

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Travel: These 11 cruise ports are worth more than a brief excursion

By **DAVID DICKSTEIN** | daviddickstein@hotmail.com |

PUBLISHED: January 19, 2023 at 9:50 a.m. | UPDATED: January 19, 2023 at 9:51 a.m.

Nothing says your cruise vacation is over more than hearing that inevitable killjoy who yowls, “Back to reality!” as you’re walking off the ship for the last time.

But what if you could delay reality? That dream is doable if you have the time, money and desire to extend your vacation in or near the cruise port. You’re already there, so why not take one more shore excursion that lasts not just a few hours, but a few days?

That’s a rhetorical question for all wanderlusts with a healthy travel budget. Here’s another that isn’t rhetorical: Which port cities are worth suspending reality in after your stateroom key is deactivated? For some answers, let’s explore the four busiest ports in the U.S. that make up nearly three-quarters of all domestic-originating cruises. Then let’s explore foreign ports near and far that are deserved of a few days of post-cruise R&R or, even better, a dedicated vacation when that travel bug bites again.

Mykonos



Kalesma is a new five-star resort in the popular cruise port of Mykonos, Greece. (Photo by David Dickstein)

Set on a hilltop above Ornos Bay, two miles from where tourists wander the narrow streets of Old Town filled with quaint whitewashed shops and cafes, is a new boutique hotel that captures the magical aura of this Grecian paradise — best experienced when the cruise ships are gone. Secluded and stylish, yet unpretentious, Kalesma (kalesmamykonos.com) is so inviting that its name actually translates to “inviting.” Décor and design, staff, gourmet eats at Pere Ubu, top-notch amenities and, oh, those views of the Aegean Sea — like the rest of Mykonos, simply dazzling.