

Vacation MOM™

Cruising fun

by *Donnita Bassinger*

Moms know the recipe for happy kids: just add water!

Luckily the cruise lines have also figured this out and have come up with some incredible features to keep the whole family entertained. Here are some of the latest innovations to make your cruise vacation a fun and memorable experience.

Royal Caribbean International

Royal Caribbean likes to do things big and splashy, as they have eight of the 10 largest cruise ships in the world. They are a leader in innovation and their newest ships feature attractions such as the “Flowrider” for onboard surfing, ice skating rinks, rock climbing walls, 3D movie theaters and zip-lines. The H2O Zone splash parks have interactive geysers and water guns for lots of fun in the sun. RCCL has a call-center located here in Springfield and their 22 ships sail to just about everywhere.

Carnival Cruise Line

All 24 ships in the Carnival Cruise Line fleet have multiple swimming pools and a

waterslide. In recent years their new ships have featured a “Waterworks” water park with a giant twister waterslide, dual lane racing slide and a splash area. This has proven so popular that the line has been adding water parks to many of their ships. So far 10 ships feature this fun new area with more added every year. Many ships also feature an adult-only area called “Serenity” where you can escape the splashing children and a giant screen “Seaside Theater” on deck for watching movies or sporting events during the day or night. Carnival cruise ships sail to Mexico, the Caribbean, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada and Europe.

Disney Cruise Line

The Disney Dream (January 2011) and Disney Fantasy (2012) will both feature the “Aquaduck.” This “Water Coaster” is 765 feet long and travels from deck 16 to splashdown on deck 12. The wild ride includes a clear acrylic ‘swing out’ loop that goes out over the side of the ship so you can look down 150 feet to the ocean below. The “Aquaduck” was designed for a unique nighttime experience also. This is

just one of the water features, there is also “Nemo’s Reef” for the little ones with interactive figures that move and spray water and “Donald’s Pool” with a giant LED screen to show Disney films. They didn’t forget about the grown-ups as there is an ‘adult only’ area for sunbathing, swimming and tropical cocktails. The Disney Dream and Disney Fantasy will sail with 4,000 guests every week from Port Canaveral, Florida to the Eastern and Western Caribbean.

If you have not cruised on one of the ships built in the last five years—you need to make plans to get sailing. From here it is easy to hop a flight to Los Angeles or Seattle to catch a cruise. If the Caribbean is calling your name, you can sail out of Florida, New Orleans or Galveston. The exciting features discussed above are only on certain ships. Contact a travel agent that specializes in cruises to help you find the perfect ship for your family.

Donnita Bassinger is mom to three children and lives in Eugene where she is active in Cub Scouts, the school PTO and local charities. Donnita has been a travel agent for 27 years, is a CLIA Master Cruise Counselor and has sailed on 22 cruises. She is the owner of VIP Vacations, Inc and would be happy to chat with you about travel at 541-688-7473. You can find more information on Facebook under “Vacation MOM.”

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