fare for a taxi to the hotel to pick up their car.

Are you celebrating a special occasion?

- Notify the cruise line if your client is celebrating a special occasion such as:
 - Birthday
 - Anniversary
 - Honeymoon
- The cruise line provides a small cake and the wait staff will present it at dinner.
- Advise the cruise line the date of the celebration.
- If the occasion is not occurring during their cruise, typically the celebration is scheduled for the first formal night.

What is your preferred dining time?

Most cruise lines offer 3 choices for dining:

- Traditional Early (6:00pm)
- Traditional Late (8:30pm)
- Anytime Dining

There are Pros and Cons for both dining options:

Traditional Dining:

- Same waiter and table every night
- Seated with the same traveling companions each night
- Early dining may interfere with shore excursions
- Will not affect the ability to attend the evening shows

Anytime Dining:

- Flexibility to dine at "Any Time"
- Reservations can be booked ahead of time online
- Different waiter and dining companions each night
- May have to wait for an available table

Do you have any dietary restrictions or special needs?

Be sure to have their reservation noted with any special needs. You may be required to submit a form detailing the request. Some examples are:

- Dietary restrictions such as diabetic, food allergies, gluten-free, etc.
- A guest bringing oxygen, their own wheelchair or c-pap machine
- Sharps container
- Small refrigerator (the refrigerator in the stateroom is not suitable for storing medicine or food)
- Special requests such as a wheelchair, motorized scooter or a shower bench can be reserved for a fee by contacting www.SpecialNeedsatSea.com. This company will deliver the item to the ship on embarkation day and pick it up on disembarkation day.

Would you like to add Travel Protection (aka Travel Insurance)?

- Always, Always, Always offer Travel Protection!
- Compare third party protection company benefits against what the cruise line protection offers. They will differ.
- You will earn more commission if you purchase through a third party vs. the cruise lines.
- Highlight the features Travel Protection covers.

- Advise travel protection protects them against cancellation or non-refundable fees. List the dates they go in to effect.
- Provide an example of a client who has lost all their money and vacation due to not having travel protection.
- If the client declines travel protection be sure to have them sign the Travel Protection Waiver which can be found on the Outside Agent Link website and in this workbook. You need to keep the original signed copy and provide a photocopy to your client. This document protects you from a potential lawsuit.

What is your budget?

- Do not be afraid to ask this question!
- Inquire if the client has done any online research so you can compare apples to apples.
- If your client is hesitant to give you an estimate and since you have already started qualifying, then you could suggest a budget by saying:
 -What is the maximum you were planning on spending?
 Follow-up immediately with this statement:
I'm certainly going to find you the best possible price and will not up-charge you to reach your budget however it will help me get you the best value for your money.

Are you aware of what is NOT included in your cruise vacation?

Be sure your client is aware of what is NOT included in their cruise:

- Gratuities can be pre-paid before the client departs, verify the amount with the cruise line as they can vary
- Shore Excursions
- Beer, wine and alcohol
- Sodas, specialty coffees, bottled water, and some fresh juices, etc.
- Casino gambling and bingo
- Specialty Dining Restaurants
- Spa Treatments
- Some ships charge additional costs for Premium Entertainment Shows (i.e. NCL – Blue Man Group)

Do you know what proof of citizenship is mandatory for your cruise?

It is crucial to advise your client what proof of citizenship is mandatory.

- The BEST proof is a valid passport that must be valid 6 months after the cruise ends.
- Use a date calculator to assist your client in determining the correct date.
- Some itineraries may require a Visa and/or immunization for entry.
- An original state issued birth certificate with a raised seal along with a valid government issued ID (such as a Driver's License) is an acceptable proof of citizenship for a cruise departing and returning to the same port in the United States ONLY.
- The enhanced driver's license or enhanced ID cards offered by many states may or may not be accepted. Check www.state.gov for country specific information regarding proof of citizenship.

Notes:
