



After being widowed for five years and my kids married and on their own, I finally gave in to a friend's advice. She told me to get out there into the singles world and have a life again. How was I to do it? I'm not into the bar scene, I had nothing but phony photos and false life histories from online dating services.

Therefore, with a week's vacation from work coming up in the middle of a cold, cold winter, I decided to sign up for a singles cruise to the warm, warm Caribbean. I reasoned that, unlike online dating, I would meet single mature men face to face in a pleasant shipboard scene, and have total choice of linking up with likely companions or not.

When the cruise sailed away, and the social activities began, I found it a bit confusing. Just because it was a singles cruise, not everyone was in the same situation as I was. Many of the passengers were divorced, a few widowed, and some were married and otherwise coupled. Those had decided to stray from the marriage/live-in bed for a week to, as one silver-haired lothario bluntly put it, "to get some action".

Therefore, when I'd get together with a man at one of the ship's functions, it seemed like the old online dating routine again. I could never tell if he was handing me the truth. Not only about his personal life, but also his alleged profession, income and other chapters of his biography. At first, I made no attachment to one man, and associated with different companions at dinners, dancing, sunning on the deck, shore excursions and during entertainment performances.

The ship's accommodations and services were very good, and even without the singles scene, the week-long cruise would have been a very enjoyable break from my workaday job and empty nest at home. Another unexpected benefit was having dinner and going on shore excursions with other single women.

The sharing of similar life stories produced instant compatibility and friendships I can still treasure long after the cruise. Four of us still email each other frequently, and if the cruise had produced nothing else, that had been worth the cost of the trip. We're making plans to sign up for another singles cruise several months from now, and I look forward to seeing my new friends again.

Did I enjoy my singles cruise? The ship's accommodations were great, the food was delicious and the many activities were a lot of fun. Did I establish any lasting relationship with one man on the cruise? That's none of your business. If you're alone in the world, you'll just have to find out for yourself whether a singles cruise will be your key to find Mr. or Ms. Right out there on some moonlit night at sea waiting just for you.