Headline: Packing for first cruise can be a challenge

Deckhead: Less is more, but it’s difficult not to bring too much

It seems reasonable that too much is better than not enough – unless you’re cruising.

Travelers rarely pack the right amount of clothing and accessories for a trip. It’s like trying to count how many jellybeans are in a jar. And most often, it’s too much.

Cruising can be tricky, considering the limited space in rooms. Too many items can clutter the living area. Not enough could leave you scrambling. In the end, you’re likely kicking yourself for overpacking.

It’s even more challenging when it’s your first experience. You don’t know what to expect. You ask for advice, but often stick to your original plan.

Choosing particular clothing is important when taking a cruise. Formal nights aren’t required but they are recommended. You might be having dinner in a signature restaurant or seeing a show, where formal attire is preferred .

Dining rooms have a classy appeal. Formal could be an option. This makes it important to choose your wardrobe wisely if you want to dress up.

Men should plan on packing a sportscoat, a couple dress shirts and a pair of shoes to match. Women should consider bringing a dress – maybe two – nice shoes and another outfit. Expect two formal nights. Three is a possibility, and recycling is an option.

Don’t forget a hat, sunglasses, swimsuit(s), workout clothes and walking and/or running shoes. You’re going to spend plenty of time at the pool and ships have fitness centers. You might want to take an early jog.

Choose your causal wear like you plan on getting a couple days out of pair of shorts or pants – depending on the climate. Take enough tops for the whole week, don’t forget a jacket and remember that formal clothing is an option, not a necessity.

Pack sunscreen and toiletries but keep them to a minimum. The room is equipped with a hairdryer. And don’t forget prescribed medications and over-the-counter medicines to prevent motion sickness.

Electronic devices – smartphones and tablets – are important. Nearly all of your cruising activities will be done through an app, making charging cords essential in your packing.

This leads to the greatest challenge: How to bring everything in as few suitcases as possible? Baggage fees should help in determining what is essential and what isn’t.

Packing involves strategy. Practice rolling your clothes or using vacuum bags. Both will allow you to get the most out of your suitcase’s space. Put small items or bottles that hold liquids securely into zip-lock bags and pack them inside your shoes.

Getting by with a carry-on bag is the goal but couples should expect a checked bag and a carry-on. If more luggage is needed, then reevaluate. Practicality is a valuable trait that can save you money.

Your first cruise is exciting and you’ll certainly overpack. Consider it a test run. There’s no doubt you won’t wait long to book your next one.

Cutline: CRUISE CONTROL – The enormity and many activities on a cruise ship could have you packing your entire wardrobe. Image: Princess.