

Beat: Travel

## Aging Diamond Princess: An Experience Dampened by Subpar Amenities

### Aging Diamond Princess

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#### USPA NEWS - \*\*Aging Diamond Princess: An Unfulfilled Promise on the High Seas\*\*

Discover the unexpected challenges faced aboard the once-celebrated Diamond Princess. From stifling cabin temperatures and unreliable plumbing to lackluster dining and dated amenities, join us as we navigate the highs and lows of this iconic cruise ship's voyage through Japan and Korea. Can the dedicated crew compensate for the ship's aging infrastructure? Read on to find out.

As an experienced traveler with a penchant for cruises, I embarked on the Diamond Princess with high expectations. This voyage from Yokohama on July 27th, 2024, promised an enticing itinerary through Japan and South Korea, but the experience aboard the aging ship fell short in several aspects.

#### The Itinerary

Our journey began in Yokohama, Tokyo, where the ship set sail at 6:30 AM. The following ports of call included Nagoya, Busan in Korea, Akita City, Aomori City, and Hitachinaka, before returning to Yokohama on August 5th. Each destination offered unique cultural and historical insights, but the onboard experience detracted significantly from the overall enjoyment of the trip.

#### The Ship

The Diamond Princess, launched in 2004, was once considered a gem in Princess Cruises' fleet. However, signs of its age are now apparent. The ship, designed to carry over 2,600 passengers, struggles to offer the modern amenities and comfort expected of contemporary cruise liners.

#### Cabin Comfort and Climate Control

One of the most notable issues was the malfunctioning air conditioning system. Throughout the voyage, our entire row of cabins suffered from an inability to drop below 75 degrees Fahrenheit, making sleeping conditions less than ideal. Despite numerous complaints to the crew, the problem persisted, affecting the quality of rest and overall comfort. This issue is not an isolated one, as reviews on platforms like Cruise Critic frequently mention similar problems on the Diamond Princess.

#### Plumbing Problems

Adding to the discomfort, the toilets in several cabins, including ours, ceased to function for an entire afternoon. The lack of timely repairs and communication from the crew exacerbated the inconvenience. Plumbing issues are a significant concern on any ship, but their occurrence on a cruise liner with the reputation of Princess Cruises is particularly disheartening.

#### Dining Experience

The dining experience on the Diamond Princess can best be described as passable. The variety and quality of food offered in the main dining rooms and buffets were far from the culinary delights one might expect from a cruise of this caliber.

While the crew made commendable efforts to accommodate dietary restrictions and preferences, the overall standard of the cuisine was mediocre. Long-time cruisers will remember the days when Princess Cruises were renowned for their exquisite dining experiences, a stark contrast to the current state of affairs.

#### Entertainment and Activities

Entertainment on the Diamond Princess followed a predictable pattern, with nightly shows and daily activities that catered primarily to

an older demographic. While the effort to provide varied programming is evident, the execution often felt lackluster. The enrichment lectures, though informative, lacked the engaging quality that might captivate a more diverse audience.

#### Well-Meaning but Overburdened Crew

It is essential to highlight the dedication and professionalism of the crew. Despite the ship's aging infrastructure and the litany of complaints from passengers, the staff remained courteous and eager to assist. However, it was clear that they were often overburdened and constrained by the ship's limitations.

The crew's efforts to maintain a positive atmosphere and resolve issues were commendable but ultimately hampered by factors beyond their control.

#### Concluding Thoughts

While the Diamond Princess offers a scenic and culturally rich itinerary, the onboard experience leaves much to be desired. The combination of dated facilities, climate control issues, plumbing problems, and lackluster dining options overshadow the well-meaning efforts of the crew. For future travelers considering this voyage, it is advisable to weigh these factors carefully. The Diamond Princess may have been a shining star in its prime, but it now requires significant updates and refurbishments to meet the expectations of modern cruisers.

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