

Business Name:

**MSC Cruises World Europa**

**L** Labeling is non-existent here. The buffet has signs indicating what something is – it will say “chicken breast, or lasagna,” but never any ingredients or allergen labels. When it comes to main dining, specialty restaurants, or room service, there are still no labels on any of the food items. Your best bet is to ask for help from the head waiter. They are typically helpful and will honor your request by going and checking with the chef and kitchen staff. After the 1<sup>st</sup> night on the cruise, since I was seated in the same restaurant for main dining, I had the same head waiter and he had already gone ahead and checked on the menu for what could or could not be prepared for me based on tonight’s meal. While I appreciate this service in the main dining rooms, it is a far stretch from what to expect at the buffet. At the buffet, it’s a challenge, and that’s putting it mildly. Even typical safe foods were hard to come by – I was informed there was butter in the rice, and even cheese already in the salad greens. You can ask for a supervisor and they will do their best to check one or two ingredients for you, but do not expect them to go in the back and inquire about each and every product, because they will not, as they have a job to do. Lets be honest, there are some things that I don’t bother people about – like French fries. Unless I see them sprinkled with cheese and this is rare, it is safe to assume for me that most French fries don’t have milk on them. I am ok with food that came out of the fri-o-lator for the most part. Even if there is shared equipment or the slightest cross contamination. However, fried fish is always a concern because so many places uses milk in the fry batter for fish. It always blows my mind that people do this. I mean fish does not need milk, but there it is every time – milk powder, in the batter. So make sure that even if the fried fish to-day was ok for eating, if you see it on the buffet a following day, have them check again, because they may have changed their preparation and it could have milk.

Score of 4/10

**A** Cruise ships have so many amenities that its hard to cover all of them, so I’m going to cover this the best I can.

Lets start with the theater.

This was the first time I had cruised on the MSC world Europa.

Me and my family show up at the theater to see one of the evening shows and we are asked on the way in to see the reservations on our phone. We did not have any reservations because I didn’t know that I had to make any. I have cruised on MSC over three times already and there was never no mention about making reservations for the theater. The big difference between this ship and other previous MSC cruises is that you need to pre-reserve tickets to see theater shows. We did not know this and so we were turned away from the show. In fact, the staff was a

bit rude about it at first. It was a comedian and they were only there for that night and so we were pretty sad that we were going to miss that show. We asked to speak to one of the supervisors because we had nine people in our family group and we really wanted to see the show.

We explained to them that we had no idea about pre-reserving for the theater. They were sympathetic and explained that the world class of the ships so the Europa and possibly another one and maybe another one coming soon are the only three ships that actually need to make reservations for the theater. So at least they did not know that I was lying, because on other MSC cruise ships pre-reserving for shows is not a thing. I explained that it would be nice if we were told this on our first day and they said that it is listed on the program. When I went back to my room and looked at the program, there is the smallest of an Asterix next to the show and had you looked another page forward, and then all the way down the bottom, it says Reservations recommended. I found this to be quite strange and it was certainly a learning curve. We had to go to a kiosk, tap your room card and then reserve for a show. Since we had our family of nine with us, we were in three separate state rooms. Each state room must book separately for the show so if you have a party or your family with more people, make sure that you reserve for each room, you are not allowed to do it for people outside of your room, even though our reservations were all joined together under the same party.

So after all of that, how was the theater, the theater was OK. It wasn't bad but it wasn't great either.

If I was to say more, I would just say that some of the singing and performing was just nothing that was blowing anybody away. The theater seats were very nice and comfortable and I have to say there's not really a bad seat in the theater. So even if you show up and the theater is almost full. You still won't get a bad seat. However, that being said people do not move into the rows. Instead, when they come in, they will sit by the aisle so when you come in after them, you have to ask people excuse me can you please stand so that you can then pass them and get inside. It would be nice if the crew was able to politely ask some of the passengers, please move into the middle of the rows.

Don't get me wrong for people who have accessibility issues. I totally understand, wanting to stay by the aisle, but this was not the case with the majority of the people. I think they would like to stay by the aisle so that they could have faster time when it came at the end of the show. It just causes difficult difficulties when not everybody shows up a half hour before the show so if you come in two minutes before the show and you're asking people excuse me, can you please stand so I can pass, it can just get a bit cumbersome.

Next amenity I would talk about would be the spa. Being part of the Áurea class, we had access to the thermal spa included in our package. Massages cost extra. The spa area was really beautiful. It was nice that it was not too busy, however, that is because again, you have to make reservations to use the spa. You cannot just simply walk up and say I'd like to go into the spa, even if there was space available which I don't know if there was, they would only book for a day ahead. So just imagine if you get on the ship today, and you're making your plans start thinking about the days that you want to use the spa and book it now. Again, this was something different on the world class of ships on other MSC cruises. I would just show up and

say that I would like to access the thermal area and they would let me in. However, on the world class of ships you do need to make a reservation when you are planning to use the spa.

When discussing other amenities, some things that were really cool on this ship where that they had a really cool slide called the venom drop. However, for every day, but one, the venom drop slide was closed when we went to use it on the one day that it was open. The line was too long and we decided not to try. then there is also a bumper cars and basketball and every time we went to use this, it was either closed or already booked up. The casino as an amenity was nice however it was very, very small and smoky. For some reason, the ventilation was just not very good and the smoke would stagnate in this area and sadly the machines did not pay very well at all neither me or my family had any luck.

Aside from the buffet, there was also another grab and go pizza and French fries station down in front of the arcade area. This area was open late every night till about 1 AM. For me I was able to have some French fries, and my family was able to have some of the pizza I could not eat any of the pizza since there were no dairy free options. I asked if they ever made a pizza without cheese, and the person just laughed at me.

For amenities 5/10

**C** For cleanliness, our state room was very clean however, there was a hair on the shower and the toilet upon first inspection and they were not mine. The size and color could tell me that they were not mine. I've been growing up my hair for a bit if you haven't noticed. Not sure yet if I'll keep it I've never had her this long before. We'll have to see how it goes. There was also no hand soap and no tissues stocked in the bathroom in my state room. I asked the attendant and they were great at replenishing these items quickly. Also let me say here that in if you haven't seen this video yet, I got very sick on this ship I'll put a link to my video right here but when I got really sick

The cabin attendant was so helpful at cleaning up my room and making sure that it was clean and bringing me fresh towels as needed. I will also say that every other part of the ship that I saw, including the buffet, the restaurant, all of the hallways, and even the hospital on board as I told you, I visited the hospital for a time and even though I was foggy and kind of loopy, I do remember that it was very clean and organized. However, not really a cleanliness issue, but I would say that the entire ship was very warm now this is weird when I say this because I am used to cruising in the Caribbean and this was my first cruise in the Mediterranean and it was in January so that being said, I am not quite sure what the temperature should be inside a cruise ship in the Mediterranean in January. Granted outside at night in the Mediterranean, it was a little chilly so therefore I can see the heat being on the ship was a bit toasty in many of the places I would think that the safe range is 68 to 72°. That being said, I would say that many parts of the ship would average 75 to 78°.

8/10

**F** On to flavor - I was very impressed with the flavor of the foods. In the general dining room all of the food every night was extremely tasty. From great potatoes and meats to fish and even very nice dairy free desserts. The buffet foods, or the ones I tried, were good too.

I can even speak for the rest of the people in my family group that they were all on average, extremely satisfied with the flavor of the food. When it came to breakfast, The bacon on the buffet was always undercooked and too flabby.

8/10

**A** For attitude, this is where it gets a bit interesting. Let me start out with saying that as I told you, this was the first time that I had cruised on the Mediterranean with MSC. And why am I saying that I'm saying that because cruising on the Mediterranean turned out to be very different from cruising in the Caribbean. So, when you cruise from the Caribbean the ship will leave from Florida and it will go to its itinerary meaning either the private island or the Bahamas or Mexico and then you come back to Florida after three days or five days or seven days. One more if you're lucky. 🟡 now on the Mediterranean, even though we boarded in Civitavecchia Italy, every day at every other port, there were passengers disembarking and embarking. So it was kind of funky in a way because we didn't have the same passengers for our entire cruise. This answers my question from the first day when I was wondering why we didn't have a Sail away party? on every cruise ship I have been in the past we always have a Sail away party. It made sense to me after a few days when I heard everybody coming and going, and you would see everyone redoing safety drills every single day and so the ship is more of a transient cruise ship where people get off and on at every single port of call at every single day. So why do I start to mention this when it comes to attitudes because the first reason would be that MSC cruises do not come standard with drink packages. When you come on board, and you have purchased a normal fare,

Your fair would include coffee, tea, some juice, and bottled water only while you are in the dining room, not while you were in the buffet. If you wish to have any soft drinks or alcoholic beverages or specialty coffees, you have to pay for every beverage. So therefore, MSC employees will go around, trying to sell a drink package to you when I have done this on Caribbean cruises I got used to it in the first night when we leave they walk around with their tablets and they ask everybody who would like to buy a drink package and it is over in the first night. However, on this transient Cruise, we passengers were getting on and off every single day and some people ending their cruise. Some people starting their cruise. It made it prudent for the workers to go around every single day of the cruise trying to sell drink packages. This would obviously cause a lot of confusion and often frustration for the passengers and the employees, testing their attitudes. When you would say to an employee that today is the fourth day I've been on the cruise, and I have told people for three days that I do not want to buy a drink package they would start to make a not so friendly face at you and walk away. Me and my family

joked that we actually wish we had T-shirts or pins that we could put on ourselves that would say not buying the drink package so that people would know and they would not continue to ask us for the entire seven days of the cruise.

Also going back to the learning curves that I mentioned, about the theater and the spa and needing Reservations to access amenities on the ship. For first time, Mediterranean cruisers like myself and my family, when not knowing these things often times our ignorance would lead us to ask questions to them and while we're trying to question them, they're also trying to carry out their normal business operations. They did not have the correct amount of patience or love That they should have in order to answer such questions. They would just assume that we should know these things and that if we were saying that we didn't, they would often take us as liars and were rude about it.

For our dining room staff, they were beyond amazing and if they were the only staff that we had encountered on our whole trip, but of course that's not possible because there's hundreds and hundreds of workers on board the cruise ship but if it was just a dining room staff they would get a perfect score Because they were so friendly full of smiles when out of their way to help us, they remembered our group and they did their best to give us our same table every night for dinner, even though it was not guaranteed. On three nights, they even lined up in front of the dining room and clapped and danced when we entered because there was so happy to see us. We even took a group photo with them on the last night and two of them cried and said goodbye to us it was kind of like they were family or at least felt that way, and it was amazing and they left us with a truly spectacular feel of what a positive attitude should be like from a worker.

My cabin attendant was also extremely nice and extremely friendly and helpful when I got very sick. On day two I had purchased the Wi-Fi plan and it did not operate to the way that it should. They said they were having issues with the Wi-Fi on board and after trying to help me diagnose what the issue was with my phone they then just said they would offer me a refund and they told me to go to the services desk, and make sure that they had applied that refund to my bill. The folks at the service desk were not very friendly and lack positive attitude as well.

14/20

**C** When it comes to pricing,

We did not get the cabin that we actually paid for so we had booked a deluxe Aurea suite with Promenade and Ocean view. Clearly listed on their website it's supposed to be a comfortable king bed with a sitting area with a double sofa, bed or basically a separate living room. It's supposed to measure approximately 215 ft.<sup>2</sup>. What we actually ended up getting was a deluxe balcony that only measured 172 ft.<sup>2</sup> the couch and or sitting area was missing from our room. I did not know the specifications perfectly until after I got home I know I should've done my research a little bit better but I just booked a room and then when I went back to actually make my video and look at the actual kind of room I had and then see the specifications. I said gee, this is not exactly what we had so I have actually contacted MSC twice already trying to find out

About the specifications of the room and I did not get what I paid for and they have still not responded.

For the actual cost of the cruise, I think the value is great in terms of what you get however, I can be sometimes a frugal cruiser has seen by other people. I do not typically buy the drink package because I'm not the biggest drinker. I also most times do not buy the Wi-Fi package because I like to disconnect and I don't do as many specialty restaurants as some other folks. I typically try out only one pro cruise, where some people may do specialty dining every night. specialty dining is an additional cost and it can really add up your bill quite significantly. Let's not mention that we also need to be careful on our casino spending as I mentioned the casino was especially tight and did not pay very well at all. You could easily keep trying and trying and thinking ok I'm going to win now let me keep spending some more money and it could become very expensive very quickly, so please be careful with that.

8/10

**T** When it comes to timeliness, I am going to talk about how fast I was able to get served my food in the dining room and let me tell you it was fast. There was never a long wait to get service. We were able to come right in and get seated and again like I said when I talked about attitude, our weight stuff was amazing, and did an incredible job at serving us really quickly. When it comes to other things and timeliness such as the theater and not being able to access the theater because we did not know about the rules and regulations and having to wait until the next day that was an issue for timeliness and some, the next day was actually not the show that we wanted to see because that was a one time only deal and we missed it completely and we're not able to make it up.

7/10

**O** For options, I was very happy with the main dining options. My head waiter was able to get a lot of items on the menu made dairy free, and especially on this cruise. I have to give a big shout out to the chefs and to my weight staff for having not one but several dairy free dessert options on almost every night of the cruise. This was incredible! Most cruises desserts typically consist of fruit or sorbet, and I have to admit that those are quite boring and sad options. Don't get me wrong, one night there was fruit and sorbet on this cruise every other night there was not one, but several dairy free options of delicious desserts. They were just amazing. Sadly for milk options, when having coffee in the buffet or in the main dining room, there is no milk substitutes. In the specialty coffee restaurant, there was three milk alternatives, which was great, but again this only comes with an added additional cost. For options when it comes to late night eating, again there was a pizzeria. There was open late, but did not serve any dairy free pizza and all I could have was French fries.

8/10

**R** So when it comes to reception as I've mentioned earlier, this was a quite different cruise in the fact that people were coming and going every single day. There was no Sail away party and there was no huge greeting when we came on board I found it weird at first because I was saying to myself wow where is everybody to greet us? But then after I was learning about everyone coming and going every day, I started to understand why . However, that makes me sad because reception and greeting onto the ship was clearly lacking. Not being welcomed in the theater or the spa. The first time we showed up again was also sad . that being said the reception of our dining room crew like I said, blew us away! The way these folks worked to make us feel welcomed and wanted and even part of their family was just fantastic.

Score of 8/10

**Total Score** 70 /100

**Grade:** C-