ONCE YOU'VE CHOSEN THE RIGHT CRUISE -- IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE THE BEST STATEROOM FOR YOUR BUDGET.

Simply because there are so many staterooms (cabins) to choose from, lots of people just give up and either take "whatever" or walk away from the cruise experience.  That's unfortunate because the cruise experience boasts a higher customer satisfaction rating than all other vacation venues.

However, that "high rate of satisfaction" is best achieved when all the right choices were made.

That's where expertise comes into play.

So before we give a "real life" cruise as an example of what to look for – let's discuss the basics of picking your stateroom.

#1 – keep in mind the type and placement of the stateroom on a ship is a major determining factor in the overall cost.  If money is no object – choose a veranda (room with a tiny balcony; usually with 2 chairs and a small table) or better yet a suite (usually a slightly larger balcony plus more amenities). But even with a veranda or suite – the placement on the ship is crucial –even though they tend to be in the better locations.

If, like the rest of the real world, your budget does matter, then the time you take to select your stateroom will most definitely pay off. Discuss the details with your travel consultant; they are specifically trained to help you make those decisions based upon the basics presented below.

**Take some time to review what's on each deck. Here's the list of rooms to avoid:**

         Don't book a room above or below the floors which feature late night activities (unless you are the kind who can sleep though anything).  If your floor is under or above a night club or lounge (especially if it has a dance floor) – there will be noise lasting into the wee hours. Ditto for the theatre, bars and in general, the promenade deck.

         Avoid the laundry room, elevators, stairwells and area near the kid's club – they aren't just noisy, they also tend to get congested.

         Don't take a room under the pool deck as there is excessive traffic and noise at all hours.

         Unless you require adjoining rooms (to accommodate more than 4 guests in your immediate party) stay away from that type of room – they do allow more noise from the neighbors who may be complete strangers and possibly 'late night party animals'.

         If you have concerns about motion sickness – then your best choice is a room mid-ship where there is less potential for rocking -- although, modern stabilizers have transformed the cruise experience as they greatly reduce the effects of movement even in the roughest water.

         An Inside cabin (one with no window or view to the outside) will be less costly.

         An Ocean View cabin has a window or port hole – but the window does not open and there is no balcony or veranda.  Depending on placement on the ship, they generally cost more than an Inside cabin – but less than a Veranda.

Did you know that multi-generation vacations are exploding in both vacations booked and overall enjoyment ratings? That's because families are learning it's great fun to travel together – and there's a benefit 'cost wise' to travel as a preplanned group. (With most cruise lines, as few as 5 cabins achieve either a discount or extra amenities such as on-board credit allowances (money which is awarded per stateroom and may be spent at your discretion while on the cruise). That's a huge plus.

Cruising is PERFECT for multi-generations: the right choice can allow fabulous venues, multiple cultural and educational experiences, opportunities for grandparents to spend time with grandkids, shared experiences and long lasting memories – and there's still plenty of time to just kick back, rest, re-coop and enjoy solitude when desired.  Your group may want to book rooms in the same vicinity – or allow a bit of distance for privacy. Once again -- your choice.

I promised a "real life" cruise review.  The Celebrity Infinity with group space booked for May 6, 2019 out of Barcelona is a good example of some of what you may want to consider in a cruise – especially if you are thinking of multi-generation travel.

It boasts nine exceptional ports (in 4 countries: Spain; Gibraltar, United Kingdom; France and Italy) with long days spent at each – that allows plenty of time to explore and encounter culture, history and art. It's a moderate priced itinerary which avoids the use of a mega-ship so that smaller ports may be accessed. Because of the time of year – we anticipate near perfect weather for the days spent touring – but mornings and evenings (when we will be on the ship) will quite likely be cooler.  That means the added expense of a Balcony – or even an Ocean View may not be warranted – unless your budget permits. There will be less time to sit on a balcony if you are going to be out and about all day – and by the time we return each evening it will be dark and cooler – with little time for the balcony.  For a tour like this, an Inside Cabin will likely suffice – so we've reserved a bunch of them.

With beginning prices of $1599 per person – this offers tremendous value for an 11 night vacation.

Where else in Europe could you expect to purchase 11 night hotel lodging – with room service twice each day, all meals; travel between ports; evening entertainment; use of pool, sauna, gym; games and fun for all ages; countless on-board activities; detailed information – including professional presentations – of what to see and do in each port and the comfort and convenience of knowing English is the primary language used on ship? You always have reliable help and experienced staff on board to assist you.

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| **Ship Name: Celebrity Infinity** |
| **2019 Sail Date: May 06** |
| **Destination: Europe** |
| **Departure Port: Barcelona, Spain** |
| **Ports of Call: Barcelona, Spain; Valencia, Spain; Alicante, Spain; Gibraltar, United Kingdom; Malaga, Spain; At Sea; Provence(Marseille), France; Nice(Villefranche), France; Florence/pisa(Livorno), Italy; Rome(Civitavecchia), Italy; At Sea; Barcelona, Spain** |

Prices:

Inside cabin: $1599.00

Ocean view: $2119.00

Veranda:      $3099.00

Taxes, fees and port charges: $148.17 USD