



If you do the deal right, and with a little bit of luck, you can actually sail at no cost. First, a warning! We certainly don't mean responding to a telemarketing scam that offers a phony free cruise. This is about making direct contacts with the cruise line. Here are a few ideas:

*1. Gather passengers:* If you belong to a club, church or other organization, and can enlist from four to a dozen others to go as paying customers, your fare may be free. The requirements vary among cruise lines, and offers may depend on the number in your group, season, destination, length of cruise and other factors.

*2. Be an entertainer or established info expert:* For example, you have pro talent singing, playing an instrument, gaming expertise or pro lecturing and/or classroom background. Some cruise lines will sign you up to sail free to perform your skills at sea.

Recently, amateur contestants on TV talent or reality shows are being offered free cruises to be onboard performers. Additionally, if TV has lifted you to celebrity or notoriety status, many cruise lines will consider you. Plus, if you've picked up an entertainment agent, that can greatly enhance your chances of sailing free. *3. Survive an unfortunate cruise:* This isn't the best way to get a free ride, but could have a positive outcome. For example, you were on a ship that caught fire, had backed-up plumbing, spread a food-related illness or other disaster. Especially if the cruise schedule was cut short and you had to go home early, you may get a future free sailing.

Additionally, if a schedule problem was not your fault, such as unexpected flight cancellation, you may be entitled to a free cruise. When it happens, and you don't receive an offer, always contact the cruise line directly or through your travel agent about reimbursement or going free the next time.

*4. Join the Navy.* This is what your [travel4seniors.com](http://travel4seniors.com) editor did many decades ago. However, we realize it's a bit late for our senior readers to enlist and strut around in bell-bottom trousers and coats of Navy blue. Anyhow, we're serious about free cruises that sail for civilian days, not Navy years.

Summary: To inquire about a free cruise, whether with a complaint or other possible deal,

simply contact the line's customer relations department. Don't accept a low percentage discount on your next cruise. Demand a total freebee. Also, if you have a trusted hometown travel agent, you may achieve better results if that expert makes the cruise line contacts for you.