

Cruise Ship and Nautical Terms

The most commonly heard on a cruise ship are....

Aft - Toward the stern or back area of a vessel.

Amidship or midship - Center or middle of a vessel in either length or width.

Assistant Waiter - Staff who works in the dining room and helps the waiter with the serving and clearing of tables. Position often called "busboy" ashore

Atrium - The atrium is the central passenger area on the cruise ship, equivalent to the lobby of a hotel. Passengers will find the reception desk, shore excursion desk, purser's desk, and the cruise consultant in the atrium. The atrium is so-named because on most new ships it is multi-storied with glass elevators. The atrium often includes a bar and is a meeting place for new friends.

Berth - The dock, quay, or pier where a cruise ship ties up to the shore; the bed or beds in the passenger cabins on the ship.

Buoy - An anchored floating object used for marking a channel, marking a hazard such as a reef, or for mooring (tying) up a ship or boat.

Bridge - Area of a ship from which the vessel is steered and navigated. Sometimes referred to as the *Pilothouse*

Cabin - A sleeping compartment or room on a cruise ship, also known as a stateroom.

Cabin Steward or Stewardess - The cabin stewards or cabin stewardesses are the men or women who clean your cabin.

Captain - The captain is the highest level officer on a cruise ship. He/she is responsible for steering the ship or directing others who drive it. The captain is the ultimate commander on a ship, and all the officers and high-level civilians such as the hotel director act under his direction. Also known as the Master of the ship.

Course - Direction in which a ship is heading or is steered. The course is usually given in compass degrees.

Cruise Director - The cruise director is responsible for all activities and entertainment onboard the ship. He or she usually also serves as the emcee for the evening shows and for some of the programs throughout the day. The cruise director often reports directly to the hotel manager/director.

Current - The flow or movement of water due to changes in elevation or tides

Debark - To leave a cruise ship, especially at the end of the voyage. The term disembark is also used with the same meaning.

Deck - Floor or horizontal surface extending from one side of a ship to another.

Dining Stewards and Stewardesses - The dining stewards in a cruise ship restaurant are equivalent to the waiters at a land-based restaurant. Also know as waiters wait staff. **Draft** - The depth a vessel extends below the waterline.

Dock - A pier, berth, or quay used by cruise ships to tie up to when in port. Dock.

Embark - To go on board a cruise ship, especially for the first time at the beginning of the cruise

Forward - Toward the front or fore or bow of a cruise ship

Funnel - The smokestack or chimney on a cruise ship

Galley - The kitchen on a ship.

Gangway - The opening in the side of a ship used to embark and disembark; the ramp used to enter or exit the cruise ship.

Heading - The direction in which a vessel's bow points at any given time.

Hotel Manager – The hotel manager on a ship is in charge of all of the hotel operations, including housekeeping, the restaurants, bars, and other passenger services.

Knot – A unit of speed equal to one nautical mile (6,076 feet) per hour.

Maitre d' - The maitre d' is in charge of the dining room operations on a cruise ship. He supervises all the dining room stewards (wait staff) and assistant stewards (busboys).

Pier - A loading platform extending at an angle from the shore.

Port - A Harbor or Port of Call providing protection for vessels. Also the Left side of a vessel, marked by a red light or day-mark.

Porthole - A round window in the side of a vessel that may be opened or tightly closed to seal out water.

Promenade - An open deck around the outside of a ship that usually encircles the entire ship.

Purser – Officer on a ship who is responsible for the money on the ship; cruise ship's accountant.

Starboard - The right side of a vessel, marked by a green light or day-mark.

Stern - The aft part of a ship.

Stack – The "chimney" or funnel on a cruise ship where the gasses and smoke from the engine are released into the atmosphere.

Stem - The forward most part of a ship.

Tender - A smaller vessel used to transport passengers from the cruise ship to the shore when the ship is anchored in a harbor; one of the ship's lifeboats.

Underway - Vessel in motion, i.e., when not moored, at anchor, or aground.

.... and all the others (less commonly heard on a cruise ship)

Abaft - Behind

Abeam - Area on either side of a ship near the mid section.

Abreast – Side by side; by the side of.

About - Direction of travel opposite to that being traveled. "Come About" is to change course 180°.

Aero-Beacon - A modern type of light presently used in many lighthouses to produce a characteristic. Also used in many airport beacons.

Adrift - Loose, not on moorings or towline.

Aground - Touching or fast to the bottom.

Ahead - In front of or forward of

Aid to Navigation - Markers, buoys, lights, fog signals, and electronic systems such as G.P.S. & loran. Used to assist mariners in fixing their positions, aid in marking landfalls, mark dangerous shoals and rocks and to enable ships to keep within a channel.

Alee - Away from the direction of the wind. Opposite of windward.

Aloft - Above the deck of the boat.

Astern - In back of the boat, opposite of ahead.

Athwartships - At right angles to the centerline of the boat; rowboat seats are generally athwart ships.

Avast - Stop

Aweigh - The position of anchor as it is raised clear of the bottom.

Beam - Width of a vessel at it's widest point.

Bearing - Compass direction of a ship that is usually expressed in degrees; direction of the ship to a particular destination or location

Bight - The part of the rope or line, between the end and the standing part, on which a knot is formed. **BILGE** - The interior of the hull below the floor boards.

Bilge - The interior of the ship's hull below the floor; the area between the floor (deck) of a ship and the ship's hull.

Binnacle - Pedestal that houses a compass and sometimes a light near the helm (steering wheel) of a ship.

Bitter End - The last part of a rope or chain. The inboard end of the anchor rode.

Boat - A fairly indefinite term. A waterborne vehicle smaller than a ship. One definition is a small craft carried aboard a ship.

Boat Hook - A short shaft with a fitting at one end shaped to facilitate use in putting a line over a piling, recovering an object dropped overboard, or in pushing or fending off.

Boot Top - A painted line that indicates the designed waterline.

Bow - Front of a vessel.

Bridle - A line or wire secured at both ends in order to distribute a strain between two points.

Brightwork - Varnished woodwork and/or polished metal.

Bulkhead - Wall or partition dividing a ship into compartments. Also part of the skeleton (ribs) of a ships structure.

Bulwark - Part of the hull of a ship that extends above the main deck from bow to stern forming a rail.

Bunker - Compartment used for storing fuel.

Burdened Vessel - That vessel which, according to the applicable Navigation Rules, must give way to the privileged vessel. The term has been superseded by the term "give-way".

Capsize - To turn over.

Cast Off - To let go.

Catamaran - A twin-hulled boat, with hulls side by side.

Chafing Gear - Tubing or cloth wrapping used to protect a line from chafing on a rough surface.

Chart - A map for use by navigators.

Chine - The intersection of the bottom and sides of a flat or v-bottomed boat.

Cleat - A fitting attached to a ship or a pier where lines are made fast.

Clove Hitch - A knot for temporarily fastening a line to a spar or piling.

Coil - To lay a line down in circular turns.

Companionway - An interior stairway on a ship

Cuddy - A small shelter cabin in a boat.

Davit - A boom or crane type device used to raise and lower objects. Commonly used for lifeboats.

Day-Mark - Unique color and/or pattern that identifies an aid to navigation or vessel during daylight hours.

Dead Ahead - Directly ahead.

Dead Astern - Directly aft.

Dinghy - A small open boat. A dinghy is often used as a tender for a larger craft.

Displacement – The weight of the volume of water that is displaced by the ship's hull is equal to the ship's weight. The unit of measurement for displacement is the long ton. One long ton equals 2,240 pounds.

Dolphin - A group of piles driven close together and bound with wire cables into a single structure.

Draft or Draught – The number of feet from the waterline to the lowest point of a cruise ship's keel; the depth of water a ship draws; how low the ship sits in the water

Ebbing - A tide falling or moving from high to low water.

Even Keel - A ship in an absolute vertical fashion--straight up--when floating on the water. Not leaning to one side or the other.

Fantail – The rear or aft overhang of a cruise ship. The area after the end of the main deck.

Fathom – Measurement of distance equal to six feet used when discussing the depth of water.

Fender - A cushion, placed between boats, or between a boat and a pier, to prevent damage.

Figure Eight Knot - A knot in the form of a figure eight, placed in the end of a line to prevent the line from passing through a grommet or a block.

Flare - The outward curve of a vessel's sides near the bow. A distress signal.

Flood Tide - An incoming current or tide

Fluke - The palm of an anchor.

Following Sea - An overtaking sea that comes from astern

Fore – The front (bow) of a ship or the forward mast on the ship.

Forecastle - The crew's quarters at the bow of a merchant ship or on a sailing vessel, the upper deck located forward of the foremast.

Foremast - The forward most mast of a sailing vessel.

Forepeak - The area below the forecastle, near the bow.

Fouled - Any piece of equipment that is jammed or entangled, or dirtied.

Freeboard - Distance from the waterline to the top of the main deck.

G.P.S. - Global Positioning System that operates off of at least (3) satellites to triangulate location and elevation.

Gear - A general term for ropes, blocks, tackle and other equipment.

Give-Way Vessel - A term used to describe the vessel which must yield in meeting, crossing, or overtaking situations

Gross Registered Tons - Measurement used on a cruise ship. Each gross registered ton equals 100 cubic feet of enclosed revenue-earning space within the ship.

Gunwhale - The top of the Bulwark or side rail.

Hatch - A cover used to close and seal a hatchway or opening.

Hatchway - An opening in the deck through which cargo is transferred or persons enter and exit.

Head - the toilet or bathroom on a sailing ship

Headway - The forward motion of a boat. Opposite of sternway.

Helm – The wheel, stick, or tiller controlling the rudder of the ship.

Hitch - A knot used to secure a rope to another object or to another rope, or to form a loop or a noose in a rope.

Hold - An area below decks used for storage of cargo.

Hull - The frame or body of a ship below the main deck.

Inboard - Toward the center of a ship. Also in smaller vessels, an engine mounted inside the vessel driving a propeller shaft through the hull.

Jacobs Ladder - A rope ladder, lowered from the deck, as when pilots or passengers come aboard.

Jetty - A structure, usually masonry, projecting out from the shore; a jetty may protect a harbor entrance.

Keel - The spine of a ship that runs from bow to stern at the lowest point.

Knot - A fastening made by interweaving rope to form a stopper, to enclose or bind an object, to form a loop or a noose, to tie a small rope to an object, or to tie the ends of two small ropes together.

Latitude - The distance north or south of the equator measured and expressed in degrees.

Lee (Leeward) - Direction the wind is blowing relative to the ship. The side of the ship opposite that of which the wind is coming from is known as the Lee side.

Leeward - The direction away from the wind. Opposite of windward.

Leeway - The sideways movement of the boat caused by either wind or current.

Lighthouse - A tower used as an aid to navigation marking a hazard or point of entrance. Usually consisting of a very bright light atop a tower and often a foghorn or siren and radio beacon.

Lightship - A vessel used to mark a hazardous area and/or guide shipping traffic, anchored in position with a mast mounted beacon and equipped with a steam whistle for fog warning.

Line - Rope and cordage used aboard a vessel.

List - To lean exceedingly to one side or the other.

Log - A book for maintaining complete daily records,

Longitude - The distance in degrees east or west of the meridian at Greenwich, England.

Loran - Long range aid to navigation. Operates off of (3) land based radio towers to triangulate location.

Lubber's Line - A mark or permanent line on a compass indicating the direction forward parallel to the keel when properly installed.

Mooring - The means of tying a vessel to a pier, dock buoy or other vessel.

Nautical Mile – One minute of latitude or 6,076 feet; about 1/8 longer than a land mile of 5,280 feet.

Navigation - Directing the course of a vessel.

Navigation Rules - The regulations governing the movement of vessels in relation to each other, generally called steering and sailing rules.

Neap Tide - The lowest high tide of the lunar month, occurring near the first and last quarter moon phases

Outboard - Toward or beyond the boat's sides. A detachable engine mounted on a boat's stern.

Overboard - Over the side or out of the boat.

Pile - A wood, metal or concrete pole driven into the bottom. Craft may be made fast to a pile; it may be used to support a pier (see PILING) or a float.

Piling - Support, protection for wharves, piers etc.; constructed of piles (see PILE)

Piloting - Navigation by use of visible references, the depth of the water, etc.

Pitch – The rise and fall of a ship's bow as it moves forward.

Planing - A boat is said to be planing when it is essentially moving over the top of the water rather than through the water.

Planing Hull - A type of hull shaped to glide easily across the water at high speed.

Privileged Vessel - A vessel which, according to the applicable Navigation Rule, has right-of-way (this term has been superseded by the term "stand-on").

Prow - The front of the cruise ship; opposite of stern.

Quarter - Either side of a ship near the stern. "Quartering Seas" are waves approaching from the front of the ship at an angle.

Quay – Dock, berth or pier where a cruise ship ties up to while in port.

Radio Beacon - A land based, fixed radio beacon that aids navigation by sending a radio signal. Vessels can determine location by taking bearings from several different signals.

Range Lights - Two lights or Day-Marks, located a distance apart, visible from one direction only. When one light is visible directly above the other, you are in the marked channel for safe passage.

Reef - A ridge of rocks, sand, or coral at or near the surface of a body of water.

Rode - The anchor line and/or chain.

Roll – The side to side swaying of a ship while underway

Rope - In general, cordage as it is purchased at the store. When it comes aboard a vessel and is put to use it becomes line.

Rudder - A vertical plate or board for steering a boat.

Run - To allow a line to feed freely.

Running Lights - Lights required to be shown on boats underway between sundown and sunup.

Sea Room - A safe distance from the shore or other hazards.

Seamanship - All the arts and skills of boat handling, ranging from maintenance and repairs to piloting, sail handling, marlinespike work, and rigging.

Seaworthy - A vessels ability to operated in conditions usually found when out to sea.

Secure - To make fast.

Set - Direction toward which the current is flowing.

Screw - A boat's propeller.

Scuppers – Drain holes in the deck of a ship.

Ship's Bell - A bell used to signal the time on a ship. Generally constructed of brass.

Shipshape - A vessel operating in a clean, organized & proper order.

Shoal - An area of rocks or sand at or near the surface of a body of water.

Slack - Not fastened; loose. Also, to loosen.

Sommelier – Wine steward in charge of helping passengers select wine on a cruise ship; waiter who is an expert in wine.

SOS - A distress signal.

Sounding – A measurement of the depth of the water.

Spring Line - A pivot line used in docking, undocking, or to prevent the boat from moving forward or astern while made fast to a dock.

Squall - A sudden, violent wind often accompanied by rain.

Stow - To put an item in its proper place.

Superstructure - The structural part of the ship above the main deck

Swamp - To fill with water, but not settle to the bottom.

Tide - The regular rise and fall of the water level along a seacoast or in an ocean port. Gravitational attraction of the moon is the primary cause of tides. With the moon orbiting the earth every 24 hours and 50 minutes, low and high tides are about 12 hours and 25 minutes apart.

Tiller - A bar or handle for turning a boat's rudder or an outboard motor.

Topsides - The sides of a vessel between the waterline and the deck; sometimes referring to onto or above the deck.

Trim - The fore and aft balance of a ship.

Wake - The track of stirred-up water behind a ship in motion

Waterline - The point at which the water reaches on a vessel when floating.

Weigh - To raise the anchor.

Windward - The side of a vessel that is nearest the direction the wind is coming from.

Yaw - To swerve or steer off course; to swing back and forth; the motion of ship on her vertical axis.