

FORA



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Insider's Guide to Cruises

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*Travel Advisor***Gregory Rhoney**[CONTACT GREGORY](#)

Image courtesy of Andrew Peacock for Lindblad Expeditions

Cruising is changing. The variety is as vast as ever, with options ranging from traditional floating metropolises to intimate yachts. Avowed non-cruisers are dipping their toes in the

water. They keep coming back.

A cruise vacation can be as relaxing or as action-packed as you want. There are options for everyone. Plus, shore excursions — guided and otherwise — make it easy to experience numerous destinations on a single itinerary. One of cruises' main draws is that most of the logistics are already taken care of.

Discover a few of my favorite cruise lines, and the ideal traveler for each. When you're ready to set sail, reach out to start planning.

Need to know

- **Best time to visit:** You can cruise any time of year. Different ships depart to different destinations depending on the season. Alaska and Mediterranean itineraries are ideal for summer, for instance, while the Caribbean is great year round. For the best deals, avoid peak summer season and the holidays.
- **Ideal length of stay:** Just as there's a cruise for every season, there's a cruise for every trip duration. Most itineraries range from two days to over two weeks. Some go for several weeks, and even months. The sweet spot is around five to seven days. That way, you can get your bearings, unpack and enjoy your time on (and off) board.
- **What to wear:** It depends where you're cruising to. Regardless, pack a swimming suit and a few nicer outfits for evening meals and events.
- **Transportation:** It's best practice to arrive in your departure port city one to two days before you set sail. Arrange for transfers to the port in advance. (I can help with this.)
- **Travel requirements:** Depending on where you're sailing, you may need a visa. (Cruises to New Zealand and Australia generally require a visa.) I will be up to date on all the requirements. And don't forget your passport; it's the one thing you need to board the ship.
- **Special considerations:** Cruise deadlines for reservations and payments differ from those of hotels, and generally fall far in advance of your departure. Booking with me will ensure you don't miss any crucial dates.

Mainstream cruises

Mainstream cruises are what typically come to mind when you think of cruises. They're giant, with tons of onboard activities, entertainment and dining outlets. Below is by no means an exhaustive list, but it encompasses a few of Fora's most popular lines.



Image courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line

Royal Caribbean

Royal Caribbean is the ultimate family-friendly cruise line (although there are areas reserved for adults). Expect waterparks, shopping, nightlife, spa days, zip lines, casinos, kids' and teen clubs and more. Go to Jamie's Italian for homemade pasta. The restaurant is also very accommodating to those who can't eat gluten.

Ideal travelers: families and multigenerational groups

Norwegian Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line's offerings are impressive and vast. There's a multi-level race track, numerous saunas and relaxation areas, fine dining, entertainment, live music and more. This cruise truly offers something for everyone.

Ideal travelers: families and multigenerational groups

Carnival Cruise Line

Carnival is a household name in the cruising industry for a reason. Expect waterslides, onboard entertainment, tons of destinations and a large fleet of ships.

Ideal travelers: younger groups, couples and those looking for more accessible pricing

Premium cruises

Premium cruises dial up the luxury. While they still can pack in a lot of people, the vibe is more intimate and exclusive than what you'd find on a mainstream cruise.

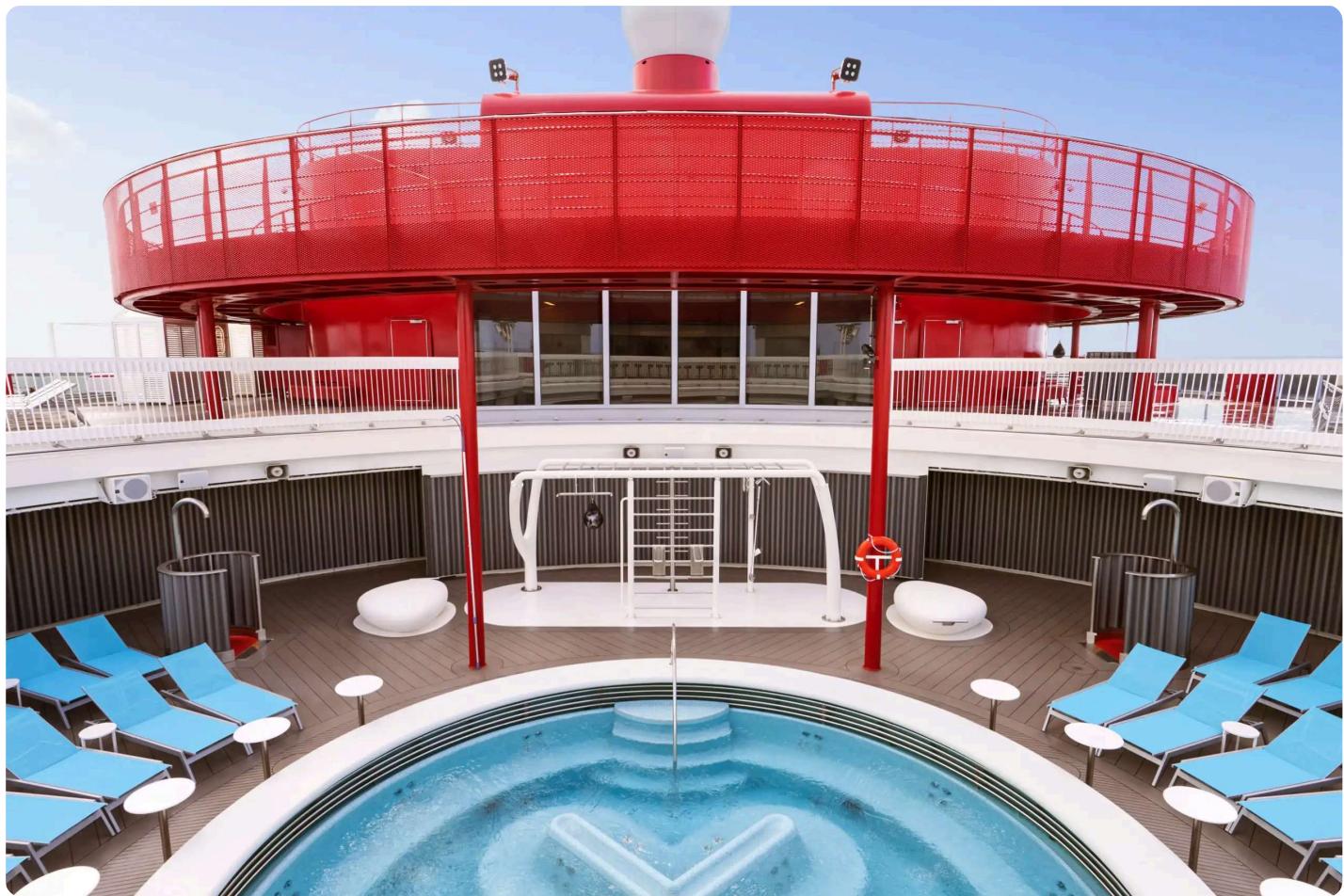


Image courtesy of Virgin Voyages

Virgin Voyages

Virgin Voyages is an adults-only cruise line with a cheeky sense of play and sleek, modern décor. There's nary a buffet on board. Try the Mexican tapas restaurant Blue Agave (and don't skip the off-menu smoked pork tacos) and the Wake, a stylish steak and seafood restaurant. Virgin is also very inclusive and especially LGBTQ-friendly.

Ideal travelers: couples, friend groups and parents who need a break

Disney Cruise Line

Disney imbues a bit of magic into everything they do — including cruises. And the magic extends to adults, who shouldn't miss the onboard spa. The company's meticulous attention to detail and contagious playfulness is evident.

Ideal travelers: families, couples and Disney fans

Luxury cruises

Luxury cruises take things up a notch. These ships are smaller in scale and offer higher-end onboard facilities — spas, restaurants, gyms — compared with what you might find elsewhere.

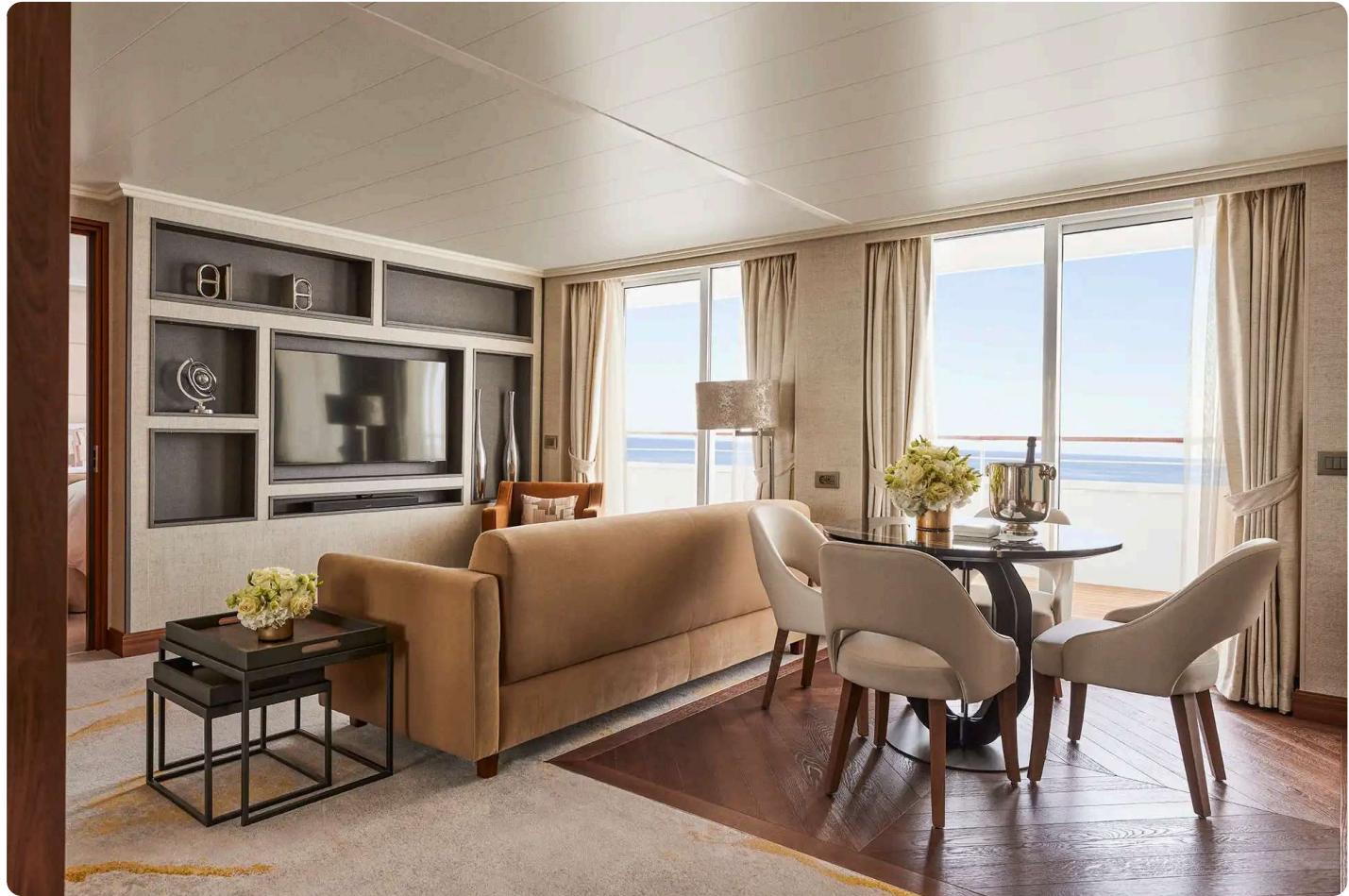


Image courtesy of Crystal

Explora Journeys

Explora Journey ships feel more like luxury boutique hotels. The service is hyper-personalized — and personable — the décor is elegant, the dining options are gourmet and onboard wellness is taken very seriously. At Sakura, sample the best pan-Asian cuisine from Japan, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia. Try the lobster pad Thai or vegetable green curry.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers, couples and families with well-traveled children

Crystal

Two luxe ships comprise Crystal's luxe fleet: Crystal Serenity and Crystal Symphony. Expect butler service, refined sophistication and class. Their cruises are truly all-inclusive, which is incredible news, since onboard restaurants include outlets helmed by chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa and other notable names in the culinary world.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers, couples and culture enthusiasts

River Cruises

River cruises allow you to see multiple destinations while only having to unpack once.



Image courtesy of AmaWaterways

Les Bateaux Belmond

Les Bateaux Belmond bring the luxe hotel brand's signature taste and refinement to France's waterways. Gourmet food and immersive, one-of-a-kind experiences — truffle hunting in Burgundy, hot-air balloon rides over the countryside — await.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers, couples and families with well-traveled children

AmaWaterways

Those who like to stay active on vacation will especially appreciate AmaWaterways. Their shore excursions include bike rides, hikes and walks. (There are also dedicated Wellness Hosts who lead group fitness classes on the ship.) Onboard food prioritizes locally sourced ingredients, and many of the off-board experiences center on tasting authentic, local specialities.

Ideal travelers: families, multigenerational groups, active travelers, couples and first-time visitors to Europe

Viking

Viking caters to adults (guests must be at least 18) who love learning and cultural immersion. Attend a lecture on history or art, grab a book from the curated onboard library, listen to local musicians, attend a local market with the ship's chef or tour a world-class museum's private collection.

Ideal travelers: couples and the intellectually curious

Expedition cruises

Expedition cruises focus on adventure and a deeper appreciation of the natural world. Often, scientists and professional nature photographers will accompany you onboard.



Image courtesy of HX

Lindblad Expeditions

Lindblad excels at taking you off the beaten path. Their ships are small enough to maneuver into more intimate natural areas untouched by people. The cruise line has also partnered with *National Geographic*, whose photographers and researchers often join expeditions to educate guests on the world around them. Even better, Lindblad's ships are carbon-neutral, and the company as a whole is deeply committed to supporting local communities and ecosystems.

Ideal travelers: adventurers, active travelers and nature lovers

HX

HX (Hurtigruten Expeditions) was the first cruise line to introduce battery-hybrid ships. They're big on environmental sustainability, and invest in initiatives meant to protect and support the health of the planet. HX cruises will take you to far-flung destinations like Antarctica and Greenland, while Hurtigruten cruises take you all around Norway.

Ideal travelers: adventurers, active travelers and nature lovers

UnCruise Adventures

UnCruise's small ships hold at most 86 people. As a result, you're able to really get close to nature. Fellow passengers begin to feel like friends, and you get more facetime with the crew, allowing you to ask any and all questions to learn more about the destination, whether that be the Galápagos, Alaska or Baja.

Ideal travelers: adventurers, active travelers and nature lovers

Yachts

Yachting is the new cruising. Luxury hotel brands have ventured to cruising, redefining what a "cruise" can be.

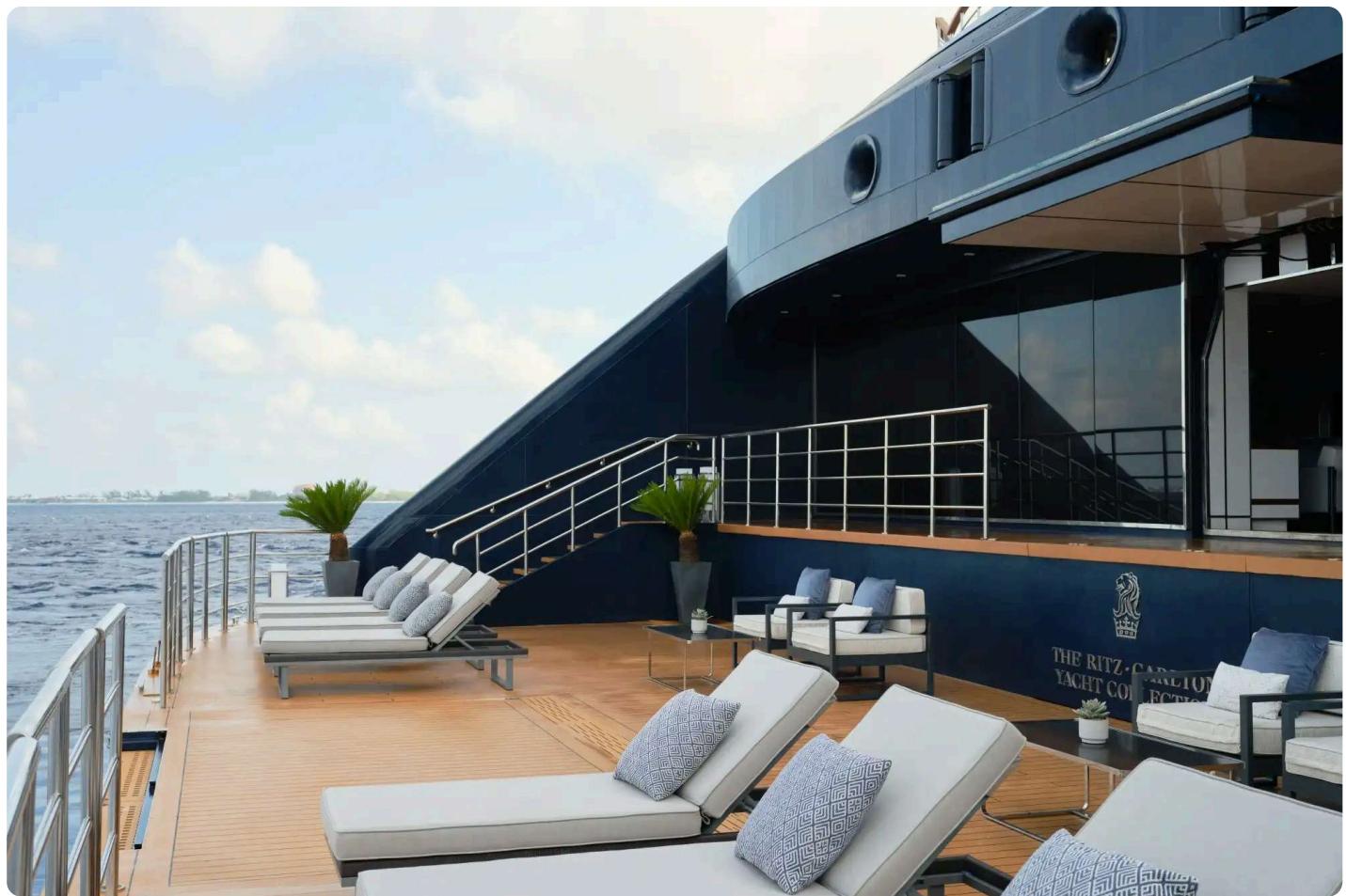


Image courtesy of Jack Hardy for The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection

Four Seasons Yachts

The forthcoming Four Seasons yacht expeditions will travel to the Caribbean, Greek Isles, Adriatic, Mediterranean, Bahamas and "Rivieras" of Spain, Italy and France. Expect sleek,

elegant accommodations and Four Seasons' signature five-star service. If you thought you'd never set foot on a cruise, this may change your mind.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers, couples and families with well-traveled children

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection

The Ritz-Carlton will take you all over the world in one of their three luxury yachts, the largest of which holds just over 450 people. Everything was designed to make the experience feel residential. You'll love the crisp, clean décor and private terraces.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers, couples and families with well-traveled children

SeaDream Yacht Club

SeaDream is all about personalization. Start the day with a complimentary yoga class, or sleep in. Practice your swing in the golf simulator, or try your luck at the casino. When it's time to explore a destination, do so via mountain bike on your own, opt for a crew-led tour or hit the market with the chef. You can't go wrong.

Ideal travelers: luxury travelers and couples

Get in touch with Gregory

Reach out for travel inspiration, hotel bookings or customized itineraries.

*Email Address

*First Name *Last Name Please provide some details about your trip.

You can expect a response from Gregory within 1-2 business days. You'll also be subscribed to our traveler newsletter (you can unsubscribe at any time).

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