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Carnival to add fuel charge on cruises

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By MARTHA BRANNIGAN
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Miami-based Carnival Corp. said beginning Feb. 1 it will charge cruise passengers on its North American brands a \$5 a day fuel fee.

Carnival, the world's largest cruise operator, said the price it pays for fuel has increased 140 percent over the last three years, with a 50 percent increase in the past seven months. The fuel charge will be added at Carnival Cruise Lines, Costa Cruises, Cunard Line, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises and The Yachts of Seabourn. Earlier this year, Carnival added a fuel charge on its European brands.

Carnival said it will add the charge for the first and second passenger per cabin and cap it at \$70 per passenger per voyage.

In a statement, Micky Arison, chairman and CEO of Carnival said: "We are hopeful fuel prices will someday return to a level that will enable us to eliminate this supplement. Until then, we believe that guests sailing on our North American brands will understand the dilemma that soaring fuel prices has caused for our company and industry and that a fuel supplement was needed to enable us to continue offering the high quality cruises our guests have come to expect."

The cruise giant said for existing reservations, it will pay travel agents \$10 per booking for notifying passengers and collecting the funds.

"This is not very good news for the consumer, on top of the fees currently being charged by the cruise lines," said Stewart Chiron, CEO of CruiseGuy.com a cruise marketing company.

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