

SELLING TIPS

Helen and her kids on
MSC World Europa



The Lego Room

PICTURE: MSC Cruises/Ivan Sarfatti

How to sell

First-time family cruises

Fresh from her first cruise with her husband and their three young children, **Helen Ochyra** picks out five key selling points for new-to-cruise families

Value for money: Our cruise in the Med on *MSC World Europa* was great value, especially for picky eaters. Rather than having to guess what our toddler might be happy to eat, then inevitably ordering dishes he would only reject, we could load up at the buffet whenever hunger struck and let the kids choose for themselves. And because everything was already paid for, there were no nasty surprises at the end of the week.

Kids' clubs: The kids' clubs were free of charge, ran until late into the evening and took the children on fun activities around the ship, from basketball to dance parties. That meant my husband and I could leave our three on board while we headed into Marseille for a languid harbourside lunch of bouillabaisse.

Safe environment: With no cars to worry about, the kids can have more freedom than on land. We felt safe letting our toddler walk ahead holding his older sisters' hands and could mostly leave the buggy in the cabin. Two of our children are scared of dogs and having none on board was a relief – no having to cross the street or switch restaurant tables to avoid an animal.

Travel tasters: A few hours in a new city is more than enough for a toddler. We spent four hours walking around Barcelona

and that was plenty: we strolled up La Rambla and around La Boqueria market, wandered the Gothic Quarter and stopped off for churros and thick hot chocolate. After all that, the kids were keen to get back on the ship. Over a week, we introduced them to multiple new destinations – including Malta, which was a new country for all of us – without the usual fatigue.

Entertainment aplenty: Having quality evening entertainment is priceless! On previous land-based trips, we've ended up sitting in hotel rooms whispering to each other in the darkness while the kids slept, but on a cruise there's plenty of family-friendly entertainment after dinner so we could enjoy an extra couple of hours all together. We particularly loved the Panorama Lounge on *MSC World Europa* with its plush sofa seating and light-up drinks tables, not to mention the jaw-dropping aerial acrobatics that featured in the shows.

BOOK IT: MSC Cruises sells a seven-night Mediterranean cruise round-trip from Barcelona on *MSC World Europa* from £5,592 per family, based on two adults and two children sharing an interior cabin. Includes flights from Manchester on April 24, 2026. msccruises.com