

A Royal Family Cruise

Text and photos by Dr Kelvin Tan

This was to be our first travel after the subsiding COVID-19 pandemic and also our first cruise as a family. It was a long-awaited holiday for us. We had so much pent-up desire just to get out of Singapore that we were very excited for it despite it being just on board a cruise ship by the Royal Caribbean Cruise. My wife and I thought that it might be more appropriate to start our two-year-old daughter with a leisure cruise to see how she would manage on her first trip “overseas”.

We have heard of the horror stories over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic – of situations on board a cruise ship when someone got diagnosed with COVID-19 and the whole cruise had to be abandoned. By August 2022, however, Singapore had started relaxing the COVID-19 regulations and we felt it was probably “safe” to go for a cruise. Prior to departure, we had to perform an online supervised ART swab to be cleared for the cruise. My daughter had just recovered from COVID-19 two weeks prior. Fortunately, my son, the last in our family free of COVID-19, remained in the pink of health and we smoothly embarked on the trip.

Embarkation day

We parked our family car at the Marina Bay Cruise Centre, cleared the customs relatively quickly and boarded the cruise in the early afternoon. Once on board, we needed to purchase access to the ship’s Wi-Fi to access and book the activities that we wanted using the cruise mobile app.

We got on the cruise early with the intention to beat the crowd to some of the more popular activities. The first activity we did was the iFly, which was

simulated skydiving in an air chamber. My six-year-old son was also daring enough to get into the iFly. We later did some other leisure activities such as playing basketball and riding bumper cars. Around evening time, the cruise started sailing off for Malaysian waters. We were greeted by a beautiful rainbow over the cruise ship; it was quite a magical moment, which I managed to capture with my mobile phone, and it had quite the welcoming effect on the first day of our cruise.



Me on the FlowRider®



Kids at water playground



Bungee trampoline

Fun for the whole family

The kids enjoyed their time at the water playground, while the adults (mainly me) engaged in the more adventurous activities such as the FlowRider®, where one needs to balance on a surfboard while high-speed water gushes at you. I would say that it was one of the highlight activities of the cruise and it was no doubt the most popular one as well. There was a long queue for it, taking up to one hour of waiting on some days. Another fun activity we tried was the bungee trampoline at the Sky Pad, where you could jump as high as you dared to. It was quite a good workout for my family and me.

There was always something to occupy everyone each day, such as interactive computer games which my two kids loved, archery, rock climbing, karaoke sessions, swimming or simply lazing around in a jacuzzi spa pool. There were also some sushi-making and jewellery-making classes available. My wife and in-laws indulged in some group dance exercise classes. For those who need a break from your kids, there is a childcare centre aboard the ship, where someone will look after and play with your kids. There is also a casino, and late-night partying and socialising sessions were held every night.



Evening picture of the cruise greeted by a nice rainbow

We had complimentary dinners at the main dining room every night, but there were also specialty restaurants such as Jamie's Italian (by well-known British chef Jamie Oliver) that one could pay extra to dine at. The nightly performances were also not to be missed. They ranged from magic shows to performances with cool robotic entertainment technology. We ended off our last night with a show called "The Effectors", featuring spectacular lighting, superheroes and drone performances. Each of the performances on board was of extremely high standards even though they were

complimentary. I would personally recommend catching all of them, as they will certainly be worth every bit of your time. We brought our kids along for all the night performances, so each night, the kids would zonk out and sleep well after a long, exhausting day.

All in all, we spent five days and four nights on the cruise. Personally, I had a blast and felt recharged after this short getaway. We disembarked on early Monday morning, 22 August 2022, and I started my work day right away. I am definitely looking forward to our next family trip! ♦



My son and I playing bumper car



Me doing iFly in the chamber

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