



PRINTABLE CRUISE CHECKLIST + PLANNER

Cruise Vacation Prep Kit

A practical cruise planning guide with packing pages, embarkation reminders, port day notes, and advisor-style tips that help first-time and repeat cruisers feel more prepared.

Quick Checklist

- ☐ Documents ready
- ☐ Embarkation bag packed
- ☐ Dining/app reviewed
- ☐ Port day notes started

INSIDER TIPS EDITION

Perfect for Caribbean, Bahamas, Mexico & warm-weather cruises



Cruise Smart Start

Cruises are wonderfully easy once you are onboard, but embarkation day goes much better when your documents, app, and carry-on bag are handled before you reach the terminal.

Heather's Tip: Your checked luggage disappears for a while

The bag you hand to the porter may not arrive at your stateroom for hours. Keep medication, IDs, swimsuits, chargers, valuables, and anything you need before dinner in your embarkation carry-on.

BEFORE EMBARKATION DAY

- ☐ Complete online check-in
- ☐ Download cruise line app
- ☐ Confirm required travel documents
- ☐ Review drink/Wi-Fi packages
- ☐ Pack medications in carry-on
- ☐ Choose arrival/boarding time
- ☐ Print or save luggage tags
- ☐ Review dining reservations
- ☐ Reserve shows if needed
- ☐ Add emergency contact info

Heather's Tip: The cruise app is not optional anymore

Most cruise lines use the app for check-in, dining, daily schedules, chat, muster drill, account review, and notifications. Download it at home while your Wi-Fi is reliable.

Cabin setup tricks

- ☐ Use packing cubes as drawer organizers
- ☐ Use a laundry bag from day one
- ☐ Take a photo of cabin number
- ☐ Bring a non-surge power strip if cruise line allows
- ☐ Bring a small nightlight
- ☐ Keep sea pass/cards in one spot
- ☐ Use magnetic hooks only if allowed and walls are magnetic
- ☐ Unpack before sailaway if possible



Cruise Packing Checklist

Cruise packing is about layers, smart shoes, and not putting the important stuff in the wrong bag.

Clothing

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Day outfits | ☐ Dinner outfits |
| ☐ Formal/theme night outfit if applicable | ☐ Swimsuits - at least 2 |
| ☐ Cover-up | ☐ Light sweater for dining rooms |
| ☐ Sleepwear | ☐ Undergarments |
| ☐ Workout clothes | ☐ Rain jacket/poncho |

Shoes + accessories

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Comfortable walking shoes | ☐ Sandals/flip-flops |
| ☐ Dress shoes if needed | ☐ Water shoes for rocky beaches |
| ☐ Hat | ☐ Sunglasses |
| ☐ Small crossbody bag | ☐ Beach tote |
| ☐ Lanyard or card holder | ☐ Laundry bag |

Heather's Tip: Dining rooms can be chilly

Even on a tropical cruise, indoor dining rooms and theaters can feel cold. A light sweater or wrap earns its suitcase space.

Cruise-specific extras

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Passport/ID | ☐ Cruise luggage tags |
| ☐ Medication in carry-on | ☐ Seasickness remedies |
| ☐ Non-surge outlet extender if allowed | ☐ Magnetic hooks if allowed |
| ☐ Towel clips | ☐ Waterproof phone pouch |
| ☐ Small bills for tips | ☐ Reusable water bottle |



Embarkation Day Game Plan

Embarkation day has a lot of moving parts. Think of it as airport day plus hotel check-in plus vacation excitement.

Heather's Tip: Eat, explore, then settle in

After boarding, grab lunch, complete muster requirements, learn the ship layout, and then check whether cabins are open. Do not camp by the cabin hallway too early if the crew is still turning rooms.

Embarkation carry-on bag

- ☐ Passport/ID/birth certificate if applicable
- ☐ Credit card/cash
- ☐ Phone charger/power bank
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Kids items if needed
- ☐ Cruise documents
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Swimsuit/change of clothes
- ☐ Sunglasses/hat
- ☐ Valuables/jewelry

Heather's Tip: Take photos before you need them

Snap photos of parking location, luggage tags, cabin number, kids club hours, and the daily schedule. Future-you will be weirdly grateful.

Timing	Heather's move
Before terminal	Have documents out, not buried in a suitcase.
Right after boarding	Finish muster/check-in tasks in the app.
Before sailaway	Confirm dining time and first-night plans.
Before bed	Check tomorrow's port or sea day schedule.



Port Day Planner

Port days are the part of cruising where timing matters most. The ship will not wait for private tour guests who are late.

Heather's Tip: Ship time wins

Always confirm whether the port follows ship time or local time. Set your phone manually if needed so you do not accidentally trust the wrong clock.

Port day bag

- ☐ Ship card
- ☐ Excursion tickets/screenshots
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Photo ID if required
- ☐ Cash/credit card
- ☐ Hat/sunglasses
- ☐ Towel if taking one ashore
- ☐ Waterproof pouch

Heather's Tip: Private excursions need a buffer

Private tours can be wonderful, but build in plenty of time to get back. I like a comfortable return buffer, not a sprint-down-the-pier situation.

PORT NOTES

Port	Plan	Back-on-board time



Sea Day + Onboard Spending Tips

Sea days are where people either relax beautifully or accidentally spend half the day deciding what to do.

Heather's Tip: Check the planner the night before

Popular activities, brunch spots, trivia, shows, spa specials, and fitness classes can fill or conflict. A two-minute look the night before makes the day feel easier.

Sea day ideas

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Pool/deck time | ☐ Specialty coffee |
| ☐ Trivia/game show | ☐ Spa thermal suite |
| ☐ Fitness class | ☐ Casino budget if desired |
| ☐ Shopping or photos | ☐ Quiet reading spot |
| ☐ Afternoon nap | ☐ Evening show |

Heather's Tip: Watch the onboard account

Check your onboard account every day or two in the app. It is much easier to fix a mistaken charge onboard than after you are home doing laundry and questioning your choices.

Budget reminders

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Gratuities included or added? | ☐ Drink package value makes sense? |
| ☐ Specialty dining charges | ☐ Wi-Fi plan |
| ☐ Excursion balance | ☐ Photo package |
| ☐ Casino budget | ☐ Souvenirs |
| ☐ Crew tips | ☐ Transportation after cruise |



Debarkation Without the Drama

The end of a cruise is not glamorous, but it can be smooth if you plan your last night carefully.

Heather's Tip: Keep clothes for the morning

If you put your luggage out the night before, keep an outfit, shoes, toiletries, medication, documents, and phone charger with you. Yes, people really do forget pants. Travel keeps us humble.

Last night checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Review final onboard account | ☐ Pack checked luggage if using luggage pickup |
| ☐ Keep morning outfit out | ☐ Keep IDs/documents with you |
| ☐ Settle gratuity/cash tips | ☐ Check debarkation luggage tags/time |
| ☐ Confirm transportation | ☐ Set alarm |
| ☐ Pack chargers after charging | ☐ Look under bed/in safe |

Heather's Tip: Do not book too-early flights

Cruise arrival time is not the same as being off the ship, through customs, in a rideshare, and at the airport. Give yourself breathing room.

POST-CRUISE NOTES



Before You Go...

Use this page as your final sweep before you close the suitcase, lock the door, and head toward vacation mode.

Heather's Tip: The travel advisor shortcut

If you are overwhelmed by resort choices, cruise cabin categories, family logistics, transfers, insurance, or the tiny details that make travel smoother, that is exactly where a travel advisor can help. Keep this kit as your prep tool - and when you want the whole trip handled with care, reach out to Dream Destinations by Heather & Joe.

LAST-MINUTE SWEEP

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ IDs/passports packed in personal bag | ☐ Medication packed in carry-on |
| ☐ Chargers and power bank packed | ☐ Household trash handled |
| ☐ Thermostat set | ☐ Doors/windows locked |
| ☐ Travel documents saved offline | ☐ Payment cards and some cash packed |
| ☐ Out-of-office replies set | ☐ Rides/transfers confirmed |

NOTES
