

FAQs (Cruises)

The most commonly asked (or should-be-asked) questions.



ASTERA VOYAGES

Tipping & Money

- **Q: What are these “gratuities” charges?**
 - They are, for better or worse, part of the cost of your vacation. There’s the “mandatory” fees of ~\$20/person/day that get billed to you onboard unless you’ve prepaid them, and gratuities on almost every service or package you purchase, and the optional tipping that is normal at the end of cruises. See this [Points Guy](#) article for more details.
- **Q: Should I pre-pay gratuities or do it onboard?**
 - Up to you. Paying in advance lets your onboard billing be more tidy and you have an “I paid for the cruise already” mentality when you get onboard. If you pay it onboard, you’ll see charges daily on your account but have the flexibility of reducing, removing, or increasing it based on your needs. **We generally pay in advance and consider the gratuities part of the cruise fare.**
- **Q: How much should I tip staff onboard?**
 - Entirely up to you. You pay gratuities at about \$20/day/person prior to your cruise or onboard, and any cash you tip is extra. That said, it’s generally accepted to do something like **\$20-\$50/person** for the cabin steward and dining room waiter and about half that for the assistant waiter. Bartenders that frequently take care of you appreciate \$1-\$2/drink but you can guesstimate and do it a few times rather than on every drink.
- **Q: How much cash should I bring?**
 - Generally **\$100-\$200/person** is more than enough. Bring something like \$20 in 1-dollar bills, \$40 in 5-dollar bills, and \$40 in 10-dollar bills at least for flexibility and tips.
- **Q: Do I tip the cruise terminal porters?**
 - If they help you with your bags (which they usually do on embarkation and it’s up to you on disembarkation), then generally it’s a reasonable **courtesy to tip ~\$2/bag**. More if the bags are awkward, bulky, and/or heavy (up to \$5/bag) or the porter(s) are particularly nice or helpful.

Booking

- **Q: When is the best time to book?**
 - Earlier the better. It may not be the cheapest price “now”, but by booking you guarantee that rate. If the price drops below what you booked at before your final payment, you can snag the lower price. Your travel agent will monitor for price drops for you.
- **Q: When should I do my final payment?**
 - On or shortly before the due date. If you pay in full substantially earlier you’re missing out on potential investment returns on it as well as locking yourself out of benefiting if the price drops. Once your final payment is made, no price adjustments can be done.

Have any other ideas, suggestions, or criticisms? Let us know!