

A Magic Time In The Med: A Semi-Live Trip Report From the Disney Magic

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Disney is forever changing and trying out new things. You only have to look at their parks and the attractions being added all the time to see that. So it came as no surprise that after a successful summer on the west coast of America with the Disney Magic, that it was time to try new continents -- specifically Europe. Sailing out of Barcelona, Spain over a three month period for 11 and 10 night itineraries, the Disney Magic started its Mediterranean summer stint this past Saturday, May 26, 2007.

With Barcelona just over two hours' flight from us, I knew that this was something we had to experience and we were lucky enough to snag ourselves places on the inaugural cruise. Over the last few days, we've been amongst the 2,300 passengers, who are the first to enjoy the Magic's itinerary around the Mediterranean.

At first, it was very hard to believe that we were actually going to board a Disney ship in Barcelona, but those feelings evaporated when we saw the Magic in the harbor as we took a taxi to our hotel. We hadn't arranged transfers to the ship beforehand through Disney, but if you want to do so and you're staying at one of the hotels booked through Disney for the night before your cruise as we were, then it's no problem, they'll arrange it for you there and then. That's exactly what we did and it was \$50 well spent (\$25 for each of us) to have our luggage taken for us and to be dropped right by the port terminal building.

There's that great sense of excitement as you get closer to the ship, as it's literally right by the quayside, dominating your whole field of vision. It's a far more impressive sight than you get as you approach Port Canaveral. It didn't take us long to clear security, but then we had to go and get our Key to the World card. For some reason, we hadn't been sorted out at the hotel and they told us to ask at the terminal. The problem was, by then, they were expecting to see your documentation before they'd issue the card and we'd handed that all in at the hotel. That took some explaining, as some of the ground staff don't have the greatest grasp of English, but if you persist, they'll be able to summon someone who'll be able to help you. (This is the type of thing that will get fixed as the cruises continue.)

Your photos on the way to boarding are with the Mediterranean map in the background (you'll see a lot of these during your travels); detailing

all the ports the Magic will be stopping at. Then it's time to actually step aboard. All in all, from the bus pulling into the terminal to getting on board probably took no more than 20 minutes. My advice would be to take one of the transfers Disney offers and to be there early. We were on one of the first buses and I have no doubt that helped ensure that we got through very quickly.

Everywhere on board are little Mediterranean touches, from the Spanish, Italian and France banners that welcome you as you first enter the elevators to the shop displays. Of course, the shops are packed with Mediterranean merchandise and if that's what you're interested in, head for Treasure Ketch. We were lucky enough to spot some Mediterranean inaugural cruise T-shirts available, so we snagged a couple. Anyone heading down for MouseFest will undoubtedly see us wearing those!

There are also special Mediterranean food items available at the various buffets and dinner menus. Having tried a number of them, I can recommend them, although some of the offerings have sounded a little way out even for me to sample! One of the beauties of the itinerary is that as soon as you set sail from Barcelona, you're into a sea day and that's something that we know has been much welcomed by the many Americans on board. Although people were advised to fly in at least the day before the cruise, it's clear a number of people didn't arrive until the day that the cruise was leaving. As a result, they've been suffering from severe jetlag, with a number of people telling us that they'd been awake for 40 or 42 hours. With the sea day straight away, it allowed a lot of people to sleep in late, although it's no substitute for flying in early and getting yourself adjusted to the change in time zones.

As I write this, so far we've visited one port of call -- Palermo in Sicily. We didn't take a guided tour around the city or the island, instead choosing to walk around Palermo and it was a rewarding morning. Although the first road you come to from the port is packed with people hawking taxi and carriage rides, making it seem quite intimidating, a bit of perseverance will pay off. Further up the road, you'll find the locals taking little interest in you and just getting on with your daily life, allowing you to sample a real taste of Sicilian life.

So that's it from me on board the Disney Magic cruising around the Med. It's a hard life, but someone's got to do it -- and if you're lucky enough to be one of those booked to follow in our footsteps this summer, from what I've seen so far, you're going to have a ball, exploring Spain, Italy and France in the most magical way possible.

Check back next week to see how the rest of Cheryl's cruise was!

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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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