

Venice, Italy: Disney Cruise Line Port Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the third in this series of articles (check out Part 1 on [Vancouver](#) and Part 2 on [Miami](#)) looking at some of the home ports for the Disney Cruise Line, we look at the newest of them all -- one that embarks just two cruises in the summer of 2014, but a name that is sure to get hearts racing as soon as you hear it ... Venice.

Venice is home to the famous canals and gondolas, and for Disney fans, somewhere that's instantly recognizable from Italy in Epcot.

Venice is a unique city, and one that we were fortunate enough to visit a few years ago in the winter months, when it was much quieter than it will be this coming summer. That's when we'll be making a return visit to the city, as we'll be on the second 9-night sailing out of Venice on the Magic. I can't wait to go back, although I will say that I'm slightly dreading the crowds and the weather, two issues we didn't have to deal with on our last visit. It'll be interesting to see whether there is a certain aroma from the canals, something my mother acutely remembers from her summertime visit to the city many, many years ago.

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□The first place that any visit to Venice has to start with is Piazza San Marco or St. Mark's Square. As our water taxi pulled up to it on our visit there, I squealed with delight, and said (rather stupidly in hindsight) "it's just like Epcot!" but in truth, it is. I'm fortunate to have visited all the World Showcase countries bar Mexico, and some of the replicas are better than others, and trust me, Italy is one of the best.

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□The Doge's Palace and the Campanile (the bell tower) in Venice are the two most familiar sights to Disney fans, and both are must-do's for any first time visitors to Venice. The Doge's Palace is a huge draw for visitors, so either head there first thing in the morning, or perhaps consider one of the Disney Cruise Line shore excursions that give you access. Skip-the-line tickets are also available through various tour operators. Be sure to allow enough time for this if you are touring on your own, as there's a lot to see here. We found there was so much, it was almost too much to take in in one go, if that makes sense.

The Campanile, opposite the palace, can be seen easily enough from the ground, but take the elevator up to the viewing platform high above St. Mark's Square for some breathtaking views over the city. We adored our visit here, and the views we had.

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□ The other big attraction in St. Mark's Square is the Basilica San Marco, which is a stunning church, both from the outside and inside. We stood there, just marvelling at all its exterior detail, seemingly for ages, amazed by what they managed to achieve when they built it. In particular, the Horses of St. Mark, replicas of the gilded bronze originals, are well worth seeing.

□ I certainly don't want to give the impression that St. Mark's Square is all there is to see in Venice, because nothing could be further from the truth. There are so many famous sights all around the city. Nearby is the Bridge of Sighs, replicated in many cities, and farther up is the Rialto Bridge. A visit to Venice isn't complete unless you see both of these. We're not art lovers, but if you are, add in a visit to the Accademia, home to the largest collection of Venetian art in existence anywhere.

□ Some of our favorite memories though weren't in the center of Venice, but on the various islands in the lagoon that surround it. We took a water taxi over to San Giorgio Maggiore, which offers some superb views back towards St. Mark's Square and the surrounding area. The church and monastery here are also well worth a visit, particularly as the sun's starting to go down, casting some beautiful light across it.

□ However, better was to come in the outlying islands, particularly our visit to Murano, which is famed for its Venetian glass. We loved wandering around the island, visiting shops to see the glass blowers at work, and picking up a few of their products. As we were in the low season, at times, we were almost on our own on this island, something I doubt we'll be able to say when we go back next summer.

□ What about the famous gondola rides? When we were in Venice, I figured we'd naturally take one, but I reckoned on them being a bit more reasonably priced. I expected they'd be expensive, but they were a totally stupid price. If you're lucky enough to be on one of the Disney cruises, seriously consider one of their shore excursions, as I thought the ones that include a gondola ride weren't a bad price, compared to how much you'd pay for them separately.

□ If you're a lover of architecture and churches, as I am, you'll absolutely be in your element in Venice, as it's packed with beautiful buildings everywhere you look. The whole of the Grand Canal is lined with picture-postcard photo opportunities, so be sure to stock up on memory cards before you head there.

□ We spent a long weekend in Venice, and even with four days, we barely scratched the surface of this enchanting, water-based city. I

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can't wait to get back to see more of it and experience life on the water once more, prior to boarding the Magic and exploring the Eastern Mediterranean for the first time ever.

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□ In the next of this series of articles, we'll look at one of the west coast options used by the Disney Cruise Line, the beautiful city of San Diego.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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