

Grace's Cruises – Insider Travel Tip

Cruise Beverage Packages: When They're Worth It (And When They're Not)

One of the most common questions cruisers ask is:
“Should I buy the beverage package?”

The answer depends on:

- Your travel style
- The cruise line
- What's included
- How much you realistically plan to use onboard

For many travelers, booking beverage packages and amenities in advance can offer excellent value — especially when the cruise line bundles these inclusions into the cruise fare as part of a promotional package.

Here's a simple guide to understanding when beverage packages may be worth considering.

What Cruise Beverage Packages Usually Include

Depending on the cruise line and package, beverage packages may include:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Cocktails and wine
- Specialty coffees
- Soda
- Bottled water
- Smoothies or fresh juices
- Energy drinks

Some packages also bundle:

- WiFi
- Gratuities
- Specialty dining
- Casual dining
- Shore excursion credits

This is where the value can increase significantly.

What Cruise Beverage Packages Usually Include

Several cruise lines now offer promotional packages that can provide very good overall value when added during the initial booking process.

Princess Cruises - Princess offers:

- Princess Plus
- Princess Premier

These packages may include:

- Beverage package
- WiFi
- Gratuities
- Fitness classes (Premier)
- Casual or Specialty dining

For many Princess guests, these packages are often less expensive than purchasing amenities separately onboard.

Holland America Line - Holland America offers the:
Have It All package

And when booked early enough, guests may sometimes upgrade to:
Have It All Plus package

This can include:

- Elite Beverage Package upgrade
- Premium WiFi
- Specialty dining
- Shore excursion credit
- Prepaid gratuities

For many Holland America guests, this bundled pricing can provide excellent value compared to purchasing everything individually onboard.

Celebrity Cruises - Celebrity Cruises offers bundled promotions that often include:

- Classic Beverage Package
- Basic WiFi

This is commonly referred to as the “2 Perk” package.

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) - NCL’s “More at Sea” allows guests to select amenities such as:

- Unlimited beverage package
- Specialty dining
- WiFi

This flexible approach works well for travelers who want to customize what’s included.

Cunard Line - Cunard also offers beverage package options that may be added before sailing.

Like most cruise lines, purchasing amenities in advance is often less expensive than waiting until onboard.

Royal Caribbean & Carnival Work Differently

Royal Caribbean and Carnival typically do not bundle large beverage packages into the original cruise booking in the same way as some premium cruise lines.

Instead, guests usually purchase:

- Beverage packages
- Dining packages
- WiFi

through the cruise line app or cruise planner before sailing.

These packages are often:

- Cheaper when purchased before the cruise
- More expensive once onboard

 **Tip:** Cruise lines frequently run pre-cruise sales through their apps or websites.

When Beverage Packages ARE Worth It

Beverage packages are often worthwhile for travelers who:

- Enjoy cocktails, wine, or specialty coffees daily
- Plan to spend many days onboard
- Drink bottled water or soda regularly
- Want a more “all-inclusive” feeling onboard
- Prefer not to track every purchase

Bundled packages that also include WiFi and gratuities can sometimes provide surprisingly good overall value.

When Beverage Packages May NOT Be Worth It

Packages may not make sense for travelers who:

- Drink very little alcohol
- Rarely purchase specialty beverages
- Spend most days ashore
- Already receive perks through loyalty programs
- Prefer paying only for what they use

Some travelers are perfectly happy purchasing drinks individually.

Booking Packages Before the Cruise Usually Saves Money

One of the biggest mistakes cruisers make is waiting until they board the ship.

Many cruise lines offer:

- Advance purchase discounts
- App-only promotions
- Pre-cruise beverage sales

This is especially common on Royal Caribbean, Carnival, NCL and Celebrity. If you think you may want a package, it's usually best to purchase it before sailing.

Don't Focus Only on Alcohol

Many travelers underestimate how quickly these items can add up:

- Bottled water
- Specialty coffees
- Soda
- Fresh juices
- WiFi
- Specialty Dining
- Gratuities

Sometimes the value of the package comes more from the bundled extras than the alcohol itself.

First-Time Cruiser Tip

Before purchasing any package, think realistically about:

- Your drinking habits
- How much time you'll spend onboard
- What's already included in your fare
- Whether WiFi or gratuities are bundled

The best package is the one that fits your actual travel style — not simply the most expensive option.

Final Thoughts From Grace

Cruise beverage packages can offer excellent value for some travelers, while others may save money purchasing only what they use. The key is understanding how each cruise line structures its packages and comparing the total value of the inclusions.

In many cases, booking amenities together before the cruise can provide better pricing, added convenience, and a more relaxing onboard experience.

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