

Lately, instead of the firepower of navies, armies and air forces, it appears the best way to protect yourself from modern pirates is to use plastic deck chairs and tables as weapons. There was a real-life recent news report that cruise ship passengers helped fight off a Somali pirate attack by throwing those lethal plastic tables and deck chairs at the bad guys.

The ship is the MSC Melody, and while on its way to ports in the Middle East, the captain made the mistake of cruising too close to the Somalia coast where the pirates lurk.

A gang of armed pirates in a high-speed motorboat suddenly came dashing up to the cruise ship and started firing rifles and tossing boarding ropes up to the railings in preparation for boarding. Before the crew could be alerted, passengers near the railings took matters into their own hands and began to fight back with everything they could find on deck.

Fortunately for everyone but the pirates, the ship's armed guards arrived on deck and began firing at the pirates. This caused the raiders to jump back into their boat and speed away.

Although the reality of piracy is nothing to laugh at, this incident doesn't have to be all negative. Now that one cruise ship has experienced the thrill of contact with Somali pirates, others can add exciting activities to entice people to book cruises and join in on the fun. Here are a few ideas:



1. "Pirates of the Caribbean" night in the ship's ballroom starring Captain Johnny Depp and his mateys.
2. Deck chair throwing contest, with the winner earning a date with Captain Depp.
3. Shiver me timbers dance contest in the ballroom.
4. Flag ceremony every morning with cutlass-rattling and hoisting of the Jolly Roger over the decks.
5. In the ship's casino, everyone gambles with pieces of eight. In the dining room, corn on the cob is available for a buck and ear (get it? buccaneer)
6. Special rum and grog drinks served aboard.
7. Watch the captain and crew walk the plank and get waterboarded.
8. Dive contest to look for Davey Jones' locker.
9. You don't want to know what will happen on the poop deck.
10. Contest winners will be awarded a free flight on Air Force One to take rooftop level photos of the Statue of Liberty for the bargain price of \$328,835 (courtesy of U.S. taxpayers).