

Dive The Islands Of The Bahamas



- Wrecks and reefs, turtles and treasures
- Discover your island paradise
- Visit the home of shark diving
- Blue holes and caverns

DIVE CENTRES OF The Bahamas



The Abacos

Brendal's Dive Center & Water Sports International

Email: brendal@brendal.com
Web: brendal.com

DIVE ABACO! An Island Tradition Since 1978...

Email: hello@diveabaco.com
Web: diveabaco.com

Dive Guana

Email: diveguana@yahoo.com
Web: diveguana.com

Andros

Andros Beach Club & Andros Diving

Email: jesse@androsdiving.com
Web: androsdiving.com

Small Hope Bay Lodge

Email: info@smallhope.com
Web: smallhope.com

Tiamo Resort

Email: reservations@tiamoresorts.com
Web: tiamoresorts.com

Bimini

Bimini Undersea

Email: info@biminiundersea.net
Web: biminiundersea.net

Neal Watsons Bimini Scuba Center

Email: neal@biminishcubacenter.com
Web: biminishcubacenter.com

Cat Island

Shannas Cove Resort

Email: shannascove@gmail.com
Web: shannas-cove.com

Greenwood Beach Resort Dive Shop

mail: info@greenwoodbeachresort.com
Web: greenwoodbeachresort.com

The Exumas

Dive Exuma

Email: info@dive-exuma.com
Web: dive-exuma.com

Bimini

Freeport

The Abacos

The Berry Islands

Nassau & Paradise Island

Andros

Grand Bahama Island / Freeport

Sunn Odyssey Divers

Email: karen@sunnodysseydivers.com
Web: sunnodysseydivers.com

UNEXSO

Email: info@Unexso.com
Web: unexso.com

Reef Oasis Dive Club Grand Bahama

Email: info@reefoasisdiveclub.com
Web: reefoasisdiveclub.com/diving-bahamas

Eleuthera & Harbour Island

Valentine's Dive Center

Email: dive@valentinesdive.com
Web: valentinesdive.com

Ocean Fox Cotton Bay

Email: al@oceanfoxcottonbay.com
Web: oceanfoxcottonbay.com

Long Island

Stella Maris Resort Club

Email: reservations@stellamarisresort.com
Web: stellamarisresort.com

Nassau & Paradise Island

Bahama Divers

Email: info@bahamadivers.com
Web: bahamadivers.com

Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas

Email: info@stuartcove.com
Web: stuartcove.com

San Salvador

Riding Rock Resort

Email: reservations@ridingrock.com
Web: ridingrock.com

Seafari Bahamas @ Club Med

Email: Bahamas@seafari-int.com
Web: seafaridiving.com/diving-centers/bahamas

It's better in The Bahamas

The beauty of diving in The Islands of The Bahamas lies in the diversity of underwater experiences on offer, all in warm, clear water. What takes your fancy?

Enjoy the reef:

The Bahamas has some of the most diverse and healthy coral communities in the western Atlantic, encompassing the third largest barrier reef system in the world and 700 islands and cays. Here, you will find sponges, fan corals, ancient brain coral and a kaleidoscope of colour.

Dive the wrecks:

Bahamian waters have long presented a challenge to navigators, so there are wrecks of all ages, all around the islands. In addition, the Bahamian Government has pursued a programme of sinking environmentally cleaned vessels to create artificial reefs.

Meet the sharks:

Welcome to the shark diving capital of the world! If your prior experience of sharks has been fleeting shadows on the edge of visibility, The Bahamas delivers close-up, safe shark encounters with sleek Caribbean reef sharks, impassive tiger sharks or majestic great hammerheads.

Descend a Blue Hole:

The Islands of The Bahamas – Andros especially – have more Blue Holes than anywhere else on the planet. These famous sinkholes were created by erosion over cave systems deep in the limestone bedrock, and offer a uniquely atmospheric diving experience.

Join the school:

The Islands of The Bahamas are home to a bewildering array of fish among the coral reef, on wrecks or out in the beautiful blue beyond the reef. Lose yourself in a shimmering school of Atlantic spadefish, snapper or grunts; marvel at the beauty of the French angelfish. They are waiting for you!

Swim with dolphins:

The sandbanks of the western islands are a favoured habitat of wild bottlenose and Atlantic spotted dolphins. They are usually friendly and will play around snorkellers and divers.

Eleuthera &
Harbour Island

Cat Island

San Salvador

Rum Cay

The
Exumas

Long Island

Ragged
Island

Acklins &
Crooked
Island

Mayaguana

Inagua



Nassau & Paradise Island

Hotels of Nassau

Boutique Hotels

Compass Point Beach Resort
compasspointbeachresort.com

Affordable

Orange Hill Inn
orangehill.com

A Stone's Throw Away
astonesthrowaway.com

Sandyport Beach Resort
sandyportresort.com

All Inclusive

Breezes Nassau (adults only)
breezes.com

Melia Nassau Beach Hotel
(families welcome)

melia.com/Melia-Hotels / All-inclusive

Warwick Paradise Island Bahamas
(adults only)

warwickhotels.com

Sandals Royal Bahamian
(adults only)

sandals.co.uk

Resorts

Atlantis Paradise Island
atlantisbahamas.com

Baha Mar
bahamar.com

Comfort Suites Paradise Island
comfordsuitespi.com

NASSAU is the capital and air travel hub of The Bahamas, located on the island of New Providence. Diving around Nassau focuses on a mixture of reef, wreck and shark dives. Even though it is just offshore from a city, underwater conditions are usually superb – the water is clear, warm and inviting.

Nassau's west side is fed by nutrient-rich currents from the Tongue of the Ocean, a deep water canyon. Wall diving is the norm here, with the top of most walls starting around 18 metres. The sandy gullies around the top of these walls are excellent locations for purpose-sunk wrecks.

Arguably the best of these wrecks is the Ray of Hope, previously a Haitian freighter. It was sunk by Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas close to their shark-feeding area, so quite often your dive will be accompanied by curious Caribbean reef sharks. They are not aggressive towards divers and at the world-renowned feeding dive you can observe them safely at close quarters, competing for food.

Also worth a visit is the Sir Nicholas Nuttall Coral Reef Sculpture Garden, where imposing statues sit alongside a coral regeneration project overseen by the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF – brief.org) whose mission is to promote the conservation of The Bahamas' marine environment.

Bimini

BIMINI is a small island, but it is home to some very big sharks. The island is just 50 miles off Florida's coast, and has traditionally been the haunt of fishermen and yachties. It is also home to one of the most influential shark studies in the world, the Bimini Biological Field Station (biminisharklab.com), which monitors and studies the variety of sharks in the area.

It was their studies that led to the discovery of a remarkable visitor – the great hammerhead shark, *Sphyrna mokarran*. The largest of the

hammerhead family, this alpha predator grows to 18ft long, and has a migratory habit that brings it to Bimini between November and April every year. A shark of this size could be regarded as potentially dangerous, but by adapting the feeding techniques popularised in Nassau, dive operators have found they can interact with them safely.

Neal Watson's Bimini Scuba Center has devised a feeding scenario in which the divers are over-weighted to hold them steady against the currents that move through a sandy channel. Each diver is given a heavy plastic pole that

provides a physical barrier between them and the shark, but its more regular use is to keep you steady in the current.

The hammerheads swim-up-current toward the feeder, where they may be redirected with some light handling. It is a surprisingly gentle interaction, and has confounded those who previously held the great hammerhead to be an aggressive shark.

Neal Watson also offers wild dolphin snorkelling trips, reef and wreck dives and even the chance to cage dive with big bull sharks in the marina, which has surprisingly good visibility.



Hotels of Bimini

Bimini Big Game Club
biggameclubbimini.com

Hilton at Resorts World Bimini
rwbimini.com/hilton-hotel



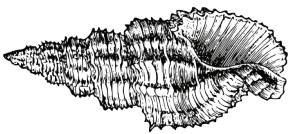
Grand Bahama Island

GRAND BAHAMA is the northernmost of The Islands Of The Bahamas, lying just 95 miles West of Palm Beach, Florida. The second most popular island, it is 96 miles long east to west and 17 miles north to south.

The marine scene is defined by a broad shallow bank that extends offshore, bordered by a barrier reef. This varied environment provides a pleasing array of underwater experiences, including dolphin dives, shark feeds and shipwrecks.

The capital is West End, once notorious for rum running and now base of operations for visiting the world renowned Tiger Beach, where you can dive on a shallow sand bank with large tiger sharks. Tigers are the largest predatory sharks in tropical water and there are strict rules for diving with them. They are utterly fearless compared to other sharks, but this gives them a calmness that can make it relatively easy to dive with them at organised feeds. Even sharks are friendly in The Bahamas!

If you crave the dark side, Lucayan National Park has one of the largest underwater cave systems in the world. You need to get cave-certified – that will allow you entry to places such as Ben's Cave, one of two inland blue holes within the park and home to stalactites, stalagmites and fossilised conch shells.



Grand Bahama Hotels

Freeport

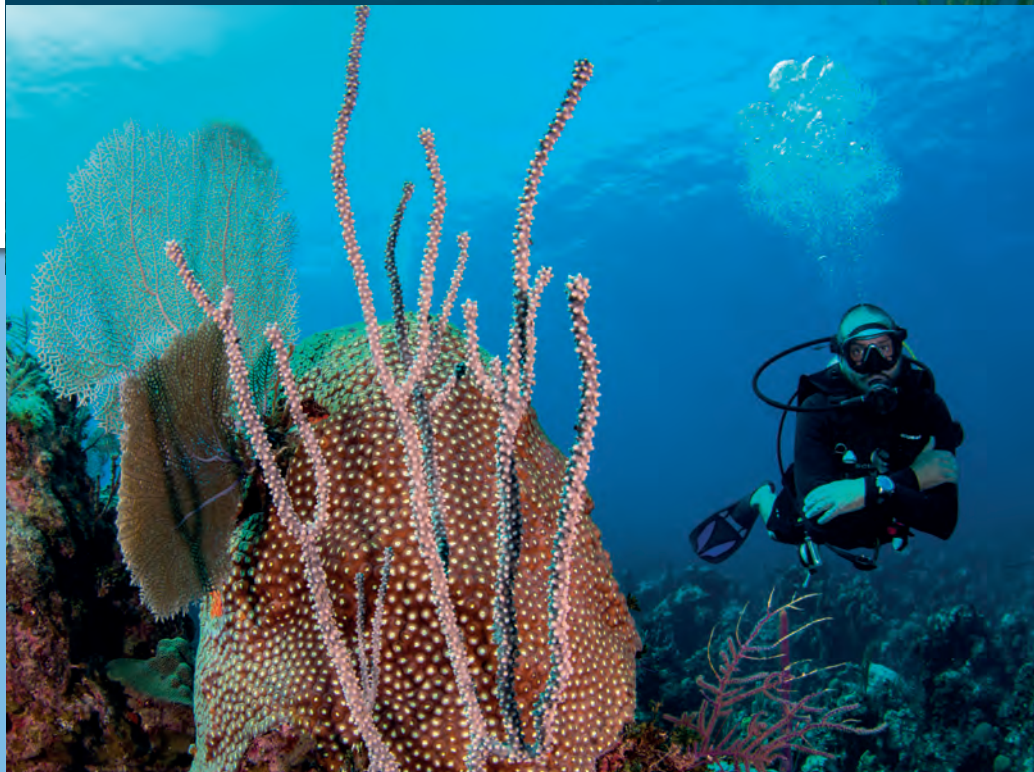
Lighthouse Pointe at Grand Lucayan Resort (All Inclusive)
grandlucayan.com

Pelican Bay Hotel
pelicanbayhotel.com

Viva Wyndham Fortuna Beach (All-Inclusive)
wyndhamhotels.com

West End

Old Bahama Bay Resort & Yacht Harbour
oldbahamabayresorts.com





Andros

IF YOU want to immerse in nature, explore ancient geological fissures and experience the wild side of The Bahamas, Andros is the island for you. At 2,300 square miles, it is the largest island of The Bahamas, with miles of deserted coast and the world's third largest barrier reef. The reef is 190 miles long and drops into the abyssal subsea canyon known as the Tongue of the Ocean, which helps sustain its luxuriant coral.

If there's one feature for which Andros is renowned, it's the Blue Holes, which are found both inland and in the ocean. These are large marine caverns or sinkholes which formed during past ice

ages when the sea level was much lower than today. They were created by the erosion of rain and chemical weathering that affects limestone-rich terrain, and Andros has 220 of them.

Devotees of diving, such as the late Jacques Cousteau, call the caves and caverns within the blue holes here some of the most fascinating dive sites in the world. They reveal much about the island's prehistoric geological past and you can even see the holes 'breathe' as water flows in and out with the tides. Experienced guides will safely lead you to all of the sites. Wreck dives and shark feeds are also available in Andros.

Andros Hotels

Small Hope Bay Lodge
smallhope.com

Dream Villas
dreamvillasbahamas.com

Tiamo Resorts
tiamoresorts.com

**Kamalame Cay:
All Inclusive Resorts**
kamalame.com



Eleuthera & Harbour Island

ELEUTHERA is a long, thin island – 110 miles in length and in places little more than a mile wide. Its eastern side faces the Atlantic Ocean, while the western side faces the Great Bahama Bank. The name also refers to a chain of small islands, including Harbour Island off the northeast coast, known for its pink sand beaches.

In terms of its diving, Eleuthera has a generous smattering of all the Bahamian classics, including Caribbean reef sharks, eagle rays, spadefish and reefs dominated by sponges and plume corals. There is an abundance of sharks and rays, which has been attributed by the local Cape Eleuthera Institute to the banning of long-line fishing in these bountiful waters.

The Devil's Backbone is a shallow and jagged reef extending across the northern edge of Eleuthera. This reef has torn the bottom out of more vessels than any other reef in the nation.



Eleuthera and Harbour Island Hotels

Valentines Resort & Marina, Harbour Island
valentinesresort.com

Cape Eleuthera Resort and Marina: Eleuthera Hotels
capeeleuthera.com



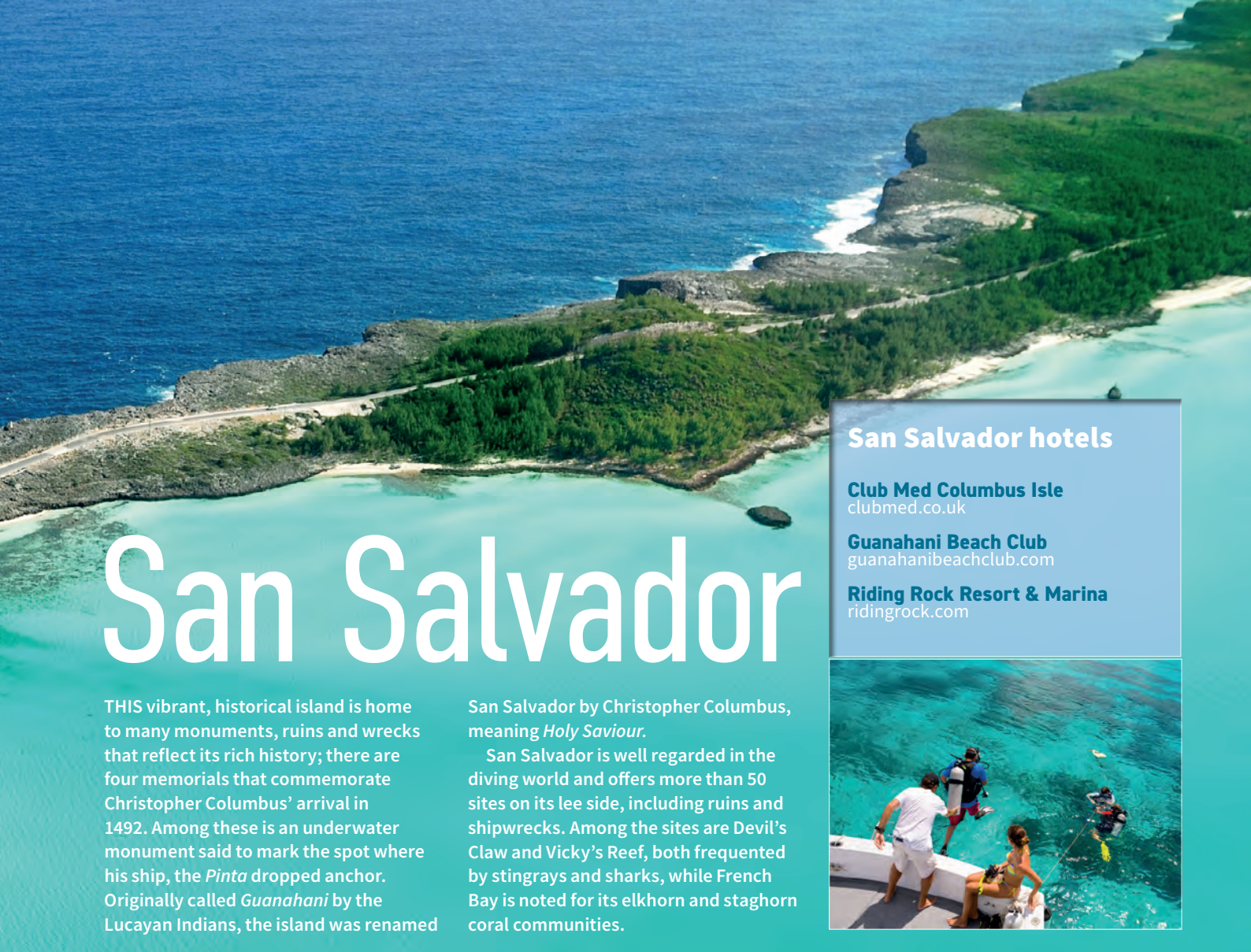
The Abacos

THE ABACO Islands lie in the northern Bahamas, 180 miles off the South Florida coast. The main islands are Great Abaco and Little Abaco, and the northernmost island is the former shark diving mecca, Walker's Cay, which has been deserted since 2004.

There are several protected underwater areas, such as Fowl Cay National Reserve and Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park, offering reefs with swim-through caves that are seasonally filled wall-to-wall with silver baitfish.

Directly exposed to the Atlantic, the reefs of The Abacos are different to the rest of The Bahamas. Subject to slightly cooler temperatures during the winter, they are just on the edge of the temperature scale for hard corals. The general form of the fringing reefs is an extinct coral base with a healthy top growth of star and elkhorn corals. The base reef has been etched out by tidal flow to form a maze of interconnecting tunnels and cathedral-like caverns. Experienced cave divers should put The Abacos on their bucket list for truly a remarkable diving experience in the conservation area.





San Salvador

THIS vibrant, historical island is home to many monuments, ruins and wrecks that reflect its rich history; there are four memorials that commemorate Christopher Columbus' arrival in 1492. Among these is an underwater monument said to mark the spot where his ship, the *Pinta* dropped anchor. Originally called *Guanahani* by the Lucayan Indians, the island was renamed

San Salvador by Christopher Columbus, meaning *Holy Saviour*.

San Salvador is well regarded in the diving world and offers more than 50 sites on its lee side, including ruins and shipwrecks. Among the sites are Devil's Claw and Vicky's Reef, both frequented by stingrays and sharks, while French Bay is noted for its elkhorn and staghorn coral communities.

San Salvador hotels

Club Med Columbus Isle
clubmed.co.uk

Guanahani Beach Club
guanahanibeachclub.com

Riding Rock Resort & Marina
ridingrock.com



The Exumas

AMONG the most beautiful islands in The Bahamas, The Exumas are an archipelago of 365 cays and islands, beginning just 35 miles southeast of Nassau. They are divided into three major areas – Great Exuma, Little Exuma and the Exuma Cays. Great and Little both offer an informal, laidback Bahamian experience, while the Cays are a playground for the rich and famous.

There are numerous diving locations, but the star attraction is swimming with the swimming pigs of Major's Spot Cay. Believed to be the descendants of farmed pigs, these sea-going swine will swim out to greet visiting boats. Of course they expect to be fed, and having become unlikely ambassadors for The Bahamas, that is exactly what happens.

Otherwise the local diving is a comprehensive mix of blue holes, reefs and wrecks, including a 20-metre tugboat sunk by Dive Exuma in 2005, now covered

in sponges and corals, and home to Nassau grouper. On the reefs, large schools of French grunts and snapper are seen at Dog N Pup Reef, along with porcupinefish, pufferfish and queen angelfish.

Exumas hotels

Peace and Plenty Resort
peaceandplenty.com

February Point Resort Estates
www.februarypoint.com

Grand Isle Resort & Spa
grandisleresort.com

Sandals Emerald Bay
sandals.co.uk/emerald-bay





Cat Island

PRISTINE Cat Island is as rich in Bahamian culture as it is in nature. Named after the infamous pirate, Arthur Catt, this is where Hollywood legend Sir Sidney Poitier's boyhood home once stood. It is also the birthplace of The Bahamas' indigenous 'rake and scrape' music, and the site of Mount Alvernia, which has the highest elevation in The Bahamas at just 62.7m above sea level.

Cat Island is popular for diving with oceanic whitetip sharks, which visit the islands from March through June. This involves drift diving in open water, where you can encounter big schools of tuna, wahoo, mahi mahi and even marlin. There is also excellent diving on the reefs and walls, where you can find moray eels, turtles, grouper and lobster.

Greenwood Beach Resort

greenwoodbeachresort.biz

Shannas Cove

shannas-cove.com

PHOTO: TOM ST. GEORGE



Long Island

ANOTHER long, thin island, Long Island is a photographer's dream – from the dramatic cliffs that tower over its eastern shore to the pink and white sand beaches and turquoise waters of the west. The Tropic of Cancer runs directly through the island, helping create these two markedly different coastlines.

The signature dive site is Dean's Blue Hole, located to the west of Clarence Town. With a maximum depth of 202 metres, it is the second deepest blue hole in the world (after the Dragon Hole in the South China Sea), and is used for freediving competitions. Dean's is roughly circular at its surface, with a diameter of 25-30 metres. After descending 20 metres the 'hole' widens into a cathedral-like cavern with a diameter of 100m. It is a journey into inner space!

Greenwich Creek Lodge

greenwichcreeklodge.com

Stella Maris Resort Club

stellamarisresort.com

The Bahamas Essentials

Getting there

British Airways (BA.com) flies directly from London Heathrow to Nassau, and there are also numerous routes via North America, including Toronto, New York, Atlanta, Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

Island hopping

Travel to the Out Islands on scheduled flights with Bahamasair, or one of the charter airlines, such as LeAir, Pineapple Air, Western Air and many others. You can book flights through Majestic Holidays (majesticholidays.com) or BahamaGo (bahamago.com). There are also seaplane services such as flytropic.com. From Nassau you can also travel to the Out Islands by mail boat or the fast ferry service (bahamasferries.com).

Climate

You can expect air temperatures of around 32°C in the summer months and 25°C during winter, with slightly cooler temperatures in Grand Bahama Island and The Abacos. Water temperatures range from 28°C in the summer to 22°C in winter. There is occasional rainfall

during the summer and the possibility of high winds during winter, but underwater visibility is great year-round.

Electricity

The Bahamas runs on 120 volts / 60 cycles, following the American model. Take a US-style flat two pin adapter (Type A).

Currency

The Bahamian Dollar is pegged to the US Dollar, and both are widely accepted throughout the islands; you might receive either in your change. In Nassau and Paradise Island there are ATM machines in major hotels and at commercial banks. On the Out Islands ATMs can be found at bank branches; credit cards are widely accepted, but cash is preferred for small payments on The Out Islands.

Tipping

For porters, the going rate is \$1-\$2 per bag. Most restaurants include a service charge of 15 per cent, but if it is not listed on your bill it is customary to tip this amount.

Time difference

GMT -5 hours
Western Europe -6 hours

Visa information

European Union passport holders do not require a visa to enter The Bahamas, and this is expected to apply to UK passport holders during the Brexit transition and beyond. Check whether you need a visa with The Bahamas High Commission in London. (bahamashclondon.net) Tel: +44 (0)207 408 4488. Visa applications are to be made in person at any Bahamian consular mission.

What to bring

Lightweight tropical clothing is recommended throughout the year, with a sweater or fleece for winter evenings. For diving, the average person will need a full length 3mm wetsuit for the summer or a 5mm for the winter. Good hire kit is available from most dive centres, but we recommend bringing personal items such as masks, wetsuits and fins / booties.





Diving is better in The Bahamas



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