



Grace's Cruises – Insider Travel Tip

Traveling With Infants Under 2: What Parents Need to Know



Flying With an Infant Under 2

1. Travel with the infant as a lap child

Children under two are generally permitted to travel on an accompanying adult's lap without purchasing their own seat. The infant must still be added to the reservation, and international fares, taxes or government fees may apply.

2. The “empty seat” strategy

Parents sometimes choose seats strategically, hoping the seat beside or between them remains empty. If the flight isn't full, the airline may allow them to use that empty seat.

💡 **Tip:** An empty seat is a bonus, never a guarantee. If you haven't purchased a seat for your infant, be prepared to hold your infant on your lap if the flight is full.

3. Purchase a seat for the infant

Parents can purchase a regular airline seat for a child under two. Check the airline's requirements for an approved child restraint system/car seat. Transport Canada recommends using an approved child restraint system for children under two on all flights, even though Canadian regulations permit them to be held in an adult's arms.



Strollers, Car Seats & Infant Equipment

Airlines have different allowances for:

- Strollers
- Car seats
- Playpens
- Diaper bags
- Gate-checking infant equipment
- Checked baggage for infants

✓ Check your airline's infant baggage allowance before packing. Don't assume your infant's equipment counts the same way as regular checked luggage.



The Part Parents Often Forget: Transportation After the Flight

You've figured out the flight...but then you land in Rome, Barcelona, Miami or Vancouver. Now what?

You may be taking:

- Taxi
- Uber/rideshare
- Private transfer
- Hotel shuttle
- Cruise-line motorcoach
- Rental car
- Minivan
- Train

Child-restraint requirements vary by country, vehicle type and the child's age/size. A taxi exemption in one destination may not apply to a private transfer or rental car. Similarly, a cruise-line motorcoach and a local taxi may have completely different requirements.

Don't Forget the Car Seat Question

Before leaving home, find out how your infant will legally and safely travel during each ground transportation portion of the trip.

For private transportation, ask whether an appropriate infant seat can be provided. If you're renting a vehicle, reserve the correct child seat ahead of time. This can prevent you from unnecessarily carrying a car seat around the world, or arriving at your destination and discovering you needed one.

Cruising With an Infant

Many first-time cruising parents probably assume: “Infants can cruise at any age.”
Not necessarily.

Minimum Age Requirements

Many major cruise lines require infants to be at least 6 months old on embarkation day for standard itineraries. Certain longer or more remote voyages may require infants to be at least 12 months old, including some transatlantic, transpacific and other itineraries with consecutive sea days.

 *Always check the cruise line's infant age policy before booking flights or making non-refundable travel arrangements. Minimum ages can vary by cruise line and itinerary.*

Infants Usually Aren't “Free” on Cruises

Unlike a lap infant on an airplane, an infant occupying a cruise stateroom is generally treated as an additional guest for cruise pricing purposes. Fares and promotions vary by cruise line and sailing. Sometimes children sail free or at reduced fares, but never assume an infant automatically cruises free simply because they're under two.

Choosing the Right Cabin

When choosing a cabin, consider a few things you may not initially think about:

- Is there enough room for a crib/Pack 'n Play?
- Where will the stroller be stored?
- Is a bathtub important, or is there only a shower?
- Would a balcony be useful during nap time?
- Is the cabin close to elevators?
- Is it underneath a noisy public area?
- Is appropriate refrigeration available for milk or formula?

 Be aware that stateroom coolers are not necessarily medical-grade refrigerators.

Infant Supplies Onboard

Don't assume the ship will sell your infant's preferred diapers, wipes, formula or infant food. Even if supplies are available, the brand or size you need may not be. Bring enough essentials plus extra for unexpected delays.

Parents should also check ahead about:

- Cribs
- High chairs
- Infant food/purée
- Bottle warming
- Refrigeration
- Laundry
- Diaper disposal
- Nursery services

Policies and availability vary considerably by cruise line and ship.

Infants & Swimming Pools

Infants who are not toilet trained may be prohibited from regular cruise-ship pools, even when wearing swim diapers. Some family-oriented ships have designated splash areas for diapered children, but not every ship does. Check before choosing your ship.

Childcare & Kids Clubs

Parents may see “kids club” listed as an amenity and assume their 18-month-old can attend, but often they can't. Minimum ages, nursery facilities, parent-supervised play areas, babysitting and fees vary by cruise line and ship. If childcare is important, make it part of your ship-selection process.

Documentation When Traveling With an Infant

An infant is still an international traveler. Depending on the trip, parents may need:

- Passport
- Visa/ETA or other entry authorization
- Birth certificate or supporting documentation
- Consent letter when one parent isn't traveling
- Cruise-line documentation

Being only six months old doesn't exempt an infant from a country's entry requirements.

Medical Considerations

Cruise ships have limited medical facilities compared with hospitals on land, which is one reason some cruise lines impose stricter infant-age requirements on remote and transoceanic itineraries. Parents should pack enough necessary medication and supplies and understand what medical services will or won't be readily available during the cruise.

Shore Excursions With Infants

Not every shore excursion accepts infants. Some have:

- Minimum ages
- Minimum heights
- Car-seat requirements
- Long bus rides
- Boats without suitable infant restraints
- Lots of stairs
- Terrain unsuitable for strollers

Look beyond “Can we bring our infant?” and ask, “Will this actually be an enjoyable experience?” Sometimes a few hours exploring independently is easier than an eight-hour motorcoach excursion.

Final Thoughts From Grace

Traveling with an infant can be an amazing experience. It just requires a little more planning. Think about the entire journey, not just the cruise or flight. Consider airline seating, infant equipment, ground transportation, cruise-line age requirements, cabin selection, childcare, shore excursions and documentation. A little preparation beforehand can make the difference between solving problems on vacation and simply enjoying your family adventure together.



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Your journey. Perfectly planned.

 **Toll Free:**
1.844.84.SHIPS (74477) (ext 102)

 **Direct Line / Text:**
604.265.4782

 **Email:**
grace@gracescruises.com