

# Cool times await on Royal Caribbean ship

## Chill Island a 3-level beach retreat on *Icon of the Seas*

**R**oyal Caribbean's newest ship is nearing its maiden voyage. One of its more anticipated vessels in recent years, *Icon of the Seas* is splendid, luxurious, entertaining, innovative and chilling.

Chill Island – a three-level, water-filled extravaganza – ranks among its finest attributes. *Icon of the Seas* debuts in January as the largest ship in the world. It's nearly 1,200 feet in length, includes 20 decks (18 that are accessible to passengers), 40 bars and restaurants, neighborhoods, a guest capacity of 7,600 and an ocean of waterways.

Chill Island boasts eight pools – including an infinity pool – that begin refreshing guests from the top deck. The pools are strategically placed throughout the three decks. Some jut over the side, allowing guests to look out over the high seas. Others are suspended or populated by tables, steps and imbedded beach chairs on which to relax.

Hot tubs sprout from multiple locations, beach chairs snake through the impressively designed areas, a Caribbean band strums tunes and a swim-up bar – *Swim and Tonic* – steals



**CHILLING OUT** – Chill Island is a three-level complex comprised of swimming pools, hot tubs, bars and music. Image: Royal Caribbean.

the spotlight. Bar stools rise from the water. Libations flow, creating the perfect afternoon delight.

“Chill Island is really a multilevel experience centered around the ideal of chilling,” said Royal Caribbean CEO Michael Bayley.

“It’s a little of a day club, beach club kind of vibe, with this incredible

infinity pool,” said Claudia Diaz-Gonzalez, associate vice president of product development.

“The experience we want to create of the hideaway is an extension of that chill vibe.”

**The highlights include:**

**Royal Bay** – The largest pool ever put on a ship. Its entry has shallow

water, as well as two hot tubs that flank either side. This also is the longest deep-water pool that the cruise line ever has created.

**Swim and Tonic** – The first of its kind on a Royal Caribbean ship, exuding a party vibe to guests.

**The Cove** – A smaller pool with infinity ocean views. It’s a calmer experience – a place to soothe your senses.

**Cloud 17** – An adults-only area. Enjoy views of the ocean, tasty cocktails and hot tubs.

The Hideaway, meanwhile, is a neighborhood that combines a day club and beach club and is centered around a suspended infinity pool – the first of its kind on a cruise ship with 180-degree views of the ocean.

“You can get incredible views, great music, fantastic drinks with proximity to food from base camp,” Diaz-Gonzalez said.

Chill Island is an architectural wonder and an entertainment mecca. It might seem too good to be true, but that’s the only way Royal Caribbean knows how to treat its guests.

*Icon of the Seas* couldn’t be a more fitting name. It’s expected to be a floating masterpiece.

# Brush up on ‘forgotten war’ at Fort Ligonier

## Reconstruction, reenactments, museum comprise historic location

**T**he French and Indian War often is referred to as the “forgotten war.”

It took place from 1754 to 1763, and it didn’t pit France vs. Native Americans. In fact, it was the opposite. New France and a host of Native American tribes battled British America for control of the North American continent.

Major fighting took place in New York, Pennsylvania, Canada and Nova Scotia, and Fort Ligonier played a crucial role in helping the Brits win the war. Constructed in 1758, the fortification served as a post of passage to the newly constructed Fort Pitt.

History buffs can learn more about Fort Ligonier by visiting the reconstructed fortress in the town that shares its name. Full-scale rebuilding on its original site transports visitors to the 18th century, where they can learn how the fort was constructed to defend a critical supply line that sustained the community.

It’s an opportunity to marvel at the recreated artillery train and discover why it was important in defending Fort Ligonier and attacking Fort Duquesne. Guests can take a seat at General John Forbes’ desk and imagine the great responsibilities thrust upon his shoulders.

A powder magazine is the only original feature that remains from the 18th century. Discovered by archeologists,



**INSTANT REPLAY** – British soldiers stand watch at Fort Ligonier during a reenactment of the French and Indian War. Image: Richard Grant. Adobe Stock.

the floor can be seen by descending a steep entrance into the magazine.

Learn about women’s roles and medical care in the British Army at the Pennsylvania Hospital Ward. The hospital had mostly soldiers’ wives assigned to nursing duties to care for the sick and wounded.

Reenactments bring the fort to life. Historians relive the battles and daily routines. From the annual

commemoration of the October 12, 1758 attack on Fort Ligonier to the Memorial Day 18th Century Military History Weekend, visitors have opportunities to witness the sights, sounds and aromas of 1758.

A museum magnifies the history of Fort Ligonier. It’s a blend of galleries that details the era and people who played leading roles.

The George Washington Gallery is

comprised of rare treasures that marked experiences of the young officer’s first war. Handwritten writings, known as “Remarks,” were penned by Washington in 1787 and are on display. A pair of saddle pistols, presented to Washington by the Marquis de Lafayette during the Revolutionary War, also can be viewed. Washington is said to have carried them while commander-in-chief of the Continental army at Valley Forge.

The Art Gallery includes original works from the 18th and 19th centuries. The extensive collection includes an original of the fort’s namesake, Lord Ligonier, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Rembrandt Peale’s portrayal of Washington in his Virginia Regiment uniform.

Arthur St. Clair is considered a forgotten founding father by historians. He served in the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars, as well as political posts in the new United States government. A parlor – a room from his Hermitage home built in the 18th century – shares his name and details his life.

Learn about archaeological finds and how they enabled the fort’s reconstruction to be within inches of where it originally stood. Artifacts include handcrafted leather objects and a 200-year-old apple, preserved in the mud and silt of a streambed under the Loyallhanna Creek.

Fort Ligonier’s story is waiting to be told. Don’t forget to plan a visit.