

TRAVEL



HEALTH IN MIND, CRUISE LINES OFFER LEAN AND LIGHT CUISINES

As oat bran and aerobics are fast-replacing designer chocolate and couch potatoes, consumer concern for health and fitness has changed vacation trends as well. More and more travelers are opting for a vacation where they can stay on track when it comes to their diets.

Recognizing the needs of these guests, cruise lines have been aggressive in catering to the growing number of vacationers who want or need special menus. Most cruise lines now offer a broader and more comprehensive range of alternative-menu offerings than ever before, according to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

For instance, low-cholesterol, low-fat, low-sodium, American Heart Association-approved, spa-prescribed, diabetic and vegetarian dishes are available on various cruise ships.

Virtually all shipboard chefs now prepare lighter, healthier meals so passengers can watch their waistlines and still delight their taste buds.

"Cruise fare has always been one of the most outstanding benefits of a vacation at sea, and now the choices are limitless," according to James G. Godsman, president of CLIA.

"Almost any dietary need can be met on a cruise vacation. Passengers will undoubtedly be surprised by an impressive roster entrees and desserts every bit as satisfying as those on the standard menu. Virtually every CLIA-member cruise line offers a variety of special selections including low-calorie cuisine and other menus that are designed for passengers with specific dietary concerns," Godsman added.

Light menus may include a variety of delicately prepared appetizers, like chilled lychee and kiwi cocktail and salad di calimari et muscoli (marinated squid and mussel) or entrees, such as poached whole Maine lobster with lemon sauce or sauteed sea scallops in a white wine sauce served over a bed of spinach. Low-cal desserts may range from Spanish cream to specially-designed pineapple cheesecake to the ever-popular fresh fruit and sherbet.

Most CLIA-member cruise lines designate special low-calorie

dishes and desserts on their standard menus by using symbols or asterisks to signify the lighter choice. Other lines list lighter fare under easy-to-find headings. A few lines offer separate low-calorie menus. And some lines even offer a complete vegetarian menu.

Over and above special meal options, salad bars and buffets also offer passengers a wide range of lighter foods. And if a particular dietary item or meal

is not listed on a regular or special menu, passengers can always place a request with the ship's matre d'.

For those who can't resist the temptations of the cherries jubilee or the baked Alaska, the wide variety of shipboard activities can help them burn the extra calories. An early-morning jog around the lap deck or an afternoon aerobics class is a great trade-off for a bout of

overindulgence!

Whatever the passenger's special menu needs--whether it stems from a lifestyle routine or a health condition--cruise lines generally can accommodate them. Passengers should notify their travel agent at the time of booking.

To find out more about the special menu options available aboard cruise ships, ask one of the 19,000 CLIA-affiliated travel agents in North America.

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