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12 Reasons to Plan Your Next Family Cruise on the Carnival Vista

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By [Judy Koutsky](#) March 9, 2017

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My boys love cruising. And I love the ease of unpacking once and moving around to different destinations, so it was a no-brainer for us to spend our school break aboard [Carnival Vista](#), the newest ship in the Carnival fleet. Here's what we loved:

Camp Ocean

I have two high-energy boys, which means it's not a vacation for me (and my husband), unless there's a kids' camp that the boys love (if they don't love it, they won't go). My boys (ages 6 and 8) asked to go to the camp every day. From scavenger hunts to movie night, the boys loved the ever-changing activities and quickly made friends.

Specialty restaurants

My eight-year-old tried filet mignon for the first time at Fahrenheit 555; we sampled just about everything on the menu at Ji Ji Asian Kitchen, and the tiramisu at Cucina del Capitano restaurant had us asking for seconds. And that's in addition to the main restaurant. The ship has 19 bars and restaurants that range from snack food to fine dining, making it easy to change it up every day.

The SkyRide and ropes course

How could we resist riding a bicycle in the sky on an elevated 800-foot-track or doing a 270-foot-long ropes course suspended over the ship? Jack, my older son, and I loved the adventurous side of the ship.

Miniature golf

We played every single day, multiple times a day. The two-level course was tough enough to be a challenge, but easy enough not to be frustrating (a combination for kids). We played daily (sometimes multiple times a day). Plus, the Clubhouse was next door, which had mini-bowling and ping pong, among other kid-friendly activities.

Dr. Seuss breakfast





Judy Koutsky

The author's sons enjoying a Dr. Seuss breakfast complete with green eggs and ham.

Who doesn't love a little green eggs and ham and pictures with Sam I Am? We did this on the last full day at sea and it was a great way to end the trip on a high note.

The spa

Since my kids loved Camp Ocean, I had some time to sample the spa. The hot stone and bamboo massage had me falling asleep as my worries were kneaded away by expert hands. The thermal suite has a jacuzzi, heated lounge chairs, and plenty of steam and sauna options for hours of relaxation (my version of Camp Ocean).

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Ports of call

At each port of call, my family liked to basically just hightail it to the nearest beach and veg out. Our Caribbean cruise stopped in Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and Cozumel. Jamaica was our favorite because there was beach less than a five-minute walk from the port. The water was warm and the sand was so soft, perfect for making sand castles. It was a great way to spend a stress-free afternoon.

Shore excursions

Carnival offers tons of options in each port of call, from [dolphin and stingray encounters](#) to jeep tours and cave explorations. On disembarkation day, we did our only shore excursion: a morning at the Everglades. We saw tons of alligators and the kids were each able to hold one.

Ice cream

There's a 24-hour ice cream station and I'm pretty sure we stopped there every day. We also loved the 24-hour freshly made pizza. Great for late-night munchies.

Room with a balcony

For me, nothing says vacation like a cup of coffee on the balcony with a good book. This was my good-to just about every day.

The Serenity area

We took the cruise during school break and there were a whole lot of kids, which was fine because my children made a lot of friends. But sometimes, it's nice to take a break from all the kid stuff; enter the Serenity area for adults only. They have chaise lounge chairs, a salad bar, and—best of all—quiet.

WaterWorks

Kids who love water parks will love the WaterWorks section. There's the Kaleid-o-Slide: an inner-tube water slide, where kids can zip down 455 feet of turns made even more fun by music and kaleidoscopic effects. Plus, there's the Twister slide, 300 feet of high-speed aquatic fun; the PowerDrencher, a 300-gallon tipping bucket; and 30 different water spray toys and mini-racing slides. Plenty of ways to get wet and have fun.

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Judy Koutsky is an award-winning writer and editor and her work has appeared in over 30 publications, including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Redbook, Parents, Scholastic, and Prevention. She writes often about travel, parenting, health, and lifestyle. Follow her @JudyKoutsky or visit her website JudyKoutsky.com.

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