



Q: We signed on for a seven-day cruise with our church seniors group. We've just been told everyone has to dress up formal with tux and gown for dinner each evening.

We know cruises are much more relaxed these days, and don't want to lug extra clothes with us. It also means added costs for baggage checking, and the laundry bill on the ship will be sky high. We want to go on the cruise, but can we ignore the dress up order? *DRL, Louisville KY*

A: If formality is the rule, you'll have to comply or make everyone else angry with you. The other members of the group consider formal dining and dancing romantic traditions of cruising. However, there are ways to make the dress-up a bit easier on you.

Pack just one tux and one gown. Change accessories for the gown each night, with scarves, belts, jewelry and different hair styles. Take just a tux coat and several colored bow ties. Wear plain, dark trousers. You don't need to eat in the formal dining room every night. Try other shipboard restaurants and buffets where you can go casual.

Cut back on the laundry bill by taking all wash'n'wear clothing into the cabin's shower with you every night, and hang it up to dry while you sleep. If you can be a bit creative, you'll have a great cruise without offending other members of your group.