

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York
Bahamas House
231 East 46th St.

**Quick Information Guide on
The Bahamas**

Last Updated December 2002



-
- This Guide gives you your first introduction to the history, lifestyle and attractions available in the Bahamas.
 - For further information on your visit contact one of our Bahamas Tourist Offices near you (listed in back of info guide) or visit the Official website of the Ministry of Tourism at www.bahamas.com.
 - For Consular related matters contact the Consular Office nearest to you (Offices listed in back of info guide).

To Contact the Consulate Call: 1 212 421 6420

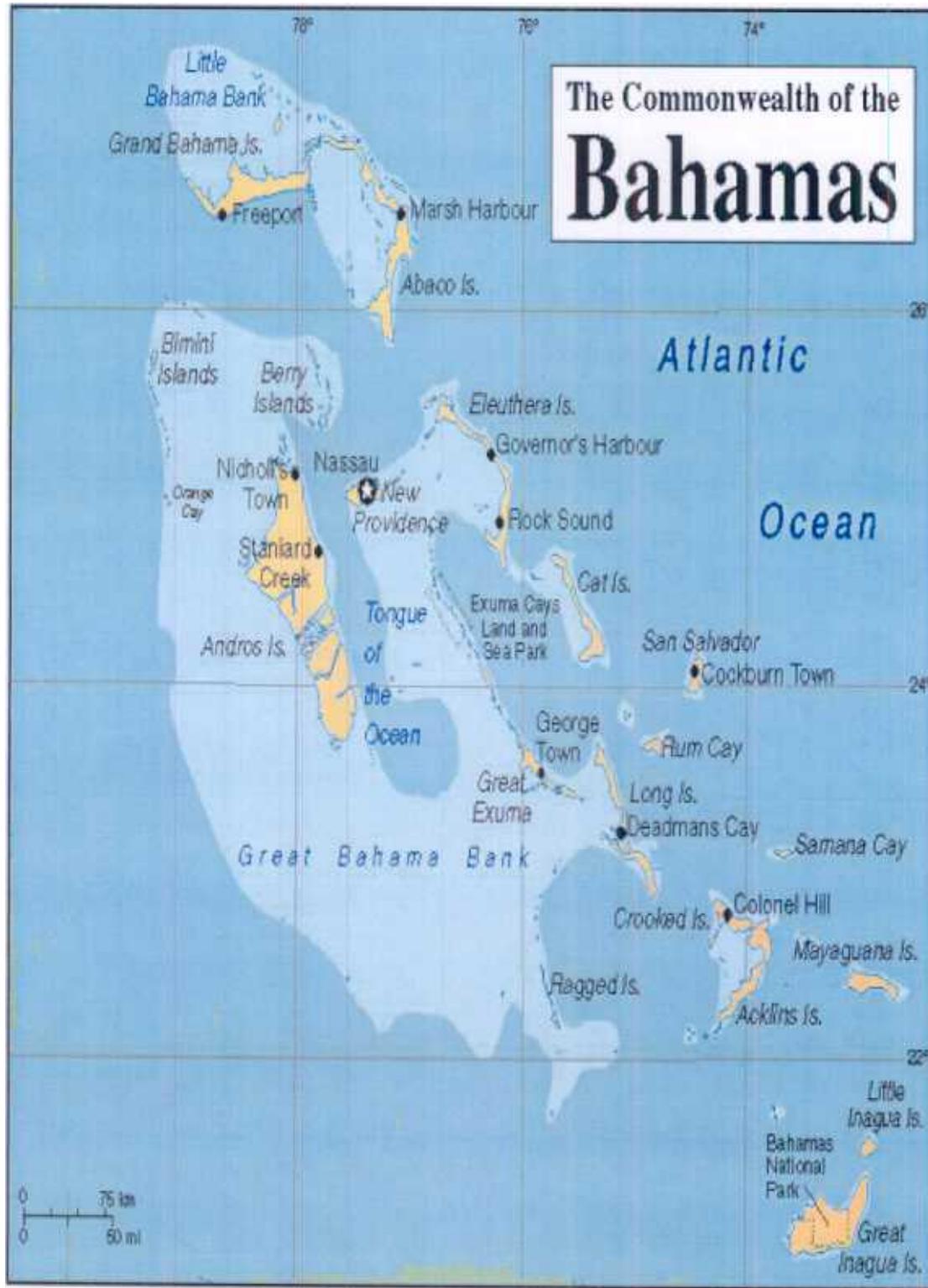


Table of Contents

<i>Map of The Bahamas</i>	2
<i>Location</i>	4
	4
<i>Government</i>	5
	5
<i>Transportation</i>	6
<i>Hotels, Cost of Living</i>	6
<i>People, Language</i>	6
<i>National Symbols</i>	7
<i>Religion</i>	9
<i>Education</i>	9
<i>Health/Medical Services</i>	9
<i>Sports/Recreation</i>	10
<i>Attractions/Events</i>	11
<i>Ecotours</i>	13
<i>List of Tourist Offices</i>	14
<i>List of Consular Offices</i>	16

To Contact the Consulate Call: 1 212 421 6420

LOCATION

Although considered part of the Caribbean, the archipelago that encompasses the Islands of the Bahamas lies in the Atlantic Ocean, extending more than 650 miles from the eastern coast of Florida to the southeastern tip of Cuba. The Tropic of Cancer runs through the Great Bahamas Bank and through the Island of Great Exuma.



The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is a group of some 700 Islands and nearly 2,500 small islets or cays. Approximately 30 of these Islands are inhabited. The two major population centers 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 Islands of The Bahamas stretch Southeast off the Florida coast, the closest Out Island to the United States mainland being Bimini, about 50 miles off the coast of South Florida. The other Islands stretch across roughly 100,000 square miles of ocean, beginning at their northernmost point about 175 miles of the coast of Palm Beach, Florida and winding nearly 750 miles to the southeast where they are within 50 miles of Cuba. The islands are mostly flat with miles of white and pink sand beaches. The highest point in the country is Mount Alvernia on Cat Island, which is 206 feet about sea level.

TIME

The Bahamas operates on Eastern Time, which is five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. From the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October, The Bahamas operates on daylight saving time.

CLIMATE

The Bahamas has a 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. **(For further information visit www.bahamasweather.org)**

HISTORY

The Siboney, Meso-Indians, who migrated into the Greater Antilles, were probably The Bahamas' original inhabitants. 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. The Spaniards named this part of the New World Bajar Mar (shallow seas). When Columbus purportedly 'discovered' the islands, he found Lucayans and called them Indians. They were in fact related to the neo-Indian Arawaks in the larger Caribbean Islands and practicing a Tainan culture. The Arawaks had originally come from the South American mainland. 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, settling from Cuba and Hispaniola. The Lucayans, as the Arawaks came to be known in The Bahamas, had no written language -only a spoken one. 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 William Sayle from 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 drinking and wenching by Blackbeard, Charles Vane and Calico Jack Rackham. However the real pirate leaders were Henry Jennings and Benjamin Hornigold, who on his pardon assisted Woodes Rogers to expel pirates. Rogers, the first Royal Governor, was appointed by King George I and his anti piratical zeal inspired the memorable motto for our country, **EXPULSIS PIRATIS. RESTITUTA COMMERCIA** (Piracy expelled, Commerce restored).

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

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 1964, Great Britain granted the Bahamas internal autonomy. The black Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) won control of the government in general elections in 1967. The leader of the party Lynden O. Pindling, then 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 its most recent elections held May of 2002, the Progressive Liberal Party, under the leadership of The Hon. Perry G. Christie, was elected as the new Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

GOVERNMENT

The Islands of the Bahamas achieved independence from Great Britain on July 10, 1973. The head of State is the Queen of England, who is represented in The Bahamas by the Governor-General, The Government is headed by the Prime Minister and Parliament comprises an upper house, the Senate, with appointed members and a lower House of Assembly with elected members.



Crest of the Governor General

The latest census conducted in 2000 showed the total population of The Bahamas at 304,837. Some 212,432 of this number reside on New Providence. Which includes the capital city of Nassau

The Official Website of the
Government of the Bahamas is
www.opm.gov.bs

BANKING



The Central Bank of the Bahamas

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. As at December 1919 there were 415 institutions licensed to carry on the business of banking trust under The Banks and Trust Companies Regulation Act within the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

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.

Legal tender in The Bahamas is the Bahamian dollar. The Bahamian dollar is on par with the United States dollar, which is widely accepted throughout the Islands of The Bahamas.

Historically, annual tourist arrivals to The Islands Of The Bahamas range between 3 and 3.4 million, however in the year 2000 tourist arrivals were recorded at the 4 million mark for the first time. 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.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of The Bahamas is estimated to be \$3 billion. The tourism industry is estimated to account for approximately 50% of this Tourist expenditure accounts for about 75,000 jobs or half of the employed workforce

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

Bahamian Currency: Legal currency of The Bahamas is the Bahamian dollar, although the U.S dollar is accepted throughout the islands. The Bahamian dollar is on par with the U.S. dollar.

The website of the Central Bank is:
www.centralbankbahamas.com

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around in Nassau/Paradise Island, Grand Bahama Island and most of the Out Islands is easy. The various modes of on-Island transportation include: **rental cars** (major car rental companies include Avis, Hertz, Budget, Dollar found in Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island) and other local rental companies, **taxis** (which are in abundance), **buses** (called jitneys) which for a small fare can take you to and from many locations, scooters (mopeds), **bicycles**, **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.



HOTELS

As of May, 2001, there were 265 hotels in The Islands of The Bahamas making a total of 15,078 rooms, 65 hotels in Nassau/Paradise Island, 28 in Grand Bahama Island and 172 in the Out Islands.

COST OF LIVING

The cost of some goods in the Bahamas 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, out patients' visits are \$10 per visit, however there is normally a long wait. 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.

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. Music is also important to Bahamians and they are a people of rhythm. It is said that no Bahamian can stand still if there are drums beating or cowbells shaking.

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 three days off and during that time they celebrated with a "grand dance." It has been described as "and 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 Bahamians. Today junkanoo is celebrated in the early morning hours of Boxing Day (the day after Christmas Day) and the New Year's Day. The celebration takes place downtown Bay Street from 1:00 a.m. to about 9:00 a.m. on Boxing Day and from 2:00 a.m. to about 10:00 a.m. on New Year's Day.

Junkanoo itself is a throbbing rhythm from cowbells, goatshin drums, whistles, horns, and brass instruments that vibrate through the street. The rhythm cannot be resisted as the pulsating music brings movement to the most staid person. The revelers or group members are dressed in a variety of colorful costumes and some carry large pieces depicting a particular theme. The work of plan-

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

ning and creating the intricately designed and stunning crepe paper costumes takes months at times.

LANGUAGE

English is spoken throughout the Islands of The Bahamas, although a strong Bahamian dialect is evident.

NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Coat of Arms: The Coat of Arms of 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' 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 of the Bahamian people is embodied in the words of the motto: **FORWARD, UPWARD, ONWARD, TOGETHER.**



National Tree- Lignum Vitae: The lignum vitae, or tree of life, is the national tree. It is the heaviest of all woods with clusters of small blue flowers at the branch tips.



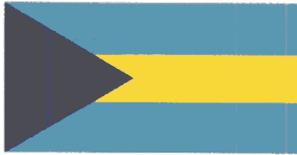
National Bird-The Flamingo: The national bird of The Bahamas is unmistakable, slender, long-legged and long necked, rose pink water bird with black tipped wings. Flamingos are highly gregarious birds and are rather wary and seldom allow one a close approach. When feeding, they wade out into shallow water,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



National Flag: The colors 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 colors on three equal stripes of aquamarine, gold and aquamarine. The symbolism of the flag is as follows: Black, a strong color, represents the vigor and force of a united people, the triangle pointing towards the body of the flag represents the enter-

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

pride and determination of the Bahamian people to develop and possess the resources of land and sea symbolized by gold and aquamarine respectively.



National Flower: This flower blooms between October and December, on a tree that may grow as high as 20 feet. The evergreen stands out because of its clusters of brilliant yellow, bell-shaped blossoms. They are about an inch across and two inches long, with red stripes lightly etched in the corolla. The little bells are held in a five-point calyx, and there are nine to 13 leaflets composing the odd pinnate leaf. Just before the blooms flare open, bag-like buds pop noisily if squeezed.

Selection of the yellow elder over many other flowers was made through the combined popular vote of members of all four of New Providence's garden clubs of the 1970s – the Nassau Garden Club, the Carver Garden Club, the International Garden Club, and the YWCA Garden Club. They reasoned that other flowers are grown here – such as the bougainvillea, hibiscus, and Poinciana – had already been chosen as the national flowers of other countries. The yellow elder, on the other hand, was unclaimed (although it is now also the national flower of the United States Virgin Islands)



National Fish: The blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) is the majestic fish that is found in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, with reports of the largest sizes found in the latter. However, many persons first encounter the fish in Ernest Hemingway's book "Old Man and the Sea." Mr. Hemingway was a frequent visitor to The Bahamas, especially the island of Bimini, where the blue marlin is highly prized among the strong game-fishing community.

The blue marlin, a relative of the sailfish and swordfish, is easily recognizable for the long "sword" or spike of its upper jaw, its high and pointed dorsal fin, and pointed anal fin. It is said that the fish uses its "sword" to club other fish on which it feeds.

The marlin's back is cobalt blue and its flanks and underbelly are silvery white. There may be light-blue or lavender vertical stripes on the sides as well.

A powerful and aggressive fighter, the blue marlin can run hard and long, sound or dive deep, and leap high into the air in a display of strength.



National Anthem:

Composed by : Mr. Timothy Gibson



Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahama Land;
March on to glory, your bright banner waving high,
See how the world marks the manner of your bearing
Pledge to excel, through love and unity.
Pressing onward, march to together to a common loftier goals;
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 leads unto your God;
MARCH ON, BAHAMA-LAND.

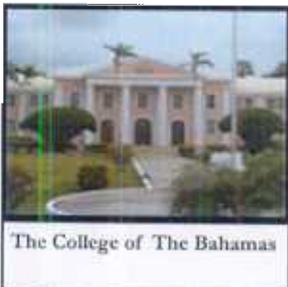
RELIGION

The Bahamas is a religious country, with Christianity as the dominant religion. Among the denominations represented are: Anglican, Assembly of God, Ba'hai 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, 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.



EDUCATION

Education in The Bahamas falls under the Ministry of Education and the government provides education at its schools throughout The Bahamas free of charge. There are currently 210 schools in The Bahamas. The government operates 158 and 52 are private. In New Providence, 39 are government-run and 27 private. In the Family Islands, 119 are government-run and 25 private Schools in The Bahamas fall under the following basic categories



Pre-school: Ages 2 -4
Primary: Ages 5 -II
Secondary Ages: 11- 16 and over

There are also various schools catering to special education for all ages and schools for higher learning. Among the higher education Institutions, are the government-operated College of The Bahamas, The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI) and the College of The Bahamas' School of Hospitality and Tourism. Several United States Universities offer degree programs with weekend and evening classes, which are held in Nassau. Among these institutions; are University of Miami and Nova Southeastern University. Other private institutions offering tertiary education and degrees include Sojourner-Douglass College, Success Training College, University of the West Indies (regional) and the Eugene Dupuch Law School.

HEALTH/MEDICAL SERVICE

The Bahamas has excellent health care and medical services. There are two major hospitals in Nassau, the Princess Margaret Hospital and Doctors Hospital. The 436-bed Princess Margaret Hospital includes the following departments. Medical, surgical, maternity, intensive care, pediatrics, eye wing, chest wing, private wing including specialist medical, surgical, obstetrical and gynecological

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

services, ambulatory care facility including accident and emergency, general practice and specialty clinics, dialysis units, laboratory including blood bank, x-ray, physiotherapy and pharmacy. The 72 patient bed privately operated Doctors Hospital provides acute care. Medical specialties are emergency medicine, ear, nose and throat, general surgery, orthopedic surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, internal medicine, family medicine, gastroenterology, urology, cardiology, cardiovascular surgery and pediatrics. There are three operating rooms, one with laminar flow, intensive care unit with eight beds, maternity suite with 14 beds, nuclear medicine, and electroencephalography. Emergency doctors are on the premises 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Lyford Cay Hospital (which incorporates the Bahamas Heart Institute) is a 12-bed facility, including a three-bed coronary care unit and four-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 offered in cardiology, internal medicine family practice, plastic surgery, and gynecology and stress echocardiography, Stat Care Medical & Emergency Center. The first freestanding health care facility designed exclusively to provide comprehensive emergency services in The Bahamas. The center features on-site consultation with specialty physicians who are board certified. Specialists on call include: Obstetrician, Gynecologist, Urologist, Cardiologist, Nephrologist, Rheumatologist, General Surgeon, Orthopedic Surgeon, Pediatrician, Family Physical and General Medicine, The facility is open daily 7:00 am – 11:00 p.m. including weekends and holidays. Sandilands Psychiatric Hospital treats and rehabilitates patients with mental illnesses and substance abuse related problems so they may return to their respective communities. The hospital includes a maximum-security unit, child and family guidance center, drug unit, detox and evaluation unit, alcoholic unit and day hospital facilities. Services for rehabilitation includes a special education program, recreation therapy, occupational therapy and psychological evaluation. The Ministry of Health operates 107 clinics throughout the Family Islands providing a variety of services. In cases where greater medical assistance is needed, patients are flown to Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau.

Freeport on Grand Bahama Island, has an 82-bed hospital, the Rand Memorial Hospital. It is a community-type hospital, which provides a variety of medical services including medical, surgical, gynecology and obstetrics, pediatrics, accident and emergency, psychiatry, pathology, clinical laboratory and radiology. In addition, there are clinics throughout the Island.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Bahamians enjoy sports tremendously. Any morning or afternoon one can find Bahamians engaged in their sport, whether it is jogging, walking, swimming, fishing, football, cricket, baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, squash, bowling, racquetball or soccer. It is common to find a group of men 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.



For tour information visit:
www.bahamas.com

ATTRACTIONS & EVENTS -

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

Adastra 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 Center: 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.

Botanical Gardens: More than 600 species of flowering trees and shrubs and a cactus garden are displayed in the 18-acre Botanic Gardens.

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".

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: Enjoy a real "down home" experience at a Bahamian fish fry. Well-seasoned fish, fried local style along with delicious homemade bread, as well as, other seafood specialties such as conch salad and conch fritter and native delicacies are the order of the day- all in an outdoor setting at Arawak Cay.

Fort Charlotte: Built in 1789 by Lord Dunmore and named in honor of the wife of King George III. This fort has never fired a shot in battle. It includes a waterless moat, drawbridge, ramparts and dungeons. Fort Charlotte commands a fine view of Nassau Harbour

Fort Fincastle: Built by Lord Dunmore, this fort boasts a spectacular view from its 126-foot water tower and lighthouse.

Fort Montagu: Oldest of the three forts located on New Providence Island. Built in 1741 of local limestone.

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.

Nassau Public Library & Museum: Built in 1797, this octagonal building was formerly the Nassau Goal (old world spelling for 'jail'). Visitors can have a look around at the small prison cells which are now lined with books, or examine a collection of historic prints " old colonial documents" or Arawak artifacts.

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: The museum was an auction site for slaves in the 18th century. It now displays artifacts" historical documents and drawings, which recount the history of slavery and emancipation in The Bahamas.

Potter's Cay: At this Bahamian marketplace, are Nassau's local fishermen selling their fresh fish and conch -watch them pull the

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

fish right out of the water and crack the conch before your eyes. You will also find produce vendors enticing visitors with mouth watering local fruits and vegetables. Located under the Paradise Island Bridge.

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

Rawson & Parliament Squares: The traditional center 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 Tyrone's Palace in New Bern, the ancient capital of North Carolina, house the Bahamian legislature and other government offices. In front of the center building is the statue 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 Market: One of the largest in the Caribbean, it is located downtown Bay Street, where one can find bustling activity with local straw vendors. Straw items include baskets, hats, dolls and mats.

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. 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 Bennett's Hill near to Fort Fincastle. Its purpose was to maintain water pressure throughout the city. It provides a panoramic view of New Providence Island coast to coast. This is the highest point on the Island, 126 feet high and stands about 216 feet above sea level.

Versailles Garden: This garden consists of a series of about seven terraces. A sundial is mounted on a twelfth century gothic pedestal and flanked by two fountains. There are 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. Located on Paradise Island.

Dolphin Encounters at the famous Blue Lagoon Island (as featured in the movie "Splash "). 1) **Enjoy a close encounter** with the friendly bottle-nosed dolphins. After arriving in the exotic lagoon, take part in an interesting and entertaining educational talk and sit on the floating platform with your feet in the water while these intelligent creatures play around you. Wade into waist-deep water for a lifetime experience in a close up contact with the most sophisticated dolphins. 2) **Swim with the dolphins.** Enjoy the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of interacting with dolphins in the water. The 45-minute program includes a 15-minute educational talk about dolphins and approximately 30 unforgettable minutes in the water with the most intelligent creatures next to man.

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.

Hartley's Undersea Walk: An adventure you will never forget. It is the famed underwater walk that is easy for every age from 5 - 85. The underwater walk is educational, exciting and an ideal outing for families. No experience, not even swimming is necessary.

Sea world Explorer: Nassau's only semi-submarine will take you through breath-taking coral reefs, with sea fans, sponges and a shipwreck.

Yellowbird/Tropical bird Catamaran Cruise: Enjoy a two hours cruise through Nassau's picturesque harbour aboard two of the largest catamarans in the Atlantic and swim at one of the most beautiful beaches in the Bahamas. Live band aboard the boats.

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

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

Island with its miles of pink sand beach and quaint homes is a two-hour ride on the Bahamas Fast Ferry. The Sea Link will also take you to Andros Island, the largest Island in The Bahamas, also known as the Bone Fishing Capital of the World all on a day's get away.

The Royal Bahamas Police Force Band - The world renowned Royal Bahamas Police Force band performs the "beating of the retreat." through the streets of downtown Nassau. This spectacular display of marching and countermarching in a series of movements. The rhythmic performance can be viewed on commemorative and special occasions such as the Independence Day Anniversary Parades in New Providence and Grand Bahama, also 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.

Bahamian Drama and Art- 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 musical and drama in the off- season. Works of art are plentiful at the various galleries.

Entertainment- A variety of entertainment is available in the Islands of The Bahamas, particularly in Nassau/ Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island. There are numerous native shows where one can enjoy the sounds of congo drums, steel drums, shakers, cowbells and goat skin drums while being entertained by fire dancers and limbo dancers. The daring visitor may also participate in these activities during the shows. The songs are mainly Bahamian and Caribbean.

If one is more romantically inclined or looking for soft music to end the night, it can easily be found. There are also many discos, in Nassau and Freeport, Grand Bahama the casino shows offer many high level revues, even Las Vegas style shows. For those who would wish to test their lick, there are numerous Casinos available for their use.

Cuisine- 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 enjoys the bountifully rich treasures from the sea. Crawfish (local rock lobster), conch (pronounced "konk"), land crabs, fish (Grouper, Yellow and Red Snapper) to name a few are delicious served with homemade Island bread. Boiled fish and grits is a favorite breakfast. Grouper is the most popular fish used for boiling. Bahamians are experts at cooking this fish which is white, tender and rich in flavor.

Conch, a mollusk, is a perennial local seafood favorite. 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 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 home cooked Bahamian meal consists of tasty crab n' rice, delicious steamed fish, served with baked macaroni and cheese and a good helping of potato salad. This is followed by deserts such as coconut or pineapple tart, bread pudding or guava duff, which is a delicious dessert that is made through a laborious process of folding the fruit into the dough and boiling it then serving it with a sauce. This meal can be topped off with a tall glass of gin n' coconut water or a glass of ice cold "switcha" (lemon aid made from natural limes, sugar and water.)

ECOTOURS

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.

Peddle and Paddle 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 by bicycle and kayak. Bird watching, reef snorkeling with fish identification, mangrove creeks, inland lakes, off-road bicycling are offered.

Canoeing at Lake Nancy: A Bahamian wildlife adventure. View exotic Ospreys, Coots. Egrets, Cranes, Herons and endangered White Crowned Pigeons and take in the nature trail. Paddle your own canoe by the hour or day in a tropical, tranquil relaxed and absorbing lake only 3' to 3 1/2' deep.

To Contact the Consulate Call: 1 212 421 6420

*For further tourist information visit:
www.bahamas.com or contact The Bahamas
Tourist Office in your area.*

Bahamas Tourist Office

Bay St. Nassau, Bahamas
P.O. Box N 3701
Tel: (242) 326- 9781
Fax: (242) 356- 0434

Office Of The Americas

c/o Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board
1200 Cornerstone
South Pine Island Road, Suite 700
Plantation, FL 33324
Phone: 954-888-5900 Ext. 120
Toll Free: 888-627-7281
E-mail: kfountain@bahamas.com
Kery Fountain - General Manager, The Americas

Chicago

8600 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue
Suite 580 North
Chicago, IL 60631
Phone: 773-693-1500
Fax: 773-693-1114
E-mail: BMOTCH@bahamas.com
Anthony Stuart - Area Manager, Midwe

Dallas

3102 Oak Lawn Avenue
Suite #700
Dallas, TX 75219
Phone: 214-560-2280
Fax: 214-560-2281
E-mail: BMOTDA@bahamas.com
Virginia Kelly - Regional Manager

Florida

1200 South Pine Island Road, Suite 750
Plantation, FL 33324
Phone: 954-236-9292
Fax: 954-236-9282
E-mail: BMOTFL@bahamas.com
Pamela Richardson - Area Manager,
Southeast & Latin America

Los Angeles

3450 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite #1204
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Phone: 213-385-0033
Fax: 213-383-3966
E-mail: BMOTLA@bahamas.com
Janet Johnson - Area Manager

New York

150 East 52nd Street
28th Floor (North)
New York, NY 10022
Phone: 212-758-2777
Fax: 212-753-6531 or
242-832-0796
E-mail: BMO'INY@bahamas.com
Valerie Brown - Area Manager

Toronto

121 Bloor Street East
Suite #1101
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3M5
Phone: 416-968-2999
Fax: 416-968-0724/6711
E-mail: BMOTCA@bahamas.com
Andrew Adderly - National Manager, Canada

United Kingdom (U.K., Ireland, The Netherlands, Scandinavia)

Three, The Billings
Walnut Tree Close
Guildford, Surrey, England GU1 4UL
Phone: 44-1483-448900
Fax: 44-1483-571846
E-mail: btogfd@bahamas.com
Jeremy Bonnett - General Manager,

Europe

France (France, Belgium, French Switzerland)

60 Rue Saint Lazare
75009 Paris, France
Phone: 33-45-26-62-62
Fax: 33-48-74-06-05
E-mail: btoparis@bahamas.com
Nicole Jacquemin - Senior Regional Manager

Italy

Corso Magenta 54
20123 Milan, Italy
Phone: 011-39-02-48194390-2
Fax: 011-39-02-72023123
E-mail: vertexmv@tin.it
Michelangelo Vismara - Regional Manager

Germany (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)

Leipziger Strasse 67d
60487 Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Phone: 49-69-970-834-0
Fax: 49-69-970-834-34
E-mail: btofrank@bahamas.com
Angela Oelschlagel - Regional Manager

The Bahamas Consular Offices

Ministry of Foreign Affairs-

Bahamas Consular Office
Consular Division
P.O. Box N 3746
Nassau, Bahamas
Tel: (242) 323- 5578
Fax: (242) 326- 6186

Embassy/ Permanent Mission to the OAS -Washington

Tel: (202) 319- 2260/7
Fax: (202) 319- 2668
Email: bahemb@aol.com

Bahamas Consulate -Miami

Tel: (305) 373- 6295
Fax: (305) 373- 6312

Bahamas High Commission- Canada

Tel: (613) 232- 1724
Fax: (613) 232- 0097
Email: ottawa.mission@bahighco.com

Bahamas High Commission- London

Tel: 0171 408 4488
Fax: 0171 499 9937
Email: bahamas.hicom.1on@cableinet.co.uk

Bahamas Embassy -Haiti

Tel: 011 (509) 257- 8782
Fax: 011 (509) 256- 5729
Email: embha@haitinew.com

Bahamas Embassy- Hong Kong

Tel: (011) 852- 2147- 0202
Fax: (011)852- 2893- 3917
Email:cafajohn@navigantor.com

The Bahamas Consulate General- New York

Bahamas House
231 East 46th St.
New York, NY 10017

Phone: 212- 421- 6420
Fax: 212- 688- 5926
Email: consulate@bahamasny.com