

Ep #159: Three Disney Cruises, Three Perspectives: Which Ship is Right for You? (Part 2)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

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Alex: Welcome back, everyone. This is part 2 of our *Disney Wish*, *Treasure*, and *Destiny* deep dive. Last time we talked vibes, decor, staterooms, dining, and entertainment. Today, we're moving on to pools, waterslides, activities, character encounters, layouts, itineraries, and even pricing. And of course, we'll end with a big question: how can we save money by using points? We're breaking it all down, so if you've ever wondered which *Wish* class ship fits your travel style, this episode is for you.

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Alex: Hey, I'm Alex.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points. All right, we are back for part 2. Megan is back with us again today. As a refresher, she sailed on the *Disney Treasure* with her family back in August. I sailed on the *Wish* with my family in July, and Alex was on the *Destiny* media preview sailing in early November with her family of 6.

Also, just a reminder that Alex and I's cruises, we were hosted by Disney, and so Disney covered the cruise fare for both of us. All opinions expressed in this episode are our own. And so we have a lot to cover still. I feel like we covered a lot in part 1. And we still have

Alex: And I still had to try not to overshare. There was more I could have said.

Megan: I know. And I'm still like, I can't believe how much I liked this.

Alex: I know, huh?

Jess: All right, so...

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Alex: Well, I think so, too, with you saying that, Megan. Like Megan, and you guys all know, we travel a lot. Megan has done some pretty incredible stuff with her kids. So to be like, we loved this Disney Cruise, I think speaks volumes for how incredible a Disney Cruise is when you're like, we took the kids to Italy, and we took the kids to Australia.

Megan: Yeah, like I've never even done a guided tour ever in my life, a tour group, but I'm like, "Sign me up for another Disney Cruise."

Alex: Yeah. I love it.

Jess: All right, so we are going to kick it off with pools, deck spaces, and water slides. So all, like I mentioned in part 1, the layout of these ships is exactly the same. These are considered the *Wish* class ships, even though only one of them is called the *Wish*, but they are the *Wish* class ships because it was the first of the three. They are sister ships. And so layout is exactly the same on all three. So if you're going for the pools or the water slides, you can pick any of these three, and they will be exactly the same.

There are 10 pools and water play areas on these ships. So there are 7 family pools scattered throughout the ship. There is an adults-only pool. There is a splash zone for younger children. I believe it's *Toy Story* theme. And so you are not allowed to put kids in swim diapers in any of the pools or on any of the water slides, but kids in swim diapers can go in the splash zone. So if you have kids who aren't potty-trained, the splash zone is really going to be their only option as far as pools and water activities go on this ship.

They also have a smaller water slide, which is the T-Rex from *Toy Story*. I think it's called... I don't remember what the slide is called, but the height requirement for this slide is 38 inches. Alex, I think you said Noah went down this slide like 30 times and was obsessed with it.

Alex: Yes. Oh my gosh, he was obsessed. Yes. And he is he was 5.

Jess: Okay. And he's 5.

Alex: Yeah, he had just turned 5.

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Jess: This was his jam. And then they all three have an Aqua Mouse, which is Disney's first attraction at sea. And so it is a water slide. You're sitting in a two-person raft. You can go alone. You don't have to have a second person with you. It kind of takes you through, it tells a story as you go. And so as you go through the water slide, there are screens on the side that tell a little story. I think this is so cool. I went on this... y'all, I went on the Aqua Mouse like 5 times. I thought it was so cool.

The height requirement for this one is 42 inches minimum, and it's 48 inches if you want to ride alone. And so just something to keep in mind. Alex, I know you did not go on it because you were too cold.

Alex: It was cold. Yeah, but everyone else in my family did. So Noah was able to go. He just had to go with Mitch.

Jess: Okay. And then Megan, did you go on the Aqua Mouse?

Megan: Yep. We did. I only did it like once, but the girls kept going, like over and over.

Jess: It's just really We went on it on our day at Castaway Cay. And so I just thought it was really cool. Like you're going through the water slide, and you look out the side of it, and you can see like the beautiful water in Disney's Private Island while you're riding this water slide. It was just really cool.

So that is it. I have like the pools, in my opinion, have never been a huge draw for me. I've never, I've gotten into the adults-only pool on a previous cruise, but they are kind of like smaller pools, like I said, that are scattered throughout the ship, and they have different depths. And so you know, there are some that are really, really shallow if you have young kids, and then there are some that are a little bit deeper if you have older kids that want, I mean, none of them are super deep. Like none of them you can dive into or anything, but...

Megan: Yeah. They're definitely more like lounging pools than jumping, playing pools.

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Alex: Yeah, they're like cooling off. We, my kids didn't even get in the pools. They did the water slides, but that was it. I don't think it's a huge draw for us either. There's just so many things to do.

Megan: Yeah, we were on it for 7 nights, and I don't think, I think the girls got in the pool the first morning because we were at sea and that was it.

Alex: Yeah. Yeah. You know, one thing I like about this area, though too, is they have Funnel Vision, so it's just like a huge TV where they're playing movies all day long. Really nice because you like, there wasn't really a glare. You can see it really well, which is impressive, and you can hear it really well, even though there's a lot going on. So we thought that was pretty cool. So even if you just wanted to sit out there and relax, and it's you know, nice weather, you could just sit there and watch a movie.

Megan: Yeah. All right, Megan, do you want to talk about the layout? Yeah. So the layout of the ships, again, is all the same. They are built exactly to the same specs, and they all have a capacity for around 4,000 passengers, which seems like a lot, but it's really not that much.

The only time it really felt busy was in between like dining, like when we were getting ready to go to our rotational dining, kind of like waiting in line to get to your table. But other than that, there is so much space that the people really spread out. All of the ships have 15 decks. Staterooms are on decks 2 and 6 through 13, and so we kind of wandered almost every level of the ship, and I don't think there's...

Jess: Of course you did, Megan. Megan is like, I'm the person who's going to get 20,000 steps a day on my Disney Cruise.

Megan: I know, there's a bad place to be. And we almost never took the elevator. We ran the stairs for everything because I was like, I'm not going to wait for an elevator. Like we're just sitting around like hanging out all day. Like, let's take the stairs.

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Jess: All right, so we're going to I've been on I've been on deck 6, I've been on deck 7. For this particular cruise, I was on deck 11 forward. I was actually kind of nervous about being that high when I first got. So Disney assigned our room. I kind of just took what I got, and I saw that we were on Deck 11, and I was like, I'm kind of nervous about that, because, and we were forward.

Typically, the closer to the middle of the ship you are, the less movement you feel, and the lower you are, the less movement you feel. And so I was like, okay, I'm on Deck 11, which is one of the highest decks, and I'm all the way forward. I'm a little bit nervous about sea sickness, motion sickness.

Alex: Is that where, is that the same, is forward, you guys, I still don't, I can't understand forward and after.

Jess: You are also Deck 11 forward.

Alex: I was forward, so were you by Marceline Market? Or were you away from it, you had to cross?

Jess: Yeah. I had to cross.

Alex: Okay, cause I thought I was aft for some reason, but I guess I wasn't. We had to cross. We were right by Festival of Foods.

Jess: Yeah, so, but I ended up I ended up loving the... A, it didn't really feel much different from when I've been on deck 6 midship, but B, I loved the easy access to the Festival of Foods on these ships. They all have the festival of foods. It's basically like a food court area, but it's outdoors. And so any type of food you can think of, they have barbecue, they have, I think, burrito bowls, pizza, soft serve machines, like chicken tenders, burgers, a grill with like chicken tenders, burgers, basically anything you can think of.

That's where the soda machines are located. So I would go fill up my Diet Coke every day at the soda machines. And so I really loved the access to the Festival of Foods, and Marceline Market is on Deck 11, which is the buffet. That's where we ate breakfast every morning.

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And so you know, TLDR, no motion issues. I really liked being on the same deck as some of the pools and all the food choices. So I thought it was great. Though, like Megan said, I really feel like you can't go wrong on these ships. Like, there's pros and cons no matter where you are. And hey, you're on a Disney Cruise, there's no bad place to be, you know?

Megan: Yeah.

Alex: Yeah, I was in the same place as Jess. Like I think pretty much exactly, but what I thought was interesting is I feel like I felt the motion more at breakfast than anywhere else, which would have been at the back of the ship then?

Jess: Mhm. Yeah.

Alex: But we also had like our first day was a little more rough. It was super windy. You'd go out to the deck, and you're like, Whoa, I'm blowing, my hair is all over the place." And I asked a couple of people. I was like, "Is this normal?" Because I have no frame of reference for this.

So I was like, and I was pretty nervous about this going into this, as people will know if they watched the Instagram stories. And so I just needed to know like, okay, I'm handling this. Like I could feel the movement, and I it felt weird, and it was like unsettling, and that first night going to bed, I could totally feel it. And you could hear like this big bang every now and then, and I think that was like the water hitting the side of the ship. There was like salt all over our windows. But maybe there is always salt.

Jess: I don't think I've ever had that. So I think that you...

Alex: Okay, there's never salt on your windows, usually.

Jess: No.

Megan: No, we don't normally have that.

Alex: Okay, because I was like, is this just because of the salty air at sea? And it's just in the mist or is this, I don't know, the wasn't the bangs were like low bangs. It wasn't like it was banging against our windows, but I could just hear it.

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And so I was like a little anxious about it, but I never ever got sick. So I used like a relief band, and I took half a Bonine twice a day. Never got sick. I didn't have any issues. I could feel it though, and I was like, Oh, this feels weird. But then it got way calmer. It was just that first day that was a little rough.

Then it was calm the rest of the time. And I think you also just get used to it. You're like, oh, like you kind of forget you're on a boat. So coming from me, and that was a big reason I never wanted to go on a cruise, because I was worried about that. I was very relieved to know, like, oh, okay, this was a rougher day. I did it, and I didn't get sick. I can do cruises. So it was very comforting to know that like I survived, and I'll do it again.

Jess: Well, I'm the person who went on the whale watching in Kauai and needed a bucket. Yes. So I am someone who is sensitive to motion sickness. I get nauseated easily, and I have never on any of my Disney Cruises gotten sick. And so I think just because you might be sensitive on smaller boats, like obviously, you know, the whale watching in Kauai, I was on a catamaran with like 20 other people. The motion on that is going to be a lot different than the motion on a huge 4,000 passenger cruise ship. And so I wouldn't let that stop you from giving it a try.

Alex: Yeah, 100%.

Megan: Yeah, and that's one of the reason why I picked kind of the room that we had. We were on deck 7 in the midship. So we were like the middle of the ship up like vertically and horizontally. I was as far as the middle that we could get. And the only time, like same as Alex, I think it wasn't really breakfast when we felt the motion, it was when we were in the rotational dining, which is also the back of the ship.

Alex: Yes. I felt that in *Lion King*. I was like, this is like disorient, it's just disorienting. I feel like is the word. Like, I wasn't sick, but I was like, and then I got used to it.

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Megan: Because you're not used to it, you know, because it's a different feeling. And there were a few nights where I would hear the hangers in the closet like rattle, and I was like, just like laying there awake.

Alex: Yes, that was me too. I feel like, for myself, a lot of it is more like it messes with me, gives me anxiety, than gets me physically sick.

Jess: Yeah, it's the anticipation.

Alex: Yes, it's a mental issue that I need to work through, and so this was good therapy for me to go on a Disney Cruise back, okay, I can do this. I didn't get sick. I don't need to stress about that anymore.

Jess: I just remember being so, I was like, I hope she likes it. I hope that she's not like I hadn't like it would be like hours since I heard from you last, and I'd be like, is she okay? Like, I haven't heard from her in a while. Are you stressed for me? But everything was good, and it was so good. And you loved it just like I knew you would. So...

Alex: Yes. Yeah.

Megan: And another thing to note is that it's what it's not like when you book a hotel, and you just get like assigned a room. Like when you book a cruise, you are picking the exact room that you will be staying in. So there are charts and blogs and YouTube videos that you can go and watch and kind of like help you figure out like if you're overwhelmed with the choices or like we use a Disney planner and she was like, "This is what I recommend and I recommend you being on this side because you can see the fireworks from your window at your balcony." So there's a lot and you and you do get to pick what room you pick. So that really helps.

Jess: It lessens the anxiety to have some say in where you're going to be. All right, and then the other thing I just wanted to point out is Megan's not going to be able to answer this question because she walked everywhere. But I've been on I have been on the *Disney Wonder* a couple times. That is one of the older

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ships, and that one has three sets of elevators. So aft, forward, and midship all have elevators.

With the *Wish* class ships, they did away with the midship elevators. And so now there are only elevators aft and forward. Did you, Alex, did you ever have issues with the elevators where you were like long wait times or really crowded?

Alex: No, we had like not... like zero issues. They came super fast. I will say my nine year old was like Megan and he's like, he would race us. He'd be going down the stairs while we're taking the elevator to see who would get there first. I also like get kind of dizzy if I go on too many elevators, and I did fine, which is a surprise, like elevators and on the sea, but I did good. Maybe it's because I had my band and I was taking Bonine. That probably was why.

Can I say we love the elevators because the Mickey and Minnie voices that say, "The doors are closing. The doors are opening." So like we would be saying that all day long, me and like my nine year old. We got pretty good at imitating Mickey and Minnie with closing and opening the doors.

Jess: That is hilarious.

Alex: What's really cool, too, about the *Destiny* is I can't remember if it's forward or aft, but one side of the ship is villains, and one side is heroes. And so, like the artwork on that side, will be heroes or villains. The elevators, like, you know, the interior like wallpaper on the elevators, would be heroes or villains. So that was really...

Jess: That's really cool too.

Alex: Did you have issues with elevators?

Jess: The only time we had issues was and it was when we were it was just when things would get crowded, like around the muster drill that we did. So the muster drill is like when you get on the ship, there's a drill that everyone has to do before the ship can set sail, and it's basically a safety briefing where they say like, "If this alarm goes off, you need to get your life..." You know, it's just to kind of go, it's like a having a fire drill when you're in school, you know?

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And so anytime like the whole ship was congregating or like for the sail away party, you know, where like the entire ship is congregating for this one thing, it would be busy then, but I feel like those times were few and far between, and just on a regular daily basis, we had no issues with them.

Alex: Yeah. Yeah. I think we had to take the stairs to do our drill. Like they opened up this...

Jess: Oh, because they closed the elevators or something?

Alex: Yeah, but maybe if you go, but they also tell you ahead of time, "Hey, this is what time the drill is at." And so some people probably just get there early, and then they're congregating, but once it starts, you're like, elevators aren't accessible anymore. Yeah.

Jess: That makes sense.

Alex: All right, so I'm going to talk a little bit about pricing. I know that's probably what everybody is waiting to hear about. First of all, important thing to know is the earlier you book, the cheaper it will be. So be like Jess and start booking two years in advance. No, but they are booking, Megan, you said through like...

Megan: I think like May 2027 right now.

Alex: Okay, so...

Jess: And y'all, I have my eye on a summer 2027 Disney Cruise. So I am anxiously awaiting the next...

Alex: Which one are you looking at?

Jess: I really want to... okay, I don't know if this is going to be possible because I don't know how much it's going to be, but I really want to do the one that goes to Norway. And so you know, I'm a *Frozen* girl. Like, I need to do the Norway Disney Cruise. Yeah.

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And the nice thing is, you know, it would be our summer family trip. I could get our flights to Europe all on points. So, might be doable. Got to see when the itinerary comes out what the price is going to be, but that's my dream.

Alex: Yeah. We know that you'll be booking it like right after it's released.

Jess: I will. 100%.

Alex: Because Jess is going to get that lower price. Yeah. All right, so depending on the itinerary, how long you want to go, like where you want to stop, that will depend which ship is the one you should choose.

So first of all, for the *Wish*, they do three and four-night sailings out of to the Bahamas out of Port Canaveral. So if that's where you want to sail from, that is the boat that you would one of the boats you would want to consider. So Jess, tell us a little bit about what your itinerary was with that ship.

Jess: Okay, so we were on a three-night Bahamian sailing. So it's like you said, from Port Canaveral, if you're leaving from Port Canaveral, Orlando Airport is going to be the best option for you. So we flew into Orlando. And then on the ship, we had two stops.

We stopped at Castaway Cay, which is Disney's Private Island, and my personal favorite of the stops in the Bahamas and the Caribbean area. And then our ship also stopped at Nassau. We decided not to get off at Nassau. We have done Nassau before. I'm not ever overly impressed with Nassau. I would rather stay on the ship and, you know, be able to do the water slide or do other things when they're a little less crowded because other people got off the ship.

So, but I loved Castaway Cay. It's so great. I mean, the nice thing about Castaway Cay is there's a kids' club on Castaway Cay. There's two restaurants on Castaway Cay, and the food from those restaurants is included in your cruise fare.

So basically, they shut down the kids' club on the ship when you arrive at Castaway Cay. Those counselors go out onto the island. And so there's a kids'

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club there, food there, and it's all included. And so it is such an easy stop for a free day, or like a day included in your cruise fare, basically.

You get off the ship, tons of seating, you do not have to worry about being the first one off the ship. I actually like hanging back a little bit and letting everyone get off, so I'm not down there wrestling with a crowd of people to get off, taking our time.

You can, you can rent bikes, you can go biking around the island. Snorkeling. There are, you can go snorkeling, there are water slides. And so it is such an easy place to just get off. If your kids want to go to the kids' club, great. If they want to hang with you at the beach, great. Get your food that's included. They have they have the soft serve machines at Castaway Cay too. You know I had to hit those up.

So yeah, it's just it's just a great way to have a free day. And then some itineraries also include Disney's newer private island, Lighthouse Point. They also have cruises that include Castaway Cay and Lighthouse Point.

Alex: Ooh, I want to do that one of those.

Jess: Because then you get to try both of them out. So that would be pretty cool, I think.

Alex: Yeah. And then if you're going to, if you want a long cruise, *Treasure*'s a good option. They do 7-night sailings to Eastern or Western Caribbean from Port Canaveral. Megan, which one did you do? What stops did you guys have?

Megan: So we did the Western Caribbean, and that was Cozumel, Mexico, Falmouth, Jamaica, Georgetown, Grand Cayman, and Castaway Cay, the Disney Island.

Alex: What was your favorite stop?

Megan: So we, I want to preface this by saying that the FOMO gets you, and you're like, I need to book all these excursions. I need to go do all this stuff. I had excursions booked for everything and every stop, and then I canceled them

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all except for one. We did Dolphinars in Cozumel, which I probably wouldn't do again. I really try to avoid the animal stuff, but it's like the FOMO. It's like, oh, everybody goes to the Caribbean and they go see dolphins and blah blah blah. And I'm like, nope, I don't, I don't need to do that again.

But the excursions are pricey, and you don't have to feel like you have to do something at every port. So, like what Jess said is we got off at Cozumel, and then we stayed on the ship the rest of the time. We didn't do any other excursions. We got off in the Disney Island, and we just took advantage of all the free things that were included, and we were on the ship for seven days, and that was still plenty. So, like, while you might think like, okay, the cost of the cruise might be a lot, you don't have to do all these added-on things that cost more money.

Alex: Yeah. The *Destiny*, so that's the ship that I was on. They have a little bit of everything. So they have three, four, five, or seven-night cruises to the Bahamas, five and seven-night cruises to the Eastern and Western Caribbean. This one sails from Fort Lauderdale.

So if you're, let's say you're wanting to go to Disney World, then the *Disney Wish* or *Treasure* is going to be a better option for you because that port is right by Orlando. You know, if you want to do a three-night, three to four-night, or a seven-night cruise, maybe the *Disney Wish* or *Treasure*, but then again, *Destiny* has it all. So that could be a good option.

If you are wanting to avoid Orlando, if you're like, I have no interest in doing days at any of the parks, then might you might want to fly or drive to Fort Lauderdale. *Disney Destiny* will be the best option for you. So here's some sample pricing. These are all for two adults and two children in an ocean view room in July of 2026. So just remember, ocean view, that's the one that just has like the porthole.

Jess: The porthole. Yeah.

Alex: So now Jess here got these dates all, or these prices put together. July 2026 was the timing we chose because everybody can go in July. You know, if

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we choose some random dates in September, might be a lot cheaper, but it's not really applicable to everybody or, you know, everyone has different spring breaks.

And so this will just give you a good idea, but keep in mind like you can find days or, you know, itineraries that are a lot cheaper than this. You can find itineraries that are more expensive than this. Like this is just to give you a rough amount here. So, for example, *Disney Wish*, four-night Bohemian cruise from Port Canaveral, stopping in Nassau. Is that how you say that right? Nassau? Nassau?

Jess: I say Nassau.

Megan: I say Nassau.

Alex: Nassau. Yeah. Okay. Guys, sometimes my pronunciations, I am my mother's daughter. Let's just say that.

Jess: Pronunciations. Alex, your Utah, your Utah's coming out.

Alex: Like, I'm not even from Utah.

Jess: Okay, but you've lived there long enough that you've acquired their dialect, I think.

Alex: Utah's are rubbing off on me. Pronunciations. But I am my mother's daughter. All right. So that would be so, remember, two adults, two children, four nights, is \$6911. *Disney Destiny*, four-night Bohemian cruise from Fort Lauderdale, same stops, \$5914. But once again, like you can find these cheaper if you're willing to do like different dates, three nights, inside stateroom. Like I found some dates as low as \$3200.

Jess: What I thought was interesting about these, though, is they are the exact same, you know, the same night number of nights, the same stops, and *Destiny*, which is the newer ship, was a thousand dollars cheaper. Part of me was part of me was wondering if there is just more demand to go from Port Canaveral because so many people are pairing it with a trip to Disney, you know? Yeah.

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Megan: Yeah. It could also be the shorter cruises. Yeah.

Jess: Yeah. Because a lot of people, you know, Orlando is a haul for them, and they're like, "I'm not going to just fly to Orlando and go on a three-night cruise. I'm going to fly to Orlando and go to Disney for 4 days, and then I'm going to tack on a three-night cruise." You know? So maybe the demand is just higher leaving from Port Canaveral because of its proximity to Orlando. I don't know. Or maybe it's just a fluke, and this was it was just a random date that I chose.

Alex: Yeah. And then, like I said, for *Disney Treasure*, they're just seven-night cruises. So seven-night Western Caribbean Cruise from Port Canaveral, \$10,489. So that's kind of what you're looking at with pricing. Of course, there's ways to save. You do not need to pay that amount.

So Jess is going to get into how you can save on your cruise with points. I want to keep in mind, though, like I just for fun was looking up, like, okay, what's the price to go to Disneyland for like three days with, you know, a family of four, and I'm getting, you know, Lightning Lane and Park Hoppers. And then I'm doing Disney World, and I'm got the pricing in there with, you know, Park Hoppers, and for you can't even buy Lightning Lane when you book like you can with Disneyland. So the pricing, though, was like maybe a thousand dollars more for the cruise, maybe on certain days. Obviously, it depends on your dates.

But the thing with the cruise is like your entertainment is all taken care of. Your place to sleep is taken care of. Your food is all taken care of. And so when you add in like, oh, when I go to Disney World or Disneyland, I'm going to have to get a hotel and have to buy all the food. A cruise actually isn't as expensive, I think, as people first think. It's like, oh, a Disney Cruise. It's like, actually, when you do the math, comparing it to the parks, like it's it's not a bad, not a bad deal.

Jess: And we're also talking like sit down, really nice restaurants with lobster tail, not like tachos from Woody's Bake house or whatever. You know what I mean? Like...

Alex: Well, hold on, but let's just say those tachos are amazing.

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Jess: The tachos are fire. I'm not, I'm not dissing the tachos, but I'm just saying unlimited high-quality food on the cruise and character interactions in air conditioning versus...

Alex: And kids clubs, like childcare.

Jess: Childcare. Childcare is included.

Alex: You're getting your money's worth out of these cruises. I just wanted to like put that out there because I didn't realize that. Like, I didn't realize the pricing wasn't as far off as I maybe would have expected it to be. Yeah. All right, Jess, on to saving.

Jess: Here are some ways to save money. These are not this is not an exclusive list. I'm going to tell you what I have used in the past, what all three of us have used, and y'all can chime in if there's anything else that I'm missing.

But number one is using points for your flights to the port. That's the most obvious, I feel like, or if you live near Orlando, just drive yourself to the port. That's how like when we go on our cruise next month, or by the time this is this month, it's leaving from Galveston. And so we are able to just drive from Houston to Galveston, that saves us a ton of money on flights, you know? So if you live near a port, maybe try sailing out of there.

If you don't, use points for your flights. The Southwest® Companion Pass® has come in so clutch for us because Southwest, like I feel like Southwest flies to Orlando from so many cities, probably because of the Disney demand. I feel like it's the Disney effect that's the case, but we have used we have used the Southwest Companion Pass pretty much every time we've ever flown to Orlando. Megan, I think you used the two companion passes.

Megan: Yeah, we have two companion passes this year, and it has really enabled my Disney addiction. We, like I have been to Disney so many times this year and the cruise, and we just renewed our Companion Passes again for next year and my husband was like, "Oh, gosh, like, I guess we're going to Disney

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again." Because even our tiny little airport in upstate New York, in Rochester, we have direct flights on Southwest into Orlando.

Alex: That's amazing.

Megan: So it has just been so convenient. It's a two-hour flight. Like, I'm taking the girls by myself next month to do the Christmas party. And I'm like, this is just so easy for me to do a weekend trip.

Alex: So fun.

Jess: I would, I want to meet up. Okay, no...

Alex: I know, guys, I'm having FOMO about Disney Christmas stuff, but...

Jess: Okay, the second one is use points for your hotel stay before or after your cruise. Here's a tip. Do not plan to fly in the day your cruise leaves. You will, you might literally miss the boat if your flight is delayed, okay? So I always try to fly in at least the day before. So you're going to want to fly in the day before.

If you are leaving from Port Canaveral, some of the better options for you, one that I've stayed at, is the Hyatt Regency Orlando Airport, literally connected to the airport, could not be more convenient for getting to and from the airport. It is a category 5 Hyatt, and so you're looking at 20,000 Hyatt points a night for a standard night there. Again, no taxes or resort fees on Hyatt Award stays. So you're paying literally zero dollars out of pocket for your stay at in Orlando before your cruise.

Megan actually, I believe, recently stayed at the Hyatt Place Cape Canaveral, which is closer to the port. Did you know how did you get to this Hyatt Place? Did you rent a car?

Megan: Yeah, I actually included it when you get to the next.

Jess: Oh, shoot.

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Megan: But I'll cover it now. So we, so the Disney transportation is pricey. It's \$45 a person each way. So, round-trip from the airport or your Disney resort to the port is \$90 a person for a round-trip on the bus.

And so what we did is we actually used our Venture X and did a rental car one way, each way. So we did a one-way from Orlando airport to Cape Canaveral, and then we stayed at the Hyatt Place. And so we just like returned our car. We got in Friday, checked into our hotel. It was really nice. Breakfast was included. I believe this is one of those ones where you have to have a certain status, so like Discoverist or higher with Hyatt, to get the free breakfast. You can still buy it. But it was good. And we went out that morning just for like a little drive, and then we returned the rental car, and then the rental car place had shuttles that took you to the port, and that was just free.

Alex: Oh, nice.

Jess: That's really smart.

Megan: And then at the end, we did the same thing. We just got on our little shuttle, and we went to pick up our rental car, and we actually went to Disney for a night and then flew home the next morning because the flights were cheaper on Sunday. And I was like, "Well, this just works out."

Alex: You're like, oh, darn.

Jess: Y'all, only Megan gets off a 7-night Disney Cruise and is like, "That wasn't enough. I need to spend an entire day at the parks."

Megan: Yeah, but we got off the cruise, and we were walking into Magic Kingdom by like 12:30.

Jess: That's amazing.

Megan: And totally doable to go the parks before or after if you're coming out of Cape Canaveral.

Jess: And then the Hyatt Place in Cape Canaveral is new. I think it just opened this year.

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Megan: It's brand new, yeah.

Jess: And so that one is a category 3 and will only cost you 12,000 Hyatt points a night for standard pricing. So that one is a really great option if you're leaving out of Port Canaveral.

Megan: Yeah, and rooms sleep up to six. There's two queen beds and a pull-out bed. So that is really great for families too.

Jess: I love it. All right, and then Fort Lauderdale. So the *Destiny* sails out of Port Everglades, which is close to Fort Lauderdale. So you'll, like we said, be flying into Fort Lauderdale. There are tons, I mean, there are tons of options in Fort Lauderdale, no matter what kind of points you have.

There are Hiltons, there are Holiday Inns, but there is a Hyatt Place Fort Lauderdale Cruise Port. It is also a category 3. So you're looking at 12,000 points a night. I'm assuming it also sleeps large families because most Hyatt Places do. And so if you're going on the *Destiny* out of Port Everglades, that will be a great option.

Alex: You mean... Yes, yes, sorry. Yeah. I was like, wait, that's the port, it is. You know, one thing for us, we got off the ship around like 9:30 a.m. I want to say, maybe 9:00 a.m. And you know, because this was a hosted thing, Disney dropped they covered our transportation, and they took us to the airport. Well, we didn't leave until like 5:40 in the evening. And we were at the airport by like 9:30 at the latest. And so we're like, okay, we're not going to sit here all day. That's going to be terrible.

And so I actually, I thought this was a pretty good little trick that I found. I went, I tried to like just book a day room, but like I tried the Hyatt place, I tried like the a Marriott hotel, and none of them were like offering day rates. And so I went to ResortPass, just online. It's a website, and through them I could book a day room. I think it was like \$120.

But the nice thing was I purposely searched for hotels that had airport shuttles. And so once we were at the airport, I called the hotel. I was like, "Hey, we're

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ready to get picked." Like we have a reservation. They're like, "Oh yeah, I see it right here." And so they picked us up from the airport, took us to the hotel, and then, when it was time to go back, they took us back. And it was the Marriott Springhill Suites.

This is so if you have time between, you know, if you're in a similar situation, this is a great place to stay. I just lucked out because I didn't really know where the location where it was. It's like maybe 10 minutes from the airport, but it's in this area where there's all this shopping and strip malls. So like, we were able to walk and go get lunch. Like, we got burgers from this place. We got acai bowls from Playa Bowls. There's a movie theater right there.

Like, if you need to just like spend a day, it was, I was so happy that I did that because it would have been terrible sitting there at the airport all day long. So check that out if you're in a similar situation, and you just need a hotel room for a day.

Jess: I'm loving the tricks, Alex. I love it. All right, another option as far as, you know, actually using points for the cruise itself. Disney Cruises are notoriously difficult to use points for. You cannot, you know, some of these bank portals allow you to book cruises. They don't allow you to book Disney Cruises, okay? So you're not going to be able to like directly apply your points through a portal to a cruise.

But one of the most popular options that people take advantage of is using the Capital One Purchase Eraser. So any of your cards earn Capital One miles, the Venture, the Venture X, there's a personal Venture X and a business Venture X. You know, you pool all those miles together, and then you can erase your cruise charge using those miles.

And basically, what that means is a cruise obviously codes as travel with Capital One. You have 90 days after a purchase posts to your account to erase that charge with miles. And so it's basically one cent per mile is the value that you're

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going to get. So if you want to erase \$100 off your cruise, that's going to be 10,000 Venture Miles.

If you're opening these cards, you're referring your player two to open these cards, and you're pooling all your miles together, which you can do for free with Capital One, you could potentially erase thousands and thousands of dollars from your cruise.

I will say that there is a new rule with Capital One that if you want to get both the personal cards, the Venture and the Venture X, within a 48-month period, you want to open the regular Venture first. So if you've never had a Capital One card and you want to use your Venture Miles towards a cruise, you might want to do the Venture first, then wait at least 6 months before you open another Capital One card, and then you could open the Venture X. In the meantime, you could be referring your player two, earning some referral points, they're earning the welcome offers. Boom, you got yourself a nearly free Disney Cruise, okay?

Alex: One thing I want to say about the Venture and Venture X stuff is Capital One's pretty quirky. We've talked about that before with approvals. And so if you want the Venture X, I think it's worth getting the Venture X, waiting 48 months, because you might not even get approved for both within that time. Anyways, like I only have the Venture X. Mitch only has the Venture, and I've had a hard time getting him approved for a Venture X.

So the other nice thing if you do go for the Venture X is you get that \$300 travel credit, which you could apply towards, you know, the hotel room, you know, pre or post departure, towards your flight. And so kind of a nice option with the Venture X. And I'd also go with what has the highest sign-up bonus. We're all about the welcome offer.

Jess: That's true. All right, and then another, if you know, if you don't want to do Capital One, there are several just straight-up cashback cards, like the Ink Premier® is an example of that. It does technically earn Ultimate Rewards®, but they're non-transferable Ultimate Rewards. So your really only option is to cash them out.

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But I, it's funny because we went on a Disney Cruise, I opened an Ink Premier, I referred Ted, he opened an Ink Premier. Boom, we had \$2000 to put towards our Disney Cruise, and they don't count towards 524. So, you know, we had \$2000 to put towards our Disney Cruise, and I thought that was a fine use of our, you know, cashback to put it towards that. So that is another option, or you could do both, you could do a combination, and you could really, you know, just work out this free cruise for yourself.

And then this is not related to points, but if you take a Disney Cruise, you will have the option while you're on board to purchase what is called a placeholder. And that is basically you are paying \$250 to save 10% on your next Disney Cruise. The next cruise has to take place within two years, and you can if you end up if you just end up deciding not to go, you can cancel your placeholder and get that \$250 back. So it's really no risk if you think you might go on another Disney Cruise. You can also do it for up to two staterooms.

And so what we did is we took a shorter cruise out of, you know, a shorter, cheaper three-night cruise out of Florida, got our placeholders, and then applied those towards our Alaska cruise. So we got 10% off of our Alaska cruise, which is much more pricey than the cruises out of Florida. And so you can kind of use those to your advantage, I think, if you want to, you know, get 10% off.

Alex: Well, and the \$250 goes towards your deposit. So you're not like you're paying \$250 to get 10% off. You're... that goes towards your payment.

Jess: It does. And so, like the cruise we're taking this month is out of Galveston, not a super, not a super pricey cruise. You better believe I'm getting those placeholders to hopefully put towards my Norway cruise.

Alex: Did you book this one from a placeholder, like from your Alaska cruise?

Jess: I couldn't. So I did have placeholders from the Alaska cruise, but because we're gone over New Year's, like it's a blackout. Like, you can't...

Alex: Oh, yeah.

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Jess: There are some blackout dates where you can't use placeholders. So that's an example of like, I wasn't able to use my placeholder in time, so our travel agent just cancelled them, and I got my \$250, well I got my \$500 back, cause I had bought two. But I will be buying two more on this upcoming cruise and hopefully getting 10% off my Disney Norway cruise.

Megan: Yeah, that's exactly what we did, and we're, we already booked the Disney Adventure, which hasn't even been finished being built yet, and we're doing that next July out of Singapore.

Alex: You already booked it?

Megan: Yeah, we already booked it. It's done. And I booked our flights to Singapore on points, so...

Alex: Oh, I love it. Out of Singapore, that is so cool

Jess: Yeah, so she's flying her family of five to Singapore on points.

Megan: In premium economy.

Jess: She got 10% off her Disney Cruise leaving from Singapore, which is going to be so unique. I can't wait to hear about that. It's going to be so awesome. And yeah, so that's the way, that's the way, I'm all about saving money any way I can, and I love these little tricks that we can do, you know, save a little bit here and there.

Alex: Yeah. And the girl who wasn't, didn't think cruises were for her, also bought a placeholder when I was on my cruise, too. I bought two so I could have two rooms for my family of six. So we'll be going back. Just got to figure out when.

And that brings us to the end of part 2 and the end of our *Wish* class showdown. Pools, activities, itineraries, and even how to cover all of, all or part of your cruise with points. We covered a lot, and the crazy thing is, there's still a lot we didn't even get to. You will, you will never run out of things to do on a Disney Cruise.

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