PORT DAY REAL TALK · KEY WEST

Flat, American, *and easy on a body.*

No hills anywhere, kerb cuts at the corners, accessible restrooms, and a narrated trolley that lets you see the whole town sitting down. If a port day is going to be gentle, this is usually the one — as long as you're not expecting a beach.

The short answer

ASHORE	Docked
FREE BEACH	20–25 min walk, and mediocre
HARDEST PART	Sun, crowds and a short port call

THE SINGLE BEST LOW-EXERTION OPTION IN ANY PORT WE COVER

The **Conch Train** or **Old Town Trolley**. Seated, narrated, hop off where you like and back on when you're ready. It turns a whole town into something you can see without spending your legs — and unlike most tours, you're not committed to a route once you start.

Why this port is *easier than most*

- **It's flat.** No hills anywhere on the island, which is not true of St. Thomas or Curaçao.
- **It's American.** Kerb cuts, ADA norms, accessible restrooms, US dollars, no language barrier — and US medical care if something goes wrong.
- **Everything in Old Town is close.** Duval Street, the Hemingway House and the Southernmost Point are all reachable from the pier.
- **The trolley covers the rest**, so distance stops being the deciding factor.

THE EXPECTATION TO CORRECT

The beaches here are mediocre. Higgs and Smathers are free but a 20 to 25 minute walk, and people who arrive expecting Caribbean sand are consistently disappointed. **Key West is a town day.** Plan it that way and it's one of the best days on the itinerary.

What the day *asks of you*

- **Very little, if you use the trolley.** Walking is optional here in a way it isn't in most ports.
- **Sun.** There's little shade on Duval, and the heat does the work the hills would elsewhere.
- **Crowds** when several ships are in, on sidewalks that aren't especially wide.
- **Watching the clock.** Port calls here are often short — check your all-aboard before you settle in anywhere.

Worth doing, *sitting down*

- **The Hemingway House** — flat grounds, plenty of seating, and the cats.
- **Mallory Square** waterfront bars, for watching the harbour without walking it.
- **Sunset**, if your ship stays late. Few ports offer it and this one does it properly.

> *"Key West is a town day. Plan it that way and it's one of the best days on the itinerary."*

Check with your cruise line

- **Ask whether you're docking at Mallory Square or Pier B** — it changes how far you are from Duval Street.
- **Ask whether the trolley you book is wheelchair accessible**, since not every vehicle in the fleet is.

- **Ask your all-aboard time** and treat it seriously; calls here are often shorter than elsewhere.
- **Ask about pier assistance** if the walk from the ship to the gate is a concern.

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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