



Norwegian Cruise Line: Planning for Your Adventure

Sail Safe Health & Safety Program

Please be sure to review the Norwegian Cruise Line [Sail Safe](#) webpage, where you can learn important information about your cruise, including health and safety measures (such as COVID-19 vaccine requirements, COVID-19 testing, pre-cruise and onboard protocols, etc.). This page is updated directly by Norwegian Cruise Line so the information here will always be the most up-to-date!

[What's Included with My Cruise Purchase?](#)

Onboard stateroom accommodations (your cabin), ocean transportation (your cruise), water/coffee/tea/lemonade, most entertainment and recreation onboard, most meals, and Norwegian's commitment to guest satisfaction!

What's Not Included?

Travel insurance, specialty dining, spa services, gambling, art auctions, merchandise purchases, shore excursions, photographs, arcade, internet access, medical services, transportation to and from the port, port parking, laundry services, ship to shore phone calls, and gratuities. Some activities on Norwegian's private islands are extra. Ask a staff member if you're ever unsure.

Final Payment

Be sure to mark a calendar with your Final Payment Date which can be found on your reservation invoice. This date comes 90 or 120 days prior to the sailing date, depending on the length of your cruise, and is the deadline date for paying off the remaining balance on your cruise. Please be sure to contact me with reasonable notice prior to this date so your balance can be paid in full. I'll need to make the transaction for you – Norwegian's call centers and online systems will not be able to assist you in processing your final payment.

Norwegian's MyNCL Online Account

You will want to create a *MyNCL* account online as soon as possible. This custom online account serves as your "cruise planner" in preparation for your cruise. Begin by exploring shore excursions for each port and entertainment options on the ship. Then, you can begin making reservations for all of those awesome activities you discovered as early as 6 months in advance of sailing. Please note that sometimes the full list of options may not be available until 3 months out. ***Pre-reserving specialty dining and shows which strongly recommended!!!***

To set up your online account and link your reservation, go to:

- [MyNCL Create an Account](#)
- [Norwegian's Countdown to Cruise](#)

What is "Online Check-In" and What are "e-Docs?"

"Online check-in" is a pre-cruise procedure in which you'll complete necessary cruise paperwork online. **It's all done in your [MyNCL account](#) after your cruise cabin is paid in full, as early as 90 days prior to sailing.** You'll print a boarding pass (called "e-docs,"), luggage tags, and you may be prompted to print a signature page for your "Freestyle" room key card. This process online saves lots of time when boarding the ship. **Online check- must be completed no later than 3 days prior to sailing.**

[Vacation Protection Insurance](#)

Most US-based medical insurance policies do not include coverage while traveling outside of the US, so purchasing travel insurance for your vacation is **always** recommended. It's a great way to protect your investment and the policy provides peace of mind at a low cost. It's not just cancellation insurance anymore. Many of today's plans include insurance for your whole trip: Personal Property, Baggage, Medical, Emergency Evacuation, and additionally 24-hour Travel Assistance. Norwegian Cruise Line's Booksafe Travel Protection Plan includes the "Cancel for Any Reason" feature which is very popular. **Contact me to add the plan any time before Final Payment. We also offer insurance through a preferred third-party vendor which can include coverage for any pre and post-cruise flights or hotels.** To request a quote comparison, please email your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent.

When Should I Plan to Arrive?

Arrive at the port the day **before** your sailing is scheduled to begin. This is a great opportunity to explore the port area (it's a destination too) and relax without the stress of delayed/cancelled flights and sudden traffic incidents (trust me on this!). Your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent can easily arrange airfare and a pre/post-cruise hotel through the cruise line at competitive rates. Please be sure to read the [Norwegian Cruise Line Boarding Policy](#) for more information.

Proof of Citizenship/Passports

Passports are *highly* recommended for cruises but not required on every sailing. **Please check the Vital Information section of your reservation for information and links to websites that can provide more details. *It is each cruise passenger's responsibility to make sure they have the proper identification documents needed to board.*** If your cruise *does* require a passport, please ensure that the name on the photo page matches the name on your cruise reservation and is valid for 6 months after travel.

If your cruise does *not* require a Passport, you will be required to provide proof of citizenship in the form of an original/certified copy of a government issued birth certificate (with raised seal and signature), **and** a laminated government-issued photo ID (driver's license) for each passenger age 16+ **that matches the name on the cruise reservation.** If the name on your ID does not match the name on your Birth Certificate and/or Driver's License, you may be asked to present a supporting document (i.e. a Marriage License, which shows your maiden and married name). It's heartbreaking to see someone left behind in the terminal, denied boarding for not having the right ID.

Visit [Norwegian's Required Travel Documentation](#) to ensure that you take the necessary ID, especially passengers who are not natural-born US citizens or carry a birth certificate from Puerto Rico.

Children traveling without both birth parents or children with a different last name than their parent may be required to show additional notarized consent.

Be advised: though Passports are not required in order to board many sailings, they are strongly recommended and would be required in the event you must return to the United States by air.

Visas

Some countries require that any American passenger departing the ship obtain a Travel Visa and/or be booked on a cruise line shore excursion (Russia, Australia, China, India, and Cuba for example) in order to exit the ship.

Visa requirements for U.S. and Canadian citizens are listed on your Booking Confirmation under "Notices," if applicable. You'll want to check if an [Visa Application Kit](#) is needed for your sailing. All other nationalities, including those with U.S. or Canadian resident status, should contact me ASAP for info in obtaining the appropriate documents.

STEP/Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

International cruise passengers are strongly encouraged to register each trip with the US Dept. of Consular Affairs [Smart Travel Enrollment Program](#) (STEP). By signing up you'll be notified of new travel advisories and pertinent tourist information. Plus, registering for this free service by the US Dept. of State also enables them to better assist you during an emergency.

Dining On Board

Norwegian Cruise Line's *FreeStyle* Dining concept means the buffet and main dining rooms are open during mealtime hours for Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner and no advance reservations are required. Just seat yourself at the buffet or visit the hostess stand at any main dining room and you'll be shown to the next available table, generally without wait. Dining hours are posted each day in your [Cruise Norwegian app](#). Plan your day ahead to avoid eating at the same place all the time (from experience).

Specialty Dining: Yay or Nay?

In my personal experience, specialty dining restaurants are just that: SPECIAL. They enhance the cruise experience and are definitely recommended by me on longer sailings. For shorter sailings, you may be content just trying out the free dining areas (especially if you're a first-time cruiser). Specialty dining experiences are ideal for special occasions, parents night out, or for foodies in general. I enjoy the opportunity to savor a variety of fresh fare from an

exclusive club of world-class chefs, so I often do a 3-meal dining package. I still get to experience the free restaurants but my husband and I get a treat while on vacation, too. *So, is it worth the price?* Specialty dining on cruise ships is subsidized, so this is your chance to try new things, prepared as they should be (think lobster, escargot, and *Cagney's* signature angus chop) at a much lower price.

It's best to make specialty restaurant reservations in your [MyNCL](#) profile in advance. Reservations are also possible for Freestyle/main dining restaurants and are recommended if you plan to have dinner during busy mealtime hours.

Dress Code

During the day you'll feel most comfortable in resort wear: a swimsuit and cover up, shorts, and whatever keeps you comfortable in the climate you're visiting. "Dress-Up or Not Night" is offered on most sailings; it's an alternative to traditional "formal nights" and gives guests the freedom to dress up for photos or not. Avoid dressing too casually in main dining restaurants for dinner, or in specialty restaurants at any time. Dressing up for Norwegian Cruise Line's "theme nights" add fun, especially their signature White Party. In general though, Norwegian Cruise Line explains their own dress code this way: "go resort casual or get decked-out and look your best - it's your call."

- Visit [What to Pack](#) for more details and notes for onshore attire.

Don't Miss the Shows!!!!

On Norwegian's state of the art cruise ships you'll *absolutely* want to mark your calendar and reserve show seats as soon as they're open for booking. Why? Their entertainers are some of the most talented in the world, so shows DO book up. True, you may find a seat or two available if you arrive no less than 30 minutes before showtime, but that is a big risk. If you absolutely can't find availability before sailing, be sure to grab a reservation *as soon as you get on board* since some seats aren't released until then.

Pre-booking shows 90-60 days prior to sailing is strongly recommended.

Port Excursions

There are SO many options at each port and endless opportunities for relaxation and adventure!

---Visit [MyNCL](#) to search [Shore Excursions](#), where you can browse by ship and sail date.

---Consider checking with your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent for a list of trusted third-party excursion vendors. These excursion companies are known for offering additional shore excursion possibilities, competitive rates, and a timely return to your ship.

Some favorites: cultural bus tours, snorkeling, hands-on experiences, and activities unique to a destination. Just about every port has their own version of ziplining, Segway tours, dolphin swims, and ATV excursions, so instead keep an eye out for unique geographical and historical sites (like Dunn's River Falls in Jamaica, The Baths in Tortola, Mayan ruins in Mexico, St. Kitts Scenic Railway, etc.)

Dreaming of an all-inclusive beach day? Spending the afternoon at a beach-front resort? This is your chance! Ask me for Resort Day Pass options in the ports you'll visit on this cruise and start dreaming of the fruity cocktail you'll try first!

You'll want to reserve shore excursions in My Cruises as early as 6 months in advance of sailing. Please note that the complete list may not be available until 120 days before sailing.

Embarkation Day (Cruise Day 1)

Ship departure times vary according to the embarkation port and ship. You'll be provided a port **arrival time** during the online check-in process, though guests booked in Suite categories like The Haven can typically arrive at any time. Plan to arrive at the port no later than 2 hours before scheduled embarkation time printed on your cruise documents. **Don't forget** to complete the Online Check-In process **at least** 3 days before Embarkation Day!

Children's Clubs

Kids of all ages have a blast! Circus school, team challenges, developmental activities – each age group is entertained in age-appropriate ways. Sign up for the Late Night Fun Zone* from 10:30pm-1:30 and have a romantic dinner alone. There are even playgroups for parents to engage with the littlest cruisers, and a Nursery on some ships. Pre-register your children on *My NCL* to save time onboard.

Health Concerns and Guests with Special Needs or Diets

Norwegian ships provide quality service and a variety of accessible features to make your experience as relaxing and enjoyable as can be. Tedious sanitization practices are in place as required by law. Frequent hand washing is strongly encouraged onboard for all passengers. Each ship is equipped with an Infirmary and Ship Doctor, available for an additional fee.*****Important:** Please inform your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent of any new or existing pregnancy, routine dialysis, special needs, [special dietary restrictions](#), or medical concerns so we can inform the appropriate department.

Stateroom Door Decorations

Decorating your stateroom door makes for a fun and memorable homecoming each night. Bring magnets, images printed on magnetic paper, or window cling to easily recognize your stateroom door. Other ideas include anniversary photos, wrapping paper, balloons, Veteran magnets, and more. Check Pinterest for ideas!

Luggage Policy

Bring up to 2 checked bags and a carry-on bag per person (airline policies may differ). Some items are permitted only in carry-on luggage (a CPAP machine, for example). Pack that carry-on wisely!

NO beverages may be brought onboard, per Norwegian Cruise Line policy. This *includes water* and alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages (there are exceptions for medical needs and for wine – see the link below). This is different from many cruise lines and is done in an effort to expedite the screening process on embarkation day. Corked, unopened wine MAY be brought onboard, but is subject to a \$15-30 per bottle corkage fee. Norwegian Cruise Line will store any other beverages brought on until the final day of sailing.

- What *not* to bring: [Prohibited Items Policy](#)

[Am I Allowed to Bring Alcohol Onboard?](#)

Corked, unopened wine MAY be brought onboard in carry-on luggage, but is subject to a \$15-30 per bottle corkage fee. Beer and hard liquors are not allowed to be brought onboard. Any beverages bought in duty-free shops on the ship or in port will be stored by the ship until the final day of the cruise.

Automatic Gratuities

As with most cruise lines, Norwegian Cruise Line automatically adds the standard gratuities to each guest's onboard account while sailing. These "tips" are divided among your Dining Room Server, Dining Room Assistant Server, and Dining Room Head Server as well as your Stateroom Host/Hostess. It is recommended to add prepaid gratuities during Final Payment because it's one less thing to budget for on the ship – let your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent know if you'd like to pay in advance.

Debarkation Day (Final Cruise Day)

You'll receive disembarkation instructions delivered to your stateroom and often on loudspeakers the day before the ship returns to the home port. Norwegian Cruise Line uses a colored luggage tag system and bags are placed outside of cabin doors the night before returning to home port. Don't forget to set aside a carry-on bag with clothing and supplies for the next morning.

Ships generally arrive back at the home port early in the morning, around 7am. The Captain will make an announcement soon after the ship reaches the pier for passengers to begin disembarkation. Believe It or not – ships are mostly empty by 9am so staff can clean and prep the ship for the next sailing!

Onboard Booking (save \$\$!): CruiseNext Incentives

You'll have the chance to **save \$\$\$** on a future cruise OR earn onboard credit by making a reservation **while still onboard**. You don't have to select a specific date for that next cruise, either! The incentives are usually pretty great, and, if you have booked your cruise thru a Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent, we hope that you will choose to list your Travel Agent on the reservation when talking with the sales staff!

A few miscellaneous notes...

- All staterooms provide soap, 2-in-1 shampoo, and a hairdryer. Pack hair conditioner and lotion, if desired.
- A clothing iron can be requested. Laundry service is available for a fee.

- Most ships have a mini-safe in all rooms. All vessels have safety deposit boxes onboard.
- Norwegian Cruise Line takes pride in their high-speed Wi-Fi at sea. If this was not included in your booking, consider adding a Wi-Fi package to your reservation if you must stay connected while away (or consider turning your device off all-together!)
- Be sure to download the Cruise Norwegian app before your cruise! You can use the app to view the daily schedule, make reservations onboard, and so much more.
- All purchases made onboard are charged to your Onboard (*Freestyle*) Account by scanning your room key card.
- If a specialty dining and/or beverage package was not included at booking time, these add-ons can be a great value. Your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent can help you decide if you're unsure.
- Norwegian Cruise Line often runs specials and discounts in the cruise planner for various extras. Please check your *MyNCL* cruise planner often to make sure you don't miss a discount.

Still have questions?

[Norwegian Frequently Asked Questions](#). And, your Wish Upon a Star with Us Travel Agent is just a phone call or email away.