

Smooth Sailing

It's your first holiday as a married couple, so your honeymoon is something extra special. A luxury cruise is just that - it's the ultimate honeymoon trip with every travel stress removed, leaving only pure pleasure and enjoyment for you the newly weds.



Cruising can be a little like time travel. You can literally go sound to sleep in one country and wake up refreshed in another.

As you sleep, the cruise boat gently floats you to a brand new country with new attractions to enjoy. You don't even suffer the customs queue, because it's all handled on your behalf. If you love luxury, decadence and never ever having to reach for a wallet, cruising is the way to go. All the tedium is taken out of travel because there's no packing and unpacking, time wasted getting from one place to another, nor any of the stress normally associated with travelling. Cruising is a true holiday with the focus firmly on relaxation, pampering and enjoyment. It's the ultimate way to see the world with ease and be cocooned in style all the way.

Cruise ships move so smoothly and so silently that you mostly have to check outside to see if the ship is moving at all, because there's simply no other way to know. So getting seasick is virtually impossible. The two Crystal Cruises ships, Serenity and Symphony, ply the world's oceans throughout the year, always choosing the best weather and sailing conditions wherever they go – so

it's always smooth sailing. Some months the ships are in the Mediterranean, other times they are in the Caribbean or somewhere else spectacular. While both cruise liners are utterly beautiful and luxurious - and the service is extraordinary - the atmosphere is completely unpretentious, and the crew is gathered from around the world so giving a 'united nations' atmosphere.

While on board, it's a lot like living in a luxurious maritime village. Entertainment and activities are plentiful and varied - you can watch movies, see live shows, gamble in the casino, enjoy a spa treatment, dine out in half a dozen restaurants and different venues, go shopping, learn a language or to play a musical instrument, paint or do yoga – or you could simply do nothing at all but relax. Best of all, the cruise is all inclusive, so you don't ever have to think of money, unless you want to go shopping. Plus, it's a vibrant environment, that's perfectly safe and secure, and utterly convenient in every way. Whatever you'd like, just ask for it. Your biggest daily decision is where to dine on board – Italian, Japanese, formal, casual, in suite or out. Plus there's the traditional cuisine of each destination country to enjoy.

With Istanbul and its iconic Blue >>



Mosque far behind us, we swop Turkey for Greece and visit idyllic Santorini. As we walk the winding cobbled streets lined by quaint whitewashed homes, traditional loud music fills the air. Lunch is delicious moussaka, washed down with traditional ouzo, and, with Santorini souvenirs in hand, we board the Crystal Serenity to sail further. Next stop is Athens – to see the mighty Acropolis high on a hilltop overlooking the snow white city, and to shop in the colourful Plaka District. But also to taste real spanakopita, freshly baked.

With hardly a bow wave Serenity sails again, cutting her way silently through the inky clear Ionian Sea, along the coast of Greece and Albania and on to the acclaimed Dalmation Coast of Croatia. This picture perfect coastline with its multitude of tiny islands is definitely reminiscent of the spots on a Dalmation's coat. In all, there are 1 200 islands, some just big rocks and others with little lighthouses. We stop in

Dubrovnik, which has seen both war and peace, and walk along the old city wall. It's postcard beautiful, with worn streets, Gothic and Baroque churches.

Sailing into Venice at sunrise is spectacular; the city appears to be floating on water and it is completely unforgettable. Venice has got to be the most romantic city on earth, not just for its winding streets and waterways and evocative architecture, but for its typical Italian lust for living and elegant lifestyle. Shop for famous Murano glass or handmade paper and lace, but be sure to get lost and found in the tangle of alleyways. Count the bridges, feed the pigeons on the Piazza St Marco and sip creamy coffees in cafes. Then at sunset, hail a gondola and slink along the Grand Canal, lying back at leisure. Venice is pure magic infused with passion, and topped with eternal romance. It's the perfect place for lovers to linger a little longer, and gently ease back into life on earth. ♡

