SOLO CRUISING 101

Ship Excursions at a Glance

Three ways to spend a port day, the guarantees in plain words, and the questions to ask before you book. Prices change by line, port, and season. Confirm the current price, meeting time, and return time before you book anything.

Three ways to spend a port day

Port day	Cost	Ship waits?	Group size	Best for
Ship-booked tour	Highest	Yes, for its own tours	Often large, 50 or more	Far ports and complex days
Independent tour	Mid-range	No	Usually smaller, about 12	Popular sights with time to spare
Day on your own	Lowest	No	Just you	Walkable ports

The guarantees, in plain words

The ship waits for its own tours. The ship does not wait for a tour booked anywhere else. A third-party guarantee never holds the ship at the dock. A third-party guarantee pays and helps after a miss.

Shore Excursions Group carries a Return to Ship Guarantee. A delay that makes a guest miss the ship brings $3,000 per person. The company covers transport to the next port, hotel nights, and meals. A money-back guarantee covers a guest who is not satisfied. Tours average about 12 people per group.

Carnival answers price with a Best Price Guarantee. A guest who finds the same tour at a lower price claims 110% of the price difference as shipboard credit. The tour must match exactly. Pre-sail claims go in at least seven days before the cruise.

Questions to ask before you book

Does the return guarantee stand in writing?
What time does the tour return to the ship?
How much spare time stands between the return and all-aboard?
Who runs the tour, and does the company carry a license and insurance?
Where is the meeting point, and what number reaches the operator on the day?
What happens to my money if the ship skips the port?

The solo safety net

Keep at least one hour of spare time between the tour return and all-aboard. Carry your passport ashore. Photograph the daily program page with the port agent number before you leave the ship. Set a turn-around alarm on your phone, set to ship time.

Nervous. Booked it. Best decision!

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