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12 Nights on Norwegian Sun: Panama Canal Hosted Group for Solo Cruisers

Norwegian Sun · 12 Nights from Miami

March 1 to 13, 2027 · A Maulsby Travel Co. hosted group



Norwegian Sun docked at Canada Place, Vancouver, with the white sail roofs of the terminal beside her and mountains behind. NORWEGIAN SUN is lettered on the bow beside a large painted sun. Photo: Xicotencatl, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

A Voyage Pack from **In the Wake**
Group organized and hosted by **Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co.**

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Welcome

> *Made for the solo cruiser who has booked this sailing with Tina's group, or is thinking about it, and wants one plain read on the twelve nights: the ship, the eight stops, the canal, and what to check before you go.*

This pack is about one cruise: **Norwegian Sun**, Norwegian Cruise Line, sailing 12 nights round trip from **Miami, Monday March 1 to Saturday March 13, 2027**. NCL calls it a "12-day Cruise to Panama Canal: Bahamas & Costa Rica from Miami." She calls at **Great Stirrup Cay, Cabo Rojo, Aruba, Curaçao, Cartagena, the Panama Canal at Gatun Lake, Colón and Puerto Limón**, with four sea days.

It's a **hosted group cruise for solo cruisers**, organized by Maulsby Travel Co. and hosted on board by **Tina Maulsby** herself. In her own words: "Join me in March for a 12 day Maulsby Travel Co hosted group cruise that I'm personally hosting." **To be part of the group you book through Tina.** A cabin booked somewhere else is on the same ship but not in the group.

Booking questions go to Tina Maulsby: tina@maulsbytravel.com or 910-528-5077, and **maulsbytravel.com**.

A note on what's first-hand here and what isn't

I haven't sailed Norwegian Sun, and I haven't been through the Panama Canal. One note, about Aruba's arrival card, comes from my own 2023 cruise there. The rest of this pack comes from NCL's own pages (its schedule for this exact sailing, its ship page, its port pages and its FAQ), PortMiami, the Panama Canal Authority, Costa Rica's tourism board and central bank, US embassy sites, the US State Department, and the UK government's travel advice. Where only a travel site had the answer, the pack says so. Where nobody had it, the pack says that too. The fact-check file behind this pack lists what was checked and where.

Prices and policies here were checked in October 2026, about five months before you sail. Check them again when NCL opens your bookings, and again the month before. Where this pack and the NCL app disagree, go with the app. Where it disagrees with Tina, go with Tina.

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It is calm by design. No urgency, no upsell, no countdown timer. The site that produced this pack is independent: no cruise-line affiliations, no shore-excursion commissions, no display ads. (See our **affiliate disclosure**.)

A note on the ship's future. In April 2025, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings announced that Norwegian Sun will go on a long-term charter to Cordelia Cruises, an Indian cruise line, with the charter "anticipated to begin in … 2027." CruiseMapper, a trade site, reported that her last NCL season ends around the end of September 2027. Your March sailing is well before that, and NCL was selling it in October 2026. If anything changes, NCL and Tina will tell you.

Includes an Emergency Contacts section with a fillable handoff card to leave with one trusted person at home. The companion app keeps the card on your phone, and it works offline once it's loaded.

If this is your first time sailing solo, the **solo cruising stories on this site** are worth a read before you go.

At a Glance

Ship	**Norwegian Sun**, built 2001, refurbished 2024 (NCL)
Cruise line	Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL)
Size	78,309 gross tons (a measure of enclosed volume, not weight) · 848 ft long (NCL)
Guests and crew	1,878 guests at two to a cabin, and 906 crew, per NCL's ship page. That's about 2.1 guests for every crew member
Built by	Lloyd Werft, Bremerhaven, Germany
Departure port	**Miami**, PortMiami. PortMiami lists Terminal B as NCL's terminal; your eDocs name the terminal for your sailing

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Itinerary	12 nights · Panama Canal partial transit, round trip
Group	Hosted group for solo cruisers, organized and hosted by Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co.
Solo rates on the flyer	Inside $3,039 · Ocean View $3,419 · Balcony $6,109 · $125 deposit. Tina adds that the Ocean View "is currently cheaper than the inside," and that there's an extra $150 off with a coupon. Ask her for today's price
Currency aboard	US dollar

Ports of call

These are the times on NCL's own schedule for this sailing (voyage 23377868), read October 2026. **They are ship's times. Check them in the NCL app before you sail.**

1. **Miami, Florida.** Board Monday March 1. Ship leaves 4:00 PM
2. **Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas.** Tuesday March 2, 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM
3. **At sea.** Wednesday March 3
4. **Cabo Rojo, Dominican Republic.** Thursday March 4, 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM
5. **Aruba (Oranjestad).** Friday March 5, 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM
6. **Curaçao (Willemstad).** Saturday March 6, 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM
7. **At sea.** Sunday March 7
8. **Cartagena, Colombia.** Monday March 8, 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM
9. **Panama Canal, Gatun Lake.** Tuesday March 9, 5:00 AM to 3:00 PM
10. **Colón, Panama.** Tuesday March 9, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
11. **Puerto Limón, Costa Rica.** Wednesday March 10, 6:45 AM to 1:30 PM
12. **At sea.** Thursday March 11 and Friday March 12
13. **Miami.** Arrive Saturday March 13, 7:00 AM

All aboard is one hour before the ship leaves. NCL's rule is that you must be back on board "no later than one (1) hour prior to the ship's scheduled departure time." So: 3:00 PM at Great Stirrup Cay, 2:30 PM at Cabo Rojo, 6:00 PM in Aruba, 4:00 PM in Curaçao, 1:00 PM in Cartagena, 7:00 PM in Colón and 12:30 PM in Puerto Limón.

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Section 1 — Your Ship: Norwegian Sun

Built in 2001, refurbished in 2024

Norwegian Sun was built at the Lloyd Werft shipyard in Bremerhaven, Germany. NCL's ship page says she was built in 2001 and lists her as refurbished in 2024. She's a Sun-class ship, and her one NCL sister was Norwegian Sky.

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Gross tonnage, 78,309 for her, isn't a weight. The International Maritime Organization says it "is a function of the moulded volume of all enclosed spaces of the ship." Divide it by NCL's guest count and you get about 42 gross tons per guest. If you want to see how she compares with other ships, the **Ship Size Atlas** lines them up.

What's on board

These come from NCL's "What's On Board" page for Norwegian Sun, read October 2026. Line-ups can change, so check the app.

- **Included restaurants:** Four Seasons and Seven Seas, the main dining rooms (Deck 5), the **Garden Café** buffet and **The Great Outdoors** (Deck 11), and the Sports Bar on Deck 11, which NCL lists as a 24-hour eatery.
- **Specialty restaurants (extra): Cagney's Steakhouse**, **Teppanyaki**, **Le Bistro**, **Los Lobos** and the Sushi Bar (Deck 12), **La Cucina** (Deck 5), and **Moderno Churrascaria** (Deck 11). NCL gives a cover charge of $40 to $60 a person, and its gratuity FAQ adds a 20% charge to specialty dining.
- **Bars:** among others, the **Atrium Bar** (Deck 5), **Bliss Ultra Lounge** and Windjammer (Deck 6), Magnum's Champagne & Wine Bar (Deck 7), the Spinnaker Lounge and Champs Bar (Deck 12), and Topsiders (Deck 11).
- **Shows** are in the Stardust Theater, which NCL lists on Decks 6 and 7.
- **Pool, spa and fitness:** the Oasis Pool, the Mandara Spa and Salon, and the Pulse Fitness Center, all on Deck 11. A jogging and walking track is on Deck 6.
- **Quiet corners:** the East Indies Library (Deck 6) and the Chapel (Deck 12), which NCL says "also functions as a meeting room."

What Sun doesn't have

- **No Studio cabins and no Studio Lounge.** NCL's deck plans for Sun list Solo Inside, Solo Oceanview and Solo Balcony cabins, and no Studios. NCL's solo page says Studio "availability and Studio Lounge accessibility varies by ship." Tina's group is your solo lounge on this one.
- **No self-service laundry.** NCL's packing page says "laundry is not self-service." Fill in the order form in your cabin and your steward collects it.

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Cabin choice: sailing solo

NCL's solo page says Solo Inside, Oceanview and Balcony cabins are "available fleetwide," and that "double occupancy rates don't apply" in them. Tina's flyer prices the group's solo cabins at **$3,039 inside, $3,419 ocean view and $6,109 balcony**, with a $125 deposit.

Prices move, though. When Tina shared the flyer she wrote: "The Ocean view room is currently cheaper than the inside. Extra $150 off as well using a coupon." So ask her what each cabin costs on the day you book. The **stateroom check** can tell you about a specific cabin number on Sun.

Free at Sea

For bookings made from November 5, 2025, NCL's package is called **Free at Sea**. Per NCL's Free at Sea page, read October 2026, it includes:

- An **open bar** for guests 21 and over, on board and at Great Stirrup Cay
- **Specialty dining**: four meals on a cruise of nine nights or more, so four on this one
- **Wi-Fi**: 150 minutes
- A **$50 shore excursion credit** at each port, for the first guest in the cabin

The open bar isn't free of charges. NCL's own Free at Sea flyer (December 2025) says: "Gratuities are $28.50/per person/per day for all Guests 21+. Please note this is the pre-cruise price. The onboard price will vary." For twelve nights alone, that's **$342**, on top of the daily service charge. A group booking can bundle things differently, so **ask Tina what your fare includes.** The **drink calculator** uses the same $28.50.

Connectivity

NCL's Wi-Fi runs on Starlink. Free at Sea includes 150 minutes. Beyond that, NCL's Free at Sea page lists the **Voyage Wi-Fi Pass at $29.99** and the **Streaming Voyage Wi-Fi Pass at $39.99**, each per cabin per day, plus $14.99 a day for each extra device (October 2026). The **internet at sea guide** explains how ship Wi-Fi works.

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Section 2 — Day by Day

Each port day has the times from NCL's schedule, the all-aboard time, and a few things to know. The port pages on this site go deeper.

Day 1 — Monday, March 1 — Miami (embarkation)

Ship leaves: 4:00 PM. **Be on board by 3:00 PM.**

- **The terminal.** PortMiami lists Terminal B, "The Pearl of Miami," as NCL's terminal, and Terminal C as one that "serves ships from several cruise lines." **Your eDocs name yours.**
- **Parking.** PortMiami lists Garage B, 1756 N. Cruise Blvd., at $35 a day (effective January 1, 2025). If your eDocs say Terminal C, Garage C is at 1648 N. Cruise Blvd., at $28 a day. Debit cards aren't accepted.
- **Arrival time.** NCL asks guests who've checked in online to arrive at the terminal no later than one hour before their chosen boarding time.
- **Carry-on.** Keep your passport, medications, a swimsuit and a change of clothes with you. NCL asks you to carry a small bag with what you need on the first day "while your luggage is delivered" to your cabin.
- **Sailaway with the group.** Tina will tell the group where to meet.

More on the **Miami port page**.

Day 2 — Tuesday, March 2 — Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas

In port: 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM. **All aboard 3:00 PM.**

This is NCL's own island in the Berry Islands of the Bahamas.

- **The pier.** NCL says a multi-ship pier debuted in December 2025, and when it opened NCL said all ships visiting the island will benefit from it, with "guests no longer being required to tender from ship to shore" (quoted by Cruise Industry News). In September 2026 Cruise Industry News reported that "the new pier opened in August 2026." So expect to walk ashore, and **check the app** the day before.

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- **What's free:** the beaches, loungers and umbrellas, and the Splash Harbor splash pad. The Free at Sea open bar applies on the island.
- **What costs extra:** the **Great Tides Waterpark** was "from $89" on NCL's excursion page in October 2026. Also cabanas, the zipline, and snorkel and paddleboard rentals.
- **Money.** NCL's ships use US dollars, charged to your shipboard account. Bring your key card.

More on the **Great Stirrup Cay port page**.

Day 3 — Wednesday, March 3 — At sea

The first sea day. Book your specialty dinners and any shore excursions you still want, find the library and the quiet corners, and meet the group.

Day 4 — Thursday, March 4 — Cabo Rojo, Dominican Republic

In port: 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. **All aboard 2:30 PM.**

Cabo Rojo is a new cruise port in **Pedernales Province**, in the far southwest of the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Port Authority says its first cruise ship arrived on January 4, 2024.

- **What's around it.** NCL's own page says the region is "sparsely populated" and that "there aren't any recommended shopping areas." Plan this day around an NCL Shore Excursion, or a quiet day near the port.
- **Bahía de las Águilas.** NCL calls it "the country's most beautiful beach" and describes it as five miles long. It sits in **Jaragua National Park**, which NCL notes is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- **Getting there.** The Dominican tourism ministry says you reach it "by an all-terrain vehicle, or by boat from the shores of Cabo Rojo." It also says the beach has "no hotels, shops, or restaurants" and no shade, so bring water and plenty of sun protection.
- **Money.** The Dominican peso. Ask before you pay in dollars.
- **Emergency number:** 911. The UK government notes that 911 "does not have full coverage across the country."

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This site doesn't have a Cabo Rojo page yet, so this pack doesn't say more than NCL and the sources above do.

Day 5 — Friday, March 5 — Aruba (Oranjestad)

In port: 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM. **All aboard 6:00 PM.**

A late-morning arrival, so you have lunch and the afternoon.

- **The terminal.** Aruba's tourism office says Main Street is "a ten-minute walk from the cruise terminal" and Surfside Beach a 15-minute walk, and that "all of Aruba's beaches are public and free."
- **Arikok National Park.** Aruba's tourism office says "nearly 20% of Aruba is a designated National Park," and that visitors "need to purchase a ticket" to enter. Travel guides say the park closes in mid-afternoon, so if you go, go straight from the ship.
- **Money.** Aruba's tourism office says the florin is the currency but "U.S. dollars are widely accepted," and some businesses won't take US $50 or $100 bills.
- **Emergency numbers:** 911 for ambulance and fire, **100 for police** (UK government travel advice).
- **Arrival card.** The written sources don't agree. Aruba's tourism site calls its online ED card "a mandatory requirement for all individuals… entering Aruba," but its own page for cruise visitors doesn't mention it. When I called at Aruba by cruise ship in 2023, we were exempt. In my experience, when a port does require paperwork, the cruise line handles it or tells you when it can't. Watch the NCL app.

Day 6 — Saturday, March 6 — Curaçao (Willemstad)

In port: 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. **All aboard 4:00 PM.**

A long day in a walkable old town.

- **The Queen Emma Bridge.** Curaçao's tourism site says it was built in 1888 and swings open to let ships into the harbor. While it's open, a small ferry carries people across free.
- **The pier.** The Curaçao Ports Authority says ships dock at the Mega Pier or the Otrobanda wharves on St. Anna Bay.

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- **Money.** Curaçao's currency is now the **Caribbean guilder (XCG)**, which took over on March 31, 2025 (Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten).
- **Emergency numbers:** 911 for police and fire, **912 for ambulance** (UK government travel advice).

Day 7 — Sunday, March 7 — At sea

The second sea day, and it's a Sunday. A good day for a slow breakfast, the spa, or a show.

Day 8 — Monday, March 8 — Cartagena, Colombia

In port: 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM. **All aboard 1:00 PM.**

An early start and an early finish. Eat breakfast before you go.

- **The dock.** NCL's page says the ship docks, at "Muelle 2 (Cartagena)."
- **The old town.** NCL says "the old walled city of Cartagena reflects a turbulent history of conquistadors and pirates," and suggests you "climb 'las murallas' for an unforgettable view of the harbor." More on our **Cartagena port page**.
- **Money.** The Colombian peso (NCL). Ask before you pay in dollars.
- **Emergency numbers: 123 for police and ambulance, 119 for fire** (UK government travel advice).
- **Read this before you go ashore.** The US State Department rates Colombia **Level 3, "Reconsider travel"** (March 2026), "due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, and natural disasters." Its Do Not Travel list names Arauca, Cauca (excluding Popayán), Valle del Cauca (excluding Cali), Norte de Santander, and the area near the Venezuela border. Cartagena isn't on that list. The same advisory says crimes including "drugging" happen "in some regions," and the UK government names street crime on "the Caribbean coast." An NCL Shore Excursion, or a walk with the group, is a sensible way to see the walled city. Keep your drink in sight.

Day 9 — Tuesday, March 9 — Panama Canal (Gatun Lake), then Colón

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Canal: 5:00 AM to 3:00 PM. **Colón:** 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. **All aboard in Colón 7:00 PM.**

This is the day the cruise is named for. Set an alarm.

- **What the ship does.** It's a partial transit: Sun sails in through the Caribbean entrance, up into Gatun Lake, and later back out to Colón. The Panama Canal Authority says the locks "raise the ships from sea level … to the level of Gatun Lake (26 meters above sea level)." That's about 85 feet. The water that lifts you comes from Gatun Lake itself, "by gravity," the Authority says.
- **Which locks.** The Authority lists the original Gatún Locks on the Atlantic side and the newer Agua Clara Locks, opened June 26, 2016. NCL doesn't say which Sun will use, so watch from the deck.
- **Getting off at Gatun Lake.** NCL's page says "only booked shore excursion guests can disembark at Gatun Lake," by tender boat, and that they travel to Colón and rejoin the ship there. **If you don't book one, you stay aboard for the lake.** That's not a loss. The open decks are the show.
- **Colón in the evening.** NCL says the ship docks at the "Colón 2000 Cruise Terminal," and that "everyone is welcome to explore" there. It's a short evening stop. The UK government lists "the city of Colón" among places to take care against mugging, and the State Department rates Panama **Level 2, "exercise increased caution"** (August 2026), noting pickpocketing and purse snatching "in tourist areas." Stay near the terminal, or go with an NCL Shore Excursion.
- **Money.** NCL lists the Panamanian balboa and says "US Dollars are widely accepted."
- **Emergency numbers: 911** for ambulance, fire and police (UK government travel advice).

More on our **Panama Canal**, **Gatun Lake** and **Colón** pages.

Day 10 — Wednesday, March 10 — Puerto Limón, Costa Rica

In port: 6:45 AM to 1:30 PM. **All aboard 12:30 PM.**

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The shortest port day of the trip. A morning, not a day.

- **The dock.** NCL's page says the ship docks, at "Limon Port." It adds that "many guests have reported seeing peaceful sloths lumbering in the trees right in port," so look up as you walk off.
- **Nearby.** Costa Rica's tourism board says Limón is a port with a "large influx of cruises almost year round," and points to **Cahuita National Park**, with "live coral reefs (35 species of coral)." Neither it nor NCL gives a travel time from the pier, so an NCL Shore Excursion keeps you on schedule.
- **Money.** The Costa Rican colón (Central Bank of Costa Rica).
- **Emergency number: 911** for ambulance, fire and police (UK government travel advice).
- **Travel advisory.** The State Department rates Costa Rica **Level 2, "exercise increased caution"** (April 2026), and says "petty crime is common throughout Costa Rica."

More on our **Puerto Limón port page**.

Days 11 and 12 — Thursday and Friday, March 11 and 12 — At sea

Two sea days to finish. Use one for rest and one for packing. Check your onboard account in the app and settle anything you want to dispute.

Day 13 — Saturday, March 13 — Miami (debarkation)

The ship is due in at 7:00 AM. Keep your passport, medications and a change of clothes with you. Don't book an early-morning flight.

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Section 3 — Pre-Cruise Countdown

Now

- **Book through Tina** if you want to be in the group. Ask her what your fare includes: drinks, Wi-Fi, specialty dining, and whether gratuities are prepaid.
- **Check your passport.** For a round trip from a US port, NCL accepts a valid passport, or a state-certified US birth certificate with a government photo ID. NCL also says it "strongly recommends all guests to obtain a passport." On a trip with three Central and South American countries, I'd take the passport.
- **Buy travel insurance** when you book. Medical care on board is billed to you.

When NCL opens your bookings

- **Specialty dinners**, if Free at Sea gives you four.
- **Shore excursions.** Cartagena, Gatun Lake and Puerto Limón are the days where an organized trip matters most.
- **Great Tides Waterpark** tickets, if you want them.

When NCL opens online check-in

- **Check in** in the NCL app, and choose your boarding time.
- **Book your flight in for Sunday, February 28, 2027.** A day early means a late flight doesn't cost you the cruise.

The week before

- **Fill in the handoff card** in **Section 6** and give it to one person at home.
- **Check the advisories** for Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica again. The companion app's Alerts tab shows them.
- **Count down** with the **countdown tool**, if that helps.

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Section 4 — Packing List

This list fits **early March in the southern Caribbean and Central America**: hot days, showers likely at Gatun Lake, Colón and Puerto Limón, eight port calls and four sea days. The **packing lists** page has more.

Documents and money

- **Passport** (or the birth certificate and photo ID NCL allows)
- A copy of your passport, kept somewhere else
- Your insurance policy and its emergency number, printed
- Two cards, kept in different places
- Some small US bills for taxis and tips ashore

Carry-on

- All medications, in their original bottles
- Phone, charger, power bank
- Refillable water bottle
- Swimsuit and a change of clothes

Daytime

- Swimsuits and a cover-up
- Light shirts and shorts
- A light sweater for the air conditioning
- **A light rain jacket or a small umbrella** for the canal day and Puerto Limón
- Sunglasses, hat, reef-safe sunscreen

Evenings

NCL's restaurant dress code: "shirts and footwear required," and "swimwear should be saved for the pool." Pack whatever makes you comfortable at dinner within that.

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Footwear

- Walking shoes for Willemstad and Cartagena’s old town
- Water shoes for the beaches
- Sandals

Wine

NCL lets you carry on bottles of wine and champagne, but not box wine or other alcohol. Its corkage fee is $15 per 750 ml bottle, waived if you have a drink package.

Section 5 — Budget Breakdown

Prices here were checked in **October 2026**. Use them to plan, and check again before you go. For your own total, the **cruise budget calculator** is set up for this.

Your fare

The flyer’s solo rates are $3,039 inside, $3,419 ocean view and $6,109 balcony, with a $125 deposit. Tina says the ocean view is currently cheaper than the inside, and that a coupon takes off another $150. **Ask her for the price on the day you book.**

Included in an NCL fare

- Your cabin
- Meals at the included restaurants (Four Seasons, Seven Seas, the Garden Café, The Great Outdoors, the Sports Bar)
- The shows in the Stardust Theater
- Pools and the fitness center
- At Great Stirrup Cay: the beaches, loungers and splash pad
- Whatever Free at Sea or your group fare adds (see **Section 1**)

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What might cost extra

Item	What we know (October 2026)
Daily service charge	$20 per person per day for cabins up to Club Balcony Suite; $25 for The Haven and suites (bookings from January 1, 2023). For 12 nights, $240 in a standard cabin. It can be prepaid up to 24 hours before sailing. Ask Tina whether your group rate includes it
Drink package service charge	$28.50 per person per day for guests 21 and over with the Free at Sea open bar (NCL's flyer, pre-cruise price; NCL says the onboard price will vary). $342 for twelve nights
Drinks without a package	NCL adds 20% to bar purchases
Specialty dining	$40 to $60 a person cover charge, plus 20%, beyond your Free at Sea meals
Wi-Fi	Beyond Free at Sea's 150 minutes: $29.99 a day per cabin, or $39.99 for streaming; $14.99 a day per extra device
Shore excursions	Priced by NCL per trip; Free at Sea gives the first guest $50 per port
Great Stirrup Cay	Great Tides Waterpark from $89; cabanas and rentals extra
Laundry	Steward service, priced on the form in your cabin
Parking	Garage B, $35 a day (Garage C, $28, if you sail from Terminal C)
Travel insurance	Depends on age and coverage
Hotel the night before	Depends on Miami prices that weekend

Tipping

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NCL’s daily service charge covers the crew in general. The **cruise tipping calculator** helps if you want to plan anything extra, and **Cruise Tipping 2026** explains the custom.

Section 6 — Emergency Contacts

Fill this in and give a copy to one person at home before you go. When you’re sailing alone, this card is how they find you.

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FAMILY HANDOFF — IN THE WAKE VOYAGE PACK
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CRUISER:          _____________________
CABIN:            ____________
SHIP:             Norwegian Sun
LINE:             Norwegian Cruise Line
SAILING:          March 1 — 13, 2027
FROM:             Miami, Florida, USA (PortMiami)
ITINERARY:        Miami → Great Stirrup Cay (Bahamas) →
                  at sea → Cabo Rojo (DR) → Aruba →
                  Curaçao → at sea → Cartagena (Colombia) →
                  Panama Canal / Gatun Lake → Colón
                  (Panama) → Puerto Limón (Costa Rica) →
                  at sea → at sea → Miami
GROUP HOST:       Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co.
                  910-528-5077 · tina@maulsbytravel.com
DAILY CHECK-IN:   I'll message by _______ each evening
                  (ship time). No message by _______ ?
                  Follow the steps below.

EMERGENCY (24/7):
  US Citizens Abroad — State Dept:
                  +1 (888) 407-4747  (from the US/Canada)
                  +1 (202) 501-4444  (from abroad)
  To reach someone aboard an NCL ship:
                  1-833-810-7963   (from the US/Canada)
                  1-321-953-9006   (international)
                  (NCL says calls are paid by card)

EMERGENCY NUMBERS ASHORE:
  Miami, FL           — 911
  Great Stirrup Cay   — 911 or 919 (Bahamas)
  Cabo Rojo, DR       — 911 (not full coverage)
  Aruba               — 911 ambulance/fire, 100 police
  Curaçao             — 911 police/fire, 912 ambulance
  Cartagena, Colombia — 123 police/ambulance, 119 fire
  Colón, Panama       — 911
  Puerto Limón, CR    — 911

US EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES (emergency lines):
  Bahamas           — Embassy Nassau:
                      242-461-5025, ext 1
  Dominican Republic — Embassy Santo Domingo:
                      (809) 567-7775
  Aruba and Curaçao  — Consulate General Curaçao:
                      +599 (9) 433-2200
                      +1 301-985-8733 (from the US)
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  Colombia          – Embassy Bogotá:
                      +57 (601) 275-2000
  Panama            – Embassy Panama City:
                      (507) 317-5000
  Costa Rica        – Embassy San José:
                      (506) 2519-2000
                      011-506-2519-2000 (from the US)

CRUISER MEDICAL:
  Allergies:    _____________________
  Medications:  _____________________
  Conditions:   _____________________
  Insurance:    _____________________  policy: ___________

WHERE IS THE SHIP:
  cruisinginthewake.com/tools/ship-tracker.html
_____________________________________________
```

What the person at home should do

If they don’t hear from you by the check-in time:

1. **Don’t panic.** A missed message isn’t, by itself, a sign of trouble.
2. **Wait for the next check-in.** Then try your phone and messages.
3. **Call Tina** at 910-528-5077. She’s on the ship with the group.
4. **Call NCL’s ship number** above. NCL says it’s paid by card.
5. **If it’s serious,** call the State Department: +1 (888) 407-4747. US embassy sites say Americans who need help can call it 24/7.
6. **To see where the ship is,** use the **ship tracker**.

The page on **reaching someone at sea** explains how all this works.

Where these numbers come from. The State Department numbers and every embassy and consulate line are from that embassy or consulate’s own website, read October 2026. NCL’s ship number is from NCL’s FAQ. The local emergency numbers are from the UK government’s travel advice. Check them again before you go.

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Section 7 — Weather and Seasickness

Weather

Below are typical figures for March 1 to 13, worked out from five years of weather records (2020 to 2024) for each stop. They're averages, not a forecast. The companion app shows a real forecast as the dates get close.

Stop	Typical high	Typical low	Days with rain
Miami	80°F	68°F	29%
Great Stirrup Cay	76°F	73°F	29%
Cabo Rojo	87°F	72°F	37%
Aruba	84°F	77°F	31%
Curaçao	85°F	77°F	38%
Cartagena	91°F	76°F	15%
Gatun Lake	84°F	77°F	54%
Colón	83°F	77°F	52%
Puerto Limón	83°F	72°F	78%

"Days with rain" counts any day with more than 1 mm (about 0.04 inch) of rain at that point, so a short shower counts the same as a wet day. Read it as how often you might see rain, not how often a day is spoiled. Cartagena has the hottest afternoons and the fewest showers; Puerto Limón saw rain on most of these days. Bring the rain jacket on Day 9 and Day 10.

These come from Open-Meteo's historical weather records, at the grid point the records use for each stop. For small islands that point can sit over the water, which keeps the night-time lows close to the highs.

Hurricanes. NOAA's National Hurricane Center says the Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30. March is outside it.

Seasickness

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Nobody can promise how your body will feel at sea. If you're prone to seasickness:

- **Think about where your cabin is.** A ship pitches and rolls around its middle, so a cabin low and near the middle moves the least.
- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist** about meclizine, dimenhydrinate or a prescription scopolamine patch, which the CDC names, and try anything new at home first.
- **Ginger and acupressure bands:** the CDC says ginger has "only weak and contradictory supporting evidence," and that bands are "no more effective than placebo" in laboratory trials.
- **Fresh air and a view of the horizon:** the CDC says a visible horizon gives "some protection" on ships.
- **The ship's medical center** can treat seasickness. It bills you. Medicare's own guide says it "doesn't cover health care services you get when the ship is more than 6 hours away from a U.S. port," so check what your plan covers.

Section 8 — Practical Logistics

Phones

- **At sea:** use the ship's Wi-Fi, and turn off cellular data so you don't pay for the ship's network.
- **In port:** every stop on this trip is outside the US. Some US plans include these countries, some charge a daily fee. **Check with your carrier before you go.**

Money

- **Aboard:** US dollars, on your shipboard account (NCL).
- **Cabo Rojo:** the Dominican peso.
- **Aruba:** the Aruban florin; US dollars "widely accepted" (Aruba's tourism office).
- **Curaçao:** the Caribbean guilder, since March 31, 2025.
- **Cartagena:** the Colombian peso.

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- **Panama:** the balboa; NCL says US dollars are “widely accepted.”
- **Puerto Limón:** the Costa Rican colón.

Travel advisories (US State Department)

Read October 2026:

- **The Bahamas:** Level 2, “exercise increased caution” (July 2026).
- **Dominican Republic:** Level 2, “exercise increased caution” (June 2025).
- **Aruba:** Level 1, “exercise normal precautions” (August 2026).
- **Curaçao:** Level 1, “exercise normal precautions” (September 2026).
- **Colombia:** Level 3, “reconsider travel” (March 2026). Cartagena isn’t in its Do Not Travel areas. See **Day 8**.
- **Panama:** Level 2, “exercise increased caution” (August 2026).
- **Costa Rica:** Level 2, “exercise increased caution” (April 2026).

These advisories describe the world as it stood in October 2026, not as it will stand the week you sail. They change in both directions: a level can rise or fall before March. Look again in the week before you go. The companion app’s Alerts tab shows the current level for each.

Laundry, smoking, and the rules

- **Laundry.** Not self-service. Use the order form in your cabin.
- **Smoking** in your cabin or on your balcony carries a **$250 cleaning charge** (NCL). NCL lists a Havana Club Cigar Lounge on Sun.
- **Drinking age:** 21 on sailings from the US.

Accessibility

If you use a wheelchair or a scooter, or need other help, tell Tina when you book so NCL can note it. Gatun Lake is a tender stop, and only for booked excursions. Great Stirrup Cay now has a pier, but check the app that day (see **Day 2**). The **accessibility guide** on this site covers more.

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Section 9 — The Solo Cruise Rhythm

Twelve nights alone at sea has a rhythm, and you get to set it.

- **Pick one anchor a day.** A port walk, a show, a dinner with the group. The rest can stay loose.
- **Eat where it's easy.** The Garden Café buffet, and the Sports Bar, which NCL lists as a 24-hour eatery, let you eat on your own schedule.
- **Use the sea days.** Day 3, Day 7, Day 11 and Day 12 are yours: the spa, a book, a long lunch.
- **One message home a day.** Tell your person where you're going ashore, and that you're back aboard.

Section 10 — Sailing Solo with the Group

- **You have a host.** Tina is on board with the group. Ask her where the group meets and how she'll keep in touch through the week.
- **Solo cabins.** Sun has Solo Inside, Solo Oceanview and Solo Balcony cabins, where NCL says "double occupancy rates don't apply."
- **No Studio Lounge on Sun.** NCL's solo lounge comes with Studio cabins, and Sun has none. The group fills that gap.
- **Excursions.** Going ashore with the group, or on an NCL Shore Excursion, is the easy way to do Cartagena, Gatun Lake and Colón.

Safety, the same as at home: tell someone where you're going ashore, keep your drink in sight, and be back early.

The **solo cruising hub** has more from people who've done it.

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Section 11 — First Cruise Notes

If this is your first cruise, the **first-cruise guide** goes deeper. A few things worth knowing ahead:

- **Download the NCL app** and log in before you go.
- **Be back early.** NCL says that if you miss the ship, “it will be the guest’s responsibility to pay all expenses incurred to rejoin the ship.” Cartagena (1:00 PM) and Puerto Limón (12:30 PM) are the early ones.
- **You don’t have to do everything.** Twelve nights is long enough to skip things.

If you like photos, the **cruise tech and photography guide** helps you pack the right gear. The canal day is the one to charge your camera for.

Closing

This pack is a plain read on twelve nights: an NCL ship in her last year with the line, NCL’s own island, two Dutch islands, a new port in the far southwest of the Dominican Republic, Cartagena’s walled city, a morning climbing into Gatun Lake, and Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast. Check the numbers again before you go, book through Tina, set your own pace, and enjoy it.

Share or save. The companion app has a share button. If someone you know is thinking about this cruise, send them the link.

Soli Deo Gloria. All work on this project is offered as a gift to God. The site that produced it is independent: no affiliate links, no commissions, no upsells. If it helped you, that’s the whole point.

Last reviewed | 2026-10-13, for a sailing on 2027-03-01. Sailing times and ship facts from NCL’s own pages; port facts as noted below |
How facts here are checked | Every fact in this pack is listed with its source in the

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pack's fact-check file. The sailing's dates, port order and times come from NCL's schedule for this voyage. Ship facts come from NCL's ship page, What's On Board page, deck plans, solo page and FAQ, with tonnage, builder and IMO number from the ship's Wikipedia entry and VesselFinder, and the charter from Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings' own press release. Port facts come from NCL, PortMiami, the Panama Canal Authority, Costa Rica's tourism board and central bank, the US State Department and its embassy and consulate sites, the UK government's travel advice, Aruba's and Curaçao's tourism sites, and named travel sites where those had no answer. Weather averages were calculated from Open-Meteo's historical weather records. Where sources disagreed, the pack says so or leaves the number out. |

Accessibility | This pack is written to read straight through on a screen reader: headings in order, small labeled tables, and links named for where they go. If something here is hard for you to use, that's a bug, and we want to hear about it. |

Sources | Ship: **Norwegian Sun**; NCL ship page, deck plans, "What's On Board", FAQ, Free at Sea and solo pages; NCLH press release (April 2025). Ports on this site: **Miami**, **Great Stirrup Cay**, **Aruba**, **Curaçao**, **Cartagena**, **Panama Canal**, **Gatun Lake**, **Colón**, **Puerto Limón**. Venues: **Garden Café**, **The Great Outdoors**, **Cagney's**, **Teppanyaki**, **Le Bistro**, **Los Lobos**, **La Cucina**, **Moderno**, **Atrium Bar**, **Bliss Ultra Lounge**. Group: **Tina Maulsby**, **Maulsby Travel Co.** Tools: **drink calculator**, **stateroom check**, **cruise budget calculator**, **cruise tipping calculator**, **ship tracker**, **ship size atlas**. Reference: **solo cruising hub**, **first-cruise guide**, **countdown**, **packing lists**, **internet at sea**, **reaching someone at sea**, **disability at sea**. Articles: **Cruise Tipping 2026**, **cruise tech and photography guide**. |

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