Dear member of our Travel Club;

Recently an article on tipping or gratuities was published in a travel magazine which thoroughly notes all the differences about tipping onboard the different cruise lines as well as doing a comparison to hotels, & restaurants on shore.

Over the last 3 years there has been a lot of changes on board cruise ships as a result of the guest feedback from the comment cards filled in by passengers at the end of each cruise as well as some guest having to go ashore on the last day looking for us cash in banks and cash machines or lining up at the front desk trying to get cash for their tips. Many guest get frustrated on the last day or evening try ing to find cash and therefore have requested the cruise line to make it easier and after consultaion with there crew representatives have developed a new approach.

The Process: (On Board Account)

Most cruise lines have now streamlined the process making it much easier for all guests. Holland America, Royal Caribbean , Princess, Canard ,Celebrity and Carnival have arranged for gratituities to be automatically charged to your on board account and processed along with your account eliminating the need for you to be making an effort to get cash at the last minute when you are busy packing. Carnival and Celebrity has provided the capacity to pre pay your gratuities before you even go on the cruise thereby reducing the final amount on your credit card payment which can be very helpful on a long voyage or for someone with a low limit on their CC. Royal Caribbean provides vouchers to guest to hand to staff as well.

Who to Tip ☹(Room Stewards & Waiters)

In all cruise lines gratuities include your room Stewards (who clean your room two or three times daily, bathroom and make your bed,create towel animals for you and leave chocolates on your pillow.)

Some guest request additional services like wine glasses, extra ice, laundry services and clean up from room service and this would be considered additional time and effort.

Your dining room staff who serve you regularly 3 or 4 times a day throughout your cruise in your dining room and Lido restaurants.

Bar Staff & Wine Stewards:

Bar staff on all cruise lines have their gratuities included when drinks are purchased. It does not include special or additional services requested like supplying extra glasses, ice or condiments for small groups of people gathering in lounges and bar areas with their own drinks or providing corkage or cleaning up after guest leave. These extra services are not covered and would be appropriate to tip the individual providing the service

As of the spring in 2009 the International accepted standard varies slightly depending on which cruise line you are travelling but is approximately $11.00 to $12.00 per day per person using USD. There are some notable exceptions like Carnival’s singing main dining room maitre’d. All cruise line list the appropriate rates in their destination brochures.

In comparison to Hotel service which recently we experienced ,the room actually may not be available to you until 4pm while a room on board ship has been cleaned twice by that time depending when you get up and out. On Cruise ships your bags are delivered to your room for you and your bed turned down for you, ice made available for you, fruit by request and more often than not a surprise animal made for you as well as a treat placed on your pillow. In some Hotel (Extended Stay America) a room rate of $120.00 USD your bedding is only changed weekly. In local restaurants the gratuity is paid at each meal and is nominally 15 to 18%.

If I could also add a comment, recently we were just getting on the elevator on day 2 of a 17 day cruise and one gentleman was telling his wife “I told you to have the gratuities taking of the account” and so I mentioned to him that he had not enough time to determine whether his bed was being made or not. Fortunately there are not that many people who don’t want to acknowledge the tremendous dedicated efforts of the crew even if one does have a bad day . There are guest however that do cling to an isolated incident to not want to provide tips for services received unless it was of course there son or daughter doing the work.