

# CRUISING NOT AS SAFE AS IT MAY APPEAR



The belief that cruising the world's oceans and seas is a way of escaping the hustle and bustle of the cities and thus avoiding crime situations has been in the heads of travellers for a long time. Recent statistics and new evidence suggest that this attitude may change in years to come. Perhaps taking to the open water is not as safe as it seems to be. As the \$30 billion industry continues to gather pace, so does the amount of suspicious goings-on on board.

In the past, the dangers and statistics linked to crime on board cruise ships were relatively unknown. However, the FBI has taken it upon itself to discover the truth behind any criminal activity on cruise liners. The surveys began in 1999 and have, naturally, continued until today. In a 5-month period shortly after the commencement of FBI activity, 207 possible crimes were reported including 72 possibly serious crimes and 41 reports of some form of sexual assault. Such reports came from a total of 200 vessels. During the same period, 4 people were reported missing and have still never been found. Some maintain, quite rightly, that as 10 million US citizens take to the water every year, criminal activity is bound to occur and it is no more dangerous than staying on land.

Nevertheless, the counter argument is also valid. Of all the above-mentioned crimes, only 16% of them have ever seen an arrest or any kind of serious police involvement. The chances of an assailant being tried convicted or even arrested have been described in some quarters as next to nothing. Although the situation has changed in recent years the authorities still tend to consider crime less serious if it takes place away from land. Critics have pointed this out as the main problem and have urged persons responsible on the ships to install more surveillance cameras and exercise more caution. All of this does not mean that one is unable to enjoy a cruise holiday in safety, yet just that one should be aware that crime is sometimes taken away from the shore and sometimes tolerated to a greater extent.

Date: 2007-10-23

Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/cruising-not-as-safe-as-it-may-appear-news585>