Basseterre, St. Kitts

Walk off at Port Zante into the middle of Basseterre. Know the per-taxi fares, carry small US bills, and save your knees for Brimstone Hill.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I haven't sailed into St. Kitts yet, so this guide is built the way I'd want one built for me: from the government's own taxi fare regulations, the fortress's own site, the US State Department and the cruise lines, with every price dated. The good news for anyone who walks carefully: Port Zante sits right on the edge of Basseterre, and the little capital's main square is a few minutes away. The catch: on a busy day your ship may be sent to the commercial Deep Water Port instead, and the island's star sight is up 50 steps on a hilltop.

THE QUICK TAKE

- Most ships **dock** at Port Zante in downtown Basseterre. On days with three or more ships, some use the commercial **Deep Water Port**. Ask your cruise line.
- The Circus, Basseterre's little clock-tower square, is about a **five-minute walk** from Port Zante.
- Taxi fares are set by law, **per taxi for 1 to 4 people**: US$12 to central Frigate Bay, US$28 to Friars Bay and US$40 to Cockleshell Bay, per taxi for 1 to 4 people (2021 regulations).
- US dollars are widely taken, but change often comes in **Eastern Caribbean dollars** (fixed at EC$2.70 to US$1).
- Cars **drive on the left**.
- No daylight saving: from November to March, local time is an hour ahead of Eastern. Be back by **ship time**.

St. Kitts at a glance

Getting ashore	Ships dock. Usually at Port Zante in Basseterre (two cruise piers); on busy days some ships use the commercial Deep Water Port
Ship to town	From Port Zante, The Circus is about a 5-minute walk, says Princess
Currency	Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC$), fixed at EC$2.70 to US$1. US dollars widely accepted; expect change in EC$
Language	English
Time zone	Atlantic time, no daylight saving: one hour ahead of Eastern from November to March. Go by ship time
Taxis	Maximum fares set by government regulation, quoted in US$ and EC$, **per taxi for 1–4 people**, plus a set amount for each extra person. Official taxis have yellow "T" or "TA" plates
Drive on	The left. You need a local visitor's driving licence to rent
Entry	The State Department says all air and sea arrivals must complete the St. Kitts eTA before travel. Ask your cruise line how it handles this for your sailing

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Official taxi fares (2021)
Government of St. Kitts and Nevis

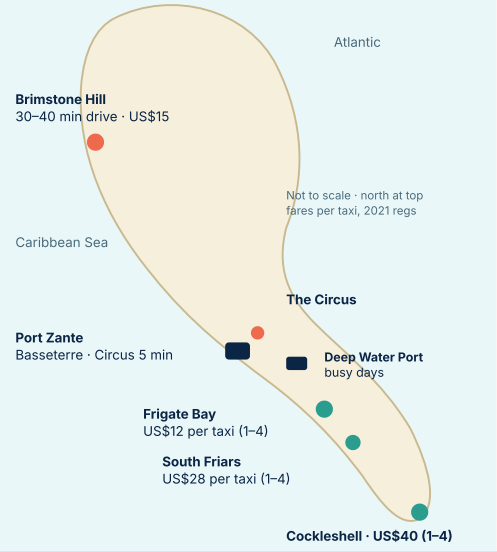
Fees and hours
Brimstone Hill Fortress

Entry rules and eTA
US Department of State

Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at **aicruisegranny.com/port-st-kitts**

Booking codes are affiliate or travel-agent links: AI Cruise Granny may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. Prices, rules and availability are set by each company; check them before you book.

Map of St. Kitts



Basseterre and the cruise piers are on the south coast; the beaches run down the skinny southeast peninsula toward Nevis, and Brimstone Hill is up the west coast.

Port Zante or the Deep Water Port: which pier you'll use

Port Zante

The main cruise port, built out into the bay in downtown Basseterre and run by the St. Christopher Air and Sea Ports Authority. A second cruise pier opened here in 2019; the government said at the time it was built to take two of the biggest Oasis-class ships at once. You walk off into a waterfront complex of duty-free shops, restaurants and a tourist information point, with free Wi-Fi. From the gate, Princess puts The Circus, with its clock tower, at about a **five-minute walk**, and Independence Square a short stroll beyond it. Most of downtown is within easy walking distance.

The Deep Water Port

A separate commercial cargo port. The government noted in 2019 that cruise ships were docking there when three or four ships were in, which blocked the cargo berth; the second Port Zante pier was meant to ease that. Ships can still be assigned there on very busy days. It is not in the town centre, and no official walking directions are published, so if your ship is sent there, plan on your cruise line's shuttle or a taxi. Check your daily planner.

At the St. Kitts cruise port: what's there

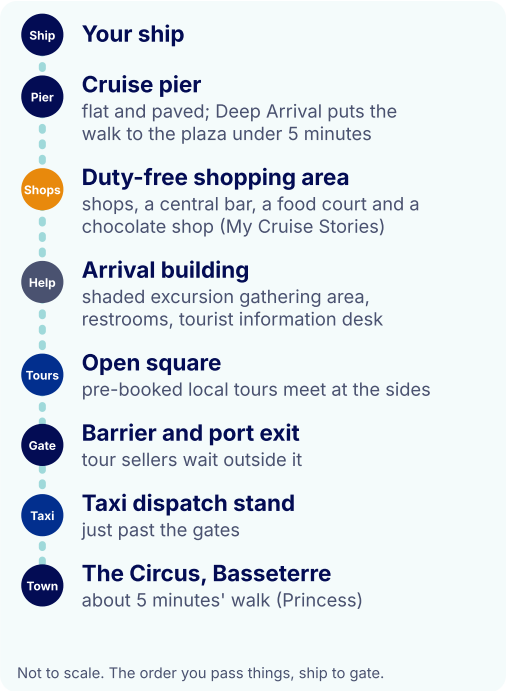
Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

I haven't sailed into St. Kitts yet, so this is the planner's version. Port Zante is one of the easy ones: you walk down the pier into a duty-free shopping village with bars, a food court and an information desk, and Basseterre's little Circus is about five minutes beyond the gate. There's no beach at the port, so a stay-at-port day here means shops, a cold drink and a slow stroll into town. If your ship is sent to the commercial Deep Water Port instead, plan on a shuttle or taxi.

Port map: this port doesn't publish a map of its own that we could find, so we drew the simple walk below from the port's and cruise lines' own descriptions.

From the ship: Port Zante (Basseterre)

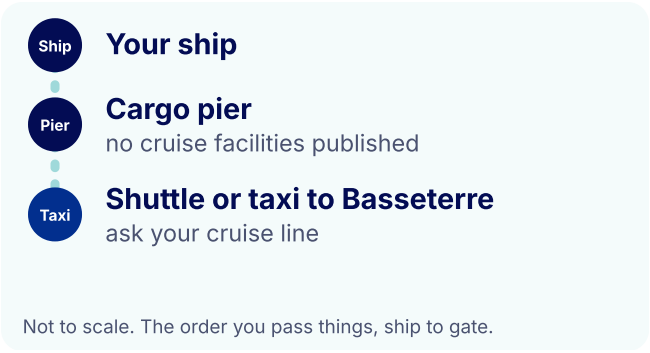
Main cruise port, built on reclaimed land on the Basseterre waterfront and run by the St. Christopher Air and Sea Ports Authority (SCASPA). Two cruise piers (the second, a US$48 million pier, opened in 2019); one cruise writer describes a wharf that can berth four ships at a time. A new home-porting terminal broke ground on 1 July 2026, ahead of P&O Cruises home-porting from November 2027.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Deep Water Port (commercial)

Separate cargo port used for cruise ships on very busy days. Not in the town centre and no official walking route is published; customs and immigration offices are there (Cruisers Wiki).



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Port Zante free Wi-Fi Free — Cruise Hive (updated January 2025) reports a free public hotspot at the port. My Cruise Stories says many cruisers use the free Wi-Fi at the Rum Barrel bar instead.
Port Zante

Window-shopping the duty-free village Free to browse — Pastel outdoor shopping village at the pier exit with duty-free boutiques, craft stalls and open-air bars (Deep Arrival).
At the end of the pier

Tourist information desk Free — In the arrival building at the end of the original pier; Cruise Hive says the desk also sells excursions and attraction tickets.
Arrival building

Shaded seating in the arrival building Free — Shaded space where ship excursions gather (My Cruise Stories). A handy place to wait out the sun.
Arrival building

The Circus and Independence Square Free — Basseterre's clock-tower square is about a 5-minute walk from the port (Princess); Independence Square is about 10 minutes (Cruise Hive).
Just outside the port · about 5 min walk from the ship

National Museum — Cruise Hive puts the National Museum, in the Old Treasury Building, under 5 minutes' walk from the port. Entry price not checked.
Old Treasury Building at the port edge

Pools and beaches

Pool at the food court (reported) Free (reported) — Cruise Hive reports a pool at the port's food court that is free for visitors. No other source mentions it, so ask at the information desk before you pack a swimsuit.
Port Zante food court

Food and drink

Port Zante food court — A food court inside the port shopping area (Cruise Hive; My Cruise Stories).
Shopping area

Rum Barrel — Bar at the port that cruisers use for its free Wi-Fi (My Cruise Stories).
Port Zante

No Rush Bar — Bar at Port Zante named by Cruise Hive.
Port Zante

Sweet Beach Bar & Restaurant — Just outside the terminal, with free Wi-Fi (Cruise Hive).
Just outside the terminal

Scoop's ice cream — Homemade ice cream in the Port Zante shopping complex (Cruise Critic).
Port Zante shops

Chocolate shop — A chocolate shop in the shopping area (My Cruise Stories).
Port Zante shops

Shopping

Port Zante duty-free complex — Jewellery and chain stores between the piers and the Old Treasury Building, including Diamonds International, Colombian Emeralds, Kay Jewelers and Abbott's, plus Sol E Mar for T-shirts, watches and flip-flops.
Between the piers and the Old Treasury Building

Pelican Mall — Shopping mall built into Port Zante, beside the duty-free complex (Cruise Hive; Fodor's).
Port Zante waterfront

Amina Market and vendor huts — Inexpensive local crafts at Amina Market; vendor huts behind Pelican Mall sell T-shirts and souvenirs (Fodor's).
Behind Pelican Mall

Bay Road, Fort Street and Liverpool Row — Local shops beyond the Old Treasury Building (Beyond Ships).
Just outside the port

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Casino — My Cruise Stories mentions a casino in the port shopping area. No name or hours published.
Port Zante shopping area

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Restrooms Free — In the arrival building at the end of the original pier; Cruise Hive calls them well kept.
Arrival building

Banking and ATMs — Cruise Hive reports banking facilities, ATMs and public phones in the terminal. My Cruise Stories points to the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank on Central Street as the most convenient ATM.
Terminal; Central Street in town

Money — Eastern Caribbean dollar, fixed at EC$2.70 to US$1. US notes are widely taken, but not coins; change comes in EC$. Carry small US bills.
Throughout

Photo ID for re-boarding — My Cruise Stories says crew asked to see photo ID at the gangway on return here. Carry it with your cruise card.
Back at the pier

Getting out of the port

Taxi dispatch stand

From US$12 per taxi (1–4 people, 2021 regulations)

— Just past the port gates (Deep Arrival). Fares are set by government regulation per taxi for 1 to 4 people (2021): US$12 to central Frigate Bay, US$28 to South Friars, US$40 to Cockleshell, US$55 for Brimstone Hill (up to 2 hours). Official taxis have yellow T or TA plates.
Outside the port gates

Pre-booked tours — Meet at the sides of the open square beyond the arrival building; tour sellers wait outside the barrier.
Open square past the arrival building

Minivan buses — Green H-plate minivans run along the coast road; fares not published.
Outside the port

Walk into Basseterre Free — The Circus is about 5 minutes on foot; the historic zone is about a mile (Cruise Hive).
From the port gate · about 5 min walk from the ship

Ferry to Nevis — A ferry to Nevis leaves from Basseterre (My Cruise Stories). Times and fares not checked; mind your all-aboard.
Basseterre waterfront

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day at the port here, I'd stroll the duty-free village first while it's cool, then step out to The Circus and Independence Square, both within about ten minutes, and back to the port for lunch at the food court or a bar with Wi-Fi to check messages. An

ice cream from Scoop's, a look round the craft stalls behind Pelican Mall, and a sit in the shade of the arrival building would round it off. There's no beach at Port Zante, so if you want sand, it's a US$12 taxi (for up to four of you) to Frigate Bay.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Port Zante is docked, not tendered. Deep Arrival describes the route from gangway to shopping plaza as flat, paved and under 5 minutes.
- Cruise Hive reports that the piers and terminal were designed to be wheelchair-friendly, but SCASPA publishes nothing on ramps, accessible restrooms or wheelchair rental.
- The arrival building has shaded seating and restrooms, a good place to rest before the walk into town.
- If your ship is sent to the Deep Water Port, you'll need the cruise line's shuttle or a taxi. Ask your cruise line about accessible transport in advance.
- Beyond the port, the US State Department says sidewalks are uneven with few curb ramps, and taxis and buses have no special accommodations.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

What is there to do at the St. Kitts cruise port?

Port Zante has a duty-free shopping village, a food court, bars, craft stalls and a tourist information desk, and Basseterre's Circus is about five minutes' walk. There's no beach at the port.

Is there free Wi-Fi at Port Zante?

Cruise Hive reports a free public hotspot at the port, and cruisers also use the free Wi-Fi at bars such as the Rum Barrel and Sweet Beach. Speeds and limits aren't published.

Can you walk from the St. Kitts cruise port to Basseterre?

Yes, from Port Zante The Circus is about a five-minute walk. From the commercial Deep Water Port you'll need a shuttle or taxi.

Where the port facts come from: Cruise Hive: St. Kitts cruise port (last modified 1 January 2025) (30 October 2026); Deep Arrival: St. Kitts cruise port (updated 7 October 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruise Critic: St. Kitts (Port Zante) port page (30 October 2026); My Cruise Stories: Saint Kitts cruise port (October 2024) (30 October 2026); Fodor's: Port Zante Mall (30 October 2026); Beyond Ships: St. Kitts cruise port (30 October 2026); SKNIS: groundbreaking for new cruise terminal at Port Zante (1 July 2026) (30 October 2026); Caribbean Journal: St. Kitts tops 1 million cruise passengers (28 August 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruisers Wiki: Basseterre (30 October 2026); Government of St. Kitts and Nevis: taxi maximum fares regulations 2021 (PDF) (26 October 2026)

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

A slow loop of downtown: The Circus, Independence Square and the harbour market, all a few minutes from Port Zante, then back to the port for lunch. Skip Brimstone Hill unless you can manage 50 steps and steep ground; see it from the road on a driving tour instead. **see St Kitts island driving tour Brimstone Hill on Viator**

Beach day

A taxi to South Friars Bay (US$28 from town for up to four of you) for beach bars and calm water close to town. Or splash out on Cockleshell Beach, at the far southern tip, for views of Nevis. **see St Kitts Cockleshell beach day on Viator**

See the island

The St. Kitts Scenic Railway: about three hours on an old cane-hauling railway, roughly 18 miles along the north coast. Or a full-island taxi tour with Brimstone Hill, Timothy Hill lookout and Romney Manor.

Getting around

Taxis

St. Kitts publishes its taxi fares in law: the Vehicles and Road Traffic (Maximum Fares) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, gazetted on 4 February 2021, the most recent schedule I could find. Fares are **for the whole taxi for 1 to 4 people**, plus a set amount for each person after that. From Basseterre:

- **Frigate Bay**: US$12 (EC$32) from central Basseterre; US$16 (EC$43) from the west side of town. Each extra person US$3 to US$4.
- **Friars Bay** (South Friars): US$28 from Basseterre, plus US$7 per extra person. (The US$12 fare in the table is from Frigate Bay, not from town.)
- **Cockleshell Bay**: US$40 (EC$109), plus US$10 per extra person.

- **Brimstone Hill only** (up to 2 hours): US$55 (EC$149), plus US$14 per extra person.
- **Half-island tour** (2½ hours): US$80; **full island** (4 to 4½ hours, with Timothy Hill): US$100.

Waiting beyond the first 15 minutes costs US$5 per 15 minutes. Use official taxis with yellow "T" or "TA" plates, and confirm the fare before you set off.

Driving

You drive on the left, and you'll need a local visitor's driving licence. Most cruise visitors are better off with a taxi.

What to see

Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park

A hilltop fortress nearly 800 feet above the sea on the west coast, a 30 to 40 minute drive from Basseterre. Entry is **US$15**, open every day **9:30am to 5:30pm**. Expect **50 steps** up to the main area. Princess suggests allowing about three hours for an independent visit, including the drive.

The Circus and Independence Square

Basseterre's small round square with the green Berkeley Memorial clock, about five minutes from Port Zante, and the leafy Independence Square nearby. Free.

St. Kitts Scenic Railway

A railway built between 1912 and 1926 to haul the island's cane harvest, now a roughly three-hour tourist ride along about 18 miles of the north coast. Seating isn't reserved. Booked as a tour.

Romney Manor and Caribelle Batik

Old plantation gardens with a batik studio, usually part of a half- or full-island tour.

Beaches, ranked for a cruise day

1. **South Friars Bay**, a short drive southeast of town. **US$28** per taxi from town for 1–4 people. Beach bars with loungers and shade (chair prices not published). Calm Caribbean side.
2. **Frigate Bay**, the closest beach area, a short drive from town. **US$12 to US$16** per taxi for 1–4 people. Restaurants and bars on the Caribbean side.
3. **Cockleshell Beach**, at the southern tip, about 25 to 30 minutes by car. **US$40** per taxi for 1–4 people. Beautiful views of Nevis, but Princess notes there's no lifeguard.

None within walking distance of Port Zante. Lifeguards are not mentioned for any beach on official pages; assume there are none.

Where to eat and what to try

Look out for **goat water** (a spiced goat stew), saltfish, coconut dumplings, johnny cakes, and local Carib beer.

- **At Port Zante**: restaurants and a food court right at the pier, the easiest choice on a short call.
- **Downtown Basseterre**: small cafés around The Circus and Independence Square.
- **South Friars and Frigate Bay**: casual beach bars and grills on the sand.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money**: the Eastern Caribbean dollar, pegged at EC$2.70 to US$1 since 1976. US dollars are widely taken, but change usually comes in EC$. Small US bills help.
- **Entry paperwork**: since May 2025 St. Kitts and Nevis requires an electronic travel authorization (eTA), and the State Department says it applies to arrivals by air or sea. Ask your cruise line whether you need to file one for your call.
- **Documents**: the State Department says cruise passengers may use another Western Hemisphere travel document instead of a passport, but it strongly recommends bringing a passport in case you need to fly home.
- **Drugs and firearms**: penalties are severe. Check your bags for stray ammunition before you leave home.
- **Taxis**: official ones only (yellow "T" or "TA" plates).
- **Drive on the left**, with a local visitor's licence.

What the videos don't show you

- **The steps at Brimstone Hill.** Fifty of them, at the top of a steep hill, in the sun. The views are earned.
- **The Deep Water Port.** The videos show Port Zante. On busy days your ship may be at the cargo port instead.
- **Change in EC dollars.** Pay in US dollars and you'll often get Eastern Caribbean money back, which is no use once you leave.

- **Busy season.** November to March is peak; downtown traffic jams, and the beaches fill.
- **Taxi fares are per car, not per person**, for up to four people. That's a bargain for a family and expensive for one.
- **Crime.** The State Department rates St. Kitts and Nevis Level 1, exercise normal precautions, but notes petty theft and car break-ins, and advises against walking alone on isolated beaches.
- **Hurricane season** runs June to November.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

St. Kitts is a docked port, and the walk from the ship into the Port Zante complex is short and flat. Cruise Hive reports the piers and terminal were designed to be wheelchair-friendly, but the ports authority publishes nothing on accessibility.

Beyond the port, the US State Department is blunt: it says getting around buildings, sidewalks and transport is extremely difficult for people with mobility issues. Sidewalks are uneven and rarely have curb ramps, crossings are few, and buses and taxis have no special accommodations. Brimstone Hill has **50 steps** to the main area, and the fortress publishes no accessibility information. Princess requires guests on its Cockleshell Beach tour to board the motorcoach unassisted.

The low-effort version of this port is the Port Zante complex and a short, slow loop to The Circus, or a taxi tour that shows you the island from the seat. See Mobility & Health Needs, and check with your cruise line about accessible transport before you sail.

The biggest mistake

Paying a taxi fare per person when the law sets it per car. St. Kitts is one of the few islands that publishes its fares in the official gazette, and for up to four people the price is for the whole taxi. Know the fare before you get in (US$12 to Frigate Bay, US$28 to Friars Bay, US$40 to Cockleshell), carry small US bills, and you'll have the easiest port day of the trip.

St. Kitts FAQs

Is St. Kitts a tender port?

No. Ships dock, usually at Port Zante in downtown Basseterre. On very busy days some ships use the commercial Deep Water Port instead.

Can you walk into Basseterre from the St. Kitts cruise port?

Yes, from Port Zante. Princess says The Circus is about a five-minute walk, and most of downtown is within easy walking distance.

How much is a taxi from the St. Kitts cruise port to the beach?

The 2021 fare regulations set US$12 to central Frigate Bay (US$16 from the west side of town), US$28 to Friars Bay and US$40 to Cockleshell Bay, for the whole taxi with 1 to 4 people, plus a set amount for each extra person.

Do they take US dollars in St. Kitts?

Yes, US dollars are widely accepted, but the local currency is the Eastern Caribbean dollar, fixed at EC$2.70 to US$1, and your change often comes in EC$.

How much does Brimstone Hill Fortress cost?

Entry is US$15, and it is open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm. It is a 30 to 40 minute drive from Basseterre, with 50 steps up to the main area.

Is St. Kitts safe for cruise passengers?

The US State Department rates St. Kitts and Nevis Level 1, exercise normal precautions. Petty theft and car break-ins happen, so keep valuables with you and avoid isolated beaches alone.

Where these facts come from

- Government of St. Kitts and Nevis (PDF copy on the tourism site's media server): Vehicles and Road Traffic (Maximum Fares) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, SR&O No. 2 of 2021 (https://tempo.cdn.tambourine.com/st-kitts/media/taxi_fares_2021-64ee0cb7ba639.pdf) (gazetted 4 February 2021; checked 26 October 2026)
- Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park Society (https://brimstonehillfortress.org/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- SKNIS (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis): construction of St. Kitts' second cruise pier (https://www.sknis.gov.kn/?p=39475) (10 May 2019; checked 26 October 2026)

- SKNIS: Saint Kitts and Nevis introduces the eTA (https://www.sknis.gov.kn/2025/05/22/saint-kitts-and-nevis-introduces-effortless-digital-entry-enhanced-security-smoother-travel-for-visitors/) (22 May 2025; checked 26 October 2026)
- US Department of State: Saint Kitts and Nevis travel advisory (https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/saint-kitts-and-nevis.html) (Level 1, issued 7 July 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- US Department of State: Saint Kitts and Nevis country information (https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SaintKittsandNevis.html) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Eastern Caribbean Central Bank: EC dollar peg to the US dollar (https://www.eccb-centralbank.org/news/the-eccb-celebrates-42nd-year-of-ec-dollar-peg-to-us-dollar) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: St. Kitts cruise port guide (https://www.princess.com/blog/st-kitts-cruise-port) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: things to do near the St. Kitts cruise port (https://www.princess.com/blog/st-kitts-things-to-do-near-cruise-port) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Hive: St. Kitts cruise port (https://www.cruisehive.com/st-kitts-cruise-port/132367) (port facilities and accessibility color only; checked 26 October 2026)

Facts checked on 26 October 2026. Ports change their rules and prices, so check before you sail.

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.