

# Let's Get Packing for a Baltic Cruise: A Disney Cruise Line Planning Article

by Stephanie Denton, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I've heard people say that when packing for a long trip, you should pack light. There's definitely something to be said for that when traveling to Europe.

This was our family's first trip to Europe, and while we didn't want to over pack, we wanted to make sure we'd have everything we needed. We'd cruised before with Disney Cruise Line, but never to Europe. This article will hopefully give you some insight as to what we packed, and why, and help you create a packing list that works for you and your family!

First, we decided what suitcases and bags we'd be taking. We made this decision early on, but neglected to ever set our suitcases next to each other until we began filling them. The reason I'm mentioning this is because of our three "medium" suitcases, I discovered that mine was considerably smaller than the other two! If we'd had the time, I would have gone back to Costco and purchased another of the larger "medium" cases. I would suggest placing all of your bags side by side, to see if you're happy with the sizes. Several years ago I purchased packing cubes from ebags. We each have our own color, to help separate and organize our clothes. These are really helpful if you need to open your suitcase while traveling. Best of all, they helped organize our clothes in our ship's stateroom. In the end, we took three suitcases (one for each of us), and we each took a backpack as our carry-on. We like backpacks because they're easy to carry, and we can fit everything inside. They zip up for security, and have pockets that fit our iPads, books, headphones, chargers, a small purse, etc. For a travel purse, I prefer the crossbody style. I have one from Eddie Bauer that I took with us, but I know a lot of people like the Baggalini and Vera Bradley brands too. You can wear it along the front of you, helping to keep your personal items safe as you venture out on excursions.

□ Packing clothes for a Baltic cruise in the summer is much different than packing for the Caribbean. We watched the weather regularly before we went, and discovered that we'd need less shorts, and more long pants/jeans. We each took a pair of shorts with us, but we didn't wear them much. We took short sleeve shirts, as well as a few long sleeve, and zip-up sweatshirts. We packed bathing suits, but didn't end up using them. Thinking back, we probably could have used a soak in the hot tub after a busy excursion day! We also have

lightweight rain jackets that came in handy multiple times. We packed small umbrellas as well. When cruising with Disney, you can do laundry onboard the ship. We chose to do laundry the first night onboard the ship, because we'd done some sightseeing before our cruise. We washed once more towards the end of our cruise. For this reason, we took approximately five changes of clothes with us. This enabled us to take medium bags instead of larger ones.

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□ Many people enjoy dressing up on a cruise. If that's your thing, then go for it. We prefer to dress nice, but not formal. My daughter and I took two skirts that we could mix and match with a few tops. I also suggest a light sweater, since in the evening it can be chilly (and sometimes downright cold!). We dressed things up with cute jewelry, and my daughter loved adding a flower or bow (often Disney!) to her hair. These items are fun, and small to pack. My husband prefers to wear a polo shirt with either a nice pair of jeans, or Dockers. If you go for the Dockers you'll probably want a second pair of shoes, so keep that in mind. Women's dressy shoes tend to be easier to pack than men's (they're less bulky). On our 7-night Baltic cruise, five of the nights were "cruise casual," one night was "formal," and one was "semi-formal." Even though your Daily Navigator will say that it's formal night, it is perfectly acceptable for you not to wear formal attire. And whatever you decide to wear, you can get your pictures taken as a family, and with the captain. The decision is up to you.

When packing toiletries, I start a list of what we'll need over the course of a 7-night cruise (longer if you're extending your stay). This helps me think of things over time, and I'm less likely to forget something. If you're traveling to a foreign country, you will most likely be able to buy things like deodorant, but there's no guarantee it'll be the brand you prefer. It's best to take what you think you'll need, and a little extra. In addition to the usual stuff, you'll want to consider taking a pain reliever, such as ibuprofen. Even though you may not enjoy the pool, sunscreen is a great idea since you'll be out in the sun A LOT. We also like to take some individually wrapped hand wipes (easier than worrying about a bottle of hand sanitizer). If you think you'll do laundry, you'll want to bring detergent. They sell little boxes there, but it's been a long time since I've used the powder kind so I took Tide pods in a Ziploc, along with some dryer sheets. I took just enough shampoo and conditioner for the pre and post cruise stops, knowing that I wanted to indulge with Disney Cruise Line's H2O Plus products. In each stateroom they leave you 2-ounce bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and lotion. If you use them up, they will replenish your stash! Disney Cruise Line's ships have hair dryers on board, but you'll want to check with your hotel(s) abroad to make sure they have one. Otherwise you may want to bring your own.

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□ In addition to taking our phones, iPads, and headphones, we also bought international chargers. We ended up getting a deal on Amazon, and purchased three (one for each of us). On the ship they have standard United States plugs in the staterooms, but if you're making pre or post stops you'll want an international charger too. We took our camera with us, but if your phone has a great camera you might be able to get by without one. We also took a neck pillow, and a sleeping mask for each of us. They fit nicely in our backpacks, and helped with the long flights.

□ The other item that you'll want to consider when packing is spending money. Check into credit cards that don't charge international fees, and how to exchange currency (you'll want some local currency for shopping street vendors).

□ Wherever your travels take you, enjoy the planning process! It's your vacation, so have fun doing it your way. No two vacations are exactly alike, but I hope that my advice can help you plan for yours. Happy planning!

#### *About The Author:*

□ *Stephanie grew up in Southern California, and has visited Disneyland many times since childhood. She and her family now live in Idaho, visiting Disneyland once every year or so, and Disney World about every three years. They are members of Disney Vacation Club, and would live on a Disney Cruise Line ship if they could.*

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