

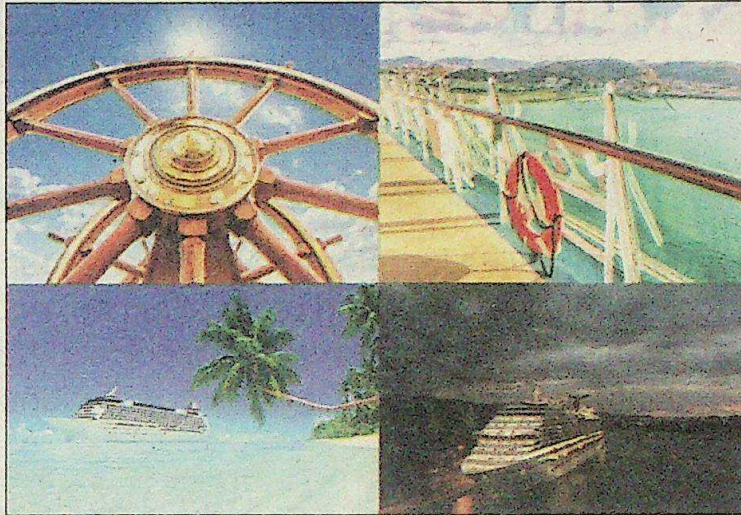
Set Sail for Dream Career in Cruise Sector

Ranjana Singh

India's cruise market has the potential to grow 10 folds over the next decade, driven by rising demand and disposable incomes. The Government of India realises this potential and is determined to position India as a global cruise hub with state-of-art infrastructure for both ocean and river cruises.

Several attractions of India along its 7,500 km long coastline and vast river systems are yet to be unveiled to the world. With the development of the right infrastructure and adoption of modern technology, India will certainly become one of the top cruise tourism destinations in the world.

The Ministry of Tourism has developed four theme-based coastal destination circuits such as Gujarat pilgrimage tours, West Coast - cultural and scenic tours, South Coast - Ayurvedic wellness tours and East Coast - heritage tourism to activate cruise demand. Lighthouse and Island development is also being undertaken to attract coastal tourists.



River cruise or inland cruise is another potential component of cruise tourism that India is exploring. Only recently on 13th January 2023, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi proudly launched the world's longest River Cruise MV Ganga Vilas. It is a five-star moving hotel which has 18 suites. Apart from this, it has accommodation for 40 crew members. The 51-day journey gives tourists an opportunity to embark upon an experiential

voyage and indulge in the art, culture, history, and spirituality of India and Bangladesh.

The cruise line industry offers many opportunities for individuals looking for a career in the travel and hospitality sector. Following are some career

opportunities available in the cruise line industry in India, including the qualifications and skills required to succeed in these roles.

Top Jobs in Cruise Liner

Cruise Ship Captain: One of the most popular roles in the cruise line industry is that of a Cruise Ship Captain. This is the highest-ranking officer on a cruise ship, and is responsible for the overall operation and navigation of the vessel. Apart from the requisite educational qualifications, a captain must have excellent leadership and decision-making skills, as well as a thorough knowledge of maritime laws and regulations.

Cruise Ship Officer: They assist in navigating a ship and supervising its crew. They report to the ship's captain and ensure

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the safe operation of ships at sea, in port or at anchor. Being a Cruise Ship Officer requires advanced navigational skills, the ability to motivate others, and a willingness to spend long periods of time at sea, away from home. Tasks and duties include the following:

- Assisting the Captain in navigating a ship by supervising the course and speed in accordance with pre-planned routes.
- Working shifts to keep watch from the ship's bridge.
- Supervising crew members.
- Ensuring safety regulations are observed.
- Coordinating loading and unloading of cargo.
- Acting as a liaison between the master and crew of a ship.
- Using radar, computers and other navigational aids to determine the position of the ship, other vessels and obstructions.
- Interpreting and updating charts and other nautical publications.
- Keeping daily records in the logbook of weather conditions and the ship's course including any alterations.

To become a Cruise Ship Captain or Cruise Ship Officer, one must have studied any or all of the following subjects in at least the Under Graduate level:

- Marine Engineering
- Marine Transportation
- Marine Engineering Systems
- Shipyard Management
- Maritime Operations and Technology
- Logistics and Intermodal Transportation

The most widely accepted educational qualification for the position of Cruise Ship Captain and Officer is B. Tech (Marine Engineering)

Top Maritime Engineering Colleges in India (Approved by the Directorate General of Shipping)

- Tolani Maritime Institute (TMI)
- B.P. Marine Academy Navi, Mumbai
- Coimbatore Marine College (CMC), Coimbatore
- International Maritime Institute (IMI), Delhi
- Vels Academy of Maritime Studies, Chennai
- Maharashtra Academy of Naval Education and Training (MANET), Pune
- SCI Maritime Training Institute, Kolkata
- Institute of Technology & Marine Engineering (ITME), Kolkata
- TS Rahaman, Mumbai
- Indian Maritime University (IMU), Chennai
- RL University of Nautical Science, Madurai
- Samundra Institute of Maritime Studies, Mumbai
- Indian Maritime University (IMU), Vizag
- Indian Maritime University (IMU), Kochi
- Amer Maritime Training Academy, Kanpur
- Centre for Maritime Education & Training, Lucknow
- Hindustan Institute of Maritime Training, Pre-Sea Training Center, Chennai

Cruise Director: The Cruise Director is responsible for planning and overseeing a variety of activities and events onboard the ship, such as games, concerts, and theme parties to cater to the interests of all passengers. The Cruise Director also supervises a team of entertainment staff. He/she is also the primary point of contact for passengers, handling any concerns or complaints they may have. They also work to create a welcoming and inclusive environment onboard the ship, ensuring that all passengers feel comfortable and enjoy their experience. The Cruise Director is also responsible for promoting onboard activities and events, as well as other services and amenities offered by the cruise line. They may also be involved in coordinating shore excursions and other off-ship activities.

To become a Cruise Director, one needs to have a combination of education, experience, and personal qualities. The specific qualifications required may vary depending on the cruise line and the particular job opening, but in general, the following qualifications are required: (i) A degree in hospitality or tourism (ii) Relevant experience in the hospitality industry, particularly in cruise ship operations, is highly valued. Candidates with experience as an activity coordinator, event planner, or other similar roles in a hospitality setting are often preferred (iii) Personal qualities like excellent communication skills, natural ability to engage with people from diverse backgrounds, ability to think clearly and swiftly in fast-paced and dynamic environments, etc are commonly sought after.

Chief Purser: The chief purser is a senior officer on a cruise ship who is responsible for managing the ship's financial operations, guest services, and administrative tasks. They manage the ship's financial operations, including overseeing onboard accounting and cash management systems. They also supervise the guest services staff, including front desk personnel, shore excursion staff, and concierge services. The Chief Purser is also responsible for overseeing the ship's administrative functions, including maintaining records and managing paperwork.

A candidate holding a degree in Hospitality Management or Business Administration is considered most suitable for the position of Chief Purser in a cruise liner. A bachelor's degree in hospitality management typically covers topics such as hotel and restaurant management, food and beverage management, event planning, and customer service. A degree in business administration can provide knowledge in areas such as accounting, finance, marketing, and human resources, which can be useful for managing the financial and administrative aspects of a cruise ship. It's important to note that experience in the cruise industry is also highly valued for the role of chief purser, and may be considered more important than formal education in some cases. Candidates with several years of experience in guest services, finance, or administration in the cruise industry may be considered for the position even without a formal degree in a related field.

Shore Excursion Manager: The roles and responsibilities mainly include developing and implementing shore excursions and tours that provide guests with unique and memorable experiences. The Shore Excursion Manager selects and manages a team of tour guides to ensure high-quality service is provided to guests. He/she also coordinates with local vendors and service providers to ensure the smooth execution of excursions while ensuring safety of regulations compliance.

A degree in hospitality, tourism, event management or a related field is usually preferred by cruise liners for the position of Shore Excursion Manager. Relevant work experience in the tourism industry, such as a tour guide, travel agent, or hospitality industry, is typically required. Additionally, a deep understanding of the destinations visited by the company's cruises, including local culture, history, and attractions, is necessary. Knowledge of different languages can also be beneficial. Organisational skills like the ability to plan and coordinate complex itineraries for large groups of people is essential, as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of all guests.

Food and Beverage Director: The key role of a Food and Beverage Director on

a cruise liner includes developing and implementing menu for all restaurants and bars on the ship. They must ensure that the menu meet the needs and preferences of the passengers and are in line with the company's standards. He/she must manage budgets for all food and beverage operations on the ship while ensuring that costs are kept under control while maintaining high levels of quality and service. He/she is also responsible for training all food and beverage staff on the ship. This includes kitchen staff, servers, bartenders, and other support staff.

Candidate aspiring to become Food and Beverage Director on a cruise liner should have a strong background in culinary arts, food service, and restaurant management. They should also have excellent communication and leadership skills, as well as the ability to manage budgets and work under pressure.

IT Manager: The role and scope of an IT Manager in a cruise liner is to oversee and manage all the technology-related operations and systems on board the ship. This includes managing the ship's communication systems, computer networks, software applications, hardware, and any other technology infrastructure used by the crew and passengers. The IT Manager is responsible for ensuring that all the technology on the ship is operating effectively and efficiently, including troubleshooting any issues that may arise. They are also responsible for managing the ship's IT budget, ensuring that all technology-related expenses are within the budget and making recommendations for future technology investments. Other responsibilities of an IT Manager on a cruise liner may include managing the ship's cyber security measures to protect against cyber threats and data breaches, managing the ship's website and online booking systems. To qualify for the post of IT Manager in a cruise liner, one must possess a degree in computer science, information technology, or a related field.

Apart from these managerial positions, there are many different types of staff members who work on a cruise ship to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers and maintain the smooth operation of the ship. Here are some of the most common types of cruise ship crew members:

Executive Chef: This is a professional culinary role that involves preparing and serving food to passengers on a cruise ship. Recruiters look for candidates having professional culinary degree or certification, as well as experience working in a professional kitchen. A cruise ship Chef must work well under pressure, and must be able to manage a large team of kitchen staff.

Hotel Staff: The hotel staff includes a wide range of positions such as housekeeping, food and beverage, and customer service personnel who are responsible for maintaining the passenger cabins, preparing and serving food and beverages, and providing entertainment and activities for passengers.

Deck Officers: The deck officers are responsible for navigating the ship, supervising the deck crew, and overseeing ship maintenance and safety procedures.

Engineers: They are responsible for the operation, maintenance, and repair of the ship's engines and other mechanical systems.

Medical Staff: The medical staff includes doctors and nurses who provide medical care to passengers and crew members.

Entertainment Staff: The entertainment staff includes performers, musicians, and other staff who organise and run activities and entertainment programs for passengers.

Security Staff: The security staff includes personnel responsible for maintaining the safety and security of passengers and crew members, including monitoring the ship's security systems and responding to emergencies.

Technical Staff: The technical staff includes crew members responsible for operating and maintaining the ship's technical systems such as the IT, audio-visual, and communications systems.

In addition to these traditional roles, there are also many other career opportunities available in the cruise line industry, including positions in marketing, sales, human resources, environment, retail, and more.

Here are some of the top colleges in India that offer courses in Cruise Ship Management:

1. Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITM) - Gwalior, Bhubaneswar, Nellore, Noida, Bodh Gaya, Shillong
2. IITM - National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS), Goa
3. Chennai School of Ship Management (CSSM), Tamil Nadu
4. ITM Institute of Hotel Management, Mumbai
5. Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition [IHM], Pusa, New Delhi
6. Udaipur Institute of Hotel Management, Rajasthan
7. Inspire Academy, Mumbai

There are other colleges that offer degree, diploma, and certificate courses in Hospitality Management which is another most sought after qualification for jobs in the cruise line industry. The courses cover various aspects of the hospitality industry including hotel management, food and beverage management, tourism and event management. It is important to research each college and the courses it offers to determine which one best suits your career goals and interests.

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Views expressed are personal.

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