

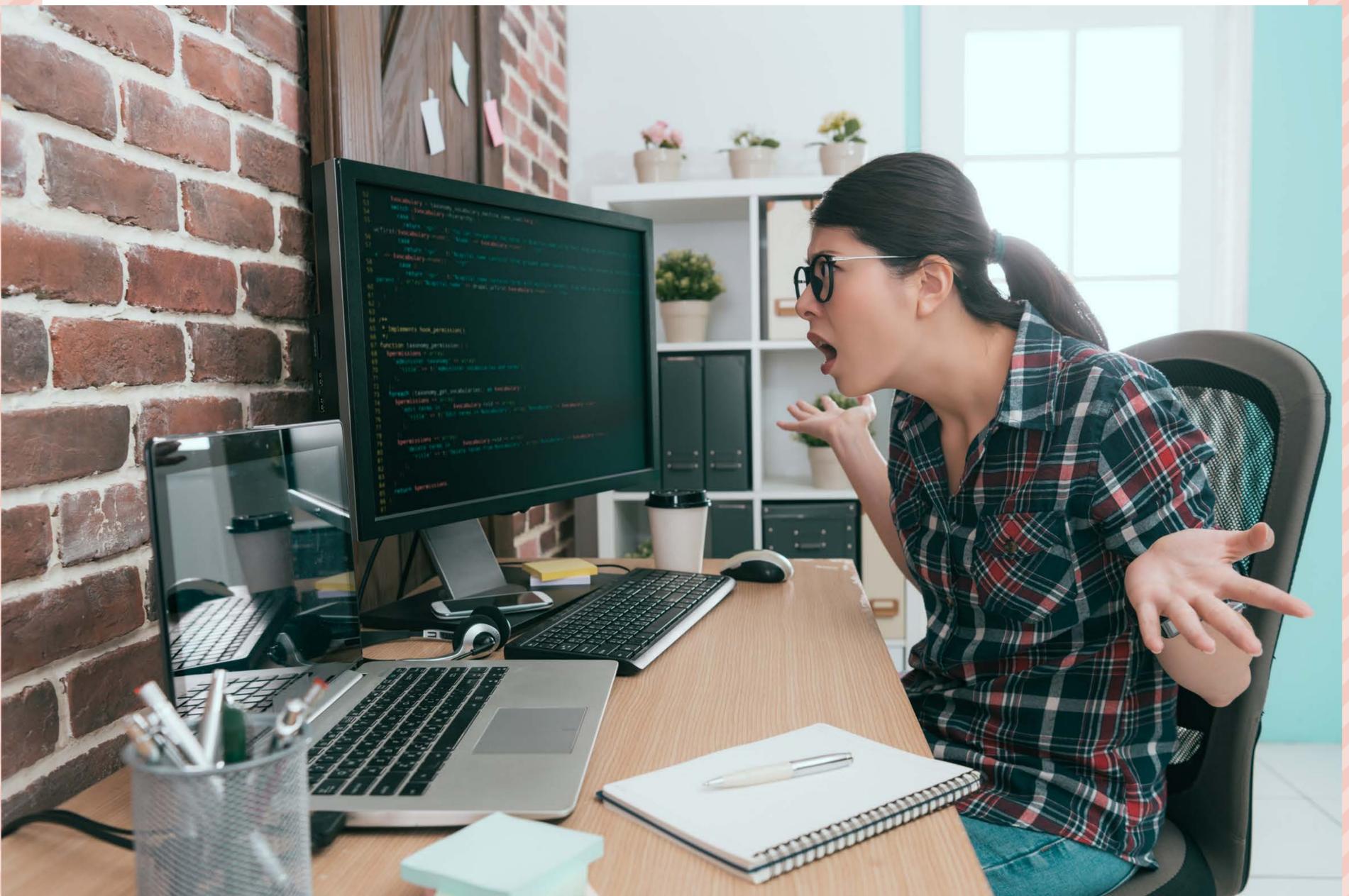


The
Crazy-Busy
Woman's Guide
to planning
Fun, Restful, Hassle-free
Vacations

Your Life is Crazy-Busy!

You are already overworked and overwhelmed. You desperately want (need!!) to take that fabulous, fun, relaxing vacation with your loved ones. Maybe it's a long-awaited family vacation, a much-needed romantic getaway, or even a well-earned girls' trip. But the idea of sorting through an entire internet full of information... it's paralysis by analysis!

The internet is a great tool for browsing beautiful destinations and new adventures. But for every positive opinion, there's a negative one. Slick marketing can make 2-star resorts look 5-star, and it's tough to keep track of the details: Which cruise ship has a waterpark? Which resorts require dinner reservations? Where can I find a tour that visits all of the cities I want to see in Italy?



I'm Greta Smith, owner of Savvy Travel Planning. I help crazy-busy women enjoy their best travel life by planning soul-filling, hassle-free travel experiences that let them spend quality time with the important people in their lives, away from the hectic pace, and return with incredible memories to cherish forever. I can show YOU how to do that, too.



Mary wanted to take her teen grandsons to see the World War 2 museum in New Orleans. She wanted a hotel with kitchen facilities, within walking distance of the museum, along with recommendations for activities and dining. Through my contacts in New Orleans, I was able to find her the perfect hotel and provide her with a locally curated list of the best (and most authentic) restaurants and fun stuff in the area.

Sharon wanted to plan a trip for two families to an all-inclusive resort for her daughter's 18th birthday. They wanted to go to a resort in the Caribbean with a beautiful beach and upscale amenities, where the legal drinking age is 18. She had not settled on a specific island and was having trouble comparing resorts in different areas on her own. Because I know Caribbean all-inclusives well, I was able to nail down the locations that would meet her expectations and had the required drinking age. I knew which resorts would suit their needs for great amenities in a fun setting, and they had a fabulous celebration trip.



While planning an extended family cruise for her grandmother's 80th birthday, Anna contacted me for help with her group. She had heard there were special perks available for groups, and needed a travel advisor to set it up. She was also overwhelmed with the idea of handling everyone's credit card numbers for deposits and payments, keeping track of who was going and their room numbers, and organizing their on-board get-togethers. I was able to take the stress off her shoulders and handle ALL of the details for her.

When beginning the planning process, most people gather as much information as possible about ALL of the options, and then filter through the noise to find the things that are most important to them.

When I work with clients, I ask them to go the other way...

What are the most important components to YOU?

I have a five-step process to get my clients from our initial conversation to boarding the plane for their dream trip, and I'm going to share those steps with YOU.

Questions about every trip:

Are you traveling to celebrate a special occasion?

Will your group include children?

Are you looking for a resort, cruise or tour?

Where would you like to go?

When would you like to go?

STEP 1:

Be super clear about your wish list

When I meet with a client for the first time, she's often been all over the internet trying to find the thing she'll like. But I like to start at the other side and find out what she REALLY wants the resort (or cruise, or tour) to have.

Questions about tours:

What cities or attractions are "must-see"?

What is your preferred method of travel- bus, train, car, boat?

Do you want to travel with a group, or would you prefer to have a private tour?

How long would you like your trip to be?

Would you like a tour that centers around a special interest (food, wine, history, etc)?

Questions about cruises:

What did you like- or not like- about cruises you've been on before?

Do you know which port you'd like to sail from?

Do you have a favorite cruise line?

Where would you like to go?

What islands or cities are a "must-see"?

What type of cabin would you like?

Questions about resorts:

Are you looking for an all-inclusive resort?

Are there specific features or amenities you would like to have available?

Are you more of a beach person or a pool person?
Is nightlife important to you?

Do you enjoy a party atmosphere, or would you prefer a quiet beach retreat?

STEP 2:

Set a Budget

You can go almost anywhere in a cheap way, but you may waste a lot of time and not see very much. You may also get sick on bad food, share bathrooms with 20 other people, and ride around in the equivalent of a school bus. Not everyone can afford a private guide in a limousine, but you want the best you CAN afford. Figure out what that number is, set a budget, and work within it to find your best options.



STEP 3: Do Your Homework

When I work with a new client, this is where I begin to take the work off her shoulders. She's worked out what she wants and the budget she can afford. From there, I take her list and my experience and pull together the options that fit her vision the best. She receives a quote sheet with the rates for several cruises, tours, or resorts, plus options for flights and pre- or post-trip hotel stays if needed. I also include my info sheet for each choice, which is sourced from professional review sites, travel industry publications, and the first-hand experiences of my colleagues, myself, and our collective clients.

Armed with your wish list and budget, start working through your options. When you find one that doesn't fit one of your non-negotiables, strike it off your list and move on.

As you start to whittle down your list, check for these "fine print" issues I watch for my clients:

Resort fees can put an unexpected dent in your budget

At some resorts, premium liquor is included only for upgraded club-level guests

Club level may also be required for unlimited dinner reservations, first dibs on reservations, and access to certain restaurants, pools and lounges

Resorts do occasionally change their focus and switch from adult-only to family-friendly, or vice versa

Some resorts include spa services in their "all inclusive" package

Some cruise lines, or specific itineraries, include drink packages

Many ships in the Caribbean alternate weeks between eastern and western Caribbean itineraries

Be sure you know exactly what is and is not included in the tour you are considering

Be aware that the hotel rating scale is different in Europe and Asia, and check out the hotels that are included

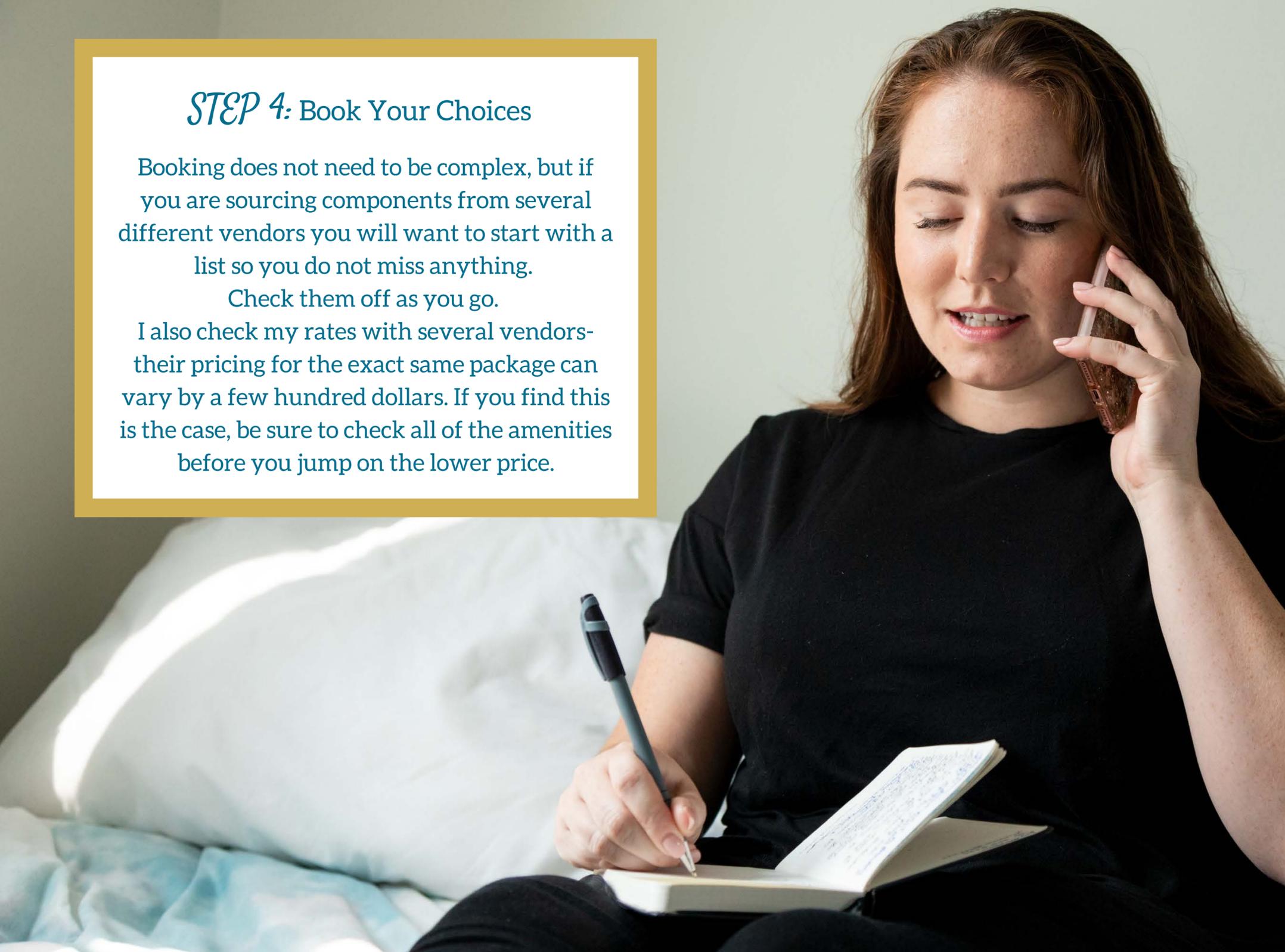


STEP 4: Book Your Choices

Booking does not need to be complex, but if you are sourcing components from several different vendors you will want to start with a list so you do not miss anything.

Check them off as you go.

I also check my rates with several vendors- their pricing for the exact same package can vary by a few hundred dollars. If you find this is the case, be sure to check all of the amenities before you jump on the lower price.



Be sure to take note of deposit amounts, remaining balances and due dates



Triple check the spelling of each traveler's name- if your reservations include airfare, you may not be able to make changes without incurring fees or causing your trip to be repriced. While you're at it, recheck those birth dates too.



If you want travel insurance that will allow you to cancel for any reason, you'll need to purchase it on the day you make your reservations.



Be sure your travel protection is sufficient to cover all components. If you add something later, call your insurer and ask if your policy can be increased to cover it.

STEP 5: Collect the Details

My clients receive several emails from me between the time we book their trip and the time they head to the airport. There can be a lot of details to collect. I find that most people appreciate getting all of the info they need, when they need it, rather than having everything dropped into their email box at once. If there are questions they can always call, text or email me. The vendor's call center could answer the question too, but no one enjoys sitting on hold and then explaining the details of their reservation every time they have to call.

Do some of the restaurants you will visit have a dress code?

What specialty restaurants does your ship have?

Does your tour have optional excursions? Are you interested in any? What are their costs? Do you prepay, or pay the guide on site?

On your cruise, does the main dining room have a dress code? Do the specialty restaurants?

Are there formal nights on your cruise? How many? What are the dress guidelines?

How much local currency should you bring?

Are gratuities included in the rate you paid? If not, what is the cost? Are they automatically charged, or do you need to set money aside?

Be sure you've met any Visa requirements.

Do you have dietary or mobility needs? Be sure to call the appropriate department at your cruise line/resort/tour company to discuss.

Check whether any inoculations are necessary for you destination, and how far in advance you need to have them.

Check the weather report before you leave and make sure you have packed appropriately.



So there you have it, the five essential steps to planning a hassle-free vacation. Follow the steps and you'll know exactly what's included in your trip and be well-informed of any requirements or special circumstances.

Have questions, or want to make the planning even easier? Visit my website at www.savvytraveldesign.com to schedule a free consultation call with me.

We'll chat about your trip, your vision, and how to make it happen!