

Lessons Learned From Our Cruise on the Disney Dream: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Last week, I recounted the [lessons learned during our recent visits to Walt Disney World](#).

In this article, I'm turning my attention to the lessons that we learned from sailing on the Disney Dream for the first time.

I really wasn't sure what to expect during our first cruise on the Disney Dream, despite the huge amount of photos I'd already seen of this beautiful new addition to the Disney Cruise Line. Would the ship just be too overwhelming for us? In all honesty, no, although as we drove up to Port Canaveral, the size of the Dream was impossible to take in. It almost came across as a bit intimidating. However, what we quickly learned was that the Dream looked bigger from the outside, than it felt once you were actually on board.

□ What was immediately apparent the moment we arrived at the Disney Cruise Line Terminal was how packed this cruise was going to be. I peeked at the Disney Cruise Line website a little beforehand, and was pretty sure that we were going to be sailing quite full, as there didn't seem to be many staterooms available for online booking. Now, while Disney tends to handle crowds very well, there were certain points where it didn't work out so well, and one of those was in the terminal.

□ Another was at the Sailaway Party, where literally every spot of deck overlooking the party was crammed full of people. As a result, one thing I quickly learned is that I'm not that keen on sailing when the ship is going to be this busy. I'd never seen anything like it, and while the Dream could just about handle the numbers, during those two periods, it wasn't much fun. As a result, any thoughts we had of sailing on the Disney Fantasy over Christmas disappeared. I will confess that also had something to do with the price tag of that particular cruise as well.

I think we already knew this, but our cruise on the Dream proved that three nights just isn't long enough. It had been fine for our first Disney cruise all the way back in 2004, but now it didn't work for us. We felt that there was so much to see and do on board, and so little time to do it. We came off the cruise promising ourselves that we would never be back on a three-night cruise, as we needed more time on board.

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□ Something else we know for our next cruise is that we'll definitely be purchasing another length of cruise pass to the Tropical Rainforest area of the spa. We were very impressed with what we saw during our tour on the first afternoon on board, but as the cruise wore on, and we enjoyed more relaxation time there, we really found it to be a superb value for the money. Yes, it was expensive, but so worth it. Where else can you sit in a hot tub on your own private, enclosed deck, and just watch the world outside, especially when that view includes Castaway Cay?

□ Another lesson we took away was to get the Main (first) dining seating for our cruises. I've never been sure which would work better for us, as I could see benefits to both. On this cruise, we wanted to dine in all three main restaurants, and fit in both Palo and Remy, too. A demanding itinerary for sure, but how else were we going to do it? With the earlier dining time, we were able to at least sample a small amount of food, and the atmosphere at each dining room, before heading off to the real star turn of the evening. It turned to be the perfect compromise, and something we'll be doing again on the Fantasy.

□ Perhaps the timing of our Fantasy cruise tells you something about what we learned next, and that also fits into the discovery we made while at Walt Disney World, both before, and after the cruise. We'll be cruising in mid-December, and some of that has to do with the fact that it was just far too hot for us during April. However, we even learned from that, working out that we needed to head ashore to Castaway Cay as soon as we were allowed. We did so, and literally a couple of hours later we'd had time to enjoy the island, and specifically the wonderful peace of Serenity Bay. At that point, we packed up, and headed back to the ship.

□ This was where we made our next discovery. If you want to ride the AquaDuck water coaster with very little, or possibly even no wait, then it's worth getting up and at 'em early, getting out to your destination when your ship is in port, and then returning to the ship. We were there not long after the AquaDuck opened at 11:00 am that day, and we waited barely 10 minutes each time, so we were able to enjoy it twice in quick succession.

□ Despite the fact that we were only on board for three nights (again far too short a time!), we still came away from this cruise having learned a huge amount about what to do, or not do again, on a future cruise, and we'll be applying that experience to the Fantasy when we meet her for the first time later this year.

□ Next in this series of articles, I'll be looking at what we learned on our

last Disneyland visit.

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!](#)

Article last updated: 06-14-2012

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