



Carnival Dream Ship Inspection Review

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By

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Carnival Cruise Line was our host for a wonderful weekend in April 2010 where we had the opportunity to tour the two Carnival ships that sail out of Port Canaveral Florida. This report is on the newest Carnival Ship, the Carnival Dream.

The Carnival Dream had her maiden voyage in 2009. At 130,000 tons she is the largest ship in the Carnival fleet. By comparison the Disney Magic and Wonder, which also sail out of Port Canaveral in 2010, are each 83,000 tons. The Carnival Liberty which we sailed on in 2006 and other ships of that class are 110,000 tons. The Dream is larger than most cruise ships in service today, though she is smaller than the Royal Caribbean's Freedom of Seas (160,000 tons) and RCCL's Oasis of the Seas (220,000 tons)

Like our other ship inspection reviews, this is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the features of the ship. Rather we give our impressions of the ship's features that stood out the most for us. See a video slideshow of Carnival Dream pictures we took here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFhLgD_gTSE

Staterooms

We toured a number of stateroom types on the ship. I liked that many of the staterooms had a "split bath" like we have seen on the Disney ships, with one small room containing a sink and a 'junior' tub, and a 2nd small room containing a sink and a shower. This is very convenient as two can use separate sinks at the same time.

On most ships if you have a family of 5 you need to book two staterooms unless you want a suite. Not on the Carnival Dream. The 6N Category is an oceanview, window only, type of stateroom that can hold 5. The 3rd/4th/5th passenger rate is usually considerably less than the 1st/2nd passenger rate in a stateroom, so this cat 6N stateroom is a good economical option for "quint" families.

The "cove" balcony stateroom type is good for people who want a balcony at a lesser price. This type of balcony is fully enclosed on the sides. We actually liked how a cove balcony is more private than a regular balcony.

Another different type of balcony stateroom on the Dream is a "wraparound" balcony. As you can see in our slideshow this type of stateroom has considerably more balcony space than a normal balcony at not too much more in price. If we take a future cruise on the Dream, a "wraparound" balcony (category 9C) would be our first choice!

The Suites on the Carnival Dream were nice but not as large or luxurious as we have seen on other ships. While perfectly fine for cruising, if you like large suites a different cruise line (like Holland America or Disney) would be a better choice.

Anne says:

One thing I appreciate about the staterooms of the Carnival Dream is the newness. Since this ship has been sailing for less than 8 months, the condition of the beds, bathrooms and other aspects of the staterooms is excellent.

Serenity Spa

The Carnival Dream has the largest spa area we have seen on any ship - the Serenity Spa which spans two decks. I especially liked the enclosed therapy pool (seen in our video). Carnival offers a wide variety of spa services, and special "spa" cabin types where visits to some areas of the spa are built into the cruise fare with no extra fees.

Anne says:

The location of the spa on the ship is situated to take advantage views of the ocean. Many of the treatment rooms offered large windows. What would be better than a relaxing ocean view while receiving amazing spa services!

Dining

We thought the food was excellent on our past Carnival cruises, and the Carnival Dream has even more dining options than what we experienced in the past. We liked the offerings in the large buffet, though we found the lines to be long after 12 noon. Two main restaurants serve dinner fare at early, late, or "anytime" seating times. A specialty steakhouse offers "unbelievable" 5 course meals, according to our guide, at an extra \$30 per person.

Anne says:

I found when visiting the buffet for our lunch that in addition to the specialty stations (Mongolian stir-fry, deli sandwiches, burger/hot dog grill, pizza, etc) there are 4 'main' buffet stations. Most people come in from the pool so the first two nearest the pool had the longest line. I went farther back and there was much less of a line. All four had basically the same food options.

Pool Area

The Waterworks area features a large water slide. We wished our teen sons were sailing with us on a Carnival Dream cruise as we are sure they would enjoy taking this 300 foot plunge. The main pool is nice with lots of shaded areas and a large outdoor movie screen for entertainment. However we thought the main pool was small for a ship this size. We've seen much bigger pool areas on Princess and Royal Caribbean ships.

Also on an open deck is a large 9-hole miniature golf course. On the Promenade deck you can completely walk around the circumference of the entire ship - good for walkers and joggers who want to keep in shape during their cruise.

Anne says:

A new feature on this ship is 'Overhanging Scenic Whirlpools. There are 4 total, two on each side of the ship in an area on Deck 5 called The Lanai. These whirlpools are very large and can accommodate a small group. The other great feature is they are not near the pools and most likely attract more adults than kids.

Entertainment

We were impressed with the wide variety of entertainment options on the ship. The highlight was the large main show room, which holds 1700 people. Not interested in the show playing tonight? No problem! The Carnival Dream features more lounges than we've seen on most ships - smaller entertainment venues. A piano bar, a comedy club, and a small intimate jazz club were three of the smaller venues that looked like fun. The comedy club features nightly shows and 5 different performers over a 7 night cruise, with a family show in the early evening and an "adults only" show late night.

Carnival also offers special tours. A "Chef's Table" tour is perfect for food connoisseurs. At \$75/person you get a comprehensive tour of the galley and a dinner hosted by one of the ship's lead chefs. Carnival limits this tour to 12 people. A "behind the scenes" tour (for 16 guests) is \$90/person and shows you areas not available to the general public - such as the bridge, crew quarters, and water plant (where Carnival generates its own drinking water from sea water)

Anne says:

The main show lounge is also used for bingo, talks and seminars, audience participation games and dance classes – something for everyone.

Kids Clubs

The Carnival Dream has dedicated areas and counselors for kids from age 2 to age 17. Unlike other cruise lines where children's programming starts at age 3, Carnival takes 2 year olds and Carnival staff **will** change diapers. Each age-specific area looked well thought out to us - I know our 16 year old sons would like the "teens only" area with no adults allowed!

Anne says:

The children are separated by age group and each designated space was bright and clean, with plenty of activities for the kids.

Summary

We think the Carnival Dream is another excellent cruise option out of Port Canaveral. Many of our clients enjoy Disney World; a Carnival Dream 7 night Caribbean cruise is a nice complement to a few days at a theme park. Carnival usually prices less than the Disney and Royal Caribbean ships sailing out of Port Canaveral, too! Contact us for more information or if you would like a Carnival Dream price quote for your family.

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