

The Star Clipper

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Over the decades I've been on more than 40 cruise ships. So given the opportunity to sail on Star Clipper last December in the Caribbean, I didn't hesitate. The first thing I learned was to throw overboard my larger ship and river cruise background. Sailing is NOT the same as cruising, and I now love both.

Life aboard the Star Clipper

- Relaxing, laid back, casual dress, focus on outdoors and sun, flexible schedule.
- Breakfast & lunch is buffet in the dining room, with a hot station that varies its offerings. The buffet has cold and hot selections. There's always good variety at each meal.
- Dinner is a la carte. Usually 2-3 appetizers, 1 soup, 4-5 entrees, 1 salad, 3-5 desserts.
- Tropical Bar offers many activities: daily talks, access to tenders, afternoon tea, entertainment, library, lifeboat drills (OUR cabin had the fire!)...half the bar is outside and half is inside with A/C and WIFI (with a relaxed speed).
- Being on deck means strolling or using a lounge chair; no tables/chairs except in the Tropical Bar. There are a few wooden benches by the forward pool.
- While there are 2 pools, they saw little use. Guests were either exploring the island, relaxing on the beach, or snorkeling.
- The daily talks were varied with topics including seasickness, spice trade, current day pirates, Columbus. An extensive overview of each is included in the daily newsletter.
- Service and crew are excellent at all levels. Our cabin was made up by the time we returned from breakfast.
- One should be nimble and have a good balance to live on a sailing ship, even when anchored. Stairs tend to be shallow steps and can be steep. Hallways have several safety doors to close off fires or flood; that means a 6" lip to step over. Gangway is portable-style with metal steps that move, and railings that shift. There is a step up into the cabin bathroom.
- Cabins have lots of storage. Except in the suites, seating is very limited.
- Excursions are only booked onboard. The daily newsletter alerts booking deadlines.
- You can bring on alcohol at ports, unlike many cruise lines
- Dining room is crowded at dinner. Chairs are cumbersome and they are crowded around the tables.

The Star Clipper and Star Flyer are sister ships. Royal Clipper, their third ship, rendezvoused with us a couple times, providing a tour and lunch onboard. I returned home with solid knowledge of Star Clipper and their ships. Although I think I need to sail with them in the Med, just to get the complete picture!