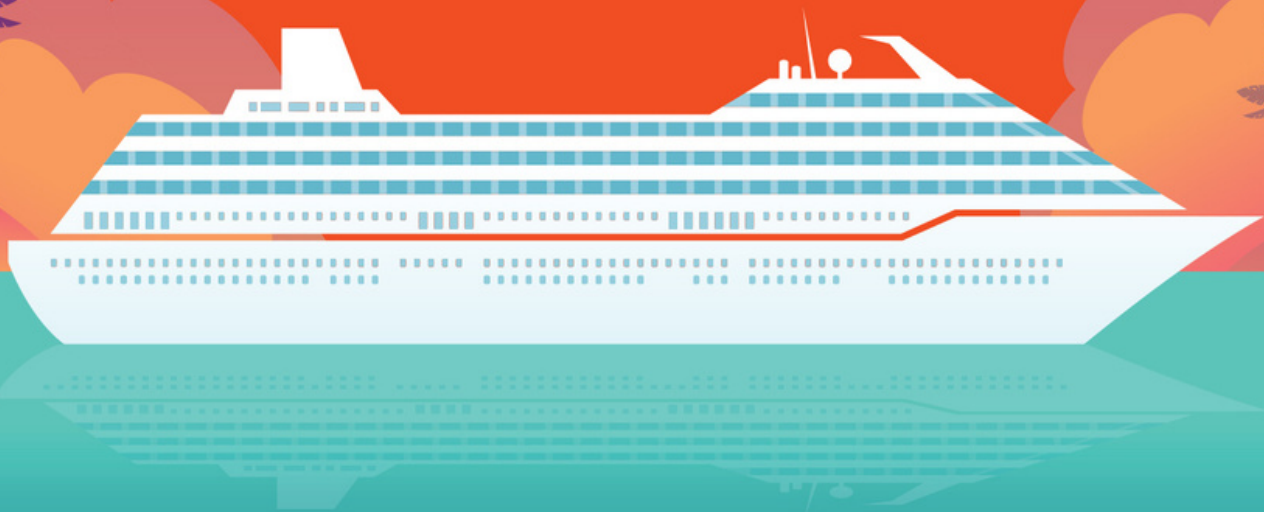


CARIBBEAN CRUISE

FEB '24



TSF Cruise 2024 – Excursion Information

In April 2023, I previewed this cruise and I am happy to share what I learned about the process and the opportunities at each port. I also want to provide you with a cost-effective beach option at each port that gets you to a beautiful beach inexpensively. A \$100 credit is given to each room to use as you see fit, whether it's at the ship's shops, a fancy dinner, or for excursions—you can use it however you want.

Before delving into each port, I'd like to start by walking through the excursion booking process. All excursions are optional and at your own cost, to be managed and booked by you. While I'm happy to help guide you and provide information, please note that I am not part of the NCL booking team. **TSF will NOT have any mandatory functions while we are at port.**

\$50 Discount from NCL- You receive \$50 per excursion for the first guest on the reservation. Here are a few examples of how it works:

- Wade and Renee Little pick snorkeling with sea turtles for \$100 each. The total is \$200, and with the \$50 discount, the cost is \$150 for both of us.
- Just Renee Little picks snorkeling alone. $\$100 - \$50 = \$50$
- The discount is per room; you get no more than \$50 per couple. When booking in groups, be mindful. For instance, if Renee wants to snorkel with the Croziers and books all 4 on her room, it's \$100 each, and only \$50 off = \$350. Instead, if Renee books for the Littles and Julie books for the Croziers, they each get \$50 off.
- The excursion desk staff on the ship are very helpful and kind. You can find the excursion desk in the main atrium (same location as Guest Relations and the Wi-Fi Help Desk).

Booking your excursion:

When to do it:

- You can book now! Log in online to view options by port and make reservations. If you're not signed up online, I recommend doing so—it's a fabulous tool.
- Alternatively, you can book on the ship at the desk or via the TV in your room. My suggestion is to explore options early, especially for bucket list items like snorkeling with turtles. Excursions fill up fast; we didn't book ahead and found snorkeling in St. Thomas available but Jeep and Beach in Tortola sold out. I lucked out someone didn't show up.

Booking excursions through outside companies:

You can book with companies not affiliated with NCL. Here are some considerations:

- In Puerto Plata, be aware of the two ports—Taino Bay and Amber Cove. NCL primarily uses Taino Bay, but this can change. Ensure the outside group knows the correct port and can adapt to potential time changes.
- Stay mindful of time changes; communication is crucial when booking with outside groups. Ensure you return to the ship on time—it will leave without you.

Now for the Fun Part!
Let's Discuss Each Beautiful Port We'll Be Visiting:

Stop 1 - Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic



The Dominican Republic (DR) is a lush, beautiful island. In this area, cruise ships primarily use two main ports: Taino Bay and Amber Cove. It's highly probable that we'll be docking at Taino Bay.

Taino Bay (as well as Amber Cove) are expansive ports that offer numerous amenities included in your cruise package. These encompass pools, lengthy and serene lazy rivers, seating arrangements, various hangout areas, and the chance to interact with colorful birds while strolling through a well-maintained and picturesque port area.



This port has a lengthy pier, so expect to do quite a bit of walking. You'll stroll down the pier, pass through a plaza where excursions depart, and then encounter the pools, lazy river, shops, and restaurants. There are open-air taxis available for transportation along the pier, or you can choose to walk, of course.

Upon disembarking, a table will be set up with towels for checkout. Provide your room number to receive towels and remember to return them upon boarding the ship.

There are many excellent excursions available here, along with some free options.

- **Free:** You can enjoy walking around, browsing the shops, and relaxing at the pools and lazy river. The pools and rivers offer beautiful and enjoyable experiences. Please note, however, that food and drinks are not included.
- **Waterfalls Tours:** These have received fantastic reviews. Expect a good hike to reach them, followed by swimming, jumping, or floating down a series of waterfalls.
- **Buggies:** Highly praised by those who've tried it, though the only feedback concerns traversing a "muddy" field occasionally used by cows, resulting in getting quite "muddy."
- **Ocean World:** This park has received consistently positive feedback, especially regarding the animal experiences. It's worth noting that some visitors mentioned it's heavily geared towards children."

Renee's Tip – Hit the ship buffet for breakfast and bring your Ziplock bag. The buffet will have a build your own sandwich station and chips. Make a plate and then at your table transfer to your Ziplock bag and purse. Then you have a snack for your adventures during the day. I filled my water bottle and took it with me as well.



Stop 2 – St. Thomas



Make sure you're out on your balcony about an hour before the port arrival time. The view of pulling into port among these islands is truly magnificent! St. Thomas port is easily navigable. The ship docks directly, making it a quick stroll to the port gate. Upon disembarking, there will be a table where you can check out towels. Simply provide your room number, and they'll provide towels for your use. Remember to return them when you get back to the boat.

There are several fun ways to explore St. Thomas:

- **Free:** You'll find numerous shops and attractions right at the port gate. Additionally, there's a sky ride (similar to a gondola) conveniently located there.
- **For a budget-friendly beach experience,** there are safe taxi options available right at the port gate. Grab a taxi and explore one of the great beaches in St. Thomas.
- **Snorkeling** is a fantastic option offered by Norwegian. We took a catamaran accommodating 100 people to a spot where we observed sea turtles, then proceeded to a private beach. It was around a 4-hour excursion and an excellent experience.
- **If you've always wanted to visit St. John,** although it's not on our itinerary, Norwegian offers a ferry ride to St. John for the day from this stop. You can return via ferry and then rent a car at St. John's port to explore.

Renee's Tip – Pack sunscreen, wear a sun shirt and hat and bring a water bottle. Be prepared especially if you go out snorkeling, as most of these snorkel trips don't have water bottles and sunscreen to share. If you have a go pro or underwater camera bring it!

Stop 3 – Tortola



Tortola means 'Turtle Dove.' This island is truly magical and left me in awe of God's creativity in nature. We arrive early at this port and must return to the boat by early afternoon. Ensure you make the most of every second here on this island. The dock is easily accessible as the ship pulls right up to it, and reaching the port gate is a simple walk. The towel process here is the same as on other days.

Renee's Tip – Set your alarm and soak in every second of this island.

Excursion suggestions for Tortola:

- **Free:** Right at the port gate, you'll find numerous shops and eateries. You can also easily find a safe and affordable taxi to downtown, just a short ride away.
- **For a budget-friendly beach option**, take a taxi for a quick 10-15 minute ride to Smugglers Cove. You can rent a chair/umbrella for \$20 or simply lay your towel on the sand and dive into the water. There's a stand offering light bites and assorted bottled drinks. This beach boasts crystal-clear, calm waters, along with an abundance of coral and sea glass—an unparalleled sight.
- **If you're inclined to splurge on an excursion**, consider this destination. We embarked on the Jeep and Beach tour, driving our own Jeep off-road around the island with a guide leading the way. It was an incredible experience ascending the mountains and witnessing the panoramic views of all the surrounding islands from the top. Plus, we had several hours to enjoy Smugglers Cove. There are various tours available for island exploration, including snorkeling opportunities. While the Tortola Baths are enjoyable and popular, be prepared for some challenging climbing in and out of them.



Stop 4 – Great Stirrup Cay (Private Island)

This port is Norwegian's privately-owned island, a beautiful location bustling with visitors from various boats in the vicinity. To reach the island, you'll need to take a quick 15-minute tender boat ride from the ship, available throughout the day.

To streamline the morning disembarkation process, they require individuals to pre-register the day before for a tender spot. Priority is given to those who reserve first. Upon reservation, a tender boat number (1-25) is assigned. Upon arrival at the island, they begin calling tender boat numbers, starting from 1. If you fail to register promptly when sign-ups commence, you may receive a later number; for instance, we received number 22, which took a few hours for our turn.

Fortunately, the TSF Group has secured a priority tender boat reservation for our group early in the morning. More details will be provided once we're on the boat.

There aren't many excursions available on this island; it's more about securing a chair and enjoying the ocean. There are numerous chairs, but many require a bit of a walk, and they tend to fill up quickly. When we arrived on tender 22, we couldn't find available chairs. While you can pre-reserve chairs, our early tender time should allow you to find a spot. For shade, I highly recommend renting a spot with an umbrella.

The island offers a buffet during the main lunch hours, which is complimentary or included in your cruise. The buffet serves simple options like burgers, fries, fruit, pizza, and other basics. It's not as extensive as the buffet on the ship, but it does include water, tea, and beverages.

Given the island's heat and the distance to walk, consider packing essentials like sunscreen, a water bottle, and any other necessities you might require.

They also provide paid fun activities such as zip lines, which I believe need to be booked in advance through the excursion desk.





Returning to the ship is straightforward. Simply head back to the area where you boarded or disembarked from the tender boat and wait in line (it's quick, and they distribute water and cool towels). No reservations are needed for the return trip.

Renee's Tip – Make sure you get on the tender early with our group spot (no reservation required just meet us at the time and spot communicated) or if you want to sleep in and go later that is a great plan too! Set an alarm in the afternoon or watch the time and get back to the ship a bit early for the bonus break out sessions with Dr. Zimmerman and Steve Cuss in the afternoon. Not required but incredibly impactful!

I can't wait for the cruise and the adventures awaiting us at these amazing ports! From the breathtaking beauty of the Dominican Republic to the vibrant charm of St. Thomas and the enchanting wonders of Tortola, each stop offers its own magic.

I'm thrilled to reconnect with everyone onboard, share stories, and create new memories while exploring these fantastic destinations together. Get ready for an incredible journey—we'll see you soon!

Renee Little