

WHICH IS BETTER: LAND HOLIDAY VS. CRUISE HOLIDAY



The 4* ships of cruise lines such as P&O and Royal Caribbean are largely considered to be on par with luxury 4* accommodation around the world, but the big question is - which is better?

Accommodation that have been awarded a 4* rating must, according to Visit Scotland, perform to an 'excellent standard', while 5* accommodation must go above and beyond, performing to an 'exceptional standard'.

Anyone who has cruised before will know that cruises are, without a doubt, an exceptional way to travel, which begs the question - are the accommodations, facilities, and services on board 4* cruises more comparable to opulent 5* land holidays? Let's take a look;

Accommodation

One area where cruise ships really stands out above 4* land accommodation is in the on board staterooms and suites.

Undoubtedly, some cabins, especially standard interior and exterior cabins, will be much smaller than in hotels, but what we should be focusing on are the in-room amenities, and how they compare to hotels and guest accommodation on land.

4* hotels on land must offer either an in-room minibar, or 24 hour drinks room service.

On board a 4* ship, passengers often have the choice of both! On P&O and Royal Caribbean ships, 24-hour room service is available to all passengers and all balcony and suite rooms offer a minibar.

Most standard staterooms will also include a small fridge, well stocked with a range of soft drinks, beers, wines, and spirits.

A facility that is available to all passengers on board P&O and Royal Caribbean ships, regardless of stateroom level, is a private, en-suite bathroom complete with toilet, shower, basin, complimentary toiletries, and robe and slippers for in-room relaxation.

At 4* land accommodation around the world, robes and slippers need only be available on demand to warrant such a rating, while guest accommodation such as B&Bs only need to provide private bathrooms for 50 percent of their rooms, according to Visit England.

En-suite facilities in all rooms are only required for establishments striving for 5* status. In terms of accommodation, it certainly seems that cruising has the edge over land holidays.

Public Areas

The AA reports that 4* hotels 'usually' include well-appointed public areas. However, there is no requirement for hotels to do so in order to earn a 4* rating. On board P&O and Royal Caribbean cruise ships, you'll find stunning, well designed public areas around every corner!

Royal Caribbean's Brilliance of the Seas, one of the Radiance Class ships designed to maximise

public space, boast the Colony Club, the Pacifica Theatre, Singapore Sling's, the library, the Jakarta Lounge, the Bombay Billiards Club, and the Casino Royale, amongst many other public spaces to have fun or chill out.

On P&O's Oceana, passengers will find the Yacht & Compass, the Starlights Lounge, Le Club, Footlights Theatre, and the al fresco Riviera Bar, along with many other places to socialise with friends, family, or other passengers.

For travellers who hate being confined to their rooms whilst on holiday, and much prefer to get out and about, cruising arguably offers much more freedom.

Restaurants

Hotels and other accommodation must offer either a breakfast buffet or room service breakfast, along with one a la carte dining room to be worthy of a prestigious 4* rating.

4* cruise ships; however, tend to offer more dining options that you can sensibly explore during a week long voyage!

All P&O and Royal Caribbean cruise ships offer an informal buffet-style restaurant, open for continental and cooked breakfasts, lunch, afternoon tea, and dinner.

Hot and cold appetisers, international main dishes, desserts, fruits, and cheeses are always on the menu. However, many passengers opt to eat in one of the main dining rooms, in the specialty restaurants, or in the al fresco cafes when the weather permits.

The main a la carte dining room (or rooms - some ships offer alternative dining rooms for suite guests or frequent passengers) offers a different menu each day, usually with dedicated options for children, or for those wanting lighter fare.

Specialty restaurants are, quite often, associated with well-known celebrity chefs, such as Marco Pierre White, Atul Kochar and Olly Smith, while cafes serve up classic favourites.

Of course, there's also 24-hour room service, too. Looking for a foodie holiday? Cruise ships win, hands down!

Of course, taking a holiday in a 4* hotel or B&B is a wonderful experience, but, while many compare this sort of getaway with a voyage on a 4* cruise ship; we really don't think the two are comparable.

In looking at accommodation, public spaces, and restaurants alone, there is a very definite and significant difference between the services provided on land, and those at sea.

While you may be travelling on a 4* liner, there is undeniably a 5* service throughout, allowing passengers to enjoy a truly luxurious holiday, complete with picturesque views, exciting ports of calls, and memories to last a lifetime.

Perhaps the greatest difference of all however, is that when enjoying a land based holiday, you may have a spectacular view when opening the curtains each morning.

You may pull the curtains back to an incredible view but a cruise holiday can offer you all of the above and an even better view! Plus you'll wake up each day to a brand new sight; there really is no room for boredom or ordinary on a cruise, they simply don't exist on board.

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