

## **Cruising with Ty**

I have a child with autism, Ty who is now 8 years old. Traveling has been a fun and interesting experience with him. He is so interested in all aspects of traveling that it helps to remind me of finding the excitement in the little things.

I too went on the Cruise with Autism on the Seas and it was a great experience. My son and I had gone on the same 3 day cruise one year prior with mixed results. We did not book through Autism on the Seas and did not receive any special accommodations for him.

He was 6 at that time and he was unable to stay in the kids club and I was not able to keep him on his restricted diet. He had a great time, but many of his symptoms increased and he was acting very out of control. By the time we got back home, his teachers and therapists wanted to know what had happened. I told them about the cruise and it took him over a month to fully recover and get back to his previous level of functioning.

When we went on the cruise with Autism on the Seas in March of 2008 with the Berreys things were much different. The Autism on the Seas staff arranged for all of his dietary accommodations (gluten and casein free) ahead of time and we were able to sit back and enjoy meal times. They also spoke to the Adventure Ocean staff and they were able to help my son enjoy his time with the other kids. Unlike our last trip, he would not leave the other kids. He had such a great time.

I also enjoyed my time and really felt like Ty and I were both getting the vacation that we really needed. As a full time single parent it is hard to find time to just sit and read a book. It was a big change to not have to worry about him every minute. I was also able to meet other parents with similar stories and that was really fun too.

At the end of the three days, I was so disappointed that it was over. Ty and I kept saying we wish the cruise was longer. When we returned home he was able to go right back to his regular routine and returned to school without incident.

I am looking forward to our 7 day cruise in August 2009 with the gang from Autism on the Seas. I know it will be a great trip!

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