

Tips From a AAA Travel Advisor: Brenda Scrivens

Alaska comes to life onboard cruise ship

See the best of ‘The Last Frontier’ while sailing on high seas

After 15 years as a postal clerk, I turned my hobby of planning trips for family and friends into my next career. Despite my intensive training, there is no replacement for experiencing and seeing the destination, or a cruise ship firsthand. AAA takes that seriously. In May, it sent a group of Travel Advisors on a one-week cruise to Alaska on Princess Cruise Line’s roundtrip cruise from Seattle.



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Be sure to sign-up for services ahead of time to make your cruise seamless. The Princess Medallion app speeds up embarkation, unlocks stateroom doors and enables payments. Consider all your dining choices. Princess offers a traditional-dining time – the same table and time nightly, or anytime dining, where you book and customize your dining using the app. The *Royal Princess* offered grill bites, pizza joints and specialty-fee dining, including the Crab Shack – a fun spot cordoned off from the buffet that came with mallets, bibs and buckets; and Sabatini’s,



COOL TIMES – A cruise ship glides by Alaska’s Margerie Glacier. *Image: Brenda Scrivens. AAA.*

offering Northern Italian fare. We were offered two specialty desserts daily and enjoyed our Gelato snacks!

The Port of Seattle offers a service called Port Valet, a complimentary luggage transfer from the ship to your airline. Your bag tags are brought to your cabin the night before you disembark. You just secure the tags, put your luggage out

by 8:30 p.m., and you won’t see your bags again until you arrive home. This worked well for us, because we disembarked at 7:30 a.m. and didn’t fly out of Seattle until later that evening. We took backpacks and were able to spend the day touring Seattle.

Onboard, the *Voice of the Ocean* show brought TV’s popular singing competition to the high seas, live and on-stage

complete with blind auditions, mentor sessions, the iconic “I Want You” spinning chairs, three charismatic coaches and a finale performance, where we voted on the winner.

The best part of the cruise was the destination – Alaska. In Skagway, we did a gold-panning and sled tour. In Ketchikan, our small vessel took us on a wildlife excursion six miles out to sea, and we were not disappointed. We saw orcas, humpbacks spouting and spotted a bald eagle taking off from a rock. He soared right over us!

My favorite day was at sea at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, where two park rangers boarded the ship and provided us with information on the natural scenery, wildlife and conservation efforts within the park. We viewed the ice formations, including the 21-mile-long Margerie Glacier. We watched giant hunks of ice breaking off the glaciers and crashing down into the bay – a process called calving.

My final tip is how to dress?! Bring it all. Our weather ranged from 70 degrees to the 40s in Glacier Bay. So, you can strip off the layers as you go!

To learn about booking a Princess cruise or a trip with another cruise line, visit your nearest AAA branch to speak with a travel advisor or visit AAA.com/Travel.

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