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What to Do in the Last 7 Days Before You Cruise



Going on a cruise is an exciting adventure, however, a little bit of preparation can make your experience smooth and enjoyable.

While some arrangements, like booking flights, and airport shuttle transfers need to be made well in advance, there are several critical tasks to handle in the final week before your departure. Here's your ultimate 7-day pre-cruise checklist to ensure a stress-free holiday.

1. Get Your Travel Documents in Order

Ensure you have all necessary travel documents, including passports, visas, cruise boarding passes, and any required identification. Make photocopies or take photos of important documents and keep them in a separate bag or with a travel companion.

Tip: Organize everything in a travel wallet to stay prepared. Never pack your documents into your big bags but rather keep them in your handbag.

2. Complete the Online Check-in

If you haven't already, finalize your cruise online check-in. This process includes agreeing to provide required documentation and adhering to cruise line policies.

3. Print Your Boarding Passes and Luggage Tags

Print your cruise boarding passes and luggage tags. If you've bid for a cabin upgrade, your boarding passes will reflect any changes. Don't worry if your cabin changes up until embarkation; porters and check-in agents will assist you.

4. Consider Using Luggage Tag Holders

To protect your luggage tags, use clear cruise luggage tag holders. These reusable tags are available for all major cruise lines and can save you time on every trip. They are secure and highly rated on Amazon. Also, attach some ribbons to your luggage handles to deter others from accidentally taking the wrong bag from the luggage hall.

5. Book Onboard Extras Through the Cruise Planner

Maximize your budget by booking onboard extras through the cruise planner before departure. Enjoy discounts on activities, dining, Wi-Fi plans, excursions, and spa services. Planning ahead not only saves money but also ensures you get the most out of your cruise experience.

6. Make Dining Reservations

Standard dining options are allocated upon your booking i.e. first or second sitting. Enhance your cruise by making specialty dining reservations before boarding. If the ideal time isn't available, secure a booking and discuss preferences with the Maître D onboard. Highlight any celebrations for a memorable dining experience.

7. Print and Organize Travel Reservations

Print and organize all travel reservations, including hotels, transportation, shore excursions, and travel insurance. Having a well-organized record of these reservations is crucial for a hassle-free travel experience. Consider using a travel folder or cruise planner to keep documents easily accessible.

8. Pack Smart

Efficient packing is essential. Create a thorough cruise packing list based on your cruise duration, planned activities, and dress codes. Pack appropriate clothing, chargers, travel adapters, and electronic devices.

9. Prepare Your Medication

Refill any prescription medications needed for your trip. Pack over-the-counter medications and basic first aid supplies to handle non-emergencies, minimizing costly visits to the ship's doctor. Keep all your essential medicine in your handbag!

10. Monitor the Weather

Check the weather forecast for your departure point and destination ports. Adjust your packing list and outfit planning accordingly. Packing a light sweater, hoodie, or rain poncho can ensure comfort in various weather conditions.

11. Notify Your Bank and Credit Card Companies

Prevent transaction issues by notifying your bank and credit card companies about your travel plans. This is especially important if you don't travel often, as large international transactions can be flagged. If you intend to use a card abroad, South African banks require that you advise them and register your cards for international transactions.

12. Prepare Travel Money

Consider obtaining local currency for your destination if needed. Most Caribbean destinations accept US dollars, but it's wise to have small bills for tips, taxi rides, and small purchases. In Mozambique, the South African Rand is also accepted.

13. Arrange Transportation

Confirm transportation to the airport and cruise port, whether it's a shuttle service, train, taxi, but do not take the illegal Uber! Cruising South Africa has been and is the official shuttle operator for MSC Cruises since 1992. <https://cruisinga.co.za> or call 0728740859

14. Notify Emergency Contacts

Share your cruise itinerary and contact information with a trusted friend or family member in case of emergencies.

15. Review Cruise Line Policies and Customs Procedures

Familiarize yourself with the cruise line's policies, including gratuities, onboard spending, and prohibited items. Remember to follow Customs regulations!

16. Verify Your Cruise Itinerary

Review your cruise itinerary and note important activities and shore excursions. Familiarize yourself with the ship's layout and facilities.

17. Secure Your Home

Arrange for someone to collect mail, water plants, and check on your home while you're away.

18. Confirm Pet Sitting Arrangements

Ensure your pet-sitting arrangements are finalized. Communicate specific instructions and provide essential items like food and medications.

19. Last Minute Preparations

Pick up travel-sized toiletries, confirm appointments, finish work projects, and rest up before your cruise. You are going on a holiday – Do not take work with you!

20. Pack an Embarkation Day Bag

Pack a carry-on bag with first-day necessities, medications, and valuables, as checked luggage may take hours to reach your cabin.

More Things to Do Before Departure:

- Put your mail on hold.
- Pay any due bills.
- Check for international phone plans.
- Buy snacks for travel.
- Set up out-of-office notifications.
- Prepare your home by cleaning and preparing a meal for your return.

By following this checklist, you'll be ready to embark on your cruise with confidence and ease, ensuring a memorable and stress-free vacation.