

Castaway Cay Getaway Package: Disney Cruise Line Port Adventure Review

by Michele Dakho, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

Port Adventures are an exciting part of any cruise vacation.

As soon as you decide on the itinerary you most likely start researching Port Adventures and learning about what there is to be seen. Castaway Cay is a favorite port for most Disney Cruise Line fans and the Castaway Cay Getaway Package is the perfect sampler of the most popular adventures on the island.

The Castaway Cay Getaway Package is a trifecta of popular adventures including: bicycle rental, float or tube rental, and snorkel equipment rental. While it sounds like the perfect package, and for most it is, there are some pros and cons of this popular package in paradise.

□ Let's look at each of the elements and weigh the pros and cons so you can make an educated decision for your family. This triple package offers about a \$5-\$6 savings with advance purchase as opposed to renting them separately. This package is ONLY available for pre-purchase and the price won't be honored once you are on the island.

□ Bicycle rental in this package is for one hour, however they aren't particularly strict on rental and return times. There are male and female bikes (some with child seats) as well as children's bikes.

• Pros: The island is set up with bike paths, including a fun ride down the airstrip near Serenity Bay. Aside from the tram service, and Cast Member transport (golf carts) you don't have to worry about "traffic" or the regular dangers of bike riding with your family. Your bike can take you anywhere you want to go, including the beaches, game pavilion and shopping. Riding both nature trails is approximately 1.5 miles on even ground.

• Cons: There are no baskets or storage spaces on the bikes (aside from the few that have child seats) so transporting your personal belongings, snorkel rental and float isn't as fun as it's cracked up to be. You are in the Bahamas and in that means Bahamian sun, so if you aren't used to the heat think twice before you hop on a bike. Also, consider your attire. If you're set for a day at the beach you are most likely in swim wear and flip flops so if you aren't comfortable riding a bike in that, this isn't your best option.

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□ Snorkel rental: The snorkel rental includes mask and flippers for the day, there is a variety of sizes for rent, and plenty to go around. Kid-size masks and fins are available and inflatable neon life vests are provided and required for all snorkeling. The family beach features a 20-acre snorkel lagoon with two different trails, Beginner or Discover.

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□• Pros: There are marked snorkel trails on the family beach with sunken treasures to explore, lifeguards on duty and nets to prevent the "big fish" from coming to shore. The water is very clear and has been dredged so there is very little seaweed and things that would obstruct your snorkeling view.

□• Cons: Although the snorkel trail has those cute Disney treasures it's not nearly as exciting as a "true" snorkel experience elsewhere. There are a lot of fish, but they are all very much the same. Although I have personally seen the gorgeous starfish and have heard there was a baby octopus lurking about, it's not the most colorful or abundant snorkeling experience I've ever had. Depending on the weather the water might be too cold for your taste to enjoy a snorkel experience.

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□ Float and tube rental: Floating around on a nice big inflatable tube is a great way to spend the day on Castaway Cay. There is also the option for a more flat, raft-style float.

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□• Pros: Since you won't be able to resist the crystal blue water, a float or raft is a great way to relax in the water and have a true "beach" day experience. The tubes and rafts are sanitized after each use, are good for use the whole day and are available at multiple locations. Adults going to Serenity Bay don't need to haul their rafts from Gill's Fins and Flippers, there is a small rental station right on Serenity Bay.

□• Cons: Depending on the timing of your cruise, you may find the water a bit too chilly to enjoy floating around. Other than the water temperature, I have nothing negative to say about the tube/float experience. You should note however, that the tubes are very fat and if you aren't used to balancing on one in the water you'll most likely go upside down a few times before you get the hang of it. I've also seen two adults who were sharing a tube slip and end up both stuck in the center of the tube, which was comical for all of us. Being able to laugh together like that is one of the reasons that cruise friends are the best kind of friends!

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□ Things to note about this excursion: Pricing for this package is only available via booking online or onboard prior to arrival at Castaway Cay. The discounted rate isn't available once you are on the island. The cost for adults (ages 10 and up) is \$32 per person and children (ages 5-9) is \$16 per person.

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About The Author: Michele is an Authorized Disney Vacation Planner with Pixie Vacations, you can find her on the boards as PixieMichele or read her other tips and tricks on her blog ThePracticalPlanner.blogspot.com. She is also a PassPorter Message Board Guide in the Disney Cruise Line forums.

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