

Cruising has long been

a popular vacation option for people with disabilities and accessible options, both offshore and on, are increasingly easier to come by—if you know where (and how) to look. We've asked some well-travelled Peers, and Accessible Travel Specialist Tarita Davenock, to give us a peek at their cruise packing lists.

- 1. Extra Personal Items.** Bring a few days' worth of personal items—such as catheter supplies, ostomy supplies, diapers, and anything else you need to get by—in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost.
- 2. Chair Care.** Pack a spare inner tube, tire patching kit, and a small bicycle pump. Folding tires for emergencies, or a separate set of foam-filled “travel wheels,” can be handy too.
- 3. Photocopy of Your Passport.** Many ports of call will accept the photocopy, so you can leave your passport in your room safe. If you lose the photocopy, you'll still be able to get back on the ship (though if you're docked in Maui, you may not want to...)
- 4. Port Smarts.** An accessible ship doesn't necessarily mean the ports are. Itineraries that have ships “docking” at a pier provide easier access than ships that must “tender” guests ashore using small lifeboats which may have weight and wheelchair restrictions.
- 5. Tide Table.** Be aware of the changing tides. If the tide is out, the on/off ramp can be too steep and the ship may be forced to use a staircase instead.
- 6. Brakes.** Make sure you have (and apply) brakes or park correctly. Whether you're eating, taking in a show, or sitting pool-side, you're still technically in transit.
- 7. Excursion Etiquette.** When booking, opt for an accessibility-friendly itinerary. You can find excursion information aboard, but be sure to explain in advance that you'll be in a wheelchair and needing accessible accommodations.



Whether items will



8. **Accessible Amenities Brochure.** Cruise lines typically publish online information spelling out what services are available and what staff will or will not do.
9. **Accessible Room.** “We’re accessible” isn’t always what it sounds like, so do your due diligence.
10. **Workout Gear.** Many cruise ship gyms don’t have the equipment you’re used to at home. Keep fit by doing laps around the boat deck or going for a swim in the pool.
11. **Staying Mobile.** Mega-ships can require covering long distances to get to the different dining and entertainment option onboard. Many travel companies can arrange for extra equipment, such as scooters or chairs, to meet you when you arrive in your stateroom so you can roam freely—just try not to get lost!
12. **Assistance Dog.** If you’re travelling with a service dog, book early and inform the cruise line. Have the proper documentation, such as service dog certification or vaccination papers, and ensure that foreign authorities will allow you ashore.
13. **Equipment rental.** Organize your rentals in advance. Some ships have a limited number of wheelchairs or other equipment available on loan; if you absolutely require a wheelchair, oxygen concentrator, scooter or other equipment during your cruise, book early. An agent can help!

You can read about the other cruise essentials in this photo and find more tips about accessible cruising at sci-bc.ca/stories/blog. Need help booking a cruise or getting your documents and rentals in order? Visit www.taritatravelconnections.com, where a portion of the proceeds from every cruise booked supports SCI BC programs and services. ■

Cruise Control

you’re a first time cruiser or a seasoned sailor, these must-pack help keep your accessibility concerns at bay on the high seas.