

Cruising Alaska with Disney Cruise Line: Ports of Call, Dining and Everything Else!

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

(Check out [Part One](#) and [Part Two](#) of Cheryl's Alaska series!)

□ What did you think of the ports of call?

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□ I think it's fair to say that my view was coloured by the weather we experienced, as my least favourite of the three was Juneau, but I wonder how much of that was down to the continual rain we had during our visit there.

Skagway was certainly the smallest, and had its own unique attractiveness, although it's very cut off from the rest of the world. I'm not sure I could spend more than a couple of days there, especially not after learning that the nearest cinema, and major store, was over 100 miles away! It was a real eye-opener to learn just how remote this destination was, although I could understand its attraction, as it brings in hundreds of thousands of people for the summer season, when the cruise lines arrive. I can imagine though, that in winter, it's not nearly as attractive, as from what we heard, the climate is exceptionally harsh.

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□ Despite that, it was a beautiful little town, and perhaps the prettiest of the ones we visited. The same couldn't be said of Juneau. This was the biggest of the three and I found it very commercialised, although I make my judgements from the bus journeys we took through it, rather than a walking exploration, as we did in the other ports of call. As I say, my views may have been coloured by the incessant rain that marred our day here.

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□ Ketchikan was a mixture of the other two ports, offering some beautiful buildings, just as in Skagway, but it was also a bustling town, more on the lines of Juneau, and was certainly packed while we were there. Something to do with the other couple of cruise ships in port that day, no doubt!

In each port, we received a warm welcome from everyone we met, and I was pleasantly surprised that people weren't that pushy with us. It was a very nice change from places we'd been to previously in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, where we'd always felt pressurised to buy goods or services. Trust me though, in each town, there are plenty of different ways to spend your hard-earned cash, with some

beautiful items available for sale. It's very easy to be parted from your money!

□ I deliberately haven't covered Tracy Arm Fjord in this section, as it's not a port of call, although apparently many people on our cruise thought it was (it's more like a day at sea, as the ship cruises in and out of the fjord)! Having said that, it was perhaps one of the most memorable parts of our cruise, and the views of the glacier are something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. There was a wonderful sense of anticipation as we slowly approached it, first getting tantalising glimpses in the distance, and then gradually drawing closer and closer, until it almost filled the whole horizon.

□ What are the shore excursions like?

□ This is perhaps the toughest choice in each port of call. I've never seen such a long list before and it took forever to narrow it down! The choices covered everything, from nature to adventure, to those specific for certain groups, such as adults, families, and teenagers. We had the toughest time ever deciding what to do in each port, and I'm sure we weren't alone. We ended up having to come up with a shortlist, before we made a final choice.

□ If you plan on cruising Alaska with Disney, it's worth knowing that you'll have some tough decisions to make about your time ashore. It's even tougher, as the excursions we took were excellent, and our friends who were on other excursions, made similar comments as well. I don't think I heard any negative comments on this subject, the only problem was the weather, which sadly we can't control, no matter how hard we try!

□ Did they have any Alaskan food on board?

□ Sadly, we missed out on the Taste of Alaska menu, which had perhaps the most wide ranging selection of Alaskan cuisine during the seven nights, but I'm told it was excellent. Apart from that, the menus appeared to be fairly standard fare, and if I'm honest, I was slightly disappointed by the quality of some of the food on board, with the exception of the wonderful meal at Palo. I don't know whether it was because it was the last cruise of the season, but the food didn't wow me in the way that other Disney cruises have done. I would've liked to have more focus on Alaskan fare during the cruise. It seemed an obvious thing to do, and a bit of an omission on Disney's part. Perhaps next season...?

□ What Alaskan merchandise did they have on board?

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□ Disney had thought of a lot of things, as you'd expect, when it came to merchandise. You want T-shirts, long sleeved shirts, or sweatshirts for any age, showcasing your Alaskan adventure? You've got it! Photo albums, scrapbooks, Christmas ornaments, and cuddly toys were also in evidence, along with the staples, such as fridge magnets and postcards. A lot of it was very stylish, and there was a good selection, although as we were on the last cruise of the season, we did find some things running out in certain sizes, which wasn't a huge surprise.

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□ Was the Alaskan cruise worth doing?

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□ I can't praise the Alaskan cruise enough. Perhaps it says everything that, along with our travelling companions, before the cruise had even ended, we'd already started to discuss a return visit. So much for it being a once in a lifetime opportunity!

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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