

All Aboard: Disney Cruise Line Tips

by Lori Spoelstra, PassPorter Guest Contributor

You've booked your Disney Cruise Line vacation. And FINALLY, the day of departure is here! Here are some tips to make the most of that first day of your cruise.

First of all, you want to get to the port early! If you can, get there as early as 10:00 am for check in and to fill out your immigration forms (if you haven't done it online). The earliest guests to arrive are the first ones to board. Boarding doesn't officially begin until 1:00 pm but when the crew has the ship ready, they will begin boarding.

If you are a Castaway Club Member (return Disney Cruise Line guests), you will have an exclusive check-in with separate boarding area. But if it's your first cruise, you will get a number, and you will board when that number is called. The earlier you check in, the lower the number; and they will board from low to high numbers.

Once you've passed through the magical Mickey boarding tunnel, you will get your picture taken for your Welcome Aboard picture. And then you step aboard the ship … the feeling that you "ARE HERE" is overwhelming, and you will be greeted by the crew as you enter.

If you get on early, and you still have port adventures, spa services, or dining changes, Palo reservations (adult-only restaurant), Flounders Reef Nursery reservations to be made, or check the kids into the kids' clubs, head to those areas first. If you have several of them to do, split your party up and tackle them right away. Once those priorities are done, you have the rest of the day to enjoy the ship.

The buffet restaurant on your ship -- The Beach Blanket (Disney Wonder) or Top Siders (Disney Magic) -- will be ready and expecting you for lunch. If you get on the ship early enough, go grab a bite to eat before the rest of the ship embarks and makes this restaurant crazy busy.

After lunch, go check and see if your stateroom is ready. If it is, meet your cabin steward, make any bedding changes (if your beds are in a twin configuration, and you need queen, just tell them), or if you have specific needs, you can share those then.

We always bring a magnet decoration of some kind to put on our door, so we (and the kids) can easily pick out our cabin. You can get really mixed up on the ship figuring out if you are on port side or starboard

side, so I've found this to be very helpful! (There are signs, but who reads signs all the time, right?)

If you have a family where you need two staterooms and you have connecting rooms, bring a bungee cord with you to keep the connecting door open. The rocking of the ship will slam that door shut, so the cord will keep it open.

Enjoy a swim, or explore the ship! By this time, the ship will be bustling with guests and you will be ready to vacation! Make sure you are back by 4:00 pm for your "muster" but after that, you are free to dance the afternoon away at the Sail Away Party on the top deck. Bring some little bottles of bubbles to celebrate your arrival (and departure!) -- make sure they are under 3 oz if you are flying, and they are in your carry-on bag.

Listen for the very exclusive Disney Cruise Line horn blowing, and watch the crew members on shore wishing you a bon voyage.

As you are moving out of the harbor, you may see dolphins following you out to sea!

Your ship has sailed! And YOU are ON it! Enjoy your Disney Cruise Line vacation!

[This article was contributed by a member of the MouseEarVacations.com® Travel Specialist Team. MouseEarVacations.com can book your next Disney Cruise Line® adventure!]

About The Author: Lori Spoelstra of Cruisingco/MouseEarVacations is an authorized Disney Destination Specialist (Walt Disney World, Disneyland & Disney Cruise Line) and also specializes in ALL cruise lines (Concierge style service, no extra charge!)"

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