



CRUISING FOR OVER 50'S

Set sail for Papua New Guinea

Spend less cruising

Top tips for first-timers

The magic of a short cruise

citro

citro

Managing editor

Bronwyn Mandile

Art director

Mara Cheshire

Partnerships manager

Joel Wilson

Contributing writers

Leonie Jarrett, Andrew Jarrett,
Nicole Pedersen-McKinnon,
Alana House, Bron Maxabella,
Carolyn Tate

Content production

Maddie Southall
Rob-Yna Peña-Lopez

Marketing & growth

Rachel Lim
Grace Chen
Nicolas Rivarola
Rebecca La Rose

Operations

Megan Burgess
Rachel Monahan

Product and engineering

Varun Sehgal, Dennis Leon, Dave
Currie, Navin Khadka, Jono Yan,
Jason Rudling, Lauren Mulholland,
Remi Chautemps

Head of design

Pin Athwal

Head of Legal & Compliance

Ralph Timpani

Managing director

Ash Frenken

Citro is published by Citrus Innovations Pty
Ltd, 50 Bridge Street, Sydney, NSW 2000
ABN 25 667 285 654

Citro is printed by Ive, 81 Derby St,
Silverwater, NSW 2128
© 2024 All rights reserved

Citro acknowledges the Traditional Owners
of Country throughout Australia and pay
our respects to Elders past and present.

joincitro.com.au
Phone 1300 869 596

All aboard!

Cruising is hot right now. A whopping 1.24 million Aussies set sail last year and that number is only set to grow in 2024.

So why might we want to join them?

Firstly, a cruise offers the most comfortable way to travel you could wish for. You're basically heading off to a variety of destinations with your bed, shower and a giant swimming pool packed in your bag. I don't know about you, but the older I get the more appealing that sounds...

Next, the value for money is exceptional. Once you pay for your cruise, you've also paid for your accommodation, meals, many drinks and most entertainment. It makes budgeting for a holiday a breeze.

Plus, you simply can't beat the convenience of someone else sorting out all the logistics of travel for you. You unpack once but still get to experience a variety of destinations, amenities and activities – basically whatever floats your own boat.

To top it all off, there's the ability to choose-your-own-adventure once you're on board. You can be as social or hermit-like as you fancy; get off at many ports or none; see entertaining shows or simply read your book; dine in style each evening or get a tasty sandwich to go. It's completely up to you how you cruise and the only pressing question you have to answer each day is "what do I feel like doing right now?"

Whether you've never been on a cruise before or you're a seasoned cruiser deciding where to go next, this guide is for you. We've tailor-made it for older travellers who still want to experience the world... just with all the added value, comfort and convenience only a cruise ship can offer.

Happy cruising from all of us at Citro.

Bron



Bronwyn Mandile
Managing Editor, Citro

Contents

He said, she said: was a cruise to Papua New Guinea smooth sailing for both husband & wife? 4

Leonie and Andrew are well-seasoned cruisers, but a trip to PNG still felt daunting. Lucky for them they soon found out it was anything but.



Careful: a short cruise might lead to a serious addiction 11

How a quick getaway on board a luxury cruiser turned into a lifetime of voyages for Leonie.

Cruise curious? Top tips for first-timers 17

Don't miss these key pointers to prepare for a smooth first (or even second or third) sailing.

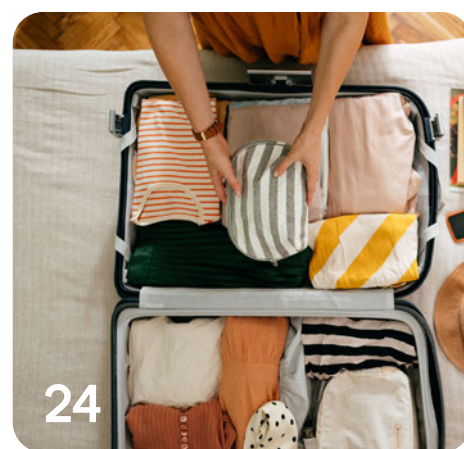


How to spend less on a cruise than you would at home 20

The hip-pocket hacks that seasoned sailors use to save money while they cruise.

Pack smart: everything you need 24

From essential gear to clever shortcuts, we've got you covered for the perfect adventure at sea.



Should you go on a cruise to nowhere? 26

A ship that doesn't go anywhere may sound strange but it's a really affordable way to experience the hospitality of cruising for yourself.

Keep calm & cruise on: advice for more mature cruisers 31

Cruising suits mature travellers so well: no luggage to schlep and you know exactly what you're coming home to each night.



He said, she said

Was a cruise to Papua New Guinea smooth sailing for both husband & wife?



Andrew and Leonie at
Conflict Islands with the Pacific
Encounter in the background

Leonie and Andrew are well-seasoned cruisers, but a trip to PNG still felt daunting. Lucky for them they soon found out it was anything but.



Our beautiful balcony cabin on the Pacific Encounter

By Leonie Jarrett and Andrew Jarrett

"It's time to visit the neighbours," Andrew said to his wife, Leonie. "It's been 56 years and we know nothing about them."

Andrew had discovered the P&O Australia (now Carnival Cruises) "New Guinea Island Encounter" cruise on the Pacific Encounter and he was immediately all-in.

The cruise left from and returned to Brisbane in August – a quick trip overseas with NO long haul flight, NO time zone change, NO jet lag and the joy of unpacking just once? Sign Leonie up!

Why Papua New Guinea?

Andrew

Having travelled around the world, I felt that it really was time to visit our nearest neighbour. Prior to our visit,

apart from the Kokoda trail in WWII, there probably wasn't a lot I could tell you about PNG. So I was excited to learn more - and learn we did!

The cruise was 10 days in total, departing from Brisbane with one day port stops in each of Alotau (Milne Bay), Kiriwina Island, Rabaul and the Conflict Islands before returning back to Brisbane.

Leonie

Pretty simple – we'd never been to Papua New Guinea, it was an easy experience as the cruise left and returned to Brisbane and the cruise seemed great value.

If I'm honest, I thought the ports might be a bit boring but I was keen to enjoy the warm weather (home in Melbourne in August is pretty grim!) and all the amenities of a floating resort.

What were your overall impressions of the cruise?

Andrew

I really enjoyed this cruise. It was a super easy experience – a door-to-door overseas trip for us without the hassle of international air travel. The sea days were very relaxing and the port days were eye-opening and memorable to say the least.

The passenger list was 95% Australian, with a range of passenger types from groups of friends to young couples, older couples, families and multi-generational groups. I felt very relaxed and comfortable onboard.

As Pacific Encounter is a larger ship, with around 2,900 passengers, there was a wide range of included food options, which definitely added to our enjoyment. Having travelled most recently on some smaller ships, we really appreciated the extra choice

in dining options that this cruise provided. I also found the onboard entertainment to be significantly better than what we've experienced on smaller ships.

Leonie

I was a bit concerned about cruising the South Pacific as it was a pretty rough voyage when we were on a different cruise there in 2017. I needn't have worried as it was only a bit bumpy the first night. I put on my sea wristbands and took a Kwells tablet (both preventative) and I was fine. I woke up to the swell a few times overnight but I was gently "rocked" back to sleep. When I woke up the next morning, the swell had stopped and I was fine from then on.

I was also a bit nervous about cruising on such a big ship. I hadn't been on one since the pandemic, but again, I needn't have worried. There was hand sanitizer everywhere and passengers and crew were diligently using it.

A big ship has pluses and minuses. The biggest minus for me was the queueing. This was a particular issue waiting for a tender boat back from Kiriwina Island and the Conflict Islands.

The pluses made up for any negatives though. Think top quality shows, a wide range of dining options, heaps of public spaces and bars, lots of onboard activities and several pool areas to choose from. There was even an adults-only pool area which is great when you're well-past the young kid stage like we are. There was also the

P8O Edge Adventure Park, if you want adventure activities like zip lining or slackline surfing (no thank you!).

Why did you choose P&O?

Andrew

We have cruised with P&O before and were impressed, so when the dates, destination and price all lined up, I had no hesitation booking again. P&O represent such excellent value for money.

I was keen to visit PNG and felt that a cruise was the best way for us to sample a country so different from Australia yet stay within the safety net provided by the cruise experience. Having now been there, this was 100% the right decision for us. I would not want to visit PNG independently.



The main pool and big screen

"A cruise was the best way for us to sample a country so different from Australia."

Leonie

We live in Melbourne so the only extra things we had to pay for outside of the cruise was our airport transfers and Melbourne-Brisbane return flights. Everything else we needed was included in the P&O fare – including transport between ports, our lovely cabin which was serviced twice daily, food and entertainment.

"The trip promised a bit of everything."

On other cruises in other parts of the world, we have often bought additional food and drinks, especially during the day when we are visiting the port. This was not the case in PNG – there was nowhere to eat or drink away from the ship, making this cruise even better value for money.

What were your overall impressions of the destinations visited?

Andrew

The trip promised a bit of everything but, in fact, delivered so much more. So many special moments and memorable experiences were crammed into just 4 days in PNG and 10 days overall. It forced me to step outside my comfort zone at times and deeply ponder both PNG's past and its future.

The unspoilt, natural eco-paradise of the Conflict Islands excelled beyond expectations – this was the very essence of a tropical paradise. Sugar fine white sand, crystal clear water with fringing coral reefs and swaying coconut trees. It was the highlight of our cruise and we have not been anywhere more beautiful in the South Pacific.



Dressed up in the Theatre for Gatsby night!



Locals in their dugout canoes at Kiriwina Island

At the other end of the spectrum, I was shocked at the poverty and primitive living conditions of the local populations in Alotau, Kiriwina Island and Rabaul.

In the case of the Kiriwina Islands, the locals have no electricity (so no refrigeration) or running water. They walk barefoot in tiny villages, living off what they can grow in their gardens or catch from the sea. Yet, time and time again, the locals would say how happy



Having a ride in a dugout canoe, Kiriwina Island

and content they were with their lives.

A memory that will stay with me forever was a group of local children wearing traditional grass skirts and face paint happily singing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" only to Leonie and I – they wanted nothing from us other than just to please us and see us clap for them.

It was a privilege to get an insight into the locals' lives yet I was also saddened that our nearest neighbours are living in such poverty.

I was also deeply shocked by the tragic and seemingly forgotten wartime history particularly of Milne Bay and Rabaul. The massacres of Australian soldiers and civilians in the Montevideo Maru sinking and at the Tol Plantation are dark and tragic chapters in Australian history that we should all know more about. The cruise definitely opened my eyes to more of Australia's wartime history.

Leonie

I'm pleased to report that the ports were not boring as I'd expected – in fact, they were interesting, thought-provoking and, at times, shocking. They were also naturally beautiful.

We realised when we got to PNG that we knew little or nothing about this beautiful country and we were both shocked at the poverty and the subsistence living.

"The ports were interesting, thought-provoking and... naturally beautiful."

I was moved by the children, moved by the military history and loss of life and moved by the natural beauty. So many experiences rolled into 4 port days!

How would you rate your cruise experience?

Andrew

We were lucky to cruise with a very happy bunch of travellers. The mood as we walked onboard was palpable with excitement and expectation across the spectrum of passengers.

There were young children running around on their first overseas trip right

through to seasoned cruisers well into their late seventies and eighties. Everyone seemed genuinely happy and excited to be sharing this great new adventure that we were setting off together on.

I was very happy with the P&O experience and with the ship, the Pacific Encounter – the cabin was lovely (the bed was super comfortable), the food options were great, there were a few pools to choose from, the shows were fantastic and the ports were very interesting.

The vibe was happy and the value for money was exceptional. 10/10 for me!



The impressive Pacific Encounter, our floating resort

Leonie

10/10 here too. It was excellent – there was something for everyone onboard. You could just stay onboard if you wanted and enjoy the warm weather and the floating resort. If you got off at the ports, there were interesting things to see and learn.

The food and the shows were great. My tip, especially on a big ship where there are a lot of activities offered, is to read the daily newsletter (it gets delivered to your cabin) to get the most out of the cruise. Mark what you want to attend, where and when.

A huge advantage of cruising was that PNG did not look set up for tourists. This was new for us because unless we are cruising, Andrew and I always travel independently. Even when we are cruising, we like to tour independently in port but this just wasn't possible in PNG. So definitely pre-book any tours you want to do when you first get onto the ship. We booked tours in Alotau, Rabaul and the Conflict Islands.



A special dinner at the wonderful Luke's Bar & Grill.

In Alotau, the tour we booked was a cultural show (very good). In Rabaul, a WWII tour where we visited Japanese barge tunnels, a War Museum and a War Cemetery (very informative and very moving). In the Conflict Islands, it was a boat trip (which was gorgeous!).

I couldn't see myself independently touring PNG. I would not feel safe travelling independently but I did feel safe being part of a cruise.

Leonie and Andrew independently booked the "New Guinea Island Encounter" on P&O's Pacific Encounter then travelled as a guest of Citro with the assistance of P&O Australia.

Note - If you're keen to book a similar cruise, P&O's Pacific Adventure has been integrated into Carnival Adventure and Carnival Encounter. You can find out more at [Carnival Cruises](#).

About Andrew & Leonie

Andrew is 56 and before retiring he trained in marketing and owned several businesses. His mission for the rest of his life is to have fun and catch as many fish as he can!

Leonie is 56 and semi-retired. She trained in law and has also owned several businesses during her working life. Her mission for the rest of her life is to write another chapter – she's just not sure what that is yet.

Andrew & Leonie played tennis together as teenagers and have been married for 32 years. They have four grown children and two fur baby Golden Retrievers. They've travelled to all 7 continents and over 50 countries. Their mission for the rest of their life is to make the most of every day and travel until they get tired of it!

Follow these [Two Drifters](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [TikTok](#).



Get started with \$50 cash today

Discover a world of rewards
with a Citro Card

- Up to 20% cashback at over 200 top brands
- No foreign transaction fees worldwide
- It's not a credit card, you use your own money
- Safe and secure - bank grade protection
- Find offers you'll love on the Citro App
- Use it on your phone (digital wallet)

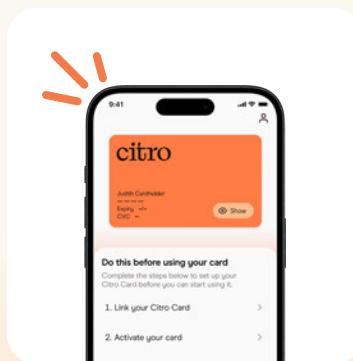
Earning cashback with your Citro Card is easy



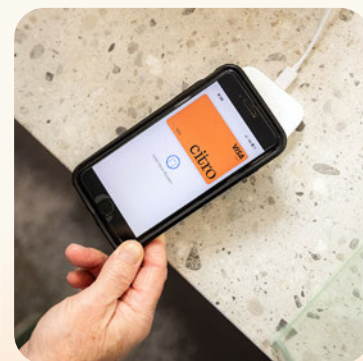
Step 1. Download app



Step 2. Sign up



Step 3. Activate



Step 3. Start earning

\$50 WELCOME BONUS

Simply apply promo code **'TRAVEL'** and activate your Citro Card to claim your reward. Applies to new customers only. Terms and conditions apply

APPLY NOW TO START EARNING
or visit joincitro.com.au/membership



Consider the Product Disclosure Statement, Target Market Determination and terms and conditions when deciding to acquire the Citro card, available at www.joincitro.com.au. Hay Limited ABN 34629037403 AFSL 515459 is the issuer of the Citro card. Citrus Innovations Pty Ltd ABN 25667285654 (Citro) administers the Citro cashback program.

EDITORIAL

Careful: a short cruise might lead to a serious addiction

A quick getaway on board a luxury cruiser turned into a lifetime of voyages for Leonie. And she's not one bit sad about that.

Words by Leonie Jarrett

My first cruise was 3 nights. It left from and returned to Melbourne and we never got off the ship. We just sailed towards Tasmania and then returned to Melbourne.

The idea behind this “taster” cruise was to see whether I would actually like cruising.

My husband Andrew is a “boat-a-holic.” He is yet to meet a boat he does not like, he never suffers from seasickness and he talked for years about buying

a catamaran for our retirement and spending each European summer flitting from one marina to another.

“Cruises are for old people”

It's not that I hate boats; we've owned a few and, on a calm and warm day, it's great fun. But the thought of living on a boat never really appealed to me and nor did cruising. I suffered from “cruises are for old people” syndrome – a very common prejudice.

We chose February for our short cruise, figuring that we would have beautiful warm weather. The Friday we left, however, Melbourne was turning on squalls and cool weather. To say I was nervous about boarding a boat I was going to be trapped on for 3 nights is an understatement. Add in the cool, windy weather and it was not a great start.



“Do you think the boat is moving much?”

We ate in the fancy dining room that Friday night (this was my first surprise – the size and grandeur of the dining room). Over dinner, I felt like I was gently rising up and down during dinner as if I were riding a horse. After a little while, I asked Andrew, “Do you think the boat is moving much?”

“No, no,” he replied hurriedly. It wasn’t until the cruise finished that Andrew confessed that he was deathly scared that the rough passage through The Heads would mean that I would hate this cruise caper and refuse to try it again!

We walked back to our room after dinner, taking the stairs rather than the

lift. This is a tip for any cruisers who are able to use the stairs. Use them whenever you can. Not only will it save any waiting for the lifts, it will soak up some calories from all the eating and drinking!

On the stairs, the swell of the boat could not be denied as the ship – and we! – moved from side to side.

“Do as much or as little as you want”

Saturday morning dawned smooth and sunny and these conditions continued for the rest of the cruise. Stroke of luck? Probably. But it enabled me to really enjoy all the ship had to offer. Given we were only away for 3 nights, that meant of enjoying the food, drinks and sunning myself by the pool.

"I realised what cruises are about – floating resorts where you can do as much or as little as you want."





It was then I realised what cruises are about – floating resorts where you can do as much or as little as you want.

Since that first short cruise, we have been on 10 more cruises! Some with our parents, some with our kids, some with friends and some on our own.

It is hard to pick a favourite cruise – who has a favourite child? That first “taster” cruise stands out as, had it been a disaster, I may not have cruised again. We absolutely loved our **Antarctica cruise** on the Scenic Eclipse, but we also loved cruising through the Panama Canal.

“Don’t knock it if you haven’t tried it”

Plenty of people “pooh pooh” cruising. Each to their own but, in my opinion, don’t knock it if you haven’t tried it.

Other people no doubt avoid cruising for fear of seasickness. My recommendation is to take travel wristbands and some seasickness medication with you just in case. There are also patches that you can wear behind your ears. A lot of the passengers on the Antarctica cruise were wearing them.

A short cruise – even one like the one I did where you don’t even get off the ship – is a great way to test the waters (pardon the pun!). You might even become a cruise addict like me!

Types of short cruises

Destination cruise

You’ll generally sail from a mainland Australia port to an island off the coast.

Entertainment cruise

Whether you’re into comedy, 80s music or disco, there’s a 3-4 night cruise to suit.

Repositioning cruise

When ships need to move from one home port to another you can often tag along at a reduced daily rate.

Themed cruise

You can also set sail with like-minded people on food, wine or sporting event cruises.



Moreton Island, just off the coast of southeastern Queensland, is a favourite short cruise destination.

Cruise curious?

Top tips for first-timers

While you may think you know what cruises are like, there's a range of types and sizes to suit just about everyone. Here are our top tips to prepare for a smooth first (or even second or third) sailing.

Words by Carolyn Tate

1. Research the ship and cruise company before you go

There are as many cruise companies sailing around the world as there are places to visit.

It's not usually the destination that will deliver a successful cruise so much as how well it matches your criteria for day-to-day living while on board.

There are loads of review sites to read what real people say about their cruise. Plus ask your friends, neighbours and anyone in your Facebook groups if they've been on a cruise they'd recommend.

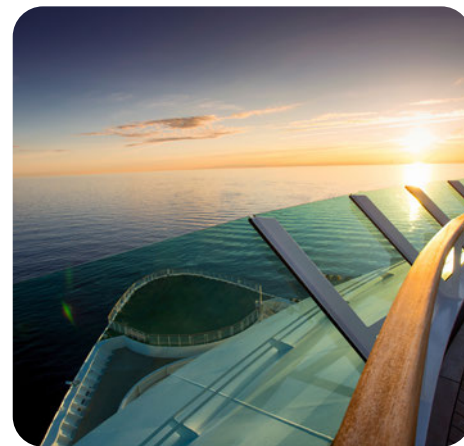
2. Long or short, big or small?

The biggest trick for successful cruising is working out your budget, destination and the type of ship you would most enjoy. Recommended: if it's your first cruise, don't book something with lots of days at sea and long itineraries – try a 2 or 3-day short cruise instead.

"We would recommend a "taster" cruise of a few days to a week for your first cruise," says Leonie and Andrew Jarrett, veterans of many, many cruises. "There are plenty of affordable short cruises that run from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane each year, usually in summer."

Leonie says these mini cruises are an ideal way of getting an experience of the cabins, the food offerings, the entertainment and even the motion and movement of the ship underway. Think of it as a 'try before you buy' cruise.





3. Be flexible if weather or itineraries change

Itinerary changes are common on cruise ships and usually happen at the last minute. Factors like rough seas, cyclones and even civil unrest can disrupt the ports you leave from or stop at. Refund and cancellation policies vary between cruise lines, so read the fine print. To have your trip fully covered, consider taking out travel insurance.

4. Book activities and excursions ahead

Popular onboard restaurants, shore excursions and spa treatments can fill up quickly, so book ahead either online or at the activity desk as soon as you board.

If you miss out on what's on offer, don't be afraid to organise your own shore excursions, says Leonie, with a strong caveat. "Organising an excursion directly will likely save you money, BUT there is one important guarantee if you organise a shore excursion through the cruise... the guarantee is that the ship will not leave port without you."

If you do go ahead with your own plan, keep a very close eye on your watch and leave plenty of wiggle room for unexpected time delays.

5. Switch to airplane mode when cruising

During your cruise, you will likely be crossing through several international telecom networks and could rack up significant roaming charges as your phone automatically downloads data.

It's best to keep your phone in flight mode and connect to the ship's Wi-Fi if it's included. If Wi-Fi isn't included, you can often purchase it or choose to completely unplug and do a digital detox while you travel.

What a good idea!

5 things to do once you're on board

1. Take medication if you need it:

Leonie is prone to motion sickness and while she rarely has a problem, she takes preventative medication to be sure. "We have been on 12 cruises and [my husband] Andrew has never been seasick. I do suffer [from it]... yet I have only ever experienced seasickness once." Taking medication has kept her comfortable.

2. Use your carry-on bag:

You may not be able to access your bags for some time after boarding. So pack a carry-on with sunscreen, swimsuits, a phone charger and any other essentials you'll need as soon as you board.

3. Wear a lanyard: Hang your room key around your neck so you're hands-free but it's always there when you need it.

4. Take the stairs: There will likely be a wait for the lifts, but the stairs offer zero queues and free exercise. "You'll likely eat and drink more than you usually do at home whilst cruising so the extra exercise is a good idea!" advises Leonie.

5. Plan your days: Read the daily programme/newsletter. These are delivered to your cabin the night before and/or are on the TV in your cabin. They are an invaluable guide to planning your day!

The Matevulu Blue Hole on Santa Island is a must-do shore tour on a Vanuatu cruise.

MONEY

How to spend less on a cruise than you would at home

Use the hip-pocket hacks of seasoned 'sailors' and – once you've paid for the cruise itself – you could find yourself spending less per day than you usually do.



Words by Nicole Pedersen-McKinnon

Whether you're a veteran cruiser or contemplating your first sea sojourn, a holiday on a floating hotel can be great value.

But take up all the available money-saving opportunities once you're on board and you could even spend less per day on a ship than you would at home - I did!

What's more, I met a lady who was doing consecutive cruises for 30 days. She didn't care where she went – her house was getting renovated and living on a ship was easier and cheaper than an Airbnb or similar.

Think there's no way you could do the same? I bet you can after I show you exactly how. The plan is essentially this:

- Don't eat anything that's not already included
- Book your own excursions
- Watch your drinks
- Buy only one internet package
- Book ahead

Let's delve a little deeper into how each of these points can help you save a fortune during your next cruise. I can't guarantee you can stay cruising for the rest of your life, but at least you'll be able to dream!

All-inclusive food can mean just that

Part of the appeal of most cruises is that they are all-inclusive for food.

But you can bet they will still try and tempt you at every turn with tantalising pay-extra possibilities, from premium options in your regular dining room to top-end, top-dollar restaurants elsewhere on the ship.

Repeat after me: you don't need these. Most people who have been on cruises, with most cruise lines, say the included food is good enough. It can even be great – mine has been.

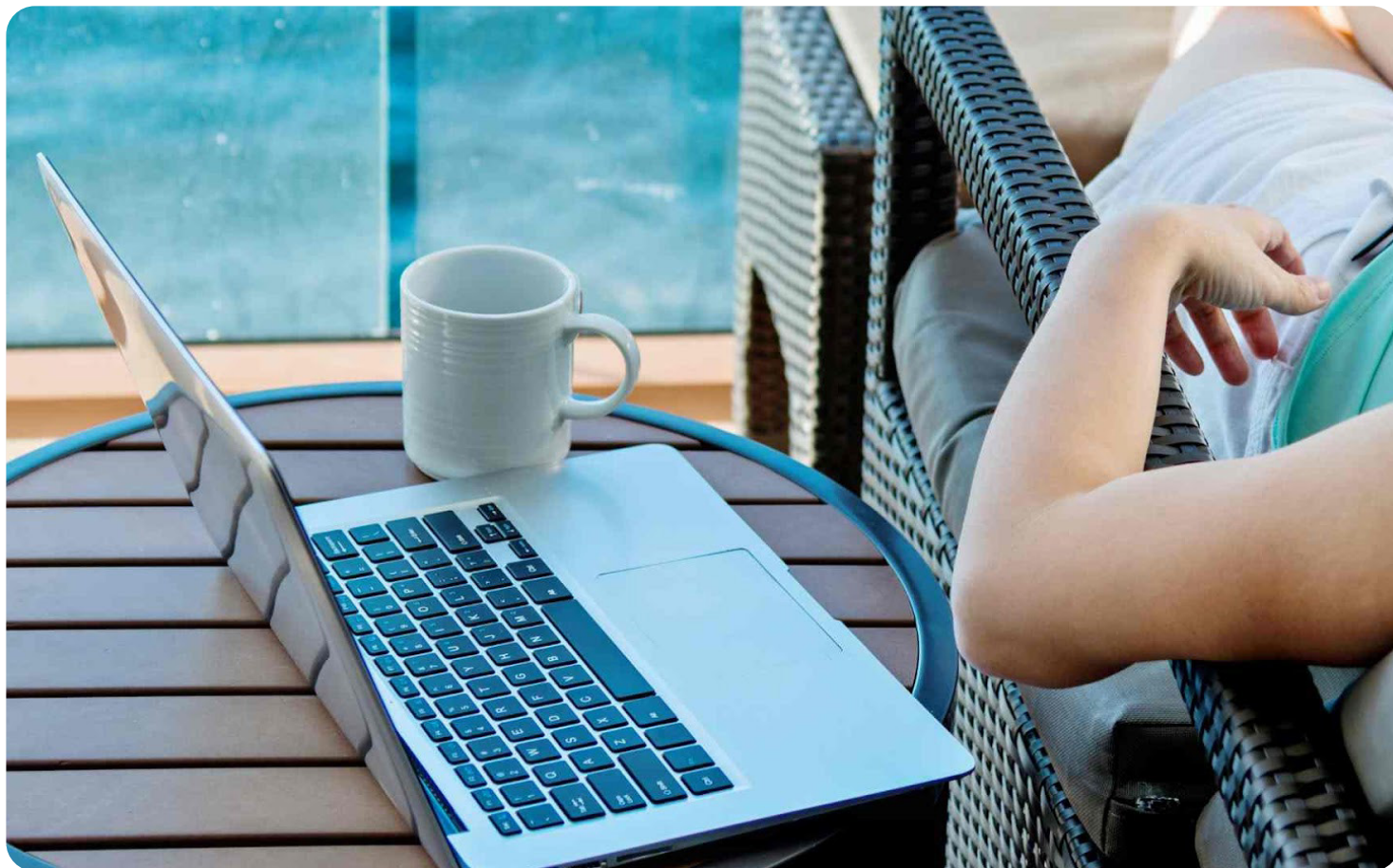
Extra money spent per day: \$0

A shore way to save

The official, liner-offered excursions always look brilliant and are usually big bucks. But, if you DIY you can experience life on shore for much less. Just keep in mind that the ship will only wait for you if you are late back from an official excursion – so under no circumstances be late back!

My other top tip when under your own steam is not to try and fit too much in on shore – it just gets too stressful. Our loveliest stop last cruise was in Noumea, New Caledonia. We simply bought a US\$10 hop-on, hop-off bus ticket. First, we hopped off at the supermarché and patisserie, and chose a selection of cheeses, meats, quiches, pastries and a baguette. Then we went two more stops to a gorgeous, near-deserted beach and enjoyed a beautiful, bargain lunch in paradise.





Average extra money spent per shore day: \$50.

To package or not to package

How important is alcohol to you? Weigh it up and make a simple call before you pay for the drinks package. This is a straight-up consumption versus alternative-cost equation – and only you know which one will be the cheaper option for you.

Just keep in mind that most liners expect all adults sharing a room to purchase the same package – so go with the package that averages out best between you.

Extra money spent per day: If you purchase a premium drinks package, you might be able to snare a pre-cruise special for about \$100. Never

pay full price and know that if a better deal comes up before you sail, most cruise companies will refund your first purchased package within 14 days.

Keep Wi-Fi down

A digital detox is great in theory, but those who want to stay in the loop need to know about the ship's Wi-Fi options.

If you don't want a total escape at sea or if you have children and grandchildren or other reasons to stay connected, you might decide to buy the ship's internet package. This will give you Wi-Fi (services can be expected to be a little unstable);

you will, of course, have no phone reception unless you activate and pay for international roaming in ports. Instead, make your calls through apps

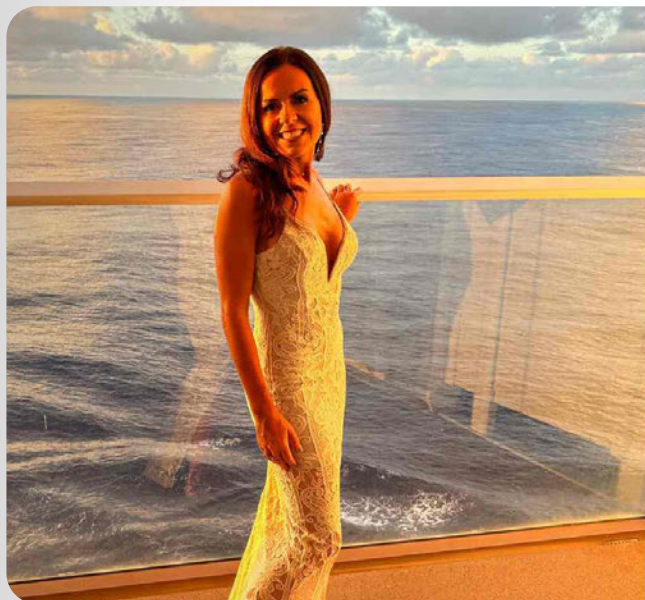
like WhatsApp and Instagram.

My other top tip when under your own steam is not to try and fit too much in on shore – it just gets too stressful.

It is usually cheapest to buy one internet package and add devices, rather than purchasing multiple packages for the people in your room.

Depending on how many are in your

party, you can also often share a package. For example, you might have 2 devices between 4 of you and simply switch them in and out as each person gets their turn for Netflix...



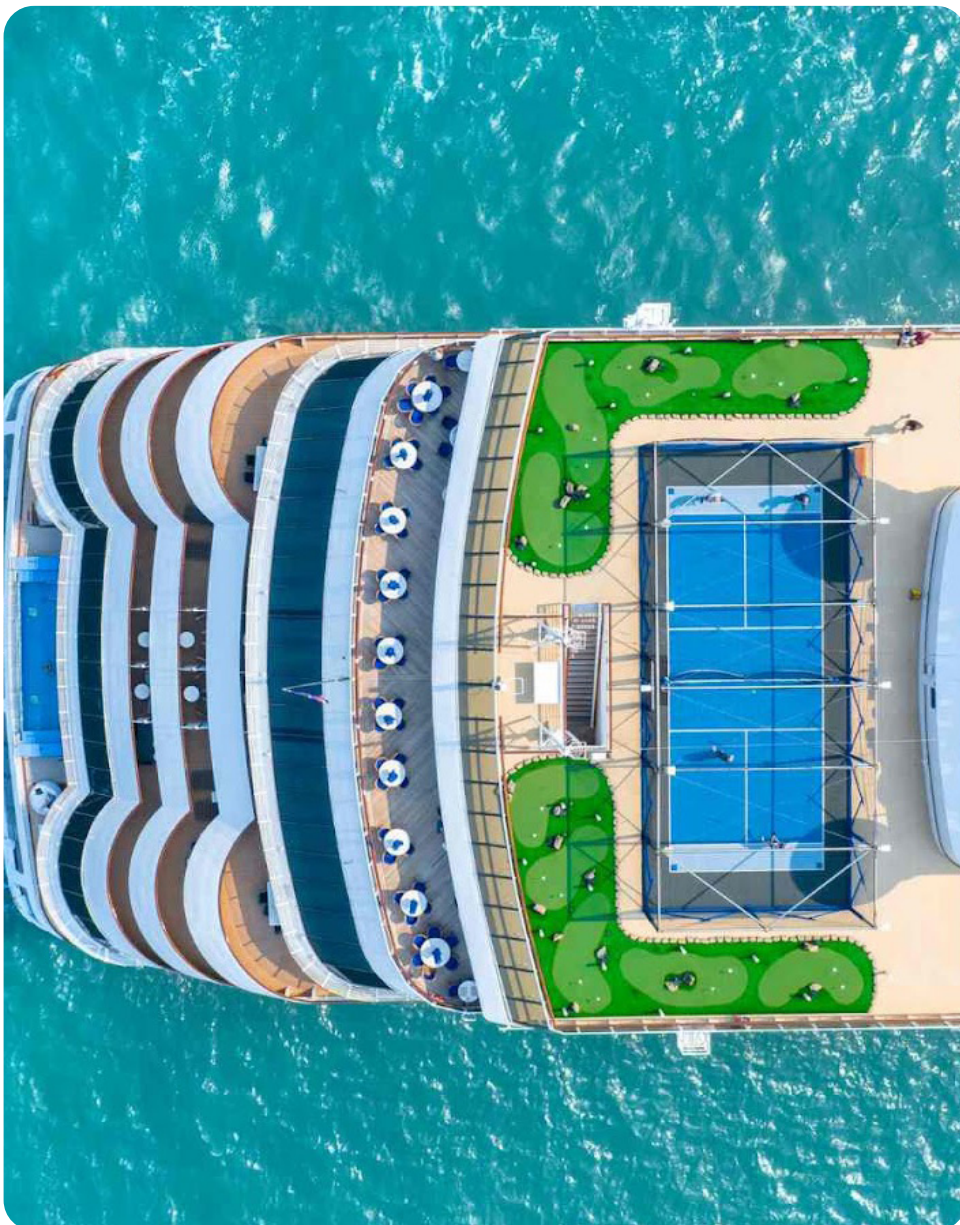
Extra money spent per day: Possibly \$50 versus \$80 or more.

Please come again soon

Cruise companies will routinely try to convert your holiday glow into a future booking. If you enjoyed cruising, this is good news.

One common strategy is to offer bonus bucks to spend on your current cruise – for example, on my recent cruise, they were giving US\$100 to people who put down a AUD\$200 deposit on their next cruise upfront. Note that with the US-AUD exchange rate, that leaves you not-much out-of-pocket!

It gets better, too: in this case, you were given a whole year to choose your next cruise and your booking could then be for any cruise that had been announced in the meantime. With so many excellent short and longer cruises to choose from, that's good news indeed.



Pack smart: everything you need for a smooth cruise experience

From essential gear to clever shortcuts, we've got you covered for the perfect adventure at sea.

By Bron Maxabella



1. Carry on bag

When you first board the ship you might be separated from your main luggage for quite a while so keep everything you need close to hand.

2. Binoculars

Handy for spotting birds, dolphins, whales and the first sight of land.

3. Medication

Even if you're not prone to seasickness, it's good to have some relief on hand, just in case.

4. Lanyard

Stay hands-free while you keep your cabin card with you at all times. You'll need it to pay for extra drinks, access different areas of the ship and, of course, return to your room.

5. Swimmers

Togs/bathers/swimming costume... whatever you call your swim gear, pack lots of it. You'll want at least 3 pairs so you've always got a dry set to slip on.

6. Sun protection

Pack sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat and something to drape over your shoulders if you're in the sun for an extended period of time.

7. Raincoat & windcheater

Be ready for inclement weather so you can comfortably stay outside if you want to.

8. A warm jacket

It can be cool at sea even in the tropics in summer, so pack something to keep you warm.

9. Comfortable shoes

If you want to explore when the ship docks, make sure you pack decent walking shoes. If you plan to go hiking, pack proper hiking shoes.

10. A beach tote

Handy for packing everything you need for a day by the pool or to take to the beach when on a transfer. The bigger, the better.

11. Power board & extension cord

Between the phone charger, computer charger, hair straightener, CPAP machine and all the other electronics we carry with us these days, the power outlet in your room gets very crowded very quickly.

12. Suction hooks

Space is at a premium in a cruise cabin, even if you go for the luxury upgrade. Suction hooks are a fantastic way to use the wall space for hanging your things.

13. Ziplock bags

It's no surprise that things will get wet on a cruise, so keep your valuables safe in a ziplock bag.

14. Sarongs

Use them to cover up on your way to the pool, to keep the sun off, as a spare blanket if you get cold, a scarf to jazz up a dinner outfit, a towel, a turban, a picnic blanket... you won't regret packing several sarongs.



Before you set sail, Virgin Australia will get you to port

- Fly with award-winning Cabin Crew
- Stretch out and enjoy up to 40% more legroom with Economy X
- Track your checked baggage on the Virgin Australia app



Get 1% cashback
when you book with
your Citro Card

*Terms and conditions apply



australia

TRAVEL

Should you go on a cruise to nowhere?

If you're excited by cruise specials in travel sections, but unsure if you want to spend weeks at sea with thousands of other passengers, a "cruise to nowhere" is a great way to get a taste of the big ship experience.



A cruise to nowhere is one with no ports of call. The ship simply sails up the coast for a few days, then heads back to port.

Words by Alana House

Flick through the travel section of any weekend paper and it's pretty clear Australia is in the midst of a massive cruise boom.

Every second advertisement spruiks a cruise to somewhere exotic, whether it be the Mediterranean, Alaska, Fiji, Norway ... and most have enticingly low price tags. Cruises can be a cost-efficient way to see the world, as most fares include meals, accommodation and entertainment.

If you're excited by cruise specials in travel sections, but unsure if you want to spend weeks at sea with thousands of other passengers, a "cruise to

nowhere" is a great way to get a taste of the big ship experience.

All the entertainment, no stopovers

A "cruise to nowhere" is one with no ports of call. The ship simply sails up the coast for a few days, then heads back to port. The cruises often have themes, which can range from comedy to '80s music and even Dolly and Elvis impersonators.

My partner and I decided to go on a comedy cruise because we enjoy watching comedians perform live and were lured by an online special that offered balcony cabins for around \$120 per person per night.

We were a bit uncertain about boarding a ship with capacity for 2636 guests, but were blown away as we stood on the prow as it departed from Sydney's White Bay Terminal, sailing under Sydney Harbour Bridge past Sydney Opera House and out through the heads.

The view was so spectacular that I couldn't resist posting a few shots on Instagram.

Luke Mangan, is that you?

After having dinner and watching a comedy show, we retired to our cabin and, lulled by the gentle sway of the sea, fell into a deep sleep... only to be woken by a piercing alarm at 3am. It was followed by a slightly hysterical loudspeaker announcement that first aid was required on deck 10.

Then the Captain arrived on the bridge and calmly announced that there was



Alana on a comedy cruise

no need to panic, but a balcony on deck 10 was on fire. We were told to get dressed, grab our life jackets and head to our muster stations. Ours was in the casino, so we camped out under a Blackjack table using our life jackets as pillows, chatting about what a great dinner party story this was going to make.

The flames were eventually extinguished, but we weren't allowed to return to our beds until all passengers had been accounted for. Crew members started calling out individual names of missing passengers over the loudspeaker. Finally it came down to one name, repeated over and over: "Luke Mangan, could you please check in."

I thought it was an odd coincidence

that someone called Luke Mangan was on a ship that had a Luke Mangan restaurant on board. I also wished this Luke passenger would bloody hurry up and report to the crew so we could go back to bed.

Our friends had dinner the next night at the Luke Mangan restaurant and were surprised to be greeted by the celebrity chef himself at the door. He even poured their Champagne.

He might want to take his ear plugs out next time he cruises.

Sunbaking off the coast of Port Macquarie

As for the rest of our cruise, it was surprisingly calm, balmy and fun. The sunsets were gorgeous and it was bliss to have zero responsibilities



for a few days.

Despite being late May, it was so warm that people were sunbaking in their cossies as we cruised past Port Macquarie.

Don't expect much from the food on board, however you can expect a great meal if you pay extra for a specialty restaurant such as Luke Mangan. My friends reckon it served the best food they've ever eaten at sea and was even on par with wonderful restaurant experiences they've had on land.

As for the on-board entertainment, we loved Bob Downe, the headline act who led a full theatre in a joyous rendition of 'Sweet Caroline' and had us cackling over how inappropriate song lyrics were in the 1970s. We also enjoyed watching an amazing magician called James Galea, who has appeared on an array of US and Aussie TV shows.

Overall, we thought the cruise was fantastic value and we loved catching up with our friends for leisurely afternoon drinks on deck. It's definitely worth giving a cruise to nowhere a whirl to suss out if you're a big ship person. While we've decided we prefer our ships slightly smaller, it was lovely to spend a few days at sea.





For some travellers, a holiday is best enjoyed at sea

Get travel insurance for your next overseas cruise with Freely's Cruise Cover Boost.

In a few simple steps, you can enjoy onboard medical and trip cover by adding our Cruise Cover Boost to your Explorer Plan.

15% cashback on travel insurance

- 24-hour medical & emergency support
- Cover for onboard medical
- Cover for existing medical conditions
- Trip cancellation and amendment



freely

Backed by  ZURICH



Scan the code for 15%
cashback when you transact
with your Citro Card

When you purchase your policy with your Citro card, Citro will receive a fee from Freely, a brand of Cover-More Insurance Services Pty Limited ABN 95 003 114 145 (AFSL 241713) (Cover-More). Zurich Australian Insurance Limited is the issuer of the policy. We do not act for Cover-More or Freely. The information provided is only on the availability of Freely products. We do not give advice & the information provided is not intended to give an opinion or recommendation regarding the product. For information on how to contact Cover-More or Freely refer to the PDS, FSG & TMD which can be found on the Freely website which should be considered before acquiring a policy. To get cover for sea- or ocean-going cruises outside of Australia that are longer than two nights (multi-night), you'll need to add our Cruise Cover Boost to your Explorer Plan (at an additional cost) from the day you board until the day you disembark. River cruising and cruises that don't leave Australian Coastal Waters are automatically covered by Freely's Explorer Plan.



ADVICE

Keep calm & cruise on: advice for more mature cruisers

Cruising suits older travellers so well: no luggage to schlep and you know exactly what you're coming home to each night. Here's how to set the comfort level to cruise control.

By Leonie Jarrett

The best thing about cruising is that you get to take your 'home away from home' with you as you go. No need to fret about bed firmness or pillow quality. Whether the hot water in the shower will come on too strong. Or you won't be able to make a decent cuppa. A cruise has you covered for all of the above and more. No matter how many ports you visit, you know exactly what you're coming home to at the end of a long day.

Little wonder then why cruising suits more 'mature' travellers so well. Here are a few tried and tested tips to make your cruise even more comfortable.

Organise your medication

Carry at least some medication in your hand luggage in case your suitcase goes astray – and try to take at least an extra week's worth with you, just in case. A travel pill organiser comes in particularly handy if you're packing for a long cruise.

Ditto with your doctor's prescriptions and any other important medical information, like allergy alerts and your blood type.

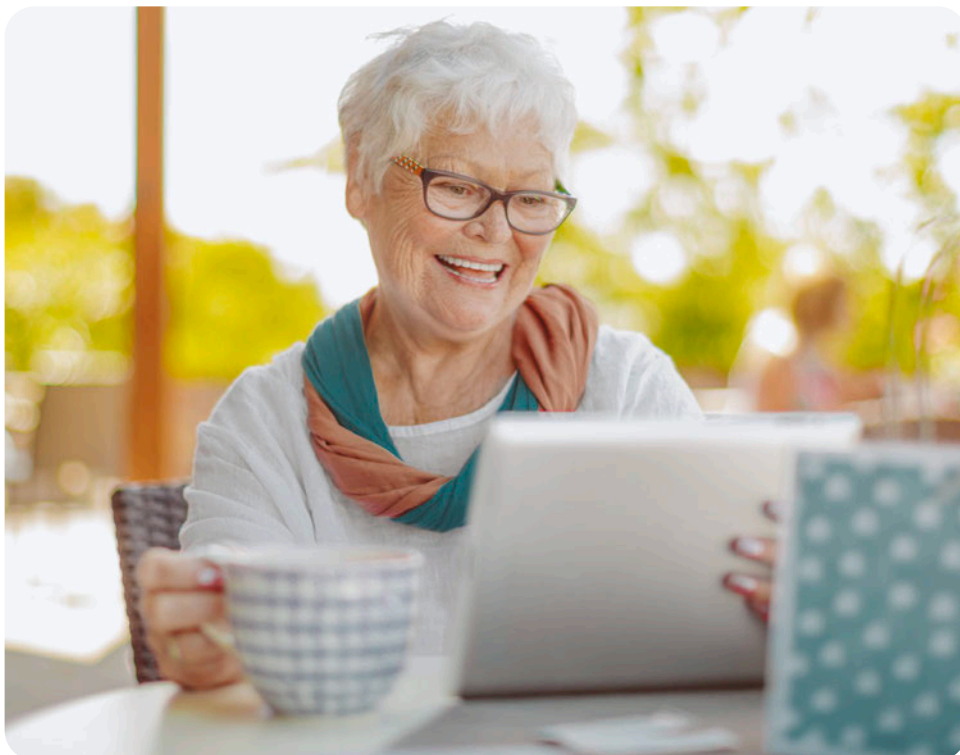
Pack some insurance too

Before you set sail, ensure you have appropriate travel insurance with cruise cover added.

It might be boring to do, but it is worthwhile reading the Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) and ensuring that you have the correct cover for your age, your destinations, the activities you're planning to do and any existing medical conditions.

Check the activity level for excursions

Choose shore excursions carefully. Pay particular attention to the required activity level. While it's tempting to want to experience everything a cruise has to offer (and there's a lot!), try not to challenge yourself beyond what you're capable of. It's exhausting, you could even get hurt, and not being able to keep up also impacts others on the excursion... nobody wants to be 'that guy'.



Consider also how many tenders are required at ports. These are smaller boats that take guests and crew ashore and they can require a bit of agility (although the ship's crew are there to help you out).

Plan for all kinds of weather

Consider the expected weather at the ports – will it be too hot or too cold for you to enjoy your cruise? If so, consider cruising at another time. Even if you're cruising in high summer, pack some warm clothes – it can be surprisingly cool out at sea, especially at night.

Weather conditions can also affect sea conditions – choppy seas do not make for a fun cruise, especially for new seafarers.

Skip the trip and enjoy the ship

If you're not sure of your touring capabilities or you're just not interested in a particular port, feel free to stay behind.

In fact, some passengers never get off the ship at different ports but they

still enjoy a terrific, relaxing cruise. Some absorb the stunning scenery from the perspective of the ship, some recharge their batteries in their room and others are content to be by the pool all day.

Go ahead and do your own thing

This is your cruise and your holiday, so do what you like when you like. If you're cruising with an intergenerational group, have a plan to meet for dinner, but go your own way during the day. This makes for an enjoyable cruise for all and some very lively dinner conversation!

5 EXTRA TIPS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

1. Stay hydrated - drink more water than you think you need and watch your alcohol intake.

2. Keep active - it can be tempting to do nothing while on a cruise, but short walks around the deck or a gentle yoga class will help you feel good.

3. Eat carefully - enjoy the variety of delicious food, but keep your menu balanced to avoid tummy upsets.

4. Be sun safe - the sun can burn quickly when it's reflected off water, so always slip, slop, slap and seek shade.

5. Wash hands - keep viruses at bay with frequent hand washing - and make regular use of the hand sanitiser stations dotted around the ship.

Citro cruising essentials

Use your Citro Card to make purchases at our partners and get cashback to spend or save. Subscribe to our newsletter to see the latest offers – Citro is always adding more!





Sportswear
4% cashback





Fashion
5% cashback





Fashion
4% cashback





Fashion
5% cashback





Travel & luggage
3% cashback





Optical & eyewear
3% cashback





Health & beauty
4% cashback





Footwear
4% cashback



Get more out of life and your money

Join celebrities like Denise Drysdale, Patti Newton, Kevin & Janetta, Susie O'Neill, & Glenn McGrath, along with over 5,000 cardholders already enjoying exclusive rewards.

Age is an asset—let the Citro Rewards Visa Debit Card make it even more rewarding.



joincitro.com.au



citro

Backed by
AMP



Consider the Product Disclosure Statement, Target Market Determination and terms and conditions when deciding to acquire the Citro card, available at www.joincitro.com.au. Hay Limited ABN 34629037403 AFSL 515459 is the issuer of the Citro card. Citrus Innovations Pty Ltd ABN 25667285654 (Citro) administers the Citro cashback program