

Packing For Your Caribbean Cruise

From the pages of



Keep in mind that you are going to be spending your days and nights on a casual, sun-soaked vacation that includes lots of water and hanging out. You probably won't use about 2/3 of the clothes and things you bring. It's almost impossible to pack too light for a cruise.

For most cruise ships, there is no limit set on the amount of luggage you may bring so long as it fits in your stateroom. Each piece of luggage must be locked (once you get to the terminal) and have a colored luggage tag listing the guest's name, ship and stateroom number. Luggage tags are mailed with your cruise documents and additional tags can be obtained at curbside from the porter when you get to the terminal, if necessary.

The amount of luggage you bring will be more important to you when you leave the ship than when you arrive. Upon arrival, you'll simply drop your gear at the baggage terminal. But when you leave, you'll be responsible for getting all of your luggage through customs and to your vehicle, which can be a bit of a walk.

Check out my new video "[Packing For Your Caribbean Cruise](#)" available on my website at www.dothecaribbean.com.

Unless you are taking an extended cruise – i.e., more than 7 days - use one large suitcase; one garment bag (if you need it) and one carry-on bag per person.

CARRY ON BAG:

- ALL of your valuables, including your travel documents and wallet
- Medicines and first aid products (Band aids, gauze, pain relief, indigestion aids, sunburn medication, Dramamine)
- Toiletries
- Change of clothes & bathing suit (this will be very useful if you have to wait a while to get into your cabin after you board the ship)
- Computer and any other electronics (MP3 Player, camera, etc)
- If you wear glasses, it's a good idea to pack an extra pair.

LARGE SUITE CASE:

- All clothing that doesn't need to be hung; shoes; sundries; toys and miscellaneous
- Personal items not required immediately
- Beverages or bottled water

GARMENT BAG (if needed):

- Any hang-up items, especially if you are bringing formal wear.
- This is actually a good place to pack some of the beverages you are going to bring on board. Garment bags almost always have unused space around the edges, and the clothes normally packed in garment bags don't weight much, so the added weight of liquid doesn't make your bag too heavy.
- Also our preferred piece of luggage (when we use one) for extra pillows, hats, and books and magazines (in the outside pockets)

DO THIS WITH ANY LUGGAGE YOU ARE CHECKING.

Put something **DISTINCTIVE** on the handle or outside of any luggage you will check. This will make your luggage stand out. Tie a piece of rope on the handle, wrap some duct tape on the handle, buy some colored scrub balls and tie on to your handle, put a small stuffed animal on it. Do something noticeable.

At debarkation, your luggage will be placed in a **BIG** room (think football fields here) with **THOUSANDS** of other pieces of luggage, many pieces of which will look just like yours. These distinctive, colorful decorations will help you locate your bag amongst the mountains of luggage, but that’s not the most important reason to do it.

Some of your fellow passengers will have stayed up late the night before and may have had a bit too much fun. Others will be ready to get the heck out of the throng of people, porters and acres of luggage. These folks may not be seeing clearly or may not be paying attention as they navigate through the big room. They may look at your luggage with blurry, impatient eyes and think “Hey, this looks like mine.” and take it without looking at the name tag. Major bummer. If this happens, you might have to wait till everyone is off the ship (which could take a couple of hours) and then see who left a bag that looks like yours. Get the picture? Make your luggage distinctive.

SAMPLE CHECK LIST. This check list is based on a 4-day cruise. Most items won’t change for longer or shorter cruises, but clothes will. Keep in mind, you probably will pack twice as many clothes as you are going to use (oh well).

Documents	Clothes
Passport/Birth Certificate	Shoes
Cruise Packet (<i>cruise line or travel agent</i>)	- Sandals for poolside
Pre-reg Form (<i>from on-line registration</i>)	- Comfy walking shoes
	- Dress shoes for dining
Toys	Shorts (<i>1 pair for every 2 days</i>)
Camera	Casual Shirts/T-shirts (<i>1 per day</i>)
Sunglasses	Swim Suit (<i>2 – so you can always have a dry one</i>)
MP3 Player	Underwear (<i>1 change per day</i>)
Alarm clock	Men – Slacks/shirts for Main Dining (<i>2 outfits</i>)
Leisure reading material	Ladies – Outfits for Main Dining (<i>2 outfits</i>)
Extra batteries for EVERYTHING	Formal Attire for Formal Night
	Socks
Sundries	Workout gear if you plan to use the gym
Air Freshener (<i>for cabin</i>)	Workout shoes if needed
Sun Screen	
Lip Balm (<i>SPF 30 or higher</i>)	
Bottles of water (<i>4-6 per person</i>)	Miscellaneous
Plastic bags (<i>for dirty/wet clothes</i>)	Extra clothes hangers
	Wind breaker, sweater or light jacket
Toiletries	Hats/visors
Hair Dryer	Basic first aid items
Eye drops	- pain reliever
Moisturizer	- band aids (assorted sizes)
Personal Hygiene	- Alka Seltzer or similar
Make-up	Sandwich bags
Vitamins/regular supplements	Power strip and extension cord.

A couple of other suggestions that you might appreciate:

- ◆ A lighted clock (especially in the interior cabins, you won't know what time it is when you wake up)
- ◆ A surge protector and at least one extension cord. There are usually only 2 plugs in your cabin, both located on the vanity. If you're like us, you'll want to use your computer, charge your camera, listen to music and use a hair dryer while someone is taking a shower... well, you get the picture.
- ◆ A can of air freshener (we prefer Lysol, because it not only deodorizes the room if needed but also sanitizes surfaces)
- ◆ Some kind of music. Fortunately for those of us who travel with our computers, we can use the music library on the hard drive. Otherwise, you can get an inexpensive set of small external speakers that will plug into the headphone jack of your MP3 player. It's a great way to keep the party going when you're awake and it is very useful at night. Some soothing music or background sounds can help to drown out whatever ship noises creep into your cabin.
- ◆ A collapsible cooler. Even if you aren't a beer fan, you can still keep your soft drinks and bottled water on ice. Collapsible coolers aren't as insulated as the solid ones, so the ice tends to melt more easily. Your Cabin Steward will be happy to keep your beverages iced down for you, especially if you spot him an extra \$10 when you come on board.
- ◆ Use dryer sheets. If your travel time to the ship is more than 24 hours, put fabric softener sheets between your garments to keep everything in your suite case smelling fresh. This is particularly nice with garments or accessories that are not regularly laundered, such as sweaters or jackets. You may want to cut one in half and place each half in your shoes. You'll be even more appreciative on your return home, since your luggage will be packed with soiled clothes, some of which may even be damp.
- ◆ Post-it Notes. These are especially useful if you are traveling with several companions and you need to stay in touch with each other. Just write a note and stick it on the big mirror over the vanity. You can also leave your cabin steward a note if needed.
- ◆ Bring A Small First Aid Kit. Unless you just want to check out the ship's infirmary for the sheer fun of it (like, maybe you're an ER nurse or something like that) it's a yucky way to spend your cruising time. If you do have to visit the infirmary, your treatment fees will be added to your shipboard account and must be paid before you disembark, since cruise lines don't file insurance papers. But, just like at home, though you may not be able to avoid all mishaps, you can prepare for the lesser blunders. It's well worth it if you can avoid the time and cost of a visit to the ship's doctor. By the way, all of this applies double if you're traveling with kids! Your kit doesn't have to be extensive though you should include remedies for bumps and bruises, indigestion, headaches and sore muscles, sunburn treatment and relief, and seasickness.
- ◆ Bungee Cords. One of the most useful items you can take. They are easy to pack, take up no room at all, and can even be useful in keeping your bags lashed together as you maneuver onto the ship. But here's the really cool part. There are never enough places to hang things in your cabin (like a shirt, or hat, or camera case). Most cabins have two or three hooks and that's about it. But each hook is big enough to hold two or three bungee cords. What's more, there are lots of places through out the cabin that can accommodate one end of a bungee cord but would never work as a hanging place, such as a lamp or the edge of your mirror. Just hang the bungee cord from any suitable place and – voila! – you have a hook that is sturdy enough to hold anything you've got.