

Board Liberty of the Seas for a 3 Night Cruise

# Sun, Sand and Sail: Florida's Gulf Coast with Bahamas Cruise January 14 - 22, 2024 (9 days)

## HIGHLIGHTS

3 Nights on St. Pete's Beach The Florida Aquarium & Dolphin Cruise St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church Tour Tarpon Springs & Sponge Diving Cruise St. Petersburg Pier & City Tour Tampa Bay Discovery Center St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club Military Heritage Museum Punta Gorda Mural & History Tour Alligator Bay Distillery Tour & Tasting 2 Nights in Fort Myers Everglades Airboat Ride Broadway Palms Dinner Theatre 3 Night Cruise aboard Liberty of the Seas

with Ports of Call in Nassau & CocoCay, Bahamas Winter 40

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Shuffleboard Time!!

Experience a sponge diving demonstration in Tarpon Springs!

Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center

#### Day 1 - Home to St. Pete Beach. FL

Today we begin our journey south to the beautiful state of Florida in search of a bit of sunshine and warmer weather! Our flight into Tampa is followed by a lunch stop and a visit to The Florida Aquarium, where sea turtles, sharks, lemurs, otters, and more await! Our visit also includes a catamaran cruise out on Tampa Bay with an experienced naturalist who will help us watch for a variety of wildlife, like bottlenose dolphins. Then we'll get settled into our hotel nestled along the soft white sands of St. Pete Beach! The property is located within walking distance of many restaurants, shops, attractions, and of course is right on the beach! Explore the resort and the beach a bit before we gather back together for a wonderful "Welcome to South Florida" dinner!

**Included Meals: Lunch, Welcome Dinner** Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn (3 Nights)

#### Day 2 - Tarpon Springs area

Following a wonderful breakfast at our hotel, we'll head to Tarpon Springs, the "sponge capital of the world." This charming seaside village was founded back in 1907 and is a mecca of Greek culture. As we tour the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, we'll be immersed in a completely unique experience - from the domed basilica architecture to the iconography adorning the walls and windows, the Cathedral is designed as a reflection and embodiment of many of the fundamental beliefs of the Orthodox Church. Then we'll have a special lunch at a local Greek Restaurant, one of R&J's favorites. Afterwards, there will be some time to walk the fishing docks and do some browsing in the local shops. We'll then take a Sponge Cruise and see just how the sponge divers of old collected the sponges. As we head back towards our lovely hotel, we'll visit Florida Orange Groves Winery for a wonderful tour and tasting. Dinner and the evening are on your own to enjoy the area. Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## Day 3 - St. Petersburg area

Today have breakfast at your leisure as the morning is free for you to soak up the sun and sink your toes in the sand. Then we head to the new St. Pete Pier to meet our step-on guide for a tour of St. Petersburg. Our tour ends back at the Pier where we will visit the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center. The Discovery Center is located on an over-water walkway and presents the unique ecosystem of Tampa Bay and features an estuary habitat with a variety of species found in the waters. This afternoon be ready for

some fun as we head over to the oldest and largest shuffle-

board club in the world! R&J Tours has rented enough courts for us to play some games! If you haven't played before, no worries, we have arranged for staff to give us a guick lesson. Dinner is planned in Johns Pass, a quaint and historic fishing village named after John Levique. John was a pirate who made the first passage through this new, hurricane-created pass in 1848. Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 4 - St. Pete Beach to Fort Myers, FL

Today we'll depart St. Pete Beach and make our way to charming Punta Gorda. We have a wonderful day planned in this waterfront community. We will first visit the Military Heritage Museum. The museum's purpose is to honor all who serve. It utilizes multiple methods to educate its visitors on the heritage aspects of U.S. military history. Enjoy a blend of artifacts, veteran museum guides, and interactive experiences at this 17,000 sq. foot facility. We will enjoy lunch at The Captain's Table and then have some free time for shopping or walking along the waterfront. This afternoon, we will have a local step on guide join us while we learn more about the history of the town by exploring various murals in the area as well as a veteran led introduction to the Vietnam Wall model at Veteran's Park. We will wrap up our afternoon with a tour of Alligator Bay Distillery. Then we continue on to Fort Myers and check into the Homewood Suites for two nights. This evening partake in the Manager's Reception.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Manager's Reception Hotel: Homewood Suites (2 Nights)

## **Day 5 - Fort Myers**

After breakfast this morning, we will head to the everglades! A local guide will meet us at our hotel to share information with us about the Florida Everglades and the creatures that inhabit them. Later we will hop aboard one of Bob's Everglades Hydro-boats for a ride that you will long remember. You will have lunch on your own today and enjoy some time this afternoon for a dip in the pool or a relaxing nap before we depart for the Broadway Palms Dinner Theater for a Broadway style musical and delicious dinner. Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 6 - Ft Myers to Fort Lauderdale, FL - Embark Cruise

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll cut across Florida to the Atlantic coast to Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale. Here we'll board the Liberty of the Seas for a reef-roaming, tropics-trekking, three WINTER night cruise! After getting settled into your outside cabin 41



We'll explore Punta Gorda's murals with the help of a local guide



Staying right on St. Pete Beach sure has its perks





with a balcony, perhaps you'll want to create figure eights on the ice rink or tap your toes to the Broadway musical Saturday Night Fever. **Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner** Ship: Liberty of the Seas (3 Nights)

#### Dav 7 - Nassau, Bahamas - Cruise

This morning we arrive in Nassau after cruising through the night. Nassau has long been known for relaxation and adventure, but back in the 1600s it was actually burned down by the Spanish. The history is rich if you choose to explore Fort Charlotte or the Pirates of Nassau Museum. Other shore excursions include many waterrelated activities like snorkeling, sailing, glass-bottom boat, Thriller powerboat, and more. (Optional shore excursions are at your own cost throughout the entire cruise.) Make sure to leave time to experience the onboard entertainment. Ship departs tonight to sail to CocoCay, Bahamas.

What a Sponge!

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (On Board)

#### Day 8 - CocoCay, Bahamas - Cruise

Sink your toes into the white-sand beaches of the secluded island of CocoCay. This is a wonderful place to spend more time on the water, do some hiking, or simply relax on the sunny beach with something cool to drink. On CocoCay Island the food & beverages are free! (Shore excursions at CocoCay are at your own cost.) Be adventurous and try parasailing, glide on a waverunner, or snorkel to capture the beauty of reefs and tropical fish or the mystery of sunken wrecks. Back aboard the Liberty of the Seas, enjoy an elegant dinner at the Chef's Table, or choose to grab something light from the Windjammer Cafe. If fresh flavors are calling your name, then head to Sabor Modern Mexican. Perhaps a shake, burger, and fries at Johnny Rockets is right up your alley. Did someone say "Old World flavor?" Giovanni Table it is! Then there's the Cupcake Cupboard, Sorrento's Pizza, Chops Grille, and more - so many tasty options to choose from!

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (On Board)

#### Day 9 - Fort Lauderdale to Home - Disembark Cruise

This morning we disembark back in Fort Lauderdale, board our coach, and head to the airport for our flight home. We've been rejuvenated by our Sun, Sand & Sail adventure! **Included Meals: Breakfast** 

## Sun, Sand and Sail

2024 DATES & PRICES		
DATES:	January 14 - 22, 2024 (9 Days)	
PRICE PER PERSON:	\$3,999 Double	\$4,979 Single
Price Includes:	Roundtrip Airfare from MSP including baggage fees, taxes & surcharges, 19 Meals & 1 Mgr. Reception, Hotels & Activities as stated in brochure, Luxury Motorcoach, 3 Night Cruise in Outside Cabins, Onboard Ship Gratuities!	
DEPOSIT DUE Per Person:	\$200 deposit per person at time of reservation. Full payment due Nov. 1, 2023.	
Optional Travel Protection P/P:	\$270 Double p/p	\$340 Single
TRAVEL BUCKS:	\$50 per person on future travel with R&J	
NEEDED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:	A Valid Passport Card or Book is Required	
TOUR PACE:	Moderate Walking (See page 9 for description)	

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