



In June of 2009, I had one of the best summers of my life. The breathtaking scenery, the gorgeous weather, the scrumptious food and the wonderful memories; it was the greatest two weeks of my life including a cruise through the Mediterranean.

The cruise sailed off from the Puerto de Barcelona, to which we travelled with three other Assamese family friends from Oman and none of us were able to contain our excitement, to be quite honest.

After two days of sightseeing in Barcelona, we had to embark on our ship, the one that we would sail in for a week in the Mediterranean. It was called 'Voyager of The Seas'. It was truly one of the coolest places I had ever been on. Consisting of fifteen storeys of five-star facilities, and having a passenger capacity of above 5,000 (including about 1,800 crew members), it seemed unbelievable!

As soon as we were checked into the ship, I was fascinated by its splendor. It took all of us some time to believe that it was the inside of a ship and not just a hotel. After all it was famously known as the "floating hotel".

If you ever imagined it to be boring to spend a week on a ship, you would definitely be wrong! All sorts of entertainment for all ages were on board. It had an ice rink, swimming pools, theatres, a spa, a library, a casino, even a rock climbing wall, and so much more! They've got all the conveniences we enjoy on land covered; from Internet services to dry cleaning. Whether you seek an adrenaline rush or total tranquility, they have it all.

The cruise liner consisted of several restaurants, including the likes of Johnny Rockets and other food chains. In the three storey main dining area, which is a major feature of the ship, we were allocated a fixed table and personal waiters for our entire journey. They had pretty much everything you have to offer in fine dining. We had two formal dinner nights, where the dress code was 'black tie'. Almost every morning, we would stop at a different city, coasting the Mediterranean. On our trip, we had visited (in order) Naples, Rome, Florence & Pisa, Villefranche : Nice, Monaco & Monte Carlo, Marseille and anchored back in Barcelona. The captain would dock our ship at about 7 in the morning at the respective ports according to our itinerary. We were then left to discover the city we

had made a pit stop in. We had to be back, however, before 7 p.m. which is when the ship would set sail again for the night. As a matter of fact, we had decided not to explore the city of Marseille as otherwise, we would not have had enough time to fully experience the diverse facilities onboard.

Each day we get back from sightseeing, our big group of 17 would usually head straight to the pool deck, where we'd lounge and have self-served ice-cream. After that, we would sometimes separate and explore the ship itself. For example, when our parents were at the casino, we'd head to the "teen club". All of us even played mini golf and volleyball ever so often. Another cool area of the ship was the "Royal Promenade" which was adorned to create an ambience of a fashionable busy street in London, with shops, little cafés and themed pubs on either side.

Every evening there would be entertaining shows in the theatre. We also had the opportunity to see the Mersey Beatles perform live, as well as the ship's own version of "Dancing on Ice" and a very unique magic show.

By the last day, we were all pretty sad we had to leave this remarkable cruise liner behind. We created unforgettable memories and had some amazing experiences. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a great marine cruise experience!

However, this was not the end of our journey! After the cruise, our vacation was to continue in Sion, which is a small skiing village in the hilly areas of Switzerland. It was just over a 3 hour drive from the Zurich International Airport. It was a beautiful village with ethereal scenery all around. Here, we rented a ski chalet for 4 days, all to ourselves. However, since it was in the summer, so it wasn't really snowing. The parents did some grocery shopping nearby and made us home-cooked meals...something we hadn't had in a while. The days we were there, we'd normally go out and do a little bit of sightseeing and shopping as well as a whole lot of eating! In the nights, we'd come home, watch a movie, chat and just relax. We also took an unforgettable journey train journey to view the snowcapped Matterhorn in Zermatt.

Those 4 days went by very quickly, unfortunately. However, we didn't fail to have a great time! All good things eventually come to an end. We went back to the Zurich airport where we boarded our flight back to Muscat.

It was a great vacation that gave me wonderful memories to cherish for a lifetime! I would be looking forward to go on another vacation like this anytime!

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