

This is a review of my first cruise onboard the Carnival Paradise. Our cruise sailed on Sunday September 24, 2000. Our trip started the day before as we got up at about 6am Saturday and went to the airport. We flew to Atlanta which was a smooth flight. In the airport we entertained kids that were sitting there with us. Then we went to Miami which was really humid, but that's really normal. It wasn't unbearable like Cancun though. We stayed at the Wyndam hotel, ate there that night, got up on Sunday morning, and found out that hurricane Isaac was going strong. We didn't think it was going to affect us though, as it was going to go North. So we get checked in and then get on the bus to go to the ship.



After we had lunch, we had to go back to our room because we had to go on a lifeboat drill. That wasn't that fun because it was warm and we were all at the top of the Lido deck sweating. So we took off our lifevests and sat there. Then we went back downstairs and I can't remember what we did that afternoon. That night we met our table company and we had a really good conversation, so we were blessed in that respect. It was a mom, dad, and daughter, and then another husband-wife couple. I'm not sure where the other 2 people were that didn't ever show for dinner. Maybe they didn't bring formal wear, and just didn't go the entire trip. I'm not sure. Anyhow, we also had a Columbian waiter, and he was nice. Our assistant waitress was so nervous, Jana. She was so nice though. I felt so bad for her, she was trying so hard. The meals on the ship were incredible.



We get to the port, go through the metal detector, stand in line to get our sign and sail's, and then board the ship. We took a picture just as soon as we crossed into the "picture doorframe" which came out really good. We got onto the ship and eventually found our way to our room - Upper Deck 161.

It was a cute room and Mom had it decorated because of her birthday. So we had cute streamers and decorations. Then we put all of our stuff down, and then went upstairs to eat lunch. This was the first introduction into how the food works on the ship. It was incredible, even though I can't remember what I had.



The shows were great in the Normandy lounge. Make sure you get there early though - the good seats can go quickly. The first night, we had our experience of a midnight buffet. It was also amazing because the food was just to die for! We weren't even hungry, but figured that it couldn't hurt. Then I went to the dance hall and was dancing all night. Then on Monday we were at sea and I was in the Trivia contest. For my efforts, I won a 24K gold plastic ship on a stick. That was cool. Then I went exploring all over the ship taking pictures. Monday night was a formal night, so I thought it was cool that we got to dress up. Then we went and got our pictures taken. Later that night I went dancing again, but noticed 1 of several things. 1, I was one of only 15 single people on the cruise. 2, the DJ played the same songs. 3, I was dancing by myself and that got old after a while. So I went home and went to sleep. I also slept in the top bunk which was weird.

On Tuesday we docked into Cozumel. It was great because my parents made me get up at the crack of dawn and watch the ship dock. That was neat though. Then we went to the shore excursion. We went on a cruise to a snorkeling reef, and it was amazing. Lots of people said that they got stung by jellyfish, but I didn't. So then we got back on the boat which had a freshwater hose, which was a lifesaver for getting the salt water out of your eyes. We then were on a party boat that took us to a secluded beach and there we went floating on floaties. That was so relaxing. We floated around, sunbathed, had the time of our lives, laughed at the lady that took her top off in the water, and kayaked around the ocean. It was so cool.



Thursday we docked at Grand Cayman. When we got off the ship we went into the town and since our tour didn't take that long, we went shopping into the guided tours that Dave the cruise director told us to go to. We got a Tortuga company rum cake (YOU HAVE TO TRY THIS CAKE) and I got a pair of pearl earrings for \$10. I thought it was great. I also spun the wheel of fortune and got a t-shirt. It's green, but it's cool. Then we went into the meeting place and we got on a bus to go to our stingray sandbar. That was incredible.



Then we got back to the ship, ate lunch, and we were going to go back out to Cozumel to go partying at Carlos and Charlie's, but we didn't. We stayed on the ship instead. I thought it was great. Tuesday was also Mom's birthday and we were so exhausted we didn't go to dinner, either. Instead we all took naps as we were docked at Cozumel. It was really relaxing though. I had a great time.

Then on Wednesday we were out at sea and although we were out at sea, we didn't get bored. There was so much to do at the ship, I couldn't believe it. I got a pair of amethyst and cz earrings for \$30. It was great.





We drove up 7 Mile Beach to a little road and then went off into the harbor to catch a yacht. That took us to stingray sandbar where the water was so beautiful, and we swam with the friendly, Gentle and loveable stingrays. We fed them squid and it was weird at first, but we got used to them, and they felt like balloons as they brushed up against you like your cat. I took lots of photos and can't wait to get them back. Then we went back to the ship where we were so hungry, and apparently everyone else was too, because when the ship left, everyone ate. We were still hungry for dinner, and I noticed that the diet entrees tasted better than the non-diet entrees.

Friday we docked at Ocho Rios in Jamaica. This trip wasn't too wonderful. For starters, my mom and dad started to get on my nerves, and it was really early in the morning, and I was grouchy. Well, we get off the boat and wait for our cool runnings tour to the Dunn's River Falls. I told the boat people that I wasn't sure if I wanted to climb the falls because I wasn't sure about my athletic ability. Then we had to hike up the waterfall, and granted others were doing it, so I figured I could too. Well, that was a big mistake because we had to form a huge daisy chain, and I couldn't grab my balance at all. Then the rocks were slippery and I fell. I scratched my leg pretty bad when I fell and I got all bruised. I didn't have a good time. I went to go get ice for my scratch. There's something raw on the rocks there because the scratch stung really bad. Then I sat there on the lifeguard station because the table had ants all over it. As I'm icing my leg, I get hit on by one of the Jamaican guys that worked there. I just didn't have a good time.



Then we go back on the party boat, and I didn't feel like dancing. So I spent the rest of the day sunbathing. All in all, The island is pretty, but I think I would've had a much better time if I didn't fall.



Saturday we were at sea all day. It was another dress up night, and that went ok. We didn't take more pictures though, I'm pretty sure it was because we would've had to purchase them, and we didn't want to do that. The pictures were \$20 a piece! Egad!

Then on Sunday morning we docked at Miami. This wasn't before the ship woke us up all night because it was rocking because of the currents where the Atlantic meets the Gulf. So exhausted, we woke up, and we were cranky. Then we went up to the Promenade deck, sat there, and waited for our turn to disembark. That part was easy. Actually getting home is another saga.



We went to the bus to get to the Miami airport, and fly back to Ontario, California. We sat in that airport until 4:20 because our first flight was delayed to Atlanta. There are 2 flights from Atlanta to Ontario. One is Noonish. The other one is later that evening. The Delta people told us that the flight to Atlanta would now leave at 5:45. Well, this would put us at 20 minutes early for our flight back to Ontario. This was the last flight of the day. That was a little tight, so we had Delta drive us to Ft. Lauderdale, then fly to Dallas, then to Ontario. That put us in Ontario at 10:00, but our luggage, which was making the original flight – missed the connection, so it got to us Monday afternoon. My advice, make sure that you get as early as possible 11:00 am ish or so. This way you aren't stuck in the airport all day listening to a Spanish paging system. Overall, the cruise was wonderful, and the vacation was something else. I can't wait to do it again!

