

10 Things I Hate About the Disney Dream: Tales From My Inaugural Cruises on the Dream

by Jennifer Marx, PassPorter Guidebooks Author

In January 2011, I was fortunate to be aboard both the Christening Cruise and the Maiden Voyage Cruise of the Disney Dream. The Disney Dream is a big, beautiful ship with innovations around every corner. But is it really the magnificent flagship of the Disney Cruise Line fleet? Could there be a nightmare lurking in the Dream?

During my time onboard the Disney Dream, I encountered ten things that I want to share with the world. Let's just cut to the chase, shall we?

1. Wave Phones

The [Wave phones](#) are a new feature, allowing guests to call one another and keep in touch. On the christening cruise, one of my Wave phones mysteriously disappeared from my stateroom. On the Maiden Voyage cruise, one of my Wave phones didn't work at all. How frustrating!

However, when I reported these incidences, I was amazed at the crew's responsiveness. The first Wave phone was re-delivered to my stateroom within hours -- it seems a manager noticed it was not working (without my mentioning it), removed it to fix it, and returned it in working order. My second Wave phone was delivered to Guest Services, where Andy from Germany took into safekeeping for repair -- a new phone was delivered later that evening, and Andy himself phoned my stateroom to make sure I received it. Oh, and the Wave phones worked every time I tried them, both on the ship and on Castaway Cay. I hate how the crew members cared about their technology, meaning I had to carry the Wave phone around and actually answer it!

2. Remy's

When I had heard Remy's, the reservations-required, adults-only restaurant, was a three-hour-long meal, I was intimidated -- I have no shame in admitting it. And then when I heard that a server would escort you to the restroom ... oh, the indignity! I wondered if the waiters be bugging me all night! Would I be just be paying \$75 per person to be uncomfortable and stiff?

So when I arrived for my meal, it was with no small amount of trepidation. But from the moment I sat down, I found the staff to be warm and friendly and, amazingly, unreserved. My server smiled knowingly when I took photos of everything on my plate. He happily

showed, and explained, everything he served. And when I dashed for the door to use the facilities, he calmly intercepted me and asked if I knew my way … and when I nodded confidently, he let me be. And when the chef stopped by the table, and i just sort of vaguely smiled and thanked him (I'm no foodie), he entertained me with an explanation of how they made the "Tomato Essence" (it takes two days!). After the delightful meal, I went back to my stateroom to discover a bud vase (for the rose my server gave me), a box of handmade chocolates, and a thank-you note. So I hate how Remy's managed to delight me even though I was intimidated, meaning it's very likely I'll be back in the future to spend another \$75 (or more!).

3. Senses Spa

Before my cruise, I'd decided to forego a spa treatment in the Senses Spa to save money. So knowing I wouldn't be there, I did the spa tour on the first afternoon. The Disney Dream spa is larger and offers more services than the Vista Spa on the Magic and Wonder. I left without making a reservation. But by the second day, I felt the lure of relaxation and stopped by to get a Rainforest Room pass, but they were all sold out!

I almost escaped, but then I happened to ask about massages ... and wouldn't you know it, a hot stone massage was available that afternoon. Yes, I booked it. I'd never had a hot stone massage before. How was it? One word: WOW! It felt like liquid heat on my sore body. Amazing. So I hate that the Senses Spa was so inviting and accommodating that I got a great massage despite my attempt to deprive myself!

4. Inaugural Merchandise

As these were special cruises, unique Maiden Voyage and Inaugural Cruise merchandise was everywhere: pins, clothing, bags, etc. When I tried to take a peek at the bags, I'd discovered they had already been sold out. And when I went to buy a Maiden Voyage hoodie, again, I found them all gone. Disappointing.

But on the flip side, I also witnessed the responsiveness of the crew to the situation. When I stopped by the gift shops later to see if more merchandise had arrived, I found that the crew had set up a queue outside the shop to prevent overcrowding! A very wise idea. The [special pins](#) were offered by a very orderly random selection process, and I was able to get every pin I wanted. I could see Disney responding and improving. So I hate that Disney made it so easy to get the inaugural pins, because I ended up ordering a couple more than I would have otherwise (though I am now happy I have them!).

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5. Castaway Club

I'm a Platinum Castaway Club member, which is Disney's fancy way of saying I've been on more than 10 cruises (I think I'm up to 16 now). I get special perks for being Platinum, and one I was looking forward to was waiting in the lounge at the far end of the terminal before boarding. Unfortunately, when I arrived, I was told that they were only allowing Concierge guests into the lounge. Bummer.

But for that one perk I didn't get, I received so many more -- including some I'd forgotten about, like free dinner at Palo. I also got boarding pass #1, meaning I was one of the first onboard. Other cool things were the extra stateroom gifts, the ability to book Remy and Palo 120 days in advance (meaning I got those coveted reservations), the onboard experiences (talks with various officers, a look at the animal program on Castaway Cay), and a free bottle of sparkling wine. I was delighted by all these little perks, and for the first time in all my cruises, I felt rewarded for being such a loyal Disney cruiser. It felt good. I hate that Disney made me feel so special on this cruise that I already want to book another one so I can try out the perks I missed!

6. The Food

Where do I begin? There was no shortage of good food onboard -- and I enjoyed everything I ate. Even the fancy-schmancy "Tomato Essence" at Remy's. But on my first night, appetizers took an hour to arrive. Dinner was so slow that first night, I had to forego dessert because I was just too exhausted to stick around.

But that night was the only slow night -- indeed, it was the only hiccup in meals over the course of the two cruises. Pretty amazing, I must say. Food was well prepared, in ample supply, and always served with a smile. Even room service impressed me -- food arrived within 30 minutes each time I ordered (and order I did ... about 8 times during those two cruises!). I hate that Disney served such delicious food that I had dessert every other night. Check out my ["Chocolate Dreams"](#) video to see for yourself!

7. The Stateroom Bed

The Disney Dream has different beds than those on the Magic and Wonder -- their beds do not separate into two twins, meaning less flexibility in stateroom sleeping arrangements.

But, oh, what a bed! I was so impressed with the comfort of the Dream beds -- I'd love to have one for myself. The beds were surprisingly soft,

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yet still firm enough. When I finally fell into bed at the end of the day, it gave me the same happy feeling I get when I sink into a hot tub. I hate that the beds felt so good that they were hard to get out of in the morning when it was time to get up and tackle the day!

8. Tubs (Round and Hot!)

Speaking of tubs, I was in a [family stateoom](#) which has one of those [new-fangled round tubs](#). Before I left, I heard many rumblings about whether these'd be large enough for adults to bathe and shave in.

I took a bath in my round tub the first night and it was heaven! It was much more comfortable than the tiny tubs in the regular staterooms. And I discovered that these tubs have two showerheads -- a regular handheld one and a rain shower head. A great touch!

I also tried out the [hot tub near the adult pool](#). I could see that it had a clear plexiglass side so you could see out the window, but I didn't notice until I was in it that it also had a clear panel in the floor so you could see the water (or dock) below. So I hate that Disney gave me more reasons to sit around soaking in hot water, sapping all my energy and actually getting me to relax!

9. Technology

The Disney Dream is filled to the brim with new technology: interactive screens in Animator's Palate, Enchanted Art on the walls, video floors in the kids clubs, video portholes in inside staterooms -- the list goes on and on. It didn't always work -- Animator's Palate is just a little too busy, sometimes the Enchanted Art was on the fritz, and I heard reports that some video portholes weren't working.

That said, when the technology was working (at least 99% of the time from what I saw), it was breathtaking. Crush talked to my friend Linda at dinner! Minnie winked at me in the Vista Gallery. And I saw a dancing hippo splash by on a video porthole. My son Alexander loved the [Midship Detective Agency](#), which is an interactive treasure hunt through the Enchanted Art. In fact, he opted to forego the kids clubs one afternoon so we could keep doing the detective agency activities. Even [Shutters Photo Studio](#) has seen considerable technological advances, and all my photos were organized for me in a neat little box. So, Disney, I hate how you've used technology to enhance my cruise experience, meaning it was oh so easy to find and buy that Palo dinner photo (and even do it on the last morning when it is usually so busy)!

10. Stage Shows (particularly "Believe")

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Disney's well known for their amazing stage shows. I caught two of them -- "Villains Tonight" and "Believe." The performances, songs, and special effects were all quite wonderful. The "Villains Tonight" show showcased many of Disney's famous villains, and it was a fun romp through naughtiness. But my favorite show was "Believe," because its message really hit home -- an overworked parent learns to cherish more time with a child. But, sadly, I was unable to take any photos or videos during the show!

Now you have to understand, I was never without my cameras during these cruises -- they were working cruises, and I felt compelled to document **everything** (if you don't believe this, you haven't seen my video of the restrooms!). But when I sat down in the lovely Walt Disney Theatre to watch the shows, the cameras stayed off. And, wouldn't you know it, I found myself immersed in the setting, my concerns drifted away, and I was lost in the story! I hate that Disney knows how to capture my imagination so well that I forgot to worry about something for a good hour!

Okay, so don't hate me, but my "10 things I hate" is really a list of what I loved about the Disney Dream. I found plenty of issues, but I found many more solutions, magic, and sheer amazement. I knew when I decided to go on these inaugural cruises that I wasn't going to be blown away by perfect precision and flawless execution -- instead, I was going so that I could be one of the first ever to cruise onboard this new ship. Problems are to be expected, and -- dare I say it? -- even embraced. It's all part of the adventure of an inaugural cruise. I loved watching Disney respond to issues -- they continue to impress and delight me, even after so many years. And I loved how Disney got me to relax, even when I was dead set on doing so much. And I loved being one of the very first to experience this magnificent vessel.

I am proud to call myself a Disney Dream Inaugural Cruiser!

About The Author: Jennifer is the co-founder of PassPorter Travel Press, as well as the webmistress of PassPorter.com. She has authored more than 50 books, including the award-winning [PassPorter's Disney Cruise Line and Its Ports of Call](#).

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