

Understanding the Port

Bermuda is not the Caribbean. It is a British Overseas Territory in the North Atlantic, six hundred miles off the Carolinas, and its season runs April to November — the inverse of the islands. Nearly every ship ties up at the old Royal Navy dockyard, usually for two or three days.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Almost all ships berth at the Royal Naval Dockyard on the West End, at King's Wharf or Heritage Wharf. Only small ships reach Hamilton or St. George's. The ferry terminal is right there.

Cash & Currency

The Bermudian dollar is fixed at par with the US dollar and both circulate. Spend US cash anywhere; cards are widely taken. Prices are closer to New York than to the Caribbean.

Getting Around

Visitors cannot rent cars here — that is the law, not a shortage. Ferries, buses, taxis and scooters are the whole menu, and one pass covers ferries and buses alike.

GOOD

The Dockyard

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ A walled fortress you can wander for free
- ✓ The National Museum in the old Keep
- ✓ Glassblowing, rum cake and a beach at the gate

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

The Pink Sand

Best for: Beach lovers, families, photographers

- ✓ Horseshoe Bay, half an hour by shuttle or bus
- ✓ Emptier coves over the rocks at the far end
- ✓ A sheltered cove for small children

Go early. It fills fast when ships are in.

BEST

The Ferry to St. George's

Best for: History lovers, walkers, explorers

- ✓ A UNESCO town founded in 1612
- ✓ The crossing is half the pleasure
- ✓ Crystal Caves within reach on the way back

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

The Dockyard

The Royal Navy built this as its Atlantic base and left behind a walled fortress you can walk into for nothing. The National Museum sits inside the Keep with the Commissioner's House above it, and there is glassblowing, rum cake and a small beach within the walls.

BETTER

Horseshoe Bay

The consensus pick, and rightly. Twenty-five to thirty minutes by beach shuttle or the number seven bus; no ferry goes there. Expect it busy when ships are in — the fix is to go early and walk over the rocks at the western end, where the coves empty out fast.

BEST

St. George's

The oldest continuously inhabited English town in the New World, founded in 1612 after a shipwreck, and UNESCO-listed with its forts. Forty-five minutes by ferry each way makes it a full-day commitment — and a Monday-to-Saturday one, for the reasons overleaf.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

A Transport Pass

One pass covers every ferry and every bus on the island, and on a two- or three-day call it pays for itself the first afternoon. Buy it at the Dockyard visitor centre — you cannot buy one aboard a bus.

Hamilton by Ferry

Twenty minutes across the Great Sound to Front Street, and the prettiest commute in the Atlantic. Pastel shopfronts, a cathedral tower you can climb, and fish chowder with black rum and sherry peppers.



Commissioner's House above the Royal Naval Dockyard



St. George's, with its pastel walls and white stepped roofs

Key Considerations

Start with the geography, because it changes what you pack. Bermuda sits in the North Atlantic, not the tropics, and the cruise season runs roughly April to early November. The water peaks near eighty-five degrees in August but is about sixty-eight in April — swimmable and brisk. Horseshoe Bay's lifeguards work May through October, which is as good a definition of the swimming season as any.

Visitors are not permitted to rent cars in Bermuda. Ferries, buses, taxis, scooters and small electric minicars are the entire menu, and a transport pass covering both ferries and buses is the single best purchase of your call — buy it at the Dockyard visitor centre, because you cannot buy one on a bus. Traffic drives on the left and the island-wide speed limit is around twenty miles an hour, so nothing here happens in a hurry.

Two scheduling traps. The direct Dockyard-to-St. George's ferry does not run on Sundays and is summer-only, and St. Peter's Church there is shut to sightseers on Sundays too — so a Sunday call is not a St. George's day. And the Crystal Caves combination ticket is sold only in morning and late-afternoon windows midweek, which is exactly when a cruise passenger is still in transit. Arrive before noon, or plan on a single cave.

One note about the Dockyard itself. There is a captive-dolphin facility inside the museum grounds that guests walk straight past. TripAdvisor declines to sell tickets to it on animal-welfare grounds, and we do not book it. If you want time in the water with something wild, the reef snorkeling here is genuinely excellent.



Pink-tinged sand at Horseshoe Bay, Warwick Parish



Gibbs Hill Lighthouse above Southampton Parish



Hamilton across the harbor, twenty minutes by ferry

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Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT (ROYAL NAVAL DOCKYARD)

● National Museum & Clocktower Mall	At the pier
● Snorkel Park Beach	Inside the walls
~ 20 min by ferry	
● Hamilton	The capital, on Front Street
~ 25–30 min by shuttle or bus 7	
● Horseshoe Bay	The pink sand; no ferry goes there
● Gibbs Hill Lighthouse	On the same bus route
~ 45 min by ferry, Mon–Sat	
● St. George's	UNESCO town; no Sunday ferry
~ 45–50 min each way	
● Crystal & Fantasy Caves	Ferry to Hamilton, then bus

DON'T FORGET

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

Key Takeaway

Bermuda is the outlier of the whole itinerary: British, Atlantic, expensive, and beautiful in a way none of the islands are.

Buy the transport pass, take the ferry somewhere, and remember most calls here last two or three days — you do not have to fit it all into one.

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

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Did You Know?

Not the Caribbean at All. Bermuda sits in the North Atlantic about six hundred miles off North Carolina. It is subtropical rather than tropical, which is exactly why its season runs opposite to the islands'.

You Cannot Rent a Car. Bermuda is one of the very few places on earth where a visitor simply cannot hire one. The British Foreign Office puts it flatly: tourists are not allowed to drive cars in Bermuda. There are no car-hire counters on the island.

The Roofs Are Waterworks. Bermuda has no rivers, no lakes and no freshwater springs. Those white stepped roofs are rainwater catchments — the steps slow the rain into gutters and down to a tank beneath the house, and building law requires them.

Coral Makes the White, Forams Make the Pink. The blush in the sand is not crushed coral, whatever you have read. It comes from a red single-celled organism that grows under the reef ledges offshore, ground into the sand by the surf. It is a subtle tint, strongest at the waterline.

Built by Convicts. The Dockyard you step off into was begun in 1809 and built in large part by convicts shipped from Britain, housed in what the Dockyard's own history calls appalling conditions aboard rotting hulks. The Royal Navy did not leave until 1951.