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[CARIBBEAN CRUISE](#)

The most popular cruises by far have been Caribbean cruises. Most of the cruise lines have numerous itineraries that cover most of the islands throughout the Caribbean and the Bahamas. You have many choices of cruise lines and destinations. If you are looking for a younger more active fun crowd, then choose Carnival, Royal Caribbean or Princess. Remember that even on these cruise lines the average age tends to be in the 50s with a broad mix of younger and older passengers. If you are looking for a quiet relaxing time or a more mature crowd and want to pay a little more, then look into Costa, Holland America, Seabourn, Cunard, Norwegian or Celebrity. The average age on these cruise lines tends to be older.



In general, Caribbean cruises are usually categorized as Western Caribbean, Eastern Caribbean, Southern Caribbean or the Bahamas. The Western Caribbean will usually consist of Cozumel/Costa Maya, Grand Cayman and Jamaica. The Bahamas, Roatan, Belize, Key West or Progreso (Mexico) may be included sometimes depending on the cruise line or your departure port. The Eastern Caribbean usually includes such ports as San Juan (Puerto Rico), St. Thomas, St. Maarten, Haiti, Antigua and Tortola/Virgin Gorda. The Bahamas may also be included depending on the cruise line or your departure port. The Southern Caribbean may include such ports as San Juan, St Thomas, Dominica, Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominican Republic, St. Maarten, Aruba, and Curacao.

Our VoyageMonkey staff recently had the pleasure of taking an assignment to

[Mexico](#)[Punta Cana](#)[Scottsdale Arizona](#)[Tahiti](#)

review a particular 8-day cruise itinerary that combined some of the best of the Southern, Eastern and Bahamas aboard a Carnival Cruise ship departing from Ft. Lauderdale Florida. Being veteran cruisers, the consensus was that this is one of the best cruise itineraries available and is highly recommended as a Caribbean must. This particular cruise included, San Juan, St. Thomas, Antigua, Tortola/Virgin Gorda, and Nassau Bahamas. Below is a chronicle of our staffs' journey and recommendations on what to do, where to eat and other valuable tips & information for our clients. Enjoy the Voyage.

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Plan on getting to Ft. Lauderdale a day early if you have to travel any distance to get there. Dealing with airports and ship embarkation on the same day may be overwhelming. Ft. Lauderdale is a great destination and deserves a day to sightsee, shop, dine and take in the many other activities it has to offers.



FT. LAUDERDALE

There are Miles of lagoons and waterways that make Fort Lauderdale one of the most popular areas on Florida's Gold Coast. Its been called the Venice of America and is one of the nations largest yachting centers. The Ft. Lauderdale area has boating, fishing, gambling, shopping, the everglades, nightlife, the beach, sun and fun. It is located about 30 minutes north of Miami and has its own airport. Direct flights to Ft. Lauderdale may not be available from certain cities. The Cab ride from Miami runs about \$75 to \$80 and there are also cheaper shuttles.



ST. REGIS, FT. LAUDERDALE



ST. REGIS LOBBY

VoyageMonkey viewed three Ft. Lauderdale hotels during the trip. These will cater to three different tastes. The St. Regis Resort was the favorite of the three. We rate this 5-stars. This hotel opened in May of 2007. It is the high-end brand of the Starwood Resorts. The hotel sits directly across the street from Ft. Lauderdale Beach in the center of the strip. Note that all the hotels on the strip (Ft. Lauderdale Blvd., A1A) are located across the street except for the Sheraton Yankee Clipper on the south end. The St. Regis is a very elegant and luxurious 24-story resort hotel. The interior boasts a stark & clean look (very Feng Shui). Open and airy. The staff is very professional and provides the top service you would expect from a 5-star hotel. There is butler service available. They have a restaurant, Cero's that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and is open to the public. The hotel has a roof-top pool and pool bar. The spa and fitness center in the hotel is top notch. Here you can pamper yourself. There is a main bar on the first floor and a wine/cognac bar & lounge. Both are elegant. The rooms are very nice, luxury & style. There are 187 guest rooms and 28 suites. They also have meeting facilities. Rooms generally



ST. REGIS POOL

start at just under \$500 per night and can exceed \$1000 for oceanfront. Room deals are available if you shop around. This is our recommended hotel if you want luxury and price is less important.

Next, VoyageMonkey viewed an old local favorite. The Sheraton Yankee Clipper. This is the only Ft. Lauderdale Hotel that is actually on the beach side of the main Ft. Lauderdale strip. Its on the south end and sits on the widest part of Ft. Lauderdale Beach. Room rates start at under \$300 per night and deals are regularly available. VoyageMonkey often offers a lowest room rate guarantee at this hotel. We rate this one as a 3-star hotel. The hotel has a restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, and a poolside snack bar and store. The restaurant, The Clipper Steak House, has great Brazilian Churasco style steaks and serves buffet style brunch if desired. The “Wreck” bar is a favorite among locals with its underwater glass behind the bar that looks into the swimming pool. The bar was made famous in the movie “Analyze This” starring Billy Crystal and Robert DeNiro. There is live music and dancing. The hotel has two pools, exercise equipment, tour desk, and car rental & concierge service. VoyageMonkey recommends this hotel to those looking for good value and a great location.

SHERATON YANKEE
CLIPPER

WRECK BAR



RIVERSIDE HOTEL

For those who want to be closer to trendy shopping, we checked out the Riverside Hotel on Las Olas Blvd. Las Olas Blvd is the main shopping strip closer to downtown. On Las Olas you will find many antique shops, art galleries, cafes, restaurants and pubs. At the center of Ft. Lauderdale Beach take Las Olas Blvd. About 1 mile or 2 and you will be in the center of this trendy shopping area near the “new river.” The Riverside Hotel has charm and is romantic. We also rate this as a 3-star hotel although our travelers often rate it better. This is a 12-story 217-room hotel. The outdoor pool sits in a tropical garden setting. Afternoon tea is served in the quaint lobby with its tile floors and fireplace. There is a hotel dock where you can catch a water taxi. The rooms are all elegantly furnished with antique furniture. At the Las Olas Blvd. Hotel entrance you will find The Grill Room and Indigo restaurants and the Golden Lyon cocktail lounge. There is also sidewalk café style dining. The Grill Room is highly rated with its fresh seafood and prime aged steaks. Room rates at the Riverside Hotel start at under \$250 and can exceed \$300. Check for occasional deals.

Other VoyageMonkey recommended hotels along the beach include The

Marriott Vacation Club Beach Place Towers and The Bahia Mar Beach Resort. These both have good locations.

For dining in the area, our VoyageMonkey staff visited Shula's on the Beach. This is Don Shula's restaurant, the former head coach of the Miami Dolphins. We've seen this restaurant recommended in various in-flight magazines as one of America's top steak houses and wanted to put it to the test. The restaurant is nicely decorated with its soft wooden décor and football photos throughout. There is a cocktail bar, TV screens and outdoor seating overlooking the beach. The restaurant is located in the front of the Sheraton Yankee Trader hotel at Ft. Lauderdale Beach. We spoke with Brad Noyes "Head Coach" of the restaurant who recommended either the Cowboy Steak (Don's Favorite) or the 24 oz Porterhouse. Steak prices were in the \$30 to \$40+ dollar range. A steak aficionado would agree with us that the steaks are well worth it. The food did not let us down. We rate the restaurant overall with 4-stars. Another highly recommended steak house in the area is Jackson's Steakhouse on Las Olas Blvd. The restaurant also boasts its one of the "Top Ten Steak House in America."



The Ship (Carnival Liberty)

The Port (Port Everglades) is around 6 miles from Ft. Lauderdale Beach. A taxi ride to the port is under \$20 and takes about 10 minutes from Ft. Lauderdale Beach. When you arrive at the pier porters from the ship will take your bags. It may take a while to check yourself through the embarkation process, as the lines can be long. Be patient, the ship won't leave without you.



CARNIVAL LIBERTY



SHIP'S DECK

Our ship was the Carnival Liberty. She was placed in service in 2005. Once you board the ship lunch is being served and the cocktails are flowing. We suggest finding your room and getting acquainted with the ship first; the food will still be there. A deck plan card is available to assist you in finding your way around the ship. Like most Carnival ships, the interior is decorated in festive style décor with various themes throughout. The ship has a main atrium with glass elevators, a bar and dance floor. Here you will find the pursers information desk and shore excursion desk. The ship has 3 pools and various Jacuzzis on the 9th floor deck. Here you will find 3 pool bars and all your buffet style restaurants. You will find two main sit-down dining rooms on the 3rd & 4th floors and a supper club on the 10th floor (Harry's Supper Club). The supper club charges a nominal fee for the top quality food and service. Here you can dine, dance and have a real romantic special evening. The ship has a 3-story auditorium with Las Vegas style shows and late night comedy. There is a gymnasium, spa and salon, complete



SHIP'S CASINO

with steam room, sauna & Jacuzzis. You can pamper yourself to a massage, facial, pedicure & manicure, or get your hair done. Other features of the ship include: a casino, sports bar with flat screen TV's, karaoke bar, cabaret lounge, teen disco club, sing-along piano bar, cigar/cognac jazz lounge, martini bar, sushi bar, deli, shopping (diamonds, watches, liquor, perfumes...), water slide, library, chapel, outdoor movie jumbo screen, desert bar, ice cream machines, 24-hour pizza counter and 24-hour room service.

You can book all your shore excursions online before you board the ship or book from your TV set in your room. We suggest booking early as the more popular excursions can fill up quickly. Excursions can get expensive for the week but it is worth it. If you try booking cheaper excursions off the ship it can take time and you are not guaranteed the ship will not leave without you. All of the ship sponsored excursions guarantee the ship will wait for your tour to return. If you don't plan on booking excursions and are simply going into port to shop, remember, on some island the vendors can be aggressive and make your experience not enjoyable. How many times can you be asked if you want your hair braided? On this particular cruise, only Antigua had the aggressive vendor syndrome. We suggest booking an excursion while in Antigua and saving your shopping for Nassau, Bahamas.

SHIP'S GLASS
ELEVATORS

San Juan, Puerto Rico



OLD SAN JUAN



OLD SAN JUAN

The first port of call was Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. Old San Juan is old world charm. The streets are cobble stone and the historic 16th & 17th century buildings are beautifully restored with many romantic looking doorways and alleyways. As you stroll the town you will pass by plazas, churches, statues and forts. The largest fort is El Morro a multi level fortress. There is great shopping in town and lots of good Puerto Rican and Caribbean food to try. If there is one port to pass on booking an excursion and just strolling around town this is the spot. The ship lets you off right in Old Town San Juan. Just walk. It is fairly safe to walk around. The town is well policed to protect tourists. Here you will find jewelry, clothing, perfumes and Caribbean spices.

The ship stays till late at night so dinner and local nightlife in town is a must. We recommend trying traditional Puerto Rican/Spanish cuisine at La Mallorquina, the oldest restaurant in Puerto Rico. Several locals in town recommended this restaurant. It's located on Calle San Justo. Here you can feast on authentic Asopao, a Puerto Rican Gumbo. The ambiance is old colonial and they have an elegant cocktail bar. Also on the



LA MALLORQUINA

menu you will find arroz con pollo, fresh seafood, black bean soup and shrimp in garlic sauce. It has white tablecloths and suited waiters but it is casual and the prices are reasonable. Other local favorites are the Parrot Club on Fortaleza Street, Barrachina on Calle Cristo, Ostra Cosa on Calle Cristo and the casual La Bombonera on Calle San Francisco.



CASINO, SAN JUAN

If you did not get enough gambling on the ship you can gamble in San Juan. The closest to the ship would be the Sheraton Old San Juan across from the cruise piers. A 10 to 20 minute cab ride will take you to the stretch of beach resort area known as Condado and Isla Verde. High-rise hotels and several gambling casinos line this area. The nicest are the Ritz Carlton and the Wyndham El San Juan with its old world charm and elegance. The El San Juan has one of the nicest bars in the main lobby. A great place to stop for a drink. If you venture down to this area and want to indulge in some great Puerto Rican/Cuban cuisine visit Metropol across from the Ritz Carlton next to the cockfight arena. It serves the best black bean soup. We recommend the Caribbean meat sampler platter. Also try the fried plantains and Yucca. Dining is casual and this is a local favorite.

The ship sponsors several popular excursions in this port if you are not one to go on your own. There is a popular City & Shopping Tour, San Juan Nightlife Tour, Bacardi Distillery Tour, Night Horseback Riding Tour and guided Old San Juan Walking Tours.

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands



CHARLOTTE AMALIE

The ship's pier is a short taxi ride into Charlotte Amalie, the capital of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the main town on the island of St. Thomas. This is one of the most beautiful harbors in the Caribbean, filled with luxury yachts, sail boats and sports fishing boats. Water activities are abundant. Charlotte Amalie has great restaurants, nightlife and draws visitors from around the world for its duty-free shopping.

The island is only 32-square miles. It's easy to get a taxi, rent a car or take a guided tour to get around. There are great panoramic mountain vistas where you can see other US and British Virgin Islands. At Paradise Point, you can take a tram 700 feet above the Charlotte Amalie Harbor and enjoy the view. Take your camera. If you have time you can play golf or charter a boat while visiting the island. If you want to get out of town and take in some of the natural beauty of the island head over to Megens Bay which is a short taxi ride to the other side of the island. This is one of the world's most beautiful beaches with its white sand stretching over half a mile. The beach is great for swimming in its sheltered waters. The western end of the beach has the better snorkeling and is often less



crowded on busy days. Other popular beaches are Morningstar Beach and Coki Beach. Morningstar beach is popular with the cruise ship passengers because of its convenience and proximity. The beach is located near the Marriott Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort and is the closest beach to the cruise pier. Here you can rent a lounge chair & umbrella and order drinks from one of the bars. You can get snacks at the snack bar and rent windsurfers from the sports center. Coki Beach is on the other side of the island and is a favorite of the locals. The beach offers great snorkeling and scuba diving. There is a dive shop at the beach. You will find restrooms, changing rooms, food stands and bars. The beach is near Coral World Ocean Park. The park has an 80,000-gallon coral reef tank, underwater observatory tower, marine gardens aquarium and shark pool.



If you have time you can take a boat over to Buck Island or St. John for the day. Buck Island is a small 176-acre island and has pristine beaches and has one of the areas best snorkel reefs with spectacular coral and sea life. Buck Island is a great place to unwind for the day. St. John is a short boat ride from St. Thomas. The island of St. John is two-thirds U.S. National Park so the island is very unspoiled. Be sure to visit Trunk Bay, a popular small-secluded bay with a soft white sand beach. Enjoy the great snorkeling offered here and follow the snorkel trail complete with underwater plaques. You can rent snorkel equipment or bring your own. You will see Fan Coral and many Parrot Fish. This is probably the most popular beach to visit on St. John. There is a small snack bar, a shop and changing room at Trunk Bay.

Some of the popular shore excursions offered by the ship include kayaking, golf, scuba diving & snorkeling, sunset champagne cruise, Coki Beach and Megens Bay trips, St. John & Trunk Bay tour, shopping tour, Coral World Ocean Park and ocean yacht racing. Our VoyageMonkey staff chose to experience the ocean yacht racing operated by [ONDECK](#) Ocean Racing. On this excursion the ONDECK staff divide you into teams and you compete against each other on Farr 65 ft. carbon fiber racing yachts. You actually get involved in taking the helm, trimming sails, grinding winches, or just sitting on the rail as weight. You get to take in great sights of the harbor and head to the open ocean. This was an exhilarating experience. We highly recommend this excursion to the adventurous person. Sailing is a good workout. After the work is done you get to enjoy Rum Punch and view your photos taken by the staff. [Mention "VoyageMonkey" when you book.](#) The adventure runs around \$100 per person and takes a total of around 3-hours. You still can get in some shopping for the rest of the day.



ONDECK RACING
YACHTS



If you want to enjoy a meal while you are in Charlotte Amalie we recommend Hervé Restaurant & Wine Bar,



located on Government Hill, next to Hotel 1829. It serves the best food in town and has a panoramic view of Charlotte Amalie. Prices are reasonable and the food is top quality. The cuisine is American and French with a touch of the Caribbean. The seafood is fresh and the deserts are delicious. Dine on the terrace and enjoy the view. Another VoyageMonkey favorite is Tavern on the Waterfront, located at 30 Dronningens Gade. The cuisine is Caribbean with a French touch. There is a good selection of seafood dishes and the barbeque pork ribs are very popular. The décor is simple and there is a good view of the harbor. Other recommended restaurants in Charlotte Amalie include: Cuzzin's Caribbean Restaurant & Bar (located at 7 Wimmelskafts Gade), a casual local favorite for Caribbean food & seafood; and, Virgilio's, Italian Restaurant (18 Dronningens Gade). Here you can enjoy the best northern Italian food on the island and listen to soft Italian music while seated among elegant Crystal Chandeliers and stained-glass windows.

Antigua

Antigua (pronounced An-tee'ga) is about 14 miles long and 11 miles wide and claims to have 365 beaches, one for each day of the year. Antigua uses the Eastern Caribbean Dollar although US Dollars are widely accepted. The cruise ship docks at the center of the islands capital city of St. John's. The island is the largest of the British Leeward islands and is surrounded by a nearly unbroken coral reef. This was a strategic location for the British colonial navy in the 17th and 18th century. You will find abundant colonial history on the Island. Nelson's Dockyard, an 18th century British naval dockyard and St. John's Cathedral built in 1845 are fine examples. Under colonial rule for most of its recent history, Antigua didn't achieved full independent status from Britain until 1981. Most local Antiguan are of African lineage, descendants of slaves brought to the island centuries ago to labor in the sugarcane fields. You will also find many local British.



Tourism is the main industry of the island today. The coasts of Antigua are ideal for yacht cruising and racing, with its constant trade-winds. Antigua is home to the annual Antigua Sailing Week, one of the premier sailing regattas that brings sailing enthusiasts from around the world. The event usually takes place around the end of April each year. Antigua is also the home of the Jumby Bay Island Resort, on Long Island. This is boasted as one of the finest resorts in the Caribbean. Long Island is also a second home to celebrities and the rich & famous. The Jumby Bay Island Resort is expensive by most standards (rooms start at about \$1,000 per night in the off season), but as a cruiser you can purchase a day use pass and enjoy the resorts many amenities for the day. If it is not offered as an excursion by the ship ask the ship concierge for details. VoyageMonkey highly recommends this if you want to spend the day relaxing, enjoying a pristine lush tropical beach and just pampering yourself. You can experience the resort at a fraction of the price. Other popular resorts in Antigua are Sandals, the Royal Antiguan Beach Resort, and the Jolly

Beach Resort.

With 365 beaches on the island there is a lot to do and the ship offers a wide variety of excursions for every taste. The excursions include: a “Best of Antigua” tour, Beach Escape tour, ATV adventure, Canopy Zip-Line tour, Catamaran Sail & Snorkel, Golfing, Historic Tour & Beach, Safari 4x4 Adventure, Kayak & Snorkel Eco Adventure, Mini Boats & Hidden Beaches, Private Island Snorkel, and Stingray Sensation Tour. VoyageMonkey staff checked out the Kayak & Snorkel Eco Tour operated by “Paddles.” This excursion is popular for its variety of activities. You get to paddle Kayaks through lush mangrove laced lagoons, waterways & tiny islands where you will learn about the eco-system of the island. You then get to take powerboats along the beautiful coast of Antigua where you are taken to the uninhabited tiny island of Bird Island, with its two white sandy beaches. You can take a short-guided hike to the peak on the island for a spectacular panoramic view. Snorkeling enthusiasts can enjoy the local reef with its coral, starfish, parrot fish and stingray. Others can relax under a coconut tree on a hammock along the beach or just swim in the warm waters. The tour is followed by rum punch and you are then taken back to St. John’s where you still have plenty of time to look around, shop and take in some lunch or a snack.



PADDLES, ANTIGUA



BIRD ISLAND VIEW



BIRD ISLAND BEACH



In St. John’s you will find the typical island shopping; a few high-end jewelry stores, perfumes & art galleries; and, your small local island T-shirt, swimwear & trinket shops. Most of the shopping is within a couple of blocks of the cruise dock. Some of the local vendors will be out on the sidewalks trying to pull you into their shops. This can become annoying so just practice saying no or go inside. Once you go inside and look you are free to leave and say thanks. There is also a very small casino, King’s Casino, right next to the cruise dock.

Dinning in St. John’s is mostly casual and there are a few American fast food places. A popular spot right near the cruise docks is Big Banana-Pizzas in Paradise (on Redcliffe Quay). They serve delicious pizzas with seafood toppings for a local Caribbean touch. Hemingway’s Caribbean Café (St. Mary’s St.) is a popular lunch spot that is known for its local Caribbean food and grilled fish. Another local favorite for Caribbean seafood is George Restaurant, 3-blocks from the dock. Other local favorites close to the cruise dock are; Bellyful (on high St.), Café Napoleon (Redcliffe Quay), and Commissioner Grill (Redcliffe St.).



Before setting sail, go up on the deck to take some



photos as the ship pulls out of port. This offers some of the best picturesque views of St. John's and the harbor. Sitting on the ship's deck is always a great way to end the day as you leave port.

Tortola/Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) has over 50 islands, islets and cays grouped together in close proximity. They are located just 60 miles east of Puerto Rico. The largest island is Tortola followed by Virgin Gorda, known for "The Baths." There are another 10 inhabited islands. Most of the other islands are uninhabited or private. The islands are British territory although the US Dollar is the only legal tender. Early British settlers built sugar plantations and exported large quantities of rum to Britain. Rum is still produced on Tortola today although tourism, yachting and international finance are the main industries. Tax-free international business corporations flourish on paper in this offshore financial haven.



TORTOLA, BVI

The cruise ship dock is in Road Town, the capital city on Tortola. You can fill your day touring Tortola or take an excursion by boat to Virgin Gorda or one of the outer islands for the day. In Road Town you will find many open-air safari buses & taxis that can take you around the island for a tour. If you rent a car, be sure to stay on the "wrong" side of the road. BVI is a sailor's paradise with its protected waters, trade-winds and tiny islands. Road Town is one of the Caribbean's largest yacht chartering centers. The Moorings yacht chartering company can be found in Road Town.



DOCKING IN ROAD TOWN



BVI offers many water activities and has many pristine sandy white beaches to enjoy. Here you can scuba dive ship wrecks, snorkel, sail, kayak, windsurf or lounge around on the beach. The most popular beaches on Tortola are found at Brandywine Bay,

Brewer's Bay, Josiah's Bay and Cane Garden Bay. Cane Garden Bay is one of the most scenic and is popular for its horseshoe shaped bay, water toys, lounge chair rentals, shops and several beach bars & restaurants. At Cane Garden Bay you will also find the Callwood Rum Distillery where you can buy local rum. On the island of Virgin Gorda, the must-go-to beach is The Baths. This geological marvel is one of BVI's most popular spots that brings visitors from around the world. This national park is filled with giant boulders that form a series of sea pools and secluded grottoes.

BVI has many national parks, historic forts & ruins and museums. While in Road Town visit the Old Government House and Folk Museum. Road Town offers shopping, local dining and historic sight seeing. Most shopping is on Main St. close to the cruise ship dock. This is the town's primary shopping street. There is a large open-air crafts market next to the cruise dock where

you can buy inexpensive souvenirs.

If you'd like to eat lunch in Road Town, closest to the cruise dock you will find the Captains Table, which offers good seafood, meats & poultry dishes and has nice open air dining overlooking the Inner Harbour Marina. Fresh lobster, grilled shrimp and conch are favorites. Another good restaurant in Road Town is the Dove Restaurant & Wine Bar at 67 Main St. The menu is Eclectic featuring items such as Coffee Crusted Angus Beef, Rabbit Spring Rolls, and Goat Cheese & Beef Salad. You will also find standard seafood & meat dishes. The restaurant offers an extensive wine list, specialty martinis, rums, cognacs and single malt scotches. You can enjoy a harbor view while you enjoy tapas or sushi. A more casual fun atmosphere can be found at the legendary Pusser's Pub on Main St. The pub serves authentic Caribbean cuisine and has the best happy hour in town. It serves over 50 exotic Caribbean rum drinks. The pub food ranges from peel & eat shrimp, jerk chicken and conch fritters to shepherds pie, grilled fish and pizza.



NORMAN ISLAND, BVI



PETER ISLAND, BVI



THE BATHS, VIRGIN GORDA

VoyageMonkey staff spent part of their day on the Virgin Islands Sailaway & Snorkel Tour. On this tour you will board a sailing catamaran in Road Town, put up the sails and sail across the Sir Francis Drake Channel to Norman Island for a snorkel and then over to Peter Island to enjoy the beach at a local beach club. Once you arrive at Norman Island you snorkel directly from the catamaran at a location called the Caves where you can snorkel into small caves along the cliffs. Norman Island and its famous pirate history were immortalized in Robert Louis Stevenson's book "Treasure Island." The snorkeling is great and the island is lush and beautiful. The next stop was Peter Island where you stop at a local beach club to enjoy the beach, swim in the clear waters and enjoy tropical drinks at the beach bar. On the sail back to Road Town you are served local rum punch while you enjoy the spectacular views of the Sir Francis Drake Channel and some of the other surrounding islands. This tour is recommended for snorkeling and sailing fans. Other recommended excursions offered by the ship while in BVI include: Best of Tortola sight seeing tour; a trip to The Baths on Virgin Gorda; various "Swim with Dolphins" tours. There are also various scuba, kayak & bike tours and beach resort escapes offered.

Nassau, Bahamas

The final port of call on the cruise was Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas and the largest city. Nassau is located on New Providence Island, next to Paradise



Island, home of the Atlantis Resort. The Bahamas are located off the east coast of Florida and are comprised of around 700 islands and cays extending over 500 miles. Formed by coral reefs (the world's third largest barrier reef) the highest elevation is only 206 ft. The warm climate, crystal clear blue waters, tropical landscape, world class shopping and luxury hotels make Nassau one of the most popular tourist destinations. The local people are friendly. There are plenty of sports and aquatic activities to enjoy including golf, diving, snorkeling, boating and fishing.



NASSAU, BAHAMAS



Nassau has rich colonial history evident from its Victorian architecture, government buildings and historic forts. In the 18th century, Nassau was widely known as a hideout for some of the most notorious Caribbean pirates in history, including Blackbeard. This island paradise has some of the best food, drinks and nightlife to make it an ultimate vacation destination. Rich in cultural arts & entertainment, Nassau features theatre performances, live shows, casinos, nightclubs & discos. You will find plenty of activities to keep you busy or you can simply relax on a tropical beach and put your toes in the sand.

The cruise ship port is at the center of Nassau so walking is the mode of transportation for those who want to take in some shopping and lunch off the ship. Once off the ship you will be surrounded by shops for every taste. High-end jewelry & gems are found on every block. You will also find plenty of T-shirts.



Local eateries just off the ship include the Hard Rock Café and other casual dining. Hard Rock Cafe is a favorite for those wanting a casual meal, drinks and familiar atmosphere just off the ship. There are many good local casual eateries and bars in this area frequented by cruise ship passengers.



If you want to experience some of the finer dining in Nassau and don't mind dressing up less casual, then go try Chez Willie on West Bay St., Dune at the Ocean Club at Paradise Island or the Graycliff Restaurant located at 8 thru 12 West Hill Street in Nassau, across from the Government House. One of the best-rated restaurants is Dune at the Ocean Club on Paradise Island. This restaurant is the creation of Jean-Georges Vongerichten who owns several New York City restaurants. Each item on the menu is carefully crafted to delight the taste buds. Chez Willie is a lovely 3-story manor house with a main dining room and a courtyard. The menu includes seafood, lobster, steaks, veal and rack of lamb. Graycliff Restaurant is a dining connoisseurs delight. The cuisine is described as traditional continental fused with new world flair. The tables are set with fine china, crystal and white lace table clothes. The décor of the solarium-style dining room is elegant. The menu has Italian style seafood and pastas. The restaurant has a 128 page wine

list with 250,000 fine wines. Food prices are moderate. Another more casual local Italian restaurant in town is Café Matisse on Bank Lane behind Parliament Square off Bay St. This is a picturesque restaurant decorated with Matisse art prints. The menu features seafood, meats & poultry and homemade pastas. You can dine in the courtyard or veranda and order from the extensive wine list.

When you pulling into the harbor and get off the cruise ship you can't help to notice the Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island just across the harbor. The ship offers a "discover Atlantis" excursion or you can take a short taxi ride or water ferry over to Paradise Island and visit it on your own. You can get oriented to the resort at the Day Visitor Center. The resort has a world-class gambling casino, elegant gourmet restaurants, pools, waterslides, rivers & rapids, aquarium, 7-acre lagoon and tropical beach. If you are planning to dine at the resort, two of the Bahamas best restaurants are located here: the Bahamian Club and Villa d'Este. The Bahamian Club serves international and French cuisine and is known for its fine cuts of meats. Villa d'Este serves some of the best Italian cuisine in the Bahamas. Dining at the Atlantis resort can be expensive. Rooms at the Atlantis Resort generally start at well over \$300 per night, although deals can be found from time to time on VoyageMonkey and other sites.



ATLANTIS RESORT



CABLE BEACH



BREEZES RESORT



BREEZES' POOL

SuperClubs Breezes all-inclusive resort at Cable Beach in Nassau recently offered some great bargain deals through VoyageMonkey starting at around \$150 per night so our staff stopped by to check out the resort. Cable Beach is the most popular beachfront on New Providence Island and is home for a string of resorts. It offers 4 miles of soft white sand. Along this strip you will find, water sports, restaurants, bars, casinos, music, dancing and other nightlife. The local water sports include parasailing, jet skiing and water-skiing. Breezes has 400 rooms and suites, restaurants, bars, live music, disco, pools, Jacuzzi, tennis, water-skiing, kayaking, rock-climbing, volleyball, beach, circus trapeze and other water sports such as small sailing catamarans, windsurfers and water-trikes. Our staff acquired a day use pass through one of the excursions on the ship and sampled the amenities. The food and drinks were decent quality and abundant. There was a buffet inside serving a multitude of dishes and the pool grill had great conch fritters and burgers. The resort appeared to have no children and was a younger crowd of adults and couples. The pool and beach area had activities going on and the guests were having a lot of fun. The pool area was not crowded. The rooms are standard and the hotel & grounds are clean. Based on the bargain prices recently offered on VoyageMonkey the verdict is that this resort is a good value at those prices. It is not the most luxurious but the location is great, the beach is great, the staff is friendly and it has all the amenities. If

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Ardastra Gardens Tour, Blackbeard's Beach Break, Cable Beach Golfing, Catamaran & Snorkel Tour, Dolphin Encounter, Scuba Diving, Stingray Adventure & Beach Break, historical tours and Yellowbird Party Boat
VoyageMonkey.com provides Online Travel Booking, Find Discount Travel Packages, Vacation Package Deals, Discount Cruises, Cheap Air travel & Hotel Accommodations, Unbiased reviews and articles on destinations, hotel accommodations, restaurants and attractions all at voyagemonkey.com

Overall, this is one of the best Caribbean cruise itineraries you can find. Carnival Cruise Lines did a great job with their good food, service, entertainment and friendly staff. VoyageMonkey recommends this cruise to anyone wanting the get the most out of their Caribbean experience. Other VoyageMonkey recommended ports of call are: Aruba, Barbados, Cozumel, Curacao, Grand Cayman, Jamaica and St. Maarten. When in Jamaica be sure to book an excursion. The local vendors can be aggressive to the point it gets annoying. The island is very lush and beautiful, so save your shopping for someplace else.

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