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Small Ship Cruising Versus Large Ship Cruising

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 3 September 2014 | [0 Comments](#)



We were avid large ship cruisers. We loved every single thing about an ocean cruise. The magnificent and abundant choices for dining. The fact that you only have to unpack once and your comfy accommodations travel right along with you. Plenty of time to relax, yet time to stay busy, or time to make whatever choice you want that makes you happy. We loved simply hanging out on our cabin verandah just watching the water slip by. Seriously. We loved every single thing about the experience.

So when we were offered an opportunity to take a small ship cruise, we were naturally a little hesitant. Wouldn't the ship be uncomfortably small so we wouldn't have any privacy? Would we have any choices about what we ate? Would we have any choices about things to do?

We are now avid small ship cruisers. Let me tell you why.

1. The Size of the Ship

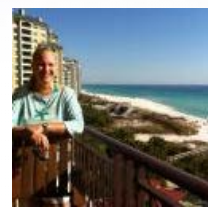
One of the things we were the most worried about – that the ship would be small – ended up being one of the things we loved most about our cruises. Our first small ship cruise was on the Safari Quest, a luxurious and comfortable yacht owned by Un-Cruise Adventures which heads to Alaska, the Snake and Columbia Rivers in Oregon, and Coastal Washington and British Columbia. This cozy yacht became our home away from home and we found it amazing that, with a small ship, you can actually get right up close to the action – which, on our cruise, meant hanging out for a couple of hours to observe a pod of Orcas and slipping into small and quiet inlets with scenic waterfalls. We spent our time doing everything from watching the astonishing scenery slip by the windows to kayaking in a still cove where we were the only ship around. We also stepped right off the ship onto shore - no waiting in long lines to get off the ship, just step out and you are there!



2. The People

We have never made friends on a large ship. It's not a situation that is particularly conducive to making friends unless you are extremely outgoing, which we are not. We have had perfectly pleasant table mates at dinner

Travelled By Jan Ross



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

but nobody we stayed in contact with after the cruise. We are actually Facebook friends with people we have met on some small ship cruises. The intimate nature of a small ship cruise puts you in proximity with your fellow cruisers unlike the impersonal experience of cruising with thousands of other passengers and we loved it. We cruised Lake Michigan on the charming Grande Mariner with Blount Small Ship Adventures and sharing the Fourth of July fireworks display with our fellow passengers at quaint Mackinac Island is a memory we will always cherish.



3. The Food

Although there is not a wide variety of choices of restaurants on a small ship, that has ceased to be a worry for us. On our cruise of Lake Michigan with Blount Small Ship Adventures, every meal was better than the last. We found ourselves looking for the freshly baked cookies every day and it was so pleasant to have coffee or soft drinks available at any time. I can't imagine having a soft drink dispenser available to passengers on a large ship cruise – in fact, they normally charge for every single soft drink! On our British Columbia cruise with Un-Cruise Adventures, every time we came aboard from an adventure, they crew had a special and delicious treat waiting for us.



4. The Shore Excursions

When you plan and budget for a large ship cruise, you better set aside plenty of money for the shore excursions because they are going to really add to your budget. Not so with many small ship cruises. Every adventure we participated in on our British Columbia cruise with Un-Cruise Adventures was included in the price of the cruise. We hiked, kayaked, explored inlets in a skiff with our resident naturalist, visited the amazing Butchart Gardens in Victoria and had an amazing high tea – all at no extra expense. Our shore excursions with Blount Small Ship Adventures were not free but they were very reasonably priced.



5. The Crew

The crew on a large ship can be very nice and we have had plenty of friendly waiters and room stewards in the past, but the crew on a small ship cruise seems to honestly enjoy everything about their job and helping us in any way they possibly can. On our Lake Michigan cruise with Blount Small Ship Adventures, we were forced to stay in port longer than planned because of bad weather on the lake. The crew went out of their way to make sure everyone was comfortable and enjoying their cruise experience as much as possible. They arranged extra outings and adventures not normally included in the cruise experience and didn't charge passengers any extra for these activities. I never saw them get impatient with the dozens of questions we asked and they went out of their way to make sure everyone was having a wonderful time. On the Safari Quest with Un-Cruise Adventures, they had an open bridge policy and welcomed passengers to visit the bridge and talk to the captain. Many passengers spent a lot of time in there and really enjoyed the interaction.



Small ship cruising may seem more expensive than large ship cruising at first glance, but make sure you compare everything when you are trying to decide between a small and large ship cruise. With everything often included in the price – meals, shore excursions, your transportation via scenic rivers, lakes and bays – it can truly be the most economical way to visit a location. The cruise lines often have special deals available – I have even seen buy one, get one free offers. Check it out – you may find you are now avid small ship cruisers as well!

Tell the world!