



The old adage about there's no such thing as a free lunch applies to crooked travel offers. You get a message saying you have "won" or "been selected for" a free cruise. What it really involves are costs including piled on charges and taxes you must pay while aboard. Plus you must sit through a high-pressure timeshare pitch meeting of four to five hours.

If you accept the so-called free cruise, when you go aboard, you'll find you're on an creaky old ship heading for a dingy little island port. Meanwhile, the pitch is still pushed to upgrade and pay more as you sail for food, drinks, shore excursions and other costly features. Just ignore the original pitch and book your cruise through a trusted travel agent and/or upscale cruise line.