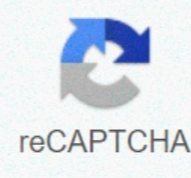




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## Why do boats spray water around cruise ships

Cruise ships are a way to explore the world and have a vacation out on the sea. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, going on a cruise to a new destination was a popular way for people to travel to new countries while being mindful of their travel budget. However, have you ever wondered what happens to cruise ships after they're no longer in use? While things are uncertain right now, here's what travel could look like after coronavirus.Where do cruise ships go?Like every other work of machinery in the world, cruise ships can't run forever. Typically, a cruise ship is built to run about 30 years. When a cruise ship is no longer running smoothly or it's time for it to retire, there are a few different factors for consideration which include the state of the ship when it goes into retirement along with how many people are interested in purchasing the cruise ship."In some cases, retired ships could have a second life and be sold to other companies," Colleen McDaniel, editor-in-chief of Cruise Critic, tells Reader's Digest. "In other cases, they're sold for scrap—meaning the ship will dock at a shipyard and the most valuable parts will be sold piece-by-piece, and the rest of the ship stripped." Cruise ships have a lot of interesting parts and features. Here are 5 hidden features on cruise ships you had no idea existed.While cruise ships can be sold to other cruise lines and repurposed that way, given the current climate with the pandemic, ships may skip that route and go straight to the scrapyard. "Currently, as cruise lines are retiring select ships, we're seeing a mix of both— some ships have been transferred to different cruise lines, others are headed to shipyards to be sold as scrap," says McDaniel. Find out some of the ways cruises could change after coronavirus.How is a cruise ship taken apart?Like retired airplanes, cruise ships have their own final resting place. "The term 'cruise ship graveyard' is usually meant to describe those final destinations for ships that have been scrapped," McDaniel says.You might be surprised to know that the largest scrap yard for ships in the world located in Alang, India recycles around 50 percent of decommissioned cruise ships. Cruise ships either use their own power to go or they're towed, which is a bit more difficult. Then there is a process in order to tear cruise ships down."If the ship is no longer profitable or has mechanical or other systemic issues, then it will be sold for demolition. In recent years, the most popular place for old cruise ships to get demolished has been Alang, in India, where there is a ten-mile stretch of beach with a 25-foot tidal variance," says Peter Knego, a cruise journalist and historian. "Ships are beached there at high tide, then when the tide recedes, workers head out, remove all salvageable fittings and begin cutting the ship down. As the ship gets cut away, it is gradually winched ashore until it finally disappears." If you're looking to book a cruise after the pandemic, here are 13 things travel experts wish you knew about booking a cruise.Cruise ships as tourist attractionsAnother option is to use retired cruise ships as popular tourist attractions. While we may never know the mysteries of the Titanic, one of the most famous cruise liners of all time, we can get an inside look at other ships like the Queen Mary. With tours and attractions and various dining options available, you're able to learn more about Queen Mary's history and learn fun facts, like how the building of this ship was a technological achievement.What will happen to cruise ships due to the pandemic?The pandemic has upended many aspects of everyday life. The coronavirus is costing the world a lot of money, and there have been dire consequences to the travel industry. This includes cruise ships. "The pandemic has sped up the process of cruise ship disposal since cruise lines cannot afford to keep vast fleets in warm layup (with full crews to make sure all systems are in working order, the ship is clean, safe, etc.) or even cold layup," says Knego. If you're wondering, here's what happens to cruise ship cabins that don't get sold.Sadly, many cruise ships have had their lives cut short due to the pandemic. "The eighteen ships that the Carnival Corporation (parent company of Carnival Cruises with multiple cruise lines) and three that Royal Caribbean have thus far disposed of were still viable and popular ships until the pandemic struck," explains Knego. "For the most part, they could have all been kept in service for several more years but without the demand and with the overhead being so high, they had no choice and had to begin paring down their fleets. If the pandemic continues for much longer, what we have seen thus far is only the beginning of a much larger purge." While things may look bleak for the travel and cruise industry now, there's still a bit of hope. Here's why this traveler will continue taking cruises after the pandemic.Sources:knape/Getty ImagesStockStudio/ShutterstockDanny Lehman/Getty Images If you long for the open ocean but bristle at the thought of all-night discos, thousand-seat dining rooms, or congested Caribbean ports turned duty-free shopping malls, know this: Not all cruise ships are vast, floating resorts. A diminutive but growing industry niche revolves around small vessels—a wide ranging group inclusive of yachts, rugged expedition ships and classic sailing schooners—where passenger counts top out at 200 rather than 2,000. Beyond offering a cozier atmosphere, these ships' size creates a whole different experience, onboard and onshore. You can go kayaking off a wilderness island in Mexico with Lindblad, trim the sails and climb the rigging with Star Clippers, follow a whale into a serene fjord in Alaska on a Cruise West ship, or hop around the Greek Islands aboard easyCruise's converted ferry. Small-ship cruising is not all about the caviar and private cabanas of luxury ships either (most of them are small too). It's more about geographic access to the world's more untrafficked ports. In the Southern Caribbean, for instance, your itinerary on Canadian Sailing Expedition's tall-ship Caledonia might eschew the marquee Barbados for the stunning, volcanic Union Island. And when Caledonia sails in Canada and New England, you can gain perspective on Newfoundland's ancient sea culture from an onboard expert, then pay a visit to Port au Choix, a tiny town rich in fishing history. Of course, these intimate experiences mean giving up big-ship amenities like Broadway-style shows, multiple dining venues, expansive kids' programs, and endless watering holes. Plus, enjoying such a personalized setting while exploring the globe typically comes at a premium price, with a few notable exceptions (see budget pick below). That said, typical cruise vacation add-ons like excursions are often included in the fare, as is access to kayaks and bikes. Before we launch into our picks, let's answer one question: How do we define "small"? It's a bit of an arbitrary distinction; with new cruise ships like the 153,000-ton, 4,200 Norwegian Epic and the 220,000-ton, 5,400-passenger Oasis of the Seas on the horizon, the concept of small is relative. For this story, however, we're going to try to stick with non-luxury vessels accommodating fewer than 300 passengers. Best for Expedition Cruises The Line: Lindblad Expeditions Why: Lindblad Expeditions, allied with National Geographic, offers soft adventure voyages on a fleet of seven capable vessels carrying from 48 to 150 passengers. Forget big-ship accouterments like in-cabin TV's, casinos and multiple bars and restaurants (though the newest ship in the fleet, National Geographic Explorer, has added a decent-sized spa and alternative eatery). Ships are comfortable, and there are some great touches, like the local and organic foods used in meals. But Lindblad's ships serve more as base camps for exploring the world's waters, with cruises to the Galapagos, South Pacific, Indian Ocean, Antarctica, Greenland and the Arctic Circle. Besides the obligatory zodiacs, which are used to make landings, ships are equipped with scientific tools like hydrophones (to snoop on marine mammals), underwater cameras and video microscopes. The line has become especially well regarded for its staff of topflight naturalists, historians, undersea specialists and expedition leaders that accompany each of its trips. National Geographic photographers accompany every sailing onboard National Geographic Explorer and most sailings on National Geographic Endeavour, as well as on select photography expeditions across the entire fleet. As you'd expect from National Geographic, there's also a strong emphasis on leaving the smallest possible carbon footprint. Honorable Mention: Hurtigruten's Fram Why: The 318-passenger Fram, the pathfinder for the Norwegian-based cruise line Hurtigruten, literally covers the globe from top to bottom&mdash;it sails a yearly Arctic Circle-to-Antarctic Circle world cruise. Onboard, this ice-hardened polar expedition vessel offers some stylish twists, like a minimalist Arctic chic design (iceberg sculptures, austere destination photography) and flat-screen TV's in cabins, but don't let the trappings fool you&mdash;these cruises are all about nature. Like other expedition vessels, Fram has its own small landing crafts that take passengers to incredible seaside locations. Passengers are an international mix, and the ship operates in at least three languages, including English, German, and Norwegian. Best for Scenic Nature Cruises The Line: Cruise West Why: Family-owned Cruise West is best known for its up-close-and-personal Alaska voyages, but the line is increasingly expanding into places like Mexico's Sea of Cortez, Central America, and Southeast Asia. It uses both company-owned ships and chartered vessels. Big ships don't make it to uninhabited Alaskan islands like the Shumagins or to the Bering Sea, which Cruise West's Spirit of Oceanus spends time in during a 24-night voyage. But despite some of the off-the-grid destinations visited by the line's 78- to 138-passenger ships, the experience onboard is more akin to "scenic cruising," with a focus on the visual—waterfalls, icebergs, birds, sea creatures. Cruise West cruises are not necessarily for hardcore adventurers. They're more suited to the nature lover who wants a comfortable way to see wilderness and coastal communities without big-ship distractions and without getting too dirty (unless you're seriously determined). There are onboard lectures (each voyage features an "exploration leader") and evening performances from local artists, but otherwise activities are kept to a relative minimum. Best excursions are included in the fare (usually a walking tour), as are snorkel and kayak gear for certain itineraries. The line also makes use of inflatable zodiacs to explore remote destinations. Honorable Mention: Voyages of Discovery's MV Discovery Why: Voyages of Discovery's MV Discovery takes its budget-savvy older audience on enriching cruises to seldom visited destinations—Iceland, Faroe Islands, Norway's North Cape, the Amazon, Devil's Island, and Easter Island, plus Antarctica and sub-Antarctic islands—without the rigorous shore excursions and spartan accommodations of true expedition vessels. It's also one of the most reasonably priced options given the exotic itineraries offered. Onboard, passengers will find some traditional big-ship touches, including two pools, several bars, a small spa, and an alternative restaurant. Passenger capacity is 800, but the ship has a policy of never carrying more than 650 passengers, and the experience is breezy and social. Best Tall-Ship Cruises The Line: Star Clippers Why: For the tall-ship enthusiast, there's nothing quite like sailing under a starry or sunny sky, powered by the bluster of ocean winds. And if you want to enjoy the power of the breeze while exploring less-traveled ports in the Southern Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and the Mediterranean, Star Clippers is tough to beat. The fleet's three vessels—the flagship 227-passenger Royal Clipper and 170-passenger twins Star Clipper and Star Flyer —are some of the fastest clipper ships ever built. Feel the sails catch the breeze, help with the raising and trimming, or morph into a spider and climb high in the rigging. Onboard, passengers don't adhere to rigid timetables as they might on more conventional cruise ships, and the evening dress code is always elegantly casual (with the exception of themed evenings, like Pirate Night). Water sports are also a major component of each cruise, with complimentary snorkeling, kayaking, sailing, and other sea-based activities offered directly from the ship. (You can also get your diving certification.) Star Clippers has a new tall ship slated for launch in spring 2011. The five-masted sailing vessel will be the largest sailing ship ever constructed at 7,400 gross tons and 518 feet in length. The new-build will carry 296 passengers—still under our 300 passenger limit. Honorable Mention: Canadian Sailing Expeditions Why: While Star Clippers offers a pretty basic sailing experience, Canadian Sailing Expeditions is even more so—it's like an adult camp for sailing enthusiasts. A cruise aboard the laid-back, 62-passenger, 12-sailed Caledonia also provides an enrichment experience that focuses on the history and natural attractions of the unique places it visits. The ship spends summers in the Canadian Maritimes, eschewing popular places like Halifax and Quebec City for less-visited ports like Tadoussac, Quebec, and Lark Harbour, Newfoundland. During its winter Caribbean season, ports include off-the-grid places like Mayreau, Union Island, and Les Saintes. The ship drops anchor in ports overnight, which has two benefits: maximum day-time sailing and nightlife sampling. Best Budget Cruises The Line: easyCruise Why: It's true that rates have been climbing in the past few years, but easyCruise is still one of the cheapest options for small-ship Greek Isles cruising (and don't pay brochure rates—the line is constantly offering special deals). Cruises sail on the bare-bones easyCruise Life, which has just one restaurant, a tiny "gym," and spartan cabins, many of which feature a quad-occupancy bunk-bed setup. Maximum capacity is 600 passengers, which we realize is larger than all of the aforementioned vessels, but an Aegean Sea voyage on easyCruise Life is small-ship cruising through and through. The port stops are one of a kind—up to 20 hours docked in popular cruise spots like Mykonos and Rhodes, coupled with lengthy calls in unique-to-cruising islands like Syros and Kalymnos—and the onboard vibe resembles a little community of youngsters, active travelers who don't have much use for a ship apart from grabbing a quick meal, sleeping, and hitching a ride to the next port. This is serious no-frills, destination-intensive cruising on the cheap, with special prices sometimes hovering around the \$30 per person, per night hostel territory—if you're cool with a quad room or tiny windowless double. Fares also include two meals and daily housekeeping. Honorable Mention: The closest approximation to easyCruise is the Greek ferry system, a popular method of inter-island travel among the islands. easyCruise Life is, after all, a converted ferry.

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