

PLEASE READ!

Things to Know Before You Cruise with **ROYAL CARIBBEAN**

Important Answers to Commonly Asked Questions from Cruise Academy's Staff

THE CRUISE ACADEMY IS YOUR TRAVEL AGENT; ANY RESERVATION QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO

US AT INFO@THECRUISEACADEMY.COM OR 1-800-688-9385.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN CANNOT & WILL NOT SERVICE YOUR RESERVATION.

Do I need a Passport? *Yes, as of June 2009, Passports are required for all Air and most Sea Travel.*

*There is an exemption for U.S. Citizens traveling on 'Closed Loop Cruises' (ie cruises departing from a U.S. port and returning to a U.S. port) [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

~ U.S. citizens on closed-loop cruises (cruises that begin and end at the same U.S. port) are able to enter the United States with a birth certificate and government-issued photo ID. Please be aware that you may still be required to present a passport to enter the countries your cruise ship is visiting. Check with your cruise line to ensure you have the appropriate documents.

(NOTE it must be an original Birth Certificate or Certified Copy with a RAISED SEAL.)

The Cruise Academy strongly urges ALL guests to travel with a government issued passport. While you may travel without one in some instances on a 'closed loop' cruise, if there were some emergency (whether it be personal medical emergency, illness/death of a loved one, a problem w/ the ship, or some other tragedy that necessitated you flying home early) - **YOU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FLY HOME IF YOU DID NOT HAVE A PASSPORT.** *Passports are required for all air travel to / from the U.S.

****Make sure your cruise reservation EXACTLY matches the name on your passport or you WILL BE DENIED BOARDING** (You DO NOT need to have your middle name, unless you legally use it as part of your first name; ie. if you name is 'Ann Marie' your first name should be listed as such. However if 'Ann' is your first name and 'Marie' is your middle name, then your cruise reservation first name should only be 'Ann'). All Passports contain a middle name if you have one, however you do not need to have this on your cruise reservation at this time; First & Last suffice.)**

Do I need any Vaccinations? *Generally, No. If you are cruising to more exotic destinations, such as South America, you may need a Yellow Fever Vaccination. However, if you are cruising to the more common destinations such as the Caribbean, Mexico, Alaska or the Mediterranean, you will not be required to get any precautionary vaccinations.*

How do I get from the Airport to the Cruise Port? *If you are flying in the day of the cruise, the cruiselines offer 'transfers' for a small fee that will shuttle you from the airport to the cruise port. You must arrange for these with your Travel Agent (The Cruise Academy); please be aware there are time restrictions for the service (ex. the cruiseline may only provide transfers for flights arriving before Noon on the date of departure*

depending on the proximity from the airport to the cruise port) Check with your agent before booking your flights and always leave enough time to get to the airport/cruise port.

***Whenever possible, we recommend flying into the city of departure the day before you cruise;** in the event of weather-related or other delays, you do not want to miss the ship (they do not wait for late arriving passengers – see check-in requirements below).

What time should I arrive at the Cruise Port? Don't arrive too early or you will get stuck in the crowd of disembarking passengers. We recommend arriving between Noon and 2:30pm (depending on the time your ship departs.) You **MUST** check in **at least** 90 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time or you **WILL BE DENIED BOARDING.**

New Homeland Security Regulations effective January 2009 mandate this; and if you arrive later than that, you will be denied boarding. It is a government mandate and neither we nor the cruiselines have control over this, so please ensure your flights are arriving early enough on the day of departure.

Will I get Seasick? Although today's ships are very large & utilize stabilizers to decrease the movement of the ship, you may get seasick if you have not cruised in the past, or if you are sensitive to motion or prone to motion sickness. We recommend everyone to prepare for the possibility that you may get seasick. The most common and least expensive medication to use is Dramamine Less Drowsy or Bonine (Both are 'Meclizine') – You can buy a generic box of 30 at Target for under \$5.00. Another option is the Prescription Medication Transcop Patch (scopolamine patch), however some may find the side-effects of this medication too great. (I personally experienced the worst dry mouth you could ever imagine, queasy stomach and very bad blurry vision – not good for being in class – but everyone is different; so judge yourself accordingly!)

***We recommend the 'Meclizine' – Take it 2 – 4 hours prior to the ship's departure – if you wait to take it once we set sail, you might end up missing dinner because you are seasick. Be proactive; take it early and as it wears off you will know by the way that you feel if you will need to take it again.**

Do I need a credit card? Yes, you will need a credit card or an ample amount of cash in order to establish an onboard charge account on your cruise. Cruiselines operate on a 'cashless' system. All guests establish an account that must be settled before you disembark from the cruise. You will use your ship card as your room key and your onboard credit card.

When you are off the ship, most of the destinations will accept U.S. currency and U.S. credit cards. We recommend using your credit cards for as much as you can, but also have an ample amount of cash to bargain with the locals (*new rules in Mexico regarding the acceptance of U.S. currency are now severely limited; if you are cruising to Mexico we will be providing information about the currency limits).

Many times those paying by cash can negotiate a better price. **If you are using a debit card,** please make sure you have plenty of money in the bank, because if you are using it to hold your onboard account; the cruiseline will place a hold of funds for a certain amount that they guestimate you will spend on your cruise. This can cause a problem with funds being held up; same goes with hotel charges – beware. Also, remember, many debit cards have daily limits on purchases, so if need be, you may need to have the purser make interim payments over the course of your cruise.

Are gratuities included? No, staff gratuities are not included in the price of your cruise. You will have the option to do prepaid gratuities; which is approx. \$12 - \$15 USD per person per day (including children); otherwise, you are left scrambling on the last day at sea to put cash into envelopes for your waiters, cabin steward, etc. We strongly encourage Pre-paid gratuities. This charge will be shared amongst those staff who help provide and support your cruise experience, including the wait staff, stateroom stewards, buffet stewards, galley staff, laundry staff and others.

NOTE: If you have chosen **ANYTIME DINING**; the gratuities generally must be pre-paid & will be automatically added to your cruise invoice.

What are the Dining Arrangements? When you board the ship, you will receive a ship card that is your room key, credit card and will also signify what time and table your assigned dining is scheduled for. All arrangements are made through your travel agent (The Cruise Academy) and are based on your requests when you book your seminar. If you are traveling with friends or someone else in the group, make sure you tell us that you wish to be seated near them. If you are traveling with someone who did not reserve their cruise through us, you will need to provide us with their Booking Number so that we can put in a request for you to sit with them. Please be advised that if you book later (3 – 4 months from the departure date) you may not receive your 1st request of dining and may be placed on a waitlist. If you do not clear the waitlist, you will be scheduled for 'Anytime Dining'. Also, please remember when you arrive onboard and your dining is assigned either Late or Early, you cannot switch to the other time unless you visit the Maître D on the date of embarkation. Don't forget there are many options for dining onboard – Main Dining Rooms (formal dining), Buffet, Johnny Rockets, Café Promenade, Room Service & Many other Specialty Restaurants (specialty dining has a nominal cover charge). *There may be a charge for Room Service – check with the ship once you board.

Will there be formal nights on my cruise? Yes, there will be 2 formal nights on your upcoming cruise. Tuxes/Suits and Formal dresses are an option, but are definitely not a requirement. A dinner jacket and tie or a dark suit for gentlemen & cocktail dress, or elegant pant suit for ladies is sufficient. Dressing up for formal night is optional.

How should I dress the rest of the time on my cruise? Cruising has become less formal and regimented over the past few years. On non-formal nights – for ladies we recommend dressing as you would if you were going out to a nice restaurant (Nice top / dressy capris / dressy sandals; Skirt & Blouse; Casual Dress). Having cruised many times, I like to recommend a lot of Mix and Match pieces. Bring a black skirt and 2 different tops to wear with it, or a nice pair of capris or slacks and 2 different tops. One thing to remember about cruising is you are bringing double the clothes of a normal vacation because you have your daytime clothes for exploring the islands, and you'll have your dinner clothes as well. With the airlines now imposing such strict baggage limits, it pays to mix and match and bring less.

For gentlemen for non-formal night dinners – khakis/slacks and a polo shirt or nice button down shirt or tropical shirt are recommended. No jeans or shorts are allowed in the dining room for dinner (they can be worn for breakfast and lunch, **but not dinner.**

During the day, you should dress for a cruise with Royal Caribbean the same way you would for any stylish land-based resort. Casual sportswear, including shorts, lightweight pants and jogging suits, is the order of the day both at sea and ashore in hotter climates. We recommend you bring a sweater, a jacket or an all-weather

coat for cool evenings / air-conditioned rooms, and for shore excursions, depending on your destination. Due to unpredictable weather, don't forget a hat or visor and a collapsible umbrella. Please be sure to bring proper clothing for visits to religious sites. You'll also want low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes for strolling on deck, as well as comfortable walking shoes or sandals to wear.

Are all of my meals included? *All of your meals in the buffet, main dining room and room service before midnight are included in the price of your cruise (room service is great to use to order breakfast on the days you are attending seminars!)*

What is NOT included is any alcoholic beverages or your meal at any of the specialty dining restaurants. If you choose to visit Portofino's, Chops Grill, or any of the other Specialty Dining venues, a cover charge of \$20 - \$50 per person will apply. Dining in a specialty restaurant is a nice option if you choose, but the food in the main dining room that is included with your cruise is delicious as well.

Onboard Alcohol Policy: *The legal drinking age onboard is 21 years. Alcohol purchased onboard or at any port of call, including the port of embarkation, may not be consumed onboard. It will be collected at the gangway for safekeeping and delivered to your stateroom on the last day of your cruise, prior to your disembarkation.*

Immigration and Customs Clearance

Due to U.S. and local customs restrictions, passengers may not leave the ship until all luggage is off-loaded. With this in mind, we suggest that you relax in one of the many public lounges to wait for customs clearance and disembarkation by pre-designated groups.

Customs and immigration inspectors will review with you the customs declarations form upon which you have listed all the articles bought in foreign ports or in the ship's boutiques. U.S. residents returning to the United States are allowed a duty-free exemption of \$800 USD per person, which includes the cost of one liter of alcoholic beverages (if purchased onboard or ashore) for each passenger 21 years of age or older.

You may be tempted to buy lots of alcohol onboard ~ Just don't forget: You can no longer bring any alcohol or liquids onboard when flying. Anything you purchase will need to be packed in your **CHECKED BAGGAGE** and will be subject to excess baggage/weight overage charges.

***TIP -Best place for Cheap Alcohol in the Caribbean is St. Thomas.**

FROM TSA.gov - Carrying Alcohol In Your Checked Baggage

- ♦ *Please note- you can't take alcoholic beverages with more than 70% alcohol content (140 proof), including 95% grain alcohol and 150 proof rum, in your checked luggage.*
- ♦ *You may take up to five liters of alcohol with alcohol content between 24% and 70% per person as checked luggage if it's packaged in a sealable bottle or flask.*
- ♦ *Alcoholic beverages with less than 24% alcohol content are not subject to hazardous materials regulations.*

Regarding Cuban Cigars:

https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/36/~importing-cuban-cigars

**Previously, foreign passengers were prohibited from bringing Cuban-origin tobacco or alcohol into the U.S. The new rules, however, have removed this restriction. You can come to the U.S. with Cuban cigars (and rum) if you're a foreign passenger, so long as the goods are not in "commercial quantities*

What time will we get off the ship? Most ships arrive into port early in the morning, however you will not be able to disembark until the ship has cleared customs and immigration (approx 9 – 10am.)

Your flights should be scheduled NO EARLIER THAN 12:30PM if you are flying out the same day, unless otherwise notified in your confirmation email.

Have any other questions? Visit <http://www.RoyalCaribbean.com> – BEFORE YOU BOARD

For Passport Information: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

For TSA information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>

Email us at info@thecruiseacademy.com with any other specific questions you might have; we've cruised a lot, so we probably have the answer for you! See You Onboard!