

I booked my Disney Cruise, I am heading to the Port to board the ship today, what do I do next?

OK, let's see if I can help you with some information on your first day you arrive on a Disney Cruise.

Make sure you fill out ALL the paperwork On-Line – **at home** before you leave. This will save you some time when you arrive at the check-in counter. When completing your online check-in, you will be asked to pick a Port Arrival Time. My advice is to choose an arrival time as early as possible as it may increase your chances of boarding the ship earlier. If you do end up having time to kill in the terminal though, you can get your photo taken with Captain Mickey or First Mate Minnie and check out the unbelievable detailed model of a Disney Cruise Line ship. If you know you'll be waiting awhile with children, consider bringing a snack.

Also - before you leave, I recommend downloading the Disney Cruise Line Navigator smartphone app from the Apple App Store or Google Play. The app has your daily cruise navigator and show you ports of call info, special spa service, character appearance locations, the drink of the day, and so much more. Also, the app has an onboard chat feature to make it easy to check in with your family and friends. The app will connect to the ship's wifi network at no cost to you.

When you arrive at port, you will drop your luggage with a porter and you may not see those bags again until early that evening when it appears outside your stateroom. Because of this, you will need to bring a day bag onboard with you that has anything you might need until you get your luggage. This should include medications, passport and identification, any pertinent travel document and any electronics you're bringing on-board. It might be helpful to use a small rolling suitcase as your day bag, because staterooms are not typically ready until around 2:00.

When you are waiting to board and you see kids the same age as yours, see if you can start making friends with them, so they will not be too scared when they go to the FUN Rooms on board later by themselves. Or if you have no kids with you, start looking around for some fun folks and go over say HI. My wife, Julie, tells me I would talk to anyone, and I say of course I do, I am a little GOOFY and I love meeting new people. We have made some lifelong friends on board some of our previous Disney Cruises. We still stay in touch with some folks from to this very day, they are from England, Pennsylvania, Florida, California and Indiana.

So if you have grown up with Disney and these wonderful characters, before you board will be a good time to take pictures with the Disney characters, then this could be a magical way to start your cruise vacation! They will happily pose with you for a family photograph and they are usually also happy to give their autographs! (Personal Note: I hate autographs – next time you do get an autograph of Goofy – go to another Goofy and you will see they don't even teach them to sign it the same way. The Disney ship's photographers are always

there to take a professional photograph with the character, which is great if you want a high quality family photo! However, in addition, they will also happily take your photo with your own camera or phone, ideal if you perhaps don't want to purchase every professional photograph taken.

Getting onboard early will allow you time to wander the ship and get familiar with its layout. I like to head up to the buffet and enjoy our first lunch onboard, preferably at a table out on deck so we can watch the action at the port.

One of our favorite things to do on embarkation day is to go swimming! We wear our swimsuits under our clothes when we board, then head straight to the pool deck **after lunch**. Since luggage isn't delivered yet and staterooms aren't ready, the pool and splash area will be fairly empty. On our last cruise, we were able to get several rides in on the AquaDuck (water coaster on the Dream and Fantasy) with no lines – something you won't find often once the cruise sets sail. There are bathrooms available on the pool deck if you need to change again before you can get into your stateroom.

You can bring bottled water & snacks on board the Disney cruise ship to keep in your cabin. This way you will have something to take with you on your excursions or just to have in your state room.

Disney Cruise Line guests 21 years and older may bring a maximum of 2 bottles of unopened wine or champagne (no larger than 750 ml) or 6 beers (no larger than 12 ounces) on board at the beginning of the voyage and **at each port-of-call**: a great money-saver!

Guests wishing to consume wine or champagne they have brought onboard in one of the dining rooms will be charged a corking fee of \$25.00 per bottle. Please note:

- These beverages must be packed in carry-on (not checked) bags or luggage.
- Any alcohol packed in checked luggage will be removed and stored until the end of the cruise.
- Any wine or champagne in excess of 2 bottles or beer in excess of 6 beers will be stored until the end of the cruise.
- Bringing liquors and spirits (including powdered alcohol – never heard of this before...but Disney tells me it is something they look for) on board is prohibited. These items will be stored until the end of the cruise.
- Guests MUST retrieve any stored alcohol at the end of the cruise. Items not retrieved will be destroyed, and no compensation will be offered.
- Alcohol brought on board may not be consumed in any lounge or public area.

Power strips, extension cords and other such devices are not permitted to be brought onboard any of the Disney Cruise Line ships. There will be extension cords available at Guest Services that can be borrowed for a \$50 deposit. These will be available on a first

come first served basis. If a guest needs one for a CPAP or medical device, one will be made available.

If this is your first Disney Cruise ship, then a walking ship tour may be both practical and exciting. The tour is guided by a member of the cruise staff, who will be able to tell you more about the wonderful ship that will be your home for the next few days. They will also be able to answer any questions that you may have about the ship or her facilities and venues. For details of when the tours begin, check out your cruise navigator when you board. On embarkation day many of the ship's entertainment and recreation venues operate open house hours that day. This means you can tour the facilities, talk to the cruise staff and find out what each has to offer during your cruise.

Day one, all of the youth facilities will operate open house hours. This is to give you and your children the opportunity to come and participate in a variety of activities and free time in all the facilities which include 'It's a small world nursery' for the under 3's, Oceaneer Club and Lab for the 3-12 year olds, Edge for the 11-14 year olds and Vibe for the 14-17 year olds. It is a chance to meet the youth activities team, ask any questions you may have and complete the on board registration for them if you have not already done so.

Are you a fan of Disney movies? The cruise navigator will give details of which movies are being shown and the start times. This is especially good for anyone that wants a more relaxed way to begin their cruise but still with a Disney feel to it. So go on, pick a comfy seat, get the popcorn in and enjoy your time at the movies! I believe the Fantasy is the only cruise ship that can show 3D movies.

The sail away celebration deck party is a fun way to start your cruise and get you into the party mood. It is hosted by the cruise entertainment team with special appearances from the Disney Characters – Captain Mickey and his pals. It usually begins shortly after the mandatory fire drills have been completed and once the ship is about to set sail for the first port of call.

Checkout what the Senses Spa, Salon and Fitness center really have to offer you and how they can enhance your cruise. So use this opportunity to tour all the facilities, ask the staff about Spa Treatments available, fitness classes scheduled and other seminars that are planned for your sailing. On Embarkation day the Spa facilities will usually also operate open house hours.

There is an interactive detective game that is played out by means of the cleverly disguised works of art around the ship. It is designed for guests 9 and older and it can be played solo or as a family. It could be a great way for you to get to know your ship and get your bearings because the game will literally take you all over the ship! It can also be stopped and started so you could start playing on embarkation day and then continue playing throughout your sailing. If you want to play, simply visit the self-service kiosk located at the Midship

Detective Agency to get your debriefing instructions from Mickey and pick up your detective badge and casebook, then you are ready to start investigating!

On board there will be a sports deck for playing basketball or soccer and sport simulators suitable for playing basketball, baseball, hockey, soccer and football. There will also be areas to practice your golf swing and a golf simulator. If you would like to book a session on any of the simulators, it is always best to book early as slots can often fill up. Reservations for this can be made at the simulators or at the port adventure desk.

If you haven't already pre-reserved your tours that you want to do at each port, this would be a good time to stop by the port adventures desk to see what is available. The staff will also be able to assist you if you have any questions about the places you are visiting or advice on popular tours and places of interest. Some port adventures have limited capacity so it is important to book as soon as you know what your plans are.

So once you have boarded your magical ship, unpacked your luggage and are ready to begin enjoying your cruise, then why not try some of these suggestions to really make your embarkation day count! There are of course many more things that you could do, and this list doesn't include all of the dining options, entertainment and theatre shows that will be on offer once you set sail. So whatever you choose to do, have a fun time, make every moment count and bon voyage!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at MrGoofy1@yahoo.com.

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