

EXPERT NAVIGATORS OF THE SEA

YOU Travel Cruise Masters are orchestrators of dream voyages. They share their expert advice and tips on how to get the most out of your cruise experience, whether you're a first-timer or a veteran cruiser.

The cruise industry is vast and multifaceted, offering travellers a unique blend of luxury, adventure, culture, exquisite dining and relaxation. Whether you are a seasoned cruiser or you're contemplating your first cruise, YOU Travel cruise specialists can play a pivotal role in ensuring that your voyage is the very best it can be. With an in-depth understanding of the cruise industry, extensive cruise experience and a passion for travel, the YOU Travel Cruise experts are not just travel agents, they are navigators of the sea and orchestrators of dream voyages.

YOU Travel Cruise Masters understand the different features and offerings of all cruise lines, destinations, and emerging trends. "There were 13 new ships launched in 2023 and we are looking forward to more in 2024 plus new voyages and ports of call, another busy year of events and educational opportunities planned by CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association)," says Monett Johnston – Director of YOU Travel Whitianga.

Their continuous learning about the latest ships, onboard amenities and innovations allows them to provide clients with the most up-to-date information. They also have an encyclopaedic knowledge of cruise packages, cabin categories and excursion options, enabling them to tailor recommendations based on individual preferences and budgets. "Becoming a CLIA Master Cruise Consultant means we have undertaken additional training, because we are passionate and committed to providing the very best advice. We ensure that our clients are given the best cruise options to enhance their experience and meet their overall expectations," says Kay Rogers – Managing Director of YOU Travel Bethlehem Bay of Plenty.

Jeryl Bromley – Owner/Manager of YOU Travel Waiheke Island reiterates, "With our passion for cruising, we have ourselves cruised on a number of cruise lines. We also do continuing professional education across all cruise lines – river, ocean and expedition cruising."

MEET THE YOU TRAVEL CRUISE EXPERTS



JERYL BROMLEY
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COMMON MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Myth: You just eat on a cruise. Well, if that is what you want to do, yes you can, says Bromley. However, there are lots of excursions offered now that include hiking and cycling. "I have been to Antarctica (Ponant) and the Sub-Antarctic Islands (Heritage Expeditions) on different expedition cruises, and you are out and about on zodiacs and ashore on landings every day with the focus on activities rather than dining (although the food is really good as well). Onboard, there are state-of-the art gyms, optional specialty fitness classes and walking tracks on the decks, so plenty of opportunities to keep fit. I love walking around the track and watching the sunrise as you come into a new port." Kiri Martin – Director of YOU Travel Orewa adds, "Expedition cruising has become really popular for the 'non cruiser/active traveller' as it enables you to access remote destinations not available by land."

Myth: Cruising is just for old people. "Absolutely not," says Bromley. "Depending on the type of cruise you do, the average age will vary. It is more about where the cruise is going. Just unpack once and you will travel to many destinations without worrying about hotels, airport transfers and flights." Johnston agrees that cruise passengers are a wide cross section of ages. "There may be a group celebrating a friend's 50th birthday or a diverse party along for a mutual interest, or an extended family group."

Myth: Cruise ships are just a Petri dish for germs. Cruise lines have been industry leaders worldwide in health and sanitation standards, especially since COVID struck, says Bromley. "I believe you can catch more germs and illnesses travelling through airports and on flights than on a cruise ship, especially as these places do not always have the same high sanitation protocols in place for crew and passengers."

Myth: Cruises are boring. You can do as little or as much as you want on a cruise with a plethora of options both onboard and at port. Johnston says: "One of our clients told me that after being a 'reluctant cruise partner', they were amazed at the interesting people they met, how well travelled these cruisers were, what great ideas they passed on about the ships they had cruised on and the adventures they'd had."



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"What do I need to pack? What is the day-to-day experience onboard? What special things does the cruise ship offer – like cooking classes, specialist lectures, excursions. What kind of cabin should I choose?" All these questions (and many more) can be easily answered by your YOU travel advisor," says Bromley.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO BOOK A CRUISE?

"As soon as you have made a decision that you want to travel!" says Rogers. "Some time frames are dependent on seasonality, e.g. Christmas Markets, Alaska, Northern Lights." Bromley adds that cruising is such a popular way of travelling that to ensure you are able to get the cabin type you want and the itinerary you want, booking sooner is definitely recommended. Many cruise lines will apply any bonuses offered under a subsequent cruise promotion to those who have already made a booking. Cruise bookings are already open for 2026. Martin recommends booking around 12- 18 months in advance depending on the destination/ cruise line. "The American market are normally booked before the Kiwis even think about it – you need to plan in advance to secure the best cabins," she advises.



MAKING THE MOST OF SEA DAYS

Bromley says sea days are a great way to fully experience all that a cruise ship offers. "On a recent cruise in Europe (on Oceania) I did three culinary classes and came home so inspired. There were also guest lectures and one of the lecturers gave some excellent insight on the Palestine-Israel conflict along with other super-interesting lectures on the history of the formation of modern Europe. There is also the spa and I took the opportunity to learn a new skill – needlepoint." Johnston adds that sea days are time to relax just like you would on a resort holiday. "Kick-start your fitness programme again in the gym with the crew instructor, walk off the kilos from all that delicious food. Days at sea can be as busy as you wish to make them."



TOP TIP
Winter cruising has become popular to avoid the crowds in Europe – I have recently cruised the Med with Viking in February/March, they are offering fabulous winter itineraries including Morocco and Malta. Kiri Martin – Director of YOU Travel Orewa.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRST-TIME CRUISERS

"There is a cruise for everybody," says Bromley. "For first-time cruisers, my recommendation is to decide where you want to go, then discuss with your travel advisor what the best-fit cruise line is for you. River cruising or close-to-home cruises are a good initial cruise. We will have personally cruised on a number of ships and different cruise lines and can help you narrow down your choices. It is important to us that the cruise line you travel with matches your needs and expectations." Martin suggests you may want to take a short local cruise before you head further afield. "To cruise your own country really offers a different perspective and to see NZ from the ocean is simply breathtaking, our coast is so spectacular!"



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A CRUISE LINE

"Engage with a CLIA-accredited Specialist and see if a CLIA Master Cruise Consultant is in your location," says Rogers. "Discuss what you want to achieve on this cruise holiday experience – how active or relaxed you want to be. Do you want to be active and do things, or be immersed into a different culture?" It's important to understand what is and isn't included in the price, to make an informed decision when comparing cruise lines. "Shore excursions, drinks packages, specialty dining and wi-fi costs can really add up. That's where a cruise expert can help."



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