



*Reader's Report:* Since retiring more than 20 years ago, I've taken dozens of cruises, including sailing on Princess, Royal Caribbean and Holland-America. At meals and other times, I had frequent talks with single senior passengers, and learned the basics. Here are some hints.

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

The best way for your first cruise as a single is to join a familiar group of people your age who are planning a trip. For instance, your school/college alumni, professional/business association, fraternity/sorority or your church members. From among the group during the cruise, you're sure to link up with other singles.

Additionally, check with the various cruise line websites to look for specifically themed singles cruises that interest you. Consider archeology, history, ethnic, music, art and other special cruises.

I once booked a cruise where the theme was the Big Band era. Of course, everyone aboard was my 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 once very sexy girl singer of my 1940s dreams who was now in a wheelchair. Despite her physical challenges, she proved to everyone's delight that she could still belt out a song.

One more tip. Consider taking along a friend of your age as a companion for the cruise. You'll always have a familiar face available for dining, activities and making the social scene. Additionally, you won't have to pay full fare for a one-person cabin priced for two.