

I haven't cruised as a single since my Navy days serving aboard a troop ship (WWII) and an aircraft carrier (Korean War). However, I couldn't recommend those kind of cruises, because the most fun activity was trying to keep some really angry guys from killing me.

Seriously, since retirement started nearly 20 years ago, my spouse and I have taken at least two dozen cruises, including Princess, Celebrity, Royal Caribbean, Cunard and Holland-America. We weren't single for our cruises, but we did have frequent talks with lonesome fellow passengers, and learned the basics of single cruising. Here are some hints.



The worst cruise mistake a young or senior single can make is to blindly book a typical cruise, and find out too late that all passengers are senior couples or families with little kids. If you fall into that trap, and it happens too often, you'll be a very unhappy, very lonesome sailor.

If you're single, before you book your cruise, try to hook up first with a group of your own age contemporaries who are planning to do single cruises. For instance, your school/college alumni. Your professional or business association. A fraternity/sorority. A religion- or church-based group of young and or older adults. If it's your orientation, check out cruises for gays

If you can't get anything from familiar groups, check as long in advance as you can with the various cruise line websites to look for future themed singles cruises that would interest you. There are archeology, history, ethnic, music, art, party animals and scores of other special cruises available.

We once booked a cruise where the theme was the Big Band era. Of course, everyone aboard was our age or older. There were themed dinners, concerts and dances with the music harking back to Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa and others. There were musicians and singers along on the cruise who were famous in that era, including a sexy girl singer of my 40s dreams who was now in a wheelchair, but could still belt out a song.

One more tip. It is usually much more fun and convenient to take along at least another friend or associate of your age and gender as a companion for the cruise. It makes sure you always have a familiar face available for dining, activities and making the social scene.

*Sent by Federico Michaeli*