



Did your most memorable cruise involve sailing for a week or more in less-than-luxurious quarters in the ship's four-bunk-high troop compartment? Was the exciting destination Normandy, Iwo Jima, Inchon, Danang or Baghdad?

If you yearn to cruise again, this time in more peaceful waters, you can do it at attractive prices. Most major cruise lines offer generous discounts, averaging from 10 to 30 percent, to active U.S. military and veterans.

The offers vary in amount, destinations and other factors, and in order to get the best deal, you need to do some internet surfing and/or phone contact with cruise lines and travel agencies. There are also online agencies that specialize in military discounts for cruises and other travel programs. Among the cruise lines that offer military discounts are Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, Celebrity and Carnival. Those and other lines advertise special cruises to locations of military history, such as Normandy, World War II airfields in England, Hawaii's Pearl Harbor, Vietnam, South Korea and others.

Before starting your search for a discounted cruise, gather info and documents to show to your travel agent or cruise authorities. In all cruises that will dock at foreign ports, you'll need a valid passport.

If you're currently on active military duty, you'll be required to show an ID card. For military retirees, ID and Social Security cards are necessary. All others who've served will need to show SS cards and copies of discharge certificates.

Check out cruise ads in newspaper travel sections and online promotions by cruise companies and travel agencies. Determine a destination, number of days involved and pricing. There's also a great variety of other factors that could influence your decision on a specific cruise.

For example, would you choose a cruise that's to be only for adults, seniors or singles? Would you be interested in a cruise that features music from an era, such as Big Band, Country-Western or Rock'n'Roll? Would a cruise to cold Alaska be preferable to one to the sunny Caribbean?

Additionally, if you can pack your bags in a hurry and be able to sail within a day or so, the most economical way to get a discount is to sign up for a last-minute cruise. Ships must sail on schedule whether all cabins are all sold or not, and last-minute bargains help them fill as many as possible.