

Packing for a Disney Cruise to Alaska: Disney Cruise Line Advice

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

□I couldn't help but notice that, with the start of a new Alaskan cruise season for the Disney Wonder, people were asking on the [PassPorter message boards](#) about how on earth to pack for such a cruise.

Having been through that ourselves last year, I figured I could supply a few words of wisdom!

I'll start by saying that packing for Alaska is a tricky business. It's nothing like Florida, which probably doesn't come as a shock to you, but whereas with Florida, you can look at the long range forecast a couple of weeks before you travel and have a rough idea of the temperatures you're likely to encounter, I found Alaskan weather to be totally different. I think, in the couple of weeks before we left home, the weather forecast underwent some dramatic changes. At one point, the forecast was for temperatures in the mid 30s, while another time when I checked, I saw the mid 50s being predicted. How on earth do you pack for that level of unpredictability? The simple answer is you don't. To a certain extent, you ignore the forecast, and pack for all eventualities.

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□Now you're probably sitting there and thinking, "That's all very well, but with luggage charges on most airlines, I'm going to end up needing about three suitcases per person." That's a good point, but the answer is to layer. Go with items that you know you can wear if it's warmer, with some additional layers to go on top, should the weather turn cold.

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□It's also worth remembering that, for much of the time you're on the Wonder, you'll probably be inside. Disney keep all the inside areas of their ships at a pleasant enough temperature. I found that I was able to wander around the interior decks comfortably in a T-shirt. However, outside was a different matter.

When you head up to the exterior decks, particularly the top ones, that's the time to bundle up. If you do, you'll find that Disney's crew is very good at looking after you. On one particularly cold, wet, and blustery day, they had blankets freely available for anyone who needed them. Equally, if you feel the cold, or it's too much on the top decks, try heading down to the deck four promenade, which is more sheltered. Another option, if you have a verandah, is to use that. Because it's a more enclosed space, we found ours to be much warmer than the open decks, unless you're silly enough to stick your head around the side of your balcony to get a better view. Been there, done that--I got the view,

and a bad hair day to boot!

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□But what about the days when you're in port, and presumably exploring the area, maybe on a shore excursion? This is where your layers may come in handy, as you can't just head back to the inside decks whenever you get chilly. Take a very careful look at your excursion description, checking especially for elevations. For example, if you take any excursion that involves travelling on Skagway's White Pass & Yukon Railway, this will either start or end, depending on which tour you select, at an elevation 3,000 feet above sea level. That can equal a hefty change in weather.

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□Another thing to keep in mind is whether your shore excursion is going to take you out on the water. As soon as you leave any sheltered harbor, the wind out to sea can be a real shock to the system, and make it feel a lot colder out.

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□So what did we pack for our Alaskan cruise? Well, in addition to Alaska we took in a number of national parks in the Midwest, Seattle, Disneyland, and Chicago over a three week period, so we literally were packing for every possible climate. Despite that, we were pleased to get away with just three cases between the two of us.

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□For Alaska, as I mentioned earlier, my base clothing was T-shirts for anything inside the Wonder. Then I took a couple of sweatshirts with me, having checked beforehand that one could be put over the other, to help me layer. I also found myself a lightweight raincoat, which again could just go on top of the layers to help keep me dry. That turned out to be invaluable on the day the heavens opened in Juneau. Something Alaska is certainly familiar with is rain, and if you can get through seven nights without any, you'll be doing really well. An umbrella also came in handy for me, as did a pair of gloves and a hat. I wasn't sure if I'd need the latter two items, but I was very glad of my gloves, as my hands do get cold easily, and the hat often went underneath the hood of my sweatshirt.

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□Of course, something else you need to plan for on a cruise is the more formal evenings. I packed one formal dress, with my husband bringing his suit. He also brought a selection of ties and polo shirts, and was able to couple these as he liked with his pants or jacket. Along with my formal dress, I bought a couple of less-formal dresses, some of which I wore during hotter days of our vacation, elsewhere. I brought my standard pair of black pants that are smart enough for semi-formal night and dinner or brunch at Palo, and coupled those with a number of tops, all of which were lightweight and didn't crease, avoiding the need for any ironing. I also found one pair of shoes that would go with all my

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formal and semi-formal outfits.

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□ Let's not forget, you do have access to laundry facilities on board, both the ship's laundry service, and the do-it-yourself guest laundries. However, if you want to use these, do plan ahead. Let's just say formal night isn't the time to try and do the washing or ironing! Instead, we opted to do our washing early one morning when we were at sea, before everyone got up, which worked great for us.

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□ All in all, it wasn't that tough packing for Alaska. We just ended up planning for most eventualities, and brought a little bit of everything. Layering really is the key, as is bringing items that you can perhaps wear more than once. That's the way to keep the cases to the bare minimum. For those of you cruising Alaska this summer, good luck with the packing, and enjoy, it's a truly breathtaking part of the world.

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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