RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay, Bahamas

Carnival's renamed private island: a new pier for Carnival ships, a tender for Holland America, and a drink package that stops at the shoreline.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Whether ships dock or tender at RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay is unsettled in Carnival own sources: its newsroom said in June 2026 that a new pier allows ships to dock, while its destination page says pier or water shuttle and its accessibility page still lists the island as requiring water shuttles. Beverage packages do not work there: both Carnival and Holland America exclude drinks bought at Half Moon Cay.

THE QUICK TAKE

- **Two names, one island.** Half Moon Cay was renamed **RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay** in December 2024. It's Little San Salvador Island in The Bahamas.
- **Carnival ships can now dock.** A new pier opened on **1 June 2026**, with Carnival Sunrise calling that day. Carnival's own accessibility page still says water shuttles are sometimes needed, so check your sailing.
- **Holland America guests still tender** to the south side, according to the 2024 plan and HAL's own 2026 beach club news.
- **Free:** the beach, loungers, lunch at the grills, and a tram linking the island. On Carnival, umbrellas are free; Holland America lists them as a rental.
- **Your drink package doesn't work at the island bars** on Carnival or Holland America.
- Eastern Time with daylight saving, like Florida. **Be back by ship time**, or by the last tender.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I haven't been to Half Moon Cay yet, so this guide is built the way I'd want one built for me: from Carnival's and Holland America's own pages and news releases, the Bahamas tourism board and the US State Department, with every date noted. Half Moon Cay has a new name, a new pier and a lot of new guests. Carnival renamed it "RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay," and Princess has been moving its Princess Cays calls here. The catch is that whether you walk off on the pier or ride a tender depends on which cruise line you're sailing.

Half Moon Cay at a glance

What it is	A private island owned by Carnival Corporation: Little San Salvador Island, in The Bahamas. Holland America has called here since 1997.
Names	RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay (since December 2024). You'll still see "Half Moon Cay" and "Little San Salvador" on booking pages.
Getting ashore	Carnival ships dock at the new north pier, open since **1 June 2026**. Holland America ships anchor and tender to the south side. Carnival still says water shuttles are sometimes required, depending on the sailing.

Book it from your phone

Planning for Half Moon Cay: the bookings Cruise 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.

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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.

Water shuttles and accessibility
Carnival Cruise Line

CHEERS! package terms
Carnival Cruise Line

RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay port page
Holland America Line

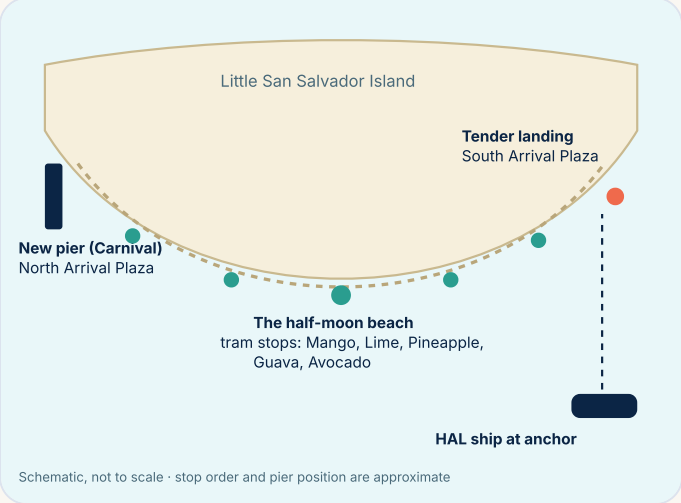
Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at **aicruisegranny.com/port-half-moon-cay**

Booking codes are affiliate or travel-agent links: AI Cruise Granny may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. Prices, rules and availability are set by each company; check them before you book.

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Who calls	Carnival (22 ships), Holland America and, since autumn 2026, many Princess sailings that used to go to Princess Cays
The beach	Cruise Critic reports two miles of beach. Carnival says the beachfront was enlarged.
Currency	Bahamian dollar, pegged one to one with the US dollar. Purchases go on your cruise card.
Language	English
Time zone	Eastern Time with daylight saving, like Florida. Always go by **ship time**.
Taxis	None. A free tram links the island's areas.

Map of the island



Carnival guests arrive by pier at one end and Holland America guests by tender at the other, with the tram running between them.

Pier or tender: which one you'll get

This is the most important thing on the page, especially if steps and a moving boat are hard for you.

Carnival: the new pier (north side)

Carnival opened its new pier on **1 June 2026**. Carnival Sunrise docked at 8am that morning, and Carnival says the pier lets its larger Excel-class ships visit for the first time. Cruise Critic reports it at **1,005 feet** long. You walk off the ship, along the pier, to the North Arrival Plaza with guest services, a shop and an artisan market, and catch the tram from there.

> **Still a "sometimes" tender port.** Carnival's own accessibility page still lists Half Moon Cay under ports where water shuttles are sometimes required, and says it varies by sailing. Ask Carnival whether your ship has a pier slot.

Holland America: tender to the south side

When the island was renamed in 2024, the plan split it: Carnival guests on the north side by pier, Holland America guests by tender to the South Arrival Plaza. Holland America's September 2026 announcement of its new Beach Club still sells **priority tendering**, and its port page doesn't mention the pier. So, if you're on Holland America, plan on a tender.

Princess

Princess has moved most of its Princess Cays calls here since autumn 2026. Princess hasn't published whether its ships use the pier or tenders, so check your daily planner.

At the RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay cruise port: what's there

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

I haven't been to Half Moon Cay yet, so I'm writing this one as your planner. Like any private island, the whole place is the port: Carnival guests now walk off a new pier into a welcome plaza and ride a tram along the beach, while Holland America guests tender in to the south end. Loungers and lunch are free, drinks are not, and your drink package stays on the ship. Here's what's where, so you can pick your stretch of sand before you step off.

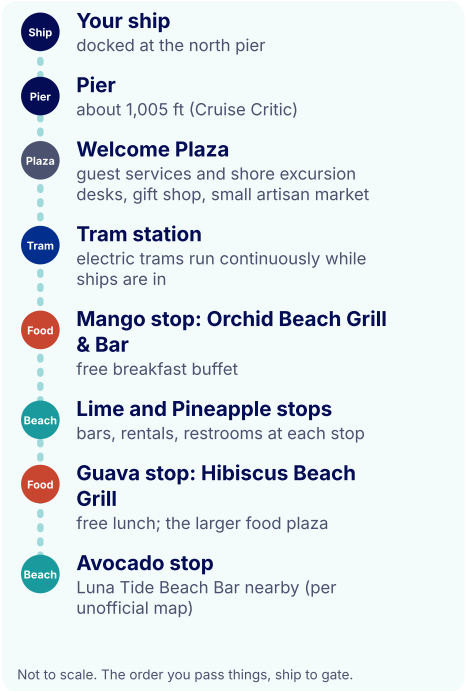
See the official port map

The port side publishes its own map. We link to it rather than copy it, so you always see the current layout. Open it before you sail and save a screenshot to your phone. Map by Carnival Cruise Line.

`aicruisegranny.com/go/half-moon-cay-port-map`

From the ship: North pier and Welcome (Arrival) Plaza (Carnival)

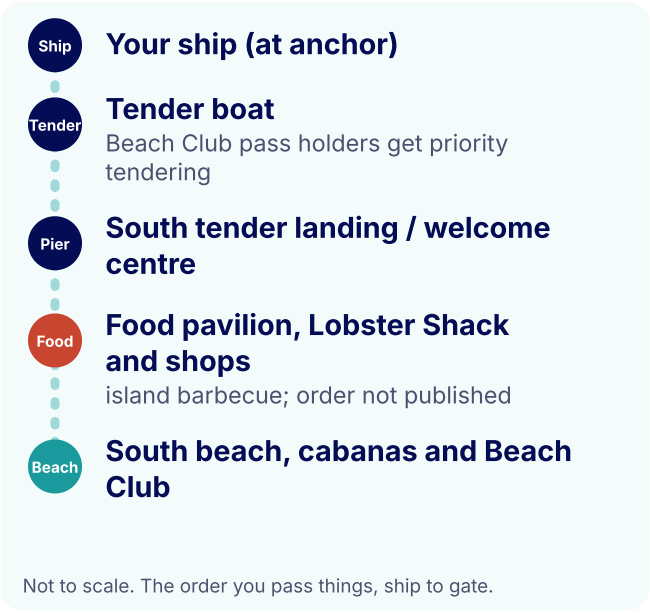
New pier opened 1 June 2026; Cruise Critic reports it at 1,005 ft and says it takes Carnival's Excel-class ships. Carnival's accessibility page still lists the island as a port where water shuttles are sometimes required, so confirm your sailing. Princess has moved most Princess Cays calls here since autumn 2026 but hasn't said whether its ships dock or tender.



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

From the ship: South tender landing (Holland America)

The December 2024 plan gave Holland America the south side, reached by tender. HAL's September 2026 Beach Club announcement sells priority tendering, and its port page doesn't mention the pier, so plan on a tender with HAL.



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

Free things to do inside the port

The beach Free — About two miles of crescent beach (Cruise Critic); Carnival says the beachfront was enlarged in 2026.
The whole crescent between the two arrival areas
Access: Sand; no beach mats or beach wheelchairs published

Loungers Free — Free on both lines. Holland America also lists complimentary towels and hammocks.
Along the beach

Umbrellas (Carnival) Free on Carnival — Carnival lists umbrellas as complimentary across the destination. Holland America's port page lists umbrellas for two as a rental, so check your own line.
Along the beach

Electric tram Free — Connects the Welcome Plaza with five stops: Mango, Lime, Pineapple, Guava and Avocado, and runs continuously while ships are in. No schedule or fare is published; it's treated as part of your day ashore, not sold as an extra.
From the Welcome Plaza
Access: Wheelchair access on the tram isn't published

Papaya Pathway (Papaya Trail) Free — Walking route linking the tram stops. Length not published.
Along the island

Breakfast at Orchid Beach Grill & Bar Free — Complimentary breakfast buffet.
Mango tram stop

Lunch at Hibiscus Beach Grill Free — Complimentary lunch at the larger food plaza.
Guava tram stop

Holland America food pavilion Free (complimentary menu) — New in 2026, with an island barbecue and what HAL calls a complimentary island-only menu.
Holland America's south side

Sports courts Free — Beach basketball, volleyball, soccer and pickleball (Holland America lists four pickleball courts).
On the island

Pools and beaches

Cabanas — Carnival lists 22 cabanas; Holland America has upgraded cabanas. Both lines sell a wheelchair-accessible cabana. Prices show only when you log in to book.
Along the beach near the tram stops
Access: Wheelchair-accessible cabana listed by both lines; contents not published

Daybeds — Carnival lists 48 daybeds; HAL added more.
Near several tram stops

Clamshells — Carnival lists 50 clamshells for a fee.
Along the beach

Umbrella rental (Holland America) — HAL's port page lists sturdy umbrellas for two as a rental; no price published.
HAL side

Deluxe two-storey Beach Villas (Holland America) — Two-storey villas with butler service, booked as a shore excursion; no public price.
HAL side
Access: Two storeys; ask about stairs

Holland America Beach Club day pass — New, first guests October 2026: priority tendering, dedicated waiter service, all alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, beach accessories and specialty food. Price not published.
HAL side

Food and drink

Carnival's bars: Luna Tide Beach Bar, Stay Awhile Beach Shack, Lil' Tiki Bar — New bars opened June 2026. Drinks cost extra; Carnival's CHEERS! package excludes drinks bought at Half Moon Cay.
Near the tram stops

Lobster Shack — Refurbished beachside hut with seafood chowder, lobster and Caribbean stew (Holland America). HAL doesn't say what's extra.
HAL side

Roaming drink trikes and buggies — Holland America lists roaming Aperol Spritz tricycles and Bacardi beach buggies you can flag down. Holland America's beverage package terms exclude drinks bought on the island.
HAL side

Shopping

Gift shop and artisan market — At the Welcome Plaza by the pier.
Welcome Plaza

Beachside shops (Holland America) — Gifts, local crafts, swimsuits and beach gear; HAL says more venues are coming.
HAL side

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Horseback riding by land and sea — Ride along the beach and into the water for a saddleback swim. Book through your ship.
Island excursion

Stingray Adventure — Tram ride to Stingray Cove to snorkel with rays.
Stingray Cove

Eco Lagoon glass-bottom boat and kayaking — Glass-bottom boat or kayak trip in Bone Fish Lagoon's mangroves (Holland America).
Bone Fish Lagoon

Water-sports rentals — Snorkel gear, kayaks, banana boats, aqua bikes and personal watercraft. Carnival has a rental centre at every tram stop.
At each tram stop

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Guest services and shore excursion desk Free — At the Welcome Plaza by the pier.
Welcome Plaza

Restrooms Free — Carnival puts restrooms at every tram stop.
Each tram stop
Access: Accessible restrooms not described

Cruise-card charging — Purchases go on your cruise card; the Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar. Carry small bills for the artisan market.
Whole island

Getting out of the port

No taxis or rentals — There's no town and no cars or carts for guests; you get around by tram or on foot.

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day here on Carnival, I'd let the first rush off the pier clear, then ride the tram rather than walk, and pick a stop in the middle of the crescent with a free lounger, a free umbrella, restrooms and a bar close by. Free breakfast is at the Mango stop and free lunch at Guava, so I'd plan my spot around those. On Holland America, I'd take a later tender when the line is short, rent an umbrella and eat at the new food pavilion. Either way, I'd budget for drinks, because the package doesn't work here, and I'd be back at the pier or tender landing well before all-aboard.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Carnival: the new pier means you can walk or roll off the ship, but Carnival still lists the island as a port where water shuttles are sometimes required and says accessible shuttles may not be available. Ask whether your sailing has a pier slot.
- Holland America: plan on a tender to the south side. In September 2026 HAL said Volendam and Zaandam have no elevator to the tender platform and crew can't carry wheelchairs or scooters over 100 lbs without the battery.
- The tram runs continuously and has restrooms at every stop, but neither line publishes whether the tram takes a wheelchair.
- No beach mats, beach wheelchairs or accessible restroom details are published. Both lines sell a wheelchair-accessible cabana.
- Check with your own cruise line before you book, because pier versus tender changes everything if walking is hard.

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

Questions about the port

What is free at Half Moon Cay?

The beach, loungers, the tram, breakfast at Orchid Beach Grill and lunch at Hibiscus Beach Grill are free on Carnival, and Carnival also lists umbrellas as free. Holland America has a free island barbecue menu but lists umbrellas as a rental; drinks, cabanas and excursions cost extra.

Is there a tram at Half Moon Cay?

Yes. Electric trams run from the Welcome Plaza to five stops named Mango, Lime, Pineapple, Guava and Avocado, continuously while ships are in. Each stop has restrooms, a bar and rentals nearby.

Does my drink package work at Half Moon Cay?

No. Carnival's CHEERS! terms and Holland America's beverage package terms both exclude drinks bought on the island. Holland America's paid Beach Club day pass includes drinks.

Where the port facts come from: Holland America Line: RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay port page (30 October 2026); Holland America Line: new Beach Club and food pavilion news release (22 September 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruise Critic: Carnival debuts RelaxAway expansion (1 June 2026, updated 9 October 2026) (30 October 2026); Caribbean Journal: Carnival's private island adds tiki bar, bigger beach (1 June 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruise Industry News: new pier and expanded amenities ready at Half Moon Cay (June 2026) (30 October 2026); Carnival Away We Go blog: Half Moon Cay shore excursions (2016, modified 2018) (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: wheelchair users and water shuttles (from live page) (26 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: CHEERS! package terms (from live page) (26 October 2026); Holland America Line: beverage package terms (from live page) (26 October 2026)

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

On Carnival, wait for the first rush off the pier to clear, then ride the tram to the nearest stop with free loungers, lunch and restrooms, and stay put. On Holland America, take a later tender when the line is short. A cabana is the splurge that buys you shade and a fixed spot.

Beach day

Ride the tram to a quieter stop away from the arrival plaza, claim a lounger and umbrella, and walk to the nearest grill for lunch. Bring cash or your cruise card for drinks, because your package doesn't work here.

See the island

There's no town to visit. The island's excursions are horseback riding on the beach, a stingray encounter, snorkelling and kayaking. They're all sold by the cruise lines, so book through your ship.

Getting around the island

Carnival runs a fleet of electric trams continuously while ships are in, with five stops named Mango, Lime, Pineapple, Guava and Avocado. Each stop has restrooms, a bar and rentals nearby. For walkers, the Papaya Pathway (Carnival also calls it the Papaya Trail) links the stops. Neither line publishes the length of the walk or the tram schedule. There are no taxis, cars or golf carts for cruise guests.

What's free and what costs extra

Included in your fare

- The beach and loungers
- **Umbrellas on Carnival.** Carnival lists them as complimentary. *Holland America's port page says umbrellas are a rental.* One island, two answers.
- Breakfast at Orchid Beach Grill (Mango stop) and lunch at Hibiscus Beach Grill (Guava stop), on Carnival's side. Holland America has a new food pavilion with a free barbecue.
- The tram and the Papaya Pathway
- Pickleball courts and nature paths

Costs extra

- **Cabanas, daybeds and clamshells.** Carnival lists 22 cabanas, 48 daybeds and 50 clamshells. Neither line publishes prices without logging into a booking.
- **Holland America's Beach Club day pass**, new in October 2026: priority tendering, waiter service, drinks and beach gear included. The price isn't published.
- Horseback riding, the stingray encounter, snorkel trips and water toys
- All drinks at the island bars

Your drink package won't work at the bars. Carnival's CHEERS! terms exclude drinks bought at Half Moon Cay, and Holland America's terms exclude drinks bought on the island too. Budget for drinks. (Holland America's Beach Club day pass includes drinks, but that's a separate purchase.)

Worth knowing: both lines list a **wheelchair-accessible cabana** as a bookable item. What it actually includes isn't published.

Beaches and areas, ranked

1. **The middle of the crescent**, a tram ride from either arrival plaza. Fewer people, and you're still near a stop with a grill and restrooms.
2. **Near the arrival plaza** on your line's side. The shortest trip off the ship and the busiest stretch of sand.
3. **Cabana and daybed rows.** Shade and a fixed spot, if you're willing to pay.
4. **Holland America's Beach Club**, a private area for day-pass buyers on HAL sailings.

Lifeguards: neither line says whether there are lifeguards. Swim near others and stay within your depth.

Where to eat

- **Orchid Beach Grill and Bar** (Mango stop): free breakfast buffet, on Carnival's side.
- **Hibiscus Beach Grill** (Guava stop): free lunch, on Carnival's side.
- **Luna Tide Beach Bar, Stay Awhile Beach Shack and Lil' Tiki Bar**: Carnival's new bars. Drinks are extra.
- **Holland America's side:** the new food pavilion with a free barbecue, plus a Lobster Shack and food trucks. Holland America doesn't say which of those cost extra.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money:** the Bahamian dollar is pegged one to one with the US dollar, and both are accepted. Most purchases go on your cruise card. Carry a few small bills for the artisan market.
- **Language:** English.
- **Marijuana:** illegal in The Bahamas and strictly penalised, according to the tourism board.

- **Ammunition:** never bring any ashore, not even a single round in a bag. The State Department says police strictly enforce this.
- **Camouflage:** leave camo clothing on the ship. Carnival warns that it's against the law in some ports, and The Bahamas is regularly named among them.
- **Documents:** on a closed-loop cruise from the US, the State Department says cruise travellers can use a WHTI-compliant document instead of a passport.

What the videos don't show you

- **Pier day or tender day depends on your line.** The new-pier videos are Carnival videos. On Holland America, you're still tendering.
- **Your drink package stops at the shoreline.** Both lines' terms say so.
- **It's much busier than it used to be.** A pier for bigger ships, plus Princess calls moved here from Princess Cays, means more people on the sand.
- **Free umbrellas aren't universal.** Carnival says they're free; Holland America's page says they're a rental.
- **Prices are hidden.** Cabanas, daybeds and the Beach Club pass don't show prices to the public.
- **Weather can still cancel the day.** Tenders stop in wind and swell, and even a pier call can be skipped. Carnival's terms allow port changes without compensation.
- **Medical care is limited.** The State Department says outer islands have only small clinics, and swimmers should watch for strong currents and never swim alone. The Bahamas is at **Level 2, exercise increased caution** (issued 28 July 2026), mostly because of crime in Nassau and Freeport, which is not where you'll be.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

On Carnival, the new pier is a big improvement: Carnival's president said at the opening that it would improve accessibility, and you can walk or roll off the ship. But Carnival still lists the island as a port where water shuttles are sometimes required, and warns that accessible shuttles may not be available. If it's a tender day, Carnival's crew are not allowed to carry anyone on or off, and the captain makes the final call. Carnival's wheelchair assistance has a **325-pound** weight limit, and Carnival says it is not responsible for accessibility in ports it doesn't control.

On Holland America, plan on a tender. When we last checked it in September 2026, Holland America published that its Volendam and Zaandam have no elevator to the tender platform, and that crew can't carry wheelchairs or scooters over 100 pounds without the battery. Ask HAL to confirm for your ship.

On the island, the tram is the big help, but **neither line publishes whether the tram takes a wheelchair**, or anything about beach mats, beach wheelchairs or accessible restrooms. Both lines do sell a wheelchair-accessible cabana.

See Mobility & Health Needs for how tenders work, and check with your cruise line about your own sailing before you book.

The biggest mistake

Seeing the new pier in Carnival's videos and assuming every ship docks. If you're on Holland America, or on a Carnival sailing without a pier slot, you'll be tendering, and that changes everything if walking is hard. Ask your cruise line, in writing if you can, whether your ship docks. And budget for drinks, because your package won't cover them at the island bars.

Half Moon Cay FAQs

Do you tender at Half Moon Cay?

It depends on your cruise line. Carnival ships have docked at the new pier since 1 June 2026, though Carnival says water shuttles are still sometimes required. Holland America guests tender to the south side. Confirm for your sailing.

What is Half Moon Cay called now?

RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay. Carnival Corporation renamed it in December 2024. The island itself is Little San Salvador in The Bahamas.

Is lunch free at Half Moon Cay?

Yes. On Carnival, breakfast at Orchid Beach Grill and lunch at Hibiscus Beach Grill are complimentary. Holland America has a new food pavilion with a free barbecue. Drinks cost extra.

Does my drink package work at Half Moon Cay?

No. Carnival's CHEERS! terms and Holland America's beverage package terms both exclude drinks bought on the island. Holland America's paid Beach Club day pass includes drinks.

Are umbrellas free at Half Moon Cay?

On Carnival, yes: Carnival lists loungers and umbrellas as complimentary. Holland America's port page says umbrellas are a rental. Loungers are free on both.

Is Half Moon Cay wheelchair accessible?

The new pier helps Carnival guests, but Carnival still lists the island as a sometimes-tender port. Neither line publishes whether the tram takes a wheelchair or anything about beach wheelchairs. Ask your cruise line directly.

Where these facts come from

- Carnival Cruise Line: guests with disabilities and water shuttles (https://www.carnival.com/en/about-carnival/special-needs/wheelchair-users) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Carnival Cruise Line: CHEERS! package terms (https://www.carnival.com/drink-packages/cheers-package/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Holland America Line: RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay port page (https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/us/cruise-destinations/caribbean-cruises/caribbean-ports/relaxaway-half-moon-cay-bahamas-hmd) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Holland America Line: new Beach Club at Half Moon Cay (https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/news/2026/September/news-092226-new-beach-club) (22 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Holland America Line: beverage package terms (https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/faq/onboard-cruise-experience/beverage/what-are-the-beverage-package-terms-conditions) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Carnival Corporation: island renamed RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay (https://www.carnival-news.com/2024/12/10/award-winning-private-island-cruise-destination-renamed-relaxaway-half-moon-cay) (10 December 2024; checked 24 September 2026)
- The Islands of The Bahamas: island FAQ (https://www.bahamas.com/plan-your-trip/island-faq) (checked 26 October 2026)
- US State Department: The Bahamas travel advisory (https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/the-bahamas.html) (issued 28 July 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Critic: Carnival debuts RelaxAway expansion (https://www.cruisecritic.com/news/carnival-cruise-line-debuts-expansion-relaxaway-half-moon-cay) (1 June 2026, updated 9 October 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- CruiseMapper: Carnival inaugurates RelaxAway enhancements (https://www.cruisemapper.com/news/16287-carnival-cruise-line-inaugurates-enhancements-relaxaway) (2 June 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Seatrade Cruise News: Carnival opens expanded RelaxAway (https://www.seatrade-cruise.com/ports-destinations/carnival-cruise-line-opens-expanded-relaxaway-half-moon-cay) (2 June 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Radio: Half Moon Cay divided for Carnival and Holland America guests (https://cruiseradio.net/half-moon-cay-gets-divided-for-carnival-and-holland-america-guests-new-name/) (10 December 2024; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Critic: Princess Cruises drops Princess Cays (https://www.cruisecritic.com/news/princess-cruises-drops-princess-cays) (1 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Hive: Carnival's camouflage warning (https://www.cruisehive.com/the-one-type-of-clothing-carnival-says-you-shouldnt-wear-ashore/209770) (19 May 2026; checked 26 October 2026)

Facts checked on 26 October 2026. Ports change their rules and prices, so check before you sail.

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.