

Cruise Line Guide

The cruise lines featured in this guide are based in the USA, UK and Europe and it is possible to cruise with all speaking only English. This list includes only budget and mainstream cruise lines.



	PRICE	DAILY SCHEDULE	LIFE ONBOARD	FORMAL NIGHTS	DRESS CODES	DINING	BASED
CARNIVAL	***	Busy	Lively	Yes	Relaxed	Flexible and Fixed	
ROYAL CARIBBEAN	****	Busy	Lively	Yes	Relaxed	Flexible and Fixed	
NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE	***	Busy	Lively	No	Relaxed	Flexible	
PRINCESS CRUISES	***	Mid Range	Relaxed	Yes	Elegant	Flexible and Fixed	
CELEBRITY CRUISES	****	Mid Range	Relaxed	Yes	Elegant	Flexible and Fixed	
HOLLAND AMERICA	***	Relaxing	Relaxed	Yes	Elegant	Flexible and Fixed	
DISNEY	*****	Busy	Lively	Yes	Elegant	Mostly Fixed	
VIRGIN VOYAGES	*****	Busy	Lively	No	Relaxed	Flexible	
	PRICE	DAILY SCHEDULE	LIFE ONBOARD	FORMAL NIGHTS	DRESS CODES	DINING	BASED
P&O	***	Mid Range	Traditional	Yes	Formal	Flexible and Fixed	
CUNARD	***	Quiet	Traditional	Yes	Very Formal	Mostly Fixed	
CRUISE AND MARITIME	**	Quiet	Relaxed	Yes	Formal	Fixed	
MARELLA	***	Busy	Relaxed	Yes	Relaxed	Flexible	
FRED OLSEN	***	Quiet	Traditional	Yes	Elegant	Mostly Fixed	
SAGA	*****	Quiet	Relaxed	Yes	Elegant	Flexible	
	PRICE	DAILY SCHEDULE	LIFE ONBOARD	FORMAL NIGHTS	DRESS CODES	DINING	BASED
HURTIGRUTEN	***	Quiet	Relaxed	No	Relaxed	Fixed	
CELESTYAL CRUISES	***	Mid Range	Relaxed	Yes	Relaxed	Flexible	
AIDA CRUISES	***	Mid Range	Lively	No	Relaxed	Flexible	
TUI CRUISES	***	Mid Range	Relaxed	No	Relaxed	Fixed	
COSTA CRUISES	*	Mid Range	Lively	Yes	Elegant	Mostly Fixed	
MSC CRUISES	**	Mid Range	Relaxed	Yes	Relaxed	Mostly Fixed	

Chapter 1: How to Find The Perfect Cruise



Part 1: How to Find The Best Cruise Line For You

Things to consider:

How much do cruises with the cruise line cost?

How busy is day to day life onboard?

Does the cruise line have formal nights?

Are dress codes strictly enforced?

Is the dining fixed or flexible?

USA

Carnival - 26 Ships

Carnival cruise line is the largest cruise line in terms of passenger numbers, carrying an average of 22% of all cruisers in 2019. Their ships are widely known for being full of energy, informal, relaxed and fun. Carnival typically attract a younger audience and are popular with families and couples. The cruise line has 26 cruise ships at present and most Carnival cruises take place in or around the USA. Carnival cruises are often cheaper than other similar cruise lines and are generally regarded as being good value for money.

Royal Caribbean - 27 Ships

Royal Caribbean are well known for their innovations in ship design. They currently have 27 ships in the fleet including Symphony of the Seas which is currently the biggest cruise ship in the world. Many of Royal Caribbean's ships feature internal neighbourhoods, parks and attractions such as zip lines, waterslides and surf simulators. Royal Caribbean typically attract families or younger passengers but cruisers of all ages will be found onboard. The quality of food is generally regarded as being high and the entertainment offered is often of Broadway quality. Royal Caribbean cruise worldwide and have two private islands in the Caribbean, Labadee and Perfect Day at CocoCay.

Norwegian Cruise Line - 17 Ships

Norwegian Cruise Line are famous for their freestyle approach to cruising. Cruises with Norwegian do not have any formal nights and dress codes are extremely relaxed. Norwegian have 17 ships which range in size, the larger, newer ships feature attractions such as go karts, laser tag courses and VR games. The cruise line tends to attract families and younger cruisers, they are also popular with solo cruisers thanks to their designated solo cabins and solo lounges available on most ships. Norwegian cruise worldwide and have two private islands, one in the Bahamas and one in Belize.

Princess Cruises - 18 Ships

In the 1970s Princess Cruises starred in an American TV show called The Love Boat. Princess Cruises to this day provide a romantic, relaxing atmosphere onboard their cruises giving guests the chance to explore new destinations in comfort. When it comes to technology, Princess Cruises offer some of the greatest innovations in the industry. The implementation of a technology called Ocean Medallion has changed the way that passengers cruise. Ocean Medallion allows passengers to order drinks to their location, open their cabin doors and much more. Princess cruise worldwide and their ships are spacious, luxurious and all have multiple swimming pools. The food available onboard is varied, of high quality and generally regarded as being some of the best in the industry.

Celebrity Cruises - 15 Ships

Celebrity Cruises are owned by Royal Caribbean and provide cruises which focus on modern luxury. The cruise line are well known for their restaurants and are widely regarded as providing some of the best food within the cruise industry. Day to day life is relaxing with an emphasis on cultural and destination immersion. Celebrity cruises do have formal nights and many guests enjoy the elegant elements of cruising with Celebrity.

Holland America - 14 Ships

Cruises with Holland America provide a traditional cruise experience, formal nights are common and guests dress elegantly. The cruise line cruises worldwide and Holland America are widely regarded as having a high quality of service and food. The experience onboard is relaxing and Holland America typically appeal to older cruisers.

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Part 1: How to Find The Best Cruise Line For You

Disney Cruise Line - 4 Ships

Cruises with Disney Cruise Line are FULL of Disney magic. Onboard you'll find musical productions, deck parties and Disney characters frequently visiting the restaurants and public areas of the ship. The food and service offered by the line is generally regarded as being some of the best within the industry. Disney mostly sails around the USA but they occasionally offer cruises in Europe. The main passenger demographic targeted by Disney is the family market but the cruise line is also popular with adult couples or groups travelling without children, there are a number of adult only areas available on all Disney ships.

Virgin Voyages - 1 Ship

Virgin Voyages recently launched their first cruise ship which provides a modern adult only experience. The onboard experience is relaxed, fun and luxurious and mostly marketed at younger cruisers. The Virgin Voyages cruise fare includes WiFi, basic beverages and gym classes. Virgin aim to attract people who have not cruised before as well as experienced cruisers. Virgin have done away with traditional cruise elements like buffets, instead choosing to offer many dining options all of which are included in the cruise fare.

UK

P&O Cruises (UK) - 6 Ships

P&O Cruises (UK) are a British cruise line which focus on traditional cruising. All ships feature a Union Jack on the bow, kettles in the cabins and afternoon tea available each day. P&O Cruises do cruise worldwide but a large proportion of the fleet cruise from the UK year round. The cruise line are popular with families, often offering free or discounted places for children. Formal nights are common on all P&O ships and many guests embrace the chance to dress formally. The entertainment and food are generally regarded as being of a high quality and the 'Great British sail away party' is enjoyed by many. Some of P&O's cruise ships are adult only.

** Note, Cruises on P&O Australia are very different from cruises with the UK portion of P&O. Cruises with P&O Australia are much more relaxed and tend to attract a younger market. P&O Australia have 3 ships, all of which were built before 2000 **

Cunard (UK) - 3 Ships

Cunard is a British cruise line who focus heavily on the traditional cruise experience. Each cruise has multiple formal nights and dress codes are strictly enforced ship wide. Cunard have three cruise ships, one of which is the only remaining ocean liner the Queen Mary 2. Queen Mary 2 cruises the Atlantic while Cunard's other two ships cruise worldwide. Cunard are well known for their traditional afternoon teas and lectures provided onboard. The onboard experience is relaxing and elegant, string quartets and ballroom dancing activities are common.

Cruise and Maritime Voyages - 6 Ships

Cruise and Maritime Voyages are an independent British cruise line that provides traditional relaxed cruises. Cruises with Cruise and Maritime are widely regarded as being good value for money. All ships are relatively small in size and for most itineraries the cruises offered by Cruise and Maritime are adult only. Cruise and Maritime regularly cruise from a number of ports in the UK and provide cruises in varying lengths. All ships in the Cruise and Maritime fleet are at least 25 years old with the oldest being Astoria built in 1948.

Marella - 5 Ships

Marella are a British cruise line, formerly known as Thomson. The cruise line provides cruises worldwide on small and mid sized ships. Cruises with Marella include drinks and gratuities as standard and are widely regarded as being good value for money. The onboard experience is relaxed and the dining options offered onboard are flexible. Marella cruises attract families, young cruisers and older cruisers alike. The entertainment, food and service onboard are all targeted towards British passengers.

Chapter 1: How to Find The Perfect Cruise



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Fred Olsen - 4 Ships

Cruises with Fred Olsen provide a traditional cruise experience on small and medium sized ships. Fred Olsen cruises are generally regarded as being good value for money and the experience onboard is relaxing. Due to having smaller ships Fred Olsen cruises are often able to visit lesser known cruise ports and they offer mystery cruises where guests do not know in advance where they will be cruising to. Fred Olsen currently have 4 ships, all built pre 2000.

Saga - 2 Ships

Saga currently have 2 ocean ships which focus on providing a traditional British cruise experience. To cruise with Saga guests must be 50+. Saga cruises include travel insurance, WiFi and drinks in the cruise fare as standard. The onboard experience is relaxing and Saga are widely regarded as having some of the best food at sea.

Europe

Hurtigruten - 11 Ships

Hurtigruten are a leading provider of expedition cruises. Cruises with Hurtigruten are destination focused and they are the only cruise line that cruise to Norway year round. A 'Northern Lights' guarantee is offered on some Hurtigruten cruises which means that if cruisers do not see the northern lights they are offered another cruise for free. Hurtigruten have a number of small ships which are functional rather than luxurious. Entertainment is not provided onboard as Hurtigruten aim to immerse their guests in the local destination.

Celestyal Cruises - 2 Ships

Celestyal Cruises are a Greek cruise line that provide Greek island cruises which often visit multiple ports per day. The cruise line currently owns two small/mid sized ships. Cruises with Celestyal attract passengers from a variety of countries and as a result the onboard experience is very multicultural. Celestyal Cruises are generally regarded as being good value for money with drinks and gratuities included in the cruise fare. The onboard experience is relaxed and the service and food provided onboard is of high quality. Celestyal Cruises attract a variety of passengers, families, young cruisers and groups are common onboard.

Aida Cruises - 13 Ships

Aida Cruises are a German cruise line who cruise primarily around Europe. The onboard experience is geared towards German speakers although it is possible to cruise with Aida without speaking German. The onboard experience is relaxed, informal and flexible. Aida ships are instantly recognisable by the lips and eyes painted onto the hull of each ship in the fleet. When booking an Aida cruise it is generally advised to book through a travel agent as Aida do not have an English website.

TUI Cruises (Germany) - 15 Ships

TUI are a German cruise line who focus mainly on the German speaking cruise market. Cruises with TUI are relaxed and the cruise fare includes gratuities and drinks. It is possible to cruise with TUI without speaking German as most staff members onboard will speak English. Tui's ships are all named 'Mein Schiff *number*' which translates to my ship in English. Passengers on cruises with Tui are able to smoke on their balconies and the ships have multiple smoking areas.

Costa Cruises - 16 Ships

Costa Cruises are an Italian cruise line and multicultural influences are felt throughout the cruise experience. The food, entertainment and onboard experience is primarily designed for an Italian audience although guests who only speak English will have no problems onboard. Each cruise features an English representative and all staff members onboard will speak some English. Costa Cruises provide some of the best value cruises within the industry and the onboard experience is colourful, lively and fun. Families, young cruisers and groups are often found on Costa cruises.

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MSC Cruises - 18 Ships

MSC offer multicultural cruises which provide great value for money. MSC's Italian heritage is reflected in the food, entertainment and onboard experience. On most MSC Cruises you'll find guests who speak a variety of languages and day to day life onboard reflects this. MSC provide some of the most flexible itineraries in the industry with guests able to embark cruises at various different ports. The cruise line are popular with families, young cruisers and groups who are attracted to MSC's modern, elegant ships. Many of MSC's ships have activities like ropes courses, waterslides and sports courts all included in the cruise fare. Unlike other cruise lines, MSC offer a 'status match' program, meaning that loyalty status's built with other cruise lines will be matched by MSC. MSC cruise worldwide and have recently opened their first private island in the Bahamas.