

RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay

Carnival's Bahamian private island, renamed and rebuilt. The important question is whether your ship docks or tenders, and the official answer is genuinely unsettled.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Whether ships dock or tender at RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay is unsettled in Carnival own sources: its newsroom said in June 2026 that a new pier allows ships to dock, while its destination page says pier or water shuttle and its accessibility page still lists the island as requiring water shuttles. Beverage packages do not work there: both Carnival and Holland America exclude drinks bought at Half Moon Cay.

Facts checked against official sources on 24 September 2026

We have not sailed here. Everything on this page comes from Carnival's and Holland America's own published pages and from government sources, with links. When we have been somewhere ourselves we say so on the page and tell you what it was actually like. We have not been here yet, so we are not going to pretend.

What it is	A private island in the Bahamas, Little San Salvador Island , owned by Carnival Corporation and used by Holland America Line and Carnival Cruise Line
The name	Renamed " RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay " in December 2024. You will see all three names on booking pages.
Since	Holland America has called here since 1997
The beach	Carnival publishes "over one mile of white-sand beach," north and south sides with separate welcome plazas
Getting ashore	Unsettled. Read the next section before you book an excursion.
Documents	The Bahamas. On a closed-loop cruise, a birth certificate and photo ID will get a US citizen home.

Pier or tender? Four official pages, three answers

Carnival has been building a pier here. Whether it is in use for your sailing is the single most important thing on this page, especially if steps and a moving boat are a problem for you. Here is every official statement we could find, with its date:

Carnival newsroom, 1 June 2026	"Island access is now also easier with a new pier allowing ships to dock and Excel-class ships to visit the destination for the first time."
Carnival destination page, current	Guests arrive " by pier or water shuttle. "
Carnival accessibility page, undated	Still lists Half Moon Cay under " Ports Requiring Water Shuttles, " flagged: "Water shuttles sometimes required; varies by sailing. Based on local availability, accessible water shuttles may not be available. "
Holland America, 31 March 2025	Describes the new beach club as offering " priority tendering " for the October 2026 to April 2027 season.

What we would tell a friend. A pier exists and Carnival says ships dock at it. But Carnival's own booking page still says "pier *or* water shuttle," its accessibility page still lists the island as a tender port whose shuttles vary by sailing, and the expansion was scheduled to continue through the end of 2026. Holland America has published nothing confirming its ships dock. **If you need step-free access, assume a tender is possible on your sailing and ring your line to confirm.**

If it is a tender, Carnival publishes the rules that follow: "safety restrictions prohibit crew from carrying individuals onto or off the shuttles," and **the captain makes the final determination** on whether anyone with a mobility limitation can board. Holland America publishes that most of its ships have elevators to the tender platform — but that **Volendam and Zaandam do not**, and that crew cannot transfer wheelchairs or scooters over **100 lb** without the battery.

More on how tender days work, and what happens to your money when one is cancelled, on our [tender ports page](#).

What is free

- **The beach, loungers and umbrellas.** Carnival's June 2026 release lists complimentary loungers and umbrellas. *Holland America's page says umbrellas are a rental.* Two lines, one island, two answers.
- **Lunch.** Carnival names Orchid Beach Grill, Hibiscus Beach Grill, Luna Tide Beach Bar, Stay Awhile Beach Shack and Lil' Tiki Bar, serving "island-style meals, full buffets and refreshing beverages."
- **A new tram** connecting all island areas, plus the "Papaya Pathway" walking route.
- Nature paths, beach volleyball, and on Holland America, pickleball and beach yoga.

Your drink package will not work at the bar. Both lines.

This is the fact most likely to cost you money. Carnival publishes that CHEERS! is "not offered on 2 day cruises, charter cruises, and beverage purchases made at Celebration Key, **Half Moon Cay** and Princess Cays in The Bahamas." Holland America publishes that its beverage packages "do not apply to... drinks bought at **Half Moon Cay**."

You have paid for a drink package and you will still be paying cash at the beach bar. Budget for it.

The oddity: Princess's Classic Soda Package *is* published as valid at Half Moon Cay. Same corporation, same island, three brands, different answers. We report them all rather than picking one.

What costs extra

Cabanas, daybeds, villas, horseback riding, the stingray encounter, snorkelling by boat and watercraft are all sold as excursions. **Neither line publishes a price on any page we could read** — the prices sit behind a booking login. We are not going to print a number we cannot source.

Worth knowing: both lines list a **wheelchair-accessible cabana** as a bookable product. Carnival's is titled "Beach Cabana Rental - Wheelchair"; Holland America's is a "Private Cabana Package - Taupe, Wheelchair Accessible." What they actually provide is not published.

Accessibility: what is published and the gap that matters

Carnival publishes two excursion grades — **Fully Accessible** ("a tour route that avoids steps and stairs. Transportation has a lift or ramp") and **Ambulatory Accessible** ("must be able to take a few steps, walk short distances, and transfer to a seat") — and marks them online with a blue wheelchair icon.

Carnival's published limits: **325 lb** maximum guest weight for wheelchair assistance; pool lifts **300 lb**; mobility devices must fit a **22-inch** cabin doorway.

And the sentence to keep in mind for any private island: "**Carnival is not responsible for accessibility in non-U.S. ports of call.**"

The gap. Carnival says the new tram "connects all island areas" and enhances "guest convenience and accessibility." **Nothing published says whether the tram is wheelchair accessible**, whether it has a ramp or lift, or whether a mobility device can board it. Nothing is published about beach wheelchairs, or about accessible restrooms anywhere on the island. For a destination sold on accessibility improvements, that is a striking silence — and it is the question to ask your line directly.

If the call is cancelled

Carnival's ticket contract, clause 8(d), lets it "omit or change any or all port calls, arrival or departure times, with or without notice, for any reason whatsoever," and states that "Carnival shall have no liability for any compensation or other damages." A cancelled excursion gets you the excursion money back and nothing else: "your sole recourse is a refund of the amount paid for the cancelled activity."

Private islands are tender-dependent and weather-dependent. On a tender day, the sea decides.

Questions about Half Moon Cay

Do you tender at Half Moon Cay?

Possibly, and the official sources disagree. Carnival's newsroom said in June 2026 that a new pier allows ships to dock, but Carnival's own destination page says guests arrive "by pier or water shuttle" and its accessibility page still lists the island as a port where water shuttles are sometimes required and accessible shuttles may not be available. Holland America referred to tendering for its 2026-27 season. Confirm with your cruise line for your sailing.

Is lunch free at Half Moon Cay?

Yes. Carnival publishes complimentary lunch venues including Orchid Beach Grill, Hibiscus Beach Grill and Stay Awhile Beach Shack, serving island-style meals and buffets. Loungers

are complimentary; Carnival lists umbrellas as complimentary while Holland America lists them as a rental.

Does my drink package work at Half Moon Cay?

No, on both lines that call there. Carnival publishes that CHEERS! is not offered for beverage purchases made at Half Moon Cay, and Holland America publishes that its beverage packages do not apply to drinks bought there. Princess's Classic Soda Package is published as valid at the island.

What is Half Moon Cay called now?

RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay. Carnival Corporation renamed it in December 2024 as part of an expansion. The island is Little San Salvador Island in the Bahamas.

Is Half Moon Cay wheelchair accessible?

Carnival publishes accessibility grades for excursions and lists a wheelchair-designated cabana, but publishes nothing about whether the island's new tram is wheelchair accessible, nor about beach wheelchairs or accessible restrooms. Carnival also states it is not responsible for accessibility in non-US ports of call. Ask your line directly.

Where these facts come from

- Carnival Cruise Line newsroom, RelaxAway expansion, 1 June 2026 (<https://www.carnival-news.com/2026/06/01/carnival-cruise-line-celebrates-expansion-of-relaxaway-half-moon-cay>)
- Carnival Corporation, island renaming, 10 December 2024 (<https://www.carnival-news.com/2024/12/10/award-winning-private-island-cruise-destination-renamed-relaxaway-half-moon-cay>)
- Carnival, RelaxAway Half Moon Cay cruises (<https://www.carnival.com/cruise-to/bahamas-cruises/relaxaway-half-moon-cay-cruises>)
- Carnival, shore excursions and ports requiring water shuttles (<https://www.carnival.com/about-carnival/special-needs/shore-excursions>)
- Carnival, wheelchair users (<https://www.carnival.com/about-carnival/special-needs/wheelchair-users>)
- Carnival, CHEERS! package terms (<https://www.carnival.com/drink-packages/cheers-package/>)
- Carnival, shore excursions terms (<https://www.carnival.com/legal/shore-excursions-terms>)
- Carnival, reservation terms and ticket contract (<https://www.carnival.com/popups/bookingengine/reservation-terms-and-conditions>)
- Holland America, RelaxAway Half Moon Cay (<https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/us/cruise-destinations/caribbean-cruises/caribbean-ports/relaxaway-half-moon-cay-bahamas-hmd>)
- Holland America, beverage package terms and conditions (<https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/us/faq/onboard-cruise-experience/beverage/what-are-the-beverage-package-terms-conditions>)
- Holland America, getting on and off the ship with mobility equipment (<https://www.hollandamerica.com/en/us/faq/accessibility/how-will-i-get-on-and-off-the-ship-with-mobility-equipment>)
- Bahamas Immigration Department, entry requirements (<https://www.immigration.gov.bs/entry-requirements/>)
- US State Department, Bahamas country information (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Bahamas.html>)
- US Customs and Border Protection, WHTI fact sheet (PDF) (<https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2018-Jan/fieldops-whti-fact-sheet.pdf>)

Ports change their rules and their prices. Check the official pages above before you sail.

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