

Top Ten Favorite Adult Experiences Onboard Disney Cruise Line: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Kelly Wilkins, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Disney Cruise Line is for adults too! Disney, as an entertainment company, knows how to treat and delight all ages.

Disney's ships have areas and activities exclusively dedicated to adults. Service is universally stellar. As a solo adult traveler, I have a fantastic time cruising on Disney.

Here are ten of my favorite adult activities and experiences on Disney Cruise Line:

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□Cove Cafe. Cove Cafe is a cafe in the adults-only area of the ship. It's peaceful, sophisticated, and a terrific place to unwind. It has talented baristas and the coffee drinks are amazing. It has diverse coffee and tea offerings similar to what you'd find at a large coffee chain, but with some special flavors and combinations. Remarkably, there are usually only a handful of guests in there. Cove Cafe also has lovely free pastries.

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□Dressing up. On every Disney cruise there's at least one optional "dress up" night. On seven night cruises, there's also a formal night. There aren't too many occasions in everyday life where you have a great reason for your group to get dressed up like this. Take advantage and enjoy! I love wearing a dress that makes me feel glamorous and fabulous. After casual downtime, everyone cleans up so well and looks terrific. If you have little ones with you, allow more time than usual for everybody to get into formalwear. My group has sometimes planned our clothing for a specific night around a color theme (red, purple, black.) I also throw myself into a festive costume night like pirate night or one with a holiday theme. How often do you get the chance to be a buccaneer?

Professional photos. Disney has wonderful professional photographers on board. Yes, a photo package can be expensive, but to me it's so worth it. Before dinner is a good time for photos. There are usually several photographers around the atrium, with different backgrounds. Spend a few minutes each day or night and by the end of the cruise, you have a splendid stack of memories. Photos of kids with characters are always cute, and guests of all ages smile when they pose with Mickey. I'm a big fan of Shutters Digital on the Fantasy, where you can view your photos

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digitally with the swipe of your Key to The World. The last evening on board it's often super busy at Shutters with people placing orders, so to make your life easier, order earlier than that. If you order a DVD, they make it simple to pick it up the morning of debarkation and take it with you.

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□Palo and Remy. These are the exclusive specialty restaurants for adults. Palo is on all four ships, and Remy is on the Fantasy and Dream. Palo is a fantastic Italian experience at a very reasonable extra price (currently \$30 per person). The food is excellent, the menu is superb, and service is brilliant. I've savored dinners at Palo, and friends say that brunch at Palo is marvelous. Remy, the French restaurant, is even another step up. Don't worry that it will be stuffy or you won't know how to eat something. The waiters are friendly, helpful and not intimidating.

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□Adult-oriented active Port Adventures. I've really had fun on Port Adventures (excursions) that are truly adventures. These allow you to be active and perhaps try something that you haven't done before. Ziplining was a major highlight for me on St. Thomas, and I look forward to ziplining again in Alaska on another cruise. Hiking, biking and kayaking are other options that are often available. Safety is always a priority and well respected.

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□Quiet corners. There's so much activity on board that sometimes you need quiet moments to chill. There are nice tranquil nooks around the ships. The adult-only forward sections are quiet and have calming atmospheres. (Note how quickly the background music and noise downshifts when you walk into that section from the kids' area!) The lounge chairs on the promenade deck are usually quiet and empty too. I especially like to get up early before the action gets going and walk around the pool and promenade decks. It's surprising how few people are on deck then. It's a good time for photos of the ship and the scenery.

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□Serenity Bay. Serenity Bay is the adults' beach on Castaway Cay. Castaway Cay is Disney's private island in The Bahamas, and many of the cruises stop there. Serenity Bay is an easy few minutes' tram ride from the main walk-off dock. Serenity Bay has no music playing so, true to its name, it really is serene. It has beautiful white sand, hammocks and plentiful umbrellas, and friendly yet unobtrusive wait staff. Its half-moon cove has gorgeous blue water that makes for a delightful swim or refreshing cool-off.

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□Navigator app. This free app is so helpful. It's the daily Navigator for your mobile device. I look up the dining menus and specialty drinks for the upcoming night. It has pages that list times for activities, movies, and character appearances. It's also good deck maps, port of call

information, shopping hours, and entertainment details. If your cruise stops at Castaway Cay, it even has the island map. It has a texting feature within the app that allows you to text onboard for free.

Download the app ahead of time to your device. When you're in the boarding area, access the free Wi-Fi to load in the specific cruise information.

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□Decorating your door. I didn't understand what a big deal this is on Disney Cruise Line until I boarded my first cruise. Many guests are really creative and enthusiastic about it! I display photos, tinsel, decorations particular to the cruise, and a message board. Make sure you're following the rules on what's permitted and what's not. Magnetic signs are allowed (including magnetic paper and things with magnets on the back of them). You can't use any tape, glue, suction cups, tacks/pins, staples, or adhesives of any kind, including temporary or removable hooks. Lots of talented crafters on sites like Etsy and ebay sell all kinds of magnetic designs that you can personalize. For personal privacy protection, you might consider not displaying the first names of people in the cabin.

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□Boarding day excitement. So your reservations are made, formalwear packed, and Navigator downloaded. It's day zero and time to board! There's nothing like the excitement of boarding day to make you feel like a kid again. I particularly like walking through the mouse ears entry at Port Canaveral and that Disney announces your group by name when you step onto the ship. Don't miss the Sail-Away Celebration. It's an energetic musical start to your voyage. I love watching the ship sail out of port, with my first specialty cocktail in hand.

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□Let's Go!

About The Author: Kelly Wilkins has been a Disney fan for more than 40 years. She's sailed on the Fantasy and the Dream in the Caribbean, and loved her amazing cruise to Alaska on the Wonder

Article last updated: 08-13-2015

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<http://www.passporter.com/articles/top-10-favorite-adult-experiences-disney-cruise.html>

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