MERIDIAN TRAVEL

VOYAGE CURATORS

A PRACTICAL BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Luxury Cruise Guide 2027

How to choose a line, a suite and a booking window — and how a dedicated Voyage Curator helps you do it well.

Meridian Travel
meridiancruiseclub.com

Edition 2027 · For members and guests

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This guide is general education, not a fare quote or a contract. Cruise-line inclusions, deposits, cancellation rules and itineraries change. Always confirm the terms that apply to the specific voyage you are considering.

1. What this guide is — and is not

Planning a luxury cruise is less about collecting brochures and more about matching a ship, a cabin category and a booking structure to the way you actually like to travel. This guide is written for people who want that process to feel calm and precise: first-time luxury guests, experienced cruisers comparing lines, and anyone who would rather have a specialist walk the options with them.

It is not a catalog of current “from” fares, and it does not invent ship counts, awards, inclusions or prices. Those details belong to the cruise line and to a current, voyage-specific quote. Where this guide describes what is “typically” included, treat it as a starting point. Your Voyage Curator will check the fare code, the deck plan and the terms that apply to your sailing.

Meridian Travel is a trading name of Meridian Cruise Club LLC, a luxury cruise agency and a CLIA Member Agency (number 00864715). Meridian Cruise Club LLC is registered with the State of Florida as a Seller of Travel. Registration No. ST150292. We work with a focused set of ocean, river, expedition and yacht-collection lines, and we book as your Voyage Curator — not as a substitute for the cruise line’s own contract.

2. How to choose a luxury cruise line

Start with how you like to spend a week, not with a brand name. A line that is perfect for one traveler can feel wrong for another, even at a similar fare. The useful questions are practical:

- How large a ship do you want under you? Mid-size luxury ships often feel calm without being tiny; yacht-style ships reach smaller harbors; larger premium-luxury ships offer more restaurants and evening options.
- How formal do you want the evenings to be? Some lines remain jacket-and-dress on selected nights; others are country-club casual throughout.
- How inclusive should the fare be? Some published fares wrap in beverages, Wi-Fi, gratuities and a set of shore excursions; others look lower until those items are added.
- Do you want river, ocean or expedition? They are different products, even when the brand name is the same.
- Who is in your party? Solo travelers, multi-generational families and celebration groups have different constraints on category, dining and itinerary pace.

Once those answers are clear, a short comparison of two or three lines is more useful than a long list. Ask to see a current, voyage-specific inclusions summary rather than a brochure generalization.

3. Suite tiers, and what actually changes as you go up

Cabin language varies by line, but the pattern is familiar. An inside or ocean-view stateroom is the most compact. A verandah or balcony stateroom adds private outdoor space. Concierge or mid-tier suites typically add a larger sitting area, better placement, and sometimes extras such as dining privileges or a welcome amenity. The top suites add substantially more space, a better location, and a higher level of personal service.

What actually changes, in practice, is space, light, storage, the usefulness of the balcony, noise and motion, and the extras attached to the category. A mid-ship mid-deck verandah is often a more comfortable place to sleep than a cheaper cabin under a venue or over a theater. The category immediately above the one you were shown is worth pricing; the difference is sometimes smaller than expected, and sometimes not worth it.

Ask to look at the deck plan with your Voyage Curator. Position, not only square footage, decides whether a suite feels quiet.

4. Booking windows, deposits and when to decide

Luxury voyages are often on sale many months, and sometimes more than a year, before departure. Early bookers may have a wider choice of suites and a better chance of a preferred dining time. Closer to departure, some lines release residual inventory or a last-minute promotion; others are simply sold out in the categories people actually want.

A typical sequence is a deposit to hold the suite, then a final payment well before sailing — often in the 90- to 150-day range, depending on the line and the voyage. After final payment, cancellation penalties usually rise. Some promotions are non-refundable, or become so earlier than the standard schedule. Always read the fare rules that apply to the booking you are making, not a general description of the line.

Decide when you have enough information, not when a countdown expires. A good Voyage Curator will tell you when a category is genuinely scarce and when you can wait for a comparison or a scheduled price review.

5. What is usually included — and what often is not

“All inclusive” is a marketing phrase, not a standard. What is typically in a luxury fare may include stateroom accommodation, main and specialty dining, basic beverages, Wi-Fi, and gratuities. Shore excursions, airfare, hotels, transfers, spa treatments, premium wines, specialty experiences and travel protection are often extra, even on a generous fare.

The reliable method is a written inclusions list for the specific fare code you are being quoted, plus the current price of the category above and below. If a promotion is in play, ask whether it is combinable with onboard credit, reduced deposits, or solo supplements, and whether it is capacity-controlled.

Taxes, port fees and other government charges should be stated clearly. A “from” fare on a website is a starting point only; it may apply to a limited number of sailings or categories.

6. River, ocean and expedition: three different journeys

River voyages are usually port-intensive. You unpack once and wake in another town. Ships are smaller, staterooms more compact than a typical ocean suite, and the day's shape often includes a guided tour. Water levels, locks and bridges can change the plan; flexibility is part of the product.

Ocean voyages range from yacht-style ships that reach smaller harbors to mid-size and larger luxury ships with a broader evening program. Sea days, formal nights and the style of enrichment vary widely. The itinerary, not only the line, decides the pace.

Expedition voyages trade production shows for Zodiac landings, naturalist briefings and remote geography. Activity level, weather contingency and medical evacuation planning matter more here than on a classic ocean week. Many travelers carry both travel insurance with a high evacuation limit and a medical transport membership such as Medjet. That is general information, not a product recommendation.

7. How a Meridian Voyage Curator helps

A dedicated Meridian Voyage Curator is your single point of contact from the first conversation through return home. You will not be passed around a call center. In outline, the work looks like this:

- Before you book. A conversation about how you like to travel, a short comparison of lines and suites, a current inclusions and fare summary, and a clear note of what is and is not included.
- When you book. The reservation, dining and other requests in writing, advice on travel protection if you want it, air or hotel coordination when you want it, and the forms the cruise line requires.
- After you book. Shore-excursion planning, pre-cruise questions, and a reachable curator if the line changes an itinerary or you need to adjust.

Meridian membership is complimentary. Member benefits — such as advice on current offers, and any onboard recognition or rewards the club is able to arrange for a given booking — are explained on the membership page and confirmed for your sailing. Benefits can vary by line and by voyage; they are never a substitute for reading the cruise-line contract.

8. Questions worth asking before you book

Use this list with your Voyage Curator, or bring it to a first call. You do not need the answer to every item; you need the answers that would change your decision.

1. What is the total per person, and what does that total include (fare, taxes and fees, beverages, Wi-Fi, gratuities, transfers, air)?
2. What category is being quoted, and what is the price of the category immediately above and below?
3. Where is the suite on the deck plan? Are there venues, tenders or supporting machinery nearby?
4. What is the deposit, when is final payment due, and what is the cancellation schedule — including any non-refundable element?
5. Is this fare combinable with current promotions, onboard credit, or reduced deposits?
6. Who is arranging air and insurance, and when do those tickets or policies become final?
7. How many sea days versus port days, and which ports typically tender?
8. What is the expected dress in the main dining room, and are there evenings you would want a jacket or a gown?
9. For river or expedition: what happens if water levels or weather change the plan? What activity level should I be ready for?
10. If I am traveling solo, celebrating, or booking adjoining cabins, what should be requested in writing at the time of reservation?

Travel protection is worth discussing early, especially on non-refundable fares and on itineraries with expensive air. Meridian can talk through the kinds of coverage people typically consider; we do not sell a particular policy in this guide, and this is not insurance advice.

9. Next steps, and a note on this edition

If you already have a date, a destination or a line in mind, write to us with those details and the size of your party. If you are earlier than that, tell us how you like to travel — river or ocean, formal or yacht-casual, a week or a longer voyage — and a Meridian Voyage Curator will come back with a short, compared set of options rather than a long generic list.

Request a quote or start a conversation at meridiancruiseclub.com, or email concierge@meridiancruiseclub.com. Membership is free, and there is no obligation to book.

About this edition

Luxury Cruise Guide 2027 is published by Meridian Travel, a trading name of Meridian Cruise Club LLC, as a general briefing. It does not list specific voyage prices, because fares, inventory and promotions change and should be confirmed at the time of quotation. Nothing in this guide is a booking, a guarantee of availability, or legal, tax or insurance advice. Cruise-line names are used to describe the market in which we work; they remain the trademarks of their owners.

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