



October 2012



In just a few days, we will be off to Walt Disney World and the Disney Fantasy for the first ever Travel On A Dream sailing. This has been about two years in the making so it is very exciting that it is finally happening! This will not be our last sailing either! We will be going to the Western Caribbean next April on Oasis of the Seas, a double dip cruise next September on the Disney Magic (right after dry dock, out of Miami). We also have planned future sailings to Alaska and other places that our fans are interested in.

Would you like to join us? Just drop me an email at tracy@travelonadream.com for these or any other future sailings.

October also marks the Cruise Line International Association's (CLIA) National Cruise Vacation Week. I know that sounds crazy, the actual week is October 21 - 28, but CLIA celebrates all month. Various CLIA cruise lines participate with their own promotions. We are also having our own promotion. New cruise bookings during the month of October, 2012 will qualify for a free bottle of wine in your cabin on the sailing between now and December 31, 2012.

Just announced by Disney Cruise Line is a new Kids Sail Free promotion. For select sailings out of Galveston, Texas on the Disney Magic between January 4 and March 1, 2013, children 17 and under will be free with two full-fare guests in each stateroom (only government taxes will be charged). Sailings included in this promotion are the 6 and 8 night Western Caribbean cruises and the 8 night Bahamian Cruise. The 8 night Bahamian cruise includes stops at Disney's private island, Castaway Cay and Port Canaveral, with a one-day park hopper

pass to Walt Disney World plus transportation included in the cruise fare!

Also just announced were two promotions for early 2013 at Walt Disney World. You can either get a room discount or a package discount with saving of up to 35% on rooms or up to \$600 on a package for travel between January 2 and March 7, 2013. We saved our clients a considerable amount when they were released. Book by December 31, 2012, but as soon as possible for best availability.

We also wanted to let you know about our Pacific Coast cruise on the Disney Wonder. This year Disney had four sailings to San Francisco (overnight), San Diego and Ensenada, Mexico. This was a fantastic way to see the California Coast. For Pixar fans, Disney included Pixar activities on these cruises!



We picked up a few things on the cruise to give away to you, our friends and fans.



Winners were selected randomly from everyone on our newsletter email list. Without further ado, the Pixar story booklet goes to Rob Brookhart, the cone beverage mug goes to Scot Atkinson, and the autograph book signed by the Pixar characters onboard goes to Jenny Wang. We will contact you for mailing information.

Disney On A Budget

By Rhonda Ctvrtnik

One of the most frequent statements I get from clients is, "Disney is just too expensive for my family." And, it's true, Disney World can be an expensive place to vacation, especially for large families. So, through the years, I have put together a list of money-saving tips, for those who want to give their family a wonderful Disney vacation, but still need to stay within their budget. Here are few from my list:

-Strollers rent for \$15 per day for a single stroller, \$13 per day for length of stay. Double strollers rent for \$31 per day and \$27 per day for length of stay. You may want to bring a stroller from home with you. Another choice would be to use an offsite stroller rental company. Your agent here at ToaD is able to arrange this for you, at a much lower price than Disney prices. This also saves you the hassle of flying with your stroller.

-Souvenirs, especially for the kids, can get pretty expensive at the Disney gift shops. If you have a Disney Store near home, you can buy some souvenirs (plush characters, etc.) and hide them from the kids until you get to Disney World! The Disney Store occasionally has good sales, where you can save quite a bit over the Disney World prices. And, the kids will never know the difference!

-If you are celebrating a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, First Visit), let your front desk know when you check in. They will give you a free button to wear! If they don't have any at your front desk, you can stop at Guest Relations at any of the Theme Parks.

-Disney gift shops sell hand-held, battery-operated, misting fans that really come in handy during the hot months to keep cool. But, again, they can add up! You can buy these before you leave home at Walmart, K-Mart, Target, etc., at a much lower price.

-Counter-service spots at the parks will give you a free glass of ice water if you ask. This is really nice when you're hot and thirsty, and just don't want another soda, or don't want to pay the price for bottled water. Note—this is limited to counter-service locations that have a fountain soda machine.

-If you want to enjoy one of Disney's famous table-service restaurants, keep in mind the prices are lower for lunch. And, it's also a nice way to take a break during the hot part of the day!

-All of the resorts have laundry rooms. Bring your own supplies if you plan on doing wash during your stay.

-Don't forget to pack camera batteries, toiletries, over the counter medications, etc. that you think you'll need. These items are expensive at the Disney shops.

-Take a break one evening, and enjoy pizza in your room. There are a number of places that will deliver. It's a relaxing way to enjoy an inexpensive meal. You can even take it out to the pool and eat at a table, while the kids work off some energy!

-When it starts raining (as it frequently does in the afternoons in Florida), everybody runs to the nearest gift shop to buy a rain poncho. But, especially for a family, this can really eat into your daily budget! You can usually find rain ponchos in dollar stores to pack beforehand. And, they usually fold up very small, so are easy to pack.

-Disney's Deluxe and Moderate resorts all have refrigerators in the rooms. If you're staying at a Value Resort and want a small fridge, they rent for \$10 per night plus the resort tax. You may want to bring a collapsible cooler to keep your items cold. All of the resorts have ice machines.

-Breakfast in the room is a great way to save money! If you have a car, you can drive to a nearby

grocery store or Walmart, and stock up on cereal, milk, bagels, breakfast bars, etc. They also sell these items in your resort's gift shop, though they are obviously more expensive there. But, especially if you have kids, it will end up cheaper purchasing these items, instead of going out to breakfast every morning.

These are just a few of my favorite money-saving tips. If you have any questions on other ways to save money, please feel free to email me at Rhonda@travelonadream. Remember, once you book your Disney trip, your Travel On A Dream agent will continually watch for discounts to be released to make your vacation even more affordable!

Mouse or Monster

By Debbie Higgins

When most people plan a trip to Central Florida, the first thing that comes to mind is a visit with Mickey Mouse and all his friends. Have you ever thought of an alternative? Well, I did!

I just recently spent two days at Halloween Horror Nights 22 at Universal Studios Orlando. The event runs, on select nights, from the 3rd week in September, right through to Halloween.



I'm here to tell you that it was the most scary, fun experience ever! Considering this is done at a movie studio, everything from the make-up, to the haunted houses and the street experiences are all top notch.

Every year there are 7-8 houses that have a new theme. This year the houses I toured are based on the classic monsters we all know and love, like Frankenstein, Wolf Man, etc. to the one that's all about The Walking Dead (hit TV series on AMC), with a few other good ones in between.

The anticipation of walking the streets and going through the houses is very high. Imagine walking down the street, in the dark, on your way to one of the houses and all of a sudden a beast jumps out at you. Or perhaps you're in a shop or a restaurant, and you just know that someone, or should I say some "thing" is right behind you (and will follow you). Of course, let's not forget the occasional zombie that might be waiting for you as you come out of the restroom!



Universal has a lot of ticket options to fit your travel plans, along with a program similar to Disney's Fast Pass that will get you through the lines quicker. It's worth spending a little time researching the best ticket options, schedules and tips from enthusiasts that know the ropes, which will help you to get the best experience.

I hope I didn't scare you out of going someday. It's definitely not for the faint of heart that's for sure. If you like to get scared and then laugh about it later, get to Halloween Horror Nights 23! And, to my friend that made me the necklace to ward off monsters - it didn't work.....

Boo!

Visiting Ports of Call On Your Own (OYO)

Rome and La Spezia

By Erin Kuzmiak

So you have booked a cruise to exotic ports of call that you have never visited before. The cruise line offers a handful of excursions for each port. Maybe you would like to see more in the short time that you have or you just want to try to save some money on the excursion to buy souvenirs. Can you do your own excursion? Of course you can! Should you? It all depends on your personal comfort level traveling in each foreign city and how much time you have in port. Heading off on your own definitely takes some pre-planning and enough research on the location of the attractions.

In 2010, my family and I cruised the Mediterranean on the 10 day itinerary onboard the Disney Magic. After months of reading travel books, watching Rick Steves' videos and researching online we felt pretty confident that we could do a few ports of call on our own. We decided that we felt safer touring Tunis and Naples (Sorrento and Pompeii) with Disney and chose a tour in Ajaccio, Corsica to see more of this wonderful island. I had spent a few weeks in Corsica while in college and wanted them to see a bit of everything. The ports of call we decided to conquer ourselves included: Valletta, Malta ~ Civitavecchia (Rome), Italy ~ La Spezia (Florence, Pisa and the 5 T's), Italy ~ Villefranche (Monte Carlo, Nice, Cannes), France.

My husband and son love ancient history so we wanted to be sure we saw EVERYTHING we could while in Rome. The port is about an 80 minute train ride away from the city. Be sure to check the ship time before heading off for the day and know when you have to be back on board. It is also a good idea to build in extra travel time for those unexpected delays. I recommend getting off as early as possible to catch the 8 am train. When you get off the ship it is just a short walk to the train station. There is a newspaper stand which sells the B.I.R.G tickets. If you buy it here you won't have to deal with the lines at the station. The B.I.R.G ticket is €9 a person and allows you to travel on the regional trains, busses,

trolleys and the metro in Rome. Be sure you validate that ticket at one of the yellow boxes before getting on the train or else there is €50 fine per passenger.

We purchased our Vatican Museum tickets (€15 per adult + €4 convenience fee) and Colosseum tickets (€13.50 per adult) prior to leaving the U.S. You will pay a little more but the benefit of not having to stand in the lines that can wrap around the walls of Vatican City and the Colosseum are well worth it. Prepaid tickets are like having the ultimate FastPasses.



After touring the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel we entered St. Peter's Cathedral. Reminder: shoulders and knees need to be covered or you will be refused entry. Convertible pants or crop pants are a good option to wear while in Rome. We took the bus to the Metro Station, then the Metro to the Colosseum. The Colosseum is amazing and larger than I ever expected. Time for a lunch break. We found a café on our way to the Trevi fountain and enjoyed PIZZA. Helpful hint: If there is outside seating you will pay a fee to eat outside and the fee will be more the closer to the main street you sit. From the Trevi Fountain you can walk to the Pantheon. To head back to the ship you need to take the Metro or bus to the Roma Termini station to catch the train back to Civitavecchia. Be sure to leave enough time for a gelato as you walk back to the ship!

It even puts a smile on an 11 year olds face after a very busy day.



Our itinerary did not have a sea day after Rome and boy did we need a relaxation day. We left our son onboard when we docked in La Spezia and took off to visit Cinque Terra. We took a brisk walk through the city to the train station and just missed the first train because we could not locate the validation box. The train that stops at each of the towns runs about every hour out of La Spezia and the travel time between each town is no more than 5 minutes.

Plan to spend at least 1 hour at each town to walk down to the sea and climb to the highest points. Enjoy a bite to eat or a glass of wine while taking in such spectacular views. There is also a footpath between each of the towns that you could take instead of the train. We traveled to Vernazza first and then worked our way back towards La Spezia stopping in Corniglia and Riomaggiore. It is very easy to travel the 5 T's.



Always be aware of your surroundings while traveling. It is always best to take that extra bit of caution keep your valuable information safe. We bought the waist wallet that attaches to a belt and folds over to the inside of your pants, a new camera strap with a safety wire running through it and a Pac-Safe back pack that is slash proof and locked securely. Do not keep anything in your pockets that you cannot afford to lose.

In 2013, Disney will be returning to the Mediterranean with 4 different itineraries:

4 night ~ Barcelona, Spain ~ Villefranche, France ~ Palma, Mallorca

7 night ~ Barcelona, Spain ~ Villefranche, France ~ La Spezia, Italy ~ Civitavecchia, Italy ~ Naples, Italy

12 night ~ Barcelona, Spain ~ Villefranche, France ~ La Spezia, Italy ~ Civitavecchia, Italy ~ Piraeus, Greece ~ Kusadasi, Turkey ~ Mykonos, Greece ~ Valletta, Malta

12 night ~ Barcelona, Spain ~ Villefranche, France ~ La Spezia, Italy ~ Civitavecchia, Italy ~ Venice (overnight), Dubrovnik, Croatia ~ Valletta, Malta

Clients' Corner

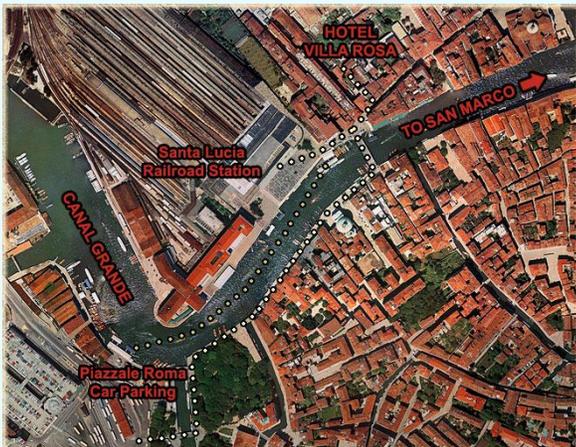
Hotel Villa Rosa, Venice, Italy

By Diane Dimond

After spending a wonderful week in Tuscany at a villa with a large Italian family, my husband and I returned our rental car to the Rome train station (I would definitely suggest investing \$70-\$80 for an Italian GPS if driving in or around Rome - there are no signs for the train station). We then boarded the train for our 4 hour ride to Venice. If traveling by train - take care to keep your wallet, purses and luggage in your sight at all times. One of our male friends was pick-pocketed on the train even though he had his wallet in his front pants pocket. A well-dressed, helpful stranger offered to help him lift his luggage. When our friend realized that his personal space was being invaded by this helpful stranger - it was too late. He had been ripped off and the stranger had already jumped off the train. So be aware!



Once we arrived at the Venice train station, the Hotel Villa Rosa was only a 5 minute walk. Be sure to follow the walking directions because you're going to go down some very small alleys (which they call roads). The Villa Rosa is located in a quiet little neighborhood (tucked off a main square). Everyone at front desk was extremely helpful. There is no elevator but the concierge kindly helped us carry our bags up to the third floor. The room was small with nice big windows. We had a queen bed, a single bed, and an armoire. We hung our good clothes in the armoire and used the single bed to lay out our suitcases. The bathroom was small with a bidet, a toilet, a shower and small sink with a shelf. Despite the size - we managed fine. My husband and I are both "normal" size people, but if you are large people - you might find the shower just too small to manage. If I dropped something in the shower - there wasn't enough room for me to pick it up - LOL! The hotel offered a nice breakfast which included coffee, juice, croissants, yogurt and cereal. Everyone at the front desk was helpful and spoke English. They gave us maps and information about the buses (these are water buses). They suggested we buy a 3 day pass for the buses. This cost us 35 Euros per person and allowed us unlimited travel on **all** of the buses around Venice. This included travel to two "Must-see" islands. Murano (known for its hand-blown glass) and Burano (known for its hand-made lace).



The hotel was in a great location. A 5 minute walk from the hotel (in the opposite of the train station) brings you to a lovely neighborhood on a canal, which included exceptional waterfront restaurants and pubs. On our first night in Venice, we ended up meeting a couple that lived in this neighborhood. My husband is a boat builder and the couple sitting next to us at dinner overheard our conversation and shared that he was a boat builder also. We chatted with them for hours and were invited sailing with them the next day. I can't think of a better way to see Venice, than with locals and by sailboat. We will go back to Venice to visit our new friends and we will definitely stay at the Villa Rosa again!

I cannot say enough how helpful Debbie Higgins was with our travel plans. Not only did she find us a wonderful hotel in Venice (price and location could not have been better), but she also booked our tickets for a fabulous tour of the Vatican. In addition, she made up a "travel-friendly" book that we took on our travels, which included highlights and walking tours of the cities we visited.

I will definitely be booking my future travels with "Travel On A Dream"!

Buon Viggio!



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