

# United Arab Emirates – Arabian Sea – India | Coastal Breeze News

<http://coastalbreezenews.com/index.php/2011/06/03/united-arab-emirates-%25e2%2580%2593-arabian-sea-%25e2%2580%2593-india/>

June 10, 2011

## By Bob Marks

Our April 8th arrival in Dubai was a sight beyond one's imagination at all the beauty and cleanliness, mile after mile in the middle of the desert. The high rise buildings were equal to NY City. The building designs are most unusual in their sky scraper beauty. We enjoyed seeing and visiting the world's largest shopping mall, apartment building and the tallest building in the world. One building contained a ski ramp where some of our people skied. We sat in a restaurant enjoying a coffee, watching people ski down the slope, and take the tram up for another trip. It was massive and being enjoyed by many local people living in the middle of the desert. There is no way for words to describe how beautiful and enjoyable Dubai is. It is a masterpiece of architecture and an engineer's dream. The people were so kind, neat, clean, well dressed, and friendly to us with English.



The Grand Stairs provided an elegant backdrop. Submitted photos

The Brilliance of the Seas sailed on the 10th at 4 pm to visit several ports of call. Each port contained its different culture and architecture from old to modern.

Saturday, April 16th we were scheduled to arrive in Goa, India at 8 am for the day. Our ship's captain announced that we would not be stopping there. There is an ongoing dispute between the local government and fishermen regarding a takeover of land used by the fishermen. To protest the government's action, the fishermen's boats created a blockade of the port's entrance allowing no ships to enter. Our captain stated that they had tentatively worked out an approval for our ship's entry, but was afraid that if the blockade was opened for us to enter that possibly the fishermen could attempt to stop us from leaving. The captain decided to bypass this visit and sailed on to Mumbai, India.

We never had any violence, hostility, or safety concerns.

Mumbai, India is truly a different story, country, and place. Over one billion people live in India, 12 million in Mumbai alone! We were told the number of people in this city is 28,000 for each square mile of land. People were very friendly, nice, and polite in every way. The city is dirty and people are very poor. There are taxis by the hundreds. Prices were cheap where shopping was mostly flea market style on the streets. Shopping was difficult because there were so many people. We mixed in with the locals and bargained for their goods which is welcomed and accepted. There never was concern for our safety, or our well being, while in any part of the city. Most of us took local taxis to tour the highlighted attractions such as Tai Mai Hall Hotel, City Street Laundry, Gateway Entrance to India, and the Victoria Train Station. The Station has 1,000 trains per day transporting 2—4 million people every day. The train's cars have no doors so passengers can enter and exit quickly. People hang out the doors and ride on top of the cars. We were told 10 people were killed or injured each day. Our two days in Mumbai gave us an opportunity to see a large part of the world population in living conditions which are in total contrast to our country. It is a sight and feeling indescribable other than through one's own eyes.

The Brilliance of the Seas is a lovely ship. The accommodations were nice, excellent nightly shows, and good food. The seas every day of our cruise were flat as a pancake. No rocking or rough water

at all. Each day was clear, sunny with temperatures from 79 to 95 degrees. We had rain one day at sea but all days in each port of call had super weather. A couple of people had a minor stomach virus or colds, but no major problem of illness in our group.



Two photos were required to fit all the members and their ladies.

We disembarked our ship in Dubai on April 21st. The MMC tour buses transferred us to the Tower Rotana Hotel. Check-in time was 2 pm. Upon arrival hotel management had rooms ready for our entire group at 11:30 am which was a real service and unexpected treat. At 3 pm all 53 of us booked an MMC exclusive desert safari with BBQ dinner boarding 11 white Land Rover Cruisers at the hotel. We placed 5 passengers in each cruiser. The 11 vehicle caravan departed for a long drive to the desert with photo stops during an exciting dune drive and visit to a camel farm. We watched a beautiful sunset in the desert. Upon reaching our campsite, we had the opportunity to do camel riding, sand boarding, and tried a henna design on our hands or feet. After working up an appetite, we enjoyed a delicious BBQ dinner and a shisha (the famous Arabic water pipe) while watching a well dressed first class belly dancer performing around the campfire by starlight. We arrived back in Dubai at 9:30 pm where we were dropped off to see the famous evening

dancing water fountain spectacular at the mall.

Our Desert Tour was one of the finest and perhaps the most enjoyable part of our trip. Many of our group expressed their enjoyment stating this was truly the highlight of their trip. Sue and I think that this tour was among the top 10 of all the tours taken in the 23 Cruises we have gone on so far. The tour company organized it well. It was first class in every way in the accommodations, food and entertainment. Truly a desert ride over domes like no other and seeing a MMC Caravan of 11 white Land Rovers wheeling thru the desert over domes for miles. It was a wonderful experience and beautiful sight that will remain with us forever!!!!

April 22, after a night's rest, we enjoyed our farewell breakfast at the Tower Rotana Hotel. People went in many directions to enjoy their last day with more of the sights, buildings, malls, and restaurants of Dubai before our 6:45 pm departure to the airport. Hotel check-out time was 2 pm. The hotel, once again, was so accommodating by allowing all our people to use their rooms up to 6 pm at no additional charge. Our 15 hour flight departed Dubai at 10:30 pm for the USA.

*Best Regards... Bob Marks*

The Marco Men's Club is a social organization with over 500 members. Residents of Marco Island, Isles of Capri and Goodland are welcome to join. The Club meets on the second Thursday of the month at the Mackle Park Community Center at 10:00 AM. Our social events include a wide range of activities from golf, sailing, bridge, travel/cruises, kayaking, Winter/Spring MBL baseball outings, NFL Football outings, theater at the Phil, the Sugden, the Barbara Mann Theater, etc, coed social events. Go to the MMC website [www.marcomensclub.com](http://www.marcomensclub.com) for more information and to download an application. Or visit us at one of our meetings at Mackle Park.