

BS Great Stirrup Cay Cruise Destination Guide

Your Complete Guide to Norwegian Cruise Line's Private Island Paradise in The Bahamas



Great Stirrup Cay holds a special place in cruise history as **the very first private island owned by a cruise line**. Purchased by Norwegian Cruise Line in **1977**, this beautiful island in the Berry Islands of The Bahamas has welcomed millions of guests over the decades and continues to evolve with exciting new enhancements.

Today, Great Stirrup Cay is an exclusive destination for guests sailing with **Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania Cruises, and Regent Seven Seas Cruises**. The island blends beautiful white-sand beaches, crystal-clear turquoise water, exciting water sports, and peaceful tropical scenery into a relaxing Bahamian escape.

With a brand-new cruise pier opening soon, guests will enjoy even easier access to one of Norwegian's most popular destinations.

Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



At the time of this guide, most ships anchor offshore and guests travel to the island by **tender boats**.

Norwegian Cruise Line is constructing a **new cruise pier**, which will allow ships to dock directly and eliminate the tender process for most visits.

Once ashore you'll find:

- Welcome Plaza
- Guest Services
- Shopping
- Beach access
- Excursion meeting points
- Tram service (seasonal and accessibility needs)
- Restaurants and bars

Note: If your sailing visits before the new pier opens, rough seas can occasionally prevent tender operations. Norwegian may substitute another port if weather conditions make tendering unsafe.

Explore Great Stirrup Cay



Great Stirrup Cay offers a relaxed island atmosphere where the focus is on enjoying the beautiful Bahamian environment.

Around the island you'll discover:

- White-sand beaches
- Hammocks
- Beach bars
- Snorkeling areas
- Walking trails
- Shopping village
- Private cabanas
- Scenic viewpoints

The island is easy to explore, and many guests spend the day simply walking from beach to beach.

★ Top Things to Do

🏖️ Relax on the Beach



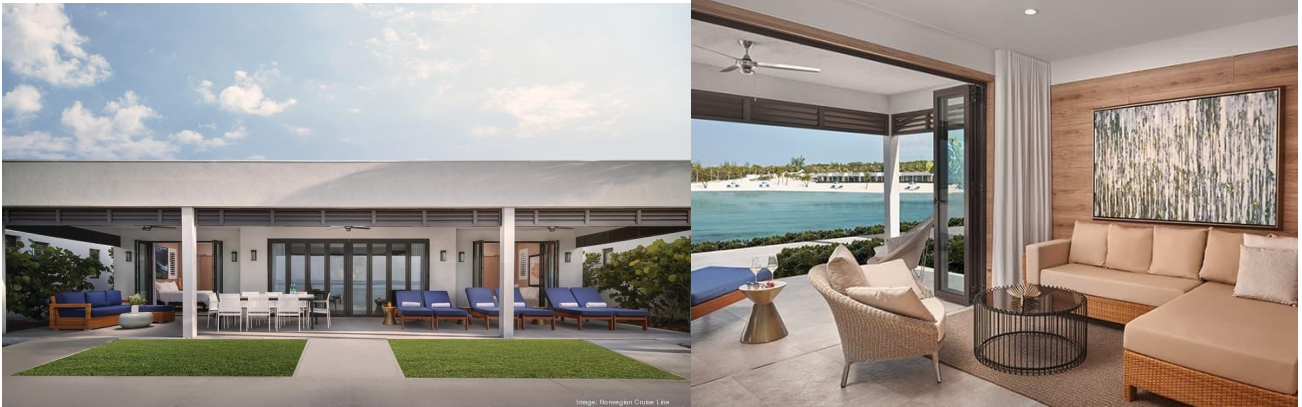
The island's beautiful beaches are the main attraction.

Perfect for:

- Swimming
- Sunbathing
- Floating in calm water
- Reading
- Families

Complimentary beach loungers are available throughout much of the island.

Silver Cove



Silver Cove is Norwegian's premium beach experience.

Features include:

- Private beach
- Infinity-style lagoon
- Luxury villas
- Premium cabanas
- Upscale atmosphere

Reservations are required for many Silver Cove amenities.

Snorkeling



Explore the clear Bahamian waters and discover:

- Tropical fish
- Coral formations
- Stingrays
- Sea life



Water Sports

Guests can enjoy:

- Paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Wave runners
- Parasailing
- Floating mats

Availability may vary by sailing.



Zipline Adventure

One of the island's signature activities.

Soar above the beaches while enjoying spectacular panoramic views of the turquoise waters below.






NEW

What's New at Great Stirrup Cay



Norwegian Cruise Line is transforming Great Stirrup Cay with several exciting enhancements, including a **brand-new water park** that is scheduled to open in **October 2026**.

The new attraction is expected to feature:

-  Multiple waterslides
-  Family splash areas
-  Interactive water play features
-  Activities for both children and adults
-  New seating and relaxation areas

Important to Know

Unlike the island's beaches, restaurants, and many complimentary amenities, **admission to the water park will require an additional fee.**

Because the water park will have a **limited daily capacity**, guests interested in visiting should **reserve admission as early as possible**, ideally before their cruise whenever reservations become available.

As with other premium experiences on Great Stirrup Cay, popular dates—especially holiday sailings and school breaks—are expected to sell out quickly.

Premium Travel Group Tip: If visiting the new water park is a priority for your family, don't wait until you're onboard to book. Reserving early gives you the best chance of securing your preferred day and time.

Best Beaches

Bertram's Beach



Ideal for:

- Relaxation
 - Swimming
 - Couples
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Main Beach

The island's largest beach.

Features:

- Calm water
 - Plenty of loungers
 - Beach bars
 - Easy access
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Silver Cove Beach

A more exclusive experience with upgraded amenities.



Shopping

The shopping village offers:

- Bahamian crafts
 - Beachwear
 - Jewelry
 - Souvenirs
 - Norwegian Cruise Line merchandise
 - Local artwork
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Food & Drinks

Lunch is included with your cruise fare.

Guests typically enjoy:

- BBQ favorites
- Hamburgers
- Hot dogs
- Fresh fruit
- Salads
- Caribbean-inspired dishes

Several bars are conveniently located throughout the island.

Guests with the Norwegian beverage package can generally use their package at most island bars, making it easy to enjoy tropical drinks throughout the day.



Hidden Gems

Many guests remain near the main beach.

Take time to discover:

- Quiet coves
- Walking trails
- Scenic overlooks
- Hammock areas
- Less crowded beaches

A short walk often rewards you with your own peaceful slice of paradise.

Weather Throughout the Year

Great Stirrup Cay enjoys warm Bahamian weather all year.

Winter (December – February)

- Highs: **73–78°F (23–26°C)**
- Comfortable temperatures
- Ideal beach weather

Spring (March – May)

- Highs: **77–84°F (25–29°C)**
- Sunny and pleasant

Summer (June – August)

- Highs: **86–90°F (30–32°C)**
- Hot with occasional afternoon showers

Fall (September – November)

- Highs: **82–87°F (28–31°C)**
- Warm ocean temperatures

Cooling sea breezes make the island comfortable throughout the year.



Hurricane Season

The Atlantic hurricane season officially runs from:

June 1 – November 30

Peak activity generally occurs during:

- August
- September
- October

Because Great Stirrup Cay is a tender port for many sailings, weather and sea conditions can occasionally affect access to the island.

Cruise itineraries may be adjusted if conditions are unsafe.



Getting Around

The island is designed to be explored primarily on foot.

Transportation options include:

- Walking paths
- Beach trails
- Accessibility transportation (available as needed)

Most destinations are within a comfortable walking distance from the arrival area.



What to Pack

Bring:

- ✓ Swimsuit
- ✓ Reef-safe sunscreen
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Water shoes
- ✓ Waterproof phone pouch
- ✓ Snorkeling gear (optional)
- ✓ Reusable water bottle

If your ship is tendering, wear comfortable shoes that make boarding and exiting the tender easier.

Premium Travel Group Tip

Don't assume the first beach you see is the best one. Great Stirrup Cay rewards guests who take a few extra minutes to explore. You'll often find quieter stretches of sand, better snorkeling, and peaceful hammock areas just a little farther from the arrival point.

If your ship arrives early, consider heading to the beach first before returning later to browse the shops and enjoy lunch. You'll often enjoy a much quieter morning before the island becomes busier.

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- RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay
- Princess Cays
- Mahogany Bay

Disney Cruise Line

- Castaway Cay
 - Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point
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Why Visit Great Stirrup Cay?

Great Stirrup Cay has been welcoming cruise guests for nearly five decades, and it's easy to understand why it remains one of Norwegian Cruise Line's most beloved destinations. Beautiful beaches, crystal-clear Bahamian waters, exciting water sports, and peaceful island scenery create the perfect setting for

a relaxing day ashore. Whether you spend your time snorkeling, lounging in a hammock, enjoying a tropical drink, or upgrading to the luxury experience at Silver Cove, Great Stirrup Cay delivers the classic private island experience that has made it a favorite among Norwegian cruisers.

Joe's Logbook

Great Stirrup Cay has a special place in cruise history as the island that started the private island trend, and it continues to evolve with exciting new additions. One of the biggest improvements is the new cruise pier, which will make visiting much easier by eliminating the need for tender boats on most sailings.

What I enjoy most about Great Stirrup Cay is that it still feels like a true island escape. While newer destinations have added massive attractions and resort-style features, Great Stirrup Cay remains focused on beautiful beaches, turquoise water, and the simple pleasure of spending a relaxing day in The Bahamas.

My advice is simple: slow down, explore beyond the main beach, and enjoy the island for what it is—a chance to unplug and experience one of cruising's original private island destinations.

Great Stirrup Cay continues to evolve while still maintaining the relaxed island atmosphere that has made it a favorite for decades. With the addition of the new cruise pier and the upcoming water park, guests will soon have even more ways to enjoy their day—whether that means an action-packed family adventure or simply finding a quiet stretch of beach to unwind.