



CRUISING VS ALL INCLUSIVE

I believe there is a lot of value in choosing a cruise or all-inclusive destination. By numbers reported by [Travel and Tourism Statistics: The Ultimate Collection](#); numbers confirm many Americans also find value in these two avenues of travel.

For the disbelievers, I hear, “there is not enough to do”, “it is not an authentic experience”, “it will be too busy” or “I like having a schedule and unique things to do”.

You can’t rule it out until you have tried it!

I also like personalized travel, boutique hotels, and destinations off the beaten path. But it doesn’t mean I don’t value what cruises and all-inclusive experiences have to offer and continue to book these vacations too!

Consider joining myself along with the other 11 million Americans that cruise each year or the 21% of vacationing families that choose to use all-inclusive resorts.

I will also point out, as a mother of 3, a TRUE VACATION is one I DON’T HAVE TO COOK OR CLEAN. Cruising and All-Inclusive Resorts are the BEST VACATION to achieve this goal!

Certainly, with all these millions of travelers, there must be many things alluring about cruising and all-inclusive resorts that keep them going back for more!

What is a cruise? A cruise is a voyage taken on a large ship with port destinations along the way. Popular entry-level cruise companies include Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Celebrity, Princess, Norwegian, etc. There are also many higher-end cruise companies. Viking River Cruise line is one we often book for some of our offered group vacations through [GetAwayVaca](#).

What is an all-inclusive? An all-inclusive resort is a large vacation property that typically includes your room, food, drinks, activities, entertainment in one convenient price. There are a few in the U.S., but most common are known throughout the Caribbean and Mexico.

Why CRUISES are awesome:

- (1) **AMENITIES:** Includes food, activities, and other amenities on board in one initial price! (wifi and alcohol packages can be added for additional price)
- (2) **MANY DESTINATIONS:** Ability to see many destinations on one trip.
- (3) **LOTS OF ACTIVITY:** I like the high density, variety of activities for all ages available. Every time you turn a corner, something else is going on. We frequently cruise with large group of family and friends. It is wonderful that people can do many different things throughout the day, plan some small joint activities but we all come together in the evening for a pre-dinner cocktail and dinner.
- (4) **CHILDCARE & KID PROGRAMS:** Ships offer wonderful childcare for a reasonable cost and free kids programs starting around 4yrs.
- (5) **FINANCES:** You know the finances up front. The initial per person cost is always a show stopper because you think “how reasonable” though a little misguided. I find the “advertised” price is usually \$500 below the final price per person for my husband and myself because we typically add on alcohol and wifi packages. In addition, ships add gratuity to your bill at the end.

+Cruising Pros+

- Meals are included (excluding any specialty dining experiences ships now offer)
- Many destinations, one “hotel” room!
- Breath of experiences, get to see a lot of places in one trip
- Ship hosted excursions at ports
- Kids camps, childcare
- Inclusive pricing, know cost of trip up front
- Custom experience, cruising can be relaxing or active, it is what you want it to be
- Balcony room upgrade options, nothing like sailing with the ocean breeze blowing through your cabin
- Cruises sometimes offer great prices for children staying in the cabin (3rd and 4th passengers in a cabin)
- Medical care on board. I find for many aging travelers; this is a great advantage!

Top cruise destinations include Alaska, Caribbean and Hawaii

-Cruising Cons-

- Rooms are small, bathrooms/showers smaller
- Maximum room capacity 4, so family of 5+ need multiple cabins
- Cheapest room options are often inside cabins, no windows
- Cost additions if you want extra amenities i.e. pop/soda packages, alcohol packages, wifi, room upgrades, special experiences – wave surfer, etc.
- Additional fees on top of booking cruise price i.e. taxes, port fees, etc.
- Additional billed gratuity added per day, per person
- Occasional tender at ports (small boats to access pier) pending weather
- Small pools
- Specialty coffee shops charge, unless you purchase alcohol package
- If anyone in your group gets motion sick or vertigo, this may not be a good option.

Why ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS are awesome:

- (1) **AMENITIES+:** EVERYTHING is included i.e. food, alcohol, activities, wifi, etc. There are no gratuities unless you want to tip your bar tender or waiter throughout your stay.
- (2) **LARGE ROOMS:** Resort rooms are spacious; all rooms have a balcony with a beautiful view.
- (3) **LOTS OF ACTIVITY:** Resorts vary on activities pending if you book an adult only or family friendly resort.
- (4) **POOLS + OCEAN:** Large pools and ocean/beach access.
- (5) **CHILDCARE & KID PROGRAMS:** Resorts offer childcare and kids programs.
- (6) **FINANCES:** The price up front, is the final price!
- (7) **ADULT ONLY OPTIONS:** For the romantic getaway, or friend group trip; adult only resorts are awesome!

+All Inclusive Resort Pros+

- Large, spacious rooms
- Rooms include balconies with a view, some resorts have swim-out room options
- All meals included (there may be certain meals/dishes on menus that have additional fees)
- All restaurants open to guests with inclusive menu items
- Resort concierge can arrange local excursions
- Inclusive pricing, know cost of trip up front
- Alcohol included
- Large pools!
- Beach Access!
- Additional free amenities usually included i.e. specialty coffee drinks, wifi
- Adult only properties available.
- Large, family friendly properties available with lots of fun activities i.e. rock climbing, waterslides, ziplines, and more.

+All-Inclusive Resort Cons+

- One destination
- Activities and entertainment can be spread throughout the property; you have to go “looking” for activity
- Where cruises are condensed and easy to get kids around; resort properties are large and multiple small children with strollers can be cumbersome

Want to give it an all-inclusive resort or a cruise a try? Follow the masses! There must be something to why millions are annually booking cruises and all-inclusive resort vacations! Look at the check list above and see what feels like the best fit.

Want more all-inclusive or cruise information, check out an affiliated post on what to pack whether you are a minimalist traveler or never want to wear the same clothes twice!