

Why We Love Cruising In a Verandah Stateroom: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Before I start this article, I just want to say I appreciate that for some, there is no way that cruising with Disney is possible at the price of verandah staterooms.

I know (oh trust me I do!) how expensive Disney cruises are. If an inside stateroom or an oceanview stateroom with a porthole is the only way you can afford to cruise, then heck, that's 100 times better than not being able to cruise at all!

We've taken two of our six cruises to date in an inside stateroom. The first was the Magic's inaugural cruise around the Mediterranean in 2007, and that was definitely out of necessity, as there was absolutely no way we could afford any other type of cabin, as prices certainly were not cheap for any stateroom. The second time was on one of the inaugural cruises of the Dream in 2011. The plan had been to use our Disney Vacation Club points for that, but without warning, that privilege was withdrawn, so we were left with no option but to pay out of pocket. That meant a lot of unplanned expense, so again we went for an inside stateroom. Of course, on the Dream, and subsequently the Fantasy, inside staterooms come with an additional treat -- the amazing virtual porthole, which I was completely enchanted by, and which helped to brighten up the room a lot.

□ However, I think it was our Alaskan cruise that changed everything for us. We immediately knew that we needed a balcony to enjoy that cruise, as everyone had told us how amazing the scenery would be, and we didn't want to miss any of it. That's when our love affair with verandahs began. Some of you reading this may be thinking, "I'm fine without one" or may be intrigued, but just can't see the value of bothering to upgrade. It's those of you I'm talking to, because once upon a time, we felt that way, too. So what made us change our minds?

□ The first thing is that, as a photographer, there is nothing better than heading outside on to a balcony to capture the scenery outside. I can photograph through glass windows, but there's always the risk of glare from outside, and of course if your window gets dirty outside, something you can't do anything about, then getting a good photo becomes virtually impossible.

Of course, there's the opportunity to sit out on the verandah and enjoy the weather, something we spent a fair bit of time doing on both our Caribbean cruise and our more recent excursion around the Mediterranean. We found it exceptionally relaxing to just sit there and watch the world go by, and it was lovely to have your own personal sunbathing space, as trust me, you can't always find that space on the public decks.

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□It's also a private area, with dividers along either side of your verandah, so the only people who'll see you is anyone you pass by on the shore or in other boats or ships, which is nice. You feel as if you have your own slice of the ship all to yourselves.

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□Doing that in Alaska isn't quite so appealing, thanks to the colder weather, but even there, we would regularly head outside to get glimpses of the scenery, particularly during our visit to Tracy Arm Fjord. The upper decks were packed with people, all eager to see what was out there, so the verandah was our perfect, private viewing area to glimpse the magnificent icebergs outside, and the seals on them. We even set up our tripod on the balcony to get shots of us with the scenery behind us, something we've done on every cruise where we've had a verandah, and another reason we wouldn't cruise without one.

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□There's also something very magical about getting up in the morning, and heading straight outside to see where you are. Some mornings, you may already be in port, but other days, you may be treated to a stunning sunrise, and we had plenty of those during our most recent Mediterranean cruise.

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□A verandah will naturally get more use on certain itineraries. Alaska is one perfect example, as pretty much all the time you're glimpsing beautiful scenes outside, and along with the scenic coastline and the homes dotted along it, occasionally you may even luck out and see a whale, as my husband did on more than one occasion. If you are taking a cruise where the scenery is going to be stunning, such as Alaska or the new Norwegian fjords itineraries, a balcony is a real must. We were lucky enough to cruise the fjords with another cruise operator, and we were outside all the time, with our jaws dropping open at the marvels we were passing by, including mountains, green fields, and beautiful waterfalls.

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□If the weather cooperates, there's a much more practical use you can put your verandah to as well. With scorching temperatures throughout much of our Med cruise, if we were in port, we'd put any clothes that had been washed and couldn't go in a dryer, outside, so that they could dry naturally. Obviously you have to judge this one carefully, as you

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don't want to attempt it on a breezy day, or you might lose something. The one day we did it, it worked really well, and everything was pretty much dry by the time we returned to our stateroom.

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□So if you've never cruised with the benefit of a verandah, and have either considered it or think it's something you might enjoy, there's never a better time to give it a go. One word of warning though -- you may end up like us, and may never return to inside or oceanview staterooms!

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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