



Advice for cruise travellers

For many Canadians, a cruise is the perfect way to explore foreign shores. But like any kind of international travel, cruising calls for careful planning and attention to personal safety.



Travel.gc.ca

Before you leave Canada, consult our free booklet *Bon Voyage, But...* for indispensable safe-travel advice. And be sure to follow these additional tips to ensure your well-being aboard and ashore.

Check if there is a Travel Advisory in effect for your point of embarkation or for any of your designated ports of call at travel.gc.ca/advice.

Purchase travel health insurance that includes at least \$500,000 in coverage for accidental injury, hospitalization abroad, and medical evacuation at sea (the cost of medically evacuating a patient from a cruise ship by helicopter can easily reach \$150,000).

Be prepared to hand over your passport to ship authorities, in accordance with administrative regulations. Unless the crew indicates otherwise, your boarding card is sufficient to go ashore and re-board the ship. Make photocopies of your passport's identification page before travelling, and keep them separate from the originals.

Note that some ports of call will require you to have an entry visa if you disembark from the ship independently (rather than participating in shore excursions organized by the cruise line). Apply for all necessary visas before leaving Canada.

Contact a travel medicine clinic well before your departure for recommendations on immunizations and preventive medication. Advise your doctor of the ship's itinerary (available from the cruise company), as some ports of call require that you have an international certificate of vaccination against yellow fever to disembark.

If you have a disability or chronic illness, inquire before booking whether your needs will be met aboard the ship.

Bring sufficient medication for the cruise and a detailed list of prescriptions and their generic names. Keep in mind that you may have little or no access to a pharmacy aboard the ship or in foreign ports. Bring an extra pair of eyeglasses in case of breakage or loss.

Sign up for the Registration of Canadians Abroad service, so that we can contact and assist you in case of an emergency abroad or at home. Identify only the country/region of embarkation (not individual ports of call), as well as the cruise line and ship's name. Sign up online at travel.gc.ca/register or register by mail, by fax, or in person.

Familiarize yourself with the local laws and customs of the countries you will be visiting. If you break the law during a stopover, you will be subject to the judicial system of the host country. At sea, the laws of the country with jurisdiction over territorial waters prevail. In waters outside national boundaries, the international law of the sea applies.

Participate in lifeboat drills, ensure that there is a life jacket for every person in your cabin, and familiarize yourself with evacuation procedures.

Watch what you eat and drink. Alert the cruise line in advance of any special dietary needs and insist on bottled water while ashore. Watch your alcohol intake, as excessive consumption aboard the ship could lead to a serious accident.

Be aware that noroviruses can spread quickly on a cruise ship. As a preventive measure, you will likely be refused boarding if you develop severe diarrhea before departure, or asked to stay in your cabin for 48 hours if symptoms occur during a cruise.

Remember that the main medical problem facing cruise travellers is sea sickness. Consult with your doctor to find out what medication you can take to help with nausea.

Protect yourself from sun exposure by wearing sunscreen, UV-resistant clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat, as the ocean's surface reflects and intensifies the sun's rays.

Minimize risks during shore excursions by booking through your cruise line or a reputable tour operator that will pay close attention to your personal security and ensure the safety of any gear used.

Check the ship's departure time before going ashore, as the ship will not wait for you if you come back late. Shore excursions offered by the cruise line are guaranteed to return you to the ship on time. Independent tour operators must be advised of your departure time.

Never open your cabin door to strangers and do not allow yourself to be isolated with someone you do not know and trust.

Note that mobile phones may not work at sea, and the fees for onboard communications are very high. Wait until you are in port if you need to call home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE

Telephone: 1-800-267-6788 (toll-free from Canada and the U.S. only)
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