

Nassau, Bahamas



New Providence Island, with Nassau as its hub, and Paradise Island, located just a stone's throw away, all lie within a graceful constellation of islands arcing south east from the coast of Florida. The unique blend of international glamour and tropical ambiance gives the vacationer the freedom to do absolutely everything or absolutely nothing. Whether you are looking for sophisticated resorts or secluded beaches, vibrant nightlife or the perfect pool, colonial charm or tropical island beauty, you'll find it here in the Bahamas.

Nassau, with its colonial past, offers many historical sights to explore. Within the city you can walk to Balcony House, dating from the 18th century; Christ Church Cathedral, built in 1837; and the Cloisters, ruins of a 14th-century French monastery that were moved to their current spot overlooking the harbor. Other important buildings include the pink and white Government House and the pink, colonnaded buildings around Parliament Square.

Nassau shopping is some of the best to be found anywhere. For fun, head off to the Straw Market, one of the largest markets of its kind in the world offering, of course, items made of straw (hats, bags, baskets, etc.) plus native necklaces and bracelets, clothing, and wood carvings. For high-end jewelry, crystal, and china, head to the numerous shops along Bay Street for duty-free shopping, which can save you up to 50% off of U.S. prices.

Eating out can be anything you desire. From a down-home Bahamian eatery to an elegant French restaurant, your choices are practically endless between downtown Nassau and the many resorts. Hotels and resorts in the area are also the focus of nightlife with their nightclubs, discos, and casinos. The dress code is relaxed, get into the spirit of the islands, and enjoy.

Package Inclusions:

- Choice of accommodations
- Roundtrip transfers between the airport and hotel
- All hotel taxes and service charges
- Assistance of a local destination representative

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should go?

Couples

Active or relaxing, your vacation can be whatever you want it to be.

Golfers

Golf courses are available to challenge any handicap.

Scuba Divers

Many great and easily accessible dive sites are in the area.

Families

With gorgeous beaches and many resorts featuring children's activities, kids love the Bahamas.

What's the climate like?

| | Winter | Spring | Summer | Autumn |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Average High | 77° F | 81° F | 88° F | 85° F |
| Average Low | 62° F | 66° F | 75° F | 71° F |
| Average Rainfall | 1.8" | 2.8" | 8.0" | 5.3" |

How do I get around town?

Transfers

Transfers between the airport and hotel are included with our air and hotel packages.

Car/Taxi

A rental car isn't needed as most places can be reached easily by taxi, which is generally the best and most convenient way of getting around. Taxi rates are set by the government. If you do decide to rent a car, rental car agencies can be found at the airport and downtown. Remember — drive on the left side of the road!

Bus

If you'd like to travel like the locals, you can hop on board a jitney (small minibus). The exact fare is required. The concierge at your hotel can help you with directions, or ask the jitney driver. Bus number 10 goes from the hotels along Cable Beach into downtown. On your return, just shout out the name of your hotel as you approach it and the driver will stop. Jitneys operate until 7pm, so if you are out for dinner, you'll need to take a taxi. Local city transit service is also available from Paradise Island to/from downtown and Cable Beach.

Scooter

Scooters are another fun way to travel around the area. Helmets are mandatory and remember to drive on the left. You may also want to start off on some of the quieter side streets to get the hang of it before you set off.

Carriage

For romance, take a horse-drawn carriage ride around Nassau. You can find them in the center of Rawson Square and don't hesitate to bargain.

Water Taxi

Between downtown Nassau and Paradise Island, you can either walk, take local city transit service, take a taxi, or hop on a water taxi. Water taxis operate from 9am till early evening. They will pack the boat almost to overflowing, so don't be alarmed. Also, one of the boat hands may also act (with an emphasis on "act") as a tour guide. Tip them if you feel they did a great job.

What kinds of dining and nightlife are available?

Nassau/Cable Beach and Paradise Island offer endless temptation for the food lover. From classic American to Greek and Chinese cuisine, you can find just about anything you are in the mood for. Local specialties include conch chowder and fritters. Other local favorites include peas n' rice, johnnycake, and guava duff for dessert. They even have a local beer, Kalik (pronounced KAH-LIK). Try out any of these restaurants for a great dining experience:

- Bahamian Kitchen**
 Excellent Bahamian cuisine at reasonable prices. A favorite of travelers and locals, here you can dine on Bahamian seafood and top-notch salads and sandwiches.
- Chez Willie**
 Owner/operator Mr. Willie Armstrong boasts more than 28 years of experience and says "at Chez Willie, the only thing better than our food is our service." Enjoy French and Bahamian gourmet cuisine.
- Columbus Tavern**
 Paradise Island's only waterside restaurant provides fresh seafood prepared in a Continental style with a Bahamian twist. Particularly delightful is the steak Diane, prepared tableside, or the lobster flambé.
- Double Dragon**
 Specializing in authentic Chinese cuisine.
- East Villa**
 Arguably the best broiled New York strip steak in the Bahamas, East Villa specializes in Chinese and Continental cuisine.
- Greycliff Inn and Restaurant**
 Combining Bahamian and Continental cuisine, the Greycliff Restaurant offers one of the most decadent dining experiences in the Caribbean.

- **Seashells**

Mediterranean-style cuisine such as pan-seared beef tenderloin or pan-roasted lobster tail highlight the menu along with homemade pasta, bread, and ice cream. Dance under the stars and see the amazing ocean view.

Nightlife centers on the hotels and several nightclubs on the island, in addition to the two casinos. The most spectacular casino is at the Atlantis Paradise Island. The casino is extraordinary with huge glass-blown sculptures by Dale Chihuly, and lots of natural light during the day. Next door is the just-as-impressive disco. The other casino is over on New Providence Island on Cable Beach at the Wyndham Nassau Resort & Crystal Palace Casino and spans more than 3,000 square feet and is loaded with 750 slot machines, blackjack tables, roulette wheels, and more.

Where should I go shopping?

Nassau offers some of the best duty-free shopping in the Caribbean with the biggest names in fashion and jewelry including Armani, Bulgari, Cartier, Ferragamo, Gucci, Versace, etc.

All along Bay Street you'll find duty-free shopping with savings of up to 50% off U.S. prices on jewelry, crystal, and china. If buying crystal and china to augment what you currently have, make sure to bring along the brand name and the pattern.

Some 30 shops selling goods from around the globe are located in the Nassau International Bazaar, running between Bay Street down to the waterfront. The area looks like a European village with its quaint storefronts and cobbled pathways.

Nassau's famous Straw Market is one of the largest in the world, and is open seven days a week from early morning until evening. Here, you'll find an array of handmade mats, hats, and baskets along with fabrics, jewelry, woodcarvings, and guava jellies. Of course, half the fun of shopping here is in the bargaining. The Straw Market is on downtown Bay Street, a block east of the British Colonial Hotel.

When are the local events?

People-to-People Tea Party

Ongoing, last Friday of the month, January - August. Come have tea with the Governor General's wife as she hosts a People-to-People Tea Party at Government House in Nassau. A delightful afternoon of tea and Bahamian hospitality where guests can chat with local volunteers.

Changing of the Guard Ceremony

Ongoing, every second Saturday, year-round at 10am. Witness the pomp and pageantry of the Changing of the Guard at the Government House.

Junkanoo

December 26, every year. A spectacular parade of elaborately costumed dancers dancing to the sounds of cowbells and drums. Some of the costumes can cost thousands of dollars. It is often compared to Mardi Gras or Carnival. The best place to see the celebration is on Bay Street, preferably in one of the bleachers set up for the occasion. Several hotels have Junkanoo-type celebrations as part of their entertainment.

What are my golf and recreation options?

Golf

Customize your vacation with discounted greens fees and gain access to hotel-affiliated golf courses with a stay at select hotels.

Hotel-Affiliated Courses

- **Cable Beach Golf Club**

With four sets of tees, this course will accommodate any level of player. Accuracy is needed. Designed by Fred Settle, Jr.

- Greens fees are included in the all-inclusive plan for guests staying at Sheraton Cable Beach Resort.

- **Ocean Club Golf Course**

Enjoy invigorating play and spectacular ocean views at this course on Paradise Island. Designed by Tom Weiskopf.

- Guests at Atlantis Paradise Island may reserve tee times up to 60 days in advance. Greens fees not included.
- Guests at other hotels may reserve tee times on the day of play, based on availability.

Sportfishing

November - May is the best time to fish for amberjack, June and July are great for blue marlin, and May - September are the best months for oceanic bonito and blackfin tuna. Arrangements for a half day or full day of fishing can be made at most hotels.

Snorkeling

Snorkeling is very popular in the Bahamas. With shallow seas, crystal-clear water, and a number of sites, it's easy to see why. The most popular snorkeling sites are Love Beach, Rose Island Reefs, the Gambier Deep Reef, Booby Rock Channel, and the Goulding Reef Cays.

Scuba Diving

Many shipwrecks are in the shallow waters, which makes the Bahamas one of the best scuba diving locales in the world. Elkhorn coral and dozens of reefs are also great places to dive. The best dive site is Shark Wall, 10 miles out and filled with an incredible amount and variety of marine life. Other dive sites include Rose Island Reefs, the Southwest Reef, Razorback, and Booby Rock Reef.

Travel tidbits

Meet the People

Get to know the fascinating local culture of the Bahamas in a unique way. A community involvement venture, the People-to-People Encounter Program brings travelers and Bahamians together for an evening of cultural exchange. You'll be treated to a home-cooked meal with your volunteer Bahamian hosts who have been screened by People-to-People executives. Personnel of the Bahamian Tourism board are responsible for matching visitors and volunteers according to their ages, hobbies, interests, and occupations.

The Local Flavor

If you've ever wondered where a Bacardi cola came from, the Bacardi Distillery is a good place to start looking. At the Bacardi and Company Ltd. Plant, you'll enjoy a free distillery tour and have the opportunity to try out the finished product as professional bartenders are on staff to pour your favorite Bacardi beverage.

Beaches

The Bahamas are famous for their beaches and one of the best known is Cable Beach. If you're looking for a more serene scene, you might like to try Adelaide Beach. It's busy with locals on the weekends, but virtually empty during the week. Also try Caves Beach, located west of Cable Beach, to avoid the crowds.

Good to Know:

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| Airport Name: | Nassau International Airport |
| 3-letter Code: | NAS |
| Best Weather: | December – May |
| Best Values: | June – November |
| Currency: | Bahamian Dollar, but U.S. currency is accepted everywhere; bring small bills if you are going to barter at the Straw Market |
| Language: | English, with an Irish/British/Scottish, and/or African lilt |
| Time Zone: | Nassau is in the Eastern Time Zone, one hour ahead of the Central Time Zone. |
| Proof of Citizenship: | Government legislation requires all people traveling via air to and from the United States and Canada to have a valid passport. For details on passports, visas, and health requirements, see Entry Requirements . |
| Tipping: | 15%, but check to see if it has been added to your restaurant bill |
| Dress: | More formal than other beach destinations, especially in the evening and at church. |