

Do You Like to Dress Up?

Mainstream cruise lines used to always have one or two dress-up nights on a seven-day cruise where passengers would wear formal or semi-formal attire.

Along with the general trend towards more relaxed dress, some cruise lines have started to feature "resort casual" or "country club casual" dress every night. On these ships, they probably won't care if you want to be more formal, but you might feel awkward if you showed up without a tie for a semi-formal dinner on a more traditional ship. If you want to eat dinner in jeans, shorts, or very casual attire, you need to look towards small sailing ships like Windjammer or have dinner in your cabin or in one of the casual buffets most mainstream ships have.

Look at the brochure and Web Site pictures and read the brochures/schedules carefully on ships that you are considering. If all of the pictures of people dining show everyone in semi-formal wear, then you will want to take along either your black suit, tux or white dinner jacket. Ladies will need either a silky suit, cocktail dress, or something "glittery." If you want to leave that tie and other semi-formal wear at home, then look for cruise ships with more relaxed dress for dinner.

I love dressing up for dinner, but hate having to pack the extra "stuff". With all the airlines strictly enforcing the suitcase weight guidelines, women should probably only take one or two evening outfits and just wear them more than once or mix and match the pieces.