

Panama Canal Trip
Coral Princess

Oct 22 08 Wednesday Taxi by Byron to LAX. Left 06:30 arrived 14:05 Miami. Bus to Ship arrived 1530. Walked to cabin E333. The ship was full, so we didn't get the upgrade that we expected. The window was obscured by the tender. We got light, but no view. We had a 10 minute wait for dinner in dining room. We had "anytime seating" instead of set dining times and the same people at the table.

We ate all our breakfasts at the Horizon Court (buffet at the top of the ship).

Oct 23 Thursday At Sea. 08:00 Went east of Cuba. The Port lecturer spoke on Aruba. It was formal night and the Captain's cocktail party, so we ate up in the Buffet.

Oct 24 Friday At Sea. breakfast at 09:45, walked two miles on various decks Lunch at buffet. 1330 Cartagena lecture. Tried to join the Shuffle board tournament, but no one showed up, no prizes. Dinner Salmon in Main Diningroom.

Oct 25 Saturday breakfast 07:15 Walked off boat in Oranjestad and east 1 mile. The internet café charged 1.50 ½ hour (instead of the 0.75/minute on the boat). It was muggy. We walked 1.3 miles to Eagle Beach: nice sand, water warm, trash on beach. We ate lunch dining room. The fish plate was good. Dinner in the main dining room was very bland that night.

Oct 26 Sunday breakfast 08:30. Took \$12 taxi to Old town in Cartagena. It was very hot and humid with no wind. The old city was quite beautiful. It sort of reminded me of the area of New Orleans around Bourbon St. Returned to ship \$15 by taxi. Driver spoke good English. 1130.lunch two salads. Dinner steak

Oct 27 Monday up 6:15 We entered the first lock of the Panama Canal at 0800.(Gatun Locks). Lunch service in the dining room was slow. We missed the narrowest part of the canal where they had the most problems when building it. Did NOT make us happy. The show that night was a Comedian. dinner OK

Oct 28 Tuesday At sea. Lunch DR It was another formal night. Lobster was on the menu in the main dining room, which was off limits to us because we had not brought formal wear. One of our lunch companions had told us to ASK for the lobster up in the buffet. We ended up eating our salad at the Buffet, the lobster was sent to our room, then we promenaded a bit, ending up at the buffet for desert.

Oct 29 Wednesday. Spent 2 hours in Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Accessed the Internet and walked to end of point. The beach and town were dirty and littered. We saw an Iguana in town. Dinner in DR

Oct30 Thursday We took the tender to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua and spent 2 hours walking in town. Coolish. Cloudy all day.

Oct 31 Friday Puerto Quesnal, Guatemala. No town in sight. Weather clear and hot. HC dinner. Could have skipped this garden spot.

Nov 1 Saturday Huatalco, Mex. We went snorkeling at a beach that the locals use in clear water. (\$5 equipment rental.) Nice coral reef with BIG blue fish. We would have LIKED more time here!

Nov 2 Sunday at Sea. hazy 22.7 knots movie 5 pm

Nov 3 Monday at sea Off Cabo san Luis 1130 Cooler outside

Nov 4 Tuesday at sea cooler 68 F. watched vote 1600 until 1845 on CNN. Went to pianist and comedian. No TV when we returned. Didn't come back until 022.

Nov 5 Wednesday arrived port at 0630. Off ship at 925, walked with no stops. Waited 10 minutes for \$60 taxi home.

We found the food on the ship underseasoned. I guess they have to cater to people who think that the only seasoning in the world is salt, pepper, ketchup, and mustard. They would put fancy names on dishes. Sometimes you had no idea what you ordered, other times you know what the dish was supposed to be, but didn't recognize it when it came. Deserts were wonderful. Ice cream was almost as good as Italian. The dining room had a high opinion of themselves and you could die of old age eating dinner there. There were two nights where they put us at a table for two. We still had a leisurely meal, but it took only 2/3 the time.

We had a wonderful female singer that gave two concerts. One comedian was good the other wasn't very funny. There was a juggler who was quite entertaining. His show was on a day where the ship had quite a lot of "motion" so I was quite impressed with what he could do on a stage that didn't stay still. There was a concert pianist who was quite good, and a lounge singer with a good voice. Saw a couple of good movies.

All in all a good time. We both loved the Canal, but it does look it's age! There were lots of dings in concrete and lots of rust. The Coral Princess is a Panamax boat, which means that it couldn't be larger and go through the canal. There was 4 or 5 feet of room fore and aft of the boat, but less than 1 ft side to side. They hook you up to tractors called mules to keep you centered in the lock. The Princess supposedly pays the highest toll of anything going through the canal at a price of a quarter million\$. I guess they are going to expand the canal by putting in another set of locks off to the side.