

Canadian First-Time Cruisers - Four Unexpected Souvenirs: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Our first day on the Disney Wonder out of Galveston, Texas was filled with -- you guessed it -- wonder!

We built up so much anticipation for our first Disney cruise that I feared we might have set the bar too high -- no chance.

The Galveston port wasn't the image we'd conjured up in our heads. It is very much an industrial area with less than scenic views, in sharp contrast to the picturesque seaside area of Galveston we experienced over the previous two days. But never mind, there was enough awe and wonder to keep our focus on the ship that first day.

□ As Lori Ketcherside mentioned in her [December 2012 article on the Galveston port](#), this port is not really "Disney-fied." We didn't see any characters like we always heard about or extra special Disney touches in the port. But when you're on the ship within an hour of arriving at the port, you don't have much time to dwell on that.

□ We got our famous "Wear family welcome" as we boarded the ship and were whisked away to the buffet on deck 9, where everyone eats like they've never seen food before. Disney's commitment to first-class service was evident from that first meal. Where else do you find staff devoted to helping passengers carry their trays and provide any additional assistance needed? No sense in declining because they are going to insist on helping.

Eventually, I got out my Navigator (Disney's daily guide to all events happening on the ship) and panic ensued: special event tickets! How could I forget to find out about character tickets?!

□ We hustled to Studio Sea, where a limited number of free "tickets" were given out for a Disney Jr. character breakfast, Frozen character Meet 'n Greet, and princess meet and greet with Ariel, Belle, Rapunzel, and Cinderella. Note to self: Get tickets before going to the buffet next time.

□ With a quick stop at guest services, I got the lowdown on wifi packages. I got 50 free megabites for signing up before midnight on the first day. This could last a full 7-night cruise if you just briefly went on Facebook to post a few pictures each day. Since I wanted to do a little

more, I bought an additional 100 megabites for \$19. This was money well spent.

☐ As we found our way around the ship, we were awestruck by Disney's attention to detail. You can't help but marvel at the glass chandelier or the Ariel statue outside Triton's restaurant in the grand atrium. Hidden Mickeys are no stranger to the Disney Wonder, either.

☐ Our deluxe oceanview stateroom did not disappoint. Disney touches, while not overdone, could be found in everything from the pillows and bedding to the shower curtain and H2O products in the split bath. Kids love bunk beds, so our girls were tickled pink with their sleeping arrangements.

☐ After the 4pm mandatory muster drill, it was time to kick off our cruise with the Adventures Away deck party. Cast members loosened us up with some music and dancing, but the "this is really happening" moment came when Captain Mickey and the rest of the gang stole the spotlight. I was fighting back tears as the characters led us in the countdown to sail away.

☐ It was soon time to head to Animator's Palate for our first of many memorable nights of dining. We were seated at a table for eight with a family from Texas. Everyone was pretty quiet the first night and I wondered how a week of dining together would turn out.

☐ We made small talk and the conversation began to open up. The cruise line knew what they were doing putting us together. It was no coincidence that John and Priscilla, grandparents traveling with their two grand-daughters, are also travel agents and die-hard Disney fans. Or that their grand-daughters were very close in age to our two daughters.

☐ Thanks in part to our incredible servers, on the second night the girls sat closer together at the table and were quickly becoming friends. Alvito and Nenana were constantly playing games with the kids and kept them entertained night after night. A few days into the cruise, the girls were making plans to meet up in the kids clubs and go to the deck parties together.

☐ My husband and I never ran out of things to talk about with John and Priscilla. We even spent an afternoon at sea together on deck while the girls were in the kids clubs. By our last day, we enjoyed pool time and savoured all of the final events together, including the magical performance of Dreams, the musical. John and Priscilla were naturals at adopting our girls as two extra grand-daughters for the week, always

watching out for them wherever we went.

□

□ On the morning of debarkation from such a wonderful vacation experience, the hardest part to leave was our adoptive Texas family. This was the first time where the people we met on vacation had such an impact on us that we will make plans in the coming years to cruise or visit Walt Disney World together.

□

□ Thanks to email and social media, we have been able to keep in touch, share trip photos, and get to "virtually" know each other's extended families. Our older girls quickly became international e-pals and are learning about the differences between life in South Texas and Atlantic Canada.

□

□ The souvenirs we will treasure most from this trip aren't the latest stuffies and apparel from the gift shop -- though those Captain Mickeys are priceless. They are the photos and video clips of the memories we made with those strangers from Texas. We may live over 2000 miles apart, but all it will take is one day of everyone flying to Orlando or another Disney Cruise port and we will be together again. It truly is a small world when you share a love of all things Disney.

About The Author: Amy Wear is a work at home mom, travel agent, writer, and registered occupational therapist. She lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and specializes in planning magical vacations for people of all abilities at Click The Mouse. You can find her online at <http://www.clickthemouse.ca/amy-w.html>

Article last updated: 01-05-2016

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/disney-cruise-line-souvenirs.html>

Copyright by Amy Wear. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>