

Now that's what  
you call a  
'dream' holiday!

The author finds herself in a reverie on her maiden cruise on Genting Dream from Singapore to Phuket. Onboard the 18 decks tall luxury cruise liner is a dream world with 1674 staterooms, 35 restaurants and bar concepts, a delectable spread of diverse cuisines, the largest Asian Reflexology Spa at sea, and endless options for recreation making it an experience every traveller must indulge in at least once in a lifetime

Text by  
**Naina Nath**



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he Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore (MBCCS) is an architectural icon that can accommodate some of the world's largest ships. Waves and nautical elements take centre stage with an undulating roofscape that mimics the breaking of waves on the shore – featuring an angular rather than curvilinear form, with alternating panels of aluminum and glass along the length of the terminal.

This is my maiden cruise and I am really excited thinking about what's in store. I am part of the EDWIN@S.E.A. program and, along with 120 other delegates, on board Genting Dream for the Phuket Adventure.

We reached MBCCS around 3 pm on September 9. To my surprise, the embarkation process is seamless in spite of such a large crowd – she can carry 3352 passengers and 1999 crew members! Even though in a group, individual guests have to manage their check in. It is best to check in the luggage first and be hands-free till your boarding number is called out by the immigration desk which could take about 30–60 minutes. The cruise card handed over is the most important item during the journey. It will act as the room key as well as credit card to consume services on board. The charges are posted to the room folio and may be settled on the day of check out.

There is an online check in option available seven days prior to travel. It is not mandatory for guests to provide credit/debit card or cash deposit to establish their onboard account. However, pre-authorization will facilitate express check out and final settlement of one's account on the last day of the cruise as there will be a long queue to settle charges in cash. If an official receipt is not needed, charges can be settled via the Dream app before disembarking. How very convenient.

When I entered my Balcony Stateroom, the luggage was already there. This is my home till the 12th and I loved it at first sight – well-appointed with all modern amenities and a stunning view, thanks to the balcony. We had just started sailing and I watched

the Marina Bay Sands with its iconic SkyPark and the Singapore Flyer drifting away from me. I would urge all travellers not to compromise on the balcony bit. It's the best thing to have when cruising.

We immediately met for lunch at Lido where we were to dine for the next few days. The buffet spread is massive and truly international, designed to address the palate of a global audience.

To my surprise many authentic Indian preparations were included and I could see Indian faces behind the buffet counters too.

"Cruise is a very different product to sell and offers much better margins compared to traditional tour products," says Tanushka Kaur Anand, Executive Director, GPS and the operations powerhouse behind EDWIN. "Such educational initiatives help tour operators understand the complexities of the cruise product and appreciate the experiences from a customer perspective, which will enable them to sell much better."

Genting Dream features all the comforts of authentic Asian hospitality, combined with the finest experiences from around the world. It is 18 decks tall with 1674 staterooms, 35 restaurants and bar concepts, and 70 per cent of the rooms come with balconies. I had some free time so I decided to explore my new home.

According to CNN, Genting Dream has the ocean's most luxurious rooms. I have to admit, The Palace, tucked away in its own exclusive enclave on Genting Dream, is part boutique hotel, part private club house. Step inside and one is in a different world. Here one will find exclusivity, style and impeccable service at every turn. It's the ultimate luxury experience from Dream Cruises. Palace Villa (2BR duplex and among the largest at sea), Palace Penthouse, Palace Deluxe Suite and Palace Suite are the dwelling options.

More economical options include the Balcony Deluxe Room, Balcony Stateroom, Oceanview Stateroom (with window, no balcony) and Interior Stateroom (smallest option without window or balcony).



Interconnected rooms and connecting different class rooms are possible too.

For the foodie, Genting Dream is a fairyland offering a delectable spread of Chinese, South East Asian, Japanese, Korean and International fare. Dining at the Lido and Dream Dining Room is part of the My Cruise Fare. For enjoying the menu at any of the choicest restaurants, separate charges apply; prior reservation and dress code may also be applicable.

We caught up at Zouk Beach Club for our inaugural night celebrations. With a cabana seating, massive pool and giant LED screen, this venue is perfect for hosting clubbing events and movie nights. Past midnight some of us hopped in to Blue Lagoon, a popular Asian and international food court to enjoy a quick meal in front of live cooking stations.

There is nothing more mesmerizing than the view of the early morning sun from the balcony amidst the 'infinite indigo of immense possibilities'. I am not a tea person so I cannot make it sound more romantic by saying 'sipping my freshly brewed Earl Grey Twinings'. After an early breakfast, I started phase two of my self-discovery of Genting Dream.

On board, dreams come to life in the most captivating live production shows exclusively created to complement the grand vacation on the high seas. Be enthralled with a rich program of live production shows and enrichment events, including the first-ever 'China's Got Talent – The Dream Experience' at sea. No wonder Genting Dream was awarded 'Best Cruise Line – Entertainment, Travel Weekly Asia Readers Choice Awards 2017'.

A mysterious story of a mermaid and an astronaut

comes alive in The Voyage of A Lover's Dream and award-winning ballroom dance champions Gabriele & Iryna, Viktor & Laura, Artem & Tjasa, Dmytrio & Vladyslav feature in Rhythm Divine – Latin Ballroom Dance Show. Don't miss these for the moon.

Like airport duty free, shopping on board comes with remarkable value, thanks to tax and duty free savings. A range of leading luxury brands and designer products are available including high-end goods and fine leather merchandise.

There's more to pamper oneself. Welcome to the most comprehensive Beauty and Wellness Centre at sea – from Swedish, to hot stone, to aroma touch, to the first ever Himalayan salt stone massage on cruise in the world, from beautiful scrubs and warm wraps to hand-touch facials and intense treatments with high technology beauty devices. Genting Dream also features the largest Asian Reflexology Spa at sea. The Thermal Lounge with 60 oversized reflexology thrones, and male and female vitality pools, offer rest and revitalization like no other. There is also a 24-hour gymnasium and Crystal Life, a specially-designed nutritious menu for health-conscious guests.

We reached Phuket around 6 pm. Our vessel could not berth at the cruise terminal as it's too big and hence smaller boats took us to the mainland. After disembarking, we took an hour-long taxi ride to Patong beach and also visited Bangla walking street to experience the nightlife and do some brisk shopping. We managed limited 'bar-hopping' and finally landed up at Illuzion night club. It was sunrise when we got back to the port.

The boat ride to the ship when the day is just

#### The Balcony Stateroom



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Initiatives like GPS EDWIN help tour operators understand the complexities of the cruise product and appreciate the experiences from a customer perspective, which will help them sell much better”

**TANUSHKA KAUR ANAND**  
Executive Director, GPS

Photo credit  
Genting Cruise Lines



**Medical**

Every cruise ship has medical professionals on board. There will be a charge for medical services rendered. However, please take a travel insurance that covers cruising.



**Smoking**

Smoking is permitted on open decks and in designated public areas only (i.e. bars, cigar lounges and casino area). Smoking inside staterooms and suites is strictly prohibited but allowed in the balcony of the staterooms and suites). Cigarettes, e-cigarettes and cigars are permitted.



**Wi-Fi**

Satellite Internet connection is available on Dream Cruises. Wi-Fi packages can be bought straight from the Dream app without having to queue up at the front desk. Standard package starts at SGD 19 per day allowing email, chat and social media.



**Currency**

All prices onboard Genting Dream are in Singaporean Dollars (SGD).



**Gratuities**

Dream Cruises charges a per person gratuity of SGD 26 per night for Palace class rooms and SGD 21 for the other category rooms. This is mandatory.



Clockwise: The Lido restaurant; Voyage of A Lover's Dream at Zodiac Theatre; Main pool deck; Blue Lagoon restaurant; Outdoor Ropes Course & Zip Line; Bar 360; Naina Nath with Harmandeep Singh Anand, MD, GPS; LED display on the 300 metre-long Genting Dream ship-side; The Waterslide Park; Zouk Beach Club



"Though I have sold cruises to many customers, I have never had the opportunity to experience it in person. This has been so much fun and the kind of practical first-hand product knowledge we could gather in this trip is eye-opening"

**MRINAL AGGARWAL**  
Travel Nation



"Really an immersive learning experience being onboard Genting Dream. Appreciate the efforts of GPS EDWIN and Genting Dream teams"

**KETKI RAMI**  
Dream Voyagers



"A cruise holiday is attractive because it can cater to all kinds of holiday makers and is an all-inclusive package which is affordable too"

**NARESH RAWAL**  
Vice President - Sales; Genting Cruise Lines - Star Cruises, Dream Cruises & Crystal Cruises

recently voted Asia's best and the fourth best club in the world by the DJ Mag Top 100 Clubs poll. During the day it transforms into a shared space for day-time loungers and Zumba class for kids. Adjacent to Zouk is the gaming room with fun activities like VR gaming and even a set table for a game of beer pong! I was enamoured by the esoteric experience of the UV bowling alley (Glow Bowl) with neon-coloured balls and glowing pins and to my happiness they had happy hours - Pay for one, Play for two! And though I bowled (very well, I must add), I was the one that got bowled over!

Down a drink or two at Bar 360 a unique three-storey 360-degree set-up which allows guests to enjoy unobstructed views of the live entertainment onboard from any angle. One can sit by the bar and sip their favourite liqueur or even play a few rounds on the slot machines.

We celebrated the last night with thousands of co-travellers on the 16th floor deck, a massive pool area while witnessing an open air live concert. The energy was bursting through the roof. And in this case may I add, all the way to the stars! Travellers of all ages danced away to their heart's content.

We were also treated to an amazing display of fireworks - not the usual polluting kind but specially-designed for the cruise line with no adverse impact on the environment.

It is natural after reading all of this to think about weddings and honeymoons. Genting Dream is an excellent setting. The Cruise Experts can help plan an unforgettable proposal, nuptials or honeymoon from start to finish, custom-made to suit one's liking.

My maiden voyage was coming to an end and what an incredible experience it was. I really hope that some day ships like Genting Dream can home port in India for more travellers to experience a cruise as marvellous as this. It is worth every moment for its sheer grandeur, variety, indulgence and unlimited fun.

dawning was one of the most spectacular experiences for me especially seeing 'I Love Phuket' and 'Genting Dream' displayed on the 300 metre-long ship-side LED lighting system in electric blue!

On our last day on board I discovered an endless assortment of activities including waterslides, bowling alley, ropes course and many more. The Waterslide Park has six slides with gentler ones for the family and faster ones for thrill-seekers. There is also a Rock Climbing Wall for energetic kids. And believe it or not, a 9-hole putting course too.

After sweating it out a bit, next on my agenda was the bars and lounges. I have to specially mention Zouk, the glamorous high-energy nightclub



The author was hosted by Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)