Our HOLIDAYS: Orlando/Caribbean cruise and stay

Could a stay-and-cruise holiday to Florida and the western Caribbean keep everyone in the family happy?

A stay and cruise holiday enables you to and see a huge amount in a short period of time. The stay part involved four nights at the luxurious four-star Loews Royal Pacific Resort, one of the three on-site hotels at Universal Orlando, Florida. Complete with a Lagoon-style pool, private beach and a choice of six restaurants, it couldn’t fail to please. The hotel is just a few minutes’ walk or a free water taxi ride from the resort’s two theme parks — Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios — and the buzzing entertainment and shopping complex CityWalk.

Islands of Adventure is divided into six themed islands, including Seuss Landing, where younger children can enjoy The Cat in the Hat ride, and Marvel Super Hero Island, where thrill-seekers of all ages can feel their world turn upside down on The Incredible Hulk Coaster or do battle with villains on The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man.

But the real highlight is the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Entering Hogsmeade and seeing the soaring Hogwarts Express train and sparkling roofs of the wiggly shops and houses is like walking on to a movie set. The shops will be familiar to fans — there’s Ollivander’s wand store, Hogsmeade sweet shop and Zonko’s joke shop. You can even try the famous Butterbeer in the Hog’s Head Pub.

Then head up to Hogwarts Castle and make your way through the classrooms and corridors of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to join the most thrilling four minutes of your life. Climb on to the magical bench as you feel their world turn upside down on The Incredible Hulk Coaster before joining Freedom of the Seas for a seven-night cruise from Port Canaveral calling at Labadee, Falmouth, George Town, Cozumel and Port Canaveral. Prices are per person based on two adults sharing an inside cabin on a full-board basis and include transfers and Virgin Atlantic flights from London Heathrow to Orlando (based on a departure date of January 2012). Often is subject to availability and includes all applicable taxes and fuel supplements which are subject to change. For more information or to book, call 0844 573 4398 or visit www.virginholidayscruises.co.uk

On board the mighty Freedom of the Seas

The Promenade Deck and Floowrider onboard ship

The fun doesn’t stop there either — there’s a 3D cinema on the ship made four ports of call, — blissful on a warm night. On the Royal Princess got My holiday and there’s plenty of something to enjoy on shore. Ancient Mayan ruins.

Everyone will surely find something to enjoy on shore. A stay-and-cruise holiday

definitely meets the challenges a family holiday presents. I can see it now — as the eight-year-old flings himself down the Floowrider, Granny will be on the mini-golf course, Uncle in the casino, Dad in the gym… and Mum? Ah well, rest and relaxation is what I’m after on my holiday and there’s plenty of that to be had. A life on the ocean waves is for me!

Anna Pattenden

Anna’s tips

● Staying at an on-site hotel at Universal means you enjoy free Park Admission (an hour before the park opens) to some of the most popular attractions, including The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, as well as free Universal Express Ride Access to skip the queues on participating attractions at both theme parks. For further money-saving tickets check out www.universalorlando.com before your trip.

● Onboard ship, pick up a copy of the daily newsletter, Cruise Compass, which contains details of the scheduled activities, plus weather and docking information and offers at the shops, bars and restaurants.

● The fun doesn’t stop either — there’s a 3D cinema from the Artisan’s Market, a bag full of Haitian artefacts and local crafts. From the Artisan’s Market, a bag full of Haitian artefacts and local crafts. From docking information and offers at the shops, bars and restaurants.

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