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The Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has been serving gastronomes for 127 years. The historic market has survived the Great Depression and two World Wars! On a September Saturday, we decided to explore this public market, which attracts more than 100,000 people every week during 'normal' times.

The moment you step through its doors, the clatter, the bright ceiling lights and most importantly, the aroma in the air make you hungry. Although you would want to buy or taste a little something from every stall, that is quite impossible, because there are more than 80 merchants

Philadelphia's century-old public market



busy at work in this indoor marketplace.

The vendors at Reading Terminal Market sell a wide array of items, chiefly food; from fresh produce, seafood, meats and poultry, dairy and cheese, baked goods, ice cream, chocolate, spices and condiments, beverages, and ready-to-eat foods, which you could enjoy in its food courts before the pandemic hit us all.

Its Center Court has recently been opened for indoor diners, but only at 25 percent capacity in order to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The market was pretty crowded that Saturday afternoon, although not as bustling as it used to be in

the pre-pandemic days. Everyone, from the buyers to the sellers, was wearing a mask or face-covering as a requirement.

The place was vibrant enough to tickle your senses; the sights, sounds and smells makes the one of the largest and oldest public markets of America a must-visit. The entire place was buzzing with conversations and clank of kitchen utensils as foods were being prepared in front of patrons' eyes.

I spotted Chinese, Korean, Thai, Japanese, Spanish, Indian, Pennsylvania-Dutch, Greek, Caribbean, Latino and Middle-eastern vendors selling and

preparing their ethnic dishes. If you are an adventurous person foodwise, someone who loves to explore foods from around the world, then this public market gives you that perfect everything-under-one-roof opportunity.

As we explored the market, we bought pretzel buns and Amish-style hand-rolled butter, a kind of creamy, flavourful, slightly tangy, slow churned butter, to eat at breakfast the following morning.

We bought our lunch from a Kosher vendor called Hershel's East Side Deli, which the locals call the best Jewish eating place outside of the New York City. As we waited, they carved the meats and prepared our corned beef and pastrami sandwiches on rye bread with coleslaw and Russian dressing right before our eyes.

Because the market is located in the heart of Philadelphia, a major and one of the most populous American cities, car parking is not free. We paid \$5 for a 90-minute on-street parking. The Reading Terminal Market demands "repeat tourism" no matter what. We will have to find another weekend pretty soon to revisit this century-old historic market that is a gourmand's heaven.

Photo courtesy: Wara Karim

#TRAVEL

Travelling in the Cox's Bazar — Saint Martin route and around the Bay of Bengal by the royal cruise ship, Bay One

A cruise ship or a luxurious vessel is one of the prime attractions of maritime tourism in the world. Although these pleasure boats float in the deep sea, all facilities are available for enjoying the harmony between the blue water and the sky. Some of the best times of any trip may be spent on such ships.

For many years, attempts were made to introduce cruise ships in the country. The opportunity has now opened up thanks to the introduction of the foreign cruise ship, Bay One. The chance of drifting through the salty sea air in the luxurious ship is now available, thanks to the well-known 'Karnaphuli Ship-builders Ltd.' of Chittagong.

This fine luxury cruise 'Bay One' has been bought from Japan, with a view to provide international standard experiences to travellers. Although the previous name of the ship was 'Salvia Maru', it was re-christened as 'Cruise ship Bay One' after



come to Bangladesh.

On Saturday, 19 September, 2020, the ship reached Chittagong Port commenced services just two days later, after receiving relevant approval from the government.

The inauguration ceremonies held in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, saw State Minister of Water Transport Khalid Mahmood Choudhary, present as chief guest, with State Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism Md Mahboob Ali; Secretary of Water Transport Md Mezbah Uddin Choudhary; Commodore Abuzafar Md Jalal

Uddin, and Mayor of Cox's Bazar, Muzibor Rahman, in attendance.

Primarily this ship will facilitate the journey between Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin. As the cruise is endowed with IMO star, the company is considering and expansion of services, from Chittagong to Cox's Bazar, and surrounding areas of the islands. The work for constructing a jetty-pier at Daria Nagar in Cox's Bazar for anchoring the ship has been finalised as well.

The cruise ship was built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Japan and is 393 feet in

length, 55 feet in width, and the depth is approximately 18 feet. The average speed of the ship is 16.1 Nautical miles per hour, and highest average speed is 24 Nautical miles per hour. In the coastal routes of Bangladesh, this vessel is capable of drifting at 18 to 20 Nautical miles per hour. It can accommodate cruise arrangements for more than 2000 people.

By S N Islam

Photo courtesy: Karnaphuli Ship-builders Ltd.

