

Serendipity Travels to the Caribbean, 2014

This trip involves cross-country travel and cruise-ship cruises from two different ports in Florida. One of the cruises is a four-day affair from Port Canaveral, near Orlando. The other is an eight-day cruise from Port Everglades, which is in Fort Lauderdale.



Carnival Sensation Four Day Bahamas

16 March, Port Canaveral

16:00 Departure

Boarding the *Sensation* was quick and easy. Security is very much like at an airport, although you can carry liquids aboard (no hard liquor, and limited quantities of wine). You and your carry-on will be scanned, and you need boarding passes and good ID (passports are the best, but you will *also* need another form of picture ID, like a driver's license).



DECK PLANS

Select a deck

14	Sun	8	Atlantic
12	Sports	7	Empress
11	Verandah	6	Upper
10	Lido	5	Main
9	Promenade	4	Riviera

Empress Deck

Select a stateroom to view details
◀ Pan left
Pan right ▶
⊕ Zoom in
⊖ Zoom out



We were on the ship before 13:00, and rooms are not generally available until 14:00. However, the entry point into the ship is at a lounge, and they were open and serving. A fruity drink later, we were fully into cruise mode.

We eventually found our cabin (E240). It had a large, aft-facing balcony and was plenty roomy for the two of us. The remainder of our first day included the mandatory safety briefing, watching the ship depart Port Canaveral, and dinner. Perhaps there were more drinks involved, but who remembers such trivia?

17 March, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, The Bahamas

08:00 Arrival, 17:00 Departure

Freeport is aptly named; it is a duty-free port and holding area for cargo such as containers and bulk oil enroute from one place to another. One sees a substantial container port and off-shore oil-handling facilities, as well as a tank farm to hold crude oil until a purchaser is found. Despite this economic activity, Grand Bahama Island also has many pleasant areas and upscale neighborhoods.



We had booked the “Western Heritage & Snorkel Tour” excursion through Carnival. This consisted of a narrated bus tour through parts of Freeport and onto the western end of the island, with several stops. The ultimate destination was Paradise Cove Beach Resort, where we could snorkel before having the included lunch.

Our tour guide was Dwaine, and he did an excellent job of informing and entertaining us. We learned of the commercial basis for Freeport, saw homes of the rich and famous, and stopped a few times to observe natural phenomena before arriving at the resort. Sadly, the winds were high and few ventured into the water for snorkeling. Lunch of conch fritters (which taste like spicy crab cakes) and the local beer – Strongback, brewed in Freeport – prepared us for the return to the ship.

We visited the straw market next to the cruise terminal, and then stopped in Señor Frogs for a Mojito to quench our thirst. This week was spring vacation for many colleges, and the place was full of college-age kids enjoying their break. Click the Photo Map Tour of The Bahamas link below to see the pictures we took on our stops at Freeport and Nassau.

**Click for a
Photo Map Tour
of The Bahamas**



18 March, Nassau, New Providence Island, The Bahamas

08:00 Arrival, 17:00 Departure

Nassau is the capital of the island nation of The Bahamas, with a long history including pirates and those who were chasing them. The Bahamas sit astride important sea routes between Europe and the New World, and were a strategic part of the British Empire.

We did not find a tour that interested us, so we decided to make our own. It appeared as though the most photogenic parts of Nassau were within walking distance of the cruise terminal. A short hike took us to The Queen's Steps – carved by freed slaves in honour of Queen Victoria. A brisk walk up the steps brought us to Fort Fincastle, which has a commanding view of the harbour. The cannon are now decommissioned, but would once have served to discourage or repel any who would invade.



Leaving the fort, we walked past the Governor's mansion and then down into town. After a bit of shopping, we found ourselves at Nassau's Señor Frogs and were seated at a table overlooking the bay. After lunch, we made our way back to the ship – knowing that we would return to Nassau at the end of our second cruise.

19 March, Day at Sea

After traveling south for two days, it was time to head north. Today would be a day at sea – time to read, eat, relax in the sun, or whatever. Also, a time to pack in anticipation of debarking the next morning.

20 March, Port Canaveral

07:00 Arrival

We debarked, met the pre-arranged ground transportation, and were soon back at the Radisson. We have two days to explore Florida before our next cruise.