Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic: Amber Cove and Taino Bay

Two completely different cruise terminals serve the same town, and nobody tells you which one you are getting until you look at your itinerary.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Puerto Plata has two separate cruise terminals. Amber Cove is owned by Carnival Corporation and sits about 7.4 miles by road from town (about 22 minutes by car), serving Carnival, Princess and Holland America. Its pool, loungers and lazy river are free; the water slides, floats, umbrellas and cabanas cost extra. Taino Bay is in the town itself, about a 15-minute walk from downtown, serving Royal Caribbean and Celebrity. Both are docked ports, and neither publishes a taxi fare.

I walked Amber Cove: 9 things in the order you'll come to them

From my own visit on the Regal Princess, October 2026. Prices are from my photos of the port signs and a port price board photographed the same month; they change, so check on the day.

Book it from your phone

Tours in Amber Cove: the bookings Granny uses, one scan away.

Point your phone camera at a code. Your phone opens the booking page. No camera app? Type the web address printed under the code.

Amber Cove shore excursions

Cruise-only tours with a return-to-ship guarantee. Non-refundable from 14 days before the tour.

SHORE EXCURSIONS GROUP

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Compare cruise travel insurance plans side by side before final payment.

SQUAREMOUTH

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Check the official source

Rules, prices and hours change. Scan to open the official page and confirm before you go. These are not paid links.

Port information
Amber Cove

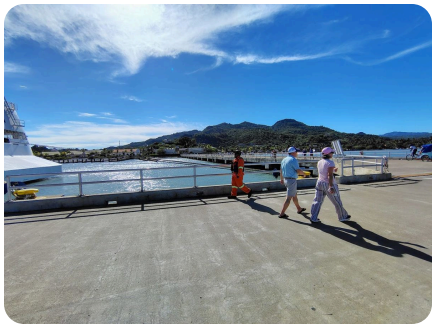
FAQs
Amber Cove

Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at **aicruisegranny.com/port-amber-cove**

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1. **The long pier.** My photos run 9:23 beside the ship to 9:32 at the entrance, with stops for pictures. Free pedal carts run the pier for tips; bring a few small bills.
2. **Left or right.** Left at the entrance is the shops and the way out to the taxis. Right is the Aqua Zone and the pool. It's very clean and pretty, with landscaping everywhere.
3. **The "Massage" sign.** It's a fish foot spa: $17 for 10 minutes, $22 for 20, $28 for 30 (my own photo of the sign). Fun to tell the grandkids; not a real massage.
4. **Food.** About $12 for a hamburger and $8 for a frozen drink (the last prices I could find, 2025). Your drink package might not work here, so ask your cruise line first.
5. **The free pool and lazy river.** The sign says "Enjoy free pool access and relax on our poolside loungers." A float is $12 for the day, and that's the one thing I wish I'd bought. Bring a towel from the ship.
6. **The walk-in pool.** Toward the back, so you can ease in without a ladder, with a kiddie splash area right near it. No pool lift is published.
7. **The water slides are not free.** They're on the "Rentals" sign, about $5 to $6 for an all-day band. The zip line is an all-day band too, up to about $30.
8. **Cabanas.** $520 for a poolside cabana on the port board ($535.99 on Carnival's site). Shared by eight, that's $65 each. Carnival calls it "ambulatory accessible": a few steps and a transfer to a seat. There's no beach here; the pool is your swim.
9. **Worth paying for.** If you leave the port, a cruise-line tour with a guaranteed return. For two people a Princess city tour is about $190 against a taxi at about $80, but Princess says that if your Princess-booked tour is delayed, the ship will wait for you. Check your own line's wording.



The long pier: about ten minutes with photo stops



The free walk-in pool at the back: no ladder



Our ship, the Regal Princess, docked at Amber Cove

Free

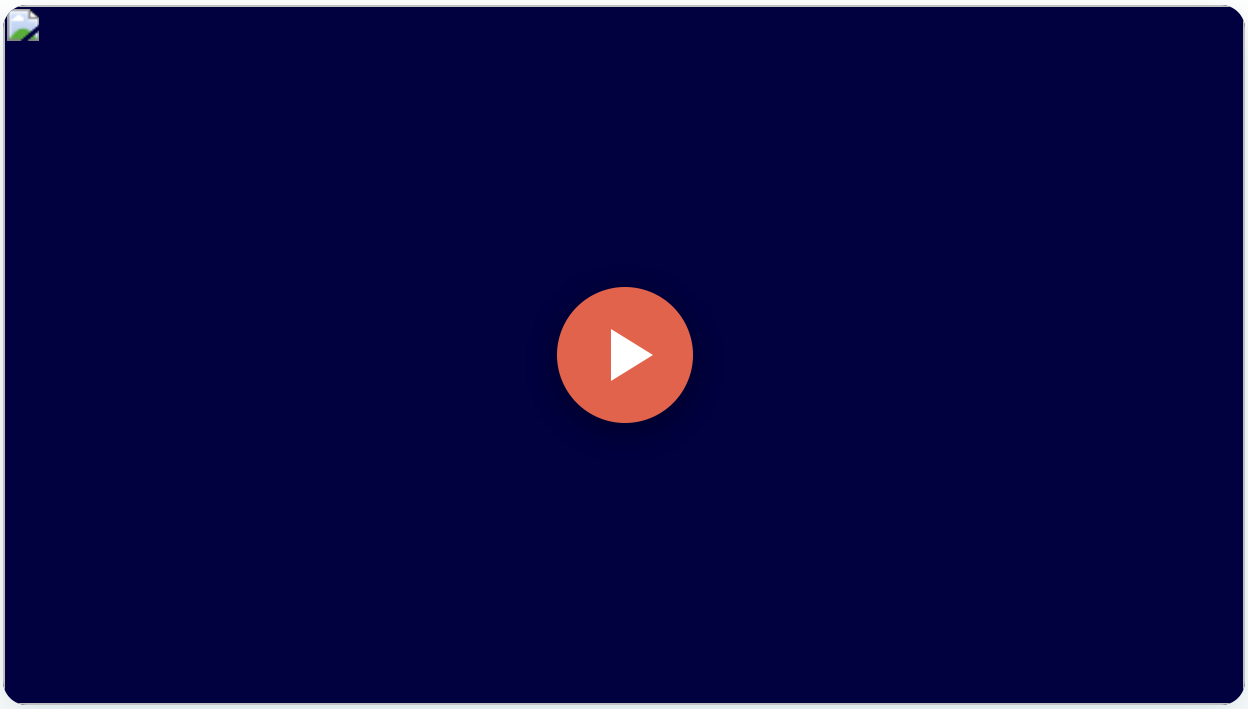
Pool · loungers · lazy river · walk-in pool · kiddie splash area · pedal carts on the pier (tips)

Costs extra

Slides ~$5–$6 · float $12 · umbrella $22 · locker $6 + $6 deposit · zip line up to

~$30 · fish spa from $17 · cabanas $520+

▶ WATCH THE WALK



S7 E2 **Amber Cove Over 55: Don't Pay Until You See These 9 Things**

Facts checked against official sources on 24 September 2026 · Amber Cove updated from my own visit and re-checked 11 November 2026

I walked Amber Cove myself on the Regal Princess in October 2026, so the walk, the signs and the prices from my own photos are first-hand. I have not been to Taino Bay yet; for that one, everything comes from official sources with links.

First: which terminal is yours?

Puerto Plata has **two separate cruise terminals**, several miles apart, owned by different people, serving different cruise lines. Which one you dock at changes your whole day, and the itinerary usually just says "Puerto Plata."

	Amber Cove	Taino Bay
Owner	**Carnival Corporation** — Carnival calls it "Carnival's very own exclusive port"	Not published by any official source we could find
Lines	Carnival Corporation brands: Carnival, Princess, Holland America, AIDA	**Royal Caribbean** and **Celebrity**; Holland America also publishes a Taino Bay page
Where	The Bay of Maimón, **about 7.4 miles by road** from Puerto Plata town (about 22 minutes by car)	**In the town itself** — Royal Caribbean and Celebrity both put downtown about a **15-minute walk** away
Opened	2015, an $85 million Carnival Corporation build	December 2021
Free pool	Yes — the pool, loungers and lazy river ("Enjoy free pool access and relax on our poolside loungers," says the port's own sign). **The water slides cost extra**, about $5–$6 for the day	Yes — Royal Caribbean publishes "complimentary pools and lazy river"

At the Puerto Plata: Amber Cove and Taino Bay cruise port: what's there

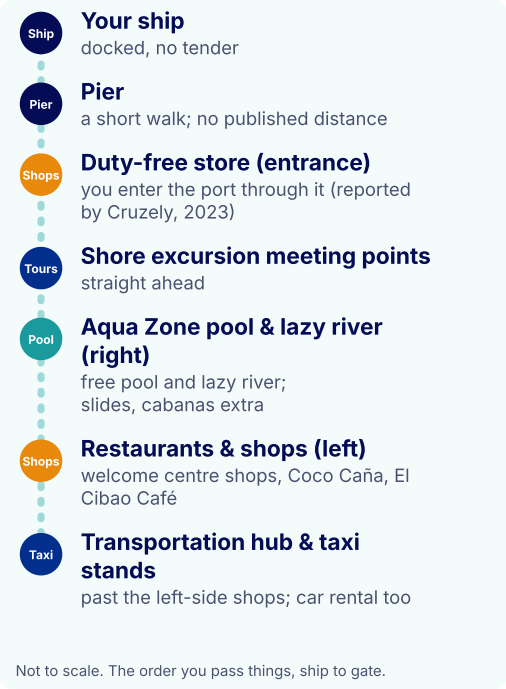
Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

Puerto Plata has two cruise terminals, and which one you get decides your day. I've been to Amber Cove: I got off and walked around the port, and it's very nice and pretty, with a very nice free pool and lazy river, plus kayaks and other toys to rent. One correction from me: I used to think the water slides were free too, but the port's own Rentals sign lists them, at about $5 to $6 for a band that lasts all day. I have never been to Taino Bay, so for that one I'm your planner, not your eyewitness. Check your itinerary for the terminal name before you plan anything.

Port map: this port doesn't publish a map of its own that we could find, so we drew the simple walk below from the port's and cruise lines' own descriptions.

From the ship: Amber Cove Cruise Center (Bay of Maimón)

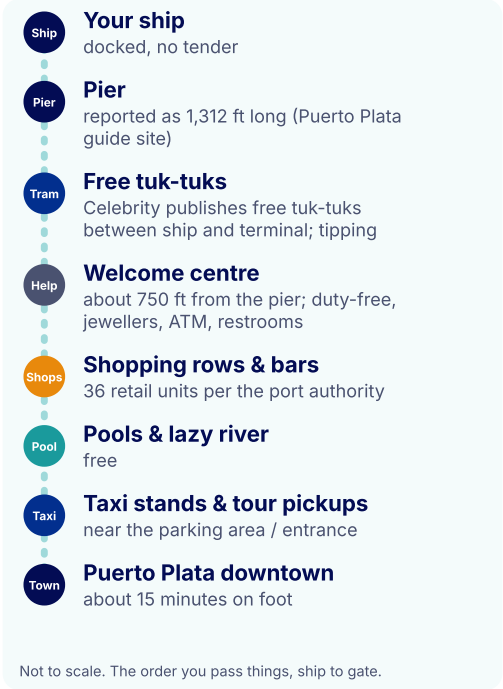
Owned by Carnival Corporation, opened 2015; two berths, up to 8,000 passengers and 2,000 crew a day. Used by Carnival, Princess, Holland America and AIDA. About 7.4 miles by road from Puerto Plata town; facilities are for cruise passengers only.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Taino Bay Cruise Port (Puerto Plata town)

Run by ITM Group, opened December 2021 with a second phase in February 2023. Three berths, a reception centre for about 14,000 passengers at once. Used by Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, MSC, Norwegian, Virgin and others. Downtown is about a 15-minute walk.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Amber Cove: Aqua Zone pool & lazy river Free — A gigantic pool and a lazy river that winds under little walk-over bridges, with a swim-up bar. The port's sign says "Enjoy free pool access and relax on our poolside loungers." Very nice, in my experience. Bring a towel from the ship.
Amber Cove, to the right as you enter
Access: No pool lift published.

Amber Cove: walk-in pool Free — Toward the back of the Aqua Zone there's a walk-in pool, so you can ease in instead of climbing down a ladder. The kiddie splash area is right near it. (My own visit, October 2026.)
Back of the Aqua Zone
Access: no pool lift published; ask your cruise line if you need one.

Amber Cove: pedal carts on the pier Free (tips) — It's a long pier: my photos run 9:23 beside the ship to 9:32 at the entrance, with stops for pictures. Little pedal carts run the pier for free, but they work for tips, so tuck a few small bills in your pocket.
The pier

Amber Cove: kids' splash area Free — Small splash area for roughly ages five and under (reported by Cruzely, 2023).
Near the main pool

Amber Cove: photo sign & basketball Free — The big 'AMBER COVE!' letters and a basketball court (reported by Cruzely, 2023).
Sign past the left-side shops; court past the pool

Taino Bay: pools & lazy river Free — A family pool with a swim-up bar and a lazy river about 300 ft long around a beach-lounge area. Royal Caribbean publishes complimentary pools and lazy river; loungers first come, first served (Cruise Critic, Jan 2026).
Taino Bay, west side of the complex
Access: Cruise Critic: no lift chair at the pool or lazy river.

Taino Bay: aviaries & murals Free — Parrot and cockatoo aviaries around the port and Dominican-culture murals in the welcome centre; live shows at the pools (reported by the Puerto Plata guide site).
Around Taino Bay

Pools and beaches

No free beach at either terminal — Both are pool resorts. Cruzely describes the water by the Amber Cove cabanas as cloudy, not clear.

Amber Cove: Poolside Cabana (Carnival)

$520 on the port board (Oct 2026); $535.99 on Carnival's site

— Six hours, arrive any time. Snacks, water and soda, air conditioning, fan, Wi-Fi, TV with HDMI, showers, misters, fridge, living-room set, server for food and drinks. Overlooks the 300,000-gallon pool and Coco Caña pool bar.

Poolside, Amber Cove

Access: Ambulatory accessible: a few steps, short walks and a transfer to a seat.

Amber Cove: Hillside Cabana (Princess) — Up to 8 guests: waiter service, water and sodas, local treats, all-day zip line passes, Jacuzzi, TV, Wi-Fi, fridge, showers. Towels not included. Princess doesn't print the price.

Hillside, Amber Cove

Amber Cove: Grand Cabana

From $1,999 per cabana, Holland America

— Up to 20 guests: private pool with umbrellas, hot tub, showers, meals with a dedicated server, drinks, local goodies, zip line passes for all, and one to two hours of water sports. Holland America lists it as wheelchair accessible.

Amber Cove

Access: Holland America: wheelchair accessible.

Amber Cove: umbrellas, floats & lockers — On a port price board photographed in October 2026: umbrella $22, float $12 for the day, locker $6 plus a $6 refundable deposit. A slide band, an umbrella, a float and a locker come to about $46 for one person, so the free day is only free if you decide it is.

Aqua Zone rentals kiosk

Taino Bay: daybeds & cabanas — Paid areas exist around the pools; no official prices published.

Taino Bay pools

Food and drink

Amber Cove: Coco Caña — Poolside restaurant with the swim-up bar.
Aqua Zone

Amber Cove: El Cibao Café — Café among the port's five food and drink outlets.
Amber Cove

Amber Cove: Sky Bar — Bar on the hill overlooking the port.
Hilltop, Amber Cove
Access: Uphill.

Amber Cove: Nathan's hot dog stand — Hot dog trailer by the pool (reported by Cruzely, 2023).
By the pool

Prices & drink packages — The last prices I could find were about $12 for a hamburger and $8 for a frozen drink (Puerto Plata guide site, 2025). Cruzely reports Carnival packages don't apply at Amber Cove; nothing official says either terminal honours them, so ask your cruise line before you order. Your ship is right there with lunch already paid for.

Taino Bay: restaurants — The port authority counts three restaurants (one Dominican) and three bars. The Puerto Plata guide site names San Mangu (Dominican), Casa Palapa and Taco Lover (Mexican).
Taino Bay

Taino Bay: bars — Including Dom Dom (swim-up, in the main pool), Tiki Tiki (at the lazy river), Keloke, Rum Bar, Mojito Bar and Blue Parrot (Puerto Plata guide site).
Around the pools and shops

Taino Bay: Cortaito Café & Cacaito Chocolate — Coffee and bakery, and organic Dominican cacao products (Puerto Plata guide site).
Taino Bay

Shopping

Amber Cove: welcome centre shops — Apparel, souvenirs, crafts, jewellery, alcohol and Dominican amber and larimar.
Left side as you enter

Amber Cove: duty-free store — You walk through it on the way in (Cruzely, 2023).
Port entrance

Taino Bay: shopping rows — 36 retail units per the port authority (2023), in four rows; Dufry duty-free and Diamonds International are in the welcome centre.
Welcome centre and rows behind it

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Amber Cove: water slides About $5–$6, all-day band — The two big tube slides beside the walk-in pool are listed under "Rentals" on the port's own sign, so they are not free. A reported 230 lb weight limit and 4 ft minimum height (Cruzely, 2023).
Beside the walk-in pool

Amber Cove: fish foot spa $17 for 10 min · $22 for 20 · $28 for 30 — The sign says "Massage," but it's an aquarium where little fish nibble your feet. Prices from my own photo of the sign, October 2026. If your back wants a real massage, keep walking.
By the Aqua Zone

Amber Cove: zip line — Zip lines over the port; an all-day band, up to about $30 on the October 2026 price board. Minimum age 8, weight 80–265 lb (Princess).
On the port, hillside

Amber Cove: kayaks, paddleboards & pedal boats — Rentals on the bay; Cruzely reported from about $35 an hour, with half-hour options (2023 price).
Waterfront by the cabanas

Taino Bay: FlowRider — Surf simulator (Puerto Plata guide site). No price published.
Taino Bay

Taino Bay: Monkey Island
$25 per person (unofficial, 2024 page)
— Squirrel-monkey encounter, 30 minutes (Puerto Plata guide site).
Taino Bay

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Amber Cove: ATM — One ATM at the cruise centre, dispensing Dominican pesos only.
Cruise centre

Amber Cove: pharmacy — A pharmacy shop (not a clinic).
Welcome centre

Amber Cove: Wi-Fi — Cruzely reported port Wi-Fi at $8 a day, with some stores offering it free (2023).
Port-wide

Taino Bay: ATM & restrooms — ATM in the welcome centre (currency not stated); restrooms in several places including the welcome centre.
Welcome centre
Access: Cruise Critic: some restrooms lack grab bars.

Taino Bay: Wi-Fi — Paid Wi-Fi, or free with a purchase at a café or restaurant (Cruise Critic, Jan 2026).
Port-wide

Money — The Dominican peso is the currency. US dollars aren't confirmed by any official source at either terminal.

Getting out of the port

Amber Cove: transportation hub — Taxis and car rental. U.S. News reports fixed-rate vans from dispatch stands inside the port, about $35–$40 round trip to downtown (priced per van). Cruise Critic reports about $35 each way for up to five people; one visitor reported $80 round trip (Fodor's, January 2025). Cruzely saw a posted $70 round trip in 2023. Agree the fare before you get in.

Past the left-side shops

Access: Holland America: many vehicles lack wheelchair lifts.

Amber Cove: walking out — Not recommended: town is about 7.4 miles by road, around two and a half hours on foot along a highway.

Taino Bay: on foot to downtown Free — Royal Caribbean and Celebrity put downtown about a 15-minute walk away.

Out the main entrance · about 15 min walk from the ship

Taino Bay: taxis, guaguas, carritos, Uber & car hire — Celebrity lists taxis outside the complex, guaguas (minivan buses, cash), carritos (shared cars), Uber and car rental. Cruise Critic says the welcome centre and drivers offer fixed rates to some destinations; no fares published.

Near the parking area and entrance

Taino Bay: pre-booked tours — A dedicated pickup area for pre-booked transfers; outside operators collect inside and outside the entrance.

By the entrance

A whole day without leaving the port

At Amber Cove, a stay-at-port day is the whole point. Come through the entrance and turn right (left is the shops and the taxis) and claim a free lounger in the Aqua Zone. Rent a float for the day and drift the lazy river, ease into the walk-in pool at the back, and let the grandkids at the splash area. The big slides are a few dollars for an all-day band. Make your plan before you get off the ship and tell your group where you'll be. Lunch at Coco Caña, then a slow browse for amber and larimar before you head back. At Taino Bay, if I were planning your day, I'd do the same at the free pools and lazy river, then use the fact that town is only about 15 minutes on foot: an hour downtown in the morning while it's cooler, back for lunch and a float in the afternoon.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Both terminals are docked; neither is on Carnival's list of tender ports.
- Amber Cove publishes no walk distance, accessible routes, restrooms or pool lifts. Carnival's poolside cabana is only 'ambulatory accessible'; Holland America lists its Grand Cabana as wheelchair accessible.
- Amber Cove's Sky Bar sits on a hill; Princess lists a 30-minute walking transfer for its hillside cabanas.
- Taino Bay: free tuk-tuks run between ship and terminal (Celebrity). Cruise Critic (Jan 2026) says many areas are wheelchair accessible but cobblestones and uneven paths limit access, some bathrooms lack grab bars, and the pool and lazy river have no lift.
- Carnival says it is not responsible for accessibility in non-US ports. Holland America warns many local vehicles have no wheelchair lift.
- Neither terminal has a beach, so there's no beach-wheelchair question; the pools are the swim.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

▼ Is the pool at Amber Cove free?

Yes for the pool, loungers and lazy river; the port's own sign says so. The water slides are not: about $5 to $6 for an all-day band (October 2026). Cabanas, floats, umbrellas, the zip line and water-sports rentals cost extra too.

▼ Is there a lazy river at Taino Bay, and is it free?

Yes. Taino Bay has a free lazy river and pools; loungers are first come, first served, and daybeds and cabanas cost extra.

▼ Can you walk to Puerto Plata from the cruise port?

From Taino Bay, yes: downtown is about 15 minutes on foot. From Amber Cove, no: it's about 7.4 miles on a highway (around two and a half hours on foot), so take a taxi or tour.

Where the port facts come from: Carnival: Amber Cove Poolside Cabana (30 October 2026); Princess: Grand Cabana at Amber Cove (30 October 2026); Princess: Hillside Cabana at Amber Cove (30 October 2026); Holland America: Grand Cabana, Amber Cove (30 October 2026); Amber Cove (ambercove.com): port information (30 October 2026); APORDOM (DR Port Authority): Taino Bay second phase, 24 Feb 2023 (30 October 2026); Cruise Critic: Taino Bay cruise port (7 Jan 2026) (30 October 2026); U.S. News (via WTOP): Puerto Plata cruise port, what to know 2026 (30 October 2026); Puerto Plata Cruise Ports Guide: Taino Bay port amenities (modified 16 Oct 2024) (30 October 2026); Cruzely: Amber Cove things to do, prices, map (13 Jan 2023) (30 October 2026); Amber Cove official site: port information (shops, five outlets, pharmacy, peso ATM; from live page) (24 September 2026); Carnival: Amber Cove (Aqua Zone complimentary; from live page) (24 September 2026)

The short version: if you want to walk into Puerto Plata and see the town, Taino Bay puts you there on foot. Amber Cove is a resort-style port about 7.4 miles out by road, and getting to town means a taxi or a tour. Neither publishes a taxi fare.

Royal Caribbean's own framing is worth noting: it sells Taino Bay on "the big bonus of a prime location," explicitly contrasted with "the region's Amber Cove."

Amber Cove itself

Getting ashore	Two berths, so ships tie up alongside. **Neither Amber Cove nor Taino Bay appears on Carnival's list of ports requiring water shuttles** — both are docked ports, no tender.
Where it is	The Bay of Maimón, about 7.4 miles by road from Puerto Plata (about 22 minutes by car)
Opened	2015
Cash	One ATM at the cruise centre, and it dispenses Dominican pesos only
Who can use it	"Currently, our facilities are exclusively available to cruise ship passengers"

What is there

The centrepiece is the Aqua Zone: pools, a lazy river, a walk-in pool, a kiddie splash area and a swim-up bar, which are free, plus waterslides, zip-lines, kayaks and paddleboards, which are not. Carnival, which operates the port, describes the Aqua Zone as complimentary for cruisers; the slides are on the port's Rentals sign. There are five food and drink outlets, including Coco Caña, El Cibao Café and the Sky Bar, and a welcome centre with shops selling apparel, souvenirs, crafts, jewellery, and Dominican amber and larimar. There is also a pharmacy.

The port runs on solar: more than 1,800 panels supply about 80 percent of its energy.

What costs extra

The water slides (about $5–$6 for an all-day band), floats ($12), umbrellas ($22) and lockers ($6 plus a refundable $6), per the port board in October 2026. Cabanas: the poolside cabana was **$520 on the port board**; Carnival's site publishes it at **$535.99 per cabana** for up to eight guests, with only one person needing to buy it. It runs six hours with flexible arrival, and includes snacks, water and soda, air conditioning, a fan, Wi-Fi, a TV with HDMI, showers, a misting system, a refrigerator and a living-room set. Carnival lists two other cabana options without publishing their prices.

Carnival describes that cabana as "ambulatory accessible," meaning "Guests must take a few steps (up/down), walk short distances, and transfer to a seat."

Beyond the gate

The transportation hub at the port handles car rental and taxis. Published drive times: Ocean World Adventure Park about 20 minutes north, Damajagua Falls about 30 minutes south, and Sosúa and Cabarete less than half an hour away. Shore **excursions** can be pre-booked through your cruise line's website.

Not published anywhere official: whether there is a beach at the port itself, restrooms, any medical or first-aid facility (the pharmacy is not a clinic), wheelchair access or accessible routes inside the port, the distance from the ship to the welcome centre, taxi fares, and whether US dollars are accepted ashore. The two official sources also disagree on the size of the port, 25 acres on the port's own site and 30 on Carnival's.

Getting into Puerto Plata town

From **Taino Bay**, Celebrity publishes the options: free tuk-tuks between ship and terminal, taxis outside the complex, *guaguas* (local minivan buses, flagged down, cash), *carritos* (shared sedans), Uber, and car rental.

From **Amber Cove**, Carnival publishes only that there is a "transportation hub" where you "rent a car, hop in a taxi and explore."

No official taxi fare is published from either terminal. Unlike St. Maarten or Aruba, where the government sets and prints the rates, we could find nothing official for Puerto Plata. Agree your fare before you get in.

Practical facts, from the Dominican Republic tourism ministry

Currency	The Dominican peso (RD$). The ministry says ATMs give the best rates; US dollars are sometimes accepted at poorer ones.
Language	Spanish is official. "English is widely spoken in the tourist areas."
Electricity	**110 volts** — US and Canadian plugs work directly.
Tipping	"Restaurant bills automatically include a 10% service charge," with roughly another 10% customary on top.
Water	The ministry is blunt: "Tap water is not safe to drink from the tap… Purchase bottled water at all times for drinking."

Documents, and a conflict worth knowing about

The Dominican Republic tourism ministry publishes that cruise passengers are **exempt from the E-Ticket** that air passengers must complete: "Passengers arriving on private flights, non-commercial vessels, ferries, cruise ships, etc., do not need to fill out the E-TICKET."

On passports, two official sources disagree and we are printing both:

- **DR Ministry of Tourism:** an exceptional measure valid **through 31 December 2026** lets US tourists enter on a passport valid only for the duration of their stay, rather than the usual six months.
- **US State Department:** says the passport should be valid six months from arrival, and adds the line that costs money — *"Disembarked cruise ship passengers without a passport valid for 6 months must pay a daily migration escort service fee of approximately $125 USD."*

They also differ on the tourist card: the DR ministry describes none for cruise arrivals, while the State Department says "cruise passengers need a tourist card if staying on land for over 24 hours" — which a same-day call does not reach.

> **Our read:** carry a passport with six months on it and the question never arises. More on documents.

The US State Department currently has the Dominican Republic at **Level 2, Exercise increased caution**, issued 12 June 2025. The advisory names no specific region and does not single out

Puerto Plata or the north coast. There is a US Consular Agent in Puerto Plata. That advisory is over a year old as we write; check it before you sail.

What the tourism ministry names as worth seeing

The DR Ministry of Tourism's own Puerto Plata page lists the **Teleférico cable car to Mount Isabel de Torres** ("panoramic city and ocean views"), **Fortaleza San Felipe** ("a 16th-century fortress turned museum"), the **Amber Museum**, and **Playa Dorada**.

> **The cable car is closed.** The Teleférico has been shut since June 2024. Rebuilding work began on 3 October 2026, and reopening is planned for the first quarter of 2028 (inmobiliario.do, 5 Oct 2026). Some tours still carry its name, so read what they substitute before you book.

> **What nobody publishes.** No official source gives an address, opening time or terminal distance for an address, opening time or terminal distance for the fort, the museum or the beach. We looked. **And a caution: the old teleférico website domain has been taken over and now serves foreign gambling spam** — do not trust a search result that looks like the official cable car site. When it reopens, book through the ship or a reputable operator.

Accessibility

Both terminals are docked ports, which is the single biggest thing in your favour — no tender. Beyond that, **neither terminal publishes any accessibility information at all.**

Carnival publishes the disclaimer that applies everywhere abroad: **"Carnival is not responsible for accessibility in non-U.S. ports of call."** Holland America warns that "many international vehicles lack wheelchair lifts, potentially requiring guests to transfer to sedan vehicles." The DR tourism ministry's one accessibility listing is a commercial mobility scooter rental it links to, not a government service.

Questions about Puerto Plata

What is the difference between Amber Cove and Taino Bay?

They are two separate cruise terminals serving Puerto Plata. Amber Cove is owned by Carnival Corporation, sits in the Bay of Maimón about 7.4 miles by road from town, and is used by Carnival, Princess, Holland America and AIDA. Taino Bay is in Puerto Plata itself, about a 15-minute walk from downtown, and is used by Royal Caribbean and Celebrity. Both have free pool complexes and both are docked ports.

Do you tender at Puerto Plata?

No. Neither Amber Cove nor Taino Bay appears on Carnival's published list of ports requiring water shuttles. Ships tie up alongside at both terminals.

Is the pool at Amber Cove free?

Yes for the pool, the loungers and the lazy river: the port's own sign says "Enjoy free pool access and relax on our poolside loungers." The water slides are not free: they are listed under Rentals, at about $5 to $6 for a band that lasts all day (October 2026). Cabanas cost extra; the poolside cabana was $520 on the port board and $535.99 on Carnival's site.

Do I need a passport for Puerto Plata?

Two official sources differ. The Dominican Republic tourism ministry publishes an exceptional measure through 31 December 2026 allowing US tourists to enter on a passport valid only for their stay. The US State Department says six months validity and warns that disembarked cruise passengers without it face an escort fee of about $125 a day. Cruise passengers are exempt from the DR E-Ticket that air passengers must complete.

How far is Puerto Plata town from the cruise port?

From Amber Cove it is about 7.4 miles by road, around 22 minutes by car (Google Maps, November 2026); Carnival rounds it to about five miles. From Taino Bay, Royal Caribbean and Celebrity both describe downtown as roughly a 15-minute walk. No official taxi fare is published from either terminal.

Where these facts come from

- inmobiliario.do: Puerto Plata cable car works start, reopening planned Q1 2028 (5 Oct 2026) (https://inmobiliario.do/arranca-el-teleferico-de-puerto-plata-cabinas-para-55-personas-y-reapertura-prevista-en-el-primer-trimestre-de-2028/)
- Google Maps: Amber Cove to central Puerto Plata, 7.4 miles / 22 minutes by car (checked 2 Nov 2026)
- Stacy Reed's own photos of the Amber Cove signs (fish spa prices, "Enjoy free pool access", Rentals list), Regal Princess, October 2026
- Amber Cove official site (https://www.ambercoveport.com/)
- Amber Cove, port information (https://www.ambercoveport.com/port-information/)
- Amber Cove, FAQs (https://www.ambercoveport.com/faqs/)
- Amber Cove, location information (https://www.ambercoveport.com/location-information/)
- Carnival, Amber Cove (https://www.carnival.com/awaywego/cruising-fun/shore-excursions/amber-cove)
- Carnival, Amber Cove Poolside Cabana (https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/amber-cove/poolside-cabana-445070)

Ports change their rules and their prices. Check the official pages above before you sail.

Mobility & access *at this port*

From Sails Anyway, the accessible-cruising section of this site. Nothing here is medical advice — it is what the port and the cruise lines publish, so you know what to ask.

The short answer

Ashore	Docked
Free beach	None — it's a pool resort
Hardest part	Nothing, if you stay in the port

Two ports, one city

Puerto Plata is served by **Amber Cove** and **Taino Bay**, and they have different characters. Check your ticket so you know which one you're arriving at before you plan the day.

What the port *actually is*

- **A pool resort.** Amber Cove is clean, modern, purpose-built and easy to move around, with a large pool, restaurants and shops all inside the port.
- **No beach.** The pool, loungers and lazy river are free; the slides, floats, umbrellas, lockers and cabanas cost extra, and they add up.
- **It's less crowded** than the Bahamas ports, which counts for something on a busy itinerary.
- **The interesting sights are outside** and need an excursion: waterfalls, colonial architecture, the amber museum.

The easiest good day here

Stay at the port. The pool, the loungers and the lazy river are free, there's a walk-in pool at the back so you don't need a ladder, and your ship is right there. The Puerto Plata cable car, the usual low-effort view, is **closed until a planned reopening in early 2028**.

What the day *asks of you*

- **Very little inside the port.** It's modern and manageable, with flat surfaces and plenty of seating.
- **A vehicle transfer** for anything beyond it — the waterfalls, the fort, the town (town is about 7.4 miles by road).
- **Heat and shade management** around the pool area, as with every Caribbean port.

This is one of the easier ports physically. The thing that ruins it isn't difficulty, it's the mismatch between what people expect and what's here.

The low-effort *day plan*

Take the pedal cart down the long pier (tip the driver), turn right at the entrance, claim a lounger near the walk-in pool, and spend the day floating the lazy river. Lunch back on the ship if your drink package won't work ashore. No beach, no long walks, no negotiating.

If you'd rather not leave at all, the pool day on its own is a perfectly good rest day between harder ports — and rest days are part of planning a cruise well.

> *“A pool day here is a perfectly good rest day — and rest days are part of planning a cruise well.”*

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask whether you're at Amber Cove or Taino Bay**, and how far the port gate is from the ship.
- **Ask whether the pool has a lift** — nothing about one is published; the walk-in pool at the back has no ladder.
- **Ask whether accessible transport** to Puerto Plata can be arranged through the shore excursion desk.
- **Ask what the pool area offers** for guests with mobility needs, such as lifts or accessible restrooms.

Accessibility details last checked 11 November 2026. How we check this →

More on cruising with mobility & health needs →

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.
