

Half Moon Cay (Just Started – Still Under Construction)

This is Holland America's private island in the Bahamas; something all the major cruise lines seem to be doing now. HAL claims it is 'uninhabited', but there are about 20-30 HAL employees who live on the island year round. You will be tendered from the ship to the Half Moon dock. From there (after the obligatory photo) Or, you can just hit the beautiful one mile beach and get the sugar sand between your toes! The water is wonderfully warm and your tuxedoed waiter will deliver Frozen Thingies to you in the surf!

HAL's private island, Half Moon Cay is a beach paradise that can get crowded near the tender dock but always has footprint free sand at the far end.

A surprisingly good snorkel trip. The coral garden area is only a ten-minute boat ride from the tender dock with lots of fish and coral.

Half Moon Cay





Located in the southern portion of the Bahamas, Half Moon Cay enjoys a tropical climate. Average daytime temperatures range in the 80's, but an occasional cold front can cause temperatures to dip in the winter.

Half Moon Cay, Bahamas Weather												
Temperature (Fahrenheit)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High	75	76	78	80	83	85	87	88	86	83	80	77
Low	67	68	69	71	74	76	78	78	78	75	73	71
Temperature (Celsius)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High	24	24	26	27	28	29	31	31	30	28	27	25
Low	19	20	21	22	23	24	26	26	26	24	23	22
Precipitation												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inches	2	2	1	2	5	5	3	6	5	9	2	1
Centimeters	5	5	3	5	13	13	8	15	13	23	5	3
Precipitation Days												


	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Days	2	3	3	3	4	6	5	8	10	12	2	3
Humidity												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Percent	73	76	75	75	79	80	78	78	79	79	74	74

Background

Located on 55-acres of the 2,400-acre Little San Salvador Island, Half Moon Cay has been rated as "Best Private Island" by Porthole Cruise Magazine for the past four years. An international bird sanctuary in the Bahamas (only two percent of the island is developed), the beauty and serenity of Half Moon Cay is second-to-none. Everything from the yellow archway at the entrance to the miniature village, to the thatch roofed bar to the lounge chaired beach, etc. is breathtaking.

Little San Salvador Island, Bahamas (also known as **Half Moon Cay**), is one of about 700 islands that make up the archipelago of the Bahamas. It is located roughly between Eleuthera and Cat Island. It is a private island, owned wholly by Holland America Line, a subsidiary of Carnival Corporation & PLC. It is usually a one-day stop (port of call) on most Holland America Caribbean cruises, and requires a tender ride from the ship to land, and vice versa.

Little San Salvador Island is about a hundred miles southeast of Nassau. Holland America purchased the island in 1997, and has developed only 45 acres (180,000 m²) of the 2,400-acre (9.7 km²) island, with the goal of maintaining as much habitat as possible for wildlife. The island is also a significant nesting area for waterfowl.

Activities include swimming, sunning, scuba diving, jet-skiing, and snorkeling. Deep-sea fishing, parasailing, glass-bottom boat rides, and nature walks also are available. A variety of water toys are available for rent, including Hobie catamarans, Sunfish sailboats, windsurfing sailboards and kayaks. There are also volleyball and basketball courts, horseshoes and shuffleboard, a fitness trail with exercise stations, horseback riding, and nature trails for hiking. The island's coordinates are  24°33'N 75°59'W.

Half Moon Cay is the privately-developed part of Little Salvador Island, about a hundred miles southeast of Nassau, and was once a refuge for pirates. Holland America purchased the island in 1997, and has developed only 45 acres of the 2,400 acre island, with the goal of maintaining as much habitat as possible for wildlife, and the island is a significant nesting area for waterfowl.

Seventeen miles from the nearest neighbor, about 100 miles south of Nassau, in the Bahamas, Half Moon Cay is considered by many to be the most beautiful of the cruise lines' private islands. Nine miles of beach stretch along the vibrant blue waters in a crescent shape. Coconut palms dot the landscape. This is truly a nature preserve as Holland America takes great strides to maintain the ecosystem of this pristine island. In fact, only 45 acres of the 2,500 acre island have been developed. All parts of the island are accessible by a tram and hard-surfaced walkways connect each area.

Half Moon Cay is a delight for water sports enthusiasts, bird watchers, beach bums and for anyone who likes a day ashore without dealing with the locals. The only "locals" at Half Moon Cay are your fellow passengers. There's no dock, so passengers

<p>must deal with getting ashore on the ship's own boats ("tenders"), with resultant line-ups -- unless you're patient. On eastern and western Caribbean cruises, you'll likely visit Half Moon Cay from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Those who have signed up for early shore excursions will be taken ashore first. Other passengers who are in a hurry to get ashore will need to get a tender "ticket" at a designated lounge on board, and wait their turn. I've always found that if you wait as little as an hour and a half, the need for a tender ticket is gone, and you can simply hop on board the next available tender. There isn't a dock, so the ship has to anchor out in the ocean, hence the tender to get you to shore. It was so hot that day. Sitting in the enclosed tender waiting for it to take off was killer. If you don't do well in the heat, you might want to carry a little battery-operated fan with you.</p>
<p>While Half Moon Cay's name could be derived from its gorgeous, white sand crescent-shaped beach, it really comes from Henry Hudson's ship, the Half Moon, which is part of Holland America's logo. It's almost ironic to note that Henry Hudson was an Englishman, but on the third of his four great voyages of exploration, he was employed by the Dutch, and on that voyage he sailed up the Hudson River to the present site of Albany, and claimed the area for Holland. Ten years later, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.</p>
<p>English is spoken and both U.S. and Bahamian dollars are accepted, but most things can be charged to your shipboard account.</p>
<p>On Half Moon Cay, the six main facilities ashore are within easy, if hot, walking distance. The "Welcome Plaza" at the tender landing dock has an orientation kiosk and a cocktail bar (there are bars everywhere!). Shops and services are available at the "West Indies Village," designed in a Spanish and Bahamian architectural style. Facilities include an ice cream shop and frozen drink bar, a casual wear shop, a straw market, post office, first aid station and a chapel.</p> <p>The Watersports Center near the Welcome Plaza is the place to get snorkeling equipment, and arrange for paddle boats, Banana Boat rides, Sunfish sailboats, Aqua bikes, wind surfers, Hobie cats, parasailing, beach floats and beach gear for rent. Children have a separate playground called "Club HAL," and there's a sports area where volleyball, basketball, shuffleboard, horseshoes and tug-of-war contests take place.</p> <p>You can explore the island from marked trails which have interpretive signs with descriptions of featured trees and plants, as well as vantage points for watching the many variety of birds. The trails are also handy for those wanting to keep fit by jogging or walking. While all the facilities are reasonably close to each other and are connected by proper pathways, if you get tired you can catch the 24-seat passenger tram which runs continuously on a separate path between the Welcome Center and the Food Pavilion. All facilities on shore are designed with physically challenged passengers in mind, including wheelchairs with umbrellas and balloon tread for use on the sand. This is just another example of Holland America's efforts to make the day at Half Moon Cay the highlight of a Caribbean cruise.</p>



Helpful Websites

<http://www.bahamas.com/>

http://www.insightcruises.com/pdf/Half_Moon_Cay.pdf (map)

http://www.carnival.com/cms/Static_Templates/halfMoonCay/html/index.aspx
(interactive map)

Beach



Excursions

There are a variety of exciting and new activities to choose from while exploring this privately-owned paradise. You can go horseback riding on the sand and through the surf, take a stingray adventure, visit the Half Moon Lagoon Aqua Park, hike a nature trail or simply relax in an air-conditioned, private beachfront cabana. You might simply

want to visit the massage station or, if you have any, get your hair braided.

Half Moon Cay is situated in a protective bay making conditions ideal for swimming in the calm waters. Holland America has one of the most comprehensive water sports programs of the private islands. You can rent a Hobie Catamaran, Sunfish Sailboat, View Boards, Windsurfer Sailboards, kayaks, aqua cycles and float mats. There is even a separate area designated for these activities. There are volleyball and basketball courts, horseshoes and shuffleboard, a fitness trail with exercise stations and nature trails for hiking. On Half Moon Cay you can snorkel, SCUBA dive, jet-ski or even do some bone fishing. Of course, you can always just kick back and relax or have a beachside massage

Aqua-Trax Adventure (\$39) has you driving your own personal watercraft on a guided tour of a lagoon, along the shoreline and out to the reef.
Horseback riding (\$69) takes you from the stables to the island's highest point, a spot of 'refreshment' then back to the beach for a ride through the surf.
Parasailing (\$69) is a great chance to get a true bird's eye view of the cay, without getting your feet wet.
There is a stingray adventure (\$19), Snorkel Tour (\$49), Scuba dive (\$69), glass-bottom boat tour (\$29 per person) and a host of other activities.



If you want to do more than swimming and snorkeling (which have separate designated areas), you can rent equipment, either pre-arranged on board (to avoid disappointment) or at the Watersports Center. Prices (as of May, 2000) were per person per hour:

\$50 for Hobie Catamarans; \$40 for Sunfish sailboats; \$30 for Aqua cycles; \$40 for windsurfers; \$25 for one person kayaks; \$45 for two-person kayaks; and \$15 for view boards. A floating foam mat could be rented for the day for \$6.

Our first stop was at Holland America's private island, Half Moon Cay (pronounced key). Dan had signed up to go deep-sea fishing (\$120). They took him out on a small

boat for two hours, and not one bite! He was hoping for a big one. When he got back, we all took at tender (a small boat) to the island for a Wish I had. The scenery was beautiful. The island was small with a pretty beach and turquoise water.. Our Eco Lagoon Tour started at 12:30. It was great. The boat was covered on the top and open on the sides, with a glass bottom, and of course there was a nice breeze once we got going. The lagoon was very shallow and we saw lots of different coral and fish. The two tour guides were very friendly and knowledgeable. One of them would jump out and pick up different animals (a star fish and a sea urchin) to show them to you up close. We all enjoyed the tour.

These choices were available in May, 2000 (all prices are per person, US dollars, except where noted):

- Advanced Snorkeling by Boat - two hours, \$36. Equipment provided.
- Beginner's Snorkeling \$16 (\$10 per child). Duration not stated. Designed for those who have never snorkeled before.
- Glass Bottom Boat Trip - one hour, \$24 (a good opportunity to appreciate the unique coral formations as well as the tropical fish)
- Certified Scuba Diving - two hours, \$69. Features a shallow one-tank dive. Must have open-water certification (C-card).
- Parasailing -one hour (although only a five-minute ride). \$39
- Banana Boat Ride - \$12 per adult, \$6 per child, for a 10-minute ride on a huge, inflatable craft in the shape of a banana, pulled behind a speedboat. "Not for the faint of heart."
- Deep Sea Fishing - two hours, \$109. Look for barracuda, wahoo, snapper and grouper on a catch-and-release basis.
- Flats Fishing - three hours, \$99. The warm shallow waters of the island's interior lagoon make for "excellent bone fishing."
- Historic Nature Walk - 1 1/4 hours, \$14. A mile and-a-half walk with an island Naturalist.
- Tropical Kayak Adventure - A 1½ hour tour for \$34 in the company of an island Naturalist on Bone Fish Lagoon.
- Treasure Hunt For Ice Cream - For children 6 - 12. One hour, \$14.
- Beach Party for teens 13 - 19, 2 1/2 hours, \$24.

Accommodates up to 5,000 guests per day. At night, guests return to the cruise ships which anchor off the island. The island has the Landing and Welcome Center, the Bahamian Village with shops and the Tropics Restaurant. A Bahamian–style chapel on Half Moon Cay accommodates wedding and renewal of vows ceremonies. In addition to two bars in the Tropics Restaurant and the Welcome Center, there are other full service bars located on the main beach and other points on the island.

There is a handicapped-accessible 25-passenger tram between the Welcome Center and the Tropics Restaurant. Guests can reserve wheelchairs with umbrellas and balloon tires made for use on the sand. Steiner of London provides *Massages on the Beach* in two air conditioned cabanas on the beach. Half Moon Cay offers a children's playground, volleyball, basketball and shuffleboard.

Half Moon Cay is a great place to try a number of watersports. There are three Water Sports Centers where vacationers can rent beach gear and water sport equipment. Sign up for the Stingray Adventure to swim or snorkel with the Southern Stingrays. There is also the Personal Watercraft Adventure, Half Moon Lagoon aqua park, snorkeling, scuba diving, parasailing, deep sea fishing, flats fishing, interpretive nature and birding walks, and rentals of Aqua Bikes, wind surfing boards, Hobie Cats, kayaks and beach floats. During the Horseback Riding by Land and Sea excursion, vacationers ride a specially trained horse while it swims in the ocean.



Food & Drink



On Half Moon Cay there is a buffet pavilion serving a barbeque luncheon, covered dining areas, an ice cream shop, and a bar serving a variety of frozen drinks and cocktails

The Food Pavilion features a buffet-style food center with up to six service lines and 15 separate open-air dining shelters where you may enjoy an uncrowded lunch. There'll likely be entertainment from a steel drum band.



Shopping

		
<p>There is only one shop, but it offers a wide range of products. Bahamian straw goods, standard souvenirs, and Holland America logo items can all be purchased.</p>		
<p>When we got to the island, there was a small “shopping” area with an outdoor bar and some small outdoor shopping stands. There was one building with a post office and an indoor shop, but it was not air-conditioned. They serve lunch on the island till 2:00, but our tour was getting back at 2:00. If they have tours that run till 2:00. The “village” area was very cute, with brightly painted buildings, a bar, and a nice bathroom. Just beyond the buildings was the beach. We could see some parasailing going on in the sky.</p>		