

10 Things Not to Do on a Cruise Sea Day



Sea days are a staple on nearly all cruise itineraries, whether you love the thought of it (or don't). From morning until night, there's nowhere to go except for onboard venues. Some folks are thrilled with a day at sea on their cruise, planning a blissful day of zoning out in the sun or a jam-packed itinerary running from the gym to trivia to a wine tasting to a dance class and then a show. Others fear boredom and claustrophobia with no land in sight.

No matter your approach to sea days, here are 10 things you should not do when spending an entire day at sea on a cruise ship.

1. Don't Ignore Your Daily Newsletter on a Sea Day-The daily newsletter left on the bed in your room each evening is your sea day bible on any cruise. It contains everything you need to know about onboard activities, dining times, special events and any one-day sales or discounts. Lose it, toss it or ignore it, and you might be missing out on the action during a day at sea.

2. Don't Pack Your Schedule Too Full-In fear of being bored on a cruise sea day, you might prepare an over-ambitious schedule for the day, with every waking hour devoted to a different activity. Port days are generally frenetic, so be sure to save some time on your day off from touring for more leisurely activities, like long lunch, a soak in the hot tub or reading time on your balcony.

3. Don't Miss Out on Sea Day Special Events-Cruise lines often schedule noteworthy events for long days at sea. Perhaps it's a special sea day brunch or a behind-the-scenes tour or even a matinee show. If you're having trouble deciding how to plan your day, prioritize any events you won't have a chance to attend due to shore excursions or conflicting event times on other days on your cruise. It also makes sense to prioritize these one-off special events over attractions that are available every day -- like the water slides or pool time -- on a sea day.

4. Don't Limit Yourself to the Buffet on a Day at Sea-The buffets and pool deck grills are a madhouse on sea days because people don't want to stray far from their lounge chair or change from their swimwear into main dining room attire. However, days at sea are the perfect time for a more refined breakfast or lunch in the cruise ship's restaurants. You're not rushing out to a tour, so you can linger over your morning meal, and we can assure you the line to get into the dining room lunch won't be as long as the one at the buffet. Plus, as noted earlier, some cruises offer special sea day meals you don't want to miss.

5. Don't Hog the Lounge Chairs Near the Pool-From all-inclusive resorts on land to cruises, chair hogs are some of the most disliked of guests. Do not get up at the crack of dawn, put a book, sunglasses and towel on a lounge in a prime location, then go back to sleep or to breakfast or to the gym. Likewise, don't occupy chairs next to you just as a place to park your belongings. Doing so is rude -- especially on a day when many people want to spend time in the sun. It's OK to save your chair while you take a dip or run off to grab a quick bite, but if you plan to be gone for more than 30 minutes, give up your spot to someone who will actually use it.

6. Don't Use the Spa or Gym at Peak Times-No one wants to miss time in port on their cruise, so most passengers plan their massages and manicures for sea days -- and schedules in a workout in a futile attempt to counteract the prior evening's indulgences. The result is that the onboard fitness center is packed on sea day mornings and often in the late afternoon. Likewise, the spa is booked solid and thermal suites are packed to their less-than-serene gills on days at sea. If you want to pump some iron on your cruise, consider going during meal times when crowds are thinner. To have the relaxing spa experience you're dreaming about, book your treatment in advance of your cruise embarkation and plan your sauna time for very early or very late in the day.

7. Don't Start Drinking Too Early in the Day-The pool bar opens early and the drinks flow well into the evening on a sea day. If you start the morning with a bloody mary, crack open your first beer at 10:30 a.m. and plan a liquid-heavy lunch, you will be over-the-top inebriated by dinner. Drunken days at sea can lead to sunburns (when you pass out on the pool deck with no sunscreen on), unpleasant dinners for your eating companions (as you rave on drunkenly) or -- worse -- sleeping right through dinner and missing the evening fun. Remember to pace yourself -- you want to remember your fun cruise experience, after all.

8. Don't Stay Indoors on Your Cruise Ship All Day-You booked a cruise for that salty sea breeze and the calming views of waves rushing past your ship. If you spend your sea day at the spa, shops, casino or show lounges, you'll miss the best of cruising -- being outside while sailing. If you must catch the expert lecturer right before bingo, at least pause on your way across the ship to take a couple of lungfuls of sea air before continuing into an over-air-conditioned, windowless space.

9. Don't Sleep All Day-Even worse than spending an entire day at sea indoors is spending your sea day passed out cold in your cabin. We get that vacation is a time for partying late, sleeping in and indulging in afternoon naps, but you didn't pay all that money just to snooze the days away. Set an alarm and make sure you experience some of the fun activities your ship has to offer.

10. Don't Forget to Keep Your Budget in Mind-On sea days, cruisers are a captive audience, and the cruise line schemes to separate you from your hard-earned cash with shopping events in the onboard boutique, poker challenges in the casino and some enticing treatments at the spa. If you're bored, it's pretty easy to plunk yourself down in front of a slot machine or go window shopping -- only to come to your senses several hundred, or thousand, dollars later. Remember your vacation budget and cut yourself off when you get too close to your pre-set limits.

The Canadian Rockies: The Trip of a Lifetime



Our Rocky Mountaineer trip through the Canadian Rockies was truly one of the most spectacular trips we've taken. The train itself was so luxurious and comfortable with chef prepared delicacies and attentive, personable and caring attendants, as we traveled around and through the magnificent Rocky Mountains. Our Motorcoach drivers and tour guides were so knowledgeable, aware and enjoyable. And our accommodations were fit for royalty! And all the while, we were surrounded by indescribable beauty 24 hours a day, in every direction that we looked. From the snow-capped mountains to the distant valleys to the turquoise lakes

and rivers, the cascading waterfalls and the plentiful wildlife. When I was a young girl, my Aunt Elsie said to me that if there is one trip, you take in your lifetime, make it to Banff and Lake Louise. Well, I must also add Jasper and Rocky Mountaineer to that list! Here's to you Aunt Elsie and to Nancy for arranging such a magnificent trip for us.



SAVE 25%* ON A 3-PARK, 5-NIGHT VACATION PACKAGE

Now you can save 25%* on an awesome 3-park, 5-night vacation package at Universal Orlando Resort. Package includes 5-night hotel accommodations, 3 Park 5-Day Park-to-Park Vacation Package ticket**, and Early Park Admission†. This package is valid for travel from 11/12/23 through 7/31/24 with blackout dates from 12/26/23-1/6/24 and 3/22/24-4/6/24. Restrictions apply.

GROUPS 2024 AND 2025

APRIL 28, 2024-GREAT TRAINS and GRAND CANYON

Highlights: Two rail journeys, Grand Canyon, Sedona, trolley tour and the Chapel of the Holy Cross. Five nights at the Hilton Sedona, five breakfasts and three dinners, all sightseeing and round-trip air fare. Rate is \$3,399.00 per person double occupancy.

JUNE 9, 2024-UTAH'S MIGHTY NATIONAL PARKS

Highlights: Arches, Capital and Canyonlands National Parks, Monument Valley, Canyonlands by night and wine tasting. Six nights hotel, six breakfasts, one lunch and three dinners, all sightseeing and round-trip air fare. Rate is \$3,625.00 per person double occupancy.

JUNE 9, 2024-SAIL CELEBRITY ECLIPSE TO BERMUDA

Sail on the revolutionized Celebrity Eclipse from Cape Liberty (Bayonne) and spend three glorious days in Bermuda. Your cruise includes accommodations in a balcony cabin, all meals (except for specialty restaurants), beverage package, wi-fi, gratuities and all current port and government taxes. Rate is \$1,859.00 per person double occupancy. NO PASSPORT is required. Must book by January 19th!

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024-BLACK HILLS, MT. RUSHMORE, and BADLANDS

Highlights: Mt. Rushmore by day and night, Devil's Tower, Crazy Horse Memorial, Custer State Park and Buffalo Jeep Safari. Six nights hotel, six breakfasts and four dinners, all sightseeing and round-trip air fare. Rate is \$3,395.00 per person double occupancy.

OCTOBER 13, 2024-NATIONAL PARKS and CANYONS of the SOUTHWEST

Highlights: Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park Tram and Hoover Dam. Two nights in Las Vegas and three nights in Mesquite, five breakfasts, one lunch and two dinners, all sightseeing and round-trip air fare. Rate is \$3,395.00 per person double occupancy.

OCTOBER 20, 2024-SUNNY PORTUGAL (with optional 4-night Madeira Island extension)

Highlights: Lisbon, Belem, Cork Factory, Evora, Winery visit, Alentejo, Lagos, Algarve, Silves, Setubal, Obidos, and Sintra. Includes eight breakfasts, three lunches and three dinners, all included sightseeing, all current air taxes and fees along with transfers t/from Newark and round-trip airfare. Bookings must be made by April 15th. Rate is \$3,999.00 per person double occupancy. PASSPORT IS REQUIRED.

MARCH 3, 2025-ALASKA'S NORTHERN LIGHTS

Highlights: Anchorage, Northern Lights excursions, Winter Glacier cruise, Prince William Sound, Talkeetna, Alaska Railroad, Fairbanks, and Dog mushing. Two nights in Anchorage, one in Talkeetna and three in Fairbanks, six breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners. With just 12-24 passengers, this is a personal journey and adventure that today's cultural explorers dream of. Rate is \$4,999.00 per person double occupancy including all above and air fare to/from Newark with transfers.

NOVEMBER 25, 2025-ICONIC CHRISTMAS MARKETS ABOARD AMA REINA (Nuremburg to Budapest)

Travel back through centuries as you walk along cobblestone streets through grand cities and historic towns bedecked with twinkling Christmas trees and lined with wooden huts gleaming with handcrafted

The Blended Beauty of **CURAÇAO**

An Amazing Destination That Sets You Free

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE IT IN THE CARIBBEAN. Curaçao is a living, breathing intersection of cultures and landscapes that defies imagination. A desert landscape that slopes into an azure sea. Colorful bougainvillea blooming amidst clusters of cacti. Dutch architecture painted in myriad shades of Caribbean hues. Curaçao is a cultural crossroads where declarations of love are spoken in four different languages, and where the flavors of Dutch, Caribbean, Latin, and Creole cuisine are fused into the everyday. The Island's population is as diverse as its terrain, and is home to the descendants of the Dutch settlers who arrived on the island hundreds of years ago. But its proximity to the northern tip of South America and distinct Caribbean sensibilities infuse this island with a thoroughly original vibe. You'll taste it in every morsel you eat and hear it in the music played on the radio. You'll see it in the Island's art and feel it in your soul. You may leave Curaçao...but Curaçao will never leave you.



Delta Air Lines Raises Checked Bag Fees

Delta Air Lines quietly bumped its checked baggage fees this week, joining other major carriers who have done the same this year.

Beginning March 5, Delta will increase fees for first and second checked bags by \$5 for most U.S.-originating domestic and short-haul international routes

The airline added that Delta SkyMiles Medallion Members and those flying in first class, Delta Premium Select, and Delta One will continue to get their checked bags for free. Same with those with eligible co-branded Delta SkyMiles American Express Cards.

The increase is nothing new for the industry—Delta is actually one of the last major U.S. carriers to raise its baggage fee this year. United Airlines was the latest, doing so in late February, moving to \$40 for the first and either \$45 or \$50 for the second depending on when a traveler pays for it.

Three other major carriers did the same earlier in the year.



Five-Star Gluten-Free Banana Bread

You may not even be able to tell that this super moist quick bread is gluten-free. A combo of flours made from brown rice and tapioca stands in for all-purpose flour. The bread is delicious on its own, but you could mix in chocolate chips, walnuts or fruit for a fun twist!

Level: Easy

Total: 3 hr 15 min (includes cooling time)

Active: 15 min

Yield: 10 to 12 servings

Ingredients:

1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted,
plus more for greasing the loaf pan
3/4 cup brown rice flour
1/2 cup tapioca flour
2/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon fine salt
2 large eggs, separated
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 very ripe bananas, mashed

Directions:

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line the bottom of a 9- by 5-inch loaf pan with parchment, and butter the bottom and sides.
- 2 Whisk together the rice and tapioca flours, 2/3 cup of the sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl.
- 3 Whisk together the butter, egg yolks and vanilla in a large bowl. Fold in the mashed bananas.
- 4 Whip the egg whites with an electric mixer on medium-high speed in another large bowl until foamy. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon sugar, and continue to beat on medium-high until soft peaks form.
- 5 Fold the flour mixture into the banana mixture until just combined (it's OK if there are some lumps). Stir in 1/3 of the egg whites until combined, then gently fold in the rest. Transfer the batter to the prepared loaf pan, and bake until the bread is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 55 minutes to 1 hour. Run a knife around the edges, and let cool completely in the pan on a rack. The bread can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 3 days.



What Are the Warmest Places to Cruise in March?

Ready to break out of your flannels and cruise to a warm and sunny destination? March is a popular month to cruise, with most ships sailing at or near capacity, often with families enjoying spring break vacations, and the warmest places to cruise in March may surprise you.

It's not too late to consider a last-minute cruise or to start planning ahead for next year's spring thaw. There are options for warm places to cruise that will have your core temperatures back to normal in no time. With that in mind, we went looking for the best cruise destinations for warming up in March, all with plenty of fun under the sun and in the sea.

But if you're looking for a jungle to play in or warm waters to splash around in, Jamaica is situated far enough south to be well out of the path of any stray cold front that might attempt to escape North America.

Okay, let's be honest. There's not a bad time to cruise to Tahiti. It's truly a year-round destination. But if you have any concerns about a freaky dip in the temperature, March is typically the warmest month in the South Pacific archipelago of French Polynesia, of which Tahiti is the largest island.

Mexico's warm beaches are the answer to your cruise cravings, and Mazatlan is one of the most idyllic ports in the Mexican Riviera on the country's west coast. It may very well be the spot you've been dreaming about all winter. It's a charming town to simply wander through but there are plenty of shore excursion opportunities here as well.

If exotic destinations are what you crave for your spring warm-up cruise, Dubai tops the list of options. You can find cruises in the Middle East that leave from Dubai or make a port call there after departing from Abu Dhabi or Doha. Itineraries are a mix of week-long cruises as well as more extended multi-week cruises, with many sailings staying overnight in Dubai, allowing passengers the opportunity to experience the city lights. Fun (and warm) things to do in Dubai are desert four-wheel safaris, beach visits, and watersports, in addition to city tours.