



MSC CRUISES

MSC Cruises Prohibited Items: U.S. Embarkation Packing Rules

MSC Cruises' bring-aboard rules for U.S. sailings: the no-outside-beverage policy, alcohol-at-discretion-only rule, \$250 vape penalty, the Mexico vape import warning, and what to expect at the embarkation scanner.

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IMPORTANT

MSC issues separate Conditions of Carriage for U.S. sailings ([msccruisesusa.com](https://www.msccruisesusa.com)) vs. European sailings — rules can diverge slightly. This guide focuses on U.S. embarkations from Miami, Port Canaveral, and New York. As of January 17, 2026, Mexico bans the import of all vapes and e-cigarettes — MSC explicitly warns guests of confiscation and fines up to \$12,500 ashore for itineraries that include Mexican ports.

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MSC's embarkation rules are stricter than U.S.-based mass-market lines on outside beverages — they ban almost all of them, including water — and the alcohol-bring-aboard policy is at the discretion of security personnel rather than a published per-bottle entitlement. The Guest Conduct Policy is enforced fleetwide and updated frequently; this guide reflects the current policy as of 2026, drawn from MSC's own pages.

At a Glance

Allowed

Sealed pre-packaged commercial snacks, sealed distilled or purified water for medical/CPAP use only, baby food and formula, CPAP machines (free distilled water and extension cords onboard), curling/flat irons, hair dryers, mobility scooters (door-width specific), drones (stored, not flown).

Prohibited

Bottled water, soda, juice, hard liquor, beer, irons and clothing steamers, candles, hoverboards, knives, surge protectors, marijuana including medical, hemp products containing THC, inflatables, pets without permission.

Check first

Service dogs (6 months advance request, port permits), oxygen (case-by-case via Safety Department), wine (no published allowance — at security's discretion), drones (allowed in luggage but cannot be flown onboard or at Ocean Cay), vapes (cabin/balcony bans, \$250 fine).

What You Can Bring

Wine and Champagne — At Security's Discretion

MSC's published U.S. policy is restrictive: "Unless otherwise permitted by our security personnel or crew, guests are prohibited from bringing alcoholic beverages on board. Boxed wine and other containers are prohibited." MSC does NOT publish a per-guest bottle allowance, an ABV cap, or a corkage fee for U.S.

sailings — security treats wine as a discretionary exception rather than a standing right. If you plan to bring wine, expect it to be evaluated case-by-case at the pier; many guests are turned away with bottles they assumed would be allowed.

Limited Beverages

Outside beverages — bottled water, soda, juice — are not allowed as carry-on or checked luggage on either embarkation or port days. The only exception is purified or distilled water in factory-sealed containers for use with medical devices. Empty reusable water bottles or insulated tumblers are reportedly permitted (MSC-policy summaries mention this; not always called out on the official luggage page).

Food

MSC's policy: "Beverages and food (including partially eaten or home cooked items) may not be brought on board, with exception of unopened, dry, packaged, and commercially produced foods." Sealed packaged commercial snacks are OK; home-cooked food and perishables are not.

Medications and Medical Equipment

Fluid medications for therapeutic use, baby items, and physician-prescribed dietary items are allowed. CPAP and BiPAP are allowed — the device must be compatible with ship power (120V/60Hz or 240V/60Hz). MSC provides complimentary distilled water and extension cords onboard (a charge applies if the extension cord is not returned). For long-term oxygen therapy, the guest is responsible for arrangements; ship medical-center oxygen is reserved for medical emergencies. Liquid oxygen reservoirs up to 55 kg may be allowed with safe storage on a case-by-case basis via the Safety Department.

Electronics and Personal Grooming

Hair dryers, hair irons, hair straighteners, and curling irons are explicitly allowed. Surge protectors are NOT allowed (see Prohibited). Non-surge cruise-style power strips without extension cords are commonly accepted, though MSC's own pages don't publish a specific power-strip rule — they ban "surge protectors" and ban extension cords as fire hazards. Personal hygiene products, cleansing products, and lotions are allowed.

Mobility Devices

Manual or electric wheelchairs, scooters, canes, rollators, and walkers are welcome but must be declared at booking. Devices must fit the cabin door — width varies by ship: 58 cm on MSC Divina/Armonia, 62 cm on most ships, 68 cm on MSC Lirica/Sinfonia/Opera. Battery type must be specified — wet batteries are not allowed; gel, dry, or lithium are accepted. Devices must be stored inside the cabin.

Sports Gear

Snorkel gear is generally fine. Fishing and scuba diving equipment must be declared and authorized in advance. Drones are allowed in luggage but cannot be flown onboard — see Conditional.

What's Prohibited

IMPORTANT

MSC's no-outside-beverage policy catches first-time MSC guests off-guard. There is no can or carton allowance like Carnival or Royal — MSC bans essentially all outside drinks, with the medical-CPAP and infant-formula exceptions as the only carve-outs.

Hard Liquor, Beer, and Most Outside Alcohol

Guests are prohibited from bringing alcoholic beverages on board (subject to security discretion). Boxed wine and concealed-alcohol containers are explicitly prohibited; security may inspect water bottles, soda bottles, mouthwash, canteens, and similar containers and dispose of any alcohol found.

Outside Non-Alcoholic Drinks

Water, soda, and juices — carry-on or checked — are prohibited at embarkation and on port days. Sealed distilled water for medical devices and infant formula are the only exceptions.

Outside Food (Perishable, Homemade, Partially Eaten)

Only unopened, dry, commercially packaged food is allowed. Perishables, homemade items, and anything refrigerated or in opened packaging is prohibited.

Irons and Clothing Steamers

Clothing irons and steamers are prohibited as heating elements and fire hazards. Hair tools (dryer, hair iron, straightener, curling iron) are explicitly excluded from the ban and remain allowed.

Cannabis, Medical Marijuana, and THC Derivatives

Per MSC's policy: "No illegal drugs or other controlled substances including but not limited to medical marijuana." Applies during transfers, in terminals, on shore excursions, and at private destinations. CBD products containing THC, or unapproved CBD, fall under the prohibition. MSC is silent on hemp-derived/0% THC CBD specifically — treat all CBD as risky and verify with MSC before sailing.

Open Flame and Fire Hazards

Candles, incense, hookahs, and other open-flame items are prohibited.

Weapons and Sharp Items

Firearms of any type (including imitations and replicas), all ammunition, explosives, fireworks, sparklers, bows of any type. Knives — switchblades, butterfly knives, hunting knives, Ulu knives. Scissors, utility knives, box cutters, razors, X-Acto knives.

Drones (In Use Onboard)

Possession is allowed, but in-flight use onboard is forbidden. Any drone seen in use will be confiscated and returned at end of cruise. Drones cannot be used at Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve at all.

Hoverboards, Segways, and Personal Scooters

Segways, self-balancing hoverboards, unicycles (motorized or otherwise), motorized luggage, and scooters not approved as medical devices are prohibited.

Heating Appliances

Hotplates, kettles, electric blankets, and clothing dryers are prohibited.

Surge Protectors

Banned as a fire hazard. Extension cords brought by guests are also discouraged — the ship loans extension cords for medical devices.

Pets

"No animals are allowed on board, apart from recognised assistance dogs." Pets brought without written permission are taken into custody and arrangements are made for the animal to be landed at the next port at the passenger's sole expense.

Inflatables

Inflatable beds, rafts, and similar items may not be inflated or used onboard. Use is permitted at destination ports where allowed.

Gray Area — Bring It But Check First

Service Animals

Only recognized service dogs — not emotional support, comfort animals, or service-dogs-in-training. The dog must be in good health and have all entry documents for every country visited. Request must be made at booking AND at least 6 months before sailing. MSC provides a mulch relief area; the guest is responsible for the dog's custody, food, and care. Approval is by MSC and subject to local-authority checks.

Vapes and E-Cigarettes

Allowed to bring onboard but treated identically to smoking for usage rules — banned in cabins, on cabin balconies, all indoor areas (sole exception: casinos for seated playing guests during opening hours), and any location not signposted as a smoking area. Age 18+ to purchase, possess, or use tobacco onboard. Smoking or vaping in non-designated areas triggers a \$250 cleaning fee per incident on U.S. sailings (€250 on European sailings). Heads-up: as of January 17, 2026, Mexico has banned import of all vapes/e-cigarettes (including non-nicotine); fines ashore can reach \$12,500.

Distilled Water for CPAP

Allowed in factory-sealed purified or distilled water containers. Complimentary distilled water is also provided onboard.

Outside Cakes

MSC doesn't address guest-brought cakes specifically. MSC sells onboard birthday cakes (including Doremi cakes for kids) via Reception or the Maître d'hôtel — Voyagers Club members get a complimentary birthday cake. In practice, an outside cake violates the home-cooked-food prohibition.

Drones

Allowed in luggage but must be stored in the cabin — flying onboard is prohibited and any drone in use will be confiscated and returned at end of cruise. Use is permitted off-ship where local laws allow, but not at Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve.

Snorkel and Dive Gear

Snorkel gear (mask, fins, snorkel) is generally fine. Fishing and scuba diving equipment must be declared and authorized in advance — treated as potentially dangerous equipment.

What Happens at the Scanner

All luggage passes through security scanning at embarkation. When something prohibited is detected:

- Bags are X-rayed at the embarkation terminal. Outside non-alcoholic beverages and most alcohol are pulled at the scanner.
- Weapons, ammunition, explosives, knives, illegal drugs, and concealed alcohol are confiscated and not returned.
- Drones used onboard are confiscated and returned at end of cruise.
- Alcohol bought ashore or in onboard duty-free is held by ship security and returned the last evening of the cruise.
- Smoking or vaping in non-designated areas is a \$250 cleaning fee per incident on U.S. sailings, with additional disciplinary action for repeat violations up to and including disembarkation at the next port at the guest's own cost.
- Drug violations result in confiscation and possible reporting to authorities at MSC's discretion.
- Daily alcohol consumption is capped at 15 alcoholic beverages per guest per day fleetwide (including MSC Yacht Club).
- Drinking age is 21 on North America-departing sailings; 18 on Europe, South America, Asia (ex-Japan), Australia, and New Zealand sailings; 21 enforced on any sailing with a U.S. port of call.

ADVISOR TIP

For drinks, plan to use MSC's onboard beverage packages or buy as you go — outside beverages are simply not part of the MSC equation the way they are on Carnival or Royal. For wrinkles, the bathroom-shower trick or onboard valet pressing handles formal nights. If your itinerary includes Mexico, leave the vape at home — Mexico's 2026 import ban means real risk of confiscation and fines ashore, even for non-nicotine devices.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I bring a bottle of wine on MSC?

MSC's policy is at security's discretion — they do not publish a per-guest bottle allowance. Plan as if it isn't allowed; if security permits a bottle at the pier, treat it as a courtesy rather than an entitlement. Boxed wine is explicitly prohibited.

Why does MSC ban bottled water?

MSC's policy is to prohibit all outside non-alcoholic beverages — water, soda, juice — sealed or not. Sealed distilled water for CPAP machines and water for reconstituting baby formula are the only exceptions. The onboard MSC Aurea Spa filtered-water stations and beverage packages are the alternatives.

What's the smoking and vape penalty?

\$250 cleaning fee per incident on U.S. sailings (€250 on European sailings). Repeat violations can result in disembarkation at the next port at the guest's own cost.

Are drones allowed?

You can bring a drone in luggage but cannot fly it onboard. Use ashore is permitted where local laws allow, but not at Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve. Drones flown onboard are confiscated and returned at end of cruise.

Can I bring CBD oil?

MSC explicitly bans medical marijuana and THC-containing products. The policy doesn't name hemp-derived/0% THC CBD specifically — treat all CBD as risky and confirm with MSC before sailing.

I take a CPAP — what's involved?

Pack the machine in your carry-on. The device must be compatible with ship power (120V/60Hz or 240V/60Hz). MSC provides complimentary distilled water and extension cords onboard (a charge applies if the extension cord is not returned at end of cruise).

Will my mobility scooter fit in my cabin?

Door widths vary by ship: 58 cm on MSC Divina/Armonia, 62 cm on most ships, 68 cm on MSC Lirica/Sinfonia/Opera. Wet batteries are not allowed; use gel, dry, or lithium. Declare the scooter at booking and confirm width clearance with MSC before sailing.

What about Mexico's vape ban?

As of January 17, 2026, Mexico bans all vape and e-cigarette imports, including non-nicotine devices. MSC explicitly warns guests of confiscation and fines up to \$12,500 ashore. If your itinerary includes a Mexican port, leave the vape at home.

Sources

All policies above are drawn from MSC Cruises's published help pages. For the latest rules, including any updates after this guide was written:

- MSC Cruises Guest Conduct Policy — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/-/media/us/documents/guest-conduct-policy>
- MSC Cruises USA on-board information FAQ — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/faq/on-board-information>
- MSC Cruises USA luggage information — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/manage-booking/before-you-go/luggage>
- MSC Cruises USA conditions of carriage — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/conditions-of-carriage>
- MSC Cruises accessibility and medical — <https://www.msccruises.com/int/manage-booking/accessibility-medical>
- MSC Cruises USA children and teens FAQ — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/faq/children-teens>
- MSC Cruises USA drink packages FAQ — <https://www.msccruisesusa.com/faq/drink-packages>

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MSC offers some of the best value of any cruise line, with European-style ships now homeporting in Miami, Port Canaveral, and New York for U.S. itineraries. We help travelers pick the right ship — from the smaller Lirica class to the newer Meraviglia and World classes — and the right cabin category, including the all-inclusive MSC Yacht Club, and walk you through MSC's rules so the embarkation-day surprises are limited to the welcome champagne in Yacht Club.

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Whether you're sailing the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, or one of MSC's longer Northern Europe and Antilles voyages, we'll get you on board with what you need and without what you don't.

