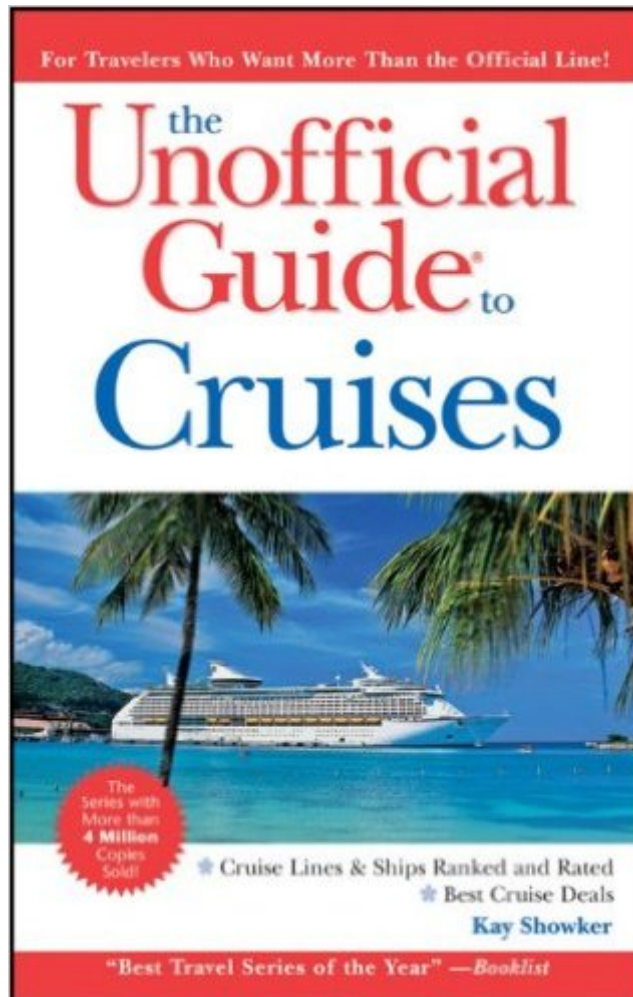


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# The Unofficial Guide To Cruises (Unofficial Guides)



## Synopsis

In keeping with the Unofficial Guide philosophy, this book pulls no punches as it reports on the nitty-gritty details of more than 100 cruise lines and 500 ships, ranking each for value and quality. The authors reveal industry secrets for getting the lowest possible fares, share helpful hints for getting the cabin you want most at a price you can afford, and give strategies for booking hassle-free air connections, making the most of your time and money on board, and figuring out who your fellow passengers will be.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We all love books with titles like these. They are going to tell us the "real" truth behind the corporate line. How well does this book live up to its promise? First, the basics of the book. The first 130 pages holds background information - why cruises are cost effective, maps of key cruising regions, and so on. The rest of the book - which is about 660 pages total - is a ship by ship review of the main ships that you can choose to cruise on. I bought this book, so obviously I was keen to hear the "secrets" :) But unfortunately, even though this version of the book came out only a year ago, I already see a large number of inaccuracies in it. It's not really a surprise - as much as they claim to be "unofficial", there is no way a group of reviewers (or especially the 2 who claim primary credit for writing this book) can go back and visit every ship listed, every year. But that means that either 1) the information is therefore inaccurate, or 2) they fall back on what the company reports, meaning they are no longer an unbiased 3rd party. In addition, just what information are they giving you? I turned

right to the Norwegian Majesty as I am looking to cruise with them shortly. They give stats like cabin count, draft, beam, etc. Undoubtedly they got those from the cruise lines, and didn't measure them themselves :). They list the decor colors, the names of the restaurants, the items in the cabins (desk, TV, etc.) Really, the entire review (which is about 2 small pages long) is a transcript of information found on corporate pages. It says things like the Sky Deck has lounge chairs, rest rooms and showers. It really doesn't have any subjective information at all. With the thousands of reviews available online, from people who DO go into the good, bad and ugly of each cruise line, I have to admit I was disappointed. Let's say I wanted to choose between the several cruise lines running to Bermuda, I don't know that these write-ups would really help over the official information found on the cruise ships' websites. With the information in the book not necessarily being accurate or up-to-date, even what they do show isn't something I could rely on fully. And given how much the price is for this book, it's really not very price-effective given how few pages are actually applicable for a given person. That's not to say that the book is "bad" in any way. The beginning section is quite helpful, if basic. It talks about planning ahead, making sure you're in town a day early so that you don't risk missing your ship. It gives general advice on what to pack. But again, you really do far better with web offerings - because instead of giving general advice on packing for "all cruises everywhere" (which has to include both Alaska and Jamaica), the web can give specific advice for specific lines going to specific destinations. Even two ships both going to a single island can have vastly different dress codes. If someone doesn't have a web connection, and wants a general quick-reference book for scanning (say in the waiting room of a travel agency), this might be a good book to have. But if you're a cruiser who has a destination in mind, or a specific cruise ship in mind, this information is really far too brief.

I'm going on my third cruise, and have a slightly itchy feeling that I might like to try a somewhat different cruise next year. I bought this book because of its detailed rating system (two scales: one for quality and one for value) and because of its detailed coverage of scores of ships and cruise lines. I'm glad I did, even though it still doesn't include everything I'd like to know (one of these days someone will write a cruise guide that includes sample floor plans and relative sizes of different classes of cabin--but it hasn't happened yet!). I personally found this guide to be helpful even though I would qualify as both an experienced cruiser and a devoted internet searcher (see review below). It has very good information on how and why you might want to figure out your own air transportation, which cruises are for you and which aren't, and is pretty accurate in summing up cruise ship ambience. I particularly enjoyed the "This cruise recommended for..." and "This cruise

not recommended for..." sections, which really help you to narrow your list down to precisely those ships that offer what you want--even if you want a luxurious but not stuffy sports minded cruise without waterslides!! I wish it had had an index, and I found some of its Cunard Line information inaccurate, but even still I am glad to have this book on my travel reference shelf.

This is a great book. I like it because it gives information but is not opinionated. It is full of practical advice on how to figure out the most important variables of a cruise, how and why to book through a travel agent, and why trip cancellation insurance is important and a good value. It includes about 20 pages of maps (cruising areas of the world).It also helps the reader think about the differences between cruises that stop at many ports of call vs. the benefits of just spending time at sea. The authors articulate the many types of cruises, and links various cruise lines, individual ships, and specific locations with categories of people you might find on that particular cruise.I never thought I would be interested in a cruise but after reading this guide I realize there are as many different types of cruises as there are people. I feel empowered to work through a travel agent with an understanding of how these industries work, knowing that if I'm flexible I'm going to get a good value.This book is a cut above your typical guide book. It has more information than you would ever want about cruise lines and individual ships including background and history on the cruise line companies.I was pleasantly surprised by this book and I recommend it to anyone who wants to research cruise alternatives. It is a great way to begin.

This book had good details about the various ships cruising in the Carribean. It gives details about ports of call and pricing that other books don't include. I especially appreciated his detailed rating system since you can't use the star rating system anymore. He compared each ship line and individual ship thoroughly.

Showker's cruise guide is right on target, what the Fielding guide once was before the reviews became dated. I love her focus on value for money, descriptions of fellow passengers and the comprehensive coverage of all aspects. Great for first timers or the experienced cruiser.

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