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How to Get the Best Cruise Quotes for Your Next Trip



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Perhaps the biggest draw of going on a cruise is how easy of a trip it can be. Once you're on the ship, you don't have to worry about a thing. Lodging, food, entertainment — it's all taken care of for you.

But planning a cruise? That can be a bit more stressful. With all the packages and port fees and excursions to consider, getting the best cruise quote for your vacation might seem overwhelming. These tips can help.

Set Your Expectations

Like you would for any vacation, you want to start by deciding what's important to you on a cruise. Is it all about the ports of call for you? Are you looking to party all night and lounge by the pool all day? Do you need a luxury room? Excursions? Spa days? WiFi?

Whatever your priorities are, listing them can help you narrow what sort of packages or deals make the most sense for your vacation. For example, if a room with an ocean view is important to you, start by comparing the baseline costs for similar rooms (taxes and fees included).

Choose Your Extras Wisely

In all honesty, starting with your cabin cost probably makes the most sense. You definitely need a room, so figuring out what you're willing to spend on usually impacts the rest of your costs.

The next step is to look at your priorities and match them up with the packages offered for each cruise line. You can eliminate the ones that offer products or services you don't want, but also come up with a ballpark figure for what you might spend on these items if you paid for them a la carte. That way, you can get a better idea of whether the package is actually a good deal.

Compare Multiple Quotes

Up until now, our tips for getting the best cruise quotes have been about research. Now it's time to start organizing all of the information you gathered. A good way to do that is with a spreadsheet. How you do this is really up to you, but you'll likely want to include:

- Cruise length
- Cabin cost by type without any extras
- Cost for each package or excursion
- Estimated cost for buying perks individually

Bonus tip: Sometimes higher priced rooms come with perks or cabin credits that cancel out some of the extra cost. Make note of these when you're comparing cruise quotes.

Another option is to go to a website that compares quotes from multiple cruise lines. There are several sites online that let you plug in your destination, dates, and departure location so you can see several quotes at once.

Consider Working With a Travel Agent

Planning a cruise can feel like you've got a lot of plates in the air, especially if you add in getting to the point of departure or using local vendors for your excursions on shore. That's why some travelers prefer to use a travel agent. The benefits of going that route include:

- **Professional expertise.** Not only does your travel agent usually know the ins and outs of organizing a cruise in general, but cruise lines often let agents experience the services they offer. That can lead to some great insider tips.
- **Advocacy.** If something goes wrong during your cruise, you can usually turn to your travel agent for help.
- **Personalized service.** Ideally, your travel agent will listen to your preferences and organize an itinerary that incorporates them as well as any special arrangements you might need.
- **Incentives and thank yous.** Travel agents might have access to a block of rooms they can offer at a group rate, or they may thank you for your business with onboard credits.

There's really only one con to using a travel agent, and that's the potential for hidden costs. Many travel agents work for commission, but some charge transaction or service fees.

Get Cruise Travel Insurance to Protect Your Investment

Whether you're taking a weekend trip around the Caribbean or a 100-day tour of the world, you're investing a lot of time, effort, and money in planning your cruise. Protecting that investment with travel insurance simply makes good financial sense.

Quality **cruise insurance** can help if you have to:

- Cancel your cruise for an unforeseen illness or injury
- Catch up to your cruise if your flight is delayed
- Leave your cruise early for a covered reason
- Purchase toiletries or clothing because your baggage is delayed

Policy details can vary by carrier, but finding cruise travel insurance coverage that fits your trip can go a long way towards helping you truly enjoy your cruise.

Written by Virginia Hamill

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