

Princess Cruise, Mexico

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Our family goal: get some sun in January. How? Sail on the Dawn Princess from San Diego to the Mexican Riviera (Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan, & Puerto Vallarta). So why are sweatshirts and fleece jackets the “hottest” selling items in the onboard shop? Evidently, we picked the wrong week; with the exception of Mazatlan, the temperature maxed at 65 degrees. Friends on the same cruise the following week had sun and high 80s!

So what do you do when the weather hasn't cooperated? We ate great food, read books, did ceramics, took a cooking class, toured the bridge, ate more great food, and repeated daily.

High Lights:

- Personal pizzas at La Scala Pizzeria, a dining option few seemed aware of
- Designing ceramic plates; a bargain at \$20 for 4 small plates.
- Touring the bridge and meeting Captain Fortezze and his officers
- Nightly greeting by name from Jean Paul, our Maitre d'Hotel
- Wonderful food and service in every dining venue
- Walk for the Cure, offered once during each Princess Cruise
- Returning “home” from each port stop
- Helpful, professional, friendly crew at every contact point

Low lights:

- Large smoking section in casino; smoke trailed 30 + ft. down hallway to cabins
- Continual bombardment by art auction; Art clogged the hallways, flyers in our mailbox, PA sales pitch
- Poorly designed showroom; long rows unbroken by aisles, not enough seats, minimal drink service
- Outdated 1950s diner-design in Zone and Remix kid clubs. While there were 60+ kids onboard, never saw any in the club.
- Congestion outside the Personal Choice dining room each evening. Unlike our Personal Choice dining experience on their other ships, no pagers were issued; guests told to return at a specified time to see if table is ready.
- Port talks were shopping focused, not destination focused.

I've always felt it critically important to match clients to a ship, not just a brand. Our experience reinforced this obsession. With new ship designs, ships in a single cruise line often have a wide variance of size, style, ambiance, and layout. Wonderful innovations on newer Princess ships appeared to have been shoe horned on this older ship, giving it a hodge-podge, cramped feel. Princess Cruise Lines is a favorite, and we will sail with them again, and I'd recommend to clients and friends. The officers and crew seem truly happy to share their ship with guests, and truly made our trip a great vacation. Well, perhaps the laundry department wasn't thrilled with the daily laundry bag from us.