PORT DAY REAL TALK · GRAND CAYMAN

The one port that *always tenders.*

Grand Cayman has no cruise pier, and it isn't getting one — voters rejected a berthing facility by roughly two to one. Every passenger reaches shore by tender boat. That single fact decides the whole day.

The short answer

ASHORE	Always tenders
FREE BEACH	A tender, then a taxi
HARDEST PART	Stepping across to a moving tender

What the day *asks of you*

Before anything else, the tender. The ship anchors offshore and a small boat carries you in. Both are moving while you step across.

- **Standing time.** Tender lines form in lounges and stairwells, often with nowhere to sit, and they are longest when several ships are in.
- **Grip and one-arm lift.** Boarding is a hand-to-hand transfer. Crew will steady you, but they are not permitted to lift you.
- **Steps and a moving gap.** The gap between ship and tender opens and closes with the swell.
- **A second transfer.** The free beach is a taxi ride from the tender landing, so reaching sand means two transfers, not one.

Work through the Port Fit Check before you decide on this port. It is the one where the honest answer is sometimes "stay aboard, and enjoy a quiet ship."

THE RISK NOBODY BUDGETS FOR

If the seas are rough enough, tendering is cancelled outright. You paid for the port and you see it from your balcony. It happens here more than anywhere else on a Caribbean itinerary — and tenders may not accommodate wheelchairs or scooters even on a calm day.

0 **Piers at Grand Cayman.** Voters rejected a berthing facility roughly two to one, so every passenger goes ashore by tender.

The beach, *honestly*

Seven Mile Beach is genuinely one of the Caribbean's best, and it is public and free. But it is a taxi ride from the tender landing, so "free beach" doesn't mean "easy beach" here. Budget for transport both ways and agree the fare before you set off.

THE LOW-EFFORT VERSION OF THIS PORT

George Town's waterfront is walkable, shaded in places and has seating. If the tender takes more out of you than expected, a slow morning by the water and an early tender back is a perfectly good day — and far better than losing tomorrow to today.

If you book an *excursion here*

This is the port where a refund guarantee actually earns its keep. Some tour platforms will refund you in full if your ship can't get into port, or if the tour is cancelled because the ship couldn't get in — which is exactly what goes wrong at Grand Cayman. That filter is usually off by default, so most people never find it.

Boat trips are low-walking once you're aboard, but boarding is the hard part. Ask how many steps or rungs are involved, and whether there is a ladder to climb back up when you're wet and tired.

> *“Sometimes the honest answer is: stay aboard, and enjoy a quiet ship.”*

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask how tender boarding works for your mobility aid** on your specific ship. Policies differ by line and by tender.
- **Ask whether priority tender tickets exist** for guests who need assistance, and how to request one.
- **Declare your need in advance** on your line's accessibility form. Crew can only plan for what they know about.
- **Ask what happens if you can't board the tender.** Knowing that answer before the morning is worth a lot.
- **Remember there is no refund** for a port missed on mobility or safety grounds. The Accommodations Guide explains the forms and deadlines that get you the help there is.

Questions people *actually ask*

Is Grand Cayman wheelchair accessible?

Does Grand Cayman have a free beach near the cruise port?

Why does Grand Cayman always tender?

Where this comes from

- Royal Caribbean — guest special needs and accessibility
- 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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