

## Families Give Top Marks to Cruising

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New Survey by CLIA and Cruise Critic Points to Value, Price and Uniqueness of Cruise Experience as Advantages over Land-based Vacations

Families take cruises and they cruise often because the price is right, the value for money spent is outstanding and the cruise experience offers unique advantages over comparably priced land-based vacations. Those are the conclusions to be drawn from a just released online survey of more than 1,000 households by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and Cruise Critic, the top online resource on cruise information.

"Experts tell us that family vacations are one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry and this certainly is true for cruises. It's not just the amazing new generation of ships and shipboard activities and facilities for young travelers," said Terry Dale, president and CEO of CLIA. "Most important, families are choosing to cruise because of price and, even more important, value. They recognize that a cruise vacation offers advantages and features that are simply not found on any other type of vacation."

Carolyn Spencer Brown, editor in chief of Cruise Critic, agrees, "The cruise vacation is an attractive way to travel because many elements of a stress-free family trip are wrapped up into one tidy package for passengers. From accommodations and meals to entertainment and activities, the almost all-inclusive cruise experience appeals -- particularly to families -- because of the tremendous value and convenience it offers."

Among the key findings:

Families take a lot of cruises. Almost half (46 percent) of respondents have taken two to four cruises with children under the age of 18, 15.2 percent have taken five to seven cruises, and 4.8 percent have taken more than ten.

Outstanding value. Over 83 percent of families said cruise vacations are very good or extremely good value.

The price is right. Among all family cruisers, 73.4 percent said that their last cruise was the same price or less than a resort vacation, with almost 50 percent saying that the cruise was slightly or much less costly.

Multiple advantages over resort vacations. Family cruisers listed many key advantages to taking a cruise over a family resort stay, including: the opportunity to visit multiple destinations (62.8 percent), the all-inclusive nature of a cruise vacation - accommodations, meals, entertainment and shipboard activities included in one price - (57.7 percent), onboard kids programs and facilities (30.2 percent), the variety of onboard amenities (28.0 percent), and onboard entertainment (20.3 percent).

Destination rules. 36.6 percent of families said that the destination or itinerary was the primary deciding factor in choosing a family cruise. Almost 30 percent were most motivated by price.

Planning is easy. Almost 70 percent of respondents said that planning a cruise was easier than planning a resort vacation.

Cruising is relaxing, hassle-free and provides for quality family time. The survey found that 44.3 percent of families spend about half their time together on a cruise, while 42.7 percent said they spend all or most of their cruise vacation together as a family.

Over 30 percent of respondents said quality shared family time was the best thing about a cruise while over 20 percent cited the hassle-free "don't need to plan anything" quality of a cruise as the most enjoyable feature of a vacation at sea. The opportunity to see multiple destinations, kids' enjoyment of the cruise experience, the quality of shipboard service and amenities, and kids' facilities and services were other leading reasons to choose a family cruise.

Cruising can be a great choice for a multi-generational vacation. Over 60 percent of respondents say they sometimes or always travel as an extended family (with grandparents and/or grandchildren.)

Almost 76 percent of families reported that their kids took advantage of kids-only activities, facilities and/or entertainment onboard ship.

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