

Understanding the Port

Princess Cays isn't a private island — it's the southern tip of Eleuthera, one of the Bahamas' great out islands, with a beach resort on the point. One of cruising's original private destinations, it still runs on the original recipe: tender in, beach hard, lunch included, tender back.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

No pier here: ships anchor offshore and tenders shuttle you in (about 10–20 minutes). The resort spreads two beach zones around the landing, each with its own free lunch pavilion.

Cash & Currency

Your ship card works at the bars and rental huts. Princess drink packages are honored ashore; Carnival's Cheers! is not. The craft market outside the gate is cash only — bring small US bills.

Getting Around

Everything is walkable, with a free tram along the paths. Beyond the fence there are no taxis at this end of Eleuthera — the dune-buggy excursion is the real way out.

GOOD

The Beach Day

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ Over half a mile of white sand — loungers free and plentiful
- ✓ The beach BBQ lunch is included — eat before noon to beat the line
- ✓ Pack water shoes: the rocky entries hide the best free snorkeling

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

On the Water

Best for: Families, snorkelers, active travelers

- ✓ Floats, kayaks, paddle wheelers — the calm lagoon is the spot
- ✓ Shore snorkeling that beats most private islands — bring your mask
- ✓ The clamshell: shade is this island's true luxury

Rentals are no-refund — book when the forecast is friendly.

BEST

A Bungalow or the Buggy

Best for: Family basecamps; couples; the Eleuthera-curious

- ✓ Air-conditioned bungalows with snacks, gear, and priority tender
- ✓ An adults-only Sanctuary row at the far, quiet end
- ✓ Or drive a dune buggy to Bannerman Town's ruins — real Eleuthera

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

The Free Formula

Walk past the watersports hut to the quiet side, claim your sand, and hit the BBQ before noon. Add water shoes and your own mask, and the rocky patches turn into the day's best free activity — fish, rays, the occasional octopus.

BETTER

Shade and a Float

The clamshell is the island's best-value upgrade, because shade — not seating — is the scarce resource here. Pair it with one water toy and call it a day; this island rewards keeping things simple.

BEST

The Dune Buggy

The only real way off the resort: self-drive buggies rumble through Bannerman Town — church ruins, cobbled lanes, wild coastline. Bumpy and muddy is part of the charm. Drivers need a license and must be 21.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

George's Bar & the Craft Market

Just outside the security gate: two dozen Eleutheran vendors selling straw work and carvings (cash only), and locally run George's Bar pouring cold beers for about half the resort price. The most real Eleuthera most guests will see.

The Quiet Side

Crowds cluster near the tender landing and the lunch line. Walk a few minutes past the watersports hut and the sand empties out — same water, same free loungers, none of the bustle.



Princess Cays, southern Eleuthera



The anchorage — snorkelers, sailboats, and the ship offshore

Key Considerations

The tender rules the day here. Lines to get back aboard peak in the last two hours, so aim your return early — and as a tender-only stop, rough seas can shorten or cancel the call entirely; Princess Cays is one of the Caribbean's most weather-skipped ports. It's now also the only one of Carnival Corporation's flagship destinations still without a pier, so plan around boats, not gangways.

Set expectations and the day is lovely: this is a beach, full stop — no pool, no waterpark, no coaster. Shade is the scarce resource (clamshells sell out, shaded loungers vanish first), water entry runs rocky in stretches (water shoes, truly), and the buffet peaks at noon. Come for a simple day and it delivers exactly that.



Out-island Eleuthera from the air — Windermere Island



Pink Sands Beach, Harbour Island — Eleuthera's famous far north



A quiet cove at The Current, North Eleuthera

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Port Orientation

FROM THE TENDER LANDING

- Welcome Area & Tram StopAt the tender landing
- A short, flat walk
- Main Beach & Buffet PavilionThe busy, calm-water hub
- Bars & Live MusicBanana Bar is the scene
- Watersports HutFloats, kayaks, snorkel gear
- Farther along
- The Quiet SidePast the watersports hut
- Bungalow Row & SanctuaryPaid; adults at the far end
- Craft Market & George's BarJust outside the gate — cash

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time — and the last tender back — before you leave the ship. Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Princess Cays is the beach day at its most elemental: sand, sea, lunch on the grill, and a tender ride home.

Bring water shoes, claim shade early, and let the island be what it is — the simplest good day in the Bahamas.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

Not an Island at All. Princess Cays isn't a private island — it's 40 acres on the southern tip of Eleuthera, a real Bahamian out island 110 miles long and, in places, barely a mile wide. The tourism board calls it "pencil-thin."

Freedom Island. Eleuthera takes its name from the Greek word for freedom — bestowed around 1648 by the Eleutheran Adventurers, Puritan settlers whose ship wrecked on a reef; they sheltered their first days in what's now called Preacher's Cave.

Pineapple Money. In the 1800s Eleuthera was billed as the pineapple capital of the world, shipping over a million ultra-sweet "sugarloaf" pineapples a year to England and America. Gregory Town still throws a Pineapple Festival every June.

The Narrowest Place on Earth. Far up-island, Eleuthera pinches to about 30 feet at the Glass Window Bridge — billed as the world's narrowest place, dark Atlantic on one side, glassy turquoise on the other. It's a 100-mile drive; admire it in photos.

New Neighbors. A private-destination pioneer since 1992, Princess Cays got company in 2024: Disney's Lookout Cay opened just up the coast — two cruise-line hideaways now share the same island tip.