

From: Cheryll Pickett updates@tess.myagentgenie.com
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To: cheryllpickett@gmail.com

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Cheryll Pickett
openwaterstravel.com
972-998-5231
www.openwaterstravel.com

The Cruise News from Open Waters Travel- June Edition

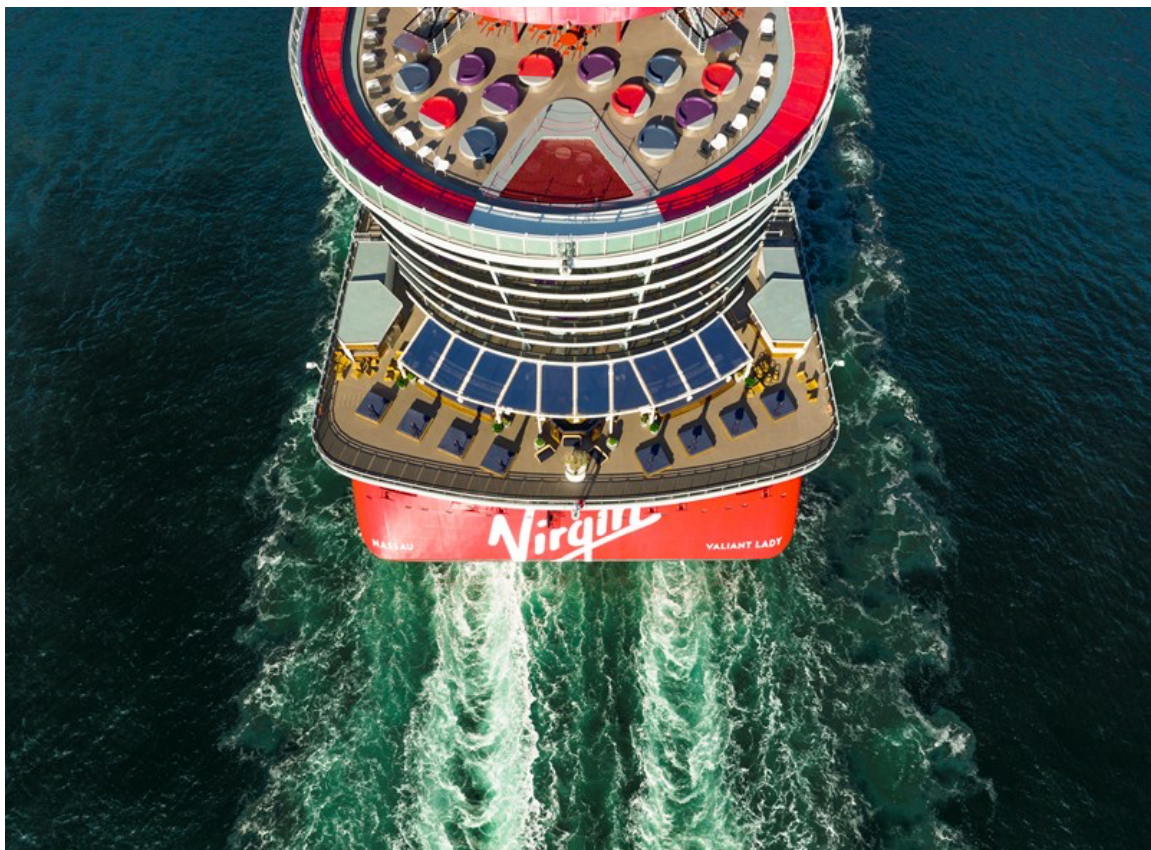
☀️ **Summer Starts Now (and yes... it snuck up on all of us)**

Somehow it's June... school's out, calendars are filling up, and everyone is suddenly realizing they need a vacation. Like, now.

This is the time of year where I start getting messages like,
"Do you have anything for July?" 😊

Good news: there are still great options out there.
Bad news: the longer you wait, the fewer (and pricier) they get.

Each month, I like to share a few cruise ideas, helpful tips, and a little inspiration to help you plan your next getaway. This month, we're leaning into easy summer escapes... think Caribbean and Bahamas, last-minute options, and how to make the most of what's still available.



🌴 Destination Spotlight: Caribbean & Bahamas

If you want easy, fun, and zero overthinking... this is it.

The Caribbean and Bahamas are basically built for summer travel. You don't need a complicated itinerary or weeks of planning. You just show up... and it works.

- **Shorter sailings** (perfect if your schedule is tight)
- **Tons of departure ports** (hello, Galveston 🙌)
- **That perfect mix** of beach days, adventure, and doing absolutely nothing

And let's be honest... there's something about stepping onto a ship, drink in hand, knowing your only job for the next few days is to relax.

What I love most about these itineraries is how flexible they are. Want to explore? You can snorkel, zipline, ATV, all of it. Want to chill? Grab a beach chair, order a drink, and call it a day. No pressure to do anything but enjoy yourself.

And if you're traveling with family? This is where cruises really shine. Some of the newer ships are basically floating resorts. We're talking waterparks, shows, kids clubs, teen spaces, and plenty for adults too. And with shorter sailings available, it's an easy win for a quick summer getaway without committing to a full week.

Top spots I love for summer:

- **Bimini** (especially with Virgin Voyages 🤩. Adult only beach club vibes done right)
- **Cozumel** (easy, fun, amazing food, and great mix of excursions)
- **Roatan** (super underrated and absolutely beautiful... some of the best water in the Caribbean)

If you're looking for a no-stress, feel-good kind of vacation, whether it's just you or the whole crew, this is it.



💡 Insider Tip: Book the "off-day" sailings

Everyone defaults to Friday or Saturday departures... which means those are usually the **most expensive and most crowded**.

If you can swing it, look for sailings that leave on Sunday, Monday or even mid week. You'll often find better pricing, fewer crowds and a more relaxed vibe overall. Same ship. Same itinerary. Totally different experience.

My Personal Travel Moment

A few years ago, if you told me my favorite Caribbean cruise experience would be on Virgin Voyages, I honestly don't know if I would've believed you. I wasn't sure I'd fit the "Virgin vibe." I thought maybe it would feel too trendy or too over-the-top for me. Turns out... I was completely wrong.

Our sailing went from Miami to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic and then to Bimini, and from the moment we stepped onboard, I got it. First of all, the ship itself was stunning. Easily the nicest cruise ship I've ever sailed on. Every space felt modern, relaxing, and thoughtfully designed without feeling stuffy or pretentious.

And the FOOD. Oh my gosh. I could happily eat at Pink Agave every single night and never complain once. Every restaurant felt like a real restaurant experience, not "cruise food." It completely changed my expectations for dining at sea.

The entertainment also surprised me in the best way possible. It was creative, immersive, funny, and so different from the traditional cruise productions I was used to seeing. You could tell Virgin really wanted the experience to feel unique instead of copy-and-paste.



One of my favorite memories was actually in Bimini. Instead of rushing off to the Beach Club

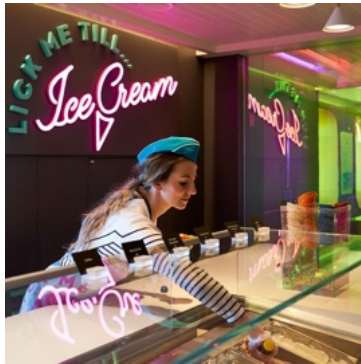
first thing in the morning like most people, we stayed onboard for a while and enjoyed the quiet ship. Coffee in hand, relaxing in the loungers at The Wake while the ocean breeze rolled through? Absolute perfection.

Other random favorites on board:

- Booking a private karaoke room at The Groupie
- Watching fellow sailors get tattoos onboard (so entertaining seeing everyone's fresh ink afterward)
- Morning coffee with ocean views
- Just how EASY it was to relax on this ship

I went into Virgin curious but unsure. I came home completely understanding the hype.

💡 **Personal Tip:** Virgin Voyages will status match from many other cruise lines and hotel loyalty programs, and it's absolutely worth checking into before you sail. Depending on your status, you can get perks like free laundry, daily specialty coffee, cocktail parties, and other little extras that make the experience even better.



💡 **Tip of the Month:** The best port day... might be the one you skip



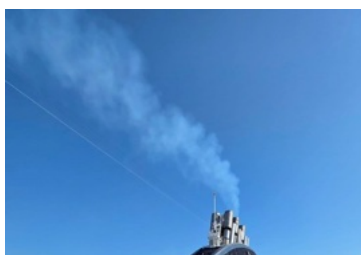
This might sound a little crazy, but hear me out... you don't have to get off the ship at every port.

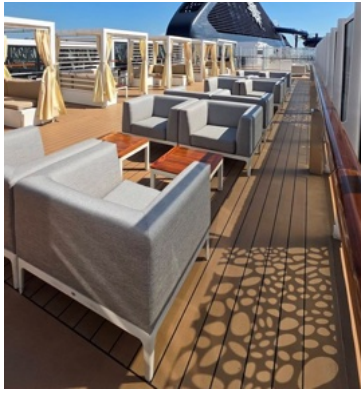
If you've already been there, or you're just not in the mood for another beach day, staying onboard can actually be one of the best parts of your trip.

While most passengers head into port, the ship turns into this calm, almost private experience. Suddenly, all those spots that were hard to grab on sea days are wide open.

We're talking:

- Prime loungers by the pool
- Hot tubs without the crowd
- Shorter lines (or no lines) for food and drinks
- Way easier reservations at specialty restaurants





And one of my favorite little perks... spa treatments are often discounted on port days. Same experience, better price, way quieter.

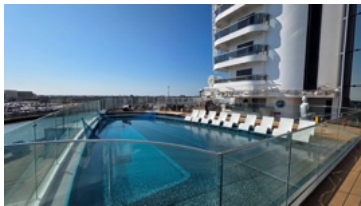
It's also the perfect time to slow down. Sleep in, grab a coffee, read a book, wander the ship, or just enjoy the fact that you don't have to be anywhere or do anything.

Don't get me wrong, I love a great port day. But not every stop has to be go-go-go.

Sometimes the smartest move... is staying right where you are.



💡 **Insider Tip:** If you book a massage onboard, set expectations before the treatment starts. Most cruise ship spas are operated by the same parent company, and the post-massage product sales pitch can honestly kill the relaxing vibe pretty quickly. I've found it helps to politely let them know upfront that you're there to relax and aren't interested in purchasing products afterward. It makes the whole experience feel way more peaceful and pressure-free.



🔥 3 itineraries I'd book right now if I had a week off



No overthinking. No endless scrolling. Just solid options I'd recommend in a heartbeat:

1. A 7-night Caribbean out of Galveston

This is the easiest "yes" for so many people. Minimal travel stress, tons of options, and you're quickly in full vacation mode. You'll usually hit places like Cozumel, Roatan, and Costa Maya... all great for a mix of beach, adventure, and good food. It's simple, reliable, and just works.

2. A Virgin Voyages sailing with a stop in Bimini

If you want something a little more elevated (and a lot more fun), this is it. Adults-only, no buffets, amazing food, and a completely different vibe than traditional cruises. And Bimini? Their private beach club is one of my favorite stops anywhere. It feels more like a beach day you'd actually choose on your own.

3. An Eastern Caribbean sailing with Turks & Caicos

If your goal is that crystal-clear, "this doesn't look real" water... this is the itinerary. Grand Turk (Turks & Caicos) is one of those places where you get off the ship and immediately feel like you're in a postcard. Pair that with a few other island stops, and you've got the perfect mix of relaxing and exploring.

And one bonus tip I'll always stand by... if the price difference isn't crazy, **book the balcony**. Morning coffee, ocean breeze, your own quiet space... it just hits different.



Ready to Book?

If you're thinking about a summer cruise, now's the time to lock it in... before the best options are gone.

Call me, text me, hit me up on Facebook or Instagram, or just reply to this email if you want help finding the right sailing.

REMEMBER: You'll always pay the cruise line. Never me. And yes... I share my commissions.

PS: Future you called... she wants a cruise booked already 🚢

Happy travels,
Cheryl
Open Waters Travel



To learn more about our services and promotions please contact us

Cheryl Pickett, 972-998-5231, openwaterstravel.com

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