



## Packing for Cruise Vacation: Here's How to Look Sharp While Keeping Luggage Light

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Among the things you are thinking about when gearing up for a cruise vacation, the prospect of seeing exciting new places, relaxing and having fun should all be at the top of your list. So why do we all worry so much about what to pack?

With little effort you can put together an appropriate wardrobe and look stylish on your cruise vacation. Easing the cause is that ships are a lot less fussy about formality than they were even a few years ago. Casual is the order of the day with opportunity to dress up at night, but only if you want to.

Cruise lines such as Princess Cruises, Holland America Line and Carnival Cruise Line all offer plenty of packing advice on their websites and in printed materials. You can also draw strong hints of how your fellow passengers might dress by looking at the photos on cruise line websites and brochures – this is at least a peek at how each line envisions its passengers dressing.

If you have further questions on what to wear, ask a friend who has cruised on the line or check message boards at websites such as Cruise Critic. Pinterest is also a great resource for creative cruise fashion ideas, or check out the many selfies on Instagram.

Once on the ship, you'll find suggested attire for each evening listed in the daily newsletter. The suggestion, which may or may not involve dressing up a little, applies to the main dining room and some specialty restaurants. On many ships you have the option of staying in your shorts or jeans and eating at the buffet and other casual dining outlets.

Choose to dress to the hilt every night if you want – there is no such thing as overdressing. If you are a fashionista and want to stand out in the crowd or the kind of guy who feels more comfortable wearing a jacket to dinner, go for it!

For those who like to put on the Ritz, cruise lines such as Princess Cruises, Cunard, Holland America Line, Seabourn and P&O Cruises UK provide opportunity at designated "formal" or "gala" nights. But don't let the terms scare you, says Fern Mallis, founder of New York Fashion Week.

These days you have a lot of leeway when it comes to "formal" attire. Skip the jeans and sneakers but beyond that anything goes, says Mallis, who recently lectured on the Queen Mary 2 during Cunard's first annual Transatlantic Fashion Week.

While some passengers may wear a tux or ball gown and look like they just stepped out of a James Bond movie, dark suits and cocktail dresses or nice pantsuits are also perfectly acceptable.

"Something sparkly is always a good bet," Mallis says.

When it comes to packing for your cruise you are free to bring as much luggage as you like, especially if you are driving to a nearby homeport to catch your ship. However, guests flying to a port city may want to consider airline baggage fees and weight restrictions.

Fortunately, packing light doesn't mean you can't still be fashionable.

"I recommend for travelers to stay focused, stick with one color and maybe accent with a shawl or some bold jewelry," says Mallis.

The classical nautical look in white or blue is always in-style on cruise ships, she adds.

Weather in your destination and your personal comfort should be a consideration when putting together your cruise wardrobe. You'll want your mittens in Alaska and maybe an extra bathing suit in the Caribbean.

If you forget something or just feel like refreshing your wardrobe, shipboard shops have you covered with fashion selections.

On Princess Cruises ships you can even check out fashions from The Shops of Princess, as modeled by your fellow guests, during The Runway fashion show held in the atrium (if you'd like to be a model yourself, sign up onboard to participate). The fashion show is part of the line's Style at Sea program, offering fashion and beauty tips in partnership with the TLC TV Network.

Cruise ships have even inspired those in the world of high fashion. For her "J Autumn Fashion Show 2016" in October, for instance, model and entrepreneur Jessica Minh Anh set up a catwalk on the sundeck of Germany-based AIDA Cruises' AIDAluna docked in New York, with a breathtaking view of Manhattan as the magnificent backdrop. Her earlier shows included a catwalk on Italy-based Costa Cruises' Costa Luminosa in Sydney Harbour.

When packing for her transatlantic crossing from Southampton, England, to New York, Mallis, who has been at the heart of the fashion industry for more than 30 years, went with loose-fitting, comfortable clothing for daytime including elegant jersey hoodies and shawls. She had kaftans and lots of small, easy-to-pack accessories to spice things up at night.

"When it comes to accessories, more is better," she says. "Most people don't leave the house without lipstick on. I don't leave the house without accessorizing."

A fun trick to look fashionable at the pool is to dress up your bathing suit with a nice cover-up and some costume jewelry. You may even want to purchase local jewelry in the ports of call to reflect the regions where your ship is sailing.

Mallis said her accessory collection includes necklaces from around the world, which she likes to layer. She is also fond of colorful eyeglasses and sunglasses.

To keep clothing items fresh and wrinkle-free in your luggage, you may want to pack with tissue paper or plastic dry-cleaning bags, Mallis says. Rolling clothes such as t-shirts and underwear helps save space in your bag.

Cruise ships provide onboard dry cleaning, pressing and laundry service and many also have self-serve facilities with washers, dryers and irons, making it easy to perk up your clothes.

Nighttime on any ship, no matter the dress code, means a night out on the town. You can do cocktails, have dinner in a beautiful dining room, catch a show and hit the casino and otherwise partake in non-stop action. Or you can have a quiet date night for two, dining on gourmet fare with an ocean view.

For many people, dressing up a little is part of the fun. Get the whole family in party clothes and have one of the shipboard photographers snap a memorable family vacation photo.

Whether you go casual or more glamorous, it's important to keep in mind that the best way to look good on your cruise vacation is to be yourself.

"You can be wearing the chicest, most fashionable outfit, but if it's not you and the outfit is speaking instead of you shining through, it's all wrong," Mallis says. "It's most important to feel comfortable and confident in your clothes."

### **Cruise Packing Tips**

- Consider the weather because while that Hawaiian shirt may be the perfect thing in the Caribbean, not so in Alaska.
- Even in the tropics, bring a sweater or shawl to keep you cozy in the ocean breezes and air-conditioned spaces.
- Sunglasses, a sun hat and sunscreen are a must because the sun shines bright on the ocean.
- Don't forget comfortable shoes or sneakers to wear on shore excursions.
- Go with lightweight fabrics so you can get more items in your luggage and still meet airline weight restrictions.
- Check your cruise line's website before you sail for what-to-wear recommendations, including mention of any dress-up nights.
- Once onboard, always take note of suggested nighttime attire.
- Save space in luggage by skipping items such as pool and beach towels, which are provided shipboard.
- Don't pack items that are prohibited, such as travel irons (check the cruise line's web site for list of prohibited items).
- Always keep essentials including your passport, medicine glasses and cruise documents close at hand in your carry-on.

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