



Bahamas Student Guide

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HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

HISTORY

The original inhabitants of The Bahamas were likely the Siboney, Meso-Indians, who migrated into the Greater Antilles. When Christopher Columbus purportedly discovered the islands, he found Lucayans and called them Indians. They were related to the neo-Indian Arawaks in the larger Caribbean Islands and their culture was Tainan. The Lucayans came to be known in The Bahamas as Arawaks and they had no written language. Being peaceful by nature they were forced northwards by the more warlike Caribs. It is believed that they arrived in The Bahamas between AD500 and AD600, after settling in Cuba and Hispaniola. Christopher Columbus made his first landing in the New World at San Salvador, a small island in the east central part of The Bahamas chain on October 12, 1492. Eager to find gold, conquistadors followed Columbus. During this time, the Lucayans were wiped out by enslavement, disease and other hardships.

The Eleutheran Adventurers, led by Captain William Sayle, former Governor of Bermuda, settled in Eleuthera from 1647 to approximately 1658. New Providence, initially known as Sayle's Island was settled about 1666. In 1670 The Lord Proprietors of England were granted the Bahamas by King Charles and the settlement on the harbour of Providence was named Charles Town. Pirates soon inhabited the new town, which was destroyed by the Spanish several times from 1684 to 1702. Governor Nicholas Trott renamed the town Nassau, one of the titles of the new king, William of Orange.

After the Queen Anne's War ended in 1713, Nassau became a "Nest of Pirates" and became notorious for the drinking and wrenching by Blackbeard, Charles Vane and Calico Jack Rackham. However, the real pirate leaders were Henry Jennings and Benjamin Hornigold. Captain Woodes Rogers, an ex-privateer, was appointed by King George I as the first Royal Governor in 1718. Rogers' mission was to suppress the pirates however he also offered pardon to those who reformed. Those who refused were either executed or banished. His anti piratical zeal inspired the memorable motto for our country, EXPULSIS PIRATIS, RESTITUTA COMMERCIA (Piracy expelled, Commerce restored).

During the American Revolutionary War, Nassau capitulated to the Spaniards for the last time. In 1783, The Bahamas was restored to Great Britain by treaty. Following the American Revolution, thousands of British Loyalists emigrated to The Bahamas, many bringing their black slaves with them. The Emancipation Act was designed to come into force on August 1, 1834, bringing freedom to the slaves, however it did not immediately give the slaves complete freedom. The ex-slaves did not become fully free until August 1, 1838 after an apprenticeship period which effected the transition between slavery and freedom.

In January 1964 Great Britain granted the Bahamas internal autonomy, which provided for a bicameral Legislature, the Lower House of Assembly and the Upper Senate. On January 10th,

1967 the White United Bahamian Party (UBP) was defeated in General Elections and for the first time, the Black Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) won control of the government. The leader of the party Lynden O. Pindling, then became Premier (later on July 10, 1973 when the country attained Independence from Great Britain he became Prime Minister) and remained in this position until August 1992 when the Free National Movement (FNM) won parliamentary elections and Hubert Ingraham became Prime Minister. In 1997, the FNM won the government for a second term. As a consequence of the 2002 General Elections, the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) formed the

Government of The Bahamas with the Rt. Hon. Perry G. Christie as Prime Minister. In 2007, the Free National Movement reclaimed the government for another 5 years.

GEOGRAPHY

Although considered part of the Caribbean, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is an archipelago of some **700 Islands** and nearly 2,500 small islets or cays situated in the Western Atlantic Ocean. Approximately 30 of these Islands are inhabited. The Islands of The Bahamas stretch Southeast off the Florida coast, the closest Out Island to the U.S. mainland being Bimini, about 50 miles off the coast of South Florida. The Islands stretch across roughly 100,000 square miles of ocean, beginning at their northernmost point about 175 miles east of Palm Beach, Florida and winding nearly 750 miles to the southeast where they are within 50 miles of Cuba and Hispaniola.. The islands are mostly flat with miles of white and pink sand beaches. The estimated land area of The Bahamas is approximately 5,400 square miles. The highest point in the country is Mount Alvernia on Cat Island which is 206 feet above sea level. **The Bahamas has the world's third longest barrier reef and about 14. 5% of the world's coral can be found in our waters. The islands are made entirely of calcium carbonate, which is mainly produced or precipitated by the organisms of coral reefs. There are no rivers in The Bahamas.**

The largest of the islands is Andros Island. On Grand Bahama is Freeport, the second largest city in the country. Great Inagua is the second largest island in the country. Other notable islands are: Great Abaco, Eleuthera, Cat Island, San Salvador Island, Acklins, Crooked Island and Mayaguana. Nassau is the capital and largest city, located on New Providence.

Water Clarity

The waters are free of silt and sediments and are among the clearest and most colourful in the world. The sea floor is easily seen at 60 ft. **It has been scientifically proven that a specific algae which requires light to live, is found deeper in the waters of The Bahamas than anywhere else on earth.**

GENERAL FACTS

GOVERNMENT

OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE

The Constitution of The Bahamas is based on the Westminster Model; Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Executive Branch, The Legislative Branch, and Judicial Branch.

The Bahamas being a member of the Commonwealth of Nations recognizes Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State. The Governor-General is Her Majesty's representative in The Bahamas and constitutes a symbol of the nation's unity.

The Cabinet constitutes the executive branch and has general direction and control of the Government of The Bahamas. It is necessary for the Cabinet to comprise at least nine Ministers inclusive of the Prime Minister and Attorney General.

Parliament constitutes the Legislative branch of the Bahamas, which consists of a Senate and a House of Assembly. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the peace, order and good governance of The Bahamas.

Judicial authority is vested in the Judicature which comprises the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal with such jurisdiction, powers and authority as may be conferred on these Courts respectively by the Constitution or any other law.

POPULATION

The latest census conducted in 2000 showed the total population of The Bahamas at 303,611 and 210,832 of this number reside on New Providence, which includes the capital city of Nassau and 46,994 in Grand Bahama Island, the second largest population centre. The next census will be in 2010.

POPULATION CENTRES

The two major population centres are the capital Nassau which is located on **New Providence Island** and **Freeport** located on **Grand Bahama Island**. The other populated Islands and cays are officially called **Family Islands** but commonly known as **Out Islands**. The population is unevenly distributed with 85 per cent of the total population residing in New Providence and Grand Bahama (70 percent in New Providence and 15 per cent in Grand Bahama Island).

CLIMATE

The Bahamas has a sub-tropical maritime climate, which makes for generally year-round good weather. The Bahamas does not experience extremes of temperatures. In centrally situated New

Providence, winter temperatures seldom fall much below 60F degrees and usually reach about 75F degrees in the day. In summer, temperatures usually fall to 78F degrees or less at night and seldom rise above 90F degrees during the day. In the more northerly Islands winter temperatures are lower than in New Providence and about five degrees higher in the southern islands. In the summer months the temperatures are generally the same throughout The Islands of The Bahamas. The rainy season falls between May and October, however unless there is a tropical system in the area, showers are generally for brief periods of time. On average, February is the coolest and driest month. June is the wettest month and July is the warmest month.

ECONOMY

The Bahamas is a stable, developing country. Its economic and political stability as well as its many tax breaks attract foreign investment from all over the world. The Bahamian economy is based mostly on tourism and offshore banking. The agricultural and industrial industries are comparatively small. The tourism sector has for a long time been the driving force of the Bahamian economy. The tourism industry is estimated to account for approximately 50 per cent of the total GDP (Gross Domestic Product) indirectly employs about 50,000 persons, roughly half of the total workforce.

CURRENCY

Legal tender in The Bahamas is the Bahamian Dollar. The Bahamian Dollar is on par with the United States Dollar, which is accepted throughout the Islands of The Bahamas. Notes are in denominations of 50 cents and Bahamian dollar \$1, 3, 5,10,20,50 and 100. Coins are in denominations of 1,5,10, 15 and 25 cents. The Bahamian dollar is on par with the United States dollar. Currency exchange is available in banks and at hotels. Automatic teller machines are available on the main islands in airports, at banks and casinos and other convenient locations. Major credit cards and debit cards are widely accepted. Travelers cheques are also accepted.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The telephone system in The Bahamas is operated by the Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) and services and facilities are comparable with those in North America. A one hundred per cent digital switching system allows direct distance to over 100 countries and there is 24 hour communication from The Bahamas to anywhere in the world.. BTC offers a wide range of services including telephone, fax, telex, cellular and radio phone networks, private line services, packet switching, satellite and GSM services.

COST OF LIVING

The cost of some goods in the Bahamas like food, autos and some items of clothing may be considered to be relatively high due to the fact that most of them are imported and duty and freight charges have to be added. Automobiles, food and clothing fall into this category. Medical and dental treatment may not be as costly as in the United States. At the government-owned Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau, there is a minimal charge of \$10 a visit for residents and \$30 a visit for non-residents: however, there is normally a long wait. To build a three bedroom

house including, a living room, dining room, kitchen, bath and patio can be a minimum of \$110 per sq. ft. ranging upwards to \$275 per sq. ft which totals \$165,000 to \$412,500 for a 1,500 sq. ft home. The cost fluctuates depending on materials used, building standards and area. The cost for renting apartments is as follows: One bedroom \$500 and up. Two bedrooms range from \$700-\$6000. An efficiency apartment can rent for \$500-\$1,000. A half gallon of milk costs approximately \$3.19, 1 dozen large eggs if locally produced costs \$1.81 while imported eggs cost \$3.49. 5 lbs of flour is approximately \$3.31; 1 loaf of whole wheat bread – approximately \$3.59; 5 lbs of potatoes – approximately \$3.99.

SHOPPING

Most goods brought into The Bahamas are imported from the United States. Nassau/Paradise Island and Freeport, Grand Bahama Island have fully stocked grocery stores with brand named goods and one can easily find the latest fashions and designer clothing and footwear from the United States and around the world. There are 11 categories of goods which are imported free of duty, and prices are lower than in the United States. These categories include: crystal, china, fine jewelry, leather bags, linens and tablecloths, wine and liquor, perfume, cologne and toilet water, cameras and accessories, cashmere sweaters and watches.

TIME

The Bahamas operates on Eastern Standard Time which is five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. From the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November The Bahamas operates on Daylight Saving Time.

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around in Nassau/Paradise Island, Grand Bahama Island and most of the Out Islands is easy. Driving is on the left hand side of the road. The various modes of on-Island transportation include:

Rental cars (major car rental companies include Avis, Hertz, Budget, Dollar, Alamo/National found in Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island) and other local rental companies.

Taxis (All taxis are required to have meters in good working condition. Taxi rates are government controlled.

Buses (called jitneys) which for a small fare can take you to and from many locations **Motor scooters** (mopeds),

Bicycles, (some hotels have bicycles for rent, generally for the use of their guests).

Surreys (horse and carriage rides used in conducting short tours around Nassau),

Water taxis (in Nassau they operate between Prince George Wharf and Paradise Island) and in some of the Out Islands they operate from the mainland to the cays.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The Islands of The Bahamas have 10 national holidays:

New Year's Day (January 1)	Junkanoo festival is held from 1:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on Bay Street
Good Friday (Friday before Easter)	Commemoration of the crucifixion of Christ.
Easter Monday	(Monday after Good Friday) Observed in parts of the British Commonwealth
Whit Monday (7th Monday after Easter)	Observation of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the church on Whit Sunday or the day of Pentecost. The birthday of the Christian church
Labour Day (1st Friday in June)	Recognition of the working people. The Labour Unions' parade takes place throughout the streets.
Independence Day (July 10)	The Bahamas' independence from Great Britain on July 10, 1973 is commemorated
Emancipation Day (1st Monday in August)	Also known as August Monday, this holiday observes the freedom of slaves in 1834
Discovery Day (October 12)	Also known as Columbus Day in commemoration of Columbus' discovery of The Bahamas on this day in 1492.
Christmas Day (December 25)	Celebration of the birthday of Jesus Christ
Boxing Day (December 26)	A traditional English holiday that was started centuries ago when left-over Christmas goods were boxed by the landlords and given to tenants and servants. The Boxing Day Junkanoo festival takes place on this day.

***Holidays falling on a Saturday or Sunday are usually celebrated on the following Monday.

*****HOLIDAYS FALLING ON TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY**

*** Tuesday holiday is usually celebrated on Monday.

***Wednesday and Thursday holidays will be celebrated on Friday (with the exception of Independence Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

ABOUT THE ISLANDS

NASSAU/PARADISE ISLAND/, GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND (FREEPORT)

Nassau, the capital of The Bahamas, located on **New Providence Island** and **Freeport**, located on **Grand Bahama Island** offer a variety of experiences from non-stop excitement to peaceful relaxation. Nassau is the centre of industry, commerce and communications and presents a special charm which captures the elegance of the old world while at the same time incorporating up-to-the-minute modern features. Here one will find well-preserved colonial buildings, exciting attractions, duty free shopping, straw market, thrilling land and sea sports, pristine beaches, delightful cuisine and unique cultural activities. Beautiful Paradise Island is linked to Nassau by bridge and has gorgeous beaches, luxury hotels, a large casino and first class entertainment.

Grand Bahama Island is the second most popular tourist destination. Here you will find long stretches of deserted clean-white beaches, inviting hotels, casino, night-time entertainment and world-class scuba diving facilities and land and sea sports. **Freeport** is the resort center of the Island and is action-packed. On the eastern and western ends of the Island are serene and quaint settings and finding hide-away spots is not uncommon. Shopping is also a feature as one can stroll through the International Bazaar and Port Lucaya Marketplace and discover shopping treasures.

THE FAMILY (OUT ISLANDS)

Each of the Islands of The Bahamas is unique and different, with individual character and charm. **The Out Islands** feature a cozy, relaxing way of life which is a big difference from the fast paced lifestyle on the Islands of New Providence (Nassau) and Grand Bahama. **Andros Island** is the largest of all the Islands but has the smallest population for its size. It has an abundance of bonefish and the world's third largest barrier reef which is over 140 miles long and is renowned for its superb diving sites and marine life.

Abaco Island has naturally protected waters and dozens of offshore cays therefore they are a pleasure for yachtsmen and fishing enthusiasts. It is referred to as the sailing capital of the world. Here you will find excellent marinas, guides and boats for hire as well as a championship golf course, one of seven in The Bahamas, the others being in Nassau/Paradise Island, Grand Bahama Island, Abaco and Eleuthera. **Bimini** one of the finest fishing areas in the world known for its large population of game fish. Championship tournaments are held there year-round.

The Island of **Eleuthera** is very inviting. It has the quaint settlements of **Harbour Island** (with pink sand beaches) and **Spanish Wells**. The **Exumas** are a pleasure for sailors who love to sail around the Islands because many of the Exuma Cays are reached only by boat.

There are so many other islands which make up the Bahamas chain and which provide tranquility and serenity. The mystery of **Cat Island** is to be discovered. This Island, with its jewel-like hermitage, stretches out into the Atlantic Ocean and has a claim of being Columbus's original landing site in the New World.

San Salvador is located in the far eastern Bahamas. It is also believed to be the place where Christopher Columbus first landed in the new world on October 12, 1492. The island was originally known as Guanahani by its first descendants, the Lucayan Indians. It is small in size but not in scenery and is surrounded by superb beaches and reefs. It is an ideal place for snorkeling, diving and fishing.

Long Island was the third Island to be discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. In his diary Columbus is said to have described Long Island as the most beautiful island he had ever seen. A monument to Christopher Columbus is erected on top of the white bluffs of the north end of the Island. Long Island is 60 miles long and has one of the most beautiful beaches in The Bahamas. It provides excellent sites for diving and snorkeling.

Crooked Island is known for its natural beauty and the Island has many quaint villages. It provides good fair weather cruising grounds and tidal flats. It has been known as a bonefish paradise and is also good for tarpon fishing

Acklins Island is long, narrow and hilly and has numerous caves and bays along its western shores. A ferry can be caught from Acklins Island to Crooked Island. Both Islands are enclosed in a shallow lagoon known as the Bight of Acklins. The Bight of Acklins is a safe cruising ground for shallow-draft vessels.

Inagua is the third largest of the Islands of The Bahamas. It is the southernmost island in The Bahamas and is mostly low and flat. The Morton Salt Company is located here and produces nearly a million pounds of salt annually. Inagua is also a home and refuge of one of the world's largest colonies of flamingos. Inagua is a haven for bird-watchers and nature lovers.

TOURISM IN THE BAHAMAS

Tourism in The Bahamas can be traced back to the 1720's when Nassau had gained some notoriety as a health resort and the first tourists to The Bahamas were invalids. Peter Henry Bruce, a military engineer sent from England to repair the forts in Nassau, recommended the islands as having the most temperate air in America, and vouched for the speedy recovery of any invalid who journeyed here for health reasons. Bruce's account forms one of the earliest records of tourism in The Bahamas.

The Civil War of the USA created one of The Bahamas' earliest "booms" when, almost overnight, Nassau became neutral ground for the exchange of goods between the warring factions of the North and South. Blockade runners from all over the world swarmed into Nassau to benefit from the selling of goods in demand – cotton, medicine, guns and food. To cope with the influx of blockade runners and other affluent Southerners, more hotel accommodations were urgently needed. When the Royal Victoria Hotel opened its doors in 1861, it immediately became the headquarters for this mixture of "visitors".

Encouraged by the arrival of 500 tourists to Nassau in 1873, Governor Robinson suggested that The Bahamas make an effort to divert some of the 100,000 tourists who were going annually to Florida. Taking a step in the right direction, a most important Hotel and Steamship Act was passed in 1898, and a ten-year contract was signed with H.M. Flagler, founding father and Czar of Miami, who leased the Royal Victoria Hotel from the government and proceeded to fill the hotel with more tourists from Florida. Unlike previous visitors, these formed a wealthier and healthier group of tourists.

At the end of the century the Royal Victoria Hotel was bought by Henry Flagler who built the Colonial Hotel in 1900 and it was also at that time that a Miami-Nassau Winter Steamship service was commenced. Samuel Cunard also introduced a steamship service New York/Nassau/Havana. All of these new developments made it attractive for the rich to spend their winters in The Bahamas. In 1929 Pan Am made its first flight from Miami to Nassau in 2 ½ hours and several other small hotels were constructed. In the 1950's Sir Stafford Sands became Chairman of the Development Board and his objective was to increase the number of tourists and make tourism a year-round business. Legislation was then passed to enable investors to build hotels with modern facilities. In the early 1960's casino gambling was introduced. The Development Board also spent millions of dollars in overseas advertisements to encourage visitors to visit The Bahamas.

Beginning in the 1950's large planes and later larger jets, were flying into Nassau. In 1957 the old Windsor Field Airport was developed into an International Airport.

One of the main natural advantages which The Bahamas enjoys is its proximity to the high-income population of North America. The inhabitants of this modern continent feel an increasing need to escape from the tensions caused by industrialization. The Bahamas offers perfect retreat: the natural beauty, white sandy beaches, clear translucent waters, sporting activities, friendly inhabitants and slow pace of the Islands make them ideal.

TOURISM STATISTICS

Prior to the year 2000, annual tourist arrivals to The Islands Of The Bahamas ranged between 3.4 and 3.6 million, however in the year 2000 tourist arrivals were recorded at the 4 million mark for the first time and at the end of 2004, total visitor arrivals was a little over 5 million. These

figures include both cruise passengers and stopover visitors. About 85% of all stopover visitors to The Islands of The Bahamas are residents of the United States, 7% are from Europe, 5% from Canada and 3% from other parts of the world. Canadians and Europeans tend to stay longer than Americans. More than 90% of all cruise visitors are from the United States.

***For up-to-date information on Tourism Statistics email: gdelancy@bahamas.com or visit the website: www.tourismtoday.com

HOTELS

As of April 2009 there were 290 hotels in The Islands Of The Bahamas, making a total of 15,909 rooms; 48 hotels in Nassau; 14 on Paradise Island, 30 in Grand Bahama Island and 198 in the Out Islands combined.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

PEOPLE

Bahamians are mainly of African descent - 85 percent Black and 15 percent White and mixed. The White population is descended mainly from the early English settlers who arrived on the Island of Eleuthera in 1648. Many can also trace their roots back to the American Loyalists who after 1783 fled the newly independent States with their slaves. Bahamians are a dynamic, independent and hospitable people. They love to celebrate and will take advantage of any opportunity to do so. Even though funerals are solemn occasions, they often end with a planned gathering of family and friends with lots of food and drinks. A “**wake**”, which is the celebration of the life of the deceased, is usually held before the funeral and goes into the wee hours of the morning as the participants sing, eat and drink throughout the night. Religion is an integral part of Bahamian life as is evident from the many churches and denominations represented. Bahamians love music and they are a people of rhythm. It is said that no Bahamian can stand still if there are drums beating or cowbells shaking.

RELIGION

The Bahamas is a religious country, with Christianity as the dominant religion. Among the denominations represented are: Anglican, Assembly of God, Baha'i Faith, Baptist, Brethren, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Christian Science, Church of God of Prophecy, Greek Orthodox, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jewish, Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Lutheran, Methodist, Muslim/Islamic, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, The Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist and other smaller denominations. In New Providence, the three largest denominations are Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic, respectively.

MUSIC

Our links to Africa and Europe are evident in our music, primarily our ring dances (jump-in dances, ring plays and fire dances) and Junkanoo. Junkanoo is a celebration which occurs on Boxing Day (December 26) and again, on New Year's Day (January 1). Junkanoo rushes mark the ceremony. Junknook, it is believed derived from a Ghanaian leader, John Connu. The Junkanoo Parade is most popular in the capital, Nassau as well as Freeport and the Family Islands.

From the 1950s, the influence of American culture has increased, via television and radio and other Caribbean styles have entered the music industry such as: Calypso, reggae and socca from Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad and other islands. When The Bahamas achieved Independence in 1973 from the United Kingdom, professionals from all walks of life began to get involved in the Junkanoo celebrations. Eventually, costuming and competitions became more complex and common place and as a result Junkanoo became a signature event and a tourist draw for The Bahamas.

Goombay is a percussion music made famous by Alphonso Higgs who was otherwise known as “Blind Blake.” “Blind Blake” entertained tourists arriving at Sir Lynden Pindling airport for many years.

Rake-and-scrape music is a unique type of instrumental music made by bending a saw and scraping with a small object. The small object of choice is a ‘screw driver.’ The rake-and-scrape music is played to accompany the quadrille dances. The quadrille dance is an example of a good mix of both European and African culture. The quadrille is similar to square dancing,

however with a native twist accompanied by rake-n-scrape using the concertina and a saw which is scraped by a metal instrument. Rake-and-scrape's popularity has been dwindling in recent times; however, local entertainers like "Rake-and-scrape's popularity has been dwindling in recent times, however, local entertainers like "Lassie Doe and The Boys" endeavour to keep rake-and-scrape alive.

Our Bahamian music is divided into three basic categories – religious, recreational and music with dance. The first Bahamians adopted religious music. The White Puritan settlers confined their music to unaccompanied singing of hymns and psalms. Religious music can be classified as ritual and non-ritual. The former includes music sung at church services and funerals as found in the Catholic and Anglican churches and while the non-ritual is religious in content it is not associated with formal type services. This music is found in churches like the Church of God of Prophecy and the Baptist churches.

Bahamian entertainers like The Bahamen, Ronnie Butler and Kirkland Bodie have gained much popularity in Japan, the United States and elsewhere.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Bahamians enjoy sports tremendously. On any given day one can find Bahamians engaged in their favorite sport, whether it is swimming, fishing, football, cricket, baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, squash, bowling, racquetball or soccer. It is common to find a group of sitting under a tree or in a backyard enthusiastically engaged in a game of checkers, chess or dominoes. Sailing regattas are held in many of the Islands of The Bahamas at different times of the year. Scores of locally-built sloops, representing each of the major Islands of The Bahamas wage fierce competition on the high seas. The activities more popular with our visitors include swimming, boating, fishing, sailing, snorkeling, scuba diving, private piloting, golf, tennis, water skiing, wind surfing, parasailing, jet skiing, casino gambling (for visitors only), bird watching, shell collecting and horseback riding.

LANGUAGE

English is spoken throughout the Islands of The Bahamas although a strong Bahamian dialect is evident. Some popular Bahamian slang include:

- Big-eye meaning greedy,
- Gussy-mae which translates into a fat Bahamian girl,
- Jack is a friend,
- Bright is light skinned
- Jook is to stab someone.

CULTURE

One of the greatest and most popular expressions of our culture is the **Junkanoo** festival which is a significant aspect of the folklore of the people and has its origin in Africa. It came to The Bahamas through the Black slaves who were brought from Africa to work on the plantations in The Bahamas. Slaves were given a few days off and during that time they celebrated with a dance. It has been described as "an annual outpouring of brilliant colour and design, strange music and rhythm and is something of which The Bahamas can be proud". Junkanoo is the soul

of the Bahamian. Junkanoo is celebrated in the early morning hours of Boxing Day (the day after Christmas Day) and New Year's Day. The celebration takes place downtown Bay Street in Nassau. From 1:00 a.m. until about 9:00 a.m. a vibrating rhythm from cowbells, goatskin drums, whistles, horns and a brass section resonates throughout the streets. The rhythm cannot be resisted as the pulsating music brings movement to the most sober person. The revelers are dressed in a variety of colourful costumes and some carry large pieces depicting a particular theme. The groups begin the year-long work of planning and creating the intricately-designed and stunning crepe paper costumes immediately after the New Year's Day festival. The Junkanoo festival is celebrated in Freeport, Grand Bahama and some of the other Islands as well, on a smaller scale.

The Royal Bahamas Police Force Band is another cultural icon. The 'beating of the retreat' by the band is a spectacular display of marching and counter-marching in a series of movements. The rhythmic performance is so inviting that onlookers cannot resist joining in the captivating display. These performances can be viewed on commemorative and special occasions such as the Independence Day Anniversary Parades in New Providence and Grand Bahama and at military funerals.

Changing of the Guard Ceremony is a fortnightly tradition of pomp and pageantry marking the changing of the guard at Government House, the residence of the Governor-General, personal representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Here, the internationally renowned Royal Bahamas Police Force Band performs proudly.

Bahamian **drama** and **art** have a significant part in our culture. There is a repertory season at the Dundas Centre for the Performing Arts. Their repertoire includes various types of drama, musicals and dancing. Various drama groups also present musicals and drama in the off season. Bahamian works of art are on display at the various galleries. The Central Bank of The Bahamas hosts frequent local cultural art exhibitions featuring Bahamian artists.

The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) is the premier Arts institution of The Bahamas. The NAGB is committed to engaging in history of Bahamian Art and Visual culture and supporting contemporary movements and experimental contemporary art practice through exhibitions, an extensive public program schedule, community and regional projects and partnership, arts education, providing fellowships and grants, the establishment and support of an art library and the building of the national collection. The website for the gallery is: www.ngb.org.bs.

People-to-People Program

The People-to-People programme is available on: New Providence, Grand Bahama, Eleuthera/Harbour Island, The Abacos, The Exumas, Bimini and San Salvador. There are over 1,200 Bahamians participating. Join the People-to-People program and experience something the average visitor might otherwise not see or hear about. The People-to-People Unit of the Ministry of Tourism matches visitors and volunteers according to their hobbies, interest, civic organizations and occupations. Volunteers are then responsible for setting up and meeting their guests. The host may invite the visitor to share an evening of pleasant conversation, join in the fun at a family gathering or worship with them at church. What the visitor does is left entirely to the host volunteers and visitors. The goal of People-to-People is for the visitor to gain an understanding of The Bahamas and culture.

What better way to learn about The Bahamas from afar than to talk directly to a Bahamian and so, with the People-to-People E-pal program, visitors can get a taste for the islands before they know what a conch fritter looks like. See the clarity of the water before their toes touch the beach and understand the culture before fully immersing themselves.

Tea Party at Government House

This program provides the visitor with the opportunity to have tea with the spouse of the Governor General at Government House, the official residence of the Queen's representative. Try some delightful local bush teas and pastries. The Tea Parties are also offered on Grand Bahama Island, The Exumas and The Abacos. Tea Parties are available from 4pm to 5pm on the last Friday of each month, January to November. Tea Parties are available from 4pm to 5pm on the last Friday of each month, January to November.

Legends/Folklore

Chickcharnies – The chickcharnies are a well-known part of Androsian culture (Andros Island is the largest Island in the Bahamas). The legendary creature is supposed to resemble an elf and has piercing red eyes, three fingers, three toes and a tail by which it hangs from the tall pine trees. It is believed that the chickcharnie forms its nest in the pine trees by joining two trees together at the top. The belief is that if the beholder sneers at the little creature, his head will turn completely around permanently. If you treat him with respect you will be blessed with good luck for the rest of your life.

Bush Medicine - The practice of bush medicine can be traced to the distant past. When the African slaves came from West Africa, they brought these practices with them. A number of bushes are said to have medicinal value and can be used to cure a variety of ailments from asthma and the common cold, to boosting energy and producing fertility in women. Some of the bushes are thought to have the qualities of aphrodisiac and others are believed to be good for relieving high blood pressure. The bushes bear such intriguing names as Seven-Man Strength, Life Leaf, and Sailor's flowers, Spanish Sage, Strong Bark, Five Fingers Leaf and Cerasee. The latter is a bush that Bahamians swear is a remedy for the common cold and some may even tell you that it has been known to cure cancer.

Rushin' - A religious dance that is a part of the New Year's eve (Watch Night) church service in some churches. It is a slavery religious dance that the congregation engages in following the New Years Eve service. It is common with Baptists and Churches of God or "Jumper Churches" and still takes place on the Family Islands, especially Andros.

Jump-in-dance Adding to the lively culture of The Bahamas is the jump-in-dance. This is like a ring play. A ring has to be formed and those participating in the dance stand in a circle around one or more dancers. There is clapping, singing and sometimes drum rhythms. One person at a time leads the dance in the circle. A solo dancer performs in the center of the ring and after dancing for a short period chooses another person, usually of the opposite sex to continue the dance in the circle. The sequence is repeated. The dance is lively and rhythmic.

OUR CUISINE AND DRINKS

Although virtually any type of international food can be found, some dishes are unique to the Islands of The Bahamas. The Bahamas are the delight of seafood lovers who enjoy the bountifully rich treasures from the sea. Crawfish (local rock lobster) conch (pronounced 'konk'), land crabs, fish (Grouper, Yellow Tail and Red Snapper to name a few), are delicious foods. Boiled fish and grits is a favourite breakfast treat. Boiled fish is also delicious served with homemade Island bread. Grouper is the most popular fish used for boiling. Bahamians are experts at cooking this fish which is flaky, white, tender and mild in flavour. Some Bahamians even used to cook the fish in seawater to bring out the true flavour. Conch, a mollusk, is a perennial local seafood favourite. The firm white meat is prepared in a variety of ways including: chowder, stew, spicy salads, popular fritters and deep fried as "cracked conch" served with peas and rice. Other specialties include Bahamian stew fish (made with celery, onions, tomatoes, spices and fish), Bahamian lobster or crawfish, peas n' rice (consisting of pigeon peas or fresh green peas with salt pork or bacon, tomatoes, celery, rice, thyme and pepper) and Johnny cake (pan-cooked bread made with butter, milk, flour, sugar, salt and baking powder).

A typical Bahamian meal consists of tasty crab and rice, delicious steamed fish, served with baked macaroni and cheese and a good helping of potato salad and fried plantain. This is followed by desserts such as coconut or pineapple tart, bread pudding or guava duff, a delicious dessert that is made through a laborious process of folding the fruit into the dough and boiling and is served with a sauce. This meal is topped off with a large glass of ice cold "switcha" (lemon or lime, sugar and water mixture). For a Sunday meal, the rich seafood delicacy, lobster, may be substituted for the fish. The lobster may be steamed, minced or broiled.

A typical Bahamian Christmas meal consists of baked ham and baked turkey with stuffing, green peas and rice (the green peas is usually picked fresh for cooking), yam or sweet potato, baked macaroni and cheese, potato salad, coleslaw and vegetables. Fruit cake is the dessert of choice for this meal.

BAHAMIAN RECIPES

APPETIZER

Conch Fritters

Ingredients: 1 lb. conch, 2 oz. onion, 2 oz. celery, 2 oz. green pepper, 1 egg (beaten), ½ oz. baking powder, 12oz. flour, salt, Tabasco Sauce, water.

Method: Cut the conch, and vegetables into ¼ inch dice. Mix the eggs, flour and baking powder and seasonings with sufficient water to form a fairly firm batter. Combine all ingredients and allow standing for 15 min. prior to deep-frying. Note: Clams may be used instead of conch. **Serves 8.**

SOUPS

Conch Chowder

Ingredients: 3-oz. onion, 3-oz. celery, and 3oz. carrots, 3oz. green pepper, 6 oz. potatoes, 8oz. Conch, 2 oz. oil, 2 oz. pork fat, 2 oz. tomato paste, 1 qt. water. Add salt and Tabasco sauce to taste.

Method: Cut the pork, vegetables and conch into ¼ inch dice. Cook the pork in the oil until light brown in colour; add the vegetables, herbs and cook for 3 minutes. Add the conch, tomato paste and chopped tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes. Add the water and simmer for 1-½ hours. Skim occasionally and season to taste. **Note:** clams, scallops or shrimp may be used in place of conch. **Serves 6.**

Peas soup and dough

Ingredients: 2 oz. pork fat, 2 oz. onion, 3 oz. flour, 4 oz. tomato paste, thyme, bay leaf, 10oz. pigeon peas, 8 oz. salt beef, 1 qt. water, salt Tabasco sauce
Dough (6oz. flour, water, ½ oz baking powder)

Method : Cut the pork into ½ inch dice and fry in the oil until brown. Add the herbs and flour and cook for 2 minutes. Allow to cool slightly, add the paste, peas, salt beef and water. Stir, bring to the boil and skim. Simmer for ½ hour, add the dough and continue cooking for 1 hour. Season to taste. **Note:** Canned kidney beans may be used instead of pigeon peas.
Dough (Combine the flour, baking powder and sufficient water to make firm dough. Knead well. Allow to stand for 15 minutes, then pin out and cut into one-inch squares).
Serves 6.

POPULAR DISHES

Crab and Rice

Ingredients: 3 land crabs, 1 oz. pork fat, 1 oz. oil, 2 oz. onion, 2 oz. celery, 2 oz. green pepper, 2 oz. tomato paste, 12 oz. pigeon peas, 1 qt. water, 1 lb. rice, salt, pepper to taste.

Method : Separate the body from the back, spoon out the fat and keep to one side. Cut the pork and vegetables into ¼ inch dice and fry in the oil. Add the crab fat, thyme, tomato paste and cook for 5 minutes. Add the water, bring to the boil. Add the rice and seasonings and cook under cover for approximately 20 minutes. **Note:** Lobster may be substituted for the crab. **Serves 6.**

Cracked Conch

Ingredients: 1 ½ lb. conch, 1 oz. lemon juice, 2oz. flour, 3 eggs

Method : Cut the conch in half horizontally and tenderize. Marinate the conch in the lemon juice for ½ hour. Beat the eggs and dip the conch in the flour, egg wash and finally dip again into the flour. Deep fry. **Serves 4.**

DESSERT

Guava Duff

Ingredients: (**Dough**) 4 cups flour, 1 cup sugar, 1 ½ tsp baking powder, 1 tsp salt, ½ cup vegetable oil, 2 cups finely sliced guava

Methods: Combine all dry ingredients and mix together. Add oil. Knead approximately 10 minutes until smooth and pliable. Place on a flat surface and roll out to ¼ in. thick. Spread sliced guava over dough. Roll up into a long round loaf. Wrap in foil. Cook in a double boiler for 1 hr.

Sauce

Ingredients: 1 lb. butter, ½ cup sugar, 2 8oz. tins sweetened condensed milk, 1 cup finely sliced guava, ¼ cup brandy (substitute vanilla extract for brandy)

Method : Blend butter and sugar together approximately 15 minutes. Add condensed milk and guava and blend 2 minutes. Add brandy (or vanilla) and blend 1 minute.

Cut dough into slices. Pour sauce over dough. Serves 8 – 10.

Johnny Cake

Ingredients: 2lb. flour, 2 tablespoons baking powder, 4oz. sugar, ¼ oz. salt, milk, water, 4oz butter, nutmeg

Method : Sift the dry ingredients and form a well. Rub the butter into the flour and add sufficient milk and water to make a firm dough. Knead well then allow standing for 30 minutes. Gently flatten to a height of 2 inches and bake in a moderate oven for approximately 35 minutes.
Serves 6.

LOCAL MIXED DRINKS

Bahama Mama

1 oz. Coconut rum
1 1/4 oz. Gold rum
1 1/2 oz. Nassau Royale Liqueur
2 oz. Orange juice
2 oz. Pineapple juice
Dash of Angostura Bitters (optional)
1/6 oz. Grenadine
1 Cherry and/or slice of orange or lemon
Mix all liquid ingredients together and garnish

Island Gal

1 1/4 oz. Vodka
3 oz. Orange juice
4 oz. Lemon lime soda
1 Cherry
1 small Pineapple wedge
Grenadine to color
Pineapple wedge
Fill a glass half way with crushed ice, place cherry in bottom of glass. Add vodka, soda and orange juice. Garnish with pineapple wedge attached to umbrella.

Yellow Bird

1 1/4 oz. Light rum
1/2 oz. Banana liqueur
1/2 oz. Galliano liqueur
2 oz. Orange juice
2 oz. Pineapple juice
1 Cherry and/or slice of orange
Mix all liquid ingredients together and garnish with fruits.

Goombay Smash

1 1/4 oz. Gold rum
1/2 oz. Coconut liqueur
3 oz. Pineapple juice
2 dashes of lemon juice
1 dash of simple syrup
1 Cherry and/or slice of orange
Mix all liquid ingredients together and garnish with fruits.

SERVICES

BANKING

Offshore banking and finance, the second industry in The Bahamas after tourism, accounts for approximately 15% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.

In The Bahamas, domestic retail banking includes: currency conversion, travelers cheques, using credit or debit cards, and accessing ATM cash is available in most of the country. Some of the Out Islands may not have such services. New Providence and Grand Bahama have easy access to such services.

There are both local Bahamian banks and foreign international banks that carry domestic retail services such as:

- Bank of The Bahamas
- British American Bank
- Commonwealth Bank
- First Caribbean Bank
- Royal Bank
- Scotia Bank

Banking hours are Monday-Thursday 9:30am-3pm and Friday until 4:30pm. All banks are closed on Saturdays except Commonwealth Bank on Prince Charles and Golden Gates. Both banks are open on Saturdays from 10am-1pm. Also, Scotia bank Cave Village opens on Saturdays from 11am-7pm. However, at Scotia no cash transactions take place on Saturdays. ATM machines are available 24 hours a day. Sundays, no banks are open.

Major credit cards, like Visa and MasterCard are accepted in New Providence, Grand Bahama and also most Family Islands.

Central Bank

The Central Bank is the central financial institution in The Bahamas and was established in 1974 by an Act of Parliament. Prior to this the Bahamas Monetary Authority held this position. Among the responsibilities of the Central Bank are: to safeguard the value of the Bahamian Dollar, credit regulation, note issue, administration of exchange control regulations, administration of banks and trusts legislation and to compile financial statistics.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

The Bahamas has excellent health care and medical services. The hospitals in The Bahamas fall under the responsibility of the Public Hospital Authority (PHA), which is governed by a Chairman and Board members. There are two major hospitals in Nassau, the **Princess Margaret Hospital and Doctors Hospital**.

Princess Margaret Hospital

The 405-bed acute care **Princess Margaret Hospital** includes the following departments: medical, surgical, maternity, intensive care, pediatrics, eye wing, chest wing, and private wing including specialist medical, surgical, obstetrical and gynecological services, ambulatory care

facility including accident and emergency, general practice and specialty clinics, dialysis units, laboratory including blood bank, x-ray, physiotherapy and pharmacy. It also has private wards.

Doctors Hospital

Doctors Hospitals is a privately operated, acute-care hospital with 72 patient-beds. Patients can choose between private and semi-private rooms equipped with satellite television, air conditioning, telephone and wireless internet. Medical specialties include, but are not limited to, emergency medicine; ear, nose and throat; general, endoscopic and laparoscopic surgery; cardiovascular surgery; obstetrics and gynecology; neonatology; pulmonologist; internal medicine; family medicine; gastroenterology; urology; cardiology; plastic surgery; psychiatry and pediatrics. There are three operating rooms, one with laminar flow. Emergency doctors are on the premises 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All emergency room staff is Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advance Life Support certified.

Geriatric Hospital

The Geriatric Hospital provides comprehensive medical and nursing care to elderly patients who are chronically ill and unable to be cared for at home or in any other community facility.

Lyford Cay Hospital

The **Lyford Cay Hospital** (which incorporates the **Bahamas Heart Institute**) is a 4 bed facility, including a two-bed coronary care unit and two-bed telemetry unit. Among the units are: operating theatre, x-ray and laboratory as well as an emergency room with a doctor on call 24 hours. Specialist treatment is also available in cardiology, internal medicine, family practice, plastic surgery, and gynecology and stress echocardiography.

Sandilands Psychiatric Hospital

Sandilands Psychiatric Hospital is responsible for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with mental illnesses and substance problems. Among the services that the hospital provides are: a maximum-security unit, child and family guidance centre, drug unit, detox and evaluation unit, alcoholic unit and day hospital facilities. Rehabilitation is provided through: a special education program, recreation therapy, occupational therapy and psychological evaluation. There is also a half-way house for long-term patients

There are also several private walk-in clinics and government-run clinics throughout the Island.

Freeport on Grand Bahama Island has a 77 bed hospital, the **Rand Memorial Hospital**. It is a community-type hospital which provides a variety of services including medical, surgical, gynecology and obstetrics, pediatrics, accident and emergency, psychiatry, pathology, clinical laboratory, radiology. It also has an intensive care unit. In addition there are clinics throughout the Island and several medical centres.

Out Islands - While there are no hospitals on the Out Islands, at present, the government operates 115 clinics of varying size, complexity and scope of services. In cases where more medical assistance is needed, patients are flown to Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau. Visitors needing medical assistance in the northern Bahamas may receive coverage from the Rand Memorial Hospital, Grand Bahama.

EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education has responsibility for Education in The Bahamas and the government provides education at its schools throughout The Bahamas free of charge. The mandatory age for school attendance is 6. Presently there are 247 schools in The Bahamas. The government operate 159 and 87 are private. In New Providence, 50 are government-run and 58 private. In the Family Islands, 109 are government-run and 29 private.

The following are the basic categories under which Schools in The Bahamas fall:

Pre-school	Ages 3 – 5
Primary	Ages 5 - 11
Secondary	Ages 11- 17
All-age	Ages 5-17

Special Education

All Ages (for exceptional students or those with severe learning disabilities)

Colleges

Among the higher education institutions are:

- The government operated College of The Bahamas
- The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI)
- The College of The Bahamas' School of Hospitality and Tourism
- Several United States Universities offer programs with weekend and evening classes which are held in Nassau. Among these institutions are University of Miami and Nova Southern University. Other private institutions offering tertiary education and degrees include Sojourner-Douglas College, Success Training College, University of the West Indies (regional) and the Eugene Dupuch Law School.
- Southeastern University. Other private institutions offering tertiary education and degrees include Sojourner-Douglas College, Success training College, University of the West Indies (regional) and the Eugene Dupuch Law School.

TOURISM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

BAHAMAHOST

Bahamahost is a training programme designed to familiarize participants with correct and accurate information on our country's history, geography, civics, economics and places of interest. A strong emphasis is placed on attitudinal training, teamwork and cooperation. In addition, participants receive training in customer service, interpersonal relationships and how to develop positive attitudes. The programme serves as a basic foundation for all other industry training and is used to promote service excellence in The Bahamas. It is a lecture series and self-improvement training programme designed in 1978 by the Ministry of Tourism to upgrade quality of service and attitudes in the hospitality industry. More than 25,000 people are

qualified Bahamahosts, including public service drivers, hotel and restaurant employees and straw vendors.

- There are also other programmes such as customer service seminars, adventures in attitude, train the trainer, a Tourism Education Awareness Module (TEAM) and Hospitality Opportunities Through Experiential Learning) (HOTEL) and (Adopt a School) programmes in high schools; Sales Marketing and Royal Treatment (SMART) training programme.

***For up-to-date information on Tourism Educational Programmes
E-mail: **dbrooks@bahamas.com.**

THINGS TO DO

ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

There are many attractions that are unique to The Bahamas, from the natural to the historic:

Nassau/Paradise Island

Ardastra Gardens & Zoo: Over 300 birds, mammals and reptiles from the Bahamas and around the world are on display in exotic tropical gardens. Visitors will take a delight in taking photos with the friendly parrots, boa constrictors and marching flamingos.

BahamaCraft Centre: A unique tourist shopping attraction located on Paradise Island; it displays a wide variety of arts and crafts, crafted from indigenous products and collected from our 700 Islands under the sun.

Balcony House: An 18th century restored house. The furnishings and design of Balcony House recapture the elegance and glory of a bygone era. A free-standing balcony gives this 18th century wooden Loyalist-style, architectural gem its name. Charming Balcony House is believed to be historic Nassau's oldest standing residence. Its proximity to Government House would render it a home of people of status. It was purchased by The Central Bank of The Bahamas, fully restored as a museum in 1992 and appointed with stately, period furnishings and unique objects.

Botanical Gardens: Enjoy 18 acres of tropical flora covering over 600 species including the national flower, the yellow elder.

British Colonial Hilton Nassau: This is a historical hotel on the site of Fort Nassau, now a part of the Hilton chain.

Christ Church Cathedral: The present edifice was erected in 1837 on the site of the first church in The Bahamas which was built around 1670. In 1861 Christ Church was designated as "The Cathedral Church of The Bahamas" by the Diocese of Nassau, which made the town "The city of Nassau".

Clifton National Heritage Park: Restoration project started in 2004 on this 208 acre compound at the southwestern end of New Providence with slave dwellings and plantation ruins. Clifton was once, a transshipment point in the 1700s, and it encompasses the remains of the Whyllly, Lyford, Johnston and Rosswood plantations. Phase one of the restoration was completed in the spring of 2008. Three of the slave huts were fully restored and an old stable converted into a gift shop. William Whyllly who was an American loyalist owned a portion of Clifton and he built his slave quarters with wooden instead of thatch roofs and sturdy stone walls. The structures which Whyllly built survived because he used high quality materials to build them.

Discover Atlantis: Tour the most mystifying and spectacular resort to have risen from the sea. Discover the world's largest marine habitat second only to Mother Nature. View over 50,000 sea animals representing 200 different species. Explore the Dig, a replica of an archaeological excavation site, which may reveal how the Atlantean culture flourished over 11,000 years ago.

Fish Fry At Arawak Cay: A popular outdoor eating spot for locals and tourists to stop for conch salad, fried fish or a cold Kalik beer.

Fort Charlotte Historic Complex: Nassau's leading historic attraction. Constructed under the Governorship of John Murray and built by Lord Dunmore this complex contains three Forts which guarded the western end of Nassau and picturesque Nassau harbor. Fort Charlotte built c. 1789 and named Charlotte after the wife of King George III of Britain. Fort Stanley and Fort D'Arcy c.1790s. Charlotte's military prowess was never tested. The former Advance Guardhouse c. 1793 now operates as a Conservation Laboratory for restoring metal artifacts: an on-site obelisk was erected c. 1835. Fort Charlotte boasts massive limestone walls encircling a dry moat and souterrains hand hewn from solid rock. Mounted cannon: a 100ft. well: interpretive, historic museum exhibits: and magnificent photo vistas from this hilltop site. Daily guided tour 8am-4pm. Facilitates the physically challenged. This site is managed by The Antiquities Monument and Museums Corporation. Website: ammcbahamas.com.

Fort Fincastle: This Fort was constructed of cut limestone and strategically placed a top Bennet's Hill c. 1773 to protect historic Nassau town and harbor. Built in the shape of a paddle-wheel steamer under the governorship of John Murray also called Viscount Fincastle. Mounted cannon, interpretive signs, exhibits and excellent vistas of Nassau, the harbor and Paradise Island. Daily guided tours 8am-4pm. Admissions free. (Subject to change). Donations appreciated Closed Christmas Day. This site is managed by The Antiquities Monuments & Museums Corporation. Website: www.ammebahamas.com.

Fort Montagu: This Fort was built on Montagu foreshore by British Engineer, Peter Henry Bruce c.1742, overlooks Montagu Beach and Park. Historic Fort Montagu, named after the Duke of Montagu engaged in 18th, century skirmishes with the American Continental Navy in 1776 and the Spanish in 1782/1783. This fort has strategically mounted cannon and defended the eastern end of Nassau and the entrance to the harbor. This site is managed by The Antiquities Monuments and Museums Corporation. Website: www.ammebahamas.com.

Garden of Remembrance: Located in Parliament Square. Here you will find the cenotaph, a monument commemorating the Bahamians who died in the First and Second World Wars.

Government House: Located near downtown Nassau. Since 1801 this has been the official residence of the Governor-General of The Bahamas, personal Representative of the Queen. A statue of Christopher Columbus which was built in 1830 stands at the front of this building to commemorate his discovery of the new world.

National Art Gallery: This Gallery is located in a stunning c. 1800 building and houses the National Collection of Bahamian art with varied annual exhibitions from private collections and historical and thematic exhibitions. Opening hours: Tue-Sat, 10am-4pm. Closed: Public Holidays. There is an admissions fee.

Pirates of Nassau Museum: A museum quality experience which relates the true, dramatic story of the golden age of piracy when Nassau was at its epicenter, a base for the greatest concentration of pirates ever seen in the New World. The Pirates of Nassau is a world class interactive innovative experience, guaranteed to thrill, entertain and educate visitors of all ages.

Pompey Museum of Slavery and Emancipation at Vendue House: The Pompey Museum is named in honour of a courageous slave, Pompey, who lived on the Rolle Plantation on Steventon, Exuma, Bahamas. Historic Vendue House or the Bourse as it was known was built sometime

before 1769 and continued to function as a marketplace until the late 1800s. Enslaved Africans and other commodities were sold at Vendue House during the 18th and 19th centuries. It was also a venue where official public notices were posted. This historic building was modified over time and throughout most of the 20th century it was utilized by various government departments.

The Pompey Museum became a museum in 1992. It featured an exhibition entitled: “Lest We Forget. The Triumph over Slavery.” A Slave Route Project created by UNESCO and the Schomburg Centre for Research in Black Culture. This exhibition focuses on the ways in which enslaved Africans reshape their destinies and place in history through the creation of distinct cultures. This story of slavery was told through pictures, documentation, authentic artifacts of slavery and replicas. There is an admission fee. Hours: Mon-Sat: 9:30am-4:30pm except Thurs 9:30am-1pm. Closed Sundays and Bahamian Holidays. This site is managed by: The Antiquities and Museum Corporation (AMMC). The website: WWW.ammcbahamas.com.

Potter’s Cay: At this Bahamian marketplace are Nassau’s local fishermen selling their fresh fish and conch – watch them pull the fish right out of the water and crack the conch out of the shells before your eyes. You will also find produce vendors enticing visitors with mouth watering local fruits and vegetables. Located under the Exit Paradise Island Bridge are the berths of the colourful mail boats which transport passengers and goods of all kinds between the capital and Family Islands.

Prince George Wharf: Located in the heart of town, this is the largest ship port in the Caribbean.

Queen’s Staircase: Nassau’s most visited attraction. Climb the 65 steps (originally 66). This steep staircase is believed to have been cut from solid limestone by slaves in the 1790’s to provide an escape route from Fort Fincastle to the town. The steps were later named the Queen’s Staircase in honour of Queen Victoria. This site is managed by The Antiquities and Museum Corporation. The website is: www.ammcbahamas.com.

Rawson & Parliament Squares: The traditional centre of the Bahamian Government located in the heart of downtown, Bay Street. On the southern side of the square are the public buildings. Built between 1805 and 1813, the buildings, which are based on Governor Tryon’s Palace in New Bern, the ancient capital of North Carolina, house the Bahamian legislature and other government offices. In front of the centre building is the statute of Queen Victoria which was given by the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the empire in 1905. Across Bay Street on the northern part of the square is the bust of Sir Milo Butler, a national hero and the first Bahamian to serve as Governor-General in an independent Bahamas.

St. Matthew’s Church: This Anglican Church, located between Church Street and Lover’s Lane, is the oldest church on the Island. It was built in 1803.

Straw Markets: Straw Markets are located on West Bay Street in Cable Beach and at the Bahamas Craft Centre on Paradise Island: however, the world famous Straw Market is located on Bay Street. The Straw Industry blossomed after the demise of the sponge industry in the 1940’s. Bahamian women as a means of income plaited and decorated dried palm and sisal plant leaves to make such creations as baskets, bags and dolls. Eventually, the straw industry grew when large numbers of women made straw souvenirs that were in high demand by visitors.

Authentically Bahamian Straw products and crafts can also be found in stores throughout New Providence and Paradise Island. Straw Markets are in the Out Islands and in Freeport/Lucaya, Grand Bahama as well.

The Caves: Located on the western end of the Island. The Lucayans sheltered here.

The Cloisters: The remains of a 14th century French stone Monastery that was imported to the United States by newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst in the 1920's. Forty years later the Cloisters was bought by Huntington Hartford and installed at the top of a hill overlooking the Nassau Harbour. The Cloisters is a popular wedding venue, located on Paradise Island.

The Water Tower: This imposing edifice was constructed on Bennet's Hill near to Fort Fincastle. A prominent landmark in Nassau, built in 1928 to maintain water pressure in the city of Nassau. It stands 126 feet high and 216 feet above sea level. A prominent landmark in Nassau built in 1928 to maintain water pressure. Its purpose was to maintain water pressure throughout the city. It provides a panoramic view of New Providence Island coast to coast. This site is maintained by The Antiquities Monument and Museum Corporation. The website is: www.ammcbahamas.com.

The Retreat: The 11-acre Bahamas National Trust property boasts one of this hemisphere's finest palm collections.

Versailles Garden: This garden is located on Paradise Island and consists of a series of about seven terraces. A sundial is mounted on a twelfth century gothic pedestal and flanked by two fountains. There is also a twelfth century statue of Hercules, marble statues of Napoleon, Josephine and a bronze statue of "Mother and Child". Also to be found in the gardens are statues of David Livingstone and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Grand Bahama Island (Freeport)

Grand Bahama Island has two main types of Attractions, natural and man-made.

Attractions include:

Bahamas National Trust Rand Nature Centre: Self-guided Nature Walks through a 100 acre nature preserve, rotating art and island exhibits. Great bird watching plus local plants, trees, educational exhibits and the Glory Banks Gallery.

Eight Mile Rock Boiling Hole: The Boiling Hole is well known for its occasional swirling movement of water in the cave area, which flows beneath the roadway. Experimental studies have confirmed that the hole is entry way to an underground cave connection across the island of Grand Bahama. This is also one of the sites explored by Jacques Cousteau who is said to have documented his findings.

Fern Gully & Josie Trail Tour: Utilized by residents in the Holmes Rock Community to escape hurricanes in the early centuries. This unique cave sits behind a local night club. It is over 200 yards in diameter and produces fresh water at low tide and salt water at high tide. The nature trail leading to and from the caves are fertile with native vegetation which produces a variety of herbal

cures referred to as “bush medicine” in addition to flowering plants, wild berries and plums that have been historically popular with the native residents in the area.

Garden of the Groves: The Garden of the Groves has more than 10,000 species of flowers, shrubs, trees and exotic plant life, which attracts many birds and butterflies. Along its shaded, winding paths are several waterfalls, and an old-fashioned chapel on the hill, a favourite place for weddings, prayer or meditation. The garden of the Groves is now also the home of the Grand Bahama Labyrinth.

Hawksbill Creek: The Hawksbill Creek, named for the once frequent visitor-now critically endangered-the Hawksbill Turtle. This area showcases the contrast between the natural and industrial landscape of Grand Bahama and also the resilience and importance of our mangrove system.

Hydro Flora Gardens: Open Monday to Friday 9am-5:30pm and Saturday 9am-4pm. Guided tours and group rates are available.

International Bazaar: The Bazaar was built as a shopping complex to showcase a multinational theme of products and merchandise from around the world including Spain, France, Denmark, South America, India and Hong Kong.

Kayak Snorkel Tours: A 30 minute paddle to the smallest national park in The Bahamas. Guided snorkeling along this spectacular, unspoiled reef, picnic lunch.

Lucayan National Park: Nature trails and boardwalks lead to a variety of ecosystems. Two large caves are open to the public-part of one of the largest underwater cave systems in the world. Swimming in the caves is prohibited: diving requires a special permit. Picnic tables are located on the beach.

Peterson Cay National Park: It is a mile offshore active coral reefs surrounding the cave provide excellent opportunities for snorkeling or diving: the Cay is perfect for picnics and relaxation. This is a protected area: leave only footprints, take only memories and photos.

Pinder’s Point Lighthouse: In the late 1700s to early 1800s this lighthouse was built to warn mariners of their proximity to coastlines and treacherous shoals: a point of entry to the island of Grand Bahama was an inlet/creek where the mail boat or small vessels would drop anchor. This inlet was located just west of the settlement of Pinder’s Point and east Hepburn Town. Ships anywhere near the island were able to determine their location through this lighthouse. It was recalled that each day at dusk Mr. Samuel Pinder, who was a descendent of Pinder’s Point, would light the torch which would burn throughout the night and daybreak, he would extinguish it.

Port Lucaya Marketplace: This 9 ½ acre waterside shopping village is popular with visitors as well as Bahamians.

Rand Nature Centre: As the headquarters of The Bahamas National Trust, the Rand Nature Centre was established in 1992 on 100 acres. It is a well known birding hotspot during October through May. In addition to birding tours, the centre also has public education programmes and unique nature trails.

Sir Charles Hayward Children's Library:

Library Hours: 10am-5pm M/W/F
10am-2pm SAT

***Closed Holidays.

Sir Charles Hayward Lending Library:

Library Hours: 10am-5pm M/W/F
10am-2pm SAT

***Closed Holidays.

Swim with Dolphins

Swim and interact with the dolphins in the natural environment of the Dolphin Experience Lagoon.

Taino Beach

Taino Beach, located in the Lucaya area, has a small playground and is ideal for families with children. During holidays the beach is the site of many local "cook-outs." Several restaurants are located here, including the Stone Crab and Keptain Kenny's Bay Watch.

The Heritage Trail/The Old Hermitage

Before 1955, the main transportation artery on Grand Bahama Island was the Old Freetown Road, a dirt path leading from Old Freetown in the east to eight Mile rock and other settlements in the west. After the foundation of Freeport brought in a modern highway, the old road was abandoned and left to nature. Eventually, nature did such a good job of reclaiming it that a stretch of the road was abandoned and left to nature. Eventually, nature did such a good job of reclaiming it that a stretch of the road near Freetown has become one of the Island's chief nature walks. Along the easy, five mile trek are over 30 species of plants, 18 kinds of birds, 7 species of butterfly and what remains of "The Hermitage" the oldest intact building on Grand Bahama dating back to 1901. Here are also remains of the early settlement and a cemetery.

The Out Islands (Family Islands)

Acklins/Crooked Island

Acklins Island's lush natural landscape makes it ideal for exotic island adventures. Acklins Island is truly one of the least known and most preserved of The Bahamas 'Out Islands. In fact, public electricity was not available on Acklins Island until 1998. This primitive Island is ideal to

those vacationers looking for a private getaway with outstanding secluded beaches and some of the largest untapped bonefish in the Caribbean

Lucayan Indian Sites

While this rustic island has relatively few historical landmarks, those folks who are lucky enough to make the trip should visit the Lucayan Indians sites. An ancient Lucayan Indian site, thought to be one of the largest Lucayan Indian settlements in The Bahamas, sits along Pompey Bay Beach, just south of Spring Point. In fact, 10 ancient Lucayan sites have been unearthed by National Geographic Society Archeologists in Samana Cay alone, which is southwest of Spring Point in Acklins.

Plana Cays

Plana Cays, also southwest of Spring Point is a protected reserve for endangered great Iguanas and the very rare estimated hutias (guinea pig like rodents) the only native mammal of The Bahamas.

Castle Island Lighthouse

Another land based site of interest in the remote Castle Island Lighthouse at the southernmost point of Acklins Island.

Bight of Acklins

Truly, the best kept secret of Acklins Island is the more than 1000sf of knee deep water of the Bight of Acklins, where some of the best bonefish in The Bahamas can be had.

The Abacos

From the historic to the unique, there's truly something for everyone.

Hope Town Lighthouse

Hope Town Lighthouse was built by the British Imperial Lighthouse Service to mark the reef of Elbow Cay during the 1860s. It is one of only two remaining lighthouse beacons saved from automation, thanks to residents, who have vigorously opposed it. Located on Elbow Cay, the historic 120 foot-high candy-striped lighthouse and the village of neat rows of gingerbread cottages painted varying pastel shades give this settlement plenty of charm.

Local residents opposed the island lighthouse in the early days. It actually took years to build because local residents continued to vandalize it in protest. Residents feared that their profitable shipwreck and salvage business would be ruined if ships could find their way at night.

Until the lighthouse's completion in 1835, Abacoans even went so far as to intentionally cause shipwrecks by sending false signals to passing vessels. Primitive artifacts and relics of the "Wrecker's Days" can be seen at Wyannie Malone Historical Museum in Hope Town.

National Parks

The Abacos have four dedicated national parks. Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park, south of Tilo Cay protects the barrier islands and coral reefs on its fringe. It is perfect for snorkeling with underwater caves abound with exotic marine life like eagle rays and sea turtles. Tiloo Cay National Reserve is a vital nesting place and habitat for many birds including the beautiful and rare white tailed tropic bird.

Abaco National Park

This park in Southern Abaco near Hole in The Wall Lighthouse is a designated natural preservation area protecting 20,500 acres containing the native habitat of the endangered Bahama parrot, exotic birds and other wildlife.

The Black Sound Cay National Reserve

The Reserve is adjacent to Green Turtle Cay; with its lush mangrove swamps is a bird watcher's paradise. However, all of The Abaco Islands are covered by scrub and pine forests so bird watching and nature hiking are keen everywhere making The Abacos, a popular Caribbean vacation destination for nature enthusiasts. Binoculars are a must.

Abaco Wild Horse Preserve

Abaco Wild Horse Preserve celebrates the history of horses who galloped the pine forests on the island for centuries. For years the origin of this endangered herd of horses was debated, but in 1998, researchers concluded that they are descendents of Spanish barbs. Visitors can tour the preserve and see Abaco barb horses in their national habitat. There are also resorts and locations where you can ride other horses on The Abacos

Man-O-War Cay

This Cay is the boat building capital of the region. While only a few hundred people live on the cay, many of them are descendents of early loyalists settlers and boat builders, such as Billie Bo and his great-great-nephew Joe Albury. Albury builds handcrafted boats, a skill that has been passed along through the generations. Visitors today make special trips to Joe Albury's studio to purchase beautiful handcrafted model

boats and sailing dinghies made from Abaco hardwoods. Albury's handcrafted boats are truly representative of proud, historic Abaco sailing vessel.

Great Guana Cay

The Cay is an islet off Great Abaco and is a seven –mile long exotic island with secluded beaches and grassy dunes that is home to about 100 people and a few roosters. This Bahamas attraction is ideal for snorkeling, swimming and relaxing on the beach. There is also not a better place to experience Bahamian cuisine. All-day pig roast on weekends are popular for eating, listening to live Bahamian music and beach dancing.

**** **Activities:** fishing tournaments, sailing, diving/snorkeling, surfing, golfing, windsurfing, biking, birding, regattas.

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Andros Island

Andros Lighthouse

Andros lighthouse was built in 1892 to mark the southern entrance to the Fresh Creek Channel. In 1952, three old cannons were added in front of the Lighthouse and a tower built to the top. The cannons came from the "Cottsac Schooner, which wrecked on Stanyard Rock in the 18000s.

Tongue of the sea

Andros is best known to scuba divers and snorkelers. Barrier Reef and Tongue of the Sea is the third largest barrier reef in the world measuring more than 140 miles long. It's just a mile off the shore of Andros island and is swimming with almost every variety of exotic fish species. The Tongue of the Ocean is a deep ocean trench that begins about 70 feet deep and plunges to more than 6,000 feet.

Mariners Well

Mariners Well is a freshwater natural spring well, which got its name from locals. It's said to have been used by pirates before the 17th century and after that by sailing crewmen on the sponging vessels. Mariners Well sits between two saltwater lakes and Andros Island and is located on the property of a house built in the shape of the letter, "A."

Native Colony Ruins

Native Colony Ruins is about a half mile south of Pleasant Harbour and include eight historical stone buildings dating back to the 1930s. The buildings represent vintage Bahamian-style architecture and are open for exploration. It's unknown why the colony was abandoned and never inhabited.

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Henry Morgan's Cave

Pirate buffs and explorers can venture to Henry Morgan's Cave at the northeastern point of Andros near the town of Morgan's Cave at the northeastern point of Andros near the town of Morgan's Bluff. While historians have never confirmed this cave was the hideout of the Caribbean's most feared pirate, folklore speaks of buried treasure within. Signs along Queen's highway direct the public to the dark cavern full of bats and stalagmites.

Activities: diving, snorkeling, fishing, boating, biking, hunting, birding.

Bimini Island

Bimini is rich with historical landmarks and natural attractions. Floridians have the luxury of only a 50-mile trip to beautiful Bimini Island, one of the best places on earth for divers, anglers and explorers. Bimini also offers a lot of fun for visitors looking for a diverse and sometimes mystic or strange vacation experience.

Bimini Road

In 1958, huge limestone blocks off the coast of North Bimini were discovered and are believed to have been once an undersea road to the lost city of Atlantis. This half-mile stretch of neatly aligned relics, named the Bimini Road, draws divers and all kind of opinions about the origins of the “road.” It’s easy to explore, as it’s only in about 20 feet of water.

Underwater Discoveries

Scuba divers, both novice and advanced have numerous underwater sites to explore like the WWI Freighter Wreck, as well as the Bimini Wall, plummeting a heart thumping 4,000 feet just to name a few.

The Fountain of Youth

Ponce de Leon was thought to have stopped on Bimini Island in his search for the mythical Fountain of Youth in 1513. Some say he heard about it from an Indian tribe when he was governor of Puerto Rico. The Fountain of Youth is believed to exist somewhere in the flats and pools of South Bimini.

Dolphins

Many come to the Biminis to encounter the friendly wild Atlantic spotted dolphins in the open ocean through human-dolphin connection excursions, with groups like Wildquest or Bill & Nowdla Keefe’s Bimini Undersea.

The Healing Hole

The Healing Hole just south of Easter Cay is said to provide calming Zen-like experiences to those who bathe in its fresh water sulfur pool.

Memory Ledge

Memory Ledge is said to produce a flood of life’s memories to those who lie on the ledge.

Activities: fishing, boating diving/snorkeling, biking, kayaking excursions

Cat Island

Historical attractions are just as extraordinary as the natural wonders. While Cat Island has superb diving off its south shore where there is an abundance of caves and coral canyons to traverse, remote Cat Island is hardly touched by tourism, let alone commercialism. For those who want a sense of true African-Bahamian culture. Cat Island is the perfect Out Island vacation destination.

Cat Island is perfect for those travelers looking to discover their own way off the beaten path and who do not need a site-seeing map to historical places, because there isn't going to be a package tour guide here. Outsiders are few, making this the perfect destination for quiet soul-searching seclusion.

The natural beauty of its rose-colored beaches and dramatic cliffs add to its charm. Most of the historical landmarks are churches, plantation ruins and old buildings.

Mt. Alvernia

The highest natural point in The Bahamas (206 ft). "The Hermitage," a miniature monastery and excellent replica of larger hermitages in Europe was built on Mt. Alvernia in the 1940's by Father Jerome, an architect and Jesuit missionary. He also built churches including one on Cat Island. He retired in 1939 and spent his last 20 years as a hermit.

Boiling Point or Boiling Hole

Ambrister Creek flows into a clear lake called "Boiling Point" or "Boiling Hole" whose tidal conditions cause bubbles and blurps, the conditions which lead to folklore of a sea monster below its surface. Today this is a great spot to spy rays and baby sharks and numerous birds that nest along its mangrove fringe.

Mermaid Hole and Big Blue Hole

Located in Bain Town is another lake. This 65-footwide, 10-foot deep lake called Mermaid Hole is where many believe a mermaid lives amongst the four bed holes within that lead to underground caverns and passageways.

The monster said to live in Big Blue Hole located near Orange Creek, just off of Dickies Road is said to devour horses. The deep blue hole has strong undersea currents that flow through its caverns linking to the sea, where many objects like dead farm animals tossed into the lake ended up. This folklores still scares local fisherman from venturing too far in this freshwater lake.

Griffin Bat Cave

Dickie's Road goes east to Griffin Bat Cave, once a hideout for slaves.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

Sitting atop a ridge alongside the road in the settlement of Old Bight is St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church another beautifully crafted legacy built by Father Jerome, with amazing frescos engraving and sculptures.

Deveaux House Mansion

In the Port Howe area of Cat Island see the ruins of an 18 century plantation at Deveaux House mansion. In its glory days the plantation was given to Colonel Andrew Deveaux in 1783 for protecting Nassau from Spanish invasion and occupation.

Columbus World Centre Museum

Located in Knowles, the Columbus World Centre Museum is a small museum where you can learn about Cat Island's history.

Sir Sidney's Poitier's Home

The Academy Award winner's boyhood home is located in South Bight.

Activities: diving, snorkeling, canoeing, kayaking, shelling

Eleuthera Island

Pink Sand, rock formations and caves are just the beginning. About two miles east of Upper Bogue and north of Gregory Town at the narrowest part of Eleuthera Island, which is just 30 feet wide is the Glass Window Bridge. Striking rock formation make up the Glass Window Bridge. The Land here is high on either side and abruptly falls away to nearly sea level almost dividing the island in two. You can stand in one spot and see the gray Atlantic Ocean to the west and Exuma Sound to the east.

The Cow & the Bull

Another interesting land formation on Eleuthera Island is the Cow and the Bull about a mile south of the Glass Window Bridge. There are two larger boulders, on one side, the boulder looks like a bull with two cows and on the other side, a bull with one cow. Both sets of boulders overlook the sea on both side, and when the weather is inclement and the wind passes through, the result is a roar that sounds like bulls.

Preachers Cave

Preachers Cave is a large unique cave about two miles east of Gene's Bay. Founders who landed and were sheltered here made an altar and held vigils in the cave, giving it its namesake.

Surfer's Beach

Surfer's Beach is two miles south of Gregory Town where southwest winds blow breaks in from the Atlantic. This two-mile beach has some of the best sugary soft white sand in The Bahamas.

Hatchet Bay Cave

Just south of Surfer's beach is Hatchet Bay Cave. The cave is a mile long and filled with stalagmites and stalactites which will take on the appearance of underground cathedrals in your torch light. Centuries old graffiti of charcoal signatures line the walls. It's recommended to tour with a cave guide.

James Cistern Beach

The waves at James Cistern Beach sometimes reach 10 feet due to brisk southerly wind making this another great surfing site at Eleuthera. There is also a shipwreck just off shore, great for snorkeling when the water is calm.

Ocean Hole

People often sought out the healing powers of Ocean Hole, rumored to be a bottomless, natural limestone wonder on the south edge of Rock Sound in Eleuthera. Filled with tropical fish and turtles who greet visitors and the brackish water is said to have medicinal purposes

Lighthouse Beach

One of the best beaches in Eleuthera, some say even better than Pink Sands, is a hidden gem called Lighthouse Beach. Located on the Atlantic side of Eleuthera Point behind some sand dunes are a fantastic secluded blush rose sand beach. There is great snorkeling just a walk off the beach: also, there is a great picnic spot.

Harbour Island

Pink Sands Beach

This famous Pink Sands Beach is located on the Atlantic Ocean side of Harbour Island. As for the beautiful pink hue, that comes from a simple single-celled animal called a foraminifera or foram for short. There are some 4,000 species of forams and a few grow bright red shells.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding takes place on Pink Sand Beach. This is a popular activity on Pink Sands Beach.

Roundheads

A hidden overgrown 17th century battery built by the English to defend the island can be found at the southern end of Bay Street. Cannons called Roundheads, can still be seen at this site.

Boiling Hole (The Current). A rock bank that "boils" during changing tides.

Loyalist Cottage (Harbour Island). Built in 1791 it is one of the remaining homes of the original loyalist settlers.

Spanish Wells – gets its name from the fresh-water reserves of this Island that Spanish sailors renewed their water supply after the long Atlantic crossing. Among the Spanish sailors was Ponce de Leon the legendary explorer who sought the Fountain of Youth.

Activities: diving, snorkeling, fishing, boating, surfing, golfing, biking, kayaking, cave exploration

Exuma Island

From swimming pigs to the oldest living evidence of life on earth. The Exumas has it all and then some. The Tropic of Cancer runs through George Town.

Government Wharf

George Town is a major settlement in Great Exuma and to be found here is the Government Wharf where most of the locals gather and the town's daily activities take place.

Mystery Cave

A must see for divers and snorkelers just south of Stocking Island is Mystery Cave, a 400 foot deep blue hole, which begins at 15 feet below the surface, but rapidly drops to 100 feet. Stocking Island is lined with talcum powder white beaches and is a great day from George Town.

Three Sisters Rock

North of George Town a mile offshore across from Mt. Thompson is an odd trio of large rocks jutting up from the sea, called Three Sisters Rock. Town lore explains appearance of the rocks after three heartbroken sisters drowned swimming out to sea. Three Sisters Reef nearby is another nice spot off the beautiful beach to go snorkeling.

The Exuma Land and Sea Park

The Exuma Land and Sea Park is the first of its kind in the world and is famous for its pristine beauty, outstanding anchorage and breathtaking marine environment. Under its transparent turquoise waters are beautiful natural gardens of coral teeming with lobster. The rarest living creatures of the park are stromatolites, blue-green, reef-forming algae, which are the oldest living evidence of life on Earth: some of them on Exuma Island are believed to be 2,000 years old. Fossil stromatolites date back 3.5 billion years.

Allan's Cay

Allan's Cay is one of the few places on the Out Islands of The Bahamas where you can see Iguanas. Looks can be deceiving. While they look fierce, iguanas actually are lizards.

The Hermitage

The Hermitage estate ruins are just one reminder of the cotton plantation days on Little Exuma this did not survive long. Visitors to the Hermitage can see the foundations of the main house and some old tombs that date back to the 1700s.

Hermitage tombs are the only three marked grave on the small settlement of Hermitage, which was settled by the Ferguson family from the Carolinas after the American War of Independence. Each of the tombs has a different inscription: to the memories of G Butler (1759-1822). Henderson Ferguson (1772-1825) and Constance McDonald (1755-1759). The unmarked grave is believed to be that of an unnamed slave

Swimming Pigs

A highlight for many vacationers is the famous swimming pigs at tiny Major Cay, a short boat ride from Staniel Cay. Not only is it a great place for snorkeling and beach bumming, it's a hoot to frolic in the surf with the pigs. Remember to bring a snack for the swimming swine.

Thunderball Grotto

Thunderball Grotto is another Bahamian gem just northwest of Staniel Cay. Two James Bond scenes were filmed here, as well as the movies Splash and Into the Blue. Divers love this gin-clear watered Cavern for the dancing, sun and even moonlight that filters through the holes in the grotto's ceiling highlighting the fish beneath.

Activities: Sailing, diving/snorkeling, fishing, boating.

Long Island

This Island has the world's deepest blue hole and so much more to offer. This thin 2-mile wide Caribbean Island has the Atlantic Ocean on the eastern side where the sea crashes into dramatic cliffs and where numerous pristine scuba diving and snorkeling coral reefs are located off shore in the sparkling ocean water. The western side enjoys plenty of shallow azure bays perfect for bird watching, ocean kayaking or just splashing and swimming around. There are numerous beautiful and secluded tropical island beaches each with a quiet personality to suit a visitor's perfect private beach vacation or wedding destination.

Long Island Museum

Stop into the Long Island Museum to brush up on the history, culture and customs of Long Island which is dotted with plantation ruins, pretty villages, historic cottages and groupings of tiny, pristine white and bright blue Gothic churches at each settlement.

Love Beaches

Some of Long Island's best tropical beaches are the four grouped pink sand Love Beaches located on the Atlantic side east of Stella Maris Airport off of Ocean View Drive. There is a small shallow bay at one of these perfect for small children to frolic and play.

Salt Pond

Just 20 miles south of Stella Maris sits Salt Pond, a thriving commercial business section for Long Island's salt production and lobster and fish processing plants.

Dunmore Plantation

Dunmore Town Long Island offers authentic craft and artwork stands and centuries-old churches. Named after a plantation aptly named Dunmore Plantation. Tours can be made of the ruins and relics of the old estate and the former slave plantation house built of limestone.

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Hamilton's Cave

Artifacts and prehistoric cave drawings from the Lucayan Indian tribe-the first known settlers in The Bahamas-were discovered in Hamilton's Cave on Long Island. Visitors can explore the ancient cave system, view historical cavern drawings and see the remains and relics of the early history of The Bahamas.

Clarence Town

Clarence Town is a peaceful settlement that is very near superb snorkeling and scuba dive sites.

Turtle Cove and the World's Deepest Blue Hole

Near Deans, is Turtle Cove, which has a fantastic tropical beach and turquoise shallows. This leads to a true jewel, however, just southeast, where one of the World's deepest blue holes (660) turns into the world's eighth-largest underwater Caverns. The vestibule of the aquamarine hole opens up to a lovely Caribbean Bay or cove flanked by magnificent white tropical beaches.

Christopher Columbus Memorial

On the northernmost tip of the island, North Long Island, there is a 15 foot tall stone obelisk memorial erected to Christopher Columbus. This area provides some stunning views and bright green exotic seas with some of the best Caribbean snorkeling and scuba diving around.

Activities: sailing, diving/snorkeling, fishing, boating.

Rum Cay/San Salvador

The island's several name changes are a reflection of its deep historical past. The Lucayan Indians, an indigenous Arawak tribe, initially named the island Guanhani which meant "welcome" in Arawak. Then, in 1492, Columbus made his first landfall in the New World on the island. He named it San Salvador or "Holy Saviour," which he noted in his travel journal and described it saying, the beauty of these islands surpasses that of any other and as much as the day surpasses the night in splendor." Today, four separate monuments mark the exact spots where he came ashore, although it is generally regarded that he landed at Long bay where a large stone cross stands. However, in the 17th, century British Pirate Captain George Washington took over the island, making it his headquarters and named it Watling Island, after himself. The island retained this name until 1925 when it was then renamed San Salvador.

Dixon Hill Lighthouse

Built in 1887 on a former plantation owned by John Dixon, this 400,000 candle Lighthouse has a visibility of 19 miles. Standing 163 feet above sea level, it maintains four-hour watches nightly, giving a double flash every 10 seconds. This kerosene lit hand-operated lighthouse is the last of its type in The Islands of The Bahamas.

New World Museum

Located at Cockburn Town, the Museum is housed in a 1910 building formerly used as the government's administrative offices and jail. This traditional museum contains many important artifacts and a display on the life of Christopher Columbus.

Cut Cay

Columbus referred to Cut Cay (the island that is not an island) in his journal. It is the small island across a shallow channel off North Point. At low tide, one can wade across to Cut Cay. Columbus believed that it would be a good site for a fortress.

Watling's Castle/Sandy Point Estate

Watling's Castle, the ruins of a late 18th, century Loyalist plantation house, was named after George Watling, a buccaneer who frequented the place. The substantial ruins at Sandy Point, including the three story "Great House," Kitchen, slave quarters, barns and boundary walls, were studied by the Bahamian field Station, a center for academic research in archeology, biology, geology and marine sciences. The Lookout Tower, which overlooks French Bay, has been restored.

Big Fortune Hill Plantation

Mr. Burton Williams, a loyalist, maintained a cottage plantation at Fortune Hill in the late 1780s. The ruins of the “Great House” and slave quarters are still located here.

The Landfall Park

The Landfall Park (at the Long Bay Site), a 10-acre site rich in archaeological artifacts, is the first landfall site of Christopher Columbus in the “New World.” On Oct 12, 1492, after 33 days at sea, it is widely believed that Columbus landed at beautiful Fernandez Bay (Long Bay). A simple white cross, erected in 1956 by Mrs. Ruth Wolper, commemorates the historic event. Also on this site is the Mexican Monument which housed the Olympic flame in 1968 on its journey from Greece to Mexico City.

Activities: diving, snorkeling, fishing, horseback riding

EXPERIENCES

Nassau/Paradise Island

Dolphin Encounters

Take a relaxing 20-minute catamaran ride to beautiful Blue Lagoon Island, a privately owned tropical island where you can immerse yourself in the natural world of dolphins and sea lions. Choose the “Dolphin Encounter” for an up-close and personal adventure or the thrilling “Dolphin Swim” Programme, where you’ll be accelerated through the water via the exhilarating “Foot-Push”! Meet friendly sea lions in the all NEW “Sea Lion Encounter” programme-the only one of its kind in The Bahamas. Spend the day relaxing on our pristine beach: enjoy lunch, tropical drinks, water sports or swimming in a hammock. Have the experience of a lifetime.

SeaWorld Explorer

The SeaWorld Explorer is a cruising underwater observatory and guided marine tour. Renowned throughout the Caribbean as a popular tourist adventure, this semi-submarine provides a unique opportunity for everyone-not just divers and snorkelers to experience the wonders of life under the waves. The sea world explorer was originally designed and manufactured in Australia for research use on the Great Barrier Reef. The vessel remains above sea level at all times while its hull, the underwater observatory, is five feet below the surface.

Yellowbird 3-hours/Catamaran cruise

See the harbor of Nassau and Paradise Island aboard the 85 foot catamaran yellowbird. Sunbath on the broad decks or lounge in cool shade and listen to the music of a live band as you cruise the harbor. The highlight of the tour comes when Yellowbird arrives at a beautiful beach where you’ll enjoy a refreshing swim in some of the bluest waters in the Caribbean. On the return trip, the Yellowbird becomes a party boat with dancing to island music and some calypso antics.

Snorkeling equipment is available on board the boat to rent.

Bahama Hand Prints

Discover the beauty and originality of hand-printed fabric at Bahama Hand Prints. Visit their boutique/factory and catch the printer in action transforming plain cloth into beautiful hand screen printed designs.

Horseback Riding.

Happy Trails Stable offer daily tours (closed on Sunday) including over an hour's riding in one or more remote areas of the island of New Providence. At the Stable, the Happy Trails staff mounts patrons on the horse and gives a few brief instructions, on basic riding. Then, enjoy a leisurely guided Nassau horseback riding tour through the woods and onto the beach for about an hour and a half.

Blackbeard's Cay Adventure

Located just northwest of the eastern end of Nassau, Blackbeard's Cay is a charming little tropical island that takes its name from the legendary pirate himself. That's where Blackbeard's Cay operates. Guest take a relaxing 25 minute cruise to the picturesque Blackbeard's Cay, on board a 65-foot, double deck motorized catamaran designed for 250 people. They then get to experience the thrill of hand feeding one of the numerous southern Atlantic stingrays under the supervision of highly trained and knowledgeable staff. Snorkel gear and life jackets are included so guests can enjoy their experience with the stingrays as they can sign up for a speed ride and feel the wind on ones face as one is whisked away.

One day Out Island Adventure - Take an exciting one day excursion to one of the beautiful Out Islands. The unique **Seaplane Safari to scenic Exuma or the Fantastic Exuma Powerboat Adventure** will allow a day's experience in Exuma. Idyllic **Harbour Island** with its miles of pink sand beach and quaint homes, tiny **Spanish Wells** and mainland **Eleuthera** are a two hour ride from Nassau on the Bahamas Fast Ferry. The Bahamas Ferries will also take you to **Andros** Island, the largest Island in The Bahamas, **Exuma** and **Abaco** Island- all on a day's get away.

Grand Bahama Island

Open Ocean Dolphin Experience

Environment. The dolphins will follow the boat into the open ocean (weather permitting) where you will enter the water and interact with the dolphins.

Horseback Riding

At Pine tree, one has the chance to explore winding wooded trails through Pine tree Forest, pass Cooper's Castle and ride along a secluded beach. Tours are guided and are geared for novice to **expert**. Reservations are necessary as space fills up.

Eco-tours

Exploring nature and the environment is fun and exciting and one can enjoy eco-adventures on any Island, including national parks, sea and land parks, birding, and an assortment of wildlife, plants and underwater cave systems.

Nassau/Paradise Island

Bahamas Outdoors -Eco-ventures. This totally eco-friendly activity is for nature lovers. Explore the very heart of nature's playground in the tranquil areas of the Island. Bird watching and off-road bicycling are also offered.

Canoeing at Lake Nancy.

Lake Nancy is nestled at the end of a wooden path off JFK Drive. Lake Nancy's sparkling clear, 3 ½- foot deep waters are home to native tilapias and an array of wild life.

National Parks

Established in 1959, The Bahamas National trust (BNT) administers the Country's national park system, covering more than 700,000 acres in 25 parks and protected areas.

Harold and Wilson Ponds National Park

This 250 acre park is located in central New Providence off Sir Milo Butler Highway. Here, visitors can walk on a boardwalk and see indigenous birds such as egrets, herons, cormorants, the endangered Bahama swallow and many others.

Bonefish Pond National Park

On the south central coast of New Providence is this 1,800 acre park which is a marine nursery providing a protective habitat for juvenile fish, crawfish and conch.

Primeval Forest National Park

This park is 7.5 acres of old growth forest and limestone grottoes southwest of Mount Pleasant villages in western New Providence. Step back in time to find 50-ft cinnamon and mahogany trees still in their centuries old pristine state. Limited access.

The Retreat

The 11-acre Retreat on Village Road is the BNT headquarters. The property features native trees such as Madeira, gum elemi and tamarind, and one of the world's largest collections of rare palms-more than 170 species. The Retreat is also a haven for birds making it a popular spot for bird watching. Guided and self-guided tours available.

Bahamas National Trust.

Participate in a guided bird-watching tour with an accredited tour guide. You will visit ecological sites, such as the Bahamas National Trust, Adelaide Creek, Lake Killarney and Harold & Wilson Pond, home to many resident and migrant species.

Grand Bahama Island

Bahamas Eco-Ventures

Bahamas Eco-Ventures is established as an ecologically sensitive tour operator on the island of Grand Bahama through its airboat nature tours.

Jeep Safari Tour

This tour allows patrons to discover Grand Bahama Island in style, as you get behind the wheel and head out into some of the most secluded areas of this lush and diverse tropical landscape. Driving through the amazing Bahamian terrain, you become an explorer charting the landscape in your exciting and adventure filled Jeep Safari Tour and to ensure nothing is missed, tour guides show off the most historical, picturesque and ecologically rich locations.

Biking Nature Tour

This tour allows you to experience the natural beauty and diversity of Grand Bahama Island by bike.

Grand Bahama Island

Birding

Birding can be found on Grand Bahama Island. Grand Bahama Island has the distinction of hosting the second highest number of native bird species. For bird watching and nature lovers, the island is a true mecca, a place where they can see 18 of the 28 species of Bahamian birds that are not seen in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Dolphin Close Encounter

Sit with your feet in the water as the dolphins swim around you and actually touch these amazing animals.

Grand Bahama Nature Tours

Kayak through an inland reef at Lucayan National Park. Enjoy lunch and relax at a private site on Gold Rock Creek Beach.

Kayak Snorkel Tours

A 30-minute paddle to the smallest national park in The Bahamas. Guided snorkeling along this spectacular, unspoiled reef, picnic l

Lucayan National Park/Kayak Nature and Cave Tour

This tour allows patrons to settle into their very own kayak and get ready to explore Lucayan National Park, a 42 acre paradise that was established in 1982 by The Bahamas National Trust. Guides lead patrons through this incredible sanctuary and reserve for a half day tour of the diverse eco-systems present within its grounds.

Open Ocean Dolphin Experience

Only at **UNEXSO** can you swim and interact with the dolphins in the open ocean environment. The dolphins will follow the boat into the open ocean (weather permitting) where you will enter the water and interact with the dolphins.

Peterson Cay Kayak Snorkel Tour

This tour allows participants to paddle out to a pristine sun-soaked island and snorkel around one of the richest reef habitats in The Bahamas. Peterson Cay, a tiny island that rests just one mile off the southern shore of Grand Bahama is one of the smallest national parks in The Bahamas.

Tour highlights include:

Only 30 minutes paddle from mainland to beach on Peterson Cay excellent snorkeling only yards off beach. All snorkeling tours are guided by experienced snorkelers.

Calabash Eco Adventures

This adventure exists of: pick up, drop off, narrative bus ride by guide, nature visits of Boiling Hole in Hepburn Town and cave. Experience short nature hike at Holmes Rock, leisurely pace biking in West End, light lunch and snorkeling at Paradise Cove Deadman's Reef.

Smiling Pat's Tour

A unique local flavor that celebrates GBI's special natural beauty, culture and traditions in beach cruises, spear fishing, Bahamian tea parties, Blue Hole excursions and high speed day trips to Abaco.

Water Cay Kayak Adventure (Only on demand).

Visit the quaint settlement off Grand Bahama Island's north shore. Enjoy a native lunch; let your guide take you back in time through the history of this small island.

Garden of the Groves

This Garden has more than 10,000 species of flowers, shrubs, trees and exotic plant life, with many birds and butterflies. Along its shaded, winding paths are several waterfalls, and an old fashioned chapel on the hill, a favorite place for weddings, prayer or meditation. The Garden of the Groves is now also the home of the Grand Bahama Labyrinth.

Birding. Grand Bahama Island hosts the second highest number of native bird species. For bird watchers and nature lovers the Island is a true mecca, where one can see 18 of the 28 species of Bahamian birds that are not seen in the United States, Canada or Europe.

Abaco Island

Abaco National Park comprises 20,500 acres in Southern Abaco near the Hole in the Wall. Included in this area are 5,000 acres of forest and the Abaco population of the Bahama Parrot.

Abaco Outback-Kayak Tour

Since 2000, Abaco Outback has offered a variety of Kayaks and nature adventure tours. The most popular tour is a half day kayak trip to the mangrove creeks of the Angel Cays. Shoving off from the launch site at Snake Cay, the kayaks head south along quiet waters in the lee of several small islands. The Creek system in the Angel Cays is extensive and the average depth is not more than a few feet. The water is crystal clear and eagle rays, nurse sharks and schools of small snapper are visible even without a snorkel mask. The mangroves are a nursery for lobster and many different species of fish and the creek beds are thick with soft corals and gorgonians in the deep spots and turtle grass and *Cassiopeia* jellyfish in the shallows.

Bird Watching and Nature Tours

These tours operated by Bahamas Naturalist Expeditions Ltd. give you the Opportunity to explore the nature trails in the Caribbean pine forests of the Abaco National Park with an experienced naturalist guide, who will explain everything of interest. You'll go in search of the endangered Bahama Parrot, see a variety of orchids and bromeliads and enjoy a catered picnic lunch on a freshwater, inland blue hole and see colossal stalagmites and stalactites that were formed more than 10,000 years ago.

Exuma Island

Crab Cay Ruins

Visit blue holes and ruins on Crab Cay, in Elizabeth Harbour about one mile southeast of George Town. Visitors will find the ruins of one of the most interesting and beautiful plantations in The Bahamas.

Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park

The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park was created in 1958. This 176 square mile park was the first of its kind in the world and is famous for its pristine beauty, outstanding anchorages and breathtaking marine environment. It is the first marine fishery reserve in the Caribbean.

Thunderball Grotto

This fantastic underwater cave was used in the filming of James Bond movies and is a must see for divers and snorkelers.

ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

ART GALLERIES

- Andrew Aitkens Frame Art Gallery, Madeira St. Tel: (242) 328-7065.
Fax: (242)356-4805
- Anthaya Art Gallery. Website: www.anthayaart.com
- Balmain Antiques and Gallery. Bay Street
- Central bank Art Gallery. Website: www.central-bank-of-the-bahamas-art-gallery
www.centralbankbahamas.com/galleries.php
- Doongalik Studios. Website: www.doongalikstudios.com
- Kennedy Gallery. Email: kennedygallery@batelnet.bs
- Lyford cay Shopping Centre. Tel: (242) 362-4034. Fax: (242) 362-4828
- Nassau Art Gallery of The Bahamas. Website: www.nagb.org.bs
- New Providence Art and Antiques. Website: www.npartantiques.com
- Popostudios Centre for Visual Arts: Website: www.popopstudios.com
- The Hub. Website: www.thehubbahamas.org
- Third Eye Artworks and Collectibles. East Street off Bay Street. Tel: (242)-326-6803

MUSEUMS

Bahamas Heritage Centre (Nassau)

This Museum houses ancient domestic items such as goose irons, washtubs, scrub boards and kerosene lamps and outdoor cultural amenities including a traditional school house for storytelling.

Bahamas Historical Society (Nassau)

This institution traces the history of The Bahamas from pre-Columbus to the present. Some of the displays include an Amerindian-style dugout canoe and various artifacts of the Loyalist era, late 19th century and early 20th century.

Balcony House Museum (Nassau)

A free standing balcony gives this 18th century wooden Loyalist-style, architectural gem its name. Charming Balcony House is believed to be historic Nassau's oldest standing residence. Its proximity to Government House would render it a home of people of status. For detailed information: www.ammcbahamas.com.

Nassau Public Library and Museum (Nassau)

One can look around the small prison cells which are now lined with books, or examine a collection of historic prints, old colonial documents, or Arawak artifacts.

Pompey Museum of Slavery & Emancipation at Venue House. (Nassau)

The Pompey Museum is named in honor of a courageous slave, Pompey, who lived on the Rolle plantation on Steventon, Exuma, Bahamas. Enslaved Africans and other commodities were sold at Vendue House during the 18th and 19th centuries. It was also a venue where official public notices were posted. For detailed information: www.ammcbahamas.com

Pirates of Nassau Museum: (Nassau)

A museum quality experience which relates the true, dramatic story of the golden age of piracy when Nassau was at its epicenter, a base for the greatest concentration of pirates ever seen in the New World. The Pirates of Nassau is a world class interactive innovative experience, guaranteed to thrill, entertain and educate visitors of all ages.

Long Island Museum: (Long Island)

This Museum is located in Buckley's Long Island. The Museum is the principal historic heritage conservation and preservation agency on the island. It is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of Long Island, the wider Bahamas and the world for visitors and future generations. A dream come true for the island residents and the members of the Long Island Association the building which houses the Museum, library and Community Centre was dedicated in 1986. The exhibition Long Island Heritage and culture: Dis We Tings represents a cross section of the traditions of the people of Long Island. It gives a glimpse at life on Long Island beginning with pre-Columbian times to the present day. It attempts to look at the diversity of the communities from Seymour's and Newton's Cay in the north to Gordon's in the South. It causes the people to remember their toils and joys and most of all their determination to leave a lasting legacy.

For detailed information visit: www.ammcbahamas.com

San Salvador Museum: (San Salvador)

The San Salvador Museum located in the capital of Cockburn Town, in the ancient 19th century jail house and Commissioner's Office, includes artifacts and replicas highlighting Columbus, the Lucayans, the plantation period and 19th century life on San Salvador.

For detailed information: www.ammcbahamas.com

FORTS

Fort Charlotte Historic Complex: West Bay Street and Marcus Bethel Way: Nassau's leading historic attraction. Constructed under the governorship of John Murray, the complex contains three forts which guarded the western end of Nassau and picturesque Nassau harbor. Fort Charlotte built c. 1789 and named Charlotte after the wife of King George III of Britain. **Fort Stanley and Fort D'Arcy** c. 1790s. Charlotte's military prowess was never tested. The former Advanced Guard House c.1793 now operates as a Conservation Laboratory for restoring metal artifacts: an on-site obelisk was erected c.1835. Fort Charlotte boasts massive limestone walls encircling a dry moat and so terrains hand hewn from solid rock. Mounted cannon: a 100 ft. well; interpretive, historic museum exhibits magnificent photo vistas from this hilltop site. For detailed information visit: www.ammcbahamas.com

Fort Fincastle: Prison Lane off East St. This Fort was constructed of cut limestone and strategically placed atop Bennet's Hill c.1793 to protect historic Nassau town and harbor. Built in the shape of a paddle-wheel steamer under the governorship of John Murray, also called Viscount Fincastle. Mounted cannon, interpretive signs, exhibits and excellent vistas of Nassau, the harbor and Paradise Island. The Queen's Staircase or Sixty-Six Steps is an attraction at the Fort Fincastle Historic Complex site and a major landmark in Nassau. These steps were hewn from solid rock by enslaved Africans and paid labourers in the late 1790s to early 1800s. For detailed information visit: www.ammcbahamas.com

Fort Montagu, East Bay Street. This fort was built on the Montagu foreshore by British Engineer, Peter Henry Bruce c. 1742, overlooks Montagu Beach and park. Historic Fort Montagu, named after the Duke of Montagu, engaged in 18th century skirmishes with the American Continental Navy in 1776 and the Spanish in 1782/1783. This fort has strategically mounted cannons and defended the eastern end of Nassau and the entrance to the harbor. For detailed information visit: www.ammcbahamas.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Most hotels contain bars, lounges and nightclubs. Live music, beach parties and discos centre on calypso and goombay bands with limbo dancing. Four casinos are spread across Cable Beach, Paradise Island and Grand Bahama (Freeport and Lucaya) with festivals and live entertainment organized locally year round. For detailed information visit: www.bahamas.com and www.tourismtoday.com

NATIONAL SYMBOLS

		
National Flag	National Crest – Coat of Arms	National Tree – Yellow Elder
		
National Tree – Lignum Vitae	National Bird – Flamingo	National Fish – Blue Marlin

National Flag: The colours embodied in the design of the Bahamian flag symbolize the image and aspirations of the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas: the design reflects aspects of the natural environment, sun, sand and sea, and the economic and social development. The flag is a black equilateral triangle against the mast, superimposed on a horizontal background made up of two colours on three equal stripes of aquamarine, gold and black. The symbolism of the flag is as follows: Black, a strong colour, represents the vigour and force of a united people, the triangle pointing towards the body of the flag represents the enterprise and determination of the Bahamian people to develop and possess the rich resources of land and sea symbolized by gold and aquamarine respectively.

Coat of Arms: The Coat of Arms The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is designed to free the spirits of Bahamians and liberate their energies and efforts into building a new nation, creating a new and better life and achieving new heights. Columbus's ship, the Santa Maria, is a reminder that the country has roots going back far into the past and that it is associated with great events.

Both flora and fauna stress the reliance the people have had and continue to have on the natural resources of the island, while the sea and sun have proven to be magnets for new developments affecting the economic growth of the country. Finally, an exhortation to the Bahamian people is embodied in the words of the motto: **FORWARD, UPWARD, ONWARD, TOGETHER.**

National Flower - Yellow Elder: Clusters of brilliant yellow blossoms and seed pods that are also decorative attract attention to the Yellow Elder, national flower of The Bahamas. It grows wild in The Bahamas, but is usually improved through cultivation. The Yellow Elder Tree may reach a height of nearly twenty feet. The blooming period is from October to December, diminishing by March.

National Tree - Lignum Vitae The Lignum Vitae, or tree of life, (Guaiacum Sanctum) is the national tree. It is the heaviest of all woods with clusters of small blue flowers at the branch tips.

National Bird - the Flamingo: The national Bird of The Bahamas is an unmistakable, slender, long-legged and long necked, rose pink water bird with black tipped wings. Flamingos are highly gregarious birds and are rather wary and seldom allow one a close approach. When feeding, they wade out into shallow water, scrape up the mud and sit with a dancing movement and immersing head and neck, turn the bill inwards. To a large extent, their food consists of mollusks.

National Fish: The Blue Marlin, of the genera Makaira and Tetrapterus, is the national fish. It is the sharp-nosed aristocrat of Atlantic game fish.

National Anthem: March on Bahamaland

The Bahamas National Anthem- March on Bahamaland became the national Anthem of The Bahamas in 1973.

*Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahama Land;
March on to glory, your bright banners waving high,
See how the world marks the manner of your bearing
Pledge to excel, through love and unity.
Pressing onward, march together to a common loftier goal;
Steady sunward, tho' the weather hide the wide and treach'rous shoal.
Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahama Land;
'Til the road you've trod lead unto your God,
MARCH ON, BAHAMA-LAND.*

Composed by Mr. Timothy Gibson (1903 – 1978)

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL MOVIES WITH SCENES FILMED IN THE BAHAMAS

NEW PROVIDENCE

- 1903 Native Woman Washing a Negro Baby In Nassau
- 1914 Thirty Leagues Under The Sea
- 1919 The Greatest Question
- 1954 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea
- 1958 Old Man And The Sea
- 1964 Flipper New Adventure
- 1965 Help (The Beatles)
- 1965 Thunder Ball (James Bond)
- 1967 You Only Live Twice
- 1968 Head
- 1977 Spy Who Loved Me (James Bond)
- 1979 Moon Racer
- 1997 Black Pearl
- 1981 For Your Eyes Only (James Bond)
- 1983 Money To Burn
- 1983 Never Say Never Again (James Bond)
- 1984 Splash
- 1985 Cocoon
- 1987 Jaws: The Revenge
- 1988 Cocoon II
- 1989 Deadly Spy Games

- 1994 My Father The Hero
- 1994 The Crew
- 1995 Too Much
- 1996 Flipper
- 1997 Zeus And Roxanne
- 1997 Speed 2: Cruise Control
- 1999 Dolphins
- 2000 Command Approved
- 2001 Bahamas Mama
- 2001 The Code Conspiracy
- 2003 Dark
- 2004 Open Water
- 2004 After The Sunset
- 2005 Nomad: The Two Worlds
- 2005 Into The Blue
- 2006 Casino Royale
- 2008 Miracle At St. Anna
- 2008 Rain
- 2008 Blue
- 2008 Daybreak
- 2008 Duplicity

ABACO

- 1999 The Insider

BIMINI

- 1991 The Silence of The Lambs

ELEUTHERA

- 2005 Three aka Survival Island (2007)
- 2007 Mysterious
- 2008 Rain
- 2008 Daybreak

EXUMA

- 2006 Pirates of The Caribbean 2 : Dead Man's Chest
- 2006 Pirates of The Caribbean 3: At World's End
- 2008 Matrimonio Alle Bahamas

FREEPORT GRAND BAHAMA

- 2005 Eye of The Dolphin
- 2006 Pirates of The Caribbean 3
- 2006 Pirates of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
- 2007 Pirates Of The Caribbean 3: At World's Chest
- 2007 Pirates Of The Caribbean 3: At World's End
- 2008 Way Of The Dolphin
- 2008 Deer Sea Wolf

LOCAL MOVIES FILMED IN THE BAHAMAS

- **Balls Alley**
- **Hooked On Love**
- **My Old Man**
- **Rain**
- **Float**
- **Eleutheran Adventure**
- **AIDS/HIV**
- **Jitney Driver**
- **Junkanoo**
- **DayBreak**

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.mfabahamas.org/mfa-contacts.html (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

<http://statistics.bahamas.gov.bs> (Department of Statistics)

GENERAL BAHAMAS INFORMATION:

www.bahamas.com (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism)

www.tourismtoday.com (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism)

www.nassauparadiseisland.com

www.outisland

www.grand-bahama.com

www.myoutislands.com

www.bahamasnet.com

www.whatsonbahamas.com

Official Government Website: www.bahamas.gov.bs

Office of the Prime Minister:
(Including Bahamas Investment Authority) www.opm.gov.bs

Bahamas Film Commission: www.bahamasfilm.com

Cultural: www.junkanoo.com
www.bahamas.gov.bs/Visiting the Bahamas/Cultural Events

Experiences: www.dolphinencounters.com (swimming with dolphins)

www.unexso.com (Underwater Explorer Society)

www.pirates-of-nassau.com (Interactive Pirates Museum)

www.bahamasdiving.com

www.stingrayadventure.com

Education: www.bahamaseducation.com

www.aboutus.org/Cob.edu.bs

www.bahamastourismcareers.com

www.bhahotels.com

www.ammcbahamas.com (The Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation)

Health: www.doctorshosp.com

Banking/Central Bank : www.centralbankbahamas.com

Bahamas News: www.znsbahamas.com
www.thenassauguardian.com
www.tribune242.com
www.jonesbahamas.com/news/45 (The Bahamas Journal)

Transportation:

By Air www.aboutus.org/BahamasAir.com

By Sea www.bahamasferries.com
www.discoverycruiseline.com
www.mailboatbahamas.com

Telecommunications: www.btcbahamas.com

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IT'S BETTER IN THE BAHAMAS.