Tips for going to sea

When you first arrive

When you arrive at the dock with your personal gear to go aboard the vessel, check in with the Chief Scientist who will give you your stateroom assignment. Get your gear settled and stowed away before you go on to explore other aspects of your new environment. Personal effects are most easily stowed aboard ship in soft duffel bags (seabags) which can fit into odd spaces and are easily lashed in place. This is the time to secure all your gear so that it will stay in place under sea conditions, not after the rolling and pitching begins. This is also the time to familiarize yourself with the station card next to your bunk. This gives the number of your lifeboat station for boat drills and the place to which you report for fire and emergency drills. If you have brought or are responsible for laboratory equipment or other scientific gear, see that it is aboard and secured. Seek the advice and help of the SSSG technician if you have any questions.

Your living space

You will be sharing the somewhat confined space of a stateroom with at least one other, and it is best to get off to a good start by following these guidelines: Keep your personal things neat and contained; clean your linen regularly and keep your bunk made; keep your room clean and in order (cleaning materials of all kinds are available from the Steward's Department); and before inviting a guest to your room, make sure your cabinmate has no objections. Keeping yourself and your clothing presentable will help to assure your welcome among your shipmates. The messdeck is an area where this is particularly important.

Seasickness

Seasickness can sneak up on almost anyone at any time, and it is not an appropriate subject for humor. If it happens to you, be reassured that it is usually a short-term illness. Rest on your bunk, but do not stay down for prolonged periods. Test your sea legs occasionally, and get out for fresh air if weather permits. Stay neat and clean and try to keep eating, if only a little bit. Unsalted, dry crackers, bread or other plain starches are usually good if all else fails. Seasickness medication is available from the ship's stores if you have not brought your own.

Many persons who have been to sea regularly bring their own snack foods - particularly those foods which are wrapped individually and give quick energy. Consult with someone experienced in your party and seek their recommendation.

Clothes at sea

Clothing at sea should be comfortable and sturdy for work. In warm climates you will want shorts, and in cold seas be sure to have your long underwear. Even in the tropics, nights and some air-conditioned laboratories can be unexpectedly cold. If you expect to...
do any work on deck, include your foul-weather gear (water-proof jacket and pants) and boots. Bring a hat which will stay on in a breeze. It is required during lifeboat drills and you will find it useful while working on deck.

Modesty of attire is appropriate aboard ship. Avoid wearing badly torn apparel, and refrain from wearing abbreviated shorts/tops and bathing suits except in your cabin or in the area on each ship designated for sunbathing.

**Captain and crew**

Most science personnel are at sea for only short periods, whereas the officers and crew members are aboard ship for many months at a time. The ship is their home and their quarters are to be visited by invitation only. This rule must be scrupulously observed with regard to crew's quarters, where more people usually share less space, no matter how much camaraderie may have grown between science and ship's people.

Occasional visits to the bridge may be welcomed by the Mates, but do not overdo it, and remember not to initiate conversations with the watch-stander on duty at the helm.

**Ships's environment**

A ship is a noisy environment. Anything you can do to eliminate a few decibels will be to everyone’s advantage. Turn down the volume of your CD player or radio, keep your voice down in passageways, and close doors quietly. Always fasten (with at least one latch or ‘dog’) heavy steel doors. They can do a lot of damage swinging loose as well as make a terrible racket. Strong crosswinds can raise havoc. Enter from the lee side of the ship whenever possible. Keep portholes and outside doors closed when the air conditioner is operating.

Videos, books, and audio tapes are not the only means of entertainment on board. There will be interesting people to talk with and philosophizing is a time-honored pastime. During informal gatherings, be careful not to disturb others who may be trying to sleep or study. When someone of the opposite sex is visiting your stateroom, gossip can be minimized by keeping the door open.

The close quarters aboard ship demand utmost consideration of others at all times. When someone is required to work long or irregular hours, perhaps out of phase with the next person's schedule, all the freedom of off-hours ashore cannot be assumed.

Be considerate of the belongings of others. The ships and most science groups have carefully planned tool kits and stocks of spares. Most things cannot be replaced at sea. Ask permission before borrowing tools, spare parts, or personal items from any source.

**After the cruise**

Before leaving the ship, be sure to return all books to the library, empty your desk, locker, and drawers, strip your bed, and return all soiled linen to the linen locker, and leave the laboratories, your room, and the head (bathroom) in spotless condition.
You may hope never again to see another ship (not everyone “takes” to the sea), or you may already be planning your next cruise. In either case, you will have had a unique experience.