

United States | 2021

# Little Book of Cruise Facts

Simple facts to address common  
misperceptions and instill cruise  
confidence.

[www.cruising.org](http://www.cruising.org)



#WeAreCruise

COVID-19

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise ships are vectors for COVID-19.”

**THE TRUTH:**

Cruise ships are operating with some of the **highest levels of COVID-19 mitigation** of any industry, with a lower incidence rate than we are seeing on land.

CLIA cruise lines have some of the most **stringent and effective public health and sanitation practices**, with multiple layers of protection encompassing the entirety of the cruise experience.

COVID-19

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “COVID-19 on cruise ships is a burden on community resources.”

**THE TRUTH:**

CLIA cruise lines have developed **pre-arranged response plans** to rapidly address any potential COVID-19 cases that may occur onboard, **without undue burden** to local governments or resources.

## NOROVIRUS

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Norovirus is more common on cruise ships than other setting.”

## THE TRUTH:

In the words of the American Medical Association, this claim “**does not hold water.**”

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), healthcare facilities are the most reported settings for norovirus outbreaks in the United States (**62 percent**), followed by restaurants or catered events (**22 percent**), and then schools and childcare centers (**6 percent**). The CDC goes on to say that **crises “account for only a small percentage (1 percent)** of all reported norovirus outbreaks.”

PRIORITIES

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise companies put profit before people by sailing during the pandemic.”

## THE TRUTH:

On March 14, 2020—two days after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic—CLIA ocean-going cruise lines **voluntarily suspended** cruise departures. CLIA member lines made this unprecedented decision in the interest of public health and in keeping with their longstanding and ongoing **commitment to putting people first and foremost.**

Operations remained paused for more than a year in most markets. Limited resumption began in Europe in July of 2020 following a **multi-layered approach** developed with input from world-class experts in health and science.

## FLAGGING

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise lines flag their ships in other countries to skirt regulations.”

## THE TRUTH:

Cruise ships operating in the United States are **subject to inspection by U.S. authorities** who verify compliance with international rules as well as U.S. requirements, regardless of where a ship is flagged. Similar enforcement measures are in place in other countries where cruises operate, making it next to impossible for cruise lines to skirt the rules.

There are more than 43,000 ocean-going commercial vessels in operation, of which only 300 are cruise ships. Of those 43,000 vessels, **only 0.4 percent are U.S. flagged, down from 57 percent in 1947.** This is, in part, due to requirements that make it very difficult for large commercial vessels to compete internationally under an American flag.

TAXES

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise lines don’t pay taxes.”

## THE TRUTH:

Direct taxes generated by cruise industry spending are consistent with other industries and **even higher per dollar of output** than certain other sectors, such as construction and manufacturing, even though cruise ships operating from the United States spend only 1/6<sup>th</sup> of their time at U.S. ports.

In 2019, the cruise industry as a whole generated **\$2.6 billion in direct taxes** to U.S. federal, state, and local governments. Additionally, the cruise industry supports more than 436,000 American jobs and, on average, each **\$1 million** in direct cruise industry spending in the United States generates approximately \$102,000 of U.S. federal, state, and local tax revenue.

OVERSIGHT

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise ships operate with little to no oversight, often breaking laws without accountability.”

**THE TRUTH:**

Cruise ships are among the most regulated vessels at sea, **receiving dozens of inspections** each year from multiple regulatory entities. Inspections encompass health and safety practices, waste management, emissions control and almost every other aspect of cruise operations.

The cruise industry has an **exceptional track record**, and performance information is widely available on government websites.



ENVIRONMENT

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise lines are bad environmental actors.”

## THE TRUTH:

Environmental protection is both an operational and a humanitarian imperative for the cruise industry, which has **invested more than \$26 billion** in ships with new technologies and cleaner fuels to help protect the land, air, and seas in which cruises operate.

Cruise ships operating today are **some of the cleanest and most efficient ships in the entire maritime community** (of which cruise ships make up only **1 percent**).

POLLUTION

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Exhaust from cruise ships pollutes the air and presents a health risk to port communities.”

## THE TRUTH:

National and international laws **strictly regulate** ship emissions at sea and in port.

One of the approved technologies that many cruise ships deploy is known as Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS), which **literally cleans exhaust emissions** from ships. Other prominent means of meeting emissions standards include the use of low-sulfur fuel or Liquified Natural Gas, which is **odorless, colorless, non-toxic and non-corrosive**. Increasingly, ships are also being equipped to use **shore-side electricity**, where it is available, which enables cruise ships to “plug-in” in port.

## “SCRUBBERS”

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Scrubbers (EGCS) take pollution from the air and put it in the water.”

## THE TRUTH:

Multiple independent studies have **disproven this claim**, including an official study from the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

EGCS (sometimes referred to as “scrubbers”) were specifically designed to meet the requirements of the International Maritime Organization to **avoid undue harm** to marine environments.

LABOR

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise lines force workers to live and work in harsh conditions with little pay and minimal rest.”

## THE TRUTH:

Cruise lines employ a global, highly satisfied workforce, with **retention rates upwards of 80 percent!** This figure is unheard of in the hospitality industry, where turnover rates hover upwards of 70 percent according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Additionally, cruise lines must adhere to the strict requirements of the **International Labour Organization’s Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)**. Requirements of the MLC address nearly every aspect of life at sea, including hours of rest, wages, annual leave, accommodation, health and safety, and more.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise tourism offers little benefit to local economies.”

## THE TRUTH:

The nearly **1.2 million people** around the world who rely on cruise tourism for their livelihoods would beg to differ!

The cruise industry annually contributes nearly **\$155 billion to the global economy**, according to 2019 data, much of which directly benefits local communities and small- and medium-sized businesses. On average, **cruisers spend approximately \$750 per passenger in port cities** over the course of a typical seven-day cruise. With nearly **30 million** cruise passengers in 2019, these numbers add up quickly.

NON-ESSENTIAL

**WHAT THEY SAY:** “Cruise travel is non-essential and shouldn’t be a priority for governments.”

## THE TRUTH:

In addition to being a vital artery for the global economy, cruise vacations are one of the **best ways to experience the world**, and, for some, cruising may be one of the only vacation choices available. Cruise holidays enable people of all ages, abilities, circumstances, and backgrounds to experience the world in ways that they might not be able to otherwise.

Plus, ample studies have shown that **traveling the world is more than “just” fun**. It is also highly beneficial for physical, mental and emotional health. One might even call it “essential!”

# The More You Know...

- CLIA is the leading voice of the **global cruise community**, representing more than **90%** of worldwide ocean cruise capacity, more than **350** suppliers and industry partners and nearly **55,000** travel agents around the world.
- Cruising is one of the best ways to experience the world and those who have done it become hooked for life—**82% of cruisers say that they will cruise again.**
- The cruise industry creates jobs and supports communities around the world, with **every 24 cruisers yielding one full-time equivalent job.**
- Cruising is a popular vacation choice and **offers something for everyone.** Worldwide, nearly **30 million** people cruised in 2019 to more than **1,000** destinations!