



We were on a recent cruise from San Diego to Acapulco, and just an hour after we left port, we called home by cell phone. The five-minute call cost \$19.50. When we argued with the phone company that it should have been free, we were told the call cost so much because it was made from a foreign country.

We didn't realize that once we had crossed that invisible line from California, USA, into Baja California, Mexico, the same rate applied as if we had called from Beijing, China. We believe it actually cost E.T. less to phone home from Earth to his planet.

Next time you're on a cruise and want to phone home or take a call from someone at home, be sure you know the pricing rules. Actually, it's cheaper to hold your call phone use until the ship docks in the foreign port. It's usually less expensive to call there than from a ship.

Better yet, before you go on a cruise, check with your cell phone provider to be fully informed about all charges you'd incur when you use the phone anywhere beyond the basic limits of home.

Additionally, before you sail, check with folks at home or office about priorities of calling and receiving calls, and keep them to a minimum.

Dire warning to avoid bank account attack!!! If you're on a cruise with tattling, twittering and tweeting teens, be sure they know the rules and limits to avoid running up astronomical charges by making never-ending calls on their cell phones and other electronic gizmos.