



Well-Kept Secret: Take a Cruise to Enjoy World's Best Beaches

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MIAMI, May 31, 2017 -- Let's face it. Everyone deserves a day at the beach, preferably in a tropical place where you can dip your toes in soft sand and clear waters. And now here's a well-kept secret:



With itineraries in places such as the Caribbean, Bahamas, Mexico, Bermuda, Hawaii, the Mediterranean, South America and the South Pacific, cruise ships make it easy to get to some of the best beaches in the world.

Cruise ship captains and other officers, when they get some time off, are likely to head to the sand and surf. They have their favorite beaches.

Steve Howarth, captain of Oriana from British line P&O Cruises, smiles with fond family memories when he thinks of Cane Garden Bay Beach in Tortola. "There is soft white sand, warm seas, palm trees for shade, and it's where my son built his first-ever sand castle when he was a year old," Howarth says. The beach is about five miles from the port in Road Town.

On the other side of the world, Bas van Dreumel, captain of Holland America Line's Maasdam, has a soft spot for Cottesloe Beach in the port city of Fremantle, near his hometown of Perth, Australia. "Cottesloe is one of the nicest white beaches for our crew and guests for some R & R," van Dreumel says. "Plus you can purchase fish & chips and enjoy the uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean."

For Pierre Camilleri, hotel director on Carnival Cruise Line's newest ship, Carnival Vista, a goal is finding a great place to swim. Trunk Bay on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, is his favorite swimming spot in the world.

"The gorgeous clear waters, soft white sand that feels like powder and swaying palm trees along the shore create a striking, peaceful natural spot," Camilleri says. "This bay revives my body and soul with its tranquility and beauty." Trunk Bay is easily accessible on a shore excursion from the popular Caribbean port of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas.

Nearby, when he gets a few free hours you'll find Renato Bendinelli, captain of another Carnival Cruise Line ship, the Carnival Fascination, making a beeline to famous Orient Bay Beach from the Caribbean port of Philipsburg on St. Maarten.

"It's a world-famous, sought-after spot where beach chairs are plentiful, the ocean is bright blue and the sand is soft and powdery. Plus, you can head downtown for French food," Bendinelli says. He also enjoys Maho Beach close to the island's airport, which brings the thrill of watching jumbo planes fly only a few hundred feet overhead.

"Some of the most beautiful beaches I have visited are on the Isle de Pines in New Caledonia in the southwest Pacific," says Kevin Boag, hotel director on P&O Cruises Australia's Pacific Eden. "It's a place I'm sure our guests will remember for a long time."

From the tender pier you can head left for a gentle stroll to the stunning white sand beach of Kuto Bay or right to the beach at Kanumera Bay, a family friendly patch with amazing areas to snorkel and pine trees for shade, Boag advises.

Rio de Janeiro's famous Ipanema beach gets high marks on the people-watching spectrum from officers on South America cruises on brands such as Italian line Costa Cruises, ultra-luxury line Seabourn, German line AIDA Cruises and the ocean liners of Cunard. If you can distract yourself from the buff bodies and skimpy bikinis on display on the two-mile stretch of golden sand, there are impressive views of the towering Two Brothers peaks.

On Australia and New Zealand itineraries, John Scott, captain of Holland America Line's Eurodam, recommends a beach break in New Zealand's Bay

of Plenty.

From the port of Tauranga on North Island, Maunganui Beach is about a 20-minute walk from the dock and has sun, sand and surf – plus the bonus of great ice cream.

"At the northern end is the stunning Mount Maunganui and behind the beach don't miss a stop at Rush Munro, New Zealand's oldest ice cream maker," Scott says.

Champagne Bay in the remote island nation of Vanuatu has long been voted the best beach in the South Pacific and is a favorite of Michael Mihajlov, destination director for Carnival Australia. "This perfectly undisturbed white sand beach lies within an undeveloped, perfectly natural bay," Mihajlov says. "It's beach nirvana."

Darren Bowland, captain of Holland America Line's ms Koningsdam, says it's no surprise that guests give high marks to the line's private island, Half Moon Cay. "It's fantastic, with a lovely white-sand beach, clear turquoise waters and no outside interruptions. I always hear from guests that this is the perfect, quintessential Caribbean island experience. You know what? It really is."

On Mexican Rivera cruises, isolated Lover's Beach near Cabo San Lucas and the tiny beach haven of Yelapa Beach near Puerto Vallarta are favorites of the Princess Cruises destination team. Recommended on Western Caribbean itineraries is an excursion from Cozumel to Tulum. Plan some time to relax in the white sands and dip in the emerald sea of Tulum beach, below the unique sight of the cliff-top ruins of an ancient Mayan city.

"There are few places in the world that compare to Myrtos Beach on the little island of Kefalonia in the Ionian sea of Greece," says Paolo Viscafè, captain of the Costa Pacifica.

"When I saw this island for the first time I was fascinated by the view of the unspoiled and beautiful beach from the mountain above. The silence was as timeless as the ancient history of this place," Viscafè says. Captain's tip: For an unforgettable experience head to the terrace of a sea-view taverna to sample local products such as cheese and olives with a glass of Robola wine.

For those who like an active beach vacation you can't do better than Hawaii's Waikiki Beach, says Wesley Dunlop, captain of the Aurora from P&O Cruises.

"I was lucky enough to visit on the Aurora's recent World Cruise and the thing that I loved about it was the plethora of activities available there, everything from surfing, canoe paddling, snorkeling, scuba, jet skis, parasailing, kite surfing," Dunlop says. "You name it, it's available! Combine this with miles of golden sand, clear blue waters and some fantastic restaurants and in my mind that is hard to beat."

Captain Marco Carsjens, master of Holland America Line's Rotterdam, daydreams about the beautiful pink sands of Bermuda, including the famous, crescent-shaped Horseshoe Bay in Southampton Parish.

"You can catch amazing views from cliff-top trails above, and if you go exploring, there are small and secluded coves such as Port Royal Cove with its shallow water and interesting rock formations," Carsjens says, adding wistfully, "I wish I had more time at the beach."

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