

# What is the cheapest time to take a cruise? What travelers should know.

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USA TODAY

Published 3:01 p.m. ET Feb. 27, 2023

When it comes to finding cruise deals, timing is important. Like other forms of travel, there are certain windows when travelers can find particularly good fares – and others when it's harder.

"If you're looking for a deal over Christmas, you're probably not going to find it," said Stephanie Goldberg-Glazer, chief experience officer and owner of the travel agency Live Well, Travel Often. "That's just how it is."

But arming themselves with that knowledge and remaining flexible can help travelers book the cruise they want at the right price. Here's what travelers should know about the cheapest times to take a cruise.

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## What is the cheapest time to go on a cruise?

Travelers can often find deals by sailing when kids are in school and steering clear of major holidays, Goldberg-Glazer said. For instance, cruises for the week after New Year's can be half the price of those during the holiday with a wider selection of cabins.

"Once you book, there's just generally more availability a little bit longer because the holidays book up so quickly," she said.

But remember that destinations can be seasonal, which may narrow the window of opportunity. The Alaska cruise season, for example, lasts from May to September, while the Caribbean season typically stretches from November through April.

Passengers may also find bargains on repositioning cruises – when cruise lines move ships from one part of the world to another between seasons. Those sailings tend to occur in the spring and fall, and travelers can find them labeled as such on cruise line websites or through a travel agent.

*Story continues below.*

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## **What is the cheapest time to book a cruise?**

Prospective cruisers can usually find "a lot of good deals at the beginning of the year" during wave season, Goldberg-Glazer said. That period typically lasts from January until March.

However, the optimal time to book may depend on when you plan to sail. Goldberg-Glazer recommended booking as far in advance as possible.

"I think that, realistically, if you can book a year or more in advance and block off the time and know that's going to work for you, then that's perfect," she said.

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She cautioned travelers booking nonrefundable deposits – which they may not get back if they have to change their plans – to be certain the reservation they make will work for them. But those booking refundable deposits "have nothing to lose," she said.

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