



NICK JR. TRAVEL Top **5**
Family-Cruise Questions

Get the lowdown on high-seas savings and fun

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Q. Are cruises right for my family?

A. Yes!

- ✔ Cruising allows for family togetherness and also gives parents an opportunity (if they want) to be alone for a time, while the children are having fun close by in a well-supervised and safe environment. Cruising is an especially good multi-generational getaway, because there's something for toddlers and teens, parents and grandparents.
- ✔ Many modern ships are built with space specifically allotted for children's activities and are loaded with kid-friendly amenities, such as kiddie pools, playrooms, and playgrounds. Most importantly, many cruise ships have extraordinary daily programs supervised by trained counselors and designed for different ages of kids (typically from ages 3 and up). On many ships, there may be nurseries and other child-care facilities for younger children as well as babysitting.
- ✔ There's also no worry about where to eat (or how to pay for meals), with three meals a day included, plus alternate breakfast, lunch, and late-night buffets. And on most ships, room service is offered at no extra charge. Ships catering to kids have special menus made just for them. Some ships have pizzerias, ice-cream parlors, and casual restaurants quite unlike the formal dining rooms you might expect.
- ✔ A cruise may not be the best option if your child does not enjoy time away from you in organized activities. Be sure to ask the cruise line which of their ships specialize in family cruises and check out [5 Great Cruise Lines for Families](#).

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Q. Will we get seasick?

A. Probably not.

- ✔ Most big ships have built-in stabilizers to dampen the rolling sensation at sea. If someone in your family has a history of motion sickness, you might want to book a room on a low level in the middle of the ship, where the rolling is less noticeable. Also, ask when you make a reservation if your trip coincides with the hurricane season (when the seas are roughest) and talk with your doctor about over-the-counter or prescription remedies, just in case. If you or

anyone in your family does get sick, the onboard infirmary can provide assistance and medications.

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Q. Are cruises very expensive?

A. Not necessarily.

- ✔ The cost for a family cruise varies widely depending on the season, the ship's itinerary, the port of departure, and when the reservation is made. A four-night Caribbean cruise may start as low as \$600 per person, plus an additional cost per child (generally less than half the adult price). For example, a recent four-night Bahamian cruise on Disney Cruise Line started at \$539 per person plus an additional \$99 per child under 3 and an additional \$329 per child between the ages of 3 and 12.
- ✔ When you consider that all of your meals are included in the cost, as are most of the activities your family will enjoy. A cruise compares favorably with other vacations. Plus, all of the planning is done for you. Think of it as an all-inclusive resort on the water.

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Q. Are there ways we can save money?

A. Yes.

- ✔ Book at least four to six months in advance of when you would like to take a cruise. You'll get a great rate and have the advantage of the best choices of ship, itinerary, and cabin. (Cabins and suites sleeping four to five book up especially fast.) Most ships offer early booking discounts up to 50 percent off the brochure price and also discounts for additional guests staying in the same cabin.
- ✔ If you can, be flexible with times and itineraries. This means there is a definite advantage for parents whose kids aren't in school (or those with young kids who can miss a few days of school). Depending on demand, you can save hundreds of dollars if you sail off-season. Peak periods, when the prices are highest, are during holidays. You'll most likely find deals for the week before or after a major holiday.
- ✔ Book your cruise out of new markets, such as Galveston, Texas, or New Orleans, rather than busy ports like Miami and you can get additional savings.
- ✔ Cruise consolidators--such as Cruises Only (800-777-0707) and World Wide Cruises (800-882-9000)--purchase blocks of cabins for resale at a discount. They work like a travel agent, and may get you the best bargains.
- ✔ You can get a discount if you book late (only one month before departure), but remember that your choices will be more limited.

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Q. Will we get cabin fever?

A. Probably not.

- ✔ The cabins are very small, but there is so much to do and see onboard that you'll most likely be in your cabin only to shower, change clothes, and sleep. If you want a little extra space, ask when making a reservation about suites or adjoining rooms.

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5 Great Cruise Lines for Families

Carnival Cruise Lines

www.carnival.com

800-CARNIVAL

- ✔ The best ships in the fleet for families are *Legend, Pride, Spirit, Imagination, Triumph, Paradise, Destiny, and Victory*.
- ✔ Carnival employs the largest staff of trained and qualified youth counselors in the cruise industry.
- ✔ The Camp Carnival program is offered for ages 2-4, 5-8, 9-12, and 10-17. For toddlers, activities include puppet making, finger painting, and alphabet and number games.
- ✔ Daycare for 2- to 4-year-olds and private babysitting are available on both sail and shore days.
- ✔ Steeply discounted third and fourth bunk rates encourage parents to bring the kids along; also, interconnecting staterooms are available for large families.
- ✔ Kid amenities include wading pools, water slides, children's menus, and high chairs.
- ✔ You can order pizza, ice cream, and frozen yogurt 24 hours a day.

Disney Cruise Line

www.disneycruise.com

800-951-3532

- ✔ Both *Magic* and *Wonder* are among the best of the fleet for families.
- ✔ From 9 a.m. to midnight, nearly an entire deck is dedicated to imaginative children's programming run by 50 trained counselors.
- ✔ The kid's programming is designed for six different age groups: 12 weeks to 3 years, 3-4, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12, and teens. The Flounder's Reef Nursery is the largest baby center at sea.
- ✔ The Oceaneer Club, for ages 3-7, includes participation in Mouseketeer Training (with inspection by Mickey Mouse), the Dance of the Seven Dwarfs (with Snow White), wacky science, and Goofy's Giggle Gala slumber party.
- ✔ Kids have plenty of opportunities to interact with Disney characters.
- ✔ The ships have a Mickey Mouse-themed family pool with water slide.
- ✔ There are separate beaches for kids, families, and adults only at Castaway Cay (Disney's private island). There is also a play fort, whalebone-dig area, games, and a 15-acre snorkeling course.
- ✔ Parents whose kids are playing in the supervised programs receive pagers. Kids wear wristbands identifying the child's name, any allergies the child may have, and the parent's pager number.

Norwegian Cruise Line

www.ncl.com

800-327-7030

- ✔ Ships recommended for families are the *Norwegian Star, Sun, Dream, Majesty, Sky,* and *Wind*.
- ✔ *Star, Sun, Sky,* and *Majesty* have designated kids' pools.
- ✔ The Kids' Crew program (with trained counselors) is offered for ages 2-5, 6-8, 9-12, and 13-17.
- ✔ For preschoolers, there is storytelling, T-shirt painting, arts and crafts, face painting, magic shows, and a circus.
- ✔ Kids get their own daily newsletter, *Cruise News*, detailing each day's events.
- ✔ Eight special menus (and an ice-cream bar) are offered specifically to appeal to younger palates.
- ✔ Private baby sitting is available noon to 2 a.m.
- ✔ Kids under two sail free.

Princess Cruises

www.princess.com

800-PRINCESS

- ✔ The best ships for families are *Sun, Dawn, Sea, Ocean, Grand, Coral, Island, Diamond, Star*. Also, try *Golden Princess*, which offers a toddlers' play area, splash pool, computers, and video games. *Grand* and *Golden* have separate deck space for children with a whales' tail splash pool.
- ✔ A complimentary, supervised Love Boat Kids program is offered for ages 3-7, 8-12, and 13-17. There is a special supervised playground at the private island, Princess Cay, offering safe play from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. while parents enjoy the beach and water sports.
- ✔ There are discounted rates for children as well as family-friendly activities in port. Also, free scheduled activities are provided for ages 3-17 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. while in port.
- ✔ There is no private babysitting available on any of the Princess ships (but group sitting is available from 10 p.m.-1 a.m. for \$5 per hour per child).

Royal Caribbean International

www.royalcaribbean.com

800-327-6700

- ✔ The best ships for families are *Nordic Empress, Legend of the Seas, Monarch of the Seas, Voyager, Explorer, Adventure of the Seas,* and *Radiance of the Seas*. *Navigator* is the newest launch; it offers 22,000 square feet of space just for kids.
- ✔ This was one of the first cruise lines to offer children's programs.
- ✔ The Adventure Ocean program is available for ages 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and 13-17. The preschool Aquanauts program includes story time, face painting, dress-up days, games, and sing alongs.
- ✔ *Nordic Empress* gets high marks for Kids' Konnection, a 95,000-square-foot playroom for ages 5-12. It includes themes like a space station with a labyrinth of suspended aluminum tubes that are lighted and carpeted inside.
- ✔ Private babysitting is available in the evenings and on some port days.
- ✔ Captain Sealy's Kid's Galley offers a special menu for ages 4-12, including peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, burgers, hot dogs, grilled cheese, and pizzas.
- ✔ Kids have their own daily agenda slipped under the cabin door each night. Typical

activities include ice-cream and pizza parties, hat making, golf putting, face painting, and special shore tours.