



Thank you for being a part of the  
**First Annual VCM Trade for Life™ Convention**  
**A 5 Day Caribbean Cruise**  
March 23-28, 2009

### Cruise Tips

**Below is important information to know before you go.** Please read it carefully and save this letter for future reference. It will answer many of your questions!

#### PAYMENTS

The due dates for deposits and final payments are on your confirmation letter. When making payments, please be sure to put the booking number on your check or money order and mail it to the address on the letter. Mark your calendar, as missed payments can result in penalties, or your reservation being cancelled.

#### INSURANCE

Everyone expects to sail, but some may not due to unexpected emergencies. We highly recommend travel insurance to protect you and your vacation investment. Insurance protects you for certain cancellations, trip interruption, health coverage, and baggage loss. Just give us a call to add it to your booking. When you purchase insurance, your tickets from the cruise line may read "insurance declined". Don't worry – the coverage is with TravelGuard, an international travel insurance company providing excellent coverage independent of the cruise line.

#### CANCELLATION POLICY AND PENALTIES FOR THE CRUISE LINE

This will vary according to the number of days prior to sailing. Please refer to your invoice for your cancellation policy and penalty. **ALL CANCELLATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN WRITING.** Once your reservation has been cancelled, we will begin the refund process with the cruise line, which can take up to eight weeks.

#### IDENTIFICATION

**Starting JANUARY 1, 2008, all passengers will need a passport for cruise travel.** It's very important that names on bookings are legal names and not nicknames. The names on I.D. must match the names on invoices and cruise documents. Check the spelling of names as soon as you receive your invoice. A name change fee will be assessed by the cruise line for any changes made after final payment. Passports for U.S. citizens can be obtained at your local post office. Please allow 6-8 weeks for your passport to be processed and mailed. For further details regarding up-to-date proof of citizenship requirements, as well as further information on how to obtain or renew a passport, please visit the following website: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_2223.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html). For non-U.S. citizens, you'll need to contact the local embassy for your country of citizenship to determine identification and travel requirements.

#### TRAVELING WITH MINORS

Children under 18 years of age must travel with the consent of both parents. If a minor is traveling with only one parent, that parent must have a notarized letter of consent from the



absent parent, a copy of the sole custody document, or the death certificate of the absent parent. If a minor is traveling without either legal parent, a notarized letter of consent must be signed by both parents and presented in addition to their proper proof of citizenship.

#### DRESS CODE

Dress for fun! Casual sportswear is great for daytime activities. Evening dress is less casual pantsuits, sun dresses, sport shirts, slacks, etc. There'll be one formal evening. For formal evenings, ladies might wear pantsuits, cocktail-type dresses, etc. Men must wear suits, sport coats with ties, or a tuxedo. Jeans and shorts are not allowed in the dining room in the evenings.

#### TIPPING

Of all the questions we receive, this one is the most common. Generally speaking, tipping is a great way to show the ship's staff how much you have appreciated their service. As with many service industries, these ladies and gentlemen are paid a salary far below what we, as Americans, consider a decent wage. You only need to tip your Cabin Steward, Dining Room Head Waiter, and Assistant Waiter. The rule of thumb is a total of \$10 per guest, per day. For example, a 7-night cruise will mean a total of \$70 in gratuities per guest. Most cruise lines will automatically add this to your shipboard account. Others will leave envelopes in your stateroom for you to personally give the tip to the appropriate person.

#### TICKETS

You should receive your documents about 7-14 days prior to sailing. Again, if you have moved, make sure we have your new address so documents will be received in a timely manner. Please supply a street address - we cannot ship to a P.O. Box.

#### PRE-REGISTRATION WITH CRUISE LINES

This is required by Homeland Security, and can be done online by going to the cruise line's website. You will need your ship name, sail date, and the cruise line reservation number found on your invoice. Doing this in advance will save you as much as an hour of waiting time when checking in at the pier.

#### TRANSPORTATION

For those driving to the pier, there is ample parking that usually needs to be paid in cash at the time of arrival. The fee will depend on which port you will be leaving from and the length of the cruise, but usually runs around \$10-15 per day. If you are arranging your own airfare, it is very important to arrive at least four hours prior to the time of embarkation. Flights home should be scheduled for five or more hours after your scheduled arrival into port. If you elect to make your own air/ground transfer arrangements, the cruise line will not be responsible for anyone not on the ship at the time of sailing, regardless of the reason, and will not refund any portion of the cruise fare. We recommend purchasing our insurance, which can be of help in this situation.

#### ON BOARD PURCHASES

With the exception of the ship's casino, everything at sea can be purchased without cash. Before buying something onboard, you will need to set up an account. You can start it with a credit card, cash, or traveler's checks. On the last day of the cruise no one will be allowed to leave the ship until all accounts are settled. You'll be required to sign for all purchases. Receipts will always be given and you can also request a statement or check your balance whenever you wish. Each passenger can have his or her own account, or the whole stateroom



or family may share an account. On the day before the cruise ends, a statement will be put in each stateroom showing the total spent onboard. If you agree with the charges, they will show up on your next credit card statement. For cash accounts onboard, this can be settled at the end of the cruise, and you'll receive a refund for any unused money left in the account.

#### **SHORE EXCURSIONS**

Most of the cruise lines have shore excursions listed on their websites and you can, in most cases, purchase them ahead of time. Some of the excursions will sell out early, so we recommend booking them as soon as you can - usually 60-70 days before your cruise. While this is completely optional, booking your excursions through the cruise line is a safe and reliable way to visit your port-of-call, especially if it's your first visit to the destination.

#### **MEDICAL, PHYSICAL or DIETARY NEEDS**

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any special needs. Most situations can be accommodated when the cruise line has advanced knowledge. Make sure you bring enough of your prescription medicine - as the ship's infirmary is limited as far as what they can supply - and be sure to keep it in its original bottle or packaging for security and safety reasons. If refrigeration is needed for medication, you can request a stateroom with a small refrigerator - available on most ships. If not, the cabin steward can keep it refrigerated for you, or it can be stored in the infirmary. If you are pregnant, you're welcome to travel provided that you don't reach your 24th week by the end of the cruise. If you are visibly pregnant, please bring a doctor's note indicating permission for you to travel and your expected due date. Finally, most cruise lines can make arrangements for special dietary needs with advance notification.

#### **EMERGENCY**

If a family member or friend needs to reach you for an emergency situation, they can call the High Seas Operator at 1-800-SEACALL. (But beware - high seas calls are VERY expensive and should only be made in cases of extreme emergency.) For "less than emergency" messages, we suggest using email since all ships have Internet access. You'll find more information on this in your documents. Cell phones will not work on all ships and will not have strong reception at all times. Service may be available in some ports of call depending on your service provider.

Bon Voyage!

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