

Traveling with Donna

February 2009



Time to Plan a Cruise!

This month's newsletter is focused on the cruise vacation. Several years ago if someone told me I would like cruising, I would have said, "Not me! I'm too independent to be stuck on a ship!" I like learning new things, and I have learned that, though cruising is not for everyone, there are cruises for nearly everyone. There are great values just now in the cruising industry. The trick is to find the type of cruise that suits **you**. Let me help you discover what you seek.

Travel Tip for Today

Know what to expect!

If you are not familiar with a particular ship or cruise line, I can help you understand what to expect. Some cruises include all tips, drinks, and excursions. Some do not. Some add the tips (typically \$10 per person per day) to your shipboard bill. Some expect you to give tips to staff individually. Some ships have scheduled dining times. Some do not. Some let you choose between those two options. You can always eat at the buffet or order room service.

Destination of the Month

Any body of water can have a cruise—lake, river, ocean. You can travel to exotic ports nearly anywhere in the world or you can cruise the Columbia River (www.sanjuanislandcruises.com) right here at home. There are cruises geared to soft adventure with excursions that make you sweat. Others include walking or coach tours. Some ships accommodate 3,000 passengers, others only 24. Prices vary widely. There are a lot of options to consider before and after a cruise if you want to extend your vacation. You can arrive early and explore or stay after and take a tour of the local area.

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Great Values!

Greece and Turkey—June 6, \$4,150, 7 days, Star Clipper, sailing ship, plus air, transfers, port charges (www.starclippers.com)

Europe—March, 8 days, \$3,800, Viking River Cruise, Paris and Normandy, includes meals and excursions, plus air, insurance and transfers (www.vikingrivercruises.com/us/)

Hawaii—April 17, 2010, from \$2,300, Norwegian Cruise Lines, 7 day island cruise, roundtrip from Honolulu. Fundraiser to benefit Laurel Community Church Youth Group. I've got my cabin reserved! (www.ncl.com)
Price for 2 pp is approximate—may vary by date and based upon availability at time of booking.

The World Through My Eyes

Have you ever looked into a black bowl filled with stars? It was shortly after midnight when I went on deck and gazed into that seemingly infinite basin overhead. It's chilly here at night in the Princess Louisa Inlet. Running on batteries at night means the only sound you hear is the gentle lap, lap, lapping of the water against the Island Spirit. With only 27 passengers, the crew of eight know all our names by the second day. It's the middle of the week long cruise and also the Jewish New Year. This evening we helped a couple from New York celebrating their 25th anniversary with a toast, "May you be sealed in the Book of Life for a sweet and happy New Year." It seemed fitting.

If you can't go there, go here!

Portland Spirit Sternwheeler—two hour cruise on the Willamette River with great food and a unique view of Portland!

Salmon Street Springs Fountain
Tom McCall Waterfront, Portland, Oregon
\$48 per person for Valentines Day Brunch
(www.portlandspirit.com/)

Looking to the Future

Travel Pink, Travel O'ahu, October 2009
Oberammergau, Germany, Passion Play 2010
NCL Hawaii Cruise, April 17, 2010 (www.ncl.com)