

This is the fourth in a series of communications intended to make your preparations for the conference cruise as thorough and smooth as possible. We've discussed registration, hotels, parking and tours: Now, let's discuss dining you can expect aboard Harmony of the Seas. BTW, you cannot book any dining, tours or shows until 90 days prior to sailing (ie, 9 June). Susan & I will let you know when to start booking and how to get to your site to do the booking.

When on the world's biggest cruise ship, you expect a selection of gastronomically astounding menus, and *Harmony of the Seas* certainly delivers on her dining options. There are venues for everyone to enjoy with no less than 18 on board. The variety is excellent and you can always find a place to eat, no matter the time of day. A number of venues -- beyond the buffet or main dining room -- offer complimentary breakfast and lunch. Picky eaters and those with dietary restrictions will be happy with Harmony of the Seas' included offerings; it's just a matter of finding the right venue for your tastes. The ship's additional-fee restaurants are comfortable and well-designed. They feel cozy and quiet -- in part because each venue caps the dining capacity to ensure an intimate experience. The cap, though, does lead to one big problem, passengers can't always get into the places they select. You should book reservations ahead of your sailing to assure you get to eat where you want, when you want. Barring that, book reservations once onboard either via the Royal IQ app or by visiting or calling the venue directly. You can be happy eating solely at the included options, but adding an alternative restaurant or two can make for a really special experience.

Free Dining

Main Dining Room (Decks 3, 4 and 5): The main dining room is actually made up of three dining rooms, all distinctly decorated. While the themes are different, the food is the same no matter where you eat. One of the restaurants -- American Icon (Deck 3) -- provides dining for those with the early assigned-time seating (which is where SAFN will be dining), while The Grande (Deck 4) offers the late seating and Silk (Deck 5) offer My Time Dining. An assigned seating means you'll eat at the same table, with the same people and have the same waiters at the same time every night. (Actually, SAFN will have the same tables, but you will be allowed to move around to any one of "our" tables each night). SAFN will dine at 6 p.m. **Dress:** Smart casual attire is suggested. Swimwear, shorts and jeans are not permitted at dinner, while the latter two are permitted at breakfast and lunch. On formal evenings (2), formal attire is appropriate in the restaurant, which includes suits and ties or tuxedos for men and dresses or dressy pants outfits for women.

American Icon is decorated in Americana style, with giant maps of the United States made out of license plates hanging on the walls, art made of round car lights and cool murals depicting American cities. The Grande feels elegant, with high-backed ivory chairs and pops of glossy black wood. Silk is Asian themed, with deep, plush red furniture and silk lanterns. For all meals, vegetarian, no-sugar-added, lactose-free and gluten-free options are identified. Notify your waiter and maître d about any food allergies or dietary requirements when you first board to ensure they can accommodate specific needs. (While you should note dietary restrictions when you book your cruise, please re-confirm once you're onboard.) If you require fairly specific accommodations, choose an assigned seating for your dining so you can have the same waiter, who can remember your needs, each night.

Breakfast is served daily in the Deck 3 Dining Room, American Icon, with Seating Times: 7:30 - 9:30 AM. You can eat either a la carte by ordering from the menu or by picking from the space's surprisingly extensive breakfast buffet. Or you can do both. The menu is the same each day, offering items like omelets, pancakes, juice, sides of bacon or ham and French toast. The buffet supplements the menu, with food such as fresh fruit, muesli, breakfast potatoes and pastries. It's a nice respite from the hustle

and bustle of the ship's buffet, and you can eat a quick meal or spend more time enjoying a leisurely breakfast.

American Icon also serves lunch, most often on sea days, Noon - 2 PM. (Watch for hours of operation in your daily Compass newsletter) Like breakfast, you can order strictly off the menu, visit the buffet or enjoy a combination of both. This is the best spot to get a salad onboard. At the buffet, you can pick out your greens, toppings (choose from olives, eggs, chicken, beans and tuna, for example), then select a dressing. The server will put it all into a bowl for you and chop it up using a pizza cutter. There is a large variety of greens (including arugula, endive and radicchio) as well as the number of protein toppings. The buffet also offers hot items, such as vegetable curry, mashed potatoes, pasta bake, broiled fish and grilled chicken, as well as an awesome variety of cheese. The menu offers starters such as cold strawberry bisque or baby spinach salad, entrees like truffled grilled cheese or lasagna al forno and desserts like ice cream or Key lime pie.

Dinner is always a plated affair no matter which main dining restaurant you pick. Menus are identical in all three main dining rooms/all three decks, and offer appetizers, soups and salads, entrees and desserts. All courses include a vegetarian option, beyond simply pasta dishes. Choose from appetizers like duck terrine or wild mushroom vol-au-vent. Soups offerings include a creamy lobster bisque or chilled cucumber soup. One of the favorite salads onboard is the tomato, watermelon and feta, served with a balsamic reduction. Entrees might include a tender filet mignon or vegetable tagine. Menus vary each night, but you can always order from the classic menu, which includes chilled shrimp and buttery escargots a la bourgeoise appetizers, French onion soup, Caesar salad, broiled Atlantic salmon, grilled chicken breast and New York sirloin.

Sorrento's Pizzeria (Deck 5): Located on the Royal Promenade, Sorrento's offers pizza by the slice or made to order. You will love the variety of slices here: usual offerings like cheese or pepperoni along with more exotic options like chicken tandoori. Gluten-free pizzas are available, made to order only. You'll also find two serve-yourself Coke machines here, which you can use if you've ordered a beverage package that includes soda. Sorrento's is open from lunchtime until very late.

Cafe Promenade (Deck 5): Cafe Promenade offers quick bites 24 hours a day. In the morning hours, grab pastries and doughnuts. Lunch and dinner deliver tasty sandwiches, such as roast beef, shrimp hoagies or chicken roti. But the best might be the post-dinnertime sweets, like chocolate banana bread. Cookies, tea and coffee are served around the clock.

Boardwalk Dog House (Deck 6): A fun addition to the Boardwalk, this feels a bit like a Coney Island staple. Try a traditional all-beef Coney Island Dog, bratwurst or chicken sausage, and slather on condiments such as mayo, American or German mustard, ketchup (unless you're a Chicago purist), and add peppers, onions or kraut. Dogs are served up fresh and messy. Swing by from around 11:30 a.m. until evening.

Vitality Cafe (Deck 6): Specializing in "light and healthy fare," the Vitality Cafe is located in the Vitality Spa complex. Menu items include yogurt parfaits, wraps and fresh fruit. Smoothies and fresh juice are available for an additional fee. Vitality Cafe is open roughly when the spa is (early morning until late evening).

Park Cafe (Deck 8): With its Central Park location, Park Cafe is a nice place to grab a hot panini and people-watch. Park Cafe serves breakfast and lunch every day. Enjoy a build-your-own bagel sandwich (though you might have to offer some direction on just how thick you'd like your schmear) for breakfast, and custom-made salads or kummelweck for lunch, along with hot soups and sandwiches. You can also

grab premade items, like egg salad sandwiches or Thai shrimp and noodles for the road; they're packed in convenient plastic containers.

Mini Bites (Deck 15): This mini venue serves mini foods -- literally, bite-sized treats like pork meatballs, little corn dogs, mini-quiches and tiny empanadas. You also can find single-bite cupcakes and fruit on toothpicks (pineapple, cantaloupe etc.) for delicious guilt-free snacks. Mini Bites is tucked away behind a Ping-Pong table on Deck 15, and you can enjoy a variety of little food while watching people zipline from Deck 16 to Deck 15. You'll also find a self-serve Coke machine here. Mini Bites is open for lunch and late-afternoon snacking.

Solarium Bistro (Deck 15): The Solarium Bistro overlooks the adults-only Solarium, a peaceful retreat on Harmony of the Seas. The Bistro, likewise, is calm and comfortable. It's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner; the first two serving essentially what amounts to a toned-down version of what is offered in the ship's buffet, the Windjammer Marketplace. At breakfast, you can get fried or scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, fruit and toast. Cold items, such as muesli or cereal, also are served. Lunch is salads, sandwiches and crepes, with some protein options.

But it's dinner that makes the Solarium Bistro shine. At night, you can order from an a la carte menu (all items priced individually) that includes items such as chicken kebabs, skirt steak or grilled shrimp. Lamb chops (\$10) and lobster tail (\$15) are also available at an extra cost. The menu is the same every night and works in conjunction with a fabulous Greek-themed buffet, which includes pita bread, hummus, baba ghanoush, tzatziki, Greek salad, couscous, fried calamari, moussaka and grilled mixed seafood, with huge sea scallops. You'll also find an extensive selection of breads and desserts (save room for the chocolate cake).

Reservations for dinner aren't required, but they are recommended.

Windjammer Marketplace (Deck 16): The ship's buffet, Windjammer Marketplace is loaded with options at all meals. While many cruise ship buffets are virtually empty at night, that's not the case on Harmony of the Seas, when passengers flock to the casual eatery, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The U-shaped space is large, occupying virtually a full third of the ship on Deck 16. The restaurant is light and bright, with lots of sunshine pouring in and a number of seating options: high tables, bar seating, tables for two or tables for eight. Hot and cold stations make up the uprights of the "U" while made-to-order grills and dessert bars create the lower curve (running along the back of the ship). Wait staff are quick and efficient, taking drink orders, carrying plates and cleaning tables at lightning speed. This helps combat the high volume of people who move through each day.

Breakfast starts bright and early, with an "early bird" continental option that lasts for about an hour. That's followed by a true breakfast, with hot and cold items like scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, ham, potatoes, bangers, grilled tomatoes and beans. Premade omelets -- plain or cheese -- are served here, too, but you can't get made-to-order omelets in Windjammer, though you can get custom fried or poached eggs. You'll also find a wealth of fruit, cheeses, cereals, milk, juice and other breakfast staples. A carving station, with fresh, hot sliced ham, is open every morning, as well.

Lunch offers a huge DIY salad bar, sandwiches, burgers, pizza, soup, tons of bread (with gluten-free options clearly identified) and a carving station that rotates daily, with items like pork loin or roast beef. Don't let the "Bakery" sign fool you. Yes, you can get bread here, but you'll also find French fries, chicken wings and fried chicken. At the back of the restaurant is a made-to-order pasta station as well as a rotating custom option that one day might offer paninis, the next German sausages with all the fixings. Desserts are cookies, cakes, gelatin parfaits and sugar-free cookies.

Dinner follows the same basic strategy as lunch and is especially popular on formal nights because, unlike other venues, no dinner dress code is enforced here. In addition to the salad bar, you will find a wide variety of hot items, such as pan-seared fish, beef stroganoff or barbecue chicken. The cheese table is exceptional, pairing cheese such as Brie or Stilton with cured meats like prosciutto. Even when you are heading elsewhere for dinner, you may like this as a nice option for a pre-dinner appetizer or post-meal dessert. Desserts include tortes, cheesecakes and puddings, along with hard-scooped ice cream. (Soft-serve ice cream is available near the pools, on Deck 15.)

Coastal Kitchen (Deck 17): Coastal Kitchen is open only to suite passengers and Pinnacle Members of Royal Caribbean's loyalty program, the Crown and Anchor Society. Coastal Kitchen and the Suite Lounge are adjoined, to the point you might not really be able to tell where one ends and the other begins. All suite passengers can dine at Coastal Kitchen at night, when it serves a fusion of Mediterranean and Californian farm cuisine, such as grilled salmon or deliciously crispy flatbreads. Food and drinks are available here all day long to passengers in the Suite Sky Class and above.

Fee Dining

Izumi Hibachi and Sushi (Deck 4); a la carte, or \$39 for the Hibachi Experience: The Asian restaurant serves sushi, sashimi, noodle bowls, soups and salads, all priced a la carte. The sushi part of the restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and service is excellent. While the menu is heavy on seafood, a few chicken and vegetarian dishes are available, and they're also wonderful. If you love sushi, try the spicy crispy shrimp roll. Not a fan of fish? Give the spicy miso ramen a shot. It's served in a large metal bowl, and your waiter will ladle and dole out with chopsticks a perfectly balanced portion of slightly spicy goodness into your soup bowl. It's a good one to share.

Be careful when you're booking Izumi using the Royal IQ app: "Izumi Hibachi and Sushi" will get you dinner at the sushi restaurant only, while the "Hibachi Experience" is for the meal served at a hibachi table. This experience is only available for dinner. The lower price is for the "Teppan Classics," your choice of yaki udon (chicken, beef or tofu), tori (chicken breast), wagyu (beef tenderloin) or ebb (tiger shrimp). The higher priced "Teppan Premier Combo" will get you premium combinations, such as tenderloin and shrimp or sea scallops and lobster. Dinner here is served in typical hibachi style, where you'll sit with others in a square around a hot hibachi surface as the chef makes mounds of rice, flips eggs with ease using a spatula and generally spends as much time entertaining as he does cooking. It's a fun experience that also makes for a fairly long meal. Top off your dinner with a selection of desserts; save room for the assorted mocha ice cream, made with green tea and red beans, for example.

Sabor Taqueria and Tequila Bar (Deck 6); \$25 per person: Located on the Boardwalk, Sabor is the ship's Mexican restaurant, open for lunch and dinner. The concept is fresh Mexican food made with fresh ingredients, and the menu promises things like guacamole made tableside. A big hit is the fresh gazpacho, a zesty cold soup that is slightly spicy. The carnitas tacos are also a hit. House-made chips and salsa are included in the meal.

Johnny Rockets (Deck 6); \$6.95: The popular 1950s-style diner serves up hamburgers, French fries (with toppings like chili and cheese), melts and hot dogs for lunch. This is not the spot for a "light meal," though you can get a salad or grilled chicken breast sandwich. Desserts include a two-scoop sundae or apple pie, served plain, a la mode or with a slice of cheddar cheese. Shakes, malts and floats cost extra. You'll find Johnny Rockets on the Boardwalk.

Those in the know head to Johnny Rockets for breakfast from 8 am – 10 am, which has no additional charge. Food is very diner-centric: flapjacks, fried eggs and hash browns. Best of all, it's usually crowd-free.

Starbucks (Deck 6); a la carte: If the cruise ship coffee just isn't doing it for you, head to Starbucks, on the Boardwalk, for your mocha latte or cappuccino fix.

Chops Grille (Deck 8); \$49: Chops Grille is Royal Caribbean's signature steakhouse, and this one, located in Central Park, is always packed at dinnertime. That's because it sticks with the big chophouse faves, like filet mignon, New York strip steak, braised short ribs and veal chops. Sure, seafood and chicken are offered as well, but, it's a steakhouse! Sides, like garlic mashed potatoes and sautéed mushrooms, are served family style. Dry-aged steaks and Maine lobster are available for an additional fee. Chops is open for dinner only.

150 Central Park (Deck 8); \$45 or \$89: This Michael Schwartz creation is located in Central Park and features two dinner options: a standard three-course dinner or a premium four-course (including two appetizers) menu, where each course is paired with wine. This is not a quick meal, as a number of courses and drinks are prepared tableside, a nice touch. The baby beet salad with red quinoa is also a great start to your meal. If you're dining with a meat-lover, try the dry-aged ribeye for two, cooked to your temperature preference, then beautifully sliced at your table for sharing. Save room for dessert, you can opt for items like tres leche or some excellent artisanal cheese.

Jamie's Italian (Deck 8); \$25 lunch, \$35 dinner: Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver lends his name and his menu to this restaurant, located in Central Park. Dishes are pure, rustic Italian. Come with an appetite and make sure to try one of the "Anti Plank" appetizers, beautifully prepared with either cured meats or vegetables. The burger entree is outrageous and delicious, with lots of smoky pancetta and gooey cheddar cheese. Pasta purists should try the spaghetti puttanesca or tagliatelle Bolognese. Save room for the limoncello (though that carries an extra fee). The lunch menu has fewer options than the dinner menu. After dinner, grab a drink at the Rising Tide Bar for a unique perspective of the Royal Promenade, as the bar slowly ascends and descends between three decks.

Wonderland (Decks 11 and 12); \$49: Spanning two decks, Wonderland's decor, inspired by "Alice in Wonderland," is impressive. But it's the dishes that are truly imaginative. This one is for the foodies and fans of molecular gastronomy; if you don't like fussy food, skip it. Innovative offerings include a baby vegetable garden, with tasty bread crumbs that resemble dirt or a reconstructed capers salad, with a liquid olive and ricotta powder. A large bar sits on the second floor, overlooking the main restaurant below, so you can watch people eat without actually partaking, if you prefer. The open kitchen is a lot of fun; you can see how the chef actually creates these molecular masterpieces. Wonderland is open for dinner only. Reservations are required.

Room Service; a la carte: A number of items on Harmony of the Seas' room service menu are complimentary, such as continental breakfast dishes, soups and salads and wraps. But premium items created by chef Michael Schwartz come with a \$4.95 per item upcharge. Choose from items such as thin-crust pizza margherita or an Angus burger on a brioche bun. Hot breakfast items also come with an additional fee from \$3.95 per. Choose from two eggs your way, an egg and chorizo tortilla or pancakes. **There is a delivery fee charged of \$7.95 on everything ordered from the room service menu with the exception of items ordered from the Continental Breakfast menu.**

Chef's Table: Treat yourself to an intimate and decadent dining experience at the Chef's Table, where no more than 16 guests indulge in a five-course, gourmet meal paired with fine wine and presented by the Executive Chef. Seating Times: Dinner only. Extremely limited, so book early through your Cruise Planner. Check onboard for hours of operation. Dress: Formal attire required. Costs: A \$95 per person fee covers meal, wine-pairings and gratuities are included. Specialty drinks, alcoholic beverages, bottled water, beer, wine and soft drinks are at current menu pricing.

Concierge Lounge: Exclusive lounge for Diamond Plus and Pinnacle Club members of Crown and Anchor Society as well as Suite guests (does not include Junior Suites) offers continental breakfast, as well as Hors d'oeuvres, and an honor bar. Continental Breakfast, 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM; Hors d'oeuvres and petit fours beginning the second evening, before and after dinner. Dress is smart casual attire; swimwear, shorts and jeans are not permitted. No additional costs. No reservations required.

Last but not least, Susan shared a new opportunity for dining called the discounted dining plan. When the dining reservations open, keep an eye out for the 3, 4 and 5-night specialty dining package plans that will be offered. By paying for the package in advance, you get a nice discount. You order your package of choice in the Cruise Planner and are allowed to make one reservation in advance of sailing for either the first or second night of the cruise only. Then once you board the ship, simply go to one of the specialty dining kiosks or restaurants as soon as possible to make the remainder of your reservations. It's a great way to sample several restaurants without breaking the bank!

OK, now that I have shared with you all the fantastic places you may dine while on the cruise, I feel the need to share some **Health and Weight Gain Cruise Tips!!!** With cruises tending to have an endless array of incredible food to gorge on from decadent deserts to the midnight buffet, you may worry about your waistline. You're on vacation and it can be fun to indulge! Use these simple cruise ideas to disembark and not be ten pounds heavier. **Why Weighing Yourself on Day 1 May Give You an Excuse to Gorge.** Yes, really. Just do it. You can always find a scale in the ship's gym. Go there to weigh yourself even if you have no intentions of using the gym during the rest of your voyage. Weigh yourself as soon as you get onboard so you can keep tabs on your weight gain during the cruise. Then weigh yourself periodically throughout the cruise and you may actually find that you're not packing on the pounds as much as you feared, giving you a well-deserved excuse to have a day of gluttony. **No Need for the Gym When You Can Use Stairs!** You're on vacation. There's no need to spend it at the gym unless you really love a good gym workout. Instead, simply hold firm on always using the stairs. Most large cruise ships have a minimum of 10 passenger decks (Harmony has more). Set a rule to never use the elevator and you'll end up burning lots of calories simply by trying to get from one place to another. If your stateroom happens to be on the bottom deck, **simply taking the stairs up to the Lido deck for lunch and back will burn approximately 100 calories**, based on the estimate of 5 calories burned per flight of stairs. Considering that you'll likely be making multiple trips up and down the ship's stairs throughout the day, you can realistically burn several hundred calories without even trying! So go ahead and get the chocolate lava cake! **Have Bread WITH Your Meal, Not Before.** A lovely basket of bread is always immediately delivered to your table upon getting seated for dinner. It's so easy to butter those rolls and load up on these carbs before your appetizer has even hit the lining. You may even find yourself too full to finish whatever delicious entrée you've picked out. So instead, make a special request for your server to only bring out the bread basket when your main course is served. Remove that carbastic temptation from the table prior to your main course. If you're still hungry while eating your meal, go ahead and have some bread. You won't gorge yourself with this filler as you would have prior to your meal's arrival. Save your appetite for the main event and forgo the seduction of all of those unnecessary carbs.

Now, don't you feel better about dining onboard? If not, you can join many SAFN members who will be getting their steps in every morning or evening with walks around the decks!

As a reminder, if you have not booked your hotel room for pre-cruise, please do it now. There are just a few rooms left. Since I have been in Florida this winter, I visited the Embassy Suites and I think it is one of THE most beautiful I have seen. The lobby and pool are gorgeous! I have pictures -- if you want me to send them, just ask. Also, some of you booked your room & said for 2 but did not put the 2nd

person's name on the reservation. If you could provide the second name, it would help when we are planning for the transport from hotel to ship.

We have an opportunity to do a shore excursion as a private group and have selected one in San Juan, Puerto Rico on Wednesday, Sept. 13 that we felt would be of interest to the majority of members. The excursion would take approximately 4.5 hours in total and would be open to members and all their guests. It would also be accessible to those with mobility restrictions. We need to get an approximate count of participants at this time. Would you please indicate your interest by completing the quick two question survey at the following link? Thank you!

<https://surveyhero.com/c/79a4d89>

If you have not yet completed the pre-cruise/post-cruise questionnaire that was sent with Update #1, please do so by clicking this link, completing the information required and submitting it so Susan gets the information she needs to book transfers: <https://surveyhero.com/c/3716f33> .

Until my next update about entertainment, have a Happy Easter.

Kay Fryman
Convention Chair