



*how to pick a*  
**CRUISE  
LINE**



# Hello!

Cruising works for almost everyone. You unpack once. You sleep in a real bed every night. You wake up somewhere new every morning. And whether you're travelling with kids, a partner, a group of friends, or just yourself, there's a ship out there that was basically built for you.

But which one is **best**?

The honest answer is that it depends on what kind of trip you're actually taking. Here's the breakdown by travel type - pick yours and go from there.

And if you're still unsure, that's what I'm here for! Reach out to schedule a free call and find out what your perfect match is.

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# Cheat Sheet

Travel Style	Recommended Line(s)	What Makes Them Stand Out
Traveling with Kids	Royal Caribbean, Disney	Waterparks, character experiences, and the best kids clubs.
Empty Nesters	Celebrity, Princess	Refined dining, quieter pools, and destination-focused trips.
Ultra Luxury	Seabourn, Silversea, Regent	Small ships, butler service, and all-inclusive pricing.
Friend Groups	Norwegian, Virgin Voyages, Royal Caribbean	Flexible dining, adults-only nightlife, or massive activity lists.
Budget / Party	Carnival, MSC Cruises	High energy sailaways and accessible price points.
Going Solo	Norwegian	Dedicated solo cabins with zero single supplement fees.

# Traveling with kids

Not all cruise lines are built for families, and the difference between a great family cruise and a miserable one usually comes down to the kids club, the ship amenities, and how much the line has actually thought about what happens when your four-year-old has a meltdown in the middle of dinner. Two lines consistently get this right.

**Royal Caribbean** is the go-to for most families. Enormous ships, excellent kids clubs especially on the newer ships (Adventure Ocean for ages 3+, free), waterparks, surf simulators, ice skating - the list is exhausting but not exhaustive. Price points are reasonable and new ships keep raising the bar. If your kids don't have a Disney obsession, this is almost always the right answer.

**Disney Cruise Line** is in a category of its own if your family is in a Disney phase. The kids clubs (Oceaneer Club, ages 3+) are unlike anything else at sea - immersive, staffed by actual professionals, and completely and utterly magical. Service is Disney standard, which is to say: incredible. The trade-off is the price, which is significant. If your kids don't care about characters, that premium doesn't make sense. But if they do? Worth every penny.



Key tip: if your child is under three or not potty trained, contact a travel advisor to find out which ships will work best for you

# Traveling as empty nesters

If the kids are grown or you're an older couple without children, you're probably looking for something more refined: better food, quieter pools, enriching experiences, and not a waterslide in sight.

**Celebrity Cruises** sits in the sweet spot between mainstream and luxury. Modern ships, exceptional dining, a design-forward aesthetic, and an atmosphere that skews adult without being stiff. Their AquaClass staterooms (which include spa access and a specialty restaurant) are one of the best deals at sea for couples.

**Princess Cruises** is a solid choice if destination and enrichment matter to you; they do longer itineraries and more unusual ports than most. The onboard experience is comfortable and well-rounded; don't expect party energy, do expect a lovely time.



# Traveling in luxury

The ultra-luxury segment of cruising is extraordinary - think butler service, open bars included, Michelin-caliber food, and ships that carry 500 guests instead of 5,000. The experience is incomparable; the price is accordingly eye-watering.

**Seabourn** and **Silversea** are the names that come up most in this category: ultra-inclusive, small-ship, and built around the idea that a cruise should feel like a private yacht. **Regent Seven Seas** competes here too, with an all-inclusive model that means almost nothing is extra once you board.

Worth noting: most of these lines either don't allow children or aren't suited for them. They're designed for adults who want peace, quiet, and extraordinary service.



# Traveling with friends

Friend group cruises are one of the most underrated travel formats - you do your own thing during the day, reconvene for dinner and drinks, and nobody has to negotiate every single activity. But the cruise line matters a lot here depending on the vibe.

**Norwegian** is excellent for groups because Freestyle Cruising means no one is locked into the same dining time or the same schedule. Multiple specialty restaurants, late-night bars, and entertainment options mean different people in your group can do different things and meet up when it suits everyone.

**Virgin Voyages** is adults-only and designed around exactly this market - music, nightlife, unique dining concepts (no main dining room), and a younger, livelier energy. No kids allowed, which for a friend group trip is often a feature, not a bug.

And **Royal Caribbean** makes a return in this category as a fantastic crowd pleaser. With the biggest ships and the most on-board activities, there is something for everyone aboard these behemoths.



# Traveling on a budget (or to party)

**Carnival** gets a reputation (usually deserved) for being the party cruise line. Lively atmosphere, a younger demographic, solid entertainment, and price points that are very accessible. It's not for everyone, and it doesn't pretend to be. If the idea of a rowdy sailaway party sounds great to you, Carnival is your answer.

**MSC Cruises** is the sleeper pick here. It's sometimes underrated for budget-conscious travelers, particularly if you're sailing in Europe where they're strongest. The caveat: quality varies significantly between ships, so do your research on the specific vessel before booking.



# Traveling solo

Cruises can often be pricey if you're going it alone - most charge by cabin rather than by person, meaning you have to spend extra to make up for the fact that you're taking a room all for yourself.

**Norwegian** is the standout in this category. They offer solo staterooms that carry no single supplement cost, and give you access to solo traveler lounge areas where you're welcome to meet others.



# Other considerations

## One thing most people miss

Within any cruise line, the ship matters more than the brand. A Royal Caribbean sailing on their oldest ship is a completely different experience from their newest Icon Class vessel. Once you've picked a line, the next question is always: which ship?

- Look at when the ship was built and last refurbished.
- Check what amenities that specific ship actually has - don't assume.
- Read reviews for that ship, not just the cruise line generally.
- Ask a travel advisor for their advice.

## Lines to skip if you're bringing kids

Some lines either don't allow children or simply aren't built for them. Worth knowing before you get excited about an itinerary.

- Virgin Voyages - adults only, no exceptions.
- Viking Ocean Cruises - no guests under 18.
- Oceania Cruises - no guests under 18 (new policy as of 2026).
- Seabourn and Silversea - technically permitted, practically not designed for them.
- Holland America - skews older, limited kids programming.

# Thank-you!

Still not sure which is right for you?

The truth is that the right ship matters more than almost anything else in your vacation.

I help families, friends, couples, and first-time cruisers narrow down the overwhelming options and avoid expensive mistakes.

Book a free planning call and I'll help match you to the right cruise line, ship, and itinerary.



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