

Cruise Lessons Learned Part 2: Disney Fantasy

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the second of this [series of articles](#), looking at what we learned on our most recent vacation, it's time to head out on board the newest of the four Disney Cruise Line ships, the beautiful Disney Fantasy.

The first thing we learned as soon as we boarded was just how beautiful the Fantasy is at Christmas. I knew the ship would be decked out for the holiday season, but somehow I wasn't prepared for just how lovely it would look. It wasn't over the top, but my goodness, you couldn't escape the trees and the wreaths everywhere, all of course perfectly themed to the areas they were in.

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□Of course, the first thing we did was to explore the ship as much as we could, but I will say that on that first day, we missed one area, which we discovered later in the cruise is not to be missed for adults. That's Satellite Falls on deck 13, and it is hidden away, I suspect quite deliberately so that it's kept nice and quiet for those over the age of 18. As you'll have days at sea on the Fantasy, this is one part of the ship you will want to find to enjoy some getaway time.

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□The next thing we discovered relates more to kids of all ages, and that included us! Keep a close eye on which characters are on board. Over the years, we've gotten used to the likes of Mickey, Minnie, Stitch, and Captain Jack Sparrow, but we were delighted to spot some more unusual additions, especially Remy and his slightly chubbier brother, Emile, neither of whom we've ever seen in the parks. Of course, it goes without saying that if you have some more unusual characters, the lines will form fast, and we were certainly glad we got there early for both of them.

Something we've always found on our previous cruises is that activities tend to be scheduled at different times of the day. For example, on your first at sea day, what you want to attend may be early in the day, whereas on your second day at sea, it will be a lot later. That didn't happen on this cruise, and it's something worth being aware of, and certainly a lesson we learned. In particular, we wanted to attend one of the Disney Vacation Club member events, but all of them were scheduled early in the morning. We ended up missing every single one, as we slept in so late.

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□That's something else we learned this cruise, as we didn't realise how exhausted we obviously were before setting sail. We didn't stay up

particularly late on any night, yet every day we were at sea, we didn't set an alarm call, and slept considerably later than we usually do. Cruises are a good way of helping you to wind down, and it's worth knowing without that alarm call, you may sleep in way past your usual wake-up time. If you are coming into port, and have an excursion scheduled, don't rely on your body clock to get you up on time, as it may be as tired as ours obviously were!

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□ Everyone knows that the weather can play a huge part on any cruise, and so it proved to be on this one, but in ways we didn't expect. We arrived at San Juan, Puerto Rico to torrential rain early on in the day. We guessed our Segway tour in the afternoon would be cancelled, but the weather changed completely, with boiling hot sun later in the day. I guess the Caribbean can be just like Florida, with the weather changing very quickly. It's something I never realised, and was definitely a lesson learned. Just because a day starts off well or badly weather-wise, don't necessarily assume it's set in for the whole day.

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□ The weather impacted in another way, with terrible weather on the day we visited Castaway Cay. Like most of the passengers, we headed back to the Fantasy early, and here's where Disney came into their own, scheduling lots of additional activities on board, and even producing a Navigator, detailing them. Never having really experienced weather like that before, it's something I wasn't aware of, and it's good to know that Disney has plans in hand, no matter what happens.

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□ We were surprised, and a bit disappointed, to see the opening hours of some of the adult areas on board the Fantasy. We explored them on our first day on board, and fell in love with the Tube in particular, as it reminded us of home. We wanted to go back, and spend some time there, but we tried on a couple of occasions, and found it closed. It turned out that it didn't open for adults only until 10:00pm, and by that time, we were usually shattered, and heading to bed. It was disappointing, but it's something to learn for the next time we cruise on the Fantasy, as we'll be sure to try and stay up late one night to finally visit it, and see what it's like at night.

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□ The final lesson we learned on this cruise was that getting a high-graded cabin really does spoil you. We'd debated, and changed cabins a couple of times while paying off our cruise, starting in a category 5C, and ending up in a category 4D. Now we never want to cruise in anything less again! It was so much bigger than the rooms we've stayed in before (category 6 had been our limit previously), and we adored the round tub/shower. Sadly, we couldn't quite stretch to that on our upcoming Eastern Mediterranean cruise next year, but we're not far off, booked in a 5B category.

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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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