

Ten MORE Things I Wish I Knew Before My Disney Cruise - Part 2: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Lori Ketcherside, PassPorter Guest Contributor

As I said in my [last article](#), I recently had reason to consider what I would want to know before my first cruise.

Well, if something is worth doing, it is worth overdoing. How about another ten things I wish I knew before I embarked on my first Disney cruise?

1.) Do I Really Need A Passport? Assuming you manage to reach your port of embarkation without a passport, is a passport necessary? I personally always travel with passports (and trip insurance), although on a closed loop cruise that departs from a US port (any cruise that starts and ends at the same port), neither is currently required. I've cruised with friends who were perfectly happy to cruise on other approved forms of proof of citizenship. As always, things are subject to change. I wouldn't cruise without this added layer of security, but it's about your comfort level with risk. (The risk being, if something happened and you needed to fly back to the States, how would you handle that without a passport?) So maybe you need one. Or maybe you like living on the edge.

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□2.) Get The Pool and Slides To Yourself. If you pack swimsuits in your carry-on bag, the first afternoon the pools are much emptier. It will probably remain relatively empty on port days, as well as first thing in the morning on sea days and during either of the dinner seating times any day of the week. If they offer a matinee in the Walt Disney Theatre and you choose to shake free, it gets you all the wonder of an open-air pool in the middle of the ocean without the challenge of supervising children while the pool deck is crowded. (Yes, I am referring to the slides and family pools, as the adult pool usually has a free lounge regardless of time of day.)

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□3.) Just a Tip. a.) When you order a drink from the barista in the cafe or server in a lounge, your tip is already included, despite the additional tip line on the slip. b) Disney will automatically charge a gratuity to your stateroom for your room steward and your dining team. If you wish to adjust these up or down, contact guest services at any time. c.) Most room service items are no-charge, but tips for the service aren't included. (Bringing an envelope of one dollar bills will make tipping easy.) Tipping a dollar a plate or a dollar a person is customary. d) While

we're on the subject of room service, for a really pixie dust experience, order a plate of cookies and milk as a midnight snack, or better yet, order a plate of cookies and some Mickey Bars for building your own cookie ice cream sandwiches.

4.) The What, Where and When. A "Personal Navigator" with the next day's schedule will be left in your stateroom during turn-down service each evening. Extra paper copies are available at Guest Services. If you're techy, there's now an app for that.

5.) Avoiding Phone Bill Surprises. If you're going to use your iPhone during the cruise just for photos, double-check that your cellular data is off and airplane mode is on. International rates can be an unwanted souvenir.

6.) Safety First! There is a mandatory muster (safety drill) the first afternoon. Back in the day, lifejackets were required. They've discontinued that, so don't wear the lifejackets to it. They do a roll call and will call you out to a makeup muster if you skip.

7.) Let's Do It Again! If you love your cruise, consider rebooking onboard for 10% off the price of your next cruise. (Mind the blackout dates). If you love your travel agent, make sure to attach their name to your new reservation. If the line is long at the "Future Cruise" desk, fill out the contact card and drop it into the box, they will get back to you.

8.) Keep the Peace. Let your kids spend as much time in the club as they want. On our first family cruise, we kept pulling them out for half or more of the day. Then we realized this vacation is theirs, too. If they want to spend super long hours in the club lounging or whiling away the day on video games, we let them. Truth be told, we enjoy the alone time together!

9.) Side Effects. Try out any seasickness remedies you plan to use, ahead of your vacation. If you're going to experience side effects, you might as well know that before you're on the ship. My husband found out that "non-drowsy" medications still put him into sleep mode. Rather than waste vacation time dreaming, he enjoys his dream vacation without that particular medication.

10.) Do Less, Enjoy More. Like a trip to Walt Disney World, you cannot do it all. Also like a trip to Disney, if you try to do it all, you won't enjoy your trip as much as you could by embracing a "do less, enjoy more" mantra. I'm still easing into this, as I am still a Recovering Disney Parks Commando.

Do you have any great tips that I missed? Any tricks that help bring

more magic to your cruise? Please let me know in the comments!

About The Author: Lori is a Christian, wife, mother of two, vegan, Texan, allergy expert in training, bookworm, runner, terrible-though-enthusiastic photographer, new homeschooler, and all around pixie dust nut! Even though she sunburns indoors on a cloudy day, she finds her #DisneySide at sea aboard the Disney Cruise Line! If you need to find her, check in with her blog, [Adventure in the Great Wide Somewhere](#).

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