

Top 20 Must-Haves **When Going On A Cruise**

Congratulations! You're going on a cruise!! Whether you are a first-time cruiser or a pro (like me!), this list is meant to help make your trip as convenient and enjoyable as possible. As a Platinum Level cruiser on Carnival Cruise Lines, I assure you these ideas will absolutely save you hassle and aggravation on your next trip!

Ready? Let's go!

1. **Power Strip** — Most cruise cabins only have 1 outlet which means you and anyone else in your cabin will be fighting over the single plug. By packing a power strip, you'll easily be able to charge multiple items at once and can even use a hair dryer or hair straightener at the same time.
2. **Travel Cup/Mug With Lid** — First of all, if you are a coffee drinker, this is a MUST. The mugs on the ships are tiny and unless you want to camp out next to the coffee machine, you'll want a larger travel mug with you. Additionally, you can use this throughout the day for juice, tea, etc, so it not only comes in handy for coffee in the AM —you'll be able to use it all day long.
3. **Night Light** — A small night light (or flash light) will absolutely come in handy. You'll find a small light helpful no matter what type of room you have booked, but those inside cabins (no window) are PITCH BLACK once you turn out the light so be sure to bring something to help navigate your way to the bathroom in the middle of the night.



4. **Air Freshener/Poop Spray** — Did I just say “poop”? I sure did! You might not want to think about it, but living in close quarters with others can sometimes prove to be a little awkward. Having a small air freshener or using the “spray before you go” poop spray will help prevent some smelly situations and help put everyone at ease.
5. **Downy Wrinkle Release Spray** — While we are on the topic of sprays, grab a travel-sized bottle of Downy’s Wrinkle Release Spray. Clothing irons and clothing steamers are NOT allowed on the cruise ship. **Most cruise ships provide an iron in designated laundry areas on the ship if you need to use one—you just can’t bring your own and if you do, they will confiscate it during the bag-scan before your luggage is delivered to your room. The wrinkle release spray will work pretty well on cotton/stretchy fabrics but if you have something a little more temperamental than you might need to use the iron that they provide or ask them to professionally press it for you once on board (for a fee, of course).
6. **Hat** — Whether it’s a baseball cap, sunhat, or otherwise, you’ll find that a hat comes in very handy out on deck. Even when the weather is perfect, there will be a breeze from the movement of the ship. Not to mention it helps block the sun from your eyes! If it’s really windy, you’ll know where the saying “hold on to your hat” came from!
7. **Sweater/Sweatshirt/Wrap** — Speaking of breezes, the slight wind out on deck at night can feel a little chilly after soaking up the sun all day. Additionally, the dining room and show lounges are positively FREEZING with air conditioning cranked up on high! You’ll definitely want to have something for those occasions (ie: Every night)!
8. **Backpack/Tote Bag** — You’ll get many uses out of this, depending on how you plan it! You’ll want a small bag to take on the ship with you the 1st day you board. Since luggage won’t be delivered to your room for a few hours, be sure to stash your medicines, sunscreen, and any other essentials (kids’ swimsuits, etc) that will be needed during those first few hours onboard in the bag. ADDITIONALLY, if you plan properly, this same bag can be used as a pool bag/shore excursion bag for when you get off the ship in the various ports. I’m a big fan of getting multiple uses out of

everything I pack, so be sure to choose your bag wisely!

9. **Water Shoes** — If you do any water excursions in the various ports, you'll be happiest if you pack water shoes instead of going in the ocean in your bare feet. Some of the places you snorkel or visit the beach will be gorgeous but also might have coral, rocks, or spikey ocean life scattered all over the ocean floor (I ran into this issue in Grand Turk, once). Water shoes are small/easy enough to bring with you and are worth it!
10. **Toiletry Organizer/Bag** (or over the door shoe organizer)— You will have limited space in your cabin bathroom. If you are sharing the room with multiple people this problem will only be magnified!! By using a hanging toiletry bag (or shoe organizer) you'll have plenty of space for everyone to store their items without having to schlep their whole suitcase back and forth to the bathroom every time they shower.
11. **Antibacterial Wipes** — I'm a firm believer the room stewards do a pretty good job of cleaning the rooms. HOWEVER, I'd rather pack some disposable wipes and do a quick wipe-down of the remote and door handles, etc, myself to assure that I don't get sick from someone who stayed in the room before me. As you have probably heard stories of, contagious illnesses will easily spread on a cruise ship if given the chance. Don't let your cabin be ground zero.
12. **Hand Sanitizer** — I'm going to assume most people bring hand sanitizer on vacation with them, but if not, add it to your list. We use it before we eat our meals and certainly when we are on shore excursions. (Again, think about all the people who do these tours every single day.). I'm definitely NOT a germ-a-phobe but I'm also aware that mixing thousands of people in touristy activities in the hot sun (most days) will only be a breeding ground for germs. Just be smart. Use the sanitizer. Better to be safe than sick on your cruise.

13. **Sunscreen/Hand Lotion/Chapstick** — Sunscreen may seem obvious (duh!) but it often gets forgotten! They will charge you a premium price for it on the ship so be sure to bring it with you! That said, if you're going to be in the sun and the wind all week, take care of your skin and your lips! Don't forget that lips can sunburn as well! I always pack a chapstick that includes SPF!
14. **Pen/Pencil/Sticky Notes** — You'll want to have something to write with and something to write on. This comes in handy for leaving notes for other folks you share a cabin with or even for your room steward. Additionally, you might want to highlight or circle items on the daily cruise agenda that is left in your room each night. The daily agenda shows the locations/times for the various activities for the following day. Having a way to highlight activities you are interested in will keep you organized and on track to have a great day!
15. **Pop Up Hamper** — The cabins are small and keeping them picked up will be a MUST so that you don't feel like the walls are closing in on you. Stash a pop-up hamper in the closet and toss your (dry!) dirty clothes in there. Then, when it's time to pack to go home, I simply move the full hamper directly into my suitcase, add my toiletries, and zip the suitcase closed. Ta-da! When I get home, my dirty clothes are already separated and can go straight to the laundry room.
16. **Long-Distance Walkie Talkies** — These are especially helpful for families with kids. Either your kids aren't old enough to have cell phones or if they are, you certainly aren't going to want to pay the international roaming fees. Having a couple walkie talkies is extremely helpful (albeit some folks might feel they are not necessary) to keep tabs on where everyone is on the ship.
17. **Portable Charger** — If you plan on using your phone as your camera, or if you are bringing a GoPro, be sure to pack a portable charger and keep it charged before your shore excursions. You don't want to run out of battery when that most perfect photo-op comes along!

18. **Lanyards** — A lanyard is a fantastic way to attach your room key and keep it with you on the ship. Attach the card to the lanyard and wear it around your neck! Easy peasy!

19. **Ziploc Bags (Various Sizes)** — I always pack a handful of Ziploc bags (various sizes) in our suitcase. At the end of your trip, you'll be bringing home wet swimsuits or other wet clothing and it's a great way to contain them. Additionally, remember those water shoes you wore on the shore excursions? They will have sand in them and it's best to put them inside a Ziplock for the trip home or else everything in your suitcase will have sand in it.

20. **Strong Magnets/Command Hooks/or Suction Cup Hooks** — I'm on the fence about these items which is why I saved it for last on the "must haves" list. I have not had the best of luck with magnets, to be honest. However, others SWEAR by them so I included them on the list. The bottom line is that space is very limited in a cruise cabin (these are not your typical hotel rooms—they are tiny in comparison). So, keeping them tidy is key. Hooks of any kind will come in handy for hanging up wet bathing suits, wet washcloths, or even that wrap/sweater I urged you to bring with you. The trick is that some of the cabin walls are textured so things don't always stick the best. Also, some of the cabin walls are not magnetic, so they don't stick. I *HAVE* had luck sticking a strong magnet on the inside of the bathroom door to hang up my washcloth after washing my face at night, so I can at least give a thumbs up to that.

So there you have it!

A list of the top 20 things that will most CERTAINLY make your life easier on a cruise!

Will you survive without these items? Probably not. Death is certain....Just kidding!
However, will your cruise be more enjoyable, convenient, and far less of a hassle WITH these suggestions? As a Platinum level cruiser I'm going to say Abso-Stinkin-Lutely YES!

If you have any questions or have a suggestion to add to the list, please shoot me a note at info@PicklesAndPunch.com or message/DM on Facebook or Instagram.

Thanks for following along! Happy Cruisin'!
~Pickles and Punch

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