

Travel by Marcy Can Help With Your Next Cruise

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5 Things to Pack for Your Cruise

You've booked your cruise and now it's time to start getting ready. What should you put on your packing list? You've checked the weather for your ports of call and know, generally, what temperature to pack for; don't forget to bring layers, just in case. And you know to never count on sunshine 100 percent of the time, so you've already got an umbrella and raincoat on the list. Also, the cruise ships are air-conditioned, and can be cool in the dining rooms and public areas.

But where most cruisers get caught up is omitting items they don't think they'll need. If you're wondering what to pack for your first cruise, here is a packing list of five things we'd never set sail without.



1. Extra Bags

A day pack, a bag for dirty laundry, a plastic bag for wet bathing suits, Zip-Loc bags for snacks ... you really can't have too many extra bags with you on a cruise. Take a look at your itinerary to see what type of bags you might need. Heading to the beach? Make sure you have a roomy beach bag you can stuff a towel or two into. Doing a city tour? You'll want an over-the-shoulder piece with a zipper for keeping your wallet, phone and camera secure. Going shopping? Pack an empty, expandable duffel that you can fill up when your suitcase is bulging with all the souvenirs you picked up on your trip.



2. First-Aid Kit

No one wants to think about getting sick or hurt on a cruise, but few vacations end without someone getting a cut or having a little indigestion. Buying Band-Aids or Pepto onboard isn't cheap, and all the over-the-counter meds you have at home might not be readily available on a cruise ship or in a foreign port. We recommend packing a small first-aid kit stocked with items like Band-Aids, alcohol swabs, antibiotic ointment, cold pills, cough drops, painkillers, seasickness remedies and meds for heartburn and upset stomachs.

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3. Your Favorite (Nonalcoholic) Beverage



Only like Coke products? Can't go a day without your Diet Dr. Pepper? Soda choices onboard most cruise lines are limited to just a handful of varieties (regular, diet, lemon [like Sprite or 7-Up], ginger ale and maybe one or two others), so if you've really got to have your favorite flavor or brand, you'll want to bring your own. Cost is an issue too, with the cost per can of soda or bottle of water on a cruise ship significantly higher than on land. Virtually every cruise line lets passengers bring their own soda and water onboard. Limits vary by cruise line, so check with your travel agent or the cruise line directly before you sail.



4. Laundry Alternatives

Sending out your laundry onboard many cruises ships is expensive, and on those where the cost is a handful of quarters for self-service, you're forced to give up part of your day to usher your clothing through wash and dry cycles. Need something pressed? You'll also pay a premium unless you're staying in a suite or there's a launderette onboard equipped with an iron. But invest in a small bottle of Downey wrinkle spray and travel-sized packets of Woolite for hand washes in your cabin's sink, and you've got a cheap path to clean and wrinkle-free clothing. Other laundry must-pack items include a quick-treatment stain remover and a travel-size bottle of Fabreze to get out smoke and other smells, so you can wear an outfit more than once.



5. Power Strip

With the exception of only the absolute newest cruise ships (we're talking those that debuted in 2014 or later), cruise ship cabins are notorious for not having enough outlet space for all the gadgets and gizmos most cruisers carry with them. The most obvious quick fix is to bring a power strip onboard, but first time cruise passengers need to be aware that cruise lines are incredibly wary about overloading shipboard circuits and have strict rules about what types of power strips may be brought onboard. First rule of thumb, **no** power surge protected strips may be carried on. Second, keep your power strip small; it should provide only one or two extra outlets for plugging into, not four or five. You might also consider bringing a portable, external charger. You can charge it at the same time you charge your laptop via a USB cable and can then use the external charger later, if needed, for your cell phone or iPod.