

# The Ultimate Guide to Conference Cruising

*You've booked your conference and it is being held on a cruise ship – what do you need to know?*



NURSES FOR  
NURSES  
NETWORK



Please note that this is a guide only and does not take the place of your own common sense when planning your conference and travel requirements.

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# Travel Arrangements

How fabulous that you have chosen to join us on one of our Conferences that is being held aboard a cruise ship. This type of conference gives you the opportunity to combine your professional obligations to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) with your love of travel.

This combination of education and travel also provides you the opportunity to travel with family and friends, our busy lives as Nurses often sees us having to juggle the needs of our family and friends with our work commitments and career objectives. With Travel CPD you can be attending the conference and your travel companions can be exploring the ship and all the activities that are on offer. If you are travelling with children most ships offer a Kids Club with a full program of ship activities that are offered throughout the day and evening.



All travel arrangements are managed by the great staff at Education at Sea.

You can contact them on 02 6674 2577 or email: [enquiries@educationatsea.com.au](mailto:enquiries@educationatsea.com.au) They can also organise your pre or post cruise accommodation as well as any other travel arrangements.

One of the great things about attending a Nursing Conference on a cruise ship is that you can easily travel alone – once you meet the other attendees you will have a new group of friends to share this experience with. Please note though that if you choose to travel alone you will be charged the full cost of the cruise ship cabin. [Education at Sea](#) will be able to explain all the different room pricing on the ship that you can choose from.

We highly recommend that you take out travel insurance when you make your deposit to attend the conference. Bad things can happen to good people and insurance covers your financial loss, in the majority of cases, if you are unable to attend the Conference once your monies have been paid.

*Disclaimer: Please note that the information provided is general information and should be read in conjunction with the information provided by the individual cruise line.*



# Choosing Your Cabin

There are a number of things you need to consider when choosing your cabin.

In most cabins the king size bed can be split into two single beds. If you choose to share with more than two people in a cabin the bedding arrangement will be either bunk beds or a pull out lounge bed to accommodate the additional people. The bathrooms on a ship are compact as is the wardrobe space.



## Never Cruised Before?

1. Go to the Cruise Company's website and make yourself familiar with the ship and the cruise highlights.
2. You can set up an internet package when you get on the ship.
3. Before we leave the dock there will be a mandatory muster drill that you must attend – that information will be given to you on the ship.
4. A daily newsletter will be delivered to your room each night so that you can see what's happening.
5. A cruise ship is a cashless system – you will need to provide a credit or cash card on check in that will be used to bill you.
6. Boarding a ship – you will be given a boarding time, drop your bags off at check-in and have your boarding documents and passport ready, join the line and smile – it doesn't take that long to process. There is security screening and prohibited items will be taken from you.

**Quick Tip:**  
**Before you check in your bags, take a quick photo of your suitcase – makes it much easier to track down.**

## Rules for Sharing a Cabin:

- *Keep it tidy* - Don't leave your belongings strewn around the room. Keep your items tidy and away when not in use. Empty your bag and put it under the bed.
- *Sharing a wardrobe* - The space should be split equally by the number of people sharing the room. Hang up your items and use the drawers allocated to you.
- *Share the bathroom nicely* - Share the storage equally and agree in advance on shower times and washing of personal items – no one wants to move your knickers before they have a shower.
- Admit to snoring in advance.
- If you are a "Night owl" then negotiate lights out times in advance. If you go to bed early then take an eye mask with you.
- Don't be noisy if others are asleep. If you get up early then quietly get dressed and go explore the ship.
- Talk beforehand about modesty is everyone happy for people to walk around naked or is it preferred that people get changed in the bathroom.
- Remember if you want to get the drinks package all people sharing the room will need to pay for the drinks package.



## What Do the Costs Cover?

### The Conference Costs include:

- Access to the Conference Online Library 4 weeks before the sail date where you can access the self-directed material and watch the recorded webinars thus making the session optional to attend when on board.
- An exceptional conference program presented by highly skilled and knowledgeable presenters.
- A conference convenor who will ensure that the conference program is delivered in a professional and timely manner.
- A conference satchel that includes a copy of the program, an NfN pen and writing paper.
- A conference lanyard.
- Tea and coffee as per the conference program.
- Social/professional networking sessions to meet with fellow conference attendees and presenters to reflect on conference themes.
- A conference farewell reception that includes complimentary canapes and drinks.
- The creation of CPD shore tours where we will visit our Nursing colleagues in various practice settings (note that these are optional tours and there is an additional cost for same).

### The Cruise Cost include:

- Your room – it is airconditioned with private ensuite.
- There is a television and phone in the room.
- The ensuite usually has hotel toiletries as well as tissues and a hairdryer. Towels are changed daily.
- Clothes hangers, pool towels, and a personal safe.
- The Cabin Stewards who will attend to your room daily.
- Fabulous food choices other than specialty restaurants.
- Great entertainment options throughout the day and night.

### The Cruise Costs don't include:

- Internet, specialist restaurants, and drinks including alcohol -
- You are able to purchase additional packages
- Shore Tours are optional – there are two types:
  - Education at Sea create special tours just for our group and they need to be purchased before we sail.
  - The ship also offers shore tours that you can book directly with the ship.
- Airfares or boat transfers but these can be organised for you by Education at Sea.

### Conference Etiquette

So that every conference attendee has a great experience we have identified key points of conference etiquette that we ask all delegates to abide by:

- Be on time for the session.
- Don't interrupt the presenter unless they state they are happy to take questions during the presentation.
- Turn your mobile phone off.
- If you need to leave the room do so quickly and quietly.

### On Hospital Tour

- Try not to appear voyeuristic.
- If you would like to take photos seek permission first.
- Wear appropriate dress for the country we are travelling in.
- Wear appropriate dress for visiting a hospital.
- Stay with your group - don't wander off.
- Don't comment negatively to the staff at the facility.
- If in doubt seek clarification from a Conference Group Leader.







One rule to always travel by is never bring more bags than you can easily carry yourself – it is rare that there will be porters available to carry your bags for you. If a lift fails you will need to be able to carry your bags upstairs as well as some distance over uneven surfaces.

Don't worry about running out of clothes – you can rinse your clothes in your room, use the onboard laundry (if available) or you can pay to have your laundry done. It's a great idea to bring a few pegs with you as many showers have an inbuilt small clothes line or you can also bring those small plastic peg lines that you can buy for very little from one of those cheap shops that can be found all over the place. At worst, you can always go shopping!

## Online check-in – this is important to complete as it will save you time on the day you get on the boat

[Education at Sea](#) will let you know via email when online check-in is open.

1. Make sure you print out the baggage tags – you need to attach these to your bag at check-in so your bags come to your cabin. Have some sticky tape with you to attach the tags
2. Make sure your passport has a minimum of 6 months left on your return from the trip
3. Check if you need to organise any visas for your trip
4. Internet is available on most ships – you can organise a package to suit you on the ship
5. Mobile phone costs can be enormous if you use your plan when overseas. Check with your phone provider as there may be better packages available for you to use
6. We operate on ships time. Time zones may change please check your daily cruise planner that is provided to you by the ship in your cabin
7. We communicate with you via email – so/check your spam folders to make sure you are getting all the correspondence
8. Check your travel documents to see what dining option you have been allocated
9. Travel arrangements will be provided to you prior to departure

## What to Pack

1. Depending on the cruise there may be a number of special fun nights held. Go to the ship's website and find the cruise that we are travelling on – you will then be able to see a map of the ship and see where the conference is being held and where your room is located. You will also be able to find out what special nights are being held – these include formal nights, Mexican nights, 80's disco night to name a few. You can choose to participate in the fun of dressing up or not – the choice is yours.
2. We provide you a conference lanyard – so there is no need to bring one.
3. For conference days it is very casual so dress as you feel comfortable.
4. For night time if you are going to one of the many restaurants on the ships the minimum dress is smart casual. If you are going to the general buffet eating area then you will see anything from very casual to a person in a cocktail dress having a quick pizza before heading off to the casino.
5. On tour days – if we are visiting a health service it is nice to show our colleagues professional respect and dress, at a minimum, in smart casual. Good walking shoes are always a good idea. If it is a general tour then dress as you feel comfortable – when visiting overseas ports it is a great idea to google local dress customs – as what we believe is acceptable can be an affront to other cultures.
6. A pashmina or sarong is a great light accessory to always travel with – if it gets cold on the plane or town you're in it will keep you warm, it's there if you enter a religious area that requires you to cover your head, you can use it to sit on if you find yourself on the beach, and you can wrap it around you when you get out of the pool, it can also turn into a carry bag with a few well-placed knots if you have spent more at the shops than you planned.



### Toiletries:

Leave all heavy glass bottles at home. Decant your favourite shampoo, conditioner and any face and skin lotions into small plastic travel bottles and buy a sample size of toothpaste – pop these into a toiletry bag that has a hook on it so that you can hang it behind the bathroom door for easy access.

Bring any prescription medications with you. Check the rules for the destinations we are travelling to as some countries prohibit the use of codeine and many other drugs easily available in Australia. You may also require a letter from your medical officer for the medications that you are carrying.

At a minimum, it is a great idea to have your pharmacist label any medications in your kit with your name and instruction for administration.

***Don't forget the one, definite essential: travel insurance – health care outside of Australia can be very expensive!***





### Optional Tours

A number of optional tours are organised for most of the Conferences by the staff at Education at Sea. When possible we will visit a local health service so that we can meet our Nursing colleagues and find out how they deliver health care in that setting. The aim is to learn from each other.

The tours will always be of great value and highlight the cultural aspects of the community that we are visiting. Your travel companions are welcome to accompany you – you can purchase their tickets as part of your conference booking with Education at Sea.

1. Make sure you have proper footwear as there is usually a lot of walking
2. Shore tours are organised by Education at Sea and these will not appear on your cruise booking. They will appear on your statement from Education at Sea
3. Your shore tour tickets will be available for you to collect at the conference
4. You need to be self-mobile to attend a tour – up and down stairs, on and off buses. You may need to be able to walk for long periods over uneven surfaces
5. The meeting point for the shore tours will be communicated to you on the ship
6. It is important that you are aware of the time frames associated with the tours – we will leave on time and cannot take responsibility if you are left behind
7. Have a hat and a water bottle with you

### What to Pack (continued)

7. Have a day bag that you can take on tours with you that is light and easy to carry. It should be big enough to take your wallet but also a water bottle, sarong or pashmina, maybe an umbrella if it is the rainy season, as well as a plastic bag to hold a wet umbrella
8. A small torch is a handy item to have
9. Ear plugs can also be useful if you are sharing a room and your roommate snores – a sad thing to find out on the first night when you are trying to get to sleep
10. There is no need to bring a hairdryer – one is usually provided
11. Do not bring a power board on a ship as it will be confiscated, as will a jug or portable Nespresso machine (yes people have had these in their bags!)
12. Check the ship's website for the power outlet that is available as you may need a power adapter to charge your devices at the hotel before you board or whilst on the ship
13. Bring an empty water bottle with you so that you can fill it up at the free water stations around the ship – that way you will not have to pay big \$'s for water – the ship's water is safe to drink
14. Bring a snorkel and face mask if the ship is in tropical waters – flippers might be too much weight so leave them behind
15. Remember in your carryon for international flights your make-up and any toiletries needs to be in a see-through zip lock plastic bags
16. You cannot carry scissors or sharp objects in your carry on



## Your Health Matters

Here are the top 10 tips for staying healthy on a Conference Cruise:

### 1. Wash Your Hands

As Nurses this is inbuilt into our psyche – but it is extremely important on a ship. Norovirus can be a holiday killer in more ways than one!

### 2. Stay Hydrated

This means with water and lots of it. The ship's water is ok to use – so bring an empty bottle and refill it at the water stations around the ship.

### 3. Shore Tours

Not all places that you visit will have suitable drinking water so best to play it safe and take your own drinking water with you or buy bottled water there.

### 4. Manage Jet Lag

The best way to acclimatise is to get into the local time zone quickly – so get heaps of natural light and go to bed at your normal time at the local time you're in.

### 5. Wear Sun Screen

Stay sun smart and protect yourself from the pain and damage the sun can cause.

### 6. Alcohol

Try to avoid boozing it up more than you normally would. A hangover is the least of your worries; excessive drinking can put you at risk of getting into a fight, becoming sexually compromised or even falling overboard.

### 8. Food Glorious Food

You may feel less bloated or sluggish if you eat wisely on the ship. An added bonus is that you won't come home weighing 7 kilos more than you did before you got on board. We're not saying to skip the desert, but you could consider limiting yourself to one full plate at the buffet, having only two courses at dinner, or skip a meal altogether so you can indulge more at night.

### 9. Motion Sickness

It only happens to a chosen few but if you are one of the chosen ones then be prepared. Talk to your doctor before you leave and have some medication ready. Ginger is a great natural option as is acupressure wrist bands. Get fresh air, look at the horizon, drink ginger beer (so you can burp). Most voyages are usually very calm – you would be unlucky to be affected.

*Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent ill health – as well as not touching the toilet door handles!!*



### 7. Vaccinations

"In general, there are few health risks associated with cruise ship holidays. As long as the traveller is up-to-date with routine vaccinations (such as ADT) no further vaccinations may be required. If, however, there is a possibility that meals will be eaten on-shore in any less-developed country, vaccination against hepatitis A would be advisable."

TravelDoctor.com

[Read more:](#)

It is advisable that you discuss travel vaccination with your medical practitioner.

### 10. Common Sense

Just like any other holiday use your common sense. Take a small first aid kit with you. Make sure you have all your routine medications with you and that they are labelled by the pharmacist. Use good cough etiquette and stay away from those that don't. Get out on the deck for some fresh air each day and maybe a walk around the deck or up and down the stairs will do you good. If you are feeling tired rest, read a good book, and enjoy the chance to indulge yourself.

### **The Education Program**

The Education program is created and managed by the staff at the [Nurses for Nurses Network](http://www.nursesfor.com.au).

The program content is provided by expert Nurse Educators with extensive clinical and education experience.

You can send the NfNN team an email at [enquiries@nfnn.com.au](mailto:enquiries@nfnn.com.au)

1. The conference program will be made available to you prior to departure and again in your conference pack
2. We communicate with you via email – so check your spam folders to make sure you are getting all the correspondence
3. The Nurses for Nurses Network will email you prior to the departure date with a website link where you can access the Conference on-line Library website. This website will continue to be available to you for 4 weeks post the conference
4. Technology has freed us these days from taking piles of paper to a conference. Download the presentation note pages and other documents onto your lap top or iPad so you can access them on the ship – internet costs can be very expensive on a ship if internet is working at all.

A ship is a fabulous conference venue but life on a ship has its limitations that you need to be aware of:

- Most ships have a dedicated conference area but they can be a bit noisy at times. Captains messages and safety announcements will be heard within the conference space
- The size of the space is different on each ship as is the room layout so we also need to be adaptable in how we can all use the space
- The ship can reallocate space on a ship without notice so we need to be a little flexible from time to time with the space that is allocated
- You will be provided with a conference pack at the conference registration reception that takes place on the first night on board the ship. This will contain your lanyard, pen, and writing material
- We highly recommend that you attend the first night conference registration session so that you can meet other conference participants, pick up your conference pack, be informed of any changes to the conference program, and collect your optional shore tour tickets if you have purchased same.

- Conference sessions will commence on time – if you are running late you are welcome to come into the room but please be quiet in doing so
- Your CPD certificate for the Conference will be sent to you after the conference.
- You will be provided with a Conference Transcript at the conference reception. If you are a Nurses for Nurses Network member then your CPD certificates will also be made available to you on the website in your member area.
- The week after the conference we will send you an electronic evaluation survey – please complete it – it only takes a few minutes and we do take your recommendations seriously.

### ***Continuing Professional Development held on a Cruise Ship How Fabulous!***



## Conference Cruise Checklist

Item	Yes	No	N/A
I have booked my shore tours			
I've got all my documents from Education at Sea Phone: 02 6674 2577 or <a href="mailto:enquiries@educationatsea.com.au">enquiries@educationatsea.com.au</a>			
I have travel Insurance if not ring Education at Sea (02 6674 2577)			
I have completed my on-line check-in			
I have printed off my luggage labels and have them in my carry-on bag			
I have sticky tape to affix the bag label			
I have my health declaration completed			
I have a passport with at least 6 months left on it from the date I get back into Australia			
I have my visa (if I need one)			
I have money for the country I am travelling to			
I have told my bank that I will be using my cards overseas			
I have a photocopy of my passport and the bank cards I am taking with me			
I have a photo on my iPhone of my passport and bank cards			
I know how to turn off my data on my mobile phone			
I have purchased a phone plan for when I'm away			
I have checked my email for any last-minute correspondence from Education at Sea or the Nurses for Nurses Network			
I have weighed my bag and it is under the weight allowed - or I have purchased additional baggage allowance online as it is cheaper			

Item	Yes	No	N/A
I have checked the cultural requirements of the countries I am visiting and have appropriate clothing			
I do not have items with more than 100mls in my carry-on bag			
I do not have scissors in my carry-on bag			
I have all the medication I need for the time I am away			
I have a small torch			
I have earplugs (my roommate snores!)			
I have the power outlet adapter I need (check the ships website)			
I have all the chargers I need for my electronic devices			
Empty Water bottle in my carry-on bag			
Snorkel and mask (if tropical)			
Good walking shoes and a hat			
I have downloaded the pdf documents I require for the education sessions onto my lap top or tablet and I have watched the prerecorded webinars as part of my Conference preparation			
I have a copy of the conference program so I know where and when to meet for Registration on the first night			





*“The Conference was very well delivered by the presenters, I myself took away some great ideas to share with fellow Health Care Workers. Sue and Cheryl do such an amazing job to put together such a Brilliant Conference, it is such a FABULOUS way to gain knowledge, and also collect CPD points. Sue and Cheryl are such a dynamic team, that's why it just works, and is so successful in education. Also not to forget Education at Sea, what a way to see the world and learn so much. The optional tours are put together well, it is not easy to organise large groups of people to do tours, but the BOYS make it work, well done Jason, Brad, and the TEAM” –  
Madonna (NFN Life Member)*

“Great opportunity to update nursing knowledge and earn CPD points whilst discovering new places in the world and interacting with other Nursing professionals from around Australia” - Kathleen