

VACATION CRUISING

How to save money *without* sacrificing fun!

By

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FORWARD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL AGENT	3
DOING YOUR DUE DILIGENCE	5
Theme Cruises	5
Group Cruises	7
Ports of Call	8
Air/Sea Packages	9
Cruise Pricing	12
Cruise Line Considerations	14
Cabin Selection	15
Cruise Bargains	16
Shore Excursions	17
LET'S GO CRUISING	20
Travel Protection	21
Travel Documents	22
A SIMPLE PLAN	24
Paperwork	24
Medical Records	27
Packing	28
A Budget	31
WELCOME ABOARD	33
TO INSURE PROPER SERVICE (TIPS)	38
CHARGE IT!	40
LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION	43
More Than Bus Trips	44
Safety	48
FOOD, FOOD, FOOD	51
Dinner Meal Time Selection	52
Table Assignments	53
Specialty Dining	56
GETTING YOUR DRINK ON	57
MAMA NEEDS A NEW PAIR 'O SHOES	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

SPORTS AND SUCH	63
Calgon, Take Me Away	64
OH MY ACHING TUMMY	67
SMILE FOR THE CAMERA	68
PHONING HOME	71
WASH DAY	73
NO MONEY, NO MONEY, NO MONEY	75
IN GENERAL	76
WRAPPING IT UP	78

INTRODUCTION

“Baby let me take you on a sea cruise”

The lyrics to Frankie Ford’s song “[Sea Cruise](#)” released in 1959 seem to echo the sentiments of many people when planning a vacation. Did you know, however, that **80% of the U.S. population has never taken a cruise**? Some think it’s out of the realm of possibilities when considering a vacation on a budget, but not anymore!

Many people think that cruising the open seas on a luxury ship is a vacation they can’t even dream of...or it's just for the newly wed or nearly dead! However, with some careful planning and saving, a cruise that fits your lifestyle is definitely within the realm of possibilities!

The cost of cruising has dropped dramatically over the last few years, and it's become affordable for almost everyone as a vacation alternative. But many of us could afford to cruise even more often if we could just cut down on all the extra on-board and on-shore costs, above and beyond the actual cruise fare.

There are hundreds of tips out there on how to save money on your cruise. Whether you get advice from family and friends, the Internet, or your local travel agent, they all are valuable. The only problem is how do you remember them all? This book has taken the best tips from several sources and put them in one convenient place – HERE!

Almost anyone can take a cruise vacation that’s everything depicted in the movies and on television. You can enjoy The Bahamas, Hawaii, Mexico, and even Alaska

aboard luxury cruise ships with all the amenities of a resort on land.

The key to making the most of your cruise vacation is to know where you can save money without sacrificing fun or rest and relaxation. Many cruises are all-inclusive, but that doesn't necessarily mean "ALL inclusive." There are extra charges for items on board as well as activities and shore trips.

You deserve to enjoy your vacation and all that comes with it, and you can do it on a budget! What could be better than that?

So sit back and read up on the best ways to save money on your cruise. Gopher, Julie, and Doc from "[The Love Boat](#)" won't be there, but YOU will be!

I listen on the radio quite often to Gopher Smith, a.k.a. Fred Grandy. He has a show on [WMAL 630](#) in Washington, DC. He's just a nutty on the radio as he was on TV.

THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL AGENT

If you decide to use a travel agent, or consultant as they care to be called, know who you are dealing with! Most cruise agents are very competent; others not so. A real travel professional will take the time to qualify you as a client.

Besides the obvious questions to find out where and when you want to go, she'll ask: why? She will ask pertinent questions about your travel history and preferences. If you've cruised in the past, for example, she'll find out what kind of cabin you've had, what you liked/disliked about your experiences, if you're qualified for any past passenger discounts. The travel professional may even ask you what hotel brands you frequent to get a feel for the cruise product best suited to you.

A travel professional can provide you one key item that you cannot get on the Internet: **customer service**. In fact, that is the "value add" that they bring to your travel experience. If possible, find one that's associated with the [Cruise Lines International Association](#) and is certified as an Accredited, Master or Elite Cruise Counsellor. That way you'll know that the person servicing your cruise vacation is a true professional.

Travel agents are certainly the easiest way to go when booking a cruise. In fact, a number of travel writers recommend that a cruise is one of those occasions where **you need to use one**. Here's an article we wrote entitled: [Why You Need A Travel Agent](#). It references and has a link to an article in MSNBC.com from Christopher Elliott, a travel

columnist. Mr. Elliott states in his article entitled "Stay off the computer":

Travel agents remain your best bet for a floating vacation. Why? Two main reasons: First, cruise lines give travel agencies access to special deals that you probably won't find anywhere else. And second, because a cruise can get complicated. There are airline tickets that have to be bought, hotel rooms to be booked, shore excursions and lots of options on the ship.

If you do use a travel agent to book your cruise, you have plenty of company. The Cruise Lines International Association reports that upwards of 87% of people use a travel agent to book their cruise. The reason is pretty obvious when you consider that the **World Wide Web lets us know the price of everything and the value of nothing!**

DOING YOUR DUE DILIGENCE

Start with research. We're assuming you don't have a particular cruise line in mind, but if you do, start with their web site. If you don't care whether you cruise on Carnival or Oceania, do a quick web search for cruise deals and you'll find tons of places that will give you information on what they have to offer. In fact, you'll be overwhelmed with information!

There are some web sites we have found that might help guide you:

[Cruise Addicts](#)

[Cruise Critic](#)

[Cruise Deck Plans](#)

[Meet On Cruise](#)

You will have a lot of options to consider when deciding on your cruise, which we will outline in this chapter.

Theme Cruises

One such option is taking a theme cruise. What exactly is a theme cruise, you ask? It is a cruise booked around a certain theme that could focus on a particular interest such as murder mystery, sports, music styles, etc. The cruise line may provide special events and lectures for you to attend revolving around the theme. Some theme cruises

have celebrities along for the ride giving you the chance to rub elbows with the rich and famous. If you can think of a theme that interests people, they probably have a cruise to match it.

A theme cruise can be great fun if you pick the right theme for you. One resource is ThemeCruiseFinder.com to find a theme cruise that matches your interest. Here's part of a description for a Total Ship Takeover Adult Lifestyle Cruise we found at that site.

You can expect the same great entertainment, playrooms, and parties that we had on this past cruise, and a lot more. Nudity will be allowed on the sun decks and pool areas, and you will also be able to go topless in the disco.

This cruise is being produced by a group that has been producing lifestyle events for many years. They have a depth of understanding of the lifestyle community, and they have held many successful lifestyle events previously...The ultimate erotic vacation for lifestyle couples. Sensuous fun on a Radiance class ship. FINALLY, Lifestyle Cruising with class - where your fantasies can be fulfilled.

Besides the "Lifestyle" category mentioned above there are more wholesome choices available to you. The cruise lines will tell you that the hottest theme cruises this year are food and wine. Some of the premium cruise lines have made major investments in teaching kitchens. Here's an [article](#) about how Celebrity Cruises has teamed up with the Food Network to offer their guests "enticing and exclusive experiences."

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