

1. Try to complete the early check-in process prior to your cruise date. This will help a lot on boarding faster onto the ship.
2. Try not to get a cabin toward the front (bow) of the ship if you are along the water line. The waves will pound against the walls and you will have a hard time sleeping. If you are on a higher deck way above the water line, then it will be okay.
3. Try not to get a cabin just below a deck with a dance club or dining area above you. The noise and footsteps will also keep you awake.
4. Highly Recommend an ocean view room or larger. The lower cost interior staterooms are very, very tiny. One person remarked that he once slipped in the shower and fell into his bed. For \$50 or more, you should be able to get a ocean view room with more room.
5. I suggest looking into getting the cruise insurance. Royal Cruise's insurance was only \$29 per person for our 5 day trip. Not bad considering if you get sick on the island or even on the boat your American based insurance will probably not cover it. Plus, if you miss the boat or some other thing happens, you will have the insurance to help. FYI, if you do get insurance you can get it through anybody, it does not have to be with the cruise line. We went with Royal only because it was cheap -plus we figured less hassle if we did have a problem.
6. Some ships do NOT provide hairdryers in the rooms according to their website. Check to see if they provide hairdryers in the room.
7. The shower stalls are usually very, very, very tiny. You will probably not be able to shave your legs or something like that in them. Everyone I talked to says they were always too small.
8. They may state to arrive at the ship say around 3pm. Not sure about other Cruise lines, but on Royal ships they would state to arrive between 3-4pm. But both times we arrived at 12-noon and they let us onto the ship. It was great as we were able to take pictures of the ship without lots of people being in the shots. Of course our room was not ready until about 5-6pm but what the heck, we got to eat lunch and check out the ship for several hours with very few people on board. So arrive early if you can.
9. Most Cruise ship provides Free Tea, Coffee and Juices. But Sodas are extra cost. Some cruise lines will have a soda package that you can purchase that will allow you unlimited soda refills. You may have to check with Carnival to see if sodas are extra. PS: Liquor will of course be extra. But on the Royal cruises I was on, the drinks were very reasonable priced and very good. For example, I paid \$5 for a Long-Island Tea alcohol drink and it was great. Something I normally pay about \$6-\$9 at clubs here in Austin and San Antonio.

10. Seasickness: Royal Caribbean ships have stabilizers — underwater fins on the sides that move to compensate for the rolling motion. Not sure about other Cruise Line ships. You probably will not get seasick. Plus most popular cruise shipping lanes are in some of the calmest water. The ships also try to go around any storms that may pop up. The newer the ship, the better the stabilizers and technology will be. Either way, I know Royal Cruises will provide sea sickness pills free upon request, but you have to go through the purser. If you go to the on-board doctor, there will be hefty fee to see him just to get the pills. Might want to check with your cruise line about sea-sickness pills and if you can get them through the purser.
11. Cruise experts recommend leaving heirloom jewelry at home. It's not worth the risk. If you do bring expensive jewels on board, or carry large sums of cash, rent a safety deposit box at the front desk. Although you'll may(?) find a free safe in your room, safety deposit boxes rented at the front desk are more secure. Suggest leaving expensive jewelry at home.
12. Self-Service Laundry facilities are sometimes(?) provided but may be crowded at times. Laundry and dry cleaning services are provided at an extra cost.
13. Cruise Luggage Tags will be mailed to you ahead of time. These tags will allow them to get your bags onto the right ship and onto the right cabin. FYI – bags usually arrive several hours later at your room after boarding. Keep that in mind. See next tip below.
14. For the first day of your cruise, pack a small carry-on bag with your travel documents, a change of clothes, bathing suit, and any medications you may need. This will allow you to begin enjoying your vacation immediately, because you won't have to wait for your bags to arrive at your stateroom. They will have to handle 4,000-6,000 bags on each trip so it does take them awhile to get them processed and delivered to the room.
15. Most Cruise Lines will provide Beach Towels and Pool towels – no need to bring beach towels from home.
16. A daily itinerary of ship activities and shows and parties should be placed in the room each morning. This will help you plan what to do each day.
17. There is a Broadway type of show each night. There will be game shows throughout the day.
18. Most cruise lines will create a badge with photo for each person. Each badge will allow the person to make charges. You “should” be able to decide how each person charges will be handled (at least on our cruise ship, my friend had her charges go to her credit card, and mine went to a different card even though the whole cruise was paid for with one card). On the last morning of your cruise vacation, an itemized

statement will be delivered to your stateroom for verification. Your charges will be billed automatically to the credit card you selected upon check-in.

19. Per Carnival's Policy, Tips have to be Pre-paid *before* the trip (ouch, not on Royal Cruises). Tips are usually \$10 per Person/per Day. i.e.: On a 5-Day cruise, for 2 people you will need a total of \$100 minimum for the cruise trip. You WILL be able to modify the amounts paid out to each person on the last day of the cruise. If you order room service, you should tip that person at that time as it will be a different person every time you order room service and they are not on the envelope list provided at the end of the cruise for tipping.
20. Definitely try to do a snorkeling trip on Cozumel. You can book these ahead of time or while you are on the ship. The Caribbean Sea is unbelievable beautiful and colorful when snorkeling. Talk to passengers on the ship to see if any of them have been on the snorkeling trips before as there will be several to pick from. The one I got was on a boat that had a maximum of 25 passengers. They had 5 guides for the whole group (fairly nice ratio). Soda, liquor, and a lunch were provided as part of the cost (I think we paid \$30-35??). They took us to the other side of the island. It was fabulous. My friend could not swim so they kept one guide with her all the time. See loved it.
21. Do NOT take the Jeep tour through the island. My friends stated that it was very, very hot, and very bumpy. The first 10-15 minutes was okay, but after that they just became miserable with the heat, the bumpy ride, the bugs, and the bushes/leaves hitting them in the arms and faces all the time. Etc. Etc.
22. At Cozumel, I HIGHLY Recommend that you take the water ferry to Playa Del Carmen (the town on the main land). Items will be a lot cheaper there. i.e.: My friend found a scarf that she liked at Cozumel for \$20, but she found the EXACT same scarf at Playa Del Carmen for \$5. Meals, shopping, etc will be a lot cheaper at Playa Del Carmen. Keep in mind that at ALL of the islands (Bahamas, Caribbean, etc) and main towns, you CAN negotiate the selling prices.
23. If you charge on the islands, ask how the charges will be posted (in US dollars or Pesos). I read that some credit card companies are now charging an additional fee for the conversion rate in addition to the store charges. Plus the conversion could be way different from what they tell you at the store as the bank will use its own conversion table. Check with your credit card company on its policy.
24. Formal dining is provided every night. There will be one (or two) formal nights where you must get dress up. Other nights are optional. Most men opt for dark suit instead of tuxedo, and women choose cocktail dresses rather than lavish gowns. The remaining nights are casual, with sport shirts and slacks recommended for men, and sundresses and khakis for women.

25. At the formal dining seating. They may state that seconds will not be served, but ask your waiter nicely. On Royal, they always gave us seconds, but they told us not to talk about it as it would be impossible to do it for everyone. Can you imagine if everyone wanted a second lobster (which we all did at our table). And when you have 3000 people eating that could be quite a task at cooking and preparing not to mention the quantity of lobsters to have on board.
26. If you are assigned a table for the formal seating, and you do not like the people at your table. They 'may' be able to move you to another table. Just ask and see what happens. On our first cruise we had fabulous table guests, the second cruise out table guests actually argued on the first night.
27. Most cruise lines have FAQ listings on their websites so check it out.