

Greenock, Scotland: A Disney Cruise Line Port of Call Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

The Disney Magic is shortly embarking on its inaugural cruise around the British Isles, and much as we'd have loved to have been on board, sadly prices were just too crazy for us.

However, if we had taken that cruise, we'd have been visiting many places we already know well. Liverpool is one, and we've already had a look at that, given it's also a stop on the Transatlantic crossing the Magic is making, it's time to look at a couple of others.

First up is Greenock in Scotland. It may be somewhere you haven't heard of. I certainly had to do a bit of research, as perhaps like Citiavecchia for Rome, it's probably best known as a port, rather than an attraction in its own right. However, from here, it opens up opportunities to visit various parts of central Scotland, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Stirling, all of which we've been fortunate enough to visit in the last couple of years.

□ There are lots of shore excursions available from Greenock, almost 40 in total, so where to start with picking one that's right for you? Why not Edinburgh? After all, when I first visited Scotland in 2012 (I am almost ashamed to admit it took me so long to get north of the border), it was Edinburgh we headed for, and we started with Edinburgh Castle, and I certainly don't regret that decision. It's a fascinating place with lots to see and so much history.

□ Therefore, it's hardly surprising that there are a number of shore excursions being offered by Disney that take in Edinburgh Castle. If you've got a lot of money, then you can consider "Be Brave" at Edinburgh Castle with an exclusive youth activity. It includes a meeting and photo opportunity at the castle with Merida from Brave, and that's presumably why you're looking at a hefty price tag of \$299/adults, and \$219/ages 5-9.

If that sounds like a bit much, Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood Palace (there's an adults only version of this tour as well) may appeal more. This was exactly what we did on our day trip to Edinburgh, as the castle lies at one end of the Royal Mile, and the palace at the other end. The tour includes free time, which you can use to explore the city centre, and enjoy the many shops and restaurants. We loved just wandering around, especially as we were lucky enough to have a beautiful sunny day for our visit. Holyrood Palace is the Queen's official residence in

Edinburgh, and just like the castle, there's a great deal to see here. If you're a lover of British royalty, this sounds like a superb tour.

□ Another option pairs Edinburgh Castle with the Royal Yacht Britannia, and this is something else well worth visiting. On our second visit to Edinburgh, the one thing we wanted to see the most was this, and we were not disappointed. We went with friends, who live locally, and I think it's fair to say that they were amazed by how long we spent there, exploring this magnificent vessel. It really does have to be seen to be believed, and the stories you heard of life on board with the Royal family on the audio tour are very special.

□ Although we've yet to make it there, another option is Edinburgh City Zoo, home to the UK's only pandas. Sadly, despite many efforts over the years, the tiny pater of panda feet is yet to happen, but I do love these animals and one day I'm sure we'll be visiting them.

□ Outside of Edinburgh is the Falkirk Wheel and, after one aborted attempt the previous year, in January, we were finally able to take a ride on this amazing piece of engineering. It's the first revolving boat lift, and joins up the Forth and Clyde canals, meaning boats can now travel between Glasgow and Edinburgh. You're lifted up a height of 115 feet in just 15 minutes, and yet you really don't feel as if you're moving during the whole thing. The Falkirk Wheel Boat Trip and Historic Stirling Panoramic adds in a tour of Stirling, with free time to explore it on your own.

□ If Stirling appeals, but all you want to see is the castle (and I wouldn't blame you, as that's all we did on our visit), then there are two options, one open to everyone, and the other aimed at families. Whichever you choose, you'll get to experience the stunning views from the castle battlements, see the famous Stirling heads (which I'm ashamed I knew nothing about until our visit), and the Royal rooms.

□ Another tour that takes in Stirling Castle is Bannockburn and Stirling: The Story of Robert the Bruce, although as far as Bannockburn, the site of Scotland's greatest victory over the English, goes, I can't help with that, as we've never made it out there. Maybe it's something to add to the itinerary for our Scotland road trip in summer 2017…

□ Closer to Greenock is Glasgow, and I'll be honest, before we spent two weekends up there for the Commonwealth Games in summer 2014, I hadn't got it on my list of places to visit. Wow, how wrong can you be? There is just so much to see and do here. Tours include Glasgow City and Kelvingrove Gallery (with an adults only version), but as art isn't our thing, all I can tell you about the gallery is that it looks stunning from

outside.

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□I'm personally very jealous of anyone who takes the Glasgow Clyde Shipbuilding Heritage tour, as it includes a visit to the Riverside Museum, home to Glasgow's Museum of Transport. Despite having made three visits to the city, we haven't got there yet, which gives you an idea of how much else there is to see here. It's definitely on my list though. Other options in the city include Gourmet Glasgow and Mackintosh's Glasgow, but I'd imagine for many, the real draw of Scotland is to see some of its famous lochs.

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□We were fortunate to spend two nights in a bed and breakfast place that was only a few miles from picturesque Loch Lomond, and that features in a number of Disney's shore excursions. Sadly, even though our visit was during the summer, the weather wasn't kind to us at Loch Lomond, with persistent rain, but even in the gloom, we could see the beauty of the place. You can combine a visit to the shops here (Loch Lomond Shores) with Glengoyne Distillery, see Loch Lomond and Inveraray Castle (on my list for next summer's road trip), take a Loch Lomond Canoeing Adventure, or have a cruise and shoreside shopping or enjoy any of the variants on the Panoramic Scottish Lochs tours (which also include adult only or small group departures).

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□Another option is Ike's Scottish Retreat -- Culzean Castle, which is a truly magnificent place to visit. Once again, our day there was hampered by rain (are you seeing a pattern here?), but it was another beautiful castle, with its centrepiece the stunning oval staircase. On a clear day, which sadly we weren't lucky enough to get, the views from here would've been quite something.

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□There are many other options for Greenock, but hopefully this has given you a taste of some of what's on offer when the Magic visits this beautiful part of Scotland. Greenock is a port of call on the 12-night British Isles cruise from Dover, leaving on June, 5 and the 2017 version that sets sail on July, 9.

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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