



**Insider's
Comparison
Guide:
Pick the Best
Travel
Experience
for *Your*
Group**



Dear Traveler,

One group's "perfect escape" could be another group's travel *nightmare*.

No group leader wants to disappoint their travelers—so how do you choose an experience that will work for *your* group? By considering all your options!

In this guide, I break down the top 6 types of travel for groups—and I give you an honest look at each with a "pro" and "con" list. Every group's needs and desires are different, so you should never feel pigeonholed into a specific type of travel experience or accommodation.

Check out the at-a-glance comparison chart below that compares the 6 types of group travel, and then read on to explore the possibilities for your group in more depth so you can land on the best fit for *your* travel goals.

-Lucy Cichon

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"In Life, It's Not Where You Go, It's Who You Travel With"

-Charles Schultz

At-a-Glance: The Best Travel Type for Your Group

| | <i>Best for Families</i> | <i>Best for Shared Interest Groups</i> | <i>Best for Hosting Events, Retreats, or Meetings</i> | <i>Best for Large (30+) Groups</i> | <i>Best for Accommodating Mobility Issues</i> | <i>Best for Brand Loyalty-Building Business Trips with Customers</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>River Cruises</i> | | X | X | X | X | X |
| <i>Ocean Cruises</i> | X | | X | X | X | |
| <i>All-Inclusive Resorts</i> | X | | X | X | X | |
| <i>Land Tours</i> | X | X | | | | |
| <i>Custom, Private Travel</i> | X | X | | X | | X |
| <i>Villa Stays</i> | X | X | X | | X | X |

River Cruises

From the charming countryside and glittering cities of Europe, to the incredible wildlife and historic temples and ruins that line iconic rivers like the Nile and China's Yangtze, river cruising is a relaxed and refined way to travel together.

Best for: Friend groups, special interest clubs, businesses

| Pros: | Cons: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Small, intimate feel—river cruises often have fewer than 100 passengers, so your group won't get lost in the shuffle➤ Can arrange special excursions at port stops, themed to your group's interests➤ Often, you can get a free cabin if your group meets the group minimum➤ If your group is large enough, you can even charter the whole river cruise ship!➤ Barge cruises can be chartered with as few as 8-12 travelers (it's like renting a floating villa)➤ More focused on exploration; ships dock in the heart of destinations + spend longer in each country | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Not as entertainment-focused as traditional ocean cruises—no shows, casinos, shopping on board➤ More limited dining options➤ Passengers tend to be more mature; not all river cruises are good for family groups with children or those looking for a "party" atmosphere |

Ocean Cruises

There's something for everyone on board a classic ocean cruise—making them great for groups! Dial up the intimacy and exploration on small ship or expedition cruises.

Best for: Friend groups, families, destination weddings, alumni groups, special interest groups/clubs

| Pros: | Cons: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Something to interest <i>everyone</i> in your group, from varied on-board entertainment to shore excursions➤ Many cruises are great option for family groups (especially multigenerational family groups)—connected suites and kids' clubs make them family-friendly➤ Ability to rent out seminar space or host private dinners on board➤ Often, you can get a free cabin if your group meets the group minimum➤ Great option for group members with limited mobility; these members can relax onboard during excursions or opt for an “easy” excursion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Limited opportunities to theme an ocean cruise around special interests (though this depends on the specific cruise!)➤ Huge ocean liners don't promote intimacy—your group won't feel like you “have the whole place to yourselves”➤ Many cruises aren't the best choice for in-depth exploration; they tend to dock in a single port for just part of a day, so you're in destinations for a shorter period of time (though expedition and small ship cruises are different!) |

All-Inclusive Resorts

Talk about effortless group travel—all-inclusive resorts truly let you lay back and relax. These resorts range from peaceful and elegant to modern and known for throwing a good party—but they *all* will get you plenty of time in gorgeous sunshine!

Best for: Friend groups, families, destination weddings, and retreats, events or meetings

| Pros: | Cons: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Great way to focus on spending quality time together—since you’re all in one place for the whole getaway!➤ All-inclusive nature makes your stay effortless; no need to figure out logistics, dining, etc. for your group➤ Ability to rent out event space or host private dinners at the resort➤ Often, you can get a free room if your group meets the group minimum➤ Large groups may get special perks and upgrades—like a complimentary champagne reception, for example➤ Excellent option for destination weddings—resorts have lots of appealing wedding packages to choose from | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Not all all-inclusive resorts are family friendly—many are “adults only,” so chose carefully if you’re a family group➤ Some resorts are spread out wide; for a more intimate group experience, ensure you get rooms in the same area of the resort➤ A long resort stay could feel monotonous for groups that prefer more in-depth exploration |

Land Tours

Does your group yearn to explore? Then a land tour is an excellent option for you—this encompasses small-group tours with reputable tour companies, safari adventures, and more. You can count on having a friendly guide to lead the way.

Best for: Friend groups, families, school groups, special interest groups/clubs

| Pros: | Cons: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Prioritizes exploration and cross-cultural learning—you'll be in the company of expert guides➤ Land tours are sometimes themed to interests (like photography or food and wine), making them great choices for special interest clubs➤ Select tours have a smaller, more intimate feel—some tours often range from just 15-25 travelers, while larger tours more often range from 30-40➤ Provides a sense of safety and security as you explore together➤ You get a more involved itinerary, but you don't have to worry about transportation/logistics—the tour company or safari outfitter takes care of it all➤ Get the chance to make new like-minded friends, since not everyone on your tour will be a part of your group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Not a great option for large (30+) groups➤ Limited opportunities to host group-only events like special workshops or private dinners—most experiences will be with the entire tour group➤ Not a good option for groups just looking to relax and reconnect, since you'll often be on the go!➤ Some tours may not be appropriate for younger children or group members with mobility issues➤ Itinerary cannot be customized since your group is joining pre-existing tour |

Custom, Private Group Travel

Get *exactly* what your group's been craving on a tailored itinerary crafted just for you. Unlike the land tours described above, this travel experience is *not* pre-packaged. This means, the possibilities are endless!

Best for: Friend groups, families, special interest groups/clubs, school groups, businesses, religious/cultural organizations

| Pros: | Cons: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Trip is built from the ground up, according to <i>your</i> group's specifications, interests, and needs➤ Complete customization means you can enjoy more off-the-beaten-tourist-path adventures➤ Can be either self-guided or escorted by a travel expert, so you don't have to worry about any of the logistics➤ Your group can travel at your own pace➤ Lots of opportunities for private, after-hours, and behind-the-scenes tours and activities➤ Can be tailored to your group's budget and desired vacation length (though customized experiences will cost more!) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ If self-guided, you would have to handle the logistics and transportation on your own (though your travel pro can arrange private transportation for your group)➤ Not a lot of opportunities to rent space for workshops/seminars |

Private Villa

Add a touch of the luxurious to your group getaway with a villa stay (it may even be more cost effective than you think!). From sun-kissed haciendas to graceful chateaux, villas often contain incredible historic details and a strong sense of place.

Best for: Friend groups, families, retreats, and businesses traveling with a small group of customers

| Pros: | Cons: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Gives your group plenty of space to sprawl out—you won't feel like you're "on top of each other"➤ Often comes with luxurious extras, like pools, concierge/butler service, private chefs, etc.➤ Provides far more privacy than resort/cruise/hotel stays—it's <i>just</i> your group at the property➤ Great option for groups who enjoy exploring at a slower pace—easy to embark on day trips, while returning to the same "home" each night➤ Opportunity to host private events at the villa, including cooking classes, wine tastings, private catered dinners, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Not a great option for large (20+) groups➤ Villas are often outside (not in) city/cultural centers—providing a more peaceful stay, but may not appeal to all travelers➤ Some villas have minimum stay requirements or can only be rented from Saturday to Saturday, making timing for your group a touch tricky |