



While most major cruise lines do their best to make sailings enjoyable experiences, not all are equal. First, of course, go to the internet to check passenger critiques from previous cruises on the ship you're considering. Don't sign on if they report poor maintenance, bad sanitary conditions, lousy food and other negatives. Then, before you board, understand all your options.

When booking online or with a neighborhood travel agency, make sure you've considered everything. For instance, if a five-night cruise offers cabins for \$299, it may seem like a great bargain. However, that cheap cabin will probably be on one of the lowest decks, have about as much room as a closet and no view of the outside world. That's not necessarily the wrong choice. With all the daily onboard activities going on, you'll probably spend only six to eight sleep hours in the little cabin. When you want to see the sea, just go out on deck at any time of the day or night. Also, all the great food, spas, pools, excursions, entertainment and other facilities are as available to cheap passengers, as to those in \$5,000 topside balcony suites.

Consider themes and destinations. If you're a pair of old duffers, are you sure you want to sign up with the Disney Line? Then you'll be together at decks, pools and dining rooms crammed with running, jumping and yelling kids.

If your cruise is a Spring Break special, you won't appreciate gangs of older kids. They'll be running, jumping, yelling, singing, drinking and who knows what else at all hours of the day and night.

If you're Mr. and Mrs. Hetero, would you enjoy sharing a cruise among gay and lesbian revelers? Many cruises cater to special groups or have exclusive themes. For instance, which music theme would you prefer: Mozart, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Frank Zappa, Verdi or Frank Sinatra?

Before booking, do your homework to make sure to get the best bargain on the best cruise ship

ever to sail the best Seven Seas.