

A Shipboard Culinary Adventure

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Last summer Kris and I had the pleasure of spending a week aboard the Columbia III, the flagship of Mothership Adventures, a tour company operating in the coastal waters of British Columbia. Our days were spent sea kayaking in the Great Bear Rain Forest and nights spent aboard the ship. While the kayaking in the fjords and around the islands was quite an adventure, this article is about our shipboard cook Max and the wonderful meals that he prepared in the most well-organized kitchen I have ever seen.

My curiosity as a kitchen designer was piqued from the moment we stepped on board the Columbia III and Max was gracious enough to share his cooking techniques and philosophy with me. Measuring just 7 feet by 9 feet the U-shaped space was incredibly functional with every inch perfectly designed for Max to produce 3 daily meals for ten passengers and 4 crew members. These were not just simple meals but elaborately prepared 3 to 4 course feasts (The average passenger gained 3 to 5 pounds during the week in spite of paddling a kayak for 6 hours a day). He even kept a full cookie jar for between meal snacks.

The ship often bounced through waves so the entire kitchen was designed to eliminate crashes from plates, utensils, etc. All countertops and shelves had raised edges to keep things from sliding onto the floor. Every cabinet door had special locks so the doors did not fly open. There were hooks for utensils and coffee mugs everywhere. When we passed over waves or swells we would occasionally see Max slide across the room but never did we see a crash or spill. There were times however when the ship rolled so much that a meal would be delayed until we were in calmer waters. We were constantly amazed when, like a magician, Max would make food appear from unlikely places. He had supplies stowed all over the ship, even under the bed of our stateroom! There were coolers and a freezer on the roof and coolers and pantries below deck.

We always looked forward to getting back to the ship tired and sometimes very wet knowing that Max would have hot drinks, a nutritious meal and a decadent dessert waiting for us. After a week of eating Max's cooking I have a new appreciation of small kitchens. As long as the details of function and organization are in place it is not the size of the kitchen that matters as much as the skill of the cook and a highly developed sense of organization. If this trip sounds interesting to you look up Mothership Adventures and maybe you too can sample Max's culinary delights!

