

Airline Reservations

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What's an air/sea cruise?

If you don't live near the port of embarkation, the air-sea package is the easiest, most popular and least expensive way to purchase your cruise. A fly/cruise or air/sea cruise vacation package includes either free or much reduced airfare along with your cruise ticket. These money-saving options are available from most major North American cities and include transfers between the airport and ship, as well as baggage handling.

The choice of airline, routing and flight times are at the discretion of the cruise line. No changes or deviations are permitted once the tickets have been issued. Airline schedules are generally not available from the cruise line until 30 days prior to sailing.

Cruise lines may use space aboard chartered flights or regular scheduled airlines at their discretion.

If you are sailing from Florida and live west of the Rockies, you may have to fly a day

prior to your cruise. This is a result of airline schedules and the difference in time zones, which make it difficult to ensure your arrival in time to board the ship. If this is the case, you will generally receive a complimentary overnight at a first class hotel for the night prior to your cruise. The flight schedule and hotel selection is at the cruise line's discretion. Pack an overnight bag as your luggage may be transferred to the ship ahead of you.

Do I have to buy the cruise line's airfare or can I book my own flights?

If you can find better airfare rates on your own or have frequent flyer points then you can certainly purchase your airfare separately. However, understand that if you have any flight delays on flights arranged apart from the cruise line, then it will be your responsibility (and cost) to meet the ship in the next port of call if necessary. **Be aware that insurance would protect a missed connection or travel delay claim.** If you book with the cruise line, transfers to and from the ship will be provided.

Frequently Asked Questions About Airline Reservations

If I purchase my own airfare, will the cruise line provide transfers to and from the ship?

If you book your own flights, you are generally also responsible for your transportation between the airport and ship. However, most cruise lines are now offering one way and roundtrip transfers to their cruise-only passengers who book their own airfare. Some lines will offer them on a complimentary basis, but most charge about the same as a taxi ride to and from the ship. These transfers include baggage handling to the ship. Your Travel Agent coordinator can make arrangements to add your transfers once you provide the Travel Agent with your confirmed flight schedule and add the cost to your passenger invoice.

Are seat assignments available in advance?

The Travel Agent can help you arrange seat selection. Once your air schedule is received, the Travel Agent will send you a detailed copy of the itinerary, along with the contact numbers for the airlines for you to arrange your seat assignments.

What is an air deviation?

The cruise line will always do its very best to get you to and from your port of embarkation on the most direct and convenient flights out of your airport gateway. However scheduling is at the cruise line's discretion and can be on any airline on any flight schedule that will affordably get you to your port of embarkation before the ship sails.

Some cruise lines offer special custom air programs - Air Deviations - that allow you to

request a specific airline and routing for a nominal fee.

If you are travelling during a peak holiday period such as Christmas, New Year's or Spring Break, this option is highly recommend. Air Deviations are also recommended for those passengers travelling with young children or for those people who may have physical or mental challenges.

The deadline for these requests is usually 60 - 75 days prior to the sailing date or within three days of your cruise reservation if you booked less than 60 - 75 days prior to the sailing date.

Deviations give you a lot of flexibility. You can arrive early, stay extra days at the end of a cruise, or maybe build in a stopover. You can also fly business class or first class. Advance seat selection may also be available - assuming the airline assigns seat at that time. This alone is worth it at times, especially on long flights.

What if I decline an air deviation and then get flights I don't like? Can I cancel my cruise?

If you choose to cancel your cruise you will be subjected to the penalties imposed by the cruise line. These penalties are outlined in their brochures. ***Unfortunately, being unhappy with your flight arrangements is not covered under cancellation insurance.***

Can I change my flights to arrive earlier or leave later?

Sure, if you purchase an air deviation. This is just another example of the flexibility of an air deviation. You may come in up to 2 weeks prior to your cruise departure or stay

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up to 2 weeks after your cruise. This depends on your cruise line. These requests must be made in writing prior to your final payment and the cruise line will add an air deviation charge. If you have booked your own flights, or did not book an air deviation, it may not be possible to change your flight arrangements after the fact. Discuss this with your Travel Agent Coordinator.

Will I get frequent flyer points if I book the cruise line's air?

If you are a Frequent Flyer member of the airline chosen for your cruise, mileage points may be credited to you. Advise the ticket agent at the check-in counter of your frequent flyer number. Remember, mileage credit is subject to the rules and regulations of the air carrier.

Can I use my frequent flyer points to upgrade to First or Business Class?

This may only be possible if you elect to make your own air arrangements. The cruise lines usually book what they call "bulk rate" tickets. These are fares that are not available to the general public and are sold to the cruise lines at a volume discount. Because these fares are usually lower than public fares, the airlines will generally decline frequent flyer or mileage upgrades, but it never hurts to ask. Check with your airline once you have your flight details. Passengers electing to take advantage of air deviation will have their flights within days of their air deviation requests. Non-deviating passengers will have their flight schedules 29 days prior to travel.

Can I use a frequent flyer ticket for one ticket and buy the other from the cruise line and get the same flights for both?

Yes, this may be possible. Book and confirm

the flight you are getting with your frequent flyer points. Advise your Travel Agent Coordinator of the flight details including flight numbers and times and we will submit an air deviation request for those same flights. Remember, there will be an air deviation charge, but it's a small price to pay considering the money you're saving on the free ticket. Passengers do it all the time.

What if I miss the ship because of a weather related or mechanical delay?

If you booked your airfare with the cruise line, the cruise line should make the arrangements to get you to the ship, even if it means flying you to the next port of call and putting you up in a hotel for a night or two. They may or may not choose to reimburse you for the unused portion of the cruise, depending on what you negotiate upon your return. If you booked your own airfare, then it will be your own responsibility in every respect to get to the next port of call. The cruise line will not reimburse you for any expenses you may incur.

Fortunately, insurance bought separately from the cruise line includes travel delay and missed connection features. Read the fine print though; sometimes there are weather related disclaimers. Check with your agent when booking your airfare separately on what your insurance will cover for you.