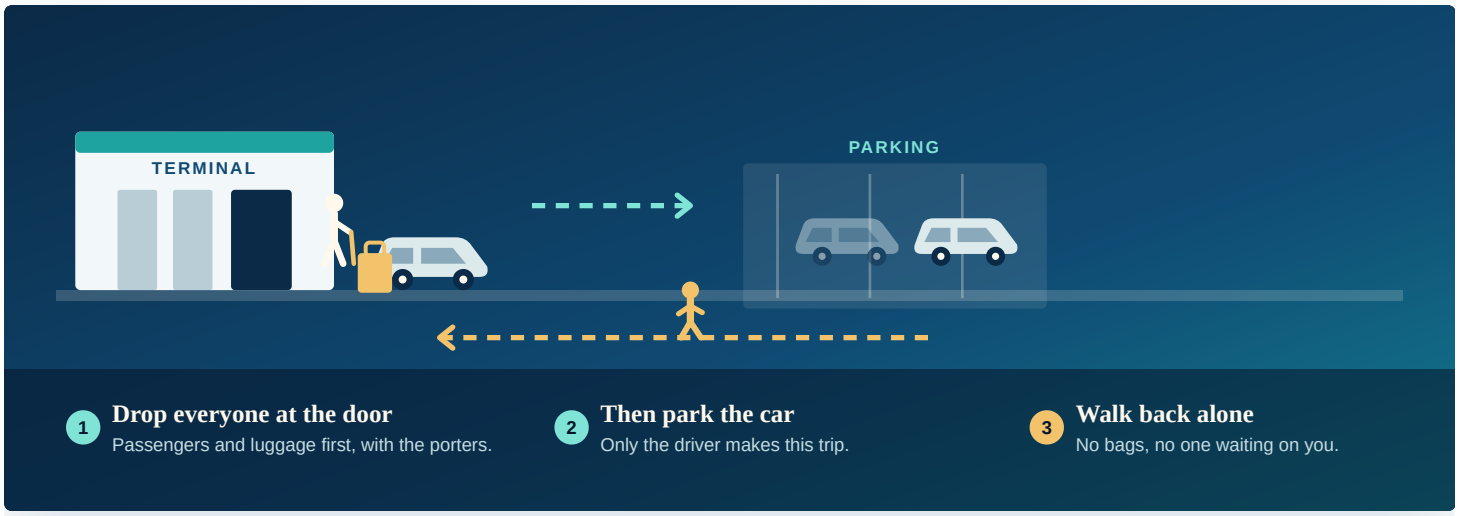
DEPARTURE DAY · TAMPA (PORT TAMPA BAY)

Three terminals, *a few blocks apart.*

Tampa is a compact, manageable port: the garage sits directly across the street from the main terminals, and everything is in the Channel District within a few blocks. It also offers the one thing most cruise ports don't — valet parking — and for some bodies that changes the whole morning.

THE BEST TWENTY DOLLARS ON THIS PAGE

Port Tampa Bay offers **valet parking for a one-time upgrade of about $20** on top of the daily rate. You hand over the car at the terminal and walk in. No garage level, no crossing the street, no walk back with luggage on the return. If the walk from the car is what costs you, this is the cheapest fix at any Florida port.



Parking at the port: *whoever needs the shortest walk should never ride to the garage. Drop them at the door first, with the luggage, then park. Private lots work differently — you park first and ride a shuttle in.*

CONFIRMED: WHO PARKS FREE AT PORT TAMPA BAY

We flagged this as unverified before. It is now confirmed: the fee is waived for a **Florida DV plate — with the veteran in the vehicle** — for vehicles with **special disability**

equipment, or for a **Florida Toll Exemption Permit**. **Bring your Florida driver's licence and vehicle registration.**

A placard on its own pays the posted rate. Rates and the parking number are on porttb.com.

WHAT A FLORIDA TOLL EXEMPTION PERMIT ACTUALLY IS

It's an **orange sticker from FDOT**, for drivers with a **severe and permanent upper-limb impairment** who hold a valid licence and drive a vehicle with accessibility modifications. Most placard holders won't qualify — which is why a placard alone doesn't get you free parking.

Where you park, *by terminal*

- **Terminals 2 and 3** share the garage at 810 Channelside Drive, **directly across the street**. Park and walk — no shuttle.
- **Terminal 6** has its own open-air lot at 1331 McKay Street, right in front of the terminal.
- **Oversized vehicles** — roughly over 7 feet high or 18 feet long — are sent to a separate lot about a ten-minute walk away, with no shuttle. RVs are reportedly not permitted at all, so confirm before you drive one down.
- **Know your terminal before you go.** All three are within a few blocks, but they're different streets on a busy morning.

What it costs, *and how to pay*

- **Self-parking is about $18 a day plus tax**, which works out around $135 to $140 for a seven-night cruise.
- **You can prepay online** through the port's reservation system, or pay at the kiosk on arrival. Prepaying is worth it in peak season — the garage can fill on multi-ship days.
- **Valet adds the one-time fee** to the same daily rate.

POSSIBLE FREE PARKING — WORTH ASKING ABOUT

At least one parking service reports that **vehicles with official disabled veteran plates or disability modifications park free** at Port Tampa Bay. We haven't been able to confirm that on the port's own pages, so treat it as a question rather than a fact — but it's absolutely worth asking when you book or arrive, because it would cover the whole week.

Where to park: *port-run and private, together*

Independent lots sit on the same stretch of Channelside Drive, generally cheaper, with a shuttle. One nearby lot expects you to walk rather than ride, which is fine for some and impossible for others — check before you book.

WHERE	WHO RUNS IT	ROUGHLY	WHAT TO KNOW
Port Tampa Bay garage & lots	Port-run	about $18/day + tax	The garage is across the street from Terminals 2 and 3; Terminal 6 has its own lot. Valet available for about $20 more, one time — the cheapest way to skip the walk.
Rightway Parking	Private	from about $5/day	Compares nearby private lots with a guaranteed space.
Park 4 Cruise	Private	about $15/day plus fees	On Channelside Drive with a shuttle to all three terminals. Prepay online only — they don't take drive-ins.
Park-and-cruise hotels	Private	varies	A hotel night plus parking for the week and a port shuttle. Often the best value in Tampa on a seven-night sailing.

ASK ONE QUESTION BEFORE YOU BOOK ANY OF THEM

"Is the shuttle wheelchair accessible, and does it have a lift?" Only some are, and one lot nearby has no shuttle at all. If a high step into a van is a problem for you, valet at the port beats every cheaper option here.

Getting there *from the airport*

- **Tampa International (TPA)** is roughly 10 to 15 miles from the terminals, about 20 to 30 minutes depending on traffic. It's one of the easiest airport-to-port runs in Florida.
- **St. Petersburg-Clearwater (PIE)** is a similar distance and sometimes much cheaper to fly into.
- **If you're flying in, consider not renting a car at all.** A rideshare or taxi each way usually costs less than a week of parking, and removes the vehicle from the equation entirely.
- **The TECO Line Streetcar is free** and stops at Channelside, which is useful for getting around the district the day before — not for luggage on sailing morning.

Coming home, *which is its own problem*

Disembarkation is early, after a week of doing more than usual. Put your name down for priority debarkation the evening before if you need wheelchair assistance. If you used an off-site lot, expect a wait for the shuttle after customs — that queue is where a good week can end badly.

Questions to ask *before you drive*

1. Do you waive parking for my vehicle or plate, and what documents do I bring?
2. Where are the accessible spaces, and how close are they to the terminal or the elevator?
3. Can I drop my passenger and bags at the terminal first?
4. For off-site lots: does the shuttle have a wheelchair lift, and can it take my scooter?
5. What's the height limit if I drive a lifted van?

WHEELCHAIR HELP AT THE TERMINAL — ASK AHEAD

Royal Caribbean: crew push wheelchairs on and off the ship at embarkation and disembarkation. Request it on the Guest Special Needs Form **at least 30 days** before you sail.

Celebrity: tick "wheelchair assistance at the pier" on the special needs form, at least 30 days ahead.

Princess: has an **Accessibility Lane** at check-in, and assigns crew when you request wheelchair help.

Every line's form and deadline →

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask which terminal** your ship uses — 2, 3 or 6 — and which parking goes with it.
- **Ask how to request pier and wheelchair assistance**, and by when.
- **Ask whether valet is available on your sailing date**, and whether it can be prepaid.
- **Ask whether there's an accessibility lane** at check-in and whether your companions can use it.

RULES AND RATES CHANGE — CALL BEFORE YOU DRIVE

This is a starting point, not legal advice. Parking rates, free-parking rules and terminal assignments change without notice. **Call the port's parking office before you set off**, and check with your own cruise line.

PRICES CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Rates here are a guide, not a quote. Published figures for Tampa's self-parking have ranged from about $15.75 to $18 a day depending on when they were checked, before taxes and fees, and private lots add service charges at checkout. Confirm the current rate

with the port or the lot, and compare the checkout total for your exact dates rather than the headline rate.

Where this comes from

- Firsthand observation on recent sailings, with the date noted above.
- How we check things — our method, and what "last checked" means.

Last checked 22 September 2026.

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