

# Autism-Friendly Caribbean Cruise Checklist

Use this comprehensive checklist to prepare for a smooth and enjoyable Caribbean cruise with your autistic family member. Check off each item as you plan your trip to ensure comfort, safety, and a stress-free vacation.

## Pre-Booking Planning

- ■ Research autism-friendly cruise lines
- ■ Select a cabin location that minimizes noise and motion
- ■ Choose an itinerary with fewer sea days if preferred
- ■ Work with an autism travel specialist
- ■ Purchase comprehensive travel insurance

## Before You Sail

- ■ Complete the cruise line's Special Needs Form
- ■ Request priority boarding and accommodations
- ■ Create a visual schedule or social story
- ■ Notify the cruise line of dietary restrictions
- ■ Pre-book excursions and dining times
- ■ Download the cruise line's mobile app

## Packing Essentials

- ■ Noise-canceling headphones
- ■ Weighted blanket or lap pad
- ■ Favorite snacks and comfort foods
- ■ Fidget toys or sensory tools
- ■ Tablet with preferred apps, movies, or games • ■ Medications and copies of prescriptions
- ■ Comfort items (favorite toy, pillow, or blanket)
- ■ Sunscreen and protective clothing
- ■ Seasickness remedies if needed

- ■ Extra change of clothes in carry-on bag

## **Embarkation Day**

- ■ Arrive early to avoid crowds
- ■ Keep important documents easily accessible
- ■ Carry sensory tools in a day bag
- ■ Review the ship layout upon boarding
- ■ Visit Guest Services to confirm accommodations

## **Onboard Strategies**

- ■ Identify quiet or low-sensory areas on the ship
- ■ Maintain familiar routines when possible
- ■ Attend sensory-friendly activities if available
- ■ Communicate needs with youth staff and crew
- ■ Use flexible dining options to avoid crowds
- ■ Schedule downtime between activities

## **Shore Excursions**

- ■ Choose private or small-group excursions
- ■ Bring a portable sensory kit
- ■ Plan for rest breaks
- ■ Carry identification and emergency contact information
- ■ Research port accessibility and facilities

## **Safety & Documentation**

- ■ Carry copies of medical records and insurance
- ■ Prepare an emergency contact card
- ■ Use an ID bracelet or wearable identification
- ■ Discuss safety plans with your family member

- ■ Take photos of travel documents as backups

## **Post-Trip Reflection**

- ■ Document successful strategies for future trips
- ■ Save helpful contacts and resources
- ■ Share feedback with the cruise line
- ■ Create a memory book or photo journal