Princess Cays, Eleuthera, Bahamas

Princess's private beach on Eleuthera: a tender ride, a free barbecue, and a destination Princess is quietly moving away from.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I've been to Princess Cays, but I'll be honest about what that means: in October 2026, on Regal Princess, Papa and I stayed on board. My sister Peaches and my stepmom Pollywog went ashore, and they came back very unhappy. The tenders ran late all day, and their glass-bottom boat ride was cancelled because of it. So this guide pairs their day with what Princess actually publishes, and with some news you need before you book: Princess has been moving its calls away from this island.

THE QUICK TAKE

- **Princess is phasing out Princess Cays.** Princess has confirmed that most published calls have moved to RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay, with some going to Celebration Key. Check your itinerary.
- **It's a tender port.** Small boats take you ashore, and on a slow day the tender line eats your time. Book anything timed with a cushion.
- **Free:** the beach, beach chairs, a barbecue lunch, the swimming areas and the kids' play area.
- **Costs extra:** umbrellas, clamshells, bungalows (Princess's fact sheet lists **$199** and **$249**), the glass-bottom boat and the water toys.
- The Bahamian dollar equals the US dollar, and both are accepted. Most things go on your cruise card anyway.
- The Bahamas keeps Eastern Time with daylight saving, the same as Florida. **Be back by ship time**, and remember the last tender, not the ship, is your deadline.

Princess Cays at a glance

What it is	Princess Cruises' private beach resort at the southern tip of Eleuthera, in the outer Bahamas, open since **1992**
Getting ashore	By tender. The ship anchors and small boats carry you to a tender pier on the island.
Size	About **40 acres**, with more than 1.5 miles of shoreline, according to Princess's fact sheet
Length of call	Usually about seven to eight hours
Currency	The Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar, and both are accepted. Most purchases go on your cruise card.
Language	English
Time zone	Eastern Time, with daylight saving, the same as Florida. Still, go by **ship time**.
Taxis	None for cruise visitors. Everything is on the resort, and island tours are sold by the ship.
Who calls here	Princess, and some Carnival ships. Since September 2026, both lines have been swapping calls to Half Moon Cay.

Book it from your phone

Planning for Princess Cays: 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.

Travel insurance

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

SQUAREMOUTH

aicruisegranny.com/go/insurance

Flights, hotels and cars

Fly in the day before and book the hotel and rental car in one place.

EXPEDIA

aicruisegranny.com/go/travel

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.

Princess Cays fact sheet
Princess Cruises

Plus and Premier package terms
Princess Cruises

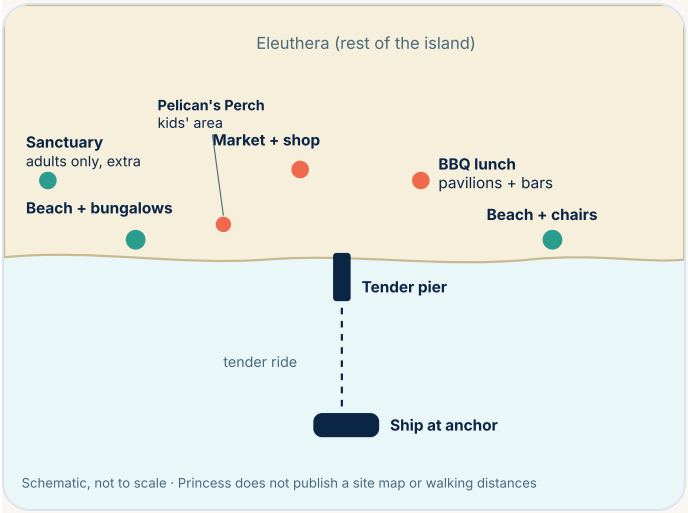
Limited mobility rules (PDF)
Princess Cruises

Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at aicruisegranny.com/port-princess-cays

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Map of the island



Everything hangs off the tender pier, so where you set up for the day decides how far you walk.

At the Princess Cays cruise port: what's there

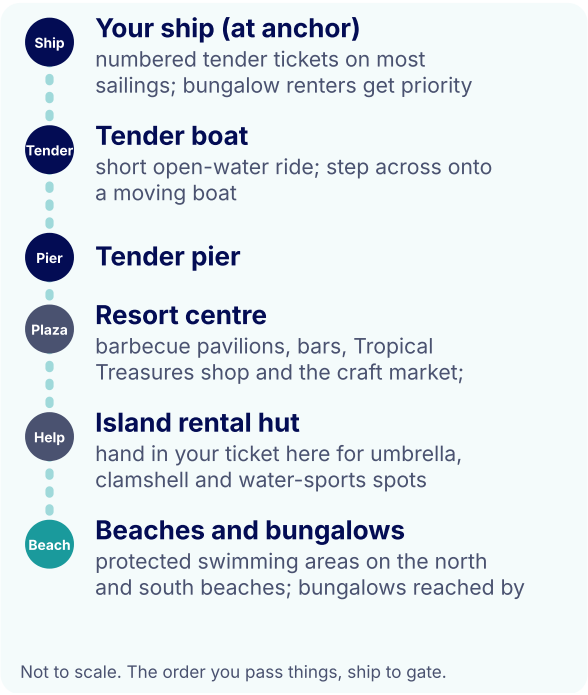
Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

At Princess Cays the whole resort is the port: you tender in, step onto the pier, and everything fans out along the beach from there. In October 2026 Papa and I stayed aboard Regal Princess, while my sister Peaches and my stepmom Pollywog went ashore, rented umbrellas and had a glass-bottom boat ride booked. The tenders ran late all day and that boat ride got cancelled, so my advice starts with the boats. And before you plan anything, check your itinerary: Princess says most of its calls here have moved to Half Moon Cay.

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: Princess Cays tender pier and resort

Princess Cruises' private beach resort at the southern tip of Eleuthera, The Bahamas, open since 1992; about 40 acres. Tender only: the ship anchors and tenders run to a pier in the resort. Princess told Cruise Critic in September 2026 that most published calls have shifted to Half Moon Cay; Princess Cays is no longer listed in Carnival's private-destination collection.



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

Free things to do inside the port

The beach and beach chairs Free — More than 1.5 miles of shoreline per Princess's fact sheet (last published October 2023). Chairs are first come, first served.
Either side of the resort centre
Access: Sand; Princess publishes no beach mats or beach wheelchairs

Protected swimming areas Free — Roped-off swimming areas on the north and south beaches.
North and south beaches
Access: Wear water shoes; the bottom can be rocky

Beach barbecue lunch Free — Two barbecue pavilions with hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, salad, fruit and cookies.
Resort centre

Pelican's Perch Free — Supervised children's play area with a replica galleon, a sand playground and its own restrooms.
In the resort

Volleyball and basketball Free — Courts for a casual game.
In the resort

Lookout tower Free — Princess lists a lookout (observation) tower among the resort facilities.
In the resort
Access: Assume stairs

Snorkelling from the beach Free with your own gear — You can snorkel off the beach toward the reef; bring your own gear or rent it.
Off the beaches

Pools and beaches

Beach umbrella (full day, up to 2 people)

From $24.99 per umbrella on Carnival's listing; Princess price shown only when booking

— Umbrella kit you set up anywhere on the beach; first come, first served; can be cancelled in high winds. Princess doesn't show its price publicly. Peaches and Pollywog rented these on our October 2026 call.
Collect at the island rental hut

Beach clamshell for two

From $44.99 per clamshell on Carnival's listing; Princess calls its fee 'nominal'

— A clamshell sunshade with two lounge chairs; bring your own towel.
On the beach; check in at the rental hut

Private beach bungalow (up to 4)

$199 on Princess's fact sheet (October 2023); from $399.99 per bungalow on Carnival's listing

— Air-conditioned bungalow with ceiling fan, table and chairs, two loungers, private shower and priority tender tickets. Carnival's version adds soft drinks, snacks, snorkel gear for four, two floats and towels.
Palm grove about a 3-minute walk from the beach (Carnival); tram/cart from the pier · about 3 min walk from the ship
Access: Carnival rates it ambulatory accessible: a few steps and short walks; a collapsible wheelchair can be stored

Sanctuary bungalow (adults only, up to 4)

$249 on Princess's fact sheet (October 2023); from $449.99 per bungalow on Carnival's listing

— Bungalow in the roped-off adults-only area with upgraded furniture and water misters; optional VIP lunch add-on.
Adults-only Sanctuary, about a 3-minute walk from the beach (Carnival) · about 3 min walk from the ship
Access: 18+ on Carnival; ambulatory accessible

Food and drink

Four bars — Drinks charged to your cruise card. Princess's terms say its beverage packages apply ashore at Princess Cays; Carnival's CHEERS! does not cover drinks bought here. Check with your own line.
Around the resort

Bungalow gourmet picnic / Sanctuary VIP lunch — Optional add-ons for bungalow renters; Princess lists no price.
Delivered to bungalows

Shopping

Tropical Treasures — Boutique with duty-free gifts and souvenirs, chargeable to your cruise card.
Resort centre

Bahamian craft market — Local vendors selling Bahamian handicrafts. Carry small bills.
Resort centre

Spa and pampering

Island hairstyling (braiding) — Princess's fact sheet says local vendors offer island hairstyling; no price published.
Craft market area

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Glass-bottom boat

From $49.99 per person on Carnival's listing (checked 26 October 2026)

— One-hour trip, about half of it travel time, on a 35-seat boat with no restroom. This is the ride my family lost to late tenders.
From the resort
Access: Carnival rates it ambulatory accessible; a collapsible wheelchair can go aboard

Water-sports rentals — Snorkel gear, kayaks, paddle wheelers, floats, aqua chairs, sea boards, windsurfers and Hobie Wave sailboats from the water-sports kiosk; most can be pre-reserved. No public prices.
Water-sports kiosk / rental hut

Banana boat ride — Powerboat-towed inflatable ride.
From the beach

Snorkel tour — Boat snorkel tour along the southern coast to a shallow reef.
From the resort

Stingray encounter, fishing, bike and lagoon kayak tours — Listed on Princess's excursion page; no public prices.
From the resort

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Cruise-card charging — Bars, the shop and rentals go on your shipboard account. The Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar; bring small bills for the craft market.
Whole resort

Restrooms Free — Princess confirms separate restrooms at Pelican's Perch; general restroom locations aren't published. Bungalows have private showers.
Resort

Bungalow tram/cart Included with bungalow — Bungalow renters can ride a tram/cart between the pier and their bungalow; there may be a short wait.
From the tender pier
Access: The only published mobility help ashore

Getting out of the port

No taxis — There are no taxis or rentals for cruise visitors; the only way past the resort is a ship's tour, such as Princess's four-hour Rock Sound and Tarpum Bay drive with lunch.
Book through the ship

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were going ashore here, I'd get an early tender, stake out free chairs near the pier and the barbecue, and rent an umbrella, because free shade is scarce. Swim in the protected areas in water shoes, eat at the free barbecue, browse the craft market, and book anything timed for the afternoon with plenty of cushion. My family learned the hard way that a late tender can wipe out a booked boat ride. If the swell looks rough at the tender platform that morning, staying aboard is a perfectly good day, too. That's what Papa and I did.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Tender only. Princess says crew won't lift more than 50 lbs (22 kg) to help you on or off a tender, guests who need help must travel with an able-bodied companion, and the captain decides who goes ashore.
- Ashore, facilities are linked by walkways, and bungalow renters get a tram/cart from the pier plus priority tenders.
- Princess publishes no beach mats, beach wheelchairs, accessible restroom details or general tram for Princess Cays.
- Carnival rates the bungalows and glass-bottom boat ambulatory accessible: you need to manage a few steps and short walks; a collapsible wheelchair can be stored.
- Watch a tender load from your balcony before you decide, and check with your own cruise line.

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

Questions about the port

What is there to do at Princess Cays for free?
The beach, beach chairs, the protected swimming areas, the barbecue lunch, volleyball, basketball and the Pelican's Perch kids' area are all included. Umbrellas, clamshells, bungalows, boat trips and drinks cost extra.

Is Princess Cays still a stop for Princess cruises?
Princess told Cruise Critic in September 2026 that most published calls have shifted to Half Moon Cay, with some going to Celebration Key. It hasn't said the island is closing, so check your own itinerary.

How much is an umbrella at Princess Cays?
Carnival's listing shows umbrellas from $24.99 for up to two people. Princess shows its price only when you book, so check your Cruise Personalizer.

Where the port facts come from: Princess Cruises: Private Beach Paradise Awaits Princess Passengers (fact sheet, last published 15 October 2023) (30 October 2026); Princess Cruises: Princess Cays excursions (UK site) (30 October 2026); Princess Cruises: beach umbrella full-day rental (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays beach umbrella full-day rental (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays beach clamshell rental for two (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays private bungalow rental (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays adults Sanctuary bungalow rental (30 October 2026); Carnival Away We Go blog: Top 10 things to do in Princess Cays (2017, modified 2018) (30 October 2026); Cruise Critic: Princess Cruises drops Princess Cays (1 September 2026, updated 9 October 2026) (30 October 2026); The Nassau Guardian: Princess Cruises dropping calls to Princess Cays (7 September 2026) (30 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays glass-bottom boat (from

live page) (26 October 2026); Princess Cruises: Princess Plus and Premier terms (from live page) (26 October 2026); Carnival Cruise Line: CHEERS! package terms (from live page) (24 September 2026)

Coming back: the tender line at the end of the day is the one that catches people. Check the last tender time in your daily planner and be in line well before it. If tenders are running late, as they were on our day, every timed activity gets squeezed.

Our family's day

> We were on Regal Princess in October 2026. Papa and I stayed on board.
>
> Peaches and Pollywog went ashore. They rented umbrellas for the beach and had a glass-bottom boat ride booked. The tenders ran late all day, and the delays got so bad that their boat ride was cancelled. They came back aboard very unhappy, and I don't blame them. A private-island day is supposed to be the easy one.
>
> They were told it was Regal Princess's **last call at Princess Cays**. That's something they were told, not something Princess has announced for that ship, so here's what I could actually confirm. Princess told Cruise Critic in September 2026 that **most of its published Princess Cays calls have moved to Half Moon Cay**, with some going to Celebration Key. One cruiser reported a February 2027 Regal Princess call now showing Celebration Key, and Cruise Hive reported no Princess calls on the schedule from November 2026 onward. Princess hasn't said whether the island is closing. So "last call" may well turn out to be true, but nobody official has said it.

Getting ashore by tender

There's no dock for the ship. Your ship anchors offshore, and tenders, often the ship's own lifeboats, carry you to a small tender pier. Princess's fact sheet describes it simply as a pier for the ship's tenders.

1. **Get a tender ticket.** On most sailings you collect a numbered ticket on board and wait to be called. Bungalow renters get **priority tender tickets**.
2. **Board the tender** from a platform low on the ship. Expect a step across a gap onto a boat that's moving with the swell, with crew holding your arm.
3. **Ride in.** It's a short trip, but it's open water.
4. **Step up onto the pier** and walk into the resort. The market, lunch pavilions and beaches all fan out from here.

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

Wait until the morning rush has gone, then tender over. Pick the closest spot with chairs near the pier and the lunch area, rather than walking the length of the beach. If the budget allows, a bungalow brings priority tenders and a cart ride to your door. If tendering looks rough that morning, there's no shame in staying aboard. That's what Papa and I did.

Beach day

Go ashore early, grab free chairs, swim in the protected areas and eat at the barbecue. Rent an umbrella if you need shade. Wear water shoes, because the sand is coarser and rockier than the photos suggest.

See the island

Princess sells a four-hour drive to the Eleuthera settlements of Rock Sound and Tarpum Bay, with lunch. It's the only way to see real Eleuthera from here. Book it through the ship, and leave room in your day in case the tenders run late.

Getting around the island

You walk. Princess doesn't publish a tram, a shuttle or walking distances. Bungalow guests can ride a **motorized cart** from the pier to their bungalow, though Princess says there may be a short wait. Outside the resort there are no taxis or rentals for cruise visitors. The only way beyond the beach is a ship's tour.

What's free and what costs extra

Included in your fare

- The beach, beach chairs (first come, first served) and the protected swimming areas
- A barbecue lunch from two pavilions: burgers, hot dogs, chicken, salads, fruit and cookies
- Volleyball and basketball
- Pelican's Perch, a supervised play area for children with a pirate-ship replica and its own restrooms

- Browsing the Bahamian craft market and the Tropical Treasures shop

Costs extra

- **Beach umbrella:** for up to two people, all day. Spots are first come, first served, and it can be cancelled in high winds. Princess doesn't show a public price.
- **Clamshell:** a shade shell with two chairs for two people. Princess calls the fee "nominal" and doesn't print it.
- **Beach bungalow: $199** for up to four people, with air conditioning, a private shower, two loungers, drinks service and priority tenders. Extra guests are **$25.95** each, maximum two.
- **Sanctuary bungalow: $249**, adults only, in a quieter roped-off area.
- **Glass-bottom boat:** one hour, half of it travel time, on a 35-seat boat with no restroom and no air conditioning. Carnival's listing for the same trip starts at **$49.99** per person.
- Snorkel gear and tours, kayaks, paddle wheelers, floats and the Eleuthera island drive
- Drinks at the four bars, charged to your cruise card

Treat the bungalow prices with care. They come from a Princess fact sheet last published in October 2023. The live booking pages don't show prices to the public, so check your Cruise Personalizer.

Drink packages: Princess's terms say its beverage packages still apply ashore at Princess Cays. Carnival's CHEERS! package does not cover drinks bought here.

Beaches and areas, ranked

1. **The main beach near the pier and lunch.** Free chairs and the shortest walk. The busiest spot, so arrive early.
2. **The Sanctuary**, adults only and roped off. Quieter, but only for Sanctuary bungalow renters.
3. **The bungalow stretch.** The middle bungalows are closest to the bar, restrooms and snorkelling. Paid.
4. **The far ends of the beach.** Quieter, but a longer walk on sand back to food, restrooms and the tender pier.

Lifeguards: Princess doesn't say whether there are lifeguards. Swim in the protected areas and wear water shoes, because the bottom can be rocky.

Where to eat

Lunch is the free barbecue at the two pavilions. The four bars sell drinks to your cruise card. Bungalow renters can add a gourmet picnic, and Sanctuary renters a VIP lunch, both for an extra charge. Local vendors sell Bahamian crafts, and some offer hair braiding. If you want conch or other Bahamian dishes, the Rock Sound and Tarpum Bay tour includes lunch.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money:** the Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar, and both work everywhere in The Bahamas. Carry some small bills for the craft market.
- **Language:** English.
- **Marijuana:** illegal in The Bahamas, and the tourism board says it's strictly penalised.
- **Ammunition:** don't bring any, not even one stray bullet 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.
- **Licensed operators only:** the tourism board advises accepting rides only from licensed operators, on land or sea.

What the videos don't show you

- **Tender delays.** This is what ruined my family's day. When the tenders run slow, you lose hours in line, and timed excursions can be cancelled.
- **It may not be on your itinerary at all.** Princess and Carnival have been switching Princess Cays calls to Half Moon Cay, often without a big announcement. Excursions booked for Princess Cays are refunded automatically.
- **Weather wins.** A tender port can be skipped because of wind or swell, and umbrella rentals can be cancelled in high winds.
- **The sand.** It's coarser than the brochure pictures, with rocky patches in the water. Bring water shoes.
- **Shade costs money.** Free chairs, yes. Free shade, mostly no.

- **Medical care.** The State Department notes that outer islands like Eleuthera have only small clinics, and 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 are. It also warns about strong currents and sharks, so never swim alone.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

Princess Cays is a tender port, and that's the whole story for a lot of us. Princess's rules for passengers with limited mobility say crew won't carry you or lift more than **50 pounds** to get you on or off a tender, that many tender ports have no wheelchair access ashore, and that the captain's decision on who can board is final. If you can't go ashore, there's **no refund or credit** for the missed port.

Once ashore, Princess publishes no accessibility information for Princess Cays: no beach mats, no beach wheelchairs, no accessible restroom details, no tram. The one helpful item is the bungalow cart from the pier, and bungalow renters also get priority tenders, which means a calmer boarding. The glass-bottom boat is rated ambulatory accessible by Carnival: you must be able to take a few steps, and a collapsible wheelchair can go on board.

My advice: watch a tender load from your balcony before you decide, and ask the tender crew what the step looks like that day. See Mobility & Health Needs for how tenders work, and check with your cruise line before you sail.

The biggest mistake

Booking a tight, timed activity on a tender day and assuming the boats will run on schedule. That's exactly how my family lost their glass-bottom boat ride. Book it for later in the day, take an early tender, and keep the rest of the day loose. The second mistake is not checking your itinerary again before you sail, because your Princess Cays call may already be a Half Moon Cay call.

Princess Cays FAQs

Is Princess Cays a tender port?

Yes. The ship anchors offshore and tenders carry you to a tender pier on the island. Bungalow renters get priority tender tickets.

Is Princess Cruises stopping calls at Princess Cays?

Princess confirmed in September 2026 that most of its published Princess Cays calls have moved to RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay, with some going to Celebration Key. It hasn't said the island is closing, so check your own itinerary.

What is free at Princess Cays?

The beach, beach chairs, the protected swimming areas, the barbecue lunch, volleyball, basketball and the Pelican's Perch kids' area. Umbrellas, clamshells, bungalows, boat trips and drinks cost extra.

How much is a bungalow at Princess Cays?

Princess's fact sheet, last published in October 2023, lists $199 for a beach bungalow for up to four people and $249 for an adults-only Sanctuary bungalow. Check the current price in your Cruise Personalizer.

Does my drink package work at Princess Cays?

On Princess, yes: its terms say beverage packages still apply ashore at Princess Cays. On Carnival, no: the CHEERS! package doesn't cover drinks bought there.

Is Princess Cays wheelchair accessible?

Getting ashore is the problem. It's a tender port, crew won't lift more than 50 pounds, and the captain decides who can board. Princess publishes no accessibility details for the island itself, so ask your cruise line before you sail.

Where these facts come from

- Princess Cruises: Princess Cays fact sheet (https://www.princess.com/news/backgrounders-and-fact-sheets/private-beach-paradise-awaits-princess-passengers) (last published 15 October 2023; checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: Princess Cays destination page (https://www.princess.com/cruise-destinations/caribbean-cruises/princess-cays) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: private bungalow rental (https://www.princess.com/shore-excursions/princess-cays-bahamas/private-bungalow-rental-4-people-maximum) (checked 26 October 2026)

- Princess Cruises: beach umbrella rental (https://www.princess.com/shore-excursions/princess-cays-bahamas/beach-umbrella-full-day-rental-2-people-maximum) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: beach clamshell rental (https://www.princess.com/shore-excursions/princess-cays-bahamas/beach-clamshell-rental-2-people-maximum) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: glass-bottom boat cruise (https://www.princess.com/shore-excursions/princess-cays-bahamas/glass-bottom-boat-cruise) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Carnival Cruise Line: Princess Cays glass-bottom boat cruise (https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/princess-cays/glass-bottom-boat-cruise-439006) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: Princess Plus and Premier terms (https://www.princess.com/cruise-deals-promotions/plus-premier-cruise-packages/terms-and-conditions) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Carnival Cruise Line: CHEERS! package terms (https://www.carnival.com/drink-packages/cheers-package/) (checked 24 September 2026)
- Princess Cruises: passengers with limited mobility (PDF) (https://www.princess.com/downloads/pdf/faq_answer_legal/Passengers-with-Limited-Mobility.pdf) (checked 26 October 2026)
- The Islands of The Bahamas: island FAQ (https://www.bahamas.com/plan-your-trip/island-faq) (checked 26 October 2026)
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- Cruise Critic: Princess Cruises drops Princess Cays (https://www.cruisecritic.com/news/princess-cruises-drops-princess-cays) (1 September 2026, updated 9 October 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- CruiseMapper: Princess Cruises phases out calls at Princess Cays (https://www.cruisemapper.com/news/16668-princess-cruises-phases-out-calls-princess-cays) (4 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Industry News: Princess Cays removed from Sun Princess itinerary (https://cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/2026/09/princess-cays-removed-from-upcoming-sun-princess-itinerary/) (11 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Hive: Carnival pulls Princess Cays from Halloween sailing (https://www.cruisehive.com/carnival-cruise-line-pulls-one-private-destination-from-halloween-sailing/218453) (21 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)
- Cruise Granny™'s family, Regal Princess, October 2026: the tender delays, the umbrella rental and the cancelled boat ride

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.