

# 8 Ways to Avoid Gaining Weight on a Cruise

The average passenger gains five to 10 pounds on a week-long cruise.\*

Despite the endless buffets and bottomless drinks, you can cruise your way to better health. In the process, you might just lose some excess baggage or maintain your current healthy weight. Just follow these eight tips from Sheah Rarback, a registered dietitian nutritionist at the University of Miami Health System.

1. **Plan ahead.** “If you want to change your lifestyle, it takes planning. Explore your options before booking your trip. Some ships offer health-themed cruises, such as the Holistic Holiday at Sea event,” Rarback says. You enjoy the relaxation of a cruise, with the added benefits of nutritional cuisine, health consultations, and workshops.
2. **Don’t skimp on breakfast.** “Start your day with a high-protein, low-carb breakfast. You’ll feel fuller and well fueled for onboard activities and port excursions. Consider ordering a veggie omelet at the omelet bar. Just skip the egg white omelets; the yolks are very nutritious.”
3. **Banish the buffet.** “Buffets are a minefield. Choose sit down meals instead.” If your travel companions can’t pass up the buffet, follow Rarback’s advice. “Make it inconvenient to refill your plate – sit far away from the buffet line. Also, use a smaller plate and fill half of it with vegetables.”
4. **Drink with discernment.** All-inclusive cruises make it tough to pass up tropical beverages. Follow Rarback’s tips to sidestep excess calories and a potential hangover. “You’re more likely to binge eat if you drink too much, so pace yourself. Start with a non-alcoholic drink, perhaps soda water with a

splash of juice and lime. Wine drinkers can opt for lower-calorie wine spritzers.” And rethink the pervasive piña colada and daiquiri. “Creamy, sugary drinks are loaded with extra calories.”

5. **Dine smarter, not harder.** “Decide *before* your food arrives at the table what you will or will not eat. You could tell your server to skip the bread basket or to bring just one roll for each person. Ask them how dishes are prepared – if it’s covered in cream sauce, order something else or get the sauce on the side. Or, choose grilled or broiled entrées and steamed or roasted vegetables instead of fried. And think of meat as a condiment, not as the main attraction.”

To make things easier on health-conscious travelers, several major cruise lines now offer lighter, healthier menu options.

6. **Create a sweet ending.** Find it hard to resist the siren song of desserts? “Don’t order dessert until you’ve eaten your meal and allowed it time to settle. If you still crave sweets, split one dessert with your companions or order fruit.” Even if you choose that chocolate mousse, ask for fruit as well. “The sweetness satisfies and the fiber is filling, so you may eat less dessert.”
7. **Watch the clock.** Vacations give us a break from routine, making it easy to justify unhealthy behavior. When the midnight buffet beckons, “Ask yourself, ‘Why am I eating at midnight?’” The same “look but don’t touch” strategy holds true for 24-hour room service and free frozen yogurt and soda stations.
8. **The more movement, the merrier.** Ocean liners offer endless opportunities to work off excess weight. “Take the stairs, jog or walk around the deck, and enjoy ocean views as you exercise in the fitness center. Choose active shore excursions and incorporate activity into your daily fun. Try something new – sign up for a yoga or Pilates class or a kayaking excursion.”

If you’ve always viewed vacations as a license to indulge, a few simple changes could make your next cruise a reason to recalibrate not only your weight, but your health

as a whole.

\*According to polls by several online cruise reviewers.

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