

We participate in many daily activities, some starting at 6 am (voluntarily) with exercise classes, swim, spa, walk/jog around the upper deck track. For breakfast and lunch, we prefer the buffet to sit-down served meals. It's more relaxing and doesn't requiring dressing up or waiting for each course to be served.

Throughout the day, there are organized sports, card games, quiz shows, bingo and, of course, just plain lazing in the sun and watching the ocean go by. I must also say that cruise ship crews are very aware of advanced-age seniors and physically-challenged passengers, and all activities are designed to permit their participation.

For dinner, throughout most of our early cruises, we sat at assigned tables with the same dining companions. Often enjoyable, but sometimes being stuck with a group of yoyos. Now, cruise ships offer more open seating arrangements, special upscale (extra cost) dining rooms, flexible hours and other amenities for those who don't want to be tied down by time and/or table companions.

Cruises feature a sweets-themed midnight buffet, which often follow dancing in the luxury ballroom and under the stars. Ya just couldn't beat that, as opposed to being on dog watch aboard the USS Oriskany.

Once cruise ships clear US waters, the glitzy casinos open, and passengers can experience Las Vegas at sea with slot machines and table games. Upscale shops feature duty-free goods. If you wait till the last day of the cruise, you can get some bargain prices at the shops.

While there's plenty to do aboard ship, shore excursions are attractive, averaging \$50 to \$150 per person for trips of from four to eight hours among the local port's facilities and surrounding attractions.