

To send a surprise gift to a cruise ship, check the cruise line's gift options or ask its guest services team what deliveries it accepts. You will usually need the sailing details and the recipient's booking information, and you should arrange the gift before departure.

Start with the cruise line

Many cruise lines offer gifts that can be arranged in advance, such as flowers, food, drinks or cabin decorations. The selection and delivery timing depend on the ship and sailing. Check the cruise line's website or contact guest services to see what is available and how to order without alerting the recipient.

Ask where the gift will be placed. It might be waiting in the cabin on embarkation day, or it might arrive later in the voyage. If the timing matters, confirm it before placing the order rather than assuming it will be delivered at a particular hour.

Gather the details and place the order

Have the recipient's full name and sailing information ready. A booking number or cabin number may also be required, although the cruise line can tell you which details it needs. Take care not to request information that would spoil the surprise.

1. Find the ship name, departure date and departure port.
2. Check the available gifts and any ordering deadline.
3. Confirm the recipient's details and cabin number if required.
4. Choose a delivery date if that option is offered, and add a short message.

5. Keep the confirmation and contact guest services if anything needs correcting.

If you do not know the cabin number, ask the cruise line whether the booking number and passenger name are enough. A travel companion may be able to help, provided they can keep the plan quiet.

Check outside delivery rules

Do not assume a florist or courier can deliver directly to a ship. Ports have security controls, and cruise lines set their own rules for accepting items from outside suppliers. Contact the cruise line before arranging an independent delivery, and ask for the approved address, recipient details and delivery deadline.

Flowers, food and alcohol may have particular restrictions. Rules can vary by ship, port and destination, so check the exact itinerary. If outside flowers are not accepted, ask about flowers offered on board or consider sending a gift to the recipient's home before the trip.

For a traveler with allergies or limited cabin space, a small arrangement or another cabin gift may be easier to enjoy. A simple note can make it personal without giving the surprise away in advance.

Questions about cruise ship gifts

Can I send a gift after the cruise has started?

Possibly. Contact the cruise line to ask what can still be ordered and delivered on that sailing. Options may be more limited once the ship has departed.

Will the recipient know who sent it?

That depends on the order and message options. Add your name to the card if you want them to know, or ask guest services how an unsigned gift is handled.

Also helpful: full guide