PORT DAY REAL TALK · CURAÇAO

The prettiest town, *on uneven ground.*

Willemstad is UNESCO-listed and genuinely lovely — the coloured buildings, the waterfront, the floating bridge. It's flat, which helps. The catch is the historic paving underfoot, and a bridge that can strand you on the wrong side of the harbour.

The short answer

ASHORE	Docked
FREE BEACH	Beaches need a taxi
HARDEST PART	Uneven historic paving

THE BRIDGE SWINGS OPEN

The Queen Emma pontoon bridge opens to let ships through, and it does it whenever a ship needs to pass — not on a schedule you can plan around. When it's open, a **free ferry** runs instead. Know that before you cross, so being on the far side when it opens is an inconvenience rather than a problem.

What the day *asks of you*

- **Uneven historic paving.** The old town is flat, but cobbles and worn surfaces are hard work for wheels, canes and ankles alike.
- **Heat with limited shade** in the old town, where the buildings are low and the streets open.
- **A transfer for the beaches.** The good ones, like Playa Porto Mari, are a real drive — arrange your pickup in advance rather than hoping for a taxi.
- **The bridge, occasionally.** Or the ferry, and a few extra minutes.

The Port Fit Check question that matters most here is the one about uneven ground — more than distance, it's what decides this port.

> **THE LOW-EFFORT VERSION OF THIS PORT**
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> Willemstad on foot as far as comfortable, a waterfront café with a view of the bridge, and back aboard. It's one of the few ports where sitting and looking is genuinely the main attraction, so doing less here costs you very little.

Worth doing, *sitting down*

- **The waterfront cafés**, watching the bridge swing and the ships pass.
- **Distillery and museum visits** — indoor, air-conditioned, seated, and a welcome break from the heat.
- **Playa Porto Mari** if you want a beach day: taxi out, arrange the pickup time, stay put. Food, chairs and snorkel rental are on site.

Curaçao is also less crowded than the big-name ports, which makes the sidewalks easier to manage with a cane or a chair.

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask which berth you're using** — the walk into Willemstad differs depending on where the ship ties up.
- **Ask about accessible transport** to the beaches through the shore excursion desk, and confirm pickup times.
- **Ask whether any ship-organised tour avoids the cobbled streets** if uneven ground is your limiting factor.
- **Ask about the ferry** when the bridge is open, and whether it takes wheelchairs and scooters.

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.

Ports change. This reflects publicly available information and recent sailings, and it is not a guarantee for yours — always confirm with your cruise line. Found something different on your visit? Tell us and we'll correct the page.

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