

# The Ultimate Cruise Packing & Prep Checklist

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by Sojournica | [sojournica.com](https://sojournica.com)

*Print this out, save it to your phone, or work through it digitally before every cruise. Check things off as you go, your future self will thank you.*

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## PRE-CRUISE PREP (Do These First)

- Book travel insurance (don't skip this, Seven Corners covers cruise cancellations, medical emergencies, and evacuation. Check cruise plans at <https://sojournica.com/go/cruise-insurance>)
  - Check passport expiry, most cruise destinations require 6 months validity beyond your return date
  - Apply for any required visas for port destinations
  - Register with your government's travel advisory system (e.g. STEP for US travelers)
  - Book pre/post cruise hotel if needed
  - Arrange airport transfers or parking at the port
  - Download your cruise line's app and check in online
  - Print or save boarding passes, e-tickets, and cabin confirmation
  - Set up your onboard account (credit card linked to cabin)
  - Pre-book specialty dining, shore excursions, and spa appointments
  - Notify your bank and credit card company of travel dates
  - Purchase any shore excursion tickets in advance (Viator and Klook often cheaper than ship)
  - Check luggage tag requirements for your cruise line
  - Arrange pet care or house sitter if needed
  - Pack a carry-on bag for embarkation day (your checked luggage may not arrive until evening)
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## DOCUMENTS & MONEY

- Passport (check expiry!)
- Visa documents (printed and digital copies)
- Cruise booking confirmation
- Travel insurance policy documents + emergency helpline number
- Flight confirmation (outbound and return)
- Hotel confirmation (pre/post cruise)

- Shore excursion tickets/vouchers
  - Driver's license or secondary photo ID
  - Credit card(s), at least two, from different networks
  - Some local cash in the currencies of your port destinations
  - Loyalty program cards (cruise line, hotel, airline)
  - Emergency contacts list (written, not just saved in your phone)
  - Digital copies of all documents saved to cloud/email
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## CLOTHING

### Daytime / Casual

- T-shirts and casual tops (1 per day, plan for 2 sea days between ports)
- Shorts or lightweight pants
- Sundresses or casual dresses
- Swimsuit(s), at least two so one can dry
- Swim cover-up or sarong
- Light cardigan or long-sleeve layer (ships are cold inside)
- Comfortable walking shoes for ports
- Sandals or flip-flops for pool deck
- Athletic shoes (if using the gym or doing active excursions)

### Formal / Smart Casual (check your cruise line's dress code)

- Formal outfit(s) for gala nights, dress, suit, or cocktail attire
- Smart casual outfits for specialty dining
- Dress shoes or heeled sandals

### Weather-Specific

- Rain jacket or packable poncho (essential for port days)
- Warm layer for Alaska, Northern Europe, or winter sailings
- Sun hat or cap
- Warm hat and gloves (cold weather itineraries)

### Underwear & Sleepwear

- Underwear (1 per day + a few extra)

- Socks (including no-show socks for walking shoes)
  - Pajamas or sleepwear
  - Comfortable cabin loungewear
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## TOILETRIES & HEALTH

- Sunscreen, SPF 30 or higher (reef-safe for Caribbean/Pacific destinations)
  - After-sun lotion or aloe vera gel
  - Lip balm with SPF
  - Shampoo and conditioner (cruise ships provide basics but often low quality)
  - Body wash or soap
  - Deodorant
  - Moisturizer and facial skincare
  - Makeup and remover
  - Razor and shaving products
  - Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
  - Hairbrush, comb, hair ties
  - Hair dryer (most cabins have one but low wattage, bring your own if needed)
  - Hair styling tools (check voltage compatibility for international trips)
  - Prescription medications, enough for the full trip plus a few extra days
  - Motion sickness remedies (Sea-Bands, Dramamine, ginger chews)
  - Pain reliever (ibuprofen, paracetamol)
  - Antidiarrheal and antacid tablets
  - Antihistamines / allergy medication
  - First aid basics: plasters, antiseptic wipes, blister pads
  - Insect repellent (for tropical port destinations)
  - Feminine hygiene products
  - Contact lenses, solution, and glasses
  - Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes
  - Face masks (optional but handy in crowded ports)
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## TECH & ELECTRONICS

- Phone + charger

- eSIM activated before departure, Saily: <https://saily.tpx.lv/hggJrOGm> | Airalo: <https://airalo.tpx.lv/9gfzbfvO>
  - Portable power bank (charged before embarkation)
  - Universal travel adapter (essential for international cruises)
  - Laptop or tablet + charger (if working or streaming)
  - E-reader or Kindle (long sea days = great reading time)
  - Camera + memory cards + battery charger
  - Underwater camera or GoPro (for snorkeling, beach days)
  - Headphones or earbuds
  - Plug converter/multi-plug (cruise cabins have limited outlets, bring a non-surge power strip)
  - Waterproof phone case or pouch
  - Earbuds for flights and lounges
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## ONBOARD ESSENTIALS

- Insulated water bottle (ship water is fine to drink; refill for free)
  - Day bag or small backpack for port excursions
  - Lanyard for cruise card (keeps it accessible all day)
  - Magnetic hooks (cruise cabin walls are magnetic, doubles your storage)
  - Over-the-door shoe organizer (maximize tiny cabin bathroom space)
  - Reusable tote bag for port shopping
  - Small padlock for lockers (some excursions have storage)
  - Pen (for immigration forms and daily activity sheets)
  - Highlighter (for marking the daily schedule of events)
  - Books, games, or cards for sea days
  - Travel umbrella (compact, fits in your day bag)
  - Snorkeling gear (optional, renting at port is convenient but pricier)
  - Laundry bags (to separate worn clothes from clean)
  - Wrinkle-release spray (for formal night outfits straight from the suitcase)
  - Nightlight (cruise cabins are very dark, helpful for night-time navigation)
  - Earplugs and sleep mask (especially in shared or interior cabins)
  - Ziploc bags in assorted sizes (waterproof organization on beach days)
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## PORT DAY ESSENTIALS (Pack in Your Day Bag)

- Cruise card + photo ID
  - Some local cash + a credit card
  - Travel insurance details + emergency number
  - Phone (fully charged) with offline maps downloaded
  - Water bottle
  - Sunscreen (reapply!)
  - Sunglasses
  - Hat or cap
  - Comfortable walking shoes
  - Light snack
  - Rain poncho
  - Return ship time written down (don't miss departure!)
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## LUGGAGE CHECKLIST

- Main suitcase, packed and within weight limits
  - Carry-on bag, essentials for embarkation day (swimsuit, change of clothes, documents, medications, valuables)
  - Day bag / backpack, for port excursions
  - Luggage tags attached (cruise line provided or your own)
  - Luggage scale (to avoid airline overweight fees)
  - TSA-approved locks on checked bags
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## FINAL CHECK (Day Before Departure)

- Travel insurance confirmed and policy saved (cruise coverage: <https://sojournica.com/go/cruise-insurance>)
- Passport and documents in your carry-on, not checked luggage
- Phone charged and eSIM active, Saily: <https://saily.tpx.lv/hggJrOGm> | Airalo: <https://airalo.tpx.lv/9gfzbfvO>
- Power bank charged
- Medications in carry-on
- Notified someone at home of your itinerary and contact details

- [ ] Set out-of-office messages and paused any subscriptions if needed
  - [ ] Home secured (locks, timers, mail held)
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*Safe travels and smooth seas. For more cruise travel guides, travel insurance tips, and destination inspiration, visit [sojournica.com](https://sojournica.com)*

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