

Flightseeing in Ketchikan, Alaska: A Disney Cruise Line Shore Excursion Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

For those of you who've cruised with Disney before, you've probably got a good idea of the range of excursions that are offered at each of your ports of call.

For those who haven't, it's easy to understand -- usually there's a huge variety of options! This was never as true as on our Alaskan cruise, where the excursions, when printed out, ran to a stupid amount of pages. All I can say is thank goodness I was then planning to recycle that paper and print on the other side!

Why do I mention this? Because it gives you an idea of the quandary I found myself in when it came to Ketchikan, the final of our three ports of call. It would be our shortest stop on shore, with the Wonder only docking at 1:40 pm and we all had to be back on board by 7:30 pm. My goodness, less than six hours all told!

□ When I first looked at the offerings on the Disney Cruise Line, they included delights such as a Bering Sea Crab Fisherman's tour, excursions to the Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show, or the Saxman Native Village with its collection of totem poles. If you wanted to get active, zip lining and canoeing were on offer, or if you want to stick close to port, there were a number of ways to tour the city itself. I did what any sensible person would do, I drew up a shortlist of those excursions I wanted to, and was capable of, doing, which knocked a lot of the more active options out. Then I showed it to my husband, who selected a couple of final choices.

□ This was where my trusty [PassPorter's Disney Cruise Line and Its Ports of Call](#) came in handy. As I read the section on Ketchikan, the words "this is the town for flightseeing in seaplanes" caught my eye. One of the final selections was the Exclusive Flight Seeing and Crab Feast, which appealed to me anyway, because of the inclusion of food within it, but I was concerned about the price tag. At \$219 each, it was going to be the most expensive excursion on our cruise. So would it live up to the price tag?

When we arrived in Ketchikan, we had some time before our excursion to explore the town, as we didn't have to leave until 3:15 pm. Immediately, I was glad that I hadn't opted for a city tour, as it's easy

enough to tour this port of call on your own. Within an hour, we'd covered most of the town, and seen a fair bit of what it had to offer.

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□We headed out on our "VIP Tour" bus -- yes, that's seriously what it said in the destination board at the front! We were treated to a very educational guided tour by our driver Eric, learning all about the former red light district, and a unique gift from a husband to his wife -- a totem pole in their front yard!

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□We had been warned that the road would run out before we reached our final destination, and we bounced along the dirt track to George Inlet Lodge. Originally built in the early 1940s about 100 miles from here, it's been moved twice since then to its current location. It's a spectacular location, on a beautiful position overlooking the lake. Immediately, you could feel the exclusivity of the title of this excursion, something that carried on when we headed inside to our own private dining room. It was just those on our excursion -- a total of seven of us.

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□Our crab feast was exactly that, a real feast. The appetisers of crackers with salmon, and cream cheese mixed with ranch dressing, and the salad, were just beautiful, but the best was yet to come -- the crab! Thankfully, we were given a lesson in how to dissect them, as that's something I've never been able to master, but now I can say it's another string to my bow! We were able to go back for more as many times as we liked, and we both took advantage of that.

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□I really never thought when I booked this tour that by the time we got to the flightseeing itself, I would already feel that this excursion had been worth the money, but that was exactly the feeling I had. Just as we finished up eating, we heard the all too familiar sound of pounding rain, and for a while, we were concerned that perhaps we'd be driving back to the ship, rather than flying. However, we were taken down to the landing area, just as our flightplane arrived on the water. We boarded, somewhat cynical about what we'd be able to see, but soon enough, the clouds cleared and the rain disappeared from the windows, and we were greeted by some beautiful views of the Tongass National Forest beneath us. It went on as far as the eye could see, although sadly we weren't lucky enough to be treated to any wildlife sightings on the way.

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□Thanks to the weather, the flight was a little more bouncy than we'd have liked, compounded by all the photos I was taking. I have to admit that, despite the beautiful scenery laid out beneath us as we'd been in flight, we were both very glad when we touched down on the water. It's something to keep in mind if you're prone to motion sickness. We'd both taken tablets earlier in the day, and were very glad we had. It was fascinating to land on water, something I'd never done before, and if

you haven't done it either, it's definitely worth giving it a try.

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□So what was the verdict on this excursion? Despite its hefty price tag, it was an amazing experience, although surprisingly we both felt that the crab feast was just as much a highlight as the flight itself. The weather didn't help us, but despite that, we still had a great time. It's one of those once in a lifetime experiences that I can now say we've done.

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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