

GALVESTON PRE-CRUISE ITINERARY

With amenities and attractions minutes from the harbor, Galveston Island is the perfect place to extend your cruise vacation. With most cruises departing between 4 and 5 p.m., you can easily add some fun to your cruise vacation! Whether you have a half-day, full day or longer, take advantage of all the island has to offer.

TRAVEL TIP: Arrive a day or two early and check in at any of the island hotels that offer port shuttle services and free parking during your cruise when you book at least a one-night stay. For a stay near the port, try Harbor House Hotel & Marina or Tremont House Hotel. For a stay on the beachfront, try the San Luis Resort or Hotel Galvez. For a stay on the West End, visit Moody Gardens Hotel. [Click here](#) for a list of hotels that offer port shuttle services.

HALF-DAY IN GALVESTON

Start your morning with a delicious breakfast in the East End Historical District at Sunflower Bakery & Café or Mosquito Café. It's worth your time to stroll through the district after breakfast to admire streets lined with classic Victorian homes painted in the most interesting color ensembles and complemented by well-manicure lawns and gardens. Throughout the district, one can take a self-guided tour of elaborate Galveston Tree Sculptures carved from Oak trees ruined by Hurricane Ike in 2008 or discover the Turtles About Town public art project featuring colorful Kemps ridley sea turtle statues created by various artists to raise awareness about turtle conservation. For a complimentary map of turtle sculptures and tree sculptures, stop by the Galveston Island Visitors Center, located behind the Ashton Villa at 2328 Broadway Ave.

A trip to Galveston isn't complete without touring through the "Broadway Beauties," including the breathtaking 1892 Bishop's Palace and the 1895 Moody Mansion. Step back in time to explore the history and stunning architecture of these fabulous homes.

Heading closer to the port, take a stroll through historic downtown Galveston and visit The Strand for an intriguing selection of shops, restaurants, museums and more. Be sure to visit the interactive pirate museum Pirates! Legends of the Gulf Coast and then stop by the old-fashioned sweets shop LaKing's Confectionery for freshly made saltwater taffy, ice cream and handmade candies. Postoffice Street is a great destination for visiting art galleries and antique shops. Grabbing a cup of coffee at MOD Coffeehouse or stopping by The Grand 1894 Opera House for a self-guided tour is also a treat. Other interesting places in the downtown district include Nautical Antiques, Hendley Market, Head to Footsies, and the Spice & Tea Exchange.

Pier 21 conveniently sits just down the street from the cruise ship terminals and offers a wide variety of ways to enjoy Galveston Harbor. If you're feeling adventurous, try a Jet Boat Thrill Ride where you will experience intense speeds and maneuvers while enjoying the cool breezes on the water. For more fun at Pier 21, take a Harbor Tour and Dolphin Watch boat ride and explore the remarkable diversity of birds and marine life. Next door, you'll find the Texas Seaport Museum. At the museum, look up your ancestors in a one-of-a-kind computer database with information on more than 133,000 immigrants

who entered the United States through Galveston. Adjacent to the museum is the 1877 Tall Ship Elissa, deemed one of America's treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

For lunch with a view, grab a bite at Fisherman's Wharf or Willie G's Seafood and Steaks while overlooking the water. Both restaurants are within walking distance of the cruise terminals.

1.5 DAYS IN GALVESTON

When you arrive, spend the morning exploring the many attractions surrounding the Moody Gardens complex. The adventure resort is home to three pyramid-shaped buildings that feature a live rainforest replica with free roaming animals, an interactive Discovery Museum and a gigantic aquarium, which recently completed a \$37 million renovation, offering new exhibits including the addition of jellyfish and tropical penguins. Outside of the pyramids, you can walk through botanical gardens while deciding whether to take a cruise on the Colonel Paddlewheel Boat, splash at Moody Gardens' Palm Beach water park, or hit the green at the Moody Gardens Golf Course. For lunch, there are a variety of dining options located on the Moody Gardens property, including their Garden Restaurant, Café in the Park and Shearn's Seafood and Prime Steaks.

After Moody Gardens, make your way to the beach! Afternoon is the perfect time to enjoy sparkling gulf views with the sand between your toes along Galveston Island's 32 miles of beaches. Recently named one of the "10 Best Beaches for Families" by Family Vacation Critic, Stewart Beach is Galveston's premier family beach park. Along with splashing in the waves and flying kites, here kids can have high-sea adventures on a ship-themed playground while you enjoy concessions, restrooms, showers, chair/umbrella rentals and more.

As you make your way down the beachfront, the spectacular Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier amusement park stretches over the Gulf of Mexico. The approximately 1,130-foot pier is home to entertaining midway games and 16 rides, including gentle rides for young visitors and exhilarating coasters for thrill seekers.

Dinner options along the Seawall are endless with many offering breathtaking views of the gulf at sunset. The Spot is a fantastic local venue easily recognizable due to its gigantic palapa roof. Here, you can eat, relax and watch the waves crash on the shore. For a more formal option, dine at the iconic Gaido's Seafood Restaurant and don't forget to try their famous pecan pie. After dinner, take a walk to Murdoch's charming gift shop, ride a surrey bike along the seawall or take part in a game at Magic Carpet Golf!

Spend the night in Galveston! For the next morning, see the itinerary for "Half-Day in Galveston"

2.5 DAYS IN GALVESTON

On Day 1, spend the morning and afternoon cooling off and lounging at Schlitterbahn Galveston Island Waterpark on the west side of the island. The park is open year-round and has an outdoor and indoor option, including many different water adventures and rides, such as water coasters, wave pools and a lazy river. If you're a daredevil, try the new MASSIV Monster Blaster—the world's tallest water coaster!

Stay at Schlitterbahn for lunch and experience the park's 20-foot smoker which slow cooks ribs, briskets, chicken and other traditional BBQ offerings daily. Family fruit platters, fresh wraps and grilled chicken are just a few of the healthy food options available. You can also find traditional park treats, like hamburgers, nachos and more.

For dinner, visit Number 13 Prime Steak & Seafood overlooking pelican rest marina and the Moody Gardens pyramid along Offats Bayou. For a casual menu, grab a table at Number 13's two-story outdoor patio, where they host free, live entertainment on weekends. For a more upscale dining experience, sit in the restaurant's main dining room. You won't be disappointed with either choice!

Spend the night in Galveston! For the next 1.5 days, see the itinerary for "1.5 Days in Galveston."