

BS Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve Guide

Your Complete Guide to MSC Cruises' Private Island Paradise in the Bahamas



Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve is one of the newest and most breathtaking private cruise destinations in the Caribbean. Located about **65 miles southeast of Miami**, this beautiful Bahamian island was transformed by MSC Cruises from a former industrial sand excavation site into a protected marine reserve dedicated to conservation, sustainability, and natural beauty.

Unlike many private cruise destinations that focus on waterparks and thrill attractions, Ocean Cay offers something refreshingly different—a peaceful island centered around pristine beaches, crystal-clear water, marine conservation, and relaxation.

Many MSC itineraries also feature an **extended stay or overnight visit**, allowing guests to enjoy one of the island's signature experiences: the spectacular **lighthouse light show after sunset**.

If you're looking for a destination where nature takes center stage, Ocean Cay may quickly become one of your favorite cruise stops.

Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Ships dock directly at the island, allowing guests to simply walk ashore.

The arrival area includes:

- Welcome Plaza
- Guest Services
- Excursion meeting areas
- Shopping
- Restaurants
- Beach access
- Tram stops

The island is designed to be explored on foot, although a complimentary tram is available for longer distances.

Explore Ocean Cay



Ocean Cay is divided into several unique beach areas, each with its own personality.

Throughout the island you'll find:

- Eight beautiful beaches
- Walking paths
- Lagoon areas
- Lighthouse
- Marina
- Beach bars
- Restaurants
- Snorkeling areas
- Water sports

Unlike many private destinations, Ocean Cay emphasizes open space, tranquility, and natural beauty rather than large attractions.

★ Top Things to Do

🏖️ Relax on the Beaches



Ocean Cay features **eight distinct beaches**, allowing everyone to find their perfect spot.

Some beaches are ideal for:

- Swimming
- Snorkeling
- Families
- Quiet relaxation
- Watching the sunset

Because the beaches are spread around the island, it's usually easy to find a peaceful place even on busy cruise days.

Snorkeling



Ocean Cay's protected waters are becoming home to a growing marine ecosystem.

Expect:

- Tropical fish
- Coral restoration areas
- Excellent water clarity
- Calm conditions

MSC continues to expand its coral restoration efforts around the island.

Explore the Island

Ocean Cay is perfect for simply wandering.

Enjoy:

- Scenic walking trails
- Beach hopping
- Photography
- Quiet coves
- Ocean views

One of the island's greatest attractions is simply taking your time.

Water Sports

Available activities often include:

- Paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Wave runners (select days)
- Snorkeling excursions

Equipment rentals are available near several beaches.



Lighthouse & Evening Light Show



The iconic lighthouse is the symbol of Ocean Cay.

If your itinerary includes an evening stay, don't miss the **Ocean Cay Lighthouse Show**.

The lighthouse comes alive with:

- Music
- Colorful lighting
- Island atmosphere
- Beautiful waterfront views

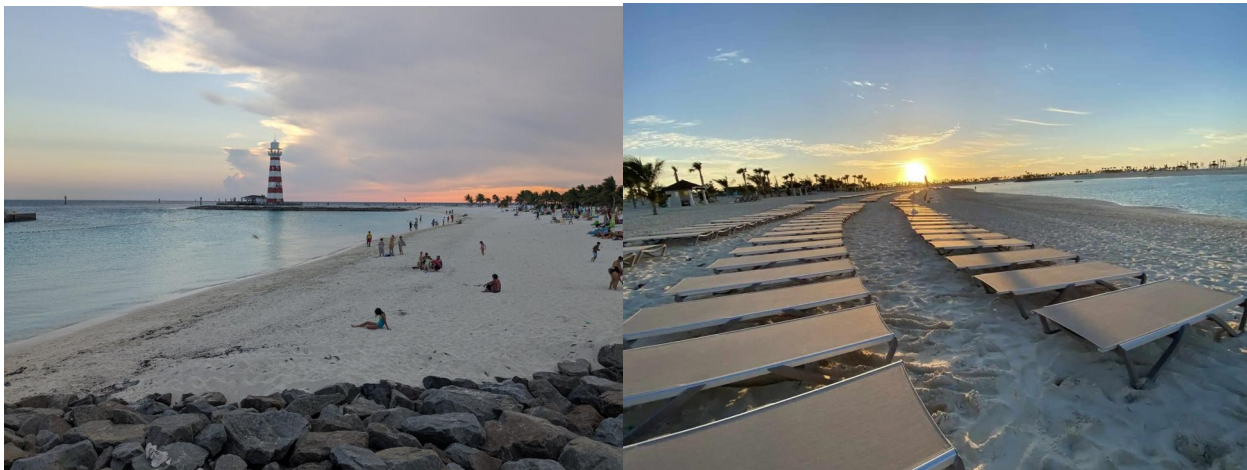
It has quickly become one of MSC's signature experiences.



Best Beaches



Sunset Beach



One of the island's most beautiful beaches.

Perfect for:

- Relaxation

- Sunset views
 - Calm swimming
-



North Beach

Known for:

- Crystal-clear water
 - Excellent swimming
 - Spacious shoreline
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Lighthouse Bay

Offers spectacular views of the lighthouse while providing easy access to restaurants and bars.



Bimini Beach

A quieter section of the island ideal for couples and those seeking a peaceful escape.



Marine Conservation

Ocean Cay isn't just another private island.

MSC invested years restoring this former industrial site into a thriving marine reserve.

Conservation efforts include:

- Coral restoration
- Marine habitat protection
- Beach restoration
- Native vegetation planting
- Sustainable operations

Visitors are encouraged to help preserve the island by respecting wildlife and using reef-safe sunscreen whenever possible.



Shopping

The shopping village offers:

- MSC merchandise
- Bahamian crafts
- Beachwear

- Jewelry
- Souvenirs
- Local artwork

Many products highlight Bahamian culture and craftsmanship.

Food & Drinks

Lunch is included as part of your cruise experience.

Dining options typically feature:

- BBQ favorites
- Fresh salads
- Burgers
- Caribbean-inspired dishes
- Fresh fruit
- Desserts

Several beach bars are located throughout the island, making it easy to grab a tropical drink while relaxing by the water.

Hidden Gems

Many guests stay near the closest beach after arriving.

Take time to explore:

- Quiet beaches on the far side of the island
- Lighthouse area
- Walking trails
- Marina
- Coral restoration areas
- Scenic overlooks

The farther you walk, the more peaceful the island becomes.

Weather Throughout the Year

Ocean Cay enjoys warm tropical weather year-round.

Winter (December – February)

- Highs: 74–79°F (23–26°C)
- Comfortable temperatures

- Excellent beach weather

Spring (March – May)

- Highs: **78–84°F (26–29°C)**
- Sunny and pleasant

Summer (June – August)

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

Fall (September – November)

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

Sea breezes keep 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

MSC carefully monitors weather conditions and may adjust itineraries if necessary.

Travel insurance is always recommended.

Getting Around

Ocean Cay is easy to explore.

Options include:

- Walking paths
- Complimentary tram
- Beach access trails

The island is relatively flat, making it comfortable for most guests to walk between beaches.



What to Pack

Bring:

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

If your ship remains into the evening, consider bringing a light cover-up for the lighthouse show after sunset.



Premium Travel Group Tip

Ocean Cay is best experienced at a slower pace. Instead of trying to "do everything," choose a beach, enjoy the incredible water, and take time to appreciate the island's natural beauty.

If your cruise includes an overnight or late-evening stay, **don't head back to the ship early**. The **Ocean Cay Lighthouse Show** is one of the most memorable experiences offered by any private cruise destination and is well worth staying ashore to enjoy.



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Disney Cruise Line

- Castaway Cay (*coming soon*)
- Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point (*coming soon*)

Why Visit Ocean Cay?

Ocean Cay proves that a private cruise destination doesn't need towering water slides or massive pools to create an unforgettable experience. Instead, it offers something increasingly rare—peace, natural beauty, and room to simply enjoy the Caribbean. With pristine beaches, crystal-clear turquoise water, growing coral reefs, and one of the most beautiful lighthouse shows in cruising, Ocean Cay has quickly earned its reputation as one of the finest private destinations in the Caribbean.

Joe's Logbook

I had the opportunity to visit **Ocean Cay in June 2026**, and it instantly became **one of my favorite private cruise destinations**. What impressed me most was what **wasn't** there. There are no giant water slides, no massive resort-style pools, and no feeling that every inch of the island has been commercialized. Instead, Ocean Cay focuses on exactly what makes the Bahamas so special—beautiful beaches, crystal-clear water, and a peaceful atmosphere where you can truly relax.

One of the highlights of my visit was simply beach hopping around the island. Each beach has its own personality, and it was easy to find a quiet spot to enjoy the scenery. But the moment that really stood out came after sunset. If your itinerary includes an evening stay, **don't miss the Lighthouse Show**. Watching the historic lighthouse illuminated with synchronized lights and music while the Caribbean sky darkens around you is an unforgettable experience and the perfect ending to a day in paradise.

For me, Ocean Cay is proof that sometimes **less really is more**. It's a destination where nature—not attractions—is the star of the show, and that's exactly why I can't wait to return.