

Harmony of the Seas Ship Tour

Noelle Belt - Kids Family Activities & Cruise Port & Airport Experience

Traveling To Fort Lauderdale from BWI:

Parking: Fast Park, 1718 Nursery Road, Linthicum, MD

Link to our WTS Client Discount Parking Page: <http://www.worldtravelservice.com/bwi-parking/>

Whenever traveling from BWI I always park at FastPark. From gate entrance to Terminal drop off in front of Airline is always very prompt, taking no more than 10 minutes even with a full passenger count. I highly recommend FastPark whenever traveling out of BWI.

Airline: Southwest non-stop to FLL

Southwest has added a terminal at BWI

Security lines took 10min. and the walk to the Gate another 25, much farther than anticipated from past departures. Also, there was no place to stop for coffee or breakfast on the walk even though I kept seeing a sign for "Food Court". When I finally did arrive at the so called food court, it was only two options. Potbelly and Crazy Burger. No Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks, for coffee hounds this is not a good feeling for an early AM departure.

737: 3 and 3 seating: New seats with ample seating and leg room, very clean and comfortable. Entertainment was available in seat and wifi was available for \$8.

Harmony of the Seas : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3tcm880HNc>

There is no lack of innovative activities and spectacular public areas onboard the Biggest and Baddest New Ship from Royal Caribbean, Harmony of the Seas.

The ship has a combination of the best of Oasis and Quantum class ships with some new family features. Royal Caribbean was looking for things to attract kids and prompt them to say " Mom & Dad, I want that! ".

For families or multi-gen travel this is the perfect destination that will keep kids of all ages engaged and active. Along with the standard kids club, Adventure Ocean, the Harmony has a few unique experiences and entertainment venues worth some props.

The Ultimate abyss: Multi Level Dry Slide

The Perfect Storm: Multi Level Water Slides

All the slides are very fun and worth several rides. From a parents point of view you would not be able to keep an eye on your child while they were enjoying these activities because they start on one level and end up several levels down. This is the only drawback I saw with this activity. There was no spot where you could see your child from start to finish.

Four entertainment stages that are used in conjunction to present one show. Part of the show is live from each stage and part is viewed on screen as your stage is reset for the next performance. Very innovative and also gives you a sense of being a part of the ship.

Stages: ICE, AQUA, ARIEL, and MAIN STAGE Royal Theatre.. All very unique in what entertainment they feature. The Aqua Theatre on the back of the ship was my favorite as it is an outdoor venue with spectacular sound and visual effects. There isn't a bad seat at this theatre and if you have a balcony along the boardwalk you can watch the shows from your cabin balcony. SWEET!

Some notes on the new RCI Group Policy:

The new policy will calculate Tour Conductor credits based on the average cabin sold instead of the lowest category sold.

A quote worth note from RCI, President Michael Bayley when asked to use one word to describe each brand RCI, CEL, AZA

Royal Delivers the Wow

Celebrity Delivers the Ooh

Azamara Delivers the Ahh

Joe Rolfes - Cabin's and public areas

Rooms: Harmony of the Seas has more room types than any 3 normal ships. You know the standard drill, though. An outside room is an outside room...nothing out of the ordinary with most of them. A few rooms do demand some additional attention, though.

- Virtual Balconies – You won't find this in the current brochure, and from what I can see, not on the RCCL website either, but some of the Inside Rooms come equipped with a Virtual Balcony, essentially, a door-sized video screen on the wall that shows a live camera-feed image of what's outside the ship. Sometime within the next year the rooms will be re-categorized, and a new VB (Virtual Balcony) room type will be designated. Until then, you just have to ask. Virtual balconies can remove a lot of the negative perception about windowless inside rooms. While not exactly completely lifelike, the video screen eliminates a lot of the closed-in feeling of the room that normally only presents you with a view of four walls. As on most ships, inside rooms on the Harmony are on the small side, most of them under 180 square feet.
- Central Park and Boardwalk View staterooms with balcony – These are some of the weirdest rooms on any ship out there. Not because there's anything wrong with the room, but because of the view. 5 decks are stacked up over the interior courtyard / promenade, with windows and balconies overlooking the antics going on below. It's like living atop a shopping mall, with a constant view of people going in and out of restaurants, bars, and shops, or even overlooking the carousel (how'd that get there?) Some people will love this, being fascinated by the hive of activity that takes place on this massive ship. Tell them to bring their own binoculars if they want to keep tabs on their neighbors across the way. If they aren't people-watchers, recommend a standard balcony room instead, with a calming ocean view.
- Suites – Certainly no other ships anywhere offer the vast array of suites and suite categories as these Oasis-class mega-ships. The Junior Suites are very pleasant, with ample cabin space, more than that found on most competing ships of this class, and a generous balcony. Another very interesting suite

category is designated “AquaTheater Suite”, which actually encompasses 4 different room types that overlook the Aqua Theater at the stern of the ship. No fussing with crowds here, you simply sit out on your expansive (and expensive) balcony and watch the show right from there. The down side is that your balconies are far from private, as onlookers below and across the way can see pretty much your entire private deck.

Other suite categories, including the largest Owner’s, Owner’s Loft, and Royal Loft Suites actually give up lots of living space in favor of additional bedrooms, some of which are smaller than a typical inside room. These suites are best for large families, as they can accommodate up to 10 people. My own opinion is that these suites would quickly become overcrowded, as most of the floor space is devoted to bedrooms, rather than the ‘standard’ suite amenities. If you are looking for a room for 2, be careful about choosing these ultra-large suites, as the extra bedroom space can’t be separated, and would be a useless extra-cost item for a couple. For a party of 2, look at the Sky Loft or standard Loft Suite instead.

All of these high-level suites entitle guests to use the Suite Lounge and Coastal Kitchen restaurant, both overlooking the open deck, but far removed from the actual activities visible down below. Also there are butlers, or Royal Genies, as they are known at RCCL. This service is available in Loft Suites and higher. A Royal Genie will help a guest settle in, handling the unpacking, and even more important, the packing at the end of the cruise, arrange for in-suite catering, handle restaurant reservations, shore excursions, laundry requests, etc. Royal Caribbean has a fairly confusing list of amenities that go along with their various suite classes. If you want the latest update, check out this URL

<http://www.royalcaribbeanblog.com/2016/03/16/everything-you-need-know-about-royal-caribbeans-royal-suite-class> I expect this list to be outdated soon. The amenities are always changing, and in some classes the amenities are being reduced, so that those at the top levels look better by comparison.

Public Rooms – Harmony of the Seas is chock full of nooks and crannies that contain lounges, restaurants, and specialty shops. You might have to look long and hard to find them all, but that’s part of the fun of being on a ship of this massive size. And you’ll always find something to do that you’ve not done before. One thing that is of interest to me is an import from the Quantum-class ships, the Solarium Café. Here is a multi-level quiet space, where you can go to read, have a quiet conversation, or just hang out in one of the pools without hearing screaming kids or overly loud music.

Other stand-out areas are the Aqua Theater, where the innovative shows all have a water theme. It’s a bit disconcerting to see the “actors” dive into the pool and not reappear. We only hope that there’s a section of that pool not visible to the audience where they can come up for air. Then there’s Studio B, where you can see evening shows adapted to an “on ice”, as in ice rink environment. There is a “regular” show theater, of course. An adaptation of the musical Grease was playing during our brief cruise. Other shows include the two robotic bartenders working tirelessly to mix drinks (scientifically, of course.) I believe they are always shaken, not stirred. Watch the crowd watching the bartenders. It’s fairly amusing. There’s a wine bar, with multiple vintages available by automatic pouring machines, more restaurants than you can count, some free and some with a fee, and a bar that rises and falls through 3 stories, surely a feature that will make the serious drinkers think twice. Oh, and don’t forget the Abyss, two twirling tube slides slung off the stern of the ship. You can hear the participants screaming from 10 stories away as they plummet through the tubes to a safe landing. I rode it once and survived.

Rob Palmissano - Restaurants and Adult Attractions

RESTAURANTS - The Harmony of the Seas certainly offers an array of choices for grabbing something to eat on the run or sitting down to a fine meal. As on most ships now a days, you can choose from free dining to a la carte or fee based dining.

The specialty restaurants were only open as a tasting menu during lunch for this inaugural cruise. I did try to get around to most of them to learn their specialty and location.

The a la carte menu restaurants are:

Starbucks (Deck 6 on The Boardwalk) - Specialty coffees
Sabor's Tequilla and Tequilla Bar (Deck 6 on The Boardwalk) - Mexican
Izumi - (Deck 4) Japanese, a la carte for sushi, fee based if you want the Hibachi experience
Room Service

Fee Based Restaurants:

Johnny Rockets (Deck 6 on The Boardwalk) - Burgers and fries (they do serve breakfast). I was able to have lunch here on our first day and service and food were both very good. If you like Johnny Rockets in your hometown, you'll like this one too.
Chops Grille (Deck 8 in Central Park) - Royal Caribbeans signature steak house
150 Central Park (Deck 8 in Central Park) - American dining by James Beard award winning chef Michael Schwartz. Many items are table side preparations.
Jamie's Italian - (Deck 8 in Central Park) - Italian cuisine by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver - interesting, a Brit cooking Italian
Wonderland - (Decks 11 and 12, enter from deck 12) - Imaginative food in an Alice in Wonderland setting. If you are a foodie, you'll love it. If you are not, might want to skip it.

Free Dining:

The Harmony of the Seas has 3 main dining rooms. Whereas the menu is the same, the décor is different for each. The American Icon dining room is located on deck 3 and as the name suggests, decorated with American themes. The Grande dining room is located on deck 4 and has a much more elegant feel. The Silk dining room is located on deck 5 and is Asian in theme. My dining room was the American Icon and I had both dinners there. It is a typical main dining menu, ranging from soups, salads, appetizers, entrees and desserts. The entrees were both classics - those that are on the menu every night - and specials of the day. The food was very good and service was equally very good. We had the same waiter for the 2 nights and he and the assistant waiter knew our likes and dislikes after one seating. For our sailing, breakfast and lunch was only served in the American Icon dining room.

Windjammer Market Place (Deck 16) - This is the ship's buffet. The buffet is available for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We had both of our breakfasts here and it was what you would expect of a breakfast buffet. We also had one lunch at the buffet and the choices were vast, from burgers and hot dogs, to pizza and chicken wings, to a carving station and several hot entrees. For those looking for a lighter lunch, there was an expansive salad bar. And then you can top your light lunch off with a full range of desserts ranging from parfaits to cookies and cakes. Although I did not eat dinner here, I did go look at the buffet one night. The buffet was heavily attended with many people opting to do this over the main dining room. Everyone was saying how good the food was at dinner.

Sorrento's (Deck 5) - located on the Promenade Deck, this is where you can get pizza by the slice and made to order. They even offer a gluten free pizza. Opened from Noon to 3:30am.

Promenade Café (Deck 5) - This café is open 24 hours, so there is no need to ever go hungry. Breakfast is pastries and doughnuts. Lunch and dinners have sandwiches available. And late night are desserts. Coffee and tea are available all day. It is a 24 hour "tea time" here.

Mini Bites (Deck 15) - A little hard to find as you head towards the Sports Zone. Open for lunch and afternoon snacks (11:00am to 5:00 pm), this is where you can find bite size food. Some of the items listed were mini corn dogs, meat balls, nachos and desserts.

Solarium Bistro (Deck 15) - Even though this bistro overlooks the adults only solarium, it is family friendly for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For dinner, reservations are not required but recommended. And be aware that there are certain dinner items that have a surcharge, such as lamb chops and a lobster tail.

Coastal Kitchen (Deck 17) - Open only to Suite guests and Pinnacle Members of Royal Caribbean's Crown and Anchor Society.

For the main dining rooms and the specialty fee restaurants, Royal Caribbean advises to allow for 2 hours for dinners. This is important to keep in mind if planning to see a show that evening.

ADULT ACTIVITIES - As expected for a cruise ship, many of the activities are outdoor related.

There's the Sports Zone where you can rock climb, play basketball or miniature golf. For those more active minded, there is the Zip Line that take you from Deck 15 to 16 while zipping over The Boardwalk. There is also Flow Rider, a surf simulator for those that want to boogie board or do stand up surfing. There are also 2 types of slides - The Ultimate Abyss which is a 10 story dry slide and The Perfect Storm, a trio of water slides.

After all of these activities, you can then retreat to the adults only Solarium (minimum age is 16 years old) which has both indoor and outdoor pools, as well as whirlpools and plenty of quiet time. Outside of the solarium, there are 3 other outdoor pools that are also available for everyone - The main pool, a beach pool with a sloping incline and a sports pool for those that want to swim laps. And then there is always the Spa and Fitness Centers.

After all of these daytime activities, you then have an opportunity to take in a show, either before or after dinner. I was able to see all four shows that were being offered on our cruise, one before and one after dinner for each night.

GREASE (Royal Theatre, Decks 4 and 5) - This is the Broadway show that can be found on the Harmony of the Seas. This version of Grease is unique and can only be found here. Most people know the music from Grease from the Hollywood movie. However, many of the songs that have become fan favorites were not in the original Broadway show. For this reason, theater goers may be disappointed when they find out that one of their favorites from the movie is not in the show. Not on The Harmony, for the first time all of the favorite songs from the movie can be found here with this production. I found the show to be fun and creative and liked it a lot. The audience felt the same way giving the cast a standing ovation at the end.

COLUMBUS THE MUSICAL! (Royal Theater, Decks 4 and 5) - After staging Broadway shows throughout several of their ships, Royal Caribbean decided to take a stab at creating their own Broadway style musical. And what a success it is! This show is put on by the same group of actors that does Grease, and in my opinion, it's even better than Grease. This is not the story of Christopher Columbus. Rather it is about his distant cousin, Marvin, who discovered - Nothing! It reminded me of the kind of humor that was in Spamalot. If you saw and enjoyed Spamalot, you will surely love Columbus The Musical. The music consists of original music as well as many top 40 hits that will be recognizable to everyone. In my opinion - don't miss it! Another standing ovation from the crowd.

1887: A Journey In Time (Studio B, Deck 4) - This is Harmony of the Seas' ice show. The story takes place in Paris, 1887. The skaters are world class but the star of the show is the ice rink. With amazing technology, the ice rink goes from being the frozen Seine River into a torrential flowing river. It is truly an amazing effect that should not be missed. You will forget that there was even an ice rink there to begin with. And yes, another standing ovation.

THE FINE LINE AQUA SHOW (Aqua Theater, Deck 6) - This is extreme sports going theatrical from high diving to synchronized swimming. The range of stunts are from 60 foot dives to high flying acrobats that swing out over the audience. Since this event is held outside, it is based on weather permitting. And I would advise not sitting in the first few rows, unless you like to get wet. Anyone in an Aqua Theater Suite can watch the show from their balcony. And those in a Boardwalk View Balcony Stateroom will be able to see most of the show from their balcony. And four for four, another standing ovation.

A note for all of these shows: Reservations are required. And you are advised to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to show time for best seats since all shows are open seating.

And if the shows are not enough for you, you can always go to the Comedy Club (The Attic, Deck 4). Reservations are needed here and must be at least 18 years old.

Music and dancing can be found at such venues as The Boots and Bonnet Pub (Deck 5), Dazzies (Decks 8 and 9), Jazz on 4 (Deck 4) and Schooner Bar (Deck 6). There's also Adults Karaoke which can be found on Deck 5 at On Air. And one of the evenings will have the Let's Celebrate Parade on the Promenade Deck 5 at Midnight, followed by music until 1:30.

And if that's not enough, you can then go to the Nightclub, located in The Attic on Deck 4 from Midnight until the last person leaves. That could be you. Then you can go get that slice of pizza at Sorrento's at 3 in the morning. Or start the next morning with an early Continental Breakfast at the Windjammer Market Place.

And what would a cruise ship be without a CASINO? The Harmony has Casino Royale with a full selection of slot machines and table games.

Let it be said too that no one will ever go thirsty on The Harmony of the Seas. Everywhere you turn you will find a bar. Some are hidden away but that's part of the fun. You can even have a drink made for you by a Robot on the Promenade Deck 5.















