

5 reasons why Disney cruises aren't just for kids

(Courtesy of Ashley Kosciolk, The Points Guy)

Gourmet French dinners, [\\$5,000 cocktail experiences](#), serene infinity pools and penthouse suites that cost thousands of dollars a night might not be the first thing you think of when someone mentions a Disney cruise. But you'll find it all on Disney ships.

I sailed with the line for the first time nearly a decade ago, and I didn't want to take the assignment. I'm a childfree adult, I'm not a particularly over-the-top Disney fan, and all I could imagine was a theme park at sea — characters everywhere, souvenir shops galore and, of course, tons of kids.

Simply, I was wrong.

What I found was an absolutely wonderful experience on an elegant ship with superb service, phenomenal entertainment, delicious food and just enough subtle magic to instill a bit of childlike wonder without making me feel immature.

[Disney Cruise Line](#) has maintained its four older ships exceptionally well, and I just had a chance to sail on its newest vessel, [Disney Wish](#) — its first new-build in 10 years. Across the board, my opinion still stands: Disney cruises aren't just for kids. Here are five reasons why you'll love the experience, even as a grownup.

IN THIS POST

1. [You control how 'Disney' you want it to be](#)
2. [There are tons of adults-only spaces](#)
3. [Even the least expensive accommodations are elevated](#)
4. [Delicious dining options range from basic to gourmet](#)
5. [The kids clubs are fantastic](#)

You control how 'Disney' you want it to be

Let me allay your fears: When you sail with Disney, you won't be overwhelmed by Mickey and friends the way you might be at the brand's land-based amusement parks. However, that experience is available, should you choose to seek it.

"How we tell the stories allows you, as the consumer, to make the choice," is the way that the head of Disney Cruise Line, Thomas Mazloum, put it to me this week in a one-on-one interview aboard Disney Wish. "You're in the driver's seat. You can say how much you want to be part of the stories."

The subtlety with which Disney manages to incorporate branded touches on its ships is commendable and classy. You'll find nods to various Disney animated movie classics as you move between decks — a pumpkin on the carpet here, a snowflake on the wall there — but you're likely to find it more tasteful than obnoxious.

If you'd like to avoid a largely Disney-fied ambiance, it's easy to do. If, instead, you prefer a more immersive cruise, you're also in luck, as the ships host scheduled character meet-and-greets, themed dining experiences and more.

There are tons of adults-only spaces

Grownups who wish to keep strictly to an older crowd will love the adults-only venues on all Disney ships.

On Disney's four older vessels — Disney Dream, Disney Fantasy, Disney Wonder and Disney Magic — adults-only bars and nightclubs are clustered into one area, known as The District. After 9 p.m., nobody younger than 18 is permitted inside, allowing the more mature set to let its hair down sans kids.

On Disney Wish, the age-limited spaces are more spread out, a purposeful layout designed to help alleviate crowding and improve traffic flow. Personally, I prefer the way The District is set up, but the watering holes on the new ship are, frankly, the most impressive in the fleet to date. I've highlighted three of them below.

Disney Wish's Nightingale piano bar is an ode to the scene in "Cinderella" where she sings the song "Oh, Singe Sweet Nightingale" while surrounded by soap bubbles. It features excellent cocktails, including some that are totally social media-worthy, and nightly live entertainment.

Inspired by New Orleans-based "The Princess and the Frog," The Bayou features a menu of yummy cocktails, wine and beer, as well as cream soda and root beer. For an unexpected treat to accompany your nightcap, give the Beignets a try. (For me, they get mixed reviews. The first time I tried them, they were hard and burned. The second time, they were sheer perfection.)

Adults who wish they were able to spend their evenings in the kids club's Star Wars Cargo Bay shouldn't worry. The immersive Star Wars Hyperspace Lounge bar has them covered.

Designed to look like the inside of a luxury space vessel, the venue's premise is that you're on a trip between galaxies. Every few minutes, the room rumbles, and the screen behind the bar changes as you ramp up to hyperspeed to reach your next destination.

The drinks are as out-of-this-world as you'd expect, with some featuring hidden messages and others spewing smokey vapor. Prices run the gamut from reasonable to "What the —?" with a \$5,000 cocktail experience that remains a mystery. (We're told it involves Stormtroopers.) You'll also need a reservation, as it's one of the most popular bars on the ship. Bring your wallet and your patience.

Even the least expensive accommodations are elevated

Disney cruises are a cut above what you'll find on most other mainstream lines. When it comes to accommodations, even the most basic feel elevated. All come with a split bath concept, which includes two bathrooms. One has a shower with a tub (rare on cruise ships) and a sink; the other has a toilet and sink.

Note: Disney provides its own brand of toiletries in cabin bathrooms. The products are so popular — they smell divine — that the line sells them in its onboard gift shops.

All rooms also offer a dividing curtain that creates two separate areas. Although these features were designed with families in mind, they're also convenient for friends traveling together, adding to the argument that a Disney cruise could make for a perfect girlfriends getaway.

On the high end, the line sells a variety of suite accommodations. New on Disney Wish, the Tower Suite is the most coveted and most expensive, carrying a price tag of several thousand dollars per night.

Located in the ship's fake funnel, the suite is two decks high and includes three bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths and a large living room area. Its understated nautical decor pays subtle tribute to "Moana." Unfortunately, because of the layout, there's no balcony, but you'll still be spoiled beyond belief if you book a stay there.

Delicious dining options range from basic to gourmet

Disney Cruise Line's dining options will allow you to either join the masses (where there will be children, so take heed) in the free dining rooms, head to the buffet or open-air food court, or opt for an adults-only added-fee option.

On all of the fleet's ships, standard dining is rotational, which means you'll move to a different main dining room each night but with the same table number, tablemates and waitstaff.

In my experience, dining across the board on Disney ships has been absolutely scrumptious and well prepared, regardless of where I chose to eat and how much extra I paid.

On Disney Wish, 1923 is a throwback to the golden age of animation. Split into two parts, it offers a more intimate setting than what you'd find at Royal Court, the more understated free dining venue on the line's other vessels.

For more immersive and somewhat gimmicky meals that are fun but often loud, adult passengers will want to check out World of Marvel and Arendelle on Disney Wish. The former brings Ant-Man and The Wasp tableside (via prerecorded broadcast) to show off their new discovery — a Quantum Core, with which Ant-Man unwittingly shrinks the ship down to the size of a toy boat.

During the latter, you'll find much singing and dancing to celebrate the engagement of Anna and Kristoff, two of the main characters from "Frozen." In line with the theme, the menu is largely Norwegian.

On other ships, immersive options include Animator's Palate, where "Finding Nemo" characters talk with you as you eat; Enchanted Garden, which feels a bit like a scene from Alice in Wonderland, where you can watch as the scenery slowly turns from day to night; and Rapunzel's Royal Table, where characters from "Tangled" make an appearance.

On the line's four older ships, Palo is an Italian eatery. On Disney Wish, it has been transformed into an elegantly styled steakhouse that exudes "Beauty and the Beast" vibes. This is the perfect option for anyone who wants something less casual than the buffet but who also wants to avoid crowds and noise in the main dining rooms without paying a fortune.

Before you go in, stop at The Rose bar, which is perfect for tasty pre-dinner cocktails.

Enchante and Remy are two of the most expensive alternative dining options at sea for any cruise line. Both feature French cuisine. The latter appears on older DCL ships and was inspired by (and named after the main character in) “Ratatouille.”

Enchante is new as of the debut of Disney Wish. It offers a completely revamped menu by Chef Arnaud Lallement, who’s also the mastermind behind the menu at Remy. Enchante allows for a la carte dining, or you can choose from one of two experiences: Passion, a seven-course meal for \$125, or Collection, a selection of surprise courses curated by the chef for \$195. (Wine and Champagne pairings cost extra.)

The kids clubs are fantastic

“But, wait,” you’re thinking. “I thought this was an article about why Disney Cruises are great for adults.” You’re exactly right, and that’s why this one is so important.

The Oceaneer Club offerings on Disney ships are so fun, engaging and technologically advanced that kids often don’t want to leave. So, whether you’re a parent looking for some downtime or a childfree adult who doesn’t appreciate little ones pushing all the elevator buttons or teens clogging up stairwells, you won’t have to worry about a barrage of younger passengers.

From babysitting for infants, kids, and tweens to play areas so cool you’ll wish you could use them yourself — think themes like princesses, Marvel superheroes and Star Wars — the line’s childcare services are a cut above those provided by all other cruise brands