



IN THE WAKE · CRUISINGINTHEWAKE.COM

7-Night Caribbean — Hosted Solo Group

*Norwegian Prima · 7 Nights from Port Canaveral
September 27 – October 4, 2026 · Hosted by Tina Maulsby*



Norwegian Prima passing through Amsterdam's IJ canal — full broadside showing the signature swirling hull livery and NCL funnel mark. Photo by Chrissy85 (CC BY-SA 4.0) via Wikimedia Commons.

A Voyage Pack from **In the Wake**
Hosted by **Tina Maulsby · Maulsby Travel Co.**

Welcome

Made for the solo cruiser who has already booked this specific Western Caribbean group sailing and wants one trusted read on the week — the ship, the four ports, the group's rhythm, and the hurricane-season caveats — in one place.

This pack exists to make one specific cruise easier: **Norwegian Prima**, sailing 7 nights from Port Canaveral, **September 27 – October 4, 2026**, calling at **Great Stirrup Cay (Bahamas), Falmouth (Jamaica), Grand Cayman, and Cozumel (Mexico)**. It's a **hosted solo cruisers group cruise** organized and on-ship-hosted by **Tina Maulsby** at **Maulsby Travel Co.**

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

I haven't sailed this itinerary on this ship. Tina is the host running it, and what's framed as hers (her sailaway plan, her Hudson's standing dinner, her group-cruise rhythm) is from her own communications. Everything else — ship docking arrangements, port logistics, excursion operators and their prices, currency mechanics, embassy contacts — comes from primary-source research: NCL's own published materials and press releases, Wikipedia for ship specs, the U.S. Embassy in Kingston for the Cayman consular agency, operator price pages, and the National Hurricane Center for the seasonal framing. If a number can't be sourced, it isn't asserted here.

Tina is both your booking agent and your on-ship host. Use tina@maulsbytravel.com or 910-528-5077 for booking questions, what's bundled with your group rate, and any pre-cruise logistics. Once aboard, she's the in-person organizer — sailaway gathering, group dinners, daily where-are-we-meeting rhythm.

It is calm by design. There is 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.

A note on timing: September 27 – October 4 is peak Atlantic hurricane season (Sep–Oct). The National Hurricane Center puts the statistical peak of the season at September 10, with most activity between mid-August and mid-October, so this week sits on the back half of the peak rather than at its top. Major lines including NCL

handle this with active fleet routing — ships are commonly rerouted around storms with 24–72 hours’ notice, and itineraries occasionally swap ports or skip a call entirely. The cruise itself remains safe; what changes is whether you make it to all four advertised ports in the original order. **Travel insurance is strongly recommended for this specific window.** See **Section 7** on weather and **Section 5** on insurance.

Includes an offline-capable Emergency Contacts section — a fillable family handoff card, cruise-line and consulate numbers tailored to this itinerary, available offline after first load via **In the Wake’s** PWA. Designed to share with one trusted person ashore before sailing.

If you’re sailing solo for the first time, you are not the only one in this group doing so. **Tina’s solo cruising stories** are worth reading whether before, during, or after this trip.

At a Glance

Ship	Norwegian Prima (lead ship of Prima Class; sister ships: Norwegian Viva 2023, Norwegian Aqua 2025 [Prima Plus], Norwegian Luna 2026 [Prima Plus])
Cruise line	Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL)
Class	Prima Class (the original 2022 design; Prima Plus is the larger 2025+ evolution)
Specifications	143,535 GT · 965 ft / 294 m (per NCL’s published spec) · 20 decks · 1,646 cabins · 3,195 guests double occupancy · 1,506 crew
Year built	2022 — delivered 29 July 2022 by Fincantieri at Marghera, Italy; Nassau, Bahamas registry
Maiden voyage	August 17, 2022 — inaugural sailing from Amsterdam (~10 nights; christened in Reykjavík ten days later, Aug 27)

Christening	August 27, 2022 in Reykjavík, Iceland — first major cruise ship christened in the Icelandic capital, with ~2,500 guests
Godmother	Katy Perry (pop singer; performed at the Reykjavík christening)
Departure port	Port Canaveral, Florida (NCL's regular Central Florida berth — verify your terminal in NCL app)
Itinerary	7 nights / 8 days · Western Caribbean round-trip
Audience	Solo travelers (hosted group)
Group host	Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co. — tina@maulsbytravel.com · 910-528-5077 (on-ship + booking)
Cabins in the group	Solo Studio and Balcony; ask Tina whether Interior or Ocean View are in the group block
Currency aboard	US Dollar

Ports of call

The four ports for the September 27 – October 4, 2026 sailing:

1. **Port Canaveral, Florida** — embark Sun Sept 27 · see </ports/port-canaveral.html>
2. **Great Stirrup Cay (NCL private island), Bahamas** — Mon Sept 28, about 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (the short first hop; verify in the NCL app)
3. **Cruising at sea** — Tue Sept 29
4. **Falmouth, Jamaica** — Wed Sept 30, about 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM
5. **Grand Cayman** — Thu Oct 1, about 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM (tender port)
6. **Cozumel, Mexico** — Fri Oct 2, about 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM
7. **Cruising at sea** — Sat Oct 3
8. **Port Canaveral, Florida** — disembark Sun Oct 4, alongside about 7:00 AM

Verify your specific day order and hours in the NCL app — the sequence above is NCL’s published one for this fall’s Western sailings (checked September 2026 against the port schedules at Great Stirrup Cay, Falmouth, George Town, and Cozumel), but hurricane-season reroutes are common in this window. The **Great Stirrup Cay port page** carries the island in more depth than this pack does.

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Section 1 — Your Ship: Norwegian Prima

The original Prima Class ship — now in her fifth year

Norwegian Prima was delivered August 2022 by Fincantieri at Marghera, Italy. She's the **lead ship of NCL's Prima Class** — the design that introduced the Indulge Food Hall, the Penrose Atrium, the three-deck go-kart Speedway, the Ocean Boulevard wraparound walkway, and the Vibe Beach Club adults-only enclave that have all become NCL signatures. By your September 2026 sailing she's just over four years old: well past any new-ship teething, her crew rhythms long settled.

Her **godmother is Katy Perry**, who performed at and christened the ship in **Reykjavík on August 27, 2022** — the first major cruise ship christening ever held in the Icelandic capital, attended by ~2,500 guests. (The maiden voyage itself had departed Amsterdam ten days earlier, on August 17, 2022.)

If you've sailed **Norwegian Aqua** (2025) or you're planning Norwegian Luna (2026), Prima is their **smaller, older sister**. Aqua and Luna are the larger Prima Plus class — roughly 10% bigger, with the Aqua Slidecoaster and a few other refinements. The core experience is the same: same Indulge concept, same Penrose Atrium, same Ocean Boulevard, same Vibe and Haven enclaves. The difference is scale, not design.

For broader context on where the major lines are pointing their newest Caribbean ships, **Caribbean Cruise Trends 2026** covers the deployment shifts. For a side-by-side feel of Prima against the other megaships you may have sailed (Symphony of the Seas, MSC World America, Carnival Mardi Gras), the **Ship Size Atlas** shows the actual relative scale.

What's distinctive about Prima



Norwegian Prima entering Kiel for the first time, September 2022 — the NCL letters on the funnel, the spiral structure on the port side (Aqua Park slides or Speedway curves), the signature swirling hull livery, and the bow nameplate. Photo by HenSti (CC BY-SA 4.0) via Wikimedia Commons.

A few signature features that mattered to her launch and still matter to your experience:

- **The Penrose Atrium** — a three-deck central social space anchored by a glass spiral staircase. The orienting landmark; the group-gathering venue; the place to be when you don't want to be in your cabin.
- **Indulge Food Hall** (Deck 8 aft) — 11 concepts under one roof: Tamara (Indian), The Gardens (salads + add-ons), Texas Q Steakhouse (BBQ), Seaside Rotisserie, The Latin Quarter (in an Airstream trailer), Coco's (desserts), Starbucks, and others. **Nearly all complimentary — Coco's and Starbucks are the paid exceptions.** The right call when you don't want to commit to a sit-down meal.
- **Ocean Boulevard** — the outdoor wraparound walkway on Deck 8 that puts you at sea-level rail along the ship's perimeter. Sunrise coffee, sailaway viewing, and the right place to watch a port approach.
- **The Rush** — two side-by-side dry racing slides ("dueling slides") that drop 10 stories. Race a friend to the bottom. Part of the three-deck Aqua Park on Deck 18. Free; the first hour after opening usually has the shortest line.

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- **The Drop** — the **world's first freefall dry slide at sea**, alongside The Rush. Open-air, gravity-only, adult-rated. The signature Prima attraction.
 - **Vibe Beach Club** — adults-only enclave with a private pool, two hot tubs, dedicated bar, and shaded loungers. NCL prices it per sailing in your myNCL account rather than publishing a rate; 2026 reports put a full-cruise pass on 7-night Caribbean sailings at roughly \$250 to 300, with day passes, when offered at all, near \$99. The right call if you're avoiding the family pool deck and the spend is workable.
 - **The Haven by Norwegian** — the ship-within-a-ship suite enclave with private restaurant, lounge, pool, and butler service.
 - **Prima Speedway** — the **world's first three-level go-kart track at sea**, spanning Deck 18–20. (NCL's Breakaway-Plus ships introduced go-karts at sea earlier — Norwegian Joy 2017 — but Prima's is the first three-level configuration.) Paid; verify pricing onboard, typically ~\$15/race.

What's NOT on Prima

Things you might expect from a 144K-ton ship that she doesn't have, or that Aqua/Luna do better:

- **No Aqua Slidecoaster** — the rollercoaster-style waterslide is a Prima Plus signature (Aqua, Luna), not Prima.
- **No named neighborhoods** — Prima is laid out as one conventional hull without the named districts that Symphony or World America use for wayfinding. The Penrose Atrium is the landmark instead.

Cabin categories — the solo calculus

The group is built around two cabin types: **Solo Studio** and **Balcony**. Two quick reads:

- **Solo Studio** — NCL's signature solo offering: roughly 100 sq ft, windowless, with **no single supplement** and **Studio Lounge access** (free coffee, social space, scheduled hosted hours for solo cruisers). The Studio Lounge is the daily social anchor; solos cluster there independent of group meetups. It's the obvious choice if space matters less to you than the social setup.

- **Balcony** — a real private outdoor space, which on a Caribbean cruise matters more than on Alaska: sea-day sunrises with coffee, port-day return-from-shore decompression, evenings on the balcony with a book. If you'll be in the cabin only to sleep, Studio wins. If you'd appreciate a private deck, Balcony changes the texture of the week.

Ask Tina about Interior and Ocean View if neither of those two fits; she knows what the group block holds.

Before you commit, run the stateroom sanity check — give it your ship and cabin number and it tells you whether that cabin sits in a known trouble spot: under the pool deck, over the theater, by the galley or the elevator bank, far forward, behind a lifeboat, or on a connecting door. On most Norwegian ships its cabin list is still partial, and it says so on the result. Studios suit confident sleepers. The check won't tell you whether a windowless room will bother you; it tells you where the cabin sits. Once chosen, the **cabin organization guide** covers small-space pragmatics (over-the-door organizers, magnetic hooks for the steel walls).

Dining

Prima's dining map:

Included with your fare (no extra charge):

- **Indulge Food Hall** (Deck 8) — 11 quick-casual concepts; the all-included variety play. Open long hours; quietest hour is just after main dining starts (around 7:00 PM).
- **The Local** — pub food + classics; long hours; a fallback for any time.
- **Surfside Café** (Deck 17) — buffet; the upper-deck breakfast view is underrated.
- **Hudson's** (Deck 7, aft) — the main dining room. Multi-course; longer than the buffet but no extra charge.
- **The Commodore Room** — the second main dining room.
- **Surfside Grill** beside the buffet on Deck 17 — quick service for daytime.

Specialty dining (extra charge or via Specialty Dining Package):

- **Cagney's Steakhouse** — NCL's standard steakhouse; reliably good.
- **Le Bistro** — French; the most romantic specialty room on NCL ships.

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- **Onda by Scarpetta** — modern Italian, Scott Conant partnership.
 - **Hasuki** — Japanese teppanyaki (the showy hibachi room).
 - **Palomar** — Mediterranean fusion.
 - **Los Lobos** — modern Mexican.

Drinks. NCL’s drink-package math: the Unlimited Open Bar package is bundled in “**Free at Sea**”, which NCL brought back for bookings made on or after November 5, 2025 (bookings made under the 2025 “More at Sea” program keep those terms). Under Free at Sea you pay a daily pre-paid service charge on the package rather than its list price; **verify with Tina what your group fare bundles and what that charge comes to**. Bought on board instead, NCL’s current published rate is \$45 per person per day plus 20% gratuity if you buy in the first two days, which breaks even at roughly five drinks a day. The **drink-calculator** opens on Norwegian, with a switch for Free at Sea, and lets you put in your real consumption pattern and see the breakeven. The companion article **Is the drink package worth it?** walks through the math with worked examples.

The Day 1 mistake to avoid: Don’t sign up for an unlimited drink package at the front desk on Day 1 unless you’ve already done the **drink-calculator** math. Decide before you board, ideally as part of your Free At Sea bundle. Mid-sail upgrades cost more per day and give you fewer days of usage.

Connectivity at sea

NCL’s Wi-Fi packages are tier-based (basic browsing / streaming / streaming + voice) and frequently bundled into Free at Sea. The **internet at sea guide** covers cross-line baselines and how to avoid cellular roaming charges in port.

For most solo cruisers in the group:

- Use included basic Wi-Fi if your fare bundles any
- Don’t try to stream video at sea
- Use port-day cellular when possible (Jamaica uses Digicel/Flow; Grand Cayman uses Flow/Digicel; Mexico uses Telcel/AT&T-Mexico; Great Stirrup Cay has no terrestrial carriers)
- Keep one trusted person ashore informed via a daily one-line message — see **Section 6**

Section 2 — Day by Day

The day-by-day below uses the typical NCL Prima Western Caribbean rhythm. **Verify your specific times in the NCL app** — the published sequence shifts between sailings, and hurricane-season reroutes are common in the late-September / early-October window.

***This is not your plan.** What follows is one possible shape of the week, not a schedule to keep. Only a few things on it are actually fixed: the muster drill, sailaway, the ship's arrival and all-aboard times in each port, and anything you have already booked. Everything else is a suggestion you are free to ignore, reorder, or sleep through. A day spent entirely on your balcony is not a day wasted, and nothing here is a commitment you have made to anyone.*

Day 1 — Sunday, September 27 — Port Canaveral (embarkation)

Terminal: Port Canaveral, Cruise Terminal 5 per the Port Authority's 2026 master cruise schedule (Prima alternates between Terminals 5 and 6 this fall, and the schedule puts your return on October 4 at Terminal 6). Confirm the terminal in the NCL app before you leave the hotel.

Getting to Port Canaveral:

- **Orlando International (MCO) → Port Canaveral:** Uber/Lyft \$60–80, 45–60 min. Shared cruise shuttle ~\$30/person, slower.
- **If driving:** Port Canaveral garage ~\$17–22/day (significantly cheaper than PortMiami at \$35/day); reservable in advance via the Port Canaveral website.
- **Embark window:** Typically 12:00 – 3:30 PM. **All-aboard 3:00 PM.** NCL's published itinerary for this fall's Western sailings shows a 4:00 PM departure; the Port Authority's master schedule lists 6:00 PM for this date. NCL's rule is that you must be aboard one hour before the departure time on your cruise documents, so plan to the app, not to either page.

Pre-cruise hotel — strongly recommended. Same-day flights to a 3:30 PM all-aboard are risky in central Florida — September afternoon thunderstorms can ground MCO arrivals with little notice. Two viable bases:

- **Cocoa Beach** (15 min from port) — beach town energy, walking distance to the pier and the beach. Hotels are simpler but the location is the right one if you want to be near the port.
- **Orlando** (45 min from port) — more hotel options, more variety, but a longer Sunday-morning transfer.

Saturday Sept 26 — fly in. Friday earlier if your flight is risky. Confirm Tina's pre-cruise meetup plans before booking your hotel.

The realistic Day 1 timeline:

- **11:00 AM:** Terminal opens for arrivals. NCL online check-in via the NCL app — complete it before arrival to skip a 20-minute queue.
- **12:00 PM:** Aboard. Cabins typically open by 1:30 PM; until then, lunch at the buffet (Surfside, Deck 17) or Indulge Food Hall (Deck 8).
- **1:30 PM:** Cabin open. Meet your stateroom steward; drop carry-ons.
- **3:00 PM:** Mandatory muster drill — NCL's drill is partly app-based (watch the safety video in the NCL app) plus an in-person check-in at your assigned station.
- **4:00 PM: Sailaway.** Tina's group gathers at the **Penrose Atrium** or **Ocean Boulevard Deck 8 aft** — verify in her communications. Port Canaveral departures pass close to the cargo and cruise terminal piers; the lighthouse and the early-evening Florida coastline are quietly beautiful.
- **5:30 – 8:00 PM:** Dinner. Tina's nightly group dinner is at **Hudson's at 5:30 PM** (her standard rhythm) — show up to whichever nights work for you. Or eat solo at Indulge.
- **Later evening:** NCL hosts a **Studio meet-and-greet** sometime on Day 1 in the **Studio Lounge** — check the NCL app's daily program for the exact time.

What to pack in your carry-on for Day 1: swimsuit (pools open before checked bags arrive), light layer (Florida September evenings can hit a humid 78°F outdoors but ship interior runs ~72°F), all medications, change of clothes, **passport** (preferred —

Jamaica + Cayman + Mexico are foreign ports and passport is the cleanest documentation), phone charger, refillable water bottle. Your checked bags may not arrive until 7–9 PM.

Money/card: Your NCL keycard is your ID, room key, and onboard charge account. You'll receive it at check-in. **Currency aboard: US Dollar.**

Day 2 — Monday, September 28 — Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas

Arrival: Approximately 8:00 AM. **Depart:** 5:00 PM. Prima docks at the **new \$150M pier**, so there's no tendering. Your sailing is one of the first to use the pier since its second berth opened, which lets two ships tie up at once. For your Monday call the cay's published schedule shows Prima alone. If a Bahamas storm threatens the cay, tendering can return as a contingency; the NCL app tells you the evening before.

Great Stirrup Cay in September 2026 — what's actually on the ground. NCL's 270-acre private island in the **Berry Islands of the Bahamas**, in NCL's hands since 1977 (leased at first, bought outright in 1986) — the oldest cruise-line private destination in the Caribbean, now in its biggest transformation under a ~\$150M plan. **Your sailing is one of the first to experience the headline new attraction, Great Tides Waterpark, since it opened.** It's a separately purchased pass. NCL takes pre-cruise bookings in myNCL up to two days before sailing, so for this sailing buy it at the **Shore Excursion Desk as soon as you board:** NCL says passes are limited onboard and not guaranteed, so they may sell out.

Great Tides Waterpark and the new Great Life Lagoon (per NCL's published materials):

- **Great Life Lagoon** — the new central pool area (NCL has described it both as a 1.4-acre area and as a 28,000-square-foot pool surface — the larger number is the whole zone with decking and surrounds; the smaller is the water). Beach-style entry, swim-up bars, ocean views. Free with cruise fare.
- **Tidal Tower** (paid) — racing slides, sea-themed.
- **Wandering River** (paid) — lazy river with surprise elements.
- **Cliffside Cove** (paid) — platform-jumping into clear pools. Height/swim ability requirements.
- **Splash Cay** (paid) — splash pad for younger kids.

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- **Grotto Bar** — cocktail bar inside the family-pad zone so adults can drink while kids play. Verify cost in the Norwegian Cruise Line app.
 - **Roughly 19 slides** across the park complex.

Waterpark access requires a pass bought in advance through your myNCL account or the Norwegian Cruise Line app. **Day-of walk-up may be limited on opening-window sailings — book early.**

Free with your cruise fare:

- **Beach access** — multiple beach zones; the main beach is the most developed.
- **Buffet lunch** — typically open 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM at the open-air pavilion.
- **Lounge chairs and umbrellas** — first-come; walk off early for the shaded ones.
- **Great Life Lagoon** (the new central pool with swim-up bars and beach-style entry).
- **Tram service** around the developed area; runs from the new Welcome Plaza arrival area.
- **Restrooms and shower facilities.**

Paid add-ons (decide ahead — reserve in the Norwegian Cruise Line app or myNCL):

- **Great Tides Waterpark** — see above; reservation-based pricing varies by date.
- **Flighthouse Zipline** — the existing ten-line zipline complex anchored by the “Flighthouse” tower take-off; ~\$20 for the multi-line option.
- **Underwater Snorkel Garden** — guided reef-snorkel at a curated underwater garden offshore.
- **Beachfront villa / cabana rentals** — premium beach spaces.
- **Snorkel-gear rental** at the watersports hut.
- **Kayak tours and waverunners** — small-group; ~\$50–80/person.
- **Jet-ski rentals** and various paid water-sports.
- **Silver Cove** — separate ultra-premium adults-only zone with private cove, lagoon villas, spa, and bar. Day passes available; full villas are the splurge option.

Arrival logistics. You’ll come ashore at the **Welcome Plaza** — NCL’s new arrival area at the pier that opened alongside the waterpark expansion in 2026. Tram service runs from Welcome Plaza along the spine of the cay to the beach zones and the waterpark.

For first-time Great Stirrup Cay: the beach + buffet day is the right default if you don't want to commit to a paid attraction. If the waterpark is open and the budget works, **Great Tides is the headline reason to be on this sailing** — it's NCL's most significant private-destination addition since 2017. The cay's history (NCL's lease from 1977, the 1863 Great Stirrup lighthouse) is more interesting than the beach if you're a history reader.

Hurricane-season note: September 28 falls in peak Atlantic hurricane season. Great Stirrup Cay is the call most commonly skipped or relocated if a storm is in the Bahamas chain. **Have a sea-day mental model as backup.**

Pack for Great Stirrup Cay: swimsuit (worn aboard or in your beach bag), reef-safe sunscreen (Bahamas appreciates it), sun hat, \$20–30 cash for tipping at the bars (gratuities bundled, but \$1–2 to a bartender who took care of you matters), refillable water bottle, water shoes (some beach areas are coral-fragment), waterproof phone pouch.

Day 3 — Tuesday, September 29 — Cruising at sea

The first full sea day, and the long leg: the ship runs south from the Bahamas toward Jamaica through the Windward Passage side of the Caribbean. The group has had one port day together; this is the day it settles.

Morning:

- **Ocean Boulevard Deck 8** for sunrise coffee, if you are an early riser.
- **Breakfast at Surfside Café** (Deck 17) — upper-deck windows, sea view. Or sit-down at Hudson's for a longer breakfast.
- **Studio Lounge** if you booked Studio — hosted coffee hour on the first sea-day morning, typically.

Mid-morning to lunch — pick ONE:

- **The Rush** dry racing slides — first hour after they open (typically 10 AM) has the shortest line.
- **Mandara Spa thermal-suite day pass** — sea-day mornings are when introductory rates appear. ~90 minutes is the right dose.
- **Port talk for Falmouth** — NCL schedules a briefing on tomorrow's port. Worth attending if this is your first time in Jamaica.

Afternoon:

- **Pool deck or Vibe Beach Club** — if you bought the Vibe day pass, this is the day to use it. The adults-only enclave is quieter than the main pool deck.
- **Trivia, live music, activities** — check the daily program in the NCL app.
- **Specialty dining reservations** — if you didn't book online pre-cruise, walk up to a host stand mid-afternoon to see what's open. The 7:30–8:30 PM slots fill first.

Evening:

- **5:30 PM Hudson's** — Tina's standard nightly group dinner.
- **Theater:** the Prima Theater & Club (forward, Decks 6 to 8) runs production shows most nights; the daily program lists them.
- **Syd Norman's Pour House** — the live classic-rock bar; Prima carries Syd's rather than the Cavern Club found on the older ships.

Day 4 — Wednesday, September 30 — Falmouth, Jamaica

Falmouth, Jamaica — the Georgian-era Historic Town and the Royal Caribbean / NCL cruise port

Arrival: Approximately 7:00 AM. **Depart:** 4:00 PM (NCL asks you aboard an hour before). Prima docks at the **Historic Falmouth Cruise Port** — the modern cruise terminal complex Royal Caribbean built in 2011 that NCL also uses. The terminal is fully developed with shops, restaurants, and excursion meeting points; the Historic Town of Falmouth (Georgian architecture, walking distance) is the second-layer experience.

Falmouth — the Georgian-era town the cruise port restored. Founded in 1769 as a sugar-trade hub, Falmouth has one of the best-preserved collections of Georgian architecture in the Caribbean. The town has been actively restoring its historic core since the cruise port opened. **Outside the cruise-port complex**, you'll see a working Jamaican town — neither cruise-port-polished nor “dangerous”; just a real place. The cruise port itself is highly developed.

Free, walkable from the cruise port:

- The **cruise port complex** — shops, restaurants, beach access at Pier 1.
- **Historic Falmouth walking tour** — self-guided through the Georgian core; the Court House, the Parish Church, the William Knibb Memorial Church (significant in Jamaica's emancipation history). Free if self-guided; guided tours \$10–20 from the port.

Paid (decide ahead):

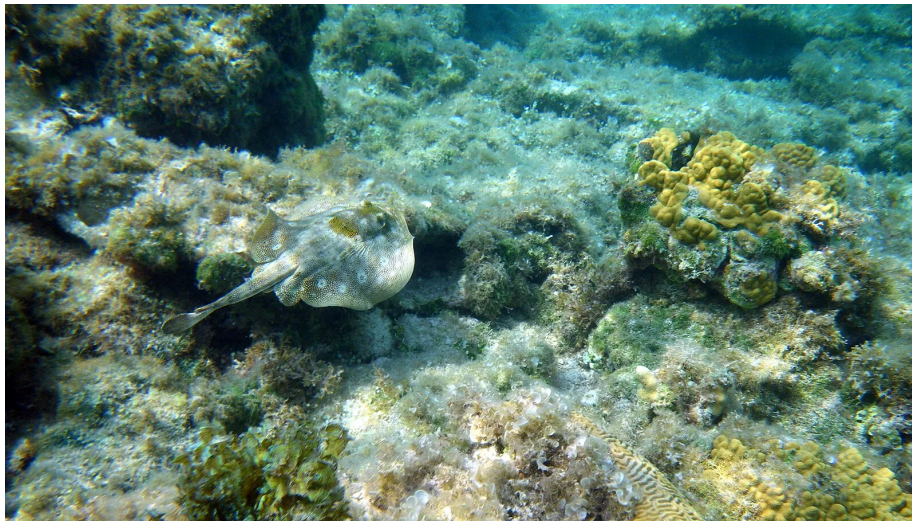
- **Dunn's River Falls** (about an hour's drive each way on the North Coast Highway, roughly 42 miles) — Jamaica's most famous attraction. Falmouth adds most of an hour over an Ocho Rios departure; with a 4:00 PM sail it is still a workable day, but not a lingering one. Ship excursion \$80–110; independent \$40–60.
- **Mystic Mountain bobsled + skyride** (Ocho Rios; ~\$120 ship) — high-energy day-tour. Similar length issue from Falmouth.
- **Luminous Lagoon** — bioluminescent water tour (evening); not feasible from a daytime Falmouth call, but ask if NCL offers a private extension.
- **Glistening Waters** — daytime alternative; calmer.
- **Falmouth highlights + Greenwood Great House** — historic plantation tour, ~\$60–80; closer to Falmouth and the cultural-history alternative to Dunn's.
- **Bamboo Beach Club** — beach day with all-inclusive drinks/food, ~\$95; the lower-stress option.

For first-time Falmouth: if you've been to Jamaica before and seen Dunn's, the Greenwood Great House + Historic Falmouth walk is the more interesting day. If this is your first time in Jamaica, the lure of Dunn's River is real but two hours of the day go to the road — consider whether you'd rather a closer, calmer day at a beach club.

Pack for Jamaica: swimsuit (if doing a beach excursion), water shoes (Dunn's requires them; many beaches benefit), sunscreen, sun hat, light cover-up, \$40–60 USD cash in small bills (USD widely accepted; Jamaican dollar not necessary), a small day-pack you don't mind getting wet, your phone in a waterproof pouch.

Worth a look on the way in: the **Falmouth port page**. Build your day in the **Port Day Planner** before you go ashore; record what actually happened in the **Port Logbook** on the way back.

Day 5 — Thursday, October 1 — Grand Cayman



George Town, Grand Cayman — the cruise tender port and the Seven Mile Beach beyond

Arrival: Approximately 7:00 AM. **Depart:** 3:30 PM (aboard by 2:30 PM). **Tender port** — Grand Cayman has no cruise pier; ships anchor offshore and tenders run to George Town. Plan for a 20–30 minute end-to-end tender process at peak. **Earlier tenders are faster.**

Grand Cayman — the most expensive port of the week, and the one with the strongest currency. A British Overseas Territory; the 2021 census counted about 71,000 people across the Cayman Islands, nearly all of them on Grand Cayman. The

Caymans use the **Cayman Islands dollar (KYD)**, pegged at **1 KYD = 1.20 USD** since 1974 — meaning the Cayman dollar is *stronger* than the U.S. dollar. USD is universally accepted, but most businesses give change in KYD at a practical rate of \$1 USD ≈ \$0.80 KYD; if you pay in USD and the bill is \$20 KYD, you'll hand over \$24 USD. George Town (the capital) is the cruise hub; **Seven Mile Beach** is the postcard stretch of west-coast white sand running north from George Town. The day-tour pricing reflects the territory's standard of living.

Free, walkable from George Town:

- **George Town walking** — the duty-free shopping district at the cruise tender drop, the Cayman Islands National Museum (\$10), and the small downtown waterfront.
- **Pirates Week souvenir shops** — touristy but easy.

Paid (decide ahead):

- **Stingray City Sandbar** — the iconic Grand Cayman experience. A sandbar in the North Sound where you stand in waist-deep clear water surrounded by tame Southern stingrays. Independent operators run tours from the Cayman Islands Yacht Club for ~\$60/person; ship excursions \$80–130. 2–3 hours total.
- **Seven Mile Beach** — ~\$5 #1 bus from George Town to multiple stops along the beach, or \$20 taxi each way. Free entry (it's a public beach); chairs at any beach club \$10–20. The lower-effort half-day.
- **Cayman Turtle Centre** — formerly a turtle farm, now a conservation + interaction park; ~\$45 entry; full-day with shuttle.
- **Bioluminescent kayak tour** (evening) — not feasible from a daytime call.

For first-time Grand Cayman: Stingray City is the trip-defining experience. If you've done it before, Seven Mile Beach (cheap via bus or taxi) is the easy default. The Cayman Islands National Museum is a quiet half-hour if it rains.

Pack for Grand Cayman: swimsuit, water shoes (Stingray City sandbar is wading-friendly but the surrounding reef has coral), reef-safe sunscreen (Cayman reef is protected), sun hat, \$60–80 USD cash, underwater camera if you have one.

Worth a look: the **Grand Cayman port page**, its **photo gallery**, and the **Grand Cayman logbook**.

Day 6 — Friday, October 2 — Cozumel, Mexico



Cozumel's coastal road and the reef offshore — the Western Caribbean's signature snorkel destination

Arrival: Approximately 9:30 AM. **Depart:** 5:30 PM (aboard by 4:30 PM); this is not one of Cozumel's late-departure calls. NCL most often uses **Punta Langosta** (downtown), with the **International Pier** on busy days; the pier is confirmed in the NCL app the evening before. Cozumel is the most heavily visited Caribbean port; expect 3–5 ships in port the same day during peak season.

Cozumel — the underwater destination of the Western Caribbean. The reef system off Cozumel — protected within Cozumel Reefs National Park since 1996 — delivers visibility consistently among the best in the Caribbean. If anyone in your group has ever wanted to try snorkeling, **this is the day to do it.** Above water, Cozumel feels touristed in a familiar way — it's been a cruise stop for 50 years and the routine is well-established.

Easy-day option (no excursion):

- Stay near your pier. **Punta Langosta** puts you directly in downtown San Miguel — walk around, find a real Mexican lunch (\$15–25/person at a non-tourist restaurant), shop at **Mercado Municipal** (the local market, NOT the tourist shops near the pier — locals shop there too). International and Puerta Maya piers are 5–10 minutes from downtown by taxi (~\$10).

Half-day options:

- **Chankanaab Beach Adventure Park** (~\$50/person entry, ~15 min by taxi). Calm water, snorkel rentals, dolphin program (paid extra), lounge and umbrella. Family-friendly; calmest reef snorkeling.
- **Paradise Beach** (~\$3 entry with food/drink minimum, ~15 min by taxi). Lower-key alternative with a real “Mexican beach club” feel.

Full-day options:

- **Palancar Reef snorkel tour** — *the iconic Cozumel experience*. Multiple operators on the pier offer this for \$40–60/person (ship excursion: \$80–110). Two-hour tour, calm water, abundant fish life. **Calm, clear water makes it a good first snorkel, even if you’ve never tried it.** Bring an underwater camera.
- **Tulum ruins** (3-hour ferry + bus, \$90–150 ship excursion or ~\$80 independent). Long day. October afternoons can hit 90°F + humidity; heat-sensitive travelers should consider timing carefully.

A note on shopping: Cozumel’s pier shops sell the same Mexican blanket, the same silver jewelry, and the same vanilla extract you can buy at any Caribbean cruise port. The interesting shopping is at **Mercado Municipal** in San Miguel (15-min walk from Punta Langosta) — vanilla, ceramics, leather, food vendors at local-shopper prices.

For first-time Cozumel: Palancar Reef snorkel tour. Even if you’ve never snorkeled, this is the day for it. Bring underwater camera if you can — the **cruise-tech and photography guide** covers waterproof cases, GoPro mounts, and the right cables for charging at sea if you want to think it through before packing. If snorkeling isn’t possible, Chankanaab is the easiest beach day with reef access.

For wheelchair users and limited mobility: Cozumel’s piers are accessible. Punta Langosta connects directly to a paved boardwalk into San Miguel. Many beach clubs have beach wheelchairs; ask in advance. Snorkel *boats* are typically NOT accessible — book a beach-snorkel tour instead.

Pack for Cozumel: swimsuit, reef-safe sunscreen (locally enforced), water shoes, sun hat, \$60–80 USD cash for tour and lunch, small underwater camera if you have one.

Worth a look: the **Cozumel port page**, its **gallery**, and the **Cozumel logbook**.

Friday evening: Back aboard by 4:30 PM, so the day ends early enough for a shower before Hudson’s at 5:30. Tomorrow is a sea day; tonight is not the last gathering.

Day 7 — Saturday, October 3 — Cruising at sea

Second sea day, and the last full day: the run north from Cozumel through the Yucatán Channel and across the Gulf Stream to Florida. By now the group has formed; the rhythm is familiar.

Morning ideas:

- **Sunrise coffee on Ocean Boulevard** — by the second sea day you've found your spot.
- **Studio Lounge** if you're in a Studio.
- **Mandara Spa thermal suite** if you didn't book Day 3.
- **The Drop** freefall dry slide and **The Rush** dry racing slides — if Day 3 was too crowded, the second sea day has settled.

Afternoon:

- **Pool deck** — quietest hours 2–4 PM after the lunch peak.
- **Galaxy Pavilion** — NCL's VR/games arcade; paid, but the second sea day is a good day for that kind of indoor diversion if weather is dicey.
- **Trivia, lectures, the debark briefing** — check the program; bags go out tonight.

Evening:

- **5:30 PM Hudson's** — Tina's group dinner.
- **Specialty dining:** the last night is a natural one for a specialty room if you booked a package, and Tina's Hudson's table is the traditional last-night gathering. Onda by Scarpetta lunch service is also quieter than dinner if you missed lunch reservations.

Day 8 — Sunday, October 4 — Port Canaveral (debarkation)

The realistic timeline:

- **6:00 – 8:00 AM:** Breakfast at Indulge Food Hall or Surfside Café. Eat now if your bag is in the hall already.
- **7:00 AM:** Ship alongside at Cruise Terminal 6, per the Port Authority schedule. Self-disembarkation begins once the ship is cleared, usually within the hour.

-
- **7:30 – 9:30 AM:** Walk-off in waves. **All passengers off the ship by 10:00 AM** per NCL standard.

The bag situation. The night before, NCL asks you to place your checked luggage outside your cabin door by ~11 PM with the color-coded tag indicating your debark group. Bags are taken to the terminal overnight and you collect them in baggage claim before customs.

Carry-on with you on debark morning: a change of clothes, all medications, passport, phone charger, valuables.

Getting from Port Canaveral to MCO:

- **Uber/Lyft:** \$60–80, 45–60 minutes.
- **Cocoa Beach Shuttle** (\$30/person, advance booking) — formal port-to-airport option; slower than Uber.
- **Public transit:** Not realistic for cruise return.

Killing 4–6 hours before an evening flight:

- **Cocoa Beach pier** — 15-min Uber. Beach walk + casual lunch.
- **Kennedy Space Center** — 20-min Uber, \$77 adult entry in 2026. Half-day minimum if you want to do it properly.
- **Cocoa Village** — historic small-town main street; lunch + shops.

Airport-arrival timing for MCO (45+ minutes away):

Flight	Leave Port Canaveral by
Domestic, after 4 PM	12:30 PM
International, after 6 PM	2:00 PM

Section 3 — Pre-Cruise Countdown

This countdown reads from booking forward. If you're reading it the day before you sail, the last two blocks are the ones that still matter; everything above them is either done or no longer changeable.

6+ months before — booking and big decisions

- **Confirm the booking with Tina.** Cabin category, final price, what's included (Free at Sea — drinks tier, Wi-Fi minutes, specialty dining credits, shore-excursion credits, gratuities).
- **Buy travel insurance. Strongly recommended for this sailing because of peak Atlantic hurricane season.** September–October is the highest-risk Caribbean weather window of the year. Specialist providers (Allianz, Travelex, Travel Guard) are usually better than your home/auto insurer's add-on. Get a policy with hurricane coverage specifically.
- **Plan flights to Orlando MCO.** Cocoa Beach hotel option is also viable for closer-to-port. Arrive at minimum the day before sailing (Saturday Sept 26, 2026).

4 months before — soft logistics

- **NCL online check-in** in the NCL app. Complete the health questionnaire close to sailing.
- **Specialty dining reservations.** NCL opens specialty dining ~3–4 months pre-cruise. **Onda by Scarpetta and Le Bistro fill first.** If you only want one specialty meal, book either of those for the first sea day (Day 3, Tuesday) or the closing one (Day 7, Saturday).
- **Excursion bookings.** Ship-sold excursions bookable in the NCL app. Independent operators in Falmouth and Cozumel typically have email-only booking 60–90 days out.

2 months before — final commitments

- **Pre-pay gratuities** if not already in your group rate (~\$20/day per person at most cabins; \$25/day Suites/Haven; verify with Tina).
- **Drink package upgrades** if Free at Sea didn't include the tier you want.
- **Confirm pre-cruise hotel.**
- **Begin packing list.** Reference **Section 4.**

1 month before — final prep window

- **Photocopy your passport** — keep in your cabin nightstand separate from the passport itself.
- **Print the emergency handoff card** and share with one trusted person ashore.
- **Confirm Tina's group rhythm** — when's the sailaway gathering, what's the Day 1 dinner plan.

14 days before — soft logistics

- **NCL online check-in** opens 21 days out and closes 3 days before sailing — complete it early in the window.
- **Print boarding documents** (or save offline in NCL app).
- **Begin physical packing.**

Day before — Central Florida arrival

- **Fly into MCO Saturday Sept 26.**
 - **Check into hotel** (Cocoa Beach or Orlando).
 - **Confirm Sunday-morning porter/Uber timing.**
-

Section 4 — Packing List (calibrated for late-Sept/early-Oct Caribbean)

This list is tuned for: **late-September / early-October Western Caribbean** — 84–90°F daytime, 75–82°F evenings, high humidity (75–85%), brief afternoon thunderstorms common, water temperature 84°F. **Peak Atlantic hurricane season** — rain gear and waterproof pouches earn their place. **Four port days** mostly walking and beach. **Two sea days. One private-island beach day** (Great Stirrup Cay). **NCL's smart-casual evening dress culture** (no formal nights; one optional “Norwegian's Night Out” is slightly dressier but jacket not required).

Documents and money

- **Passport** (strongly preferred for this itinerary)
- Photocopy of passport (separate location)
- Travel insurance policy + emergency phone number (printed)
- Credit card + debit card (separate locations)
- **\$200–300 USD cash** in small bills (\$1s, \$5s, \$10s) for tips, taxis, small purchases ashore
- NCL boarding documents (printed + saved offline in NCL app)
- Group itinerary from Tina

Carry-on (must arrive on the ship with you)

- All medications in original prescription bottles
- Phone + charger + power bank
- Refillable water bottle
- Light layer (Florida September evenings can be 78°F outside but ship runs 70°F)
- Swimsuit (pools open before checked bags arrive)
- Change of clothes (in case checked bag is delayed)
- Sunglasses, sun hat, reef-safe sunscreen (locally enforced in Cozumel and Cayman)

-
- Reading material (sea-day reading)
 - Rain jacket / poncho — September afternoons in Florida and the Caribbean carry brief but heavy thunderstorms

Daytime — port and ship

- **5–6 swimsuits** (you'll be in water 5 of 7 days; rotating swimsuits is a quality-of-life upgrade)
- **2 swim cover-ups**
- **3–4 quick-dry t-shirts or tank tops**
- **2 pairs lightweight shorts**
- **1–2 pairs lightweight pants** (mosquito protection, evening dining)
- **1 lightweight long-sleeve shirt** (sun protection if you burn easily; UV is intense in late September)
- **1 light cardigan or wrap** (for ship AC indoors; evenings on deck)
- **Insect repellent** (DEET 25%+ or picaridin) — particularly for Falmouth and Cozumel inland excursions

Evening — ship dining

- **4–5 smart-casual outfits** — sundresses, lightweight pants + nicer top, dress slacks + button-down. NCL's evening dress code is American smart casual.
- **1 dressier outfit** for “Norwegian's Night Out” or specialty dining nights — cocktail dress, dressy jumpsuit, blazer + slacks
- **Comfortable dress shoes** for long carpeted corridors

Footwear

- **Comfortable walking shoes** (sneakers or sandals) — for ship corridors and dry port days
- **Water shoes** — Cozumel reef snorkeling, Falmouth excursions, Great Stirrup Cay beach
- **Flip-flops** (pool deck and cabin)
- **Dress shoes** — one pair for the week's evenings

Toiletries

- All prescription medications (carried in original bottles, in your carry-on)
- Over-the-counter standbys: Tylenol, Advil, Imodium, Benadryl, Dramamine or Bonine
- Reef-safe sunscreen (SPF 30+ minimum, SPF 50 if you burn easily; **reef-safe enforced in Cozumel and Cayman**)
- After-sun aloe gel
- Insect repellent (DEET 25%+ or picaridin)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, basic toiletries
- Hair care for humidity (anti-frizz product or hair tie/clip)
- Lip balm with SPF

Accessories and essentials

- Polarized sunglasses
- Sun hat with brim
- Small daypack for port days
- **Waterproof phone case** — Caribbean rain showers + snorkel days
- **Dry bag** (small, ~5L) — for excursions where you don't want to leave a wet bag on the beach
- Power adapter — NCL cabins have US outlets; basic US plugs work fine
- E-reader or one book
- Pen + small notebook if you keep a logbook

Skip — what NOT to bring

- **Iron or steamer** — prohibited in cabins; ships provide ironing facilities
- **Candles** — prohibited (fire hazard)
- **Heavy jewelry** — leave high-value pieces home
- **Cash-heavy wallet beyond what's listed** — most spending goes on your NCL card

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- **Beach umbrella or pop-up shade** — Great Stirrup provides umbrellas; ship pool deck has shade
-

Section 5 — Budget Breakdown

The numbers below are calibrated for this specific sailing and were verified against NCL's published rates in September 2026; gratuity and package rates change once or twice a year, so reconfirm them at booking. For a budget tuned to your own cabin choice, drinking habits, excursion appetite, and tipping pattern, the **cruise-budget-calculator** builds a personalized total — usually within 5% of what you'll actually spend if you input accurately.

What's included in your fare

The group rate covers:

- Your cabin (the category you booked through Tina)
- All meals at Hudson's, The Commodore Room, Indulge Food Hall, Surfside Café, Surfside Grill, The Local
- Soft drinks, juice, coffee, tea at most venues
- Onboard entertainment in the Prima Theater & Club, Syd Norman's Pour House, and the Penrose Atrium
- Pools, fitness center, The Rush + The Drop slides
- Tendering (Grand Cayman; Great Stirrup Cay only if weather closes the pier)
- Cabin steward and dining-room service
- **If your group rate has Free at Sea attached:** likely includes Premium Beverage Package, Wi-Fi minutes, specialty dining credits (typically 2–4 meals), and shore-excursion credit. **Verify with Tina.**

What's NOT included

Category	Typical cost (per person, week)
Drinks package (if not in Free at Sea)	~\$380 bought on board in the first two days (\$45/day × 7 + 20% gratuity, NCL's current published rate)
Wi-Fi package (if not in Free at Sea)	\$120–280 — varies by tier
Auto-gratuity (if not pre-paid)	\$140 — \$20/day × 7; \$25/day in Suites/Haven
Specialty dining (beyond Free at Sea credits)	\$0–250 — Cagney's ~\$55, Le Bistro ~\$50, Onda ~\$60 per meal
Shore excursions — Great Stirrup Cay	\$0–250 — beach free; cabana \$250–400; jet ski ~\$95
Shore excursions — Falmouth	\$0–150 — Greenwood Great House \$60–80; Dunn's River \$80–110
Shore excursions — Grand Cayman	\$0–130 — Stingray City \$60 indep / \$90 ship; 7-Mile Beach taxi ~\$20
Shore excursions — Cozumel	\$0–110 — Palancar snorkel ~\$50 indep / ~\$95 ship; Tulum ~\$120
Vibe Beach Club full-cruise pass	~\$250–300 for a 7-night (per-sailing pricing in myNCL; day passes ~\$99 when offered)
Spa treatments	\$0–500 — massages \$130–200; thermal-suite day pass \$40
Photos	\$0–250 — Photo Package ~\$200
Speedway / Galaxy Pavilion	\$0–60 — paid per use
Travel insurance (hurricane-season; strongly recommended)	\$80–200 per person

A realistic mid-range solo budget (per person, on top of cruise fare)

Item	Cost
Auto-gratuity (\$20 × 7)	\$140
Wi-Fi (if not bundled)	\$120

Item	Cost
Drinks (if not bundled — moderate drinker)	\$400
Specialty dining (1 meal beyond Free at Sea credits)	\$55
Great Stirrup Cay extras	\$40
Falmouth: lunch + Greenwood Great House	\$90
Grand Cayman: Stingray City + lunch	\$80
Cozumel: Palancar snorkel + lunch	\$80
Travel insurance	\$100
Pre-cruise hotel (Cocoa Beach or Orlando)	\$150
Airport transfers MCO ↔ port	\$140
Total above fare	~\$1,395

Frugal version (Free at Sea bundles drinks + Wi-Fi, no specialty dining, beach-day choices everywhere): **~\$550 above fare.**

Splurge version (Haven cabin, Vibe week pass, helicopter from Falmouth or Tulum private tour): **\$2,500–4,000 above fare.**

Section 6 — Emergency Contacts

Every Voyage Pack ships with this section. Fill in the handoff card and share with one trusted person ashore.

The family handoff card

FAMILY HANDOFF – IN THE WAKE VOYAGE PACK

CRUISER: _____
 CABIN: _____
 SHIP: Norwegian Prima
 LINE: Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL)
 SAILING: September 27 – October 4, 2026
 FROM: Port Canaveral, Florida, USA
 ITINERARY: Port Canaveral → Great Stirrup Cay →
 Falmouth (Jamaica) → Grand Cayman →
 Cozumel (Mexico) → Port Canaveral
 GROUP HOST: Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co.
 tina@maulsbytravel.com · 910-528-5077

EMERGENCY (24/7) – US State Dept, Overseas
 Citizens Services (can locate the ship and
 contact NCL through official channels):
 +1 (888) 407-4747 (US/Canada)
 +1 (202) 501-4444 (from abroad)

SHIP-TO-SHORE (non-emergency messages only):
 NCL ship-phone line: +1 (833) 810-7963 (US/Canada)
 +1 (321) 953-9006 (international)
 (charged to a credit card; NCL does not
 publish the rate)

NEAREST EMBASSY/CONSULATE BY PORT:
 Port Canaveral, FL – US domestic; call 911
 Great Stirrup Cay – NCL private cay; ship's medical
 and security on-island
 Falmouth, Jamaica – US Embassy Kingston:
 +1 (876) 702-6000
 Grand Cayman – US Consular Agency, George Town:
 +1 (345) 747-8172
 (Mon-Fri from 8 AM; call first)
 After hours: US Embassy
 Kingston +1 (876) 702-6000
 Cozumel, Mexico – US Consulate Mérida
 (US Citizen Services for the
 Yucatán / Quintana Roo):
 +1 (844) 528-6611 (from US)
 or 999 689-0660 (local)

CRUISER MEDICAL:
 Allergies: _____
 Medications: _____
 Conditions: _____

Insurance: _____ policy: _____

MOST RECENT KNOWN POSITION:

Track at: </tools/ship-tracker.html>
or marinetraffic.com (search "Norwegian Prima")

What an at-home contact does

If they don't hear from you for 36+ hours:

1. **Don't panic.** Cruise Wi-Fi is unreliable; silence usually means no internet connection (no cell data or Wi-Fi), not an emergency.
2. **For a true emergency, call the State Department's Overseas Citizens Services line** (above) — they can locate the ship and contact NCL through official channels at no cost. For a non-urgent message, NCL's paid ship-phone line (above) connects to the ship's onboard phone system; NCL's FAQ lists it as the fallback when a guest can't be reached over Wi-Fi.
3. **Reach Tina** at tina@maulsbytravel.com or 910-528-5077 — she's both your booking agent AND your on-ship host.
4. **If there's been an incident:** US Coast Guard for US waters; US Consular Agency George Town for Grand Cayman (US Embassy Kingston after hours); US Embassy Kingston for Jamaica; US Consulate Mérida for Mexico; ship's medical for health emergencies.
5. **Track the ship's position** at </tools/ship-tracker.html>.

What you should pack for emergencies

- Printed list of medications, allergies, and emergency contacts (in your cabin nightstand)
- Photocopy of passport (separate from the passport)
- Travel insurance policy number (printed)
- This handoff card, in your phone's notes app and shared with one trusted person ashore

Section 7 — Seasickness + Hurricane Season

This is the section to read most carefully — September 27 – October 4 is **peak Atlantic hurricane season**.

The reality of hurricane risk

Statistically, the season peaks on September 10 (per the National Hurricane Center's climatology), and most activity falls between mid-August and mid-October, so this sailing is inside the busy stretch, past the peak but not clear of it. The Gulf of Mexico, Western Caribbean, and Bahamas all sit in the typical track. **What this means in practice:**

- **Itinerary changes are common.** NCL routinely reroutes ships around active storms 24–72 hours in advance. Ports may swap order or get skipped entirely. Great Stirrup Cay is the most commonly relocated port if a storm threatens the Bahamas.
- **Cruise cancellation is rare.** Ships are designed to outrun storms; full cancellation typically only happens for catastrophic weather (Cat 3+ near departure port).
- **Travel insurance with hurricane coverage** is the right shape of coverage here. A policy that pays for trip-interruption or cancellation if a Cat 3+ hurricane affects your sailing window is the right shape of coverage.
- **The ship is safer than your hotel.** Ships outrun storms; if a hurricane forms while you're already sailing, NCL routes around it. You're more likely to lose ports than to lose safety.

What you can control

- Buy travel insurance with hurricane coverage at booking, not last-minute.
- Be flexible about the itinerary order — assume it might shift.
- Bring rain gear, waterproof pouches, and dry bags for daytime showers (which are also routine in the Caribbean late summer).
- Watch the National Hurricane Center (nhc.noaa.gov) starting 7–10 days before sailing.

Where the tropics stood at this pack's last review (NHC outlook issued 8 AM EDT Saturday, September 26, 2026): Tropical Storm Gonzalo near the Cabo Verde Islands and Tropical Depression Fay west-southwest of the Azores, both thousands of miles from this route; no tropical cyclone formation expected in the Atlantic for the next seven days. Closer in, NHC's Saturday discussion has a cold front from the north-central Bahamas to Cuba and a deepening low off the mid-Atlantic coast sending large swell toward Florida, with rough seas starting to subside through Sunday morning. That points to a lively first night out, not a storm; if you're prone to seasickness, have your remedy packed where you can reach it on Sunday (see below). That is a snapshot, not a forecast for your week. Read the current outlook at nhc.noaa.gov the morning you board.

Seasickness onboard

Late-September Caribbean is generally calm — the Gulf Stream and Yucatán Channel can chop briefly but rarely produce serious motion. The biggest motion exposure is the Day 3 run south to Jamaica and the Day 7 return north through the Yucatán Channel and across the Gulf Stream. Both are usually mild.

If you're prone to motion sickness:

- **Bonine (meclizine)** — once-daily, less drowsy than Dramamine.
- **Sea-bands (acupressure wristbands)** — placebo or not, many find them effective.
- **Ginger** (capsules, tea, candies) — mild but real anti-nausea effect.
- **Scopolamine patches** (prescription, behind-the-ear) — strongest option; 3-day duration.
- **Stay mid-ship and low** in your cabin choice. Mid-ship Deck 9–12 has the least felt motion.

If a hurricane causes choppy water during transit, NCL's typical move is to slow down and reposition rather than push through. You may notice an itinerary change before you notice the ride change.

If a hurricane changes your week — the solo + hosted-group playbook

The most likely hurricane impact on this sailing isn't to the ship; it's to your shore plans. Here's what to know before you sail:

- **What NCL refunds vs. what travel insurance covers.** If NCL skips a port entirely, the cruise line typically refunds prepaid *ship-sold* shore excursions for that port to your onboard account within a day or two. Excursions booked direct with independent operators are between you and the operator — refund terms vary by operator and *not all are refundable for weather*. This is what your travel insurance's trip-interruption / shore-excursion-coverage rider is for. Take screenshots of every independent booking confirmation before you sail and keep them where you can reach them on the ship.
 - **How Tina will signal a reroute.** Her standing 5:30 PM Hudson's dinner is the predictable in-person channel; expect her to use it for live updates if a storm is in play. Email and phone-text reach her ashore; once you're sailing, the NCL app's onboard messaging is the more reliable in-cabin path. **If her communication goes quiet for more than 24 hours during a weather situation, the bridge is your fallback** — the Captain's daily address and the Freestyle Daily printed program both carry the same official itinerary changes Tina will be relaying.
 - **Don't make irrevocable decisions in port on bad weather days.** If the ship's posted departure pushes early because of an approaching storm, the all-aboard time shortens. The standard rule (be back 30 minutes before all-aboard) gets tighter on storm days. Independent operators sometimes try to keep groups longer to finish the tour even when conditions are deteriorating — politely insist on the early return.
 - **Where your insurance documents live matters.** Keep policy number, the 24-hour assistance line, and a one-page summary in your wallet, separately from your passport. If you're separated from luggage in a reroute scenario, you want the policy reachable without your bag.
-

Section 8 — Practical Logistics

Cell service and roaming

- **At sea** — ship Wi-Fi only; turn airplane mode ON. Cellular at sea via the ship's onboard cell tower roams at \$5–10/minute and 50¢/text.
- **Great Stirrup Cay** — no terrestrial cellular.
- **Falmouth, Jamaica** — Digicel and Flow are the carriers. US T-Mobile customers may have included roaming; verify with your carrier. Day passes ~\$10/day on AT&T/Verizon US.
- **Grand Cayman** — Flow and Digicel; same roaming math.
- **Cozumel** — Telcel and AT&T Mexico. US T-Mobile has included roaming in Mexico; Verizon and AT&T-US have day-pass rates ~\$10/day.

Currency

- **Aboard:** US Dollar.
- **Great Stirrup Cay:** NCL keycard only; cash not needed.
- **Falmouth, Jamaica:** USD widely accepted; Jamaican dollar (JMD) not necessary. Small bills are best.
- **Grand Cayman:** Cayman Islands dollar (KYD) is local and **stronger** than USD (pegged at 1 KYD = 1.20 USD since 1974). USD universally accepted; change usually comes back in KYD at a practical \$1 USD ≈ \$0.80 KYD. Credit cards everywhere.
- **Cozumel, Mexico:** USD widely accepted at tourist-facing businesses; Mexican peso (MXN) gets better prices off-tourist-track. Credit cards at sit-downs. ATMs at the pier (~\$3 fee).

Tipping ashore

- **Falmouth:** Taxi drivers, tour guides — 10–15% on bills, \$2/person on guided tours.

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- **Grand Cayman:** Taxi drivers, tour guides — 15% standard; \$5/person tip on Stingray City for the guide who takes your photo.
 - **Cozumel:** Mexican tipping practice is 10–15% on restaurant bills, 10–20 pesos for taxi drivers, \$5–10/person for half-day tours.
 - **Great Stirrup Cay:** Bartender tips appreciated, \$1–2 per drink (gratuities bundled).

Onboard tipping

NCL's auto-gratuuity runs \$20/day per person at most cabins; \$25/day in Suites/Haven.

Verify with Tina whether your group rate has it pre-paid. Additional cash tips for outstanding service are appreciated:

- Stateroom attendant: \$20–40 cash end of cruise
- Specialty dining waiter: ~10–15% of menu price if outstanding
- Bartender who remembers your name: \$1–2 per drink in cash

The **cruise-tipping-calculator** covers the total auto-grats + cash extras math. For the broader context of why cruise gratuities work the way they do across the major lines in 2026, **Cruise Tipping 2026** is the longer read.

Section 9 — The Group Cruise Rhythm

Tina is both your booking agent and your on-ship host. She'll set the rhythm. The typical pattern:

- **Day 1 sailaway** — Tina hosts a gathering at the **Penrose Atrium** or **Ocean Boulevard Deck 8 aft** around 3:30–4:00 PM, just before sailaway. Watch her communications for the specific location.
- **Hudson's 5:30 PM nightly** — Tina's standard group dinner. Show up when you want. Free with your fare. No formal reservation per night — the table is open.
- **Studio Lounge** — solo cruisers cluster here regardless of who's hosting. NCL schedules a Studio meet-and-greet on Day 1.

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- **Group activities** — Tina may schedule additional events (specialty dinner, hosted trivia, spa group day); check her communications.
 - **Specialty dinners** — Tina often books one or two group specialty nights mid-week (Cagney's, Le Bistro, Onda by Scarpetta). If a meal is on the calendar, RSVP early so the party-of-N reservation can be confirmed.
 - **Port days** — most hosted groups don't require a port-day group activity; you're on your own schedule unless a specific excursion is being organized.
 - **Last-night dinner** — Saturday night, the closing sea day, is the traditional last-night-together gathering at Hudson's.

How to find Tina on Day 1. Watch her email or Facebook for the exact location and time of the sailaway gathering. If you don't see communication before boarding, the most likely spot is the Penrose Atrium around 3:30 PM (just before the 4:00 PM sailaway).

If you're shy. Group cruises are designed for the shy. You don't have to attend every gathering; you can show up to one dinner, decide you want company, and the group will absorb you naturally. You can also decide you want quiet time and the group won't track you down. The right rhythm is whatever rhythm you set.

How the group actually works — the unwritten part

The schedule above is the written part. The unwritten part is what most first-time hosted-group cruisers actually wonder about, so here it is plainly:

- **Every event is opt-in, and opting out costs you nothing.** Skip Hudson's tomorrow because you'd rather eat alone at Indulge with a book? Nobody logs it. The 5:30 anchor exists so the group can find each other at a predictable time — not so attendance can be taken. You haven't missed the group; you'll see them tomorrow at 5:30.
- **"No thanks, I'm doing my own thing today" is a complete sentence.** On a solo group cruise specifically, everyone aboard has needed alone-time at some point — they recognize it in others and don't take it personally. Tina won't either.
- **Dinner-table norms.** At Hudson's, sit anywhere the group is sitting; there's no fixed seating and no group menu. On nights you skip the group, dine at Indulge solo (the multi-counter layout makes solo dining low-friction), join Studio Lounge neighbors, or knock on the planning channel for company. All three are normal.

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- **Port-day friendliness is not a port-week commitment.** Sharing a taxi to Stingray City on Friday doesn't obligate you to anyone's Saturday Cozumel plan. Pairings form and re-form all week; that's the design.
 - **A group this size produces a few real connections, not a crowd of them.** A hosted solo group across a week tends to yield two or three friendships that outlast the trip and a circle of friendly faces. That's a good outcome — don't measure the week against "everyone became best friends."
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Section 10 — Solo Cruising Considerations

NCL Prima is one of the strongest ships in the fleet for solo cruising. The features that matter:

- **Studio cabins with no single supplement** — the strongest solo-friendly cabin product at sea.
- **Studio Lounge** — dedicated social space for Studio cabin guests; free coffee, hosted hours, scheduled meet-and-greets. The daily social anchor.
- **Penrose Atrium** — three-deck central space that's always populated; you can sit alone with a coffee without feeling alone.
- **Indulge Food Hall** — quick-casual with multiple counters makes solo dining easy. No "table for one" anxiety.
- **Ocean Boulevard** — outdoor walkway is solo-friendly; everyone is just enjoying the sea.

For first-time solo cruisers coming from another line:

- Tina runs **welcoming, low-pressure** group cruises. Show up when you want, skip when you want.
- The Studio meet-and-greet (Day 1) is the easiest way to find your people in the first 24 hours.
- The **Solo Cruising Practical Guide** covers the broader rhythm and the small social moves that make a solo week feel right.

Solo cruising stories. Tina has written extensively on solo cruising — her **solo cruising hub** collects the practical, the emotional, and the social rhythms across multiple sailings. Worth reading whether before, during, or after this trip.

If you're sailing this one to mark a transition

Some readers of this pack are solo because of where life has put them — a recent loss, a marriage that ended, a long stretch of caregiving that finally has a quiet weekend in it. The Western Caribbean in late September is a gentle week for that kind of trip: warm water, slow sea days, an unrushed pace, and a hosted group whose composition tilts in the same direction. Tina's broader writing on the **solo hub** — particularly **In the Wake of Grief** — names this directly; this pack won't repeat what she's already said well. If that's why you booked, the resources are there to read at your pace.

Solo safety — cabin and onboard

Solo cruising is overwhelmingly safe — cruise ships are among the most surveilled travel environments anywhere, with CCTV in common areas, 24-hour security, controlled deck access, and crew trained in emergency response. The Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act (federal U.S. law since 2010) mandates specific protocols including camera coverage and reporting obligations. None of this makes risk zero, but the baseline is high. A few habits still make sense:

Your cabin door. The standard NCL cabin door has both a deadbolt and a privacy latch (a small swing-arm that keeps the door from opening even with a master key). Use both at night. Some solo cruisers add a portable door wedge — under \$10, takes no space, and for travelers who sleep uneasily in unfamiliar rooms it's calming beyond any actual security gain.

Share your itinerary before sailing. Send the day-by-day to one trusted person ashore, with your cabin number once assigned and your travel insurance policy number. The family handoff card in **Section 6** is built for exactly this — including the State Department's 24/7 line, which can locate the ship and reach NCL through official channels at no cost to your family.

Friendliness is not obligation. A good conversation at the Studio Lounge is not an invitation to dinner; a shared dinner is not an invitation to a port day; a port day is not an invitation to anything else. You set the pace, and on a hosted solo cruise specifically, declining doesn't fracture anything — see the group-dynamics notes in **Section 9**.

If something feels off, Guest Services and the 24-hour security desk respond fast — for an intrusive fellow passenger, an overstepping crew member, anything. Most solo cruisers go a lifetime without needing this; the option exists if you do.

Section 11 — First Cruise Notes

If this is your first cruise of any kind, the **first-cruise guide** is the deeper read. A few foundational notes:

- **The cabin is small.** Even Balcony cabins are smaller than a budget hotel room. You're not living in the cabin; you're sleeping in it. The ship is your living room.
- **You can't get lost.** Every elevator lobby has a deck map. Every crew member can direct you. The Penrose Atrium (Decks 6–8) is the orienting landmark.
- **You don't need to book everything ahead.** Most days unfold with significant unplanned time. That's by design.
- **Tipping is built in.** Beyond auto-gratuity, you don't need to tip every interaction. A few dollars to a great bartender or steward at the end of the week is appreciated but not expected.
- **Don't try to do everything.** A week is enough time to do what matters. Trying to do every show, every specialty restaurant, every port excursion, and every sea-day activity will burn you out by Day 4.

The thing nobody tells first-timers: the best moments of a cruise are usually unplanned, and they tend to happen in the ordinary places: the Studio Lounge, an early hour on Ocean Boulevard, a sea-day afternoon with nothing booked. The **Cruising Duck tradition** is the one piece of cruise culture worth knowing in advance — bring or hide a few rubber ducks if you want a friendly, accidental social ritual.

Leave room for that.

Closing

This pack is the calm read on one specific week — yours.

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.

Safe sailing.

Last reviewed | 2026-09-26, the day before sailing (pre-ship check of the three variants and the offline companion against NCL, the Port Authority master schedule, the port schedules, and the National Hurricane Center; NCL's ship-to-shore number replaced with the two NCL now publishes; Great Stirrup Cay's second berth confirmed in service; a dated tropical snapshot added). Prior review 2026-09-08 (day order, terminal, hours, drink-package terms, and three venue names corrected) |

How facts here are checked | Every price, date, distance, contact number, and currency claim in this pack is checked against a primary source — NCL's own published materials and press releases, Wikipedia for ship specs, the U.S. Embassy in Kingston for the Cayman Islands consular agency, the National Hurricane Center for seasonal context, and operator price pages where excursions are quoted. Sources for each claim are kept in this pack's research log. If a number can't be sourced, it isn't asserted here. Tina's communications about her group's rhythm are quoted as hers. |

Accessibility | This pack and the site that produced it follow WCAG 2.1 AA. The Emergency Contacts section is offline-capable via PWA so a trusted contact ashore can keep the family handoff card available without an internet connection. |

Sources | Ship: **Norwegian Prima**. Ports: **Port Canaveral, Great Stirrup Cay, Falmouth, Grand Cayman, Cozumel**. Host + agent: **Tina Maulsby, Maulsby Travel Co.** Onboard venues: **Hudson's, Indulge Food Hall, The Local, Surfside Café, Cagney's Steakhouse, Le Bistro, Onda by Scarpetta, Hasuki, Palomar, Los Lobos, Studio Lounge, Observation Lounge, Penrose Bar, Haven Lounge, The Haven Restaurant**. Articles: **stateroom-sanity-check, is-drink-package-worth-it, cruise-**

tipping-2026, caribbean-cruise-trends-2026, cruise-cabin-organization, cruise-tech-photography-guide, cruise-duck-tradition. Tools: **drink-calculator, cruise-budget-calculator, cruise-tipping-calculator, port-day-planner, port-tracker, ship-tracker, ship-size-atlas.** Reference pages: **solo cruising hub, first-cruise, countdown, packing-lists, internet-at-sea, disability-at-sea.** Original research: NCL.com, Port Canaveral website, NCL press releases. |