

Understanding the Port

Roatán sits on the second-largest barrier reef in the world, and it shows: this is the beach and snorkel stop of the Western Caribbean. Know one thing before you plan — the island has two separate cruise ports, and which one your ship uses changes your day.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Two ports: Isla Tropicale (formerly Mahogany Bay; Carnival family lines) and the Port of Roatán at Coxen Hole (Royal Caribbean, NCL, others). Check which one your ship uses.

Cash & Currency

Honduran lempira is official. USD accepted virtually everywhere tourists go; expect change in lempira. Bring small bills for taxis and tips.

Getting Around

Taxis meet every ship, unmetered. Agree the price, and whether it is per person or total, before you ride. West Bay Beach is 20–35 min away.

GOOD

Stay at the Port

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ Mahogany Beach: free, a short walk from Carnival's pier
- ✓ Port shops and restaurants at both terminals
- ✓ Back at the ship whenever you want

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

West Bay Beach Day

Best for: Couples, families, beach lovers

- ✓ Powder-white sand and calm turquoise water
- ✓ Snorkel the reef right from shore
- ✓ Chairs, food, and drinks all along the beach

Arrange your return taxi before you settle in.

BEST

Reef & Wildlife Day

Best for: First timers, snorkelers, animal lovers

- ✓ Snorkel or dive the Mesoamerican Reef
- ✓ Island tour: beaches, viewpoints, and wildlife
- ✓ Sloth and monkey sanctuaries, zip-line parks

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Port Area & Mahogany Beach

At Isla Tropicale, a free private beach sits a 10-minute walk (or an optional paid chairlift) from the ship. At Coxen Hole, browse the port's shopping village. No planning required.

BETTER

West Bay Beach

One of the Caribbean's great beaches, about 20–35 minutes depending on which port your ship uses. The reef sits just off shore, so pack or rent a mask. Expect a lively scene and plan your ride back.

BEST

Reef, Island, or Sloths

Snorkel or dive the second-largest reef on Earth, book a private island tour, or meet sloths and monkeys up close at a family-run sanctuary. New rules protect the animals: photos yes, holding no.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

West Bay Beach

The consensus pick. Beautiful sand, shore snorkeling, and plenty of food and drink options. Worth the taxi ride from either port.

Daniel Johnson's Monkey & Sloth Hangout

The forum favorite for wildlife: a small, family-run sanctuary near French Harbour, easily paired with a beach stop or a snorkel trip.



West Bay Beach, Roatán



Cruise ship docked at Roatán, Honduras

Key Considerations

Confirm which port your ship uses before you plan anything. Isla Tropicale and Coxen Hole sit three miles apart, and they flip what is close: the sloth sanctuaries are nearer Isla Tropicale, while West Bay and West End are nearer Coxen Hole. Agree taxi fares up front: per person or total, one-way or round-trip.

West Bay gets busy on multi-ship days and beach vendors are persistent; a resort day pass buys chairs and calmer surroundings. Seaweed can wash in seasonally, so ask us to check beach conditions near your sail date. Choose one plan, protect your all aboard time, and Roatán delivers one of the best beach days in the Caribbean.



The reef off West Bay, Roatán



West End and Half Moon Bay, Roatán



Hoffmann's two-toed sloth

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Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT

● Mahogany Beach	At Isla Tropicale, walkable
● Coxen Hole town	At Port of Roatán
~ 15–30 min by taxi	
● West End Village	Village strip, water taxis to West Bay
~ 20–35 min by taxi	
● West Bay Beach	The island's signature beach
~ 15–30 min by taxi	
● Sloth & monkey parks	French Cay, near French Harbour
~ 5–10 min by water taxi	
● West End ↔ West Bay	Small boats, a few dollars

DON'T FORGET

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

Key Takeaway

Roatán is a beach and reef island. Pick the beach, the reef, or the wildlife, and do that one thing well.

Know your port, agree your taxi fare up front, and this stop is as good as the Caribbean gets.

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

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Did You Know?

The Second-Largest Reef on Earth. Roatán sits on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, which stretches some 700 miles along four countries. Only Australia's Great Barrier Reef is bigger.

Briefly British. The Bay Islands were a British Crown colony from 1852 to 1861. That is one reason English is still widely spoken across the island.

Pirate Country. Roatán's Port Royal was a real 17th-century pirate haven, and Coxen Hole is named for pirate John Coxen. Legend says Henry Morgan himself anchored here.

Garifuna Roots. The Garifuna people of Punta Gorda arrived in 1797, and their language, music, and dance are UNESCO-recognized cultural heritage.

Divers' Bargain. The Bay Islands are among the cheapest places in the world to get scuba certified, and whale sharks cruise the waters off nearby Utila year-round.