



The Cruise Companion: A Practical Guide to a Worry-Free Cruise Vacation

Kevin Yano

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Over 11 million people took a cruise in 2005, and author Kevin Yano is onto something with this comprehensive and straightforward guide for both the novice and the pro. Like a dinner buffet aboard a cruise ship, this book has everything the cruiser could possibly want, arranged in a way that's both appetizing and filling.

Organized chronologically, the book begins with the question vacationers first ask themselves, *Why Cruise?*, moves on through the planning stages, then takes the reader aboard to meet the crew, check out the dining facilities, the casino, the pool. *The Cruise Companion* ends as the passenger reaches his *Disembarkation and the Return Home*.

Yano himself began his cruise ship career with the question, *Why Cruise?* In his case, the answer was an escape to warm weather. According to the author, cost comparisons between all-inclusive resorts and cruises leave the latter sunny-side up. On his first excursion, Yano was so impressed that he decided to join the Carnival team as a Purser Officer. Conveniently for his future career as a writer, the place to go aboard a ship for complaints, financial issues, emergency situations, phone calls, directions and advice is the Purser's desk. His personal experience provides a treasure trove of real information about everything from how to avoid lines at a port of call, to what happens if a plane is late, to how to tip a wonderful steward, how to dress for the first day, how to negotiate with port shop vendors, and what the lack of insurance can mean for an unlucky traveler.

There are excellent tips on cabin selection based on its location (watch out for those all-night discos), and what to do if you're on honeymoon and your room has twin beds. The table of contents is comprehensive and the desired information on any subject easily accessible. Each chapter wraps up with a summary in the form of a checklist.

Additional goodies include lists of appropriate clothing according to the cruise season; a graph outlining officer insignia; notes on ship terminology and a thorough glossary; dining options; arranging a private, onboard party; explanations of additional costs and payment options; choosing a ship according to age and spaciousness; Norovirus and motion-sickness; planning for families; how to leave the ship gracefully with tips, financial statements, papers and luggage in order; and emergency drill. "Unlike the Titanic," Yano writes, "all ships have sufficient lifeboats and rafts for all guests and crew."

The Cruise Companion is an excellent all-in-one resource for both Canadian and U.S. citizens. "One of the great things about cruising is that you can do as much as you want or as little as you want when you want." Author Kevin Yano shows us how. Highly recommended.

HEATHER SHAW (April 24, 2007)

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