

River Cruise Guide

Chapter 19: Common Mistakes First-Time River Cruisers Make

Everyone wants their vacation to go smoothly. Fortunately, many of the most common river cruise mistakes are easy to avoid with a little planning. Here are ten tips that can help you enjoy a more relaxing and rewarding journey.

- 1 Waiting too long to book**
The best itineraries and staterooms often sell out months in advance, especially for popular seasons.
- 2 Flying in on embarkation day**
Arriving at least one day early helps protect your vacation from airline delays or cancellations.
- 3 Packing too much**
River cruise cabins are comfortable but compact. Pack versatile clothing instead of overfilling your suitcase.
- 4 Bringing the wrong shoes**
Many excursions include cobblestone streets and uneven surfaces. Comfortable walking shoes are essential.
- 5 Skipping travel insurance**
Insurance can help protect your investment and provide valuable coverage for unexpected situations.
- 6 Choosing based only on price**
Compare what is included—not just the advertised fare. Excursions, drinks, gratuities, and transfers vary by cruise line.
- 7 Trying to see everything**
Leave time to relax and enjoy each destination instead of rushing from attraction to attraction.
- 8 Ignoring activity levels**
Review excursion descriptions so you choose experiences that match your comfort and mobility.
- 9 Forgetting travel documents**
Double-check passports, cruise documents, and any destination-specific entry requirements before departure.
- 10 Not asking questions**
Your travel advisor can help you avoid common pitfalls and recommend the best options for your travel style.

Aimee's Tip: Preparation builds confidence. By planning ahead and asking questions before you travel, you'll spend less time worrying about logistics and more time enjoying castles, vineyards, charming villages, and unforgettable experiences.

Coming Up: Chapter 20 wraps up the guide with sample itineraries and inspiration to help you choose your first—or next—river cruise adventure.