



## **Cruising Delivers Unmatched Value and Experiences**

By Zachary Laks

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) research consistently shows value for money and the ability to visit multiple destinations in one trip as the top reasons cruisers love to cruise.

For Ashley McGinnis, who recently took her eighth cruise with her family of five, there's also the joy of not having to say no to her kids. On the Caribbean cruise, her youngest, Mavie, age 4, rode her first big waterslide, sang karaoke, and took center stage at a kids-only dance party. McGinnis' older children enjoyed rock climbing and a poolside movie, and everyone loaded up on plenty of soft-serve ice cream. All were included in the cruise fare.

"As we were disembarking, my kids were already asking when we could go back, and I'm right there with them," McGinnis says. "There is just no competition for all the value I get on a cruise."

### **The Unmatched Value of Cruising**

It's no exaggeration that vacation dollars go farther on a cruise when compared to a land-based vacation. On ships ranging from small to large, ocean to river, cruise is by nature a value proposition.

Cruise fares feature complimentary dining options ranging from casual buffets to à la carte full-service restaurants, a wide variety of activities from the active to the cerebral to the just plain fun, and swanky evenings with entertainment – such as production shows, piano bars, and dance clubs. Putting all that together on land would be difficult and pricey.

"From strictly a pricing perspective, a cruise will often be less expensive and include more in the base price than a similar experience on land," says cruise expert Chris Grum, founder and owner of Premier Custom Travel. "Land-based vacations usually do not include food, activities, shows, or other amenities, while cruise lines will offer those as inclusions or at a generous discount."

According to a recent report from the Wall Street Journal, even as cruise lines are raising their fares, they are still significantly lower than comparable land-based vacations. The WSJ says the difference has historically been 25% or more.

Designed to fit every budget, cruising appeals to families, couples, solo travelers, and luxury seekers alike. This is reflected in the increased popularity of cruise vacations.

According to CLIA's 2026 State of the Cruise Industry report, In 2024, more than 37.2 million 34.6 million ocean-going cruisers passengers sailed globally in 2025, up from 34.6 million in 2024. The number is expected to rise to more than 42 million passengers in 2029. Repeat intention is strong, with about 90% of cruisers planning to sail again, and 75.6% of people who have not cruised before open to taking their first cruise.

One way cruise companies continue to attract fans is by staying on trend. Each year, innovative new ships launch that rival the best resorts on land, and popular features are added to the existing fleet during regularly scheduled refurbishments.

At the same time, CLIA members are investing in pioneering green technologies and supporting local communities, ensuring that cruising is not only enjoyable and value-packed but also sustainable and responsible travel.

### **Exciting Experiences Onboard and Ashore**

Visits to multiple destinations are part of the cruise value proposition. Unlike land travel, cruises combine adventure, relaxation, and enrichment on ship and on shore in one vacation, without the hassle of coordinating hotels, transfers, or meals in each city.

"Luxury hotels may pamper you, but they can't transport you," says Gary Smith, Owner & CEO of TravelPerks. "Cruises deliver indulgence and exploration in one effortless package."

In ports of call, guests have easy access to beach, cultural, historical, active, and nature-based experiences, whether on your own or on shore excursions.

For beach lovers, cruise lines have invested in private destinations, especially in the Bahamas. These exclusive island getaways add value by offering pristine beaches, water sports, and curated dining experiences only available to cruise guests.

Agency owner Grum notes with excitement that the cruising benefit his clients love the most is simply the convenience of only having to unpack once while visiting multiple destinations.

Cruise vacations are value-added and stress-free travel combined.

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