

# Pro-Tips (Cruises)

*Top no-fluff pro-tips you may benefit from.*



ASTERA VOYAGES

## Money

- Get [\\$100/stateroom as On-Board Credit](#) for 7 night sailings if you own 100 shares of Royal Caribbean stock (NYSE: RCL). As of 2025 this would be about 0.3% ROI per cruise. If you cruise a lot, or can buy the stock cheap, or are interested in investing in the industry anyway, this can add up!

## Travel Timing

- **Pre-departure hotel.** Consider flying into the port area the night before departure and staying at a hotel to mitigate most travel delay impacts. If you don't do this and particularly have a long flight or connections, strongly consider [travel insurance](#).
- **Post-cruise hotel.** Staying an extra day in the area after your cruise, rather than flying home immediately, can offer several benefits. You might find cost savings on flights, as post-cruise flights are often crowded and more expensive than early morning departures. These potential flight savings can often offset the cost of a hotel stay, especially if combined with any hotel loyalty or potential early check-in. If you're in a beach area or location of interest, you can get nearly 2 full days of extra time often at net-zero cost!

## Traveling

- **Book reliable flights.** Especially for the pre-cruise leg, prioritize airlines you trust.
- **Book using credit cards with solid protection.** The Chase Sapphire Reserve in particular stands out as a strong option to put travel expenses on due to the trip delay / interruption / cancellation coverage in particular. Other top options include Amex Platinum and Venture X.
- Delta gives **2x free checked bags up to 70 lbs per passenger** for everyone on the same booking if at least one person holds Silver Medallion status and a Delta SkyMiles AmEx card (Domestic, primarily).
  - Consider a family of 4 with 2 checked bags each. Roundtrip, this would cost ~\$640 in checked bag fees. The family could instead have one person buy both SkyMiles Amex Platinum (~\$350/year) *and* Reserve (~\$650/year) to immediately have Silver Medallion status from the MQD Headstart and get the bag perks. If the family travels 2+ times/year, this could be cheaper and less stressful (70 lb vs 50 lb limit, no longer trying to minimize checked bags every travel). See [Delta's official policy](#).

# Pro-Tips (Cruises)

*Top no-fluff pro-tips you may benefit from.*



ASTERA VOYAGES

## Cabins, Timing, and Price Hacks

- **Book connecting cabins** instead of suites for families. Often cheaper, gives two bathrooms and more flexibility.
- **Consider adjacent balcony cabins as effectively connecting cabins.** Most are able to open the divider on the balcony to create a shared area between cabins and letting guests go between them.
- **Casino players have unique perks.** Look into the program and strongly consider whether you want to play a bit to earn free alcoholic drinks and substantially reduced fares on future sailings. Gamble with limits and responsibly.
- **What's a good price for...**
  - Alcohol drink packages? Depends on the sailing, but usually anything less than \$75/day/person is pretty good.
  - Internet? Usually anything less than \$30/day is pretty good.
- **Should I book before getting onboard or after?**
  - Alcohol drink packages? Before.
  - Internet? Before.
  - Excursions? Before.

## Service

- **Tip well early.** Whether it's bartenders or dining room staff, a nice \$10/person tip early to establish yourself will get you fast service, high attention to detail, and often free perks beyond the value of your tips! Some waiters will give free alcoholic drinks if you tip well.

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