

CRUISE SHIPS READY FOR FAMILIES



After the trends in the U.S. showed that more families go on cruises than ever before also European families discover the floating hotels as a perfect holiday destination. This year the cruise holiday bookings in the UK made by families increased by 31%. The rise in demand for family holidays on board made cruise operators react rapidly and most cruise lines today have a range of family friendly features on board.

Many mega liners can challenge the worlds greatest all inclusive resorts. One of the most important arguments is that you can visit multiple ports of call and only have to unpack once and while you are traveling, the whole family can enjoy the activities onboard. Everybody knows that sometimes there is nothing worse than boring car journeys to get from one destination to the next.

To make cruising more attractive for families and especially for kids the cruise lines invented lots of new attractions as well as special offers. Costa Cruise Line, MSC Cruises and Crystal Cruises are offering free cruises for kids this year on selected routes when traveling together with two paying adults. According to the demand many cruise lines increased the proportion of family berths on board of their ships and Carnival Splendor has 200 interconnecting staterooms which are perfect for families. Disney Cruise Line which is very well known for family cruises styled their vessels with families in mind right from the beginning and so the staterooms are larger than average.

For Fun

RCI, Crystal Cruises and NCL installed new popular technology like Play Station 2, Nintendo Wii, Guitar Hero, Dance Dance Revolution mats and Xbox in their public rooms to fulfill the youngster's desires. Both, RCI's "Independences of the Seas" and the "Carnival Splendor" have an onboard water park.

Carnival Cruise Lines offers special shore excursions to give older kids the possibility to explore the destinations together as a group.

On its private island NCL organizes treasure hunts and sand castle competitions for the kids.

For Education

An innovation on all RCI ships is the Adventure Theater which has been developed by Camp Broadway in NYC to give kids an insight into the world of performing arts. The program includes fundamentals of acting, vocalization and dance techniques.

Celebrity Cruises worked together with LeapFrog SchoolHouse™ and created different educational programs which include topics like sports, music and wildlife and additionally include activities that teach the children about the history and culture for example of Mexico or the Caribbean reflecting the line's itineraries.

Holland America Line invented new demonstration-kitchens on all its ships. The kitchens are equipped with overhead plasma video screens providing tips for food preparation. The food children learn to prepare always depends on their age. NCL also offers cooking classes on its ships.

Princess Cruises offers a program called "Save our Seas" created by the California Coastal Commission and the Center for Marine Conservation.

For Loyalty

RCI introduced its new "Youth Loyalty Program" this summer. Like the adults, kids can now also enjoy Crown & Anchor Society repeat passenger benefits. Repeaters receive a special Youth Ultimate Value Booklet including lots of games and discounts for onboard amenities such as airbrush tattoos or ice cream.

For Parents

Today many cruise lines offer a baby sitting service or kids clubs which might include freshly baked cookies at bed time or just time for the kids to play or relax while the parents have some time for themselves to enjoy the journey.

What most of the families said about cruising as a family holiday is that there is something for everyone and the best is when they all meet up again at the end of the day and all have some exciting experiences to share.

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