

<b>Cruise – 5</b>	<b>Southern Caribbean</b>		
Itinerary	San Juan, Puerto Rico to San Juan, Puerto Rico		
Line	Princess		
ship	 <p data-bbox="692 1111 1182 1144">Golden Princess at anchor in St. Lucia</p>		
No of Days	No of Nights	Cum Nights (This Line)	Cum Nights
8	7	31	37
Cabin Number	C610, C612		
Cabin Standard	Two adjoining balcony cabins		
Overall Notes	Cathy and Chris joined us		

## Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – Flight to New York



- 07:00 GMT It is still dark and a rather cold and misty morning as we leave home to drive to Heathrow airport for our flight to Boston.
- 07:50 In a surprisingly long queue for check-in at the "Park Avenue" American Airlines check-in. After a 25 minute wait we reached check-in. Our pre-assigned seats had disappeared to be replaced by a block of middle seats. The check-in agent didn't seem to care.
- 08:40 At the Flagship Lounge. You cannot all come in, too crowded was the welcome. At least the agent put in a request to change our seats.
- 09:40 After a reasonable, if expensive breakfast, it was clear that the flight was not going on time, although there was no actual confirmation of this on the indicator screens, other than a "Please Wait" message.
- 11:20 Finally boarding. We spent some time in the Admirals Club and then walked to the gate. At the gate, still, no change to our seats, so I needed to get "assertive" with a supervisor, before finally getting some reasonable seats. In the departure lounge there was still a lack of information about our actual departure time.
- 12:10 In the air and on our way to Boston, just over 90 minutes late.
- 14:00 EST Circling North of Boston waiting for the runway to be cleared of snow.
- 14:15 Final approach to Boston aborted, following a loud bang and flash. The captain explained that this was a discharge of static electricity and that Boston airport was now closed. Diverting to Hartford, CT.
- 14:35 Approaching Hartford. Got down to around 4000' and then aborted. Apparently, there was an unacceptable cross wind.
- 15:20 On the ground at JFK New York after an uneventful approach and landing. Asked to stay seated while they worked out what to do with us.
- 16:00 We are disembarked .. not going to Boston today.
- 16:20 Things are starting to improve. We have flights to San Juan from JFK on Saturday morning.
- 17:15 Waiting in the baggage hall for AA to find staff to unload the bags.
- 18:30 Finally checked in to the Ramada Plaza Hotel just outside the airport at JFK. A poor substitute for the Hyatt Harborside in Boston. The journey to the hotel was an adventure in itself. Waiting outside for the shuttle bus was very cold and the bus was overloaded.
- 19:45 After a quick buffet dinner, we are in bed.

## Day 1 - Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – Flight to San Juan and Embarkation



Saturday morning, and we had rearranged our flights to go directly from New York to San Juan.

- 05:45 Breakfast in the hotel. We all slept reasonably well, but were awake so decided to leave 30 minutes earlier than planned.
- 07:45 In the Admirals Club waiting for our flight, after another very crowded shuttle bus ride. We believe we are going out from Gate 7, despite the assurance from the gate agent that we would be leaving from Gate 44.
- 09:20 About to leave the gate, comfortably seated in Business Class. Security checks were crowded and rather disorganised. Tried to phone Princess to advise of change of flight, but office was closed! Piles of snow around.
- 09:55 In the air, after a wait for a screwdriver to be removed from the runway. Predicted time of arrival in San Juan around 30 minutes late at 2:15pm.
- 14:05 Approaching San Juan. View of ships in the dock.
- 16:10 On board Golden Princess in our balcony cabins. Two other ships in dock .. Constellation (Celebrity) and Serenade of the Seas (Royal Caribbean). We would see a great deal of the Constellation during our cruise.
- 16:45 Late lunch in Horizon Court
- 17:45 Relaxing on deck with cocktails. What a contrast to 24 hours earlier, when we were freezing waiting for a Shuttle bus to a hotel in New York!
- 17:48 Around sunset, the crew were busy pulling in the flags that ran the length of the Golden Princess as we boarded.
- 20:00 Safety briefing at Muster Stations
- 21:15 A very late dinner
- 23:00 Departure from San Juan

## Day 2 - Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands



- 07:30 Docked at Charlotte Amalie in St. Thomas. Misty early morning.
- 09:45 Ashore. Golden Princess dominates the port area.
- 10:00 Waiting for our first "Adventure Ashore" in a jet boat, capable of 55 knots and stopping in its own length. We were warned that we would get very wet. We did.
- 10:38 On the Screamin' Eagle jet boat
- 13:05 Waiting for the Skyride Gondola
- 13:17 At Paradise Pint (the top of the gondola) overlooking the dock. Norwegian Spirit and Serenade of the Seas were docked with Golden Princess below us; Maasdsam and Sea Drean were on the far side of the harbour. While we were waiting at the bottom of the Gondola it was pouring with rain. As we got off at the top, the rain was easing and stopped completely shortly afterwards.
- 13:30 With the rain stopped, we decided to walk down rather than take the Gondola.
- 14:00 Back down at the bottom of the gondola.
- 17:00 On deck of the Golden Princess
- 17:45 Departed for St. Kitts

## Day 3 - Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – St. Kitts



- 06:10 Approaching the pier at St. Kitts before sunrise
- 06:55 Shower of rain and rainbow
- 07:08 Breakfast in Horizon Court
- 07:45 On the pier to get the shuttle bus to the start of our tour
- 08:05 Boarding the St. Kitts Scenic Railroad. New (in 2003) double-deck passenger cars for the 30" gauge sugar cane railroad. The lower deck is air conditioned. Pulled very slowly by a vintage Hunslet Diesel locomotive.
- 08:06 Underway. The top speed of 8mph is quickly reached. We sat on the open upper deck passing through fields that used to be full of sugar can and drinking frozen rum punch.
- 08:20 A level crossing. The man operating the crossing gates jumped into the pick-up truck almost hidden by the trees to beat the train to the next crossing. A small petrol railcar precedes the train to make sure that the track is clear.
- 08:35 Passing some disused sugar cane trucks. The original purpose of the line was to transport sugar cane. 2005 is the last year of sugar production in St. Kitts. A victim of changes in EU policies.
- 08:46 Crossing an impressive trestle bridge
- 09:39 Looking North towards St. Eustatius island.
- 09:46 Children from a local school greet the train.
- 10:15 The end of the ride. Transfer to a minibus to complete the tour.
- 11:05 Stopped to look across the harbour towards Golden Princess
- 11:25 Back at the dockside in Basseterre.
- 11:40 The clouds clear to reveal the top of Mt Misery, the highest point on St. Kitts
- 13:55 Pelicans soaring above the ship.
- 14:30 Chris and Cathy get back on board after their excursion. They took a different "adventure ashore" .. kayaking the South East Peninsula although Chris insists they were not kayaks at all.
- 14:49 Getting ready to sail. The Blue Peter is joined by the flags of St. Kitts and Bermuda.
- 14:58 Started to push away from the dock ready to sail to Grenada. On deck in the sun for the sail away.
- 19:25 Dressed up and ready for the formal dinner.

## Day 4 - Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – Grenada



- 07:00 Approaching Grenada. Heavy clouds, sunlight and showers.
- 07:50 Breakfast in Horizon Court
- 08:15 Docked at St. George's
- 09:15 Waiting to depart on our 4x4 tour
- 09:25 Stopped at a viewpoint. We could look across St. George's towards Golden Princess
- 09:50 Lots of evidence of damage from Hurricane Ivan which hit in September 2004.
- 10:30 Start of hike through the rain forest.
- 10:40 Arrival at the Sulphur pond.
- 11:10 Back on our 4x4.
- 11:15 Stop for fresh fruit refreshments.
- 12:00 Stop at the Grand Etang Lake. Our guide caught fish with his bare hands.
- 13:00 Back at the cruise ship dock.
- 14:30 Walking around the upper deck to look at the views of St. George.
- 16:50 On deck for the departure to Isla Margarita.
- 17:30 On deck for sunset.

## Day 5 - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – Isla Margarita, Venezuela



- 07:00 At anchor off Isla Margarita, Venezuela. We were originally scheduled to dock on the mainland.
- 07:25 Ashore at the tender dock at El Guamache
- 08:30 At the Dolphin Pool at "Waterland"
- 08:55 In the water with Dolphins
- 09:20 End of the Dolphins encounter
- 11:05 On the tender back to Golden Princess
- 11:25 Back on board, watching the tender
- 14:15 Departure from anchor off Isla Margarita en route towards Aruba
- 17:55 On our balcony for a spectacular sunset.

## Day 6 - Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – Aruba



- 07:30 Approaching Aruba in dreadful weather. We were booked on a 4x4 tour in an open vehicle.
- 09:00 In the back of a Land Rover in the rain.
- 09:25 Arrival at the Ostrich Farm, waiting for a bus that could operate in the rain.
- 09:45 Under cover watching torrential rain.
- 10:15 Driving towards the Natural Bridge. There is flood water across the road in places.
- 10:25 At the Natural Bridge. The original Natural Bridge collapsed in September 2005 (just 2 months before our visit). A smaller backup Natural Bridge remains.
- 11:05 At ruins of an old gold mine on the shore.
- 11:20 Back at the Ostrich Farm for our planned tour.
- 12:20 Visiting Our Lady of Alto Vista.
- 12:43 California Lighthouse.
- 14:25 On deck on the Golden Princess.
- 14:33 Heavy rain again.
- 17:10 Pushing away from the dock for the cruise back to San Juan.
- 17:50 On deck for sunset at around 18:17.
- 19:45 The second formal dinner of the week.

**Day 7 - Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – At Sea**



- 09:25 Walking around an almost deserted deck
- 14:45 Playing cards on our balcony.
- 17:59 Sunset

**Day 8 - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – San Juan, Disembarkation**



07:30 Back in San Juan  
09:11 Disembarkation in the rain  
Return flight to London

