

The Bahamas Guide

WI Yachts



This guide was designed to provide you with a general outlook of the islands when cruising in the Exuma & Eleuthera. It does not replace official regional nautical maps and is not to be considered a navigational tool. However, we do hope this guide will help you plan your cruise and maximize your experience on each island.

BEFORE YOU GO

Airports

- Nassau (NAS)
- Georgetown (GGT)
- Staniel Cay (STA)

Airlines & Ferries

- International flights to Nassau and Georgetown (via Expedia or other booking platforms)
- Local airlines:
 - Bahamasair
 - Sky Bahamas
 - Flamingo Air
 - Air Flight Charter
- Local ferry services: Bahamas Ferry

Currency

- U.S. Dollar (USD)
- Bahamian Dollar (BSD)

Banking

- Major Canadian and U.S. banks available
- Credit and debit cards widely accepted

Official Language

- English

Visa

- No visa required for Canadians and Americans

Population

- Bahamas: 382,600 (2014)
- Exumas: 7,314 (2010)

Electricity

- 110 volts

Time Zone

- UTC -5 (Eastern Time Zone)

Tips

- Add 15% if not already included

FISHING REGULATIONS

To help protect the marine environment, fishing activities are subject to the following regulations:

⚠️ General Rules

- Possession of spear guns is strictly prohibited.
- Spearfishing using scuba gear is illegal.
- Free diving with a Hawaiian sling is permitted.

🦞 Lobster (Crawfish)

- Limit: 6 tails per person
- Open season: August 1st to March 31st
- Minimum size:
 - 3 3/8 inches (carapace length), or
 - 6 inches (tail length)
- Egg-bearing females are strictly protected

🐚 Conch

- Limit: 6 per person

🐟 Fish (General)

- Limit: 6 fish per person (any combination of species)

🐟 Pelagic Species (Wahoo, Dolphin/Mahi-Mahi, Kingfish)

- Bag limit: 10 fish per person at any time

WEATHER

Best Time to Visit

The ideal time to explore is between September and May, when average temperatures range from 21°C to 24°C (70–75°F). During this period, the northern islands tend to be slightly cooler—by about 5°C—than the southern islands.

Summer Climate

The summer months are warmer and more humid, with temperatures typically ranging between 27°C and 29°C (80–85°F). Despite the heat, refreshing sea breezes help maintain a comfortable atmosphere.

Night Temperatures

Evenings remain mild throughout the year, with temperatures varying from 23°C (74°F) in winter to 29°C (84°F) in late summer.

Weather Forecast at Sea

Weather updates are broadcast daily (times may vary):

- Nassau – Channel 72 at 7:15
- Exumas (Highborn) – Channel 06 at 7:30
- Exumas (Exuma Park) – Channel 06 at 8:00
- Staniel Cay – Channel 12 at 8:15
- Georgetown (Great Exuma) – Channel 72 at 8:00

SERVICES

 DESTINATIONS	 FRESH WATER	 DIESEL FUEL	 GROCERIES	 ICE	 RESTAURANT	 INTERNET	 LAUNDRY SERVICE	 DOCK AVAILABLE	 CORAL MOORING (\$)	 AIRPORT
 Nassau	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Highborne	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Norman's	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
 Shroud									●	
 Warderick Wells				●	●				●	
 Compass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Staniel Cay	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Black Point				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Little Farmer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Lee Stocking Island									●	
 Emerald Bay Marina	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Georgetown				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Spanish Wells (Eleuthera)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Harbour Island (Eleuthera)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Governor's Harbour (Eleuthera)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
 Rock Sound (Eleuthera)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● AVAILABLE ○ NOT AVAILABLE

Availability of services may change.
It is always recommended to check locally.



SUGGESTED ITINERARY - 7 DAYS IN THE EXUMAS



Day 1 – Nassau

Arrive in Nassau, transfer to the marina (25 min), settle onboard and enjoy your first dinner in the Bahamas.

Day 2 – Highborne Cay

Sail ~6h to Highborne Cay. Afternoon swim and beach walk on a stunning deserted shoreline.

Day 3 – Warderick Wells

Morning snorkeling or spearfishing. Sail to Warderick Wells and explore the marina and surrounding nature.

Day 4 – Exuma Park

Discover Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park: snorkeling, hiking, wild beaches, and historic ruins.

Day 5 – Shroud Cay

Sail to Shroud Cay. Explore the mangroves by dinghy and reach a breathtaking hidden beach.

Day 6 – Norman's Cay

Short sail to Norman's Cay. Snorkel a plane wreck, relax on the beach, and enjoy a casual island dinner.

Day 7 – Back to Nassau

Sail back to Nassau. Optional visit to Paradise Island before your departure.

8 DAYS FROM NASSAU



Day 1 – Nassau → Highbourne Cay

Arrive in Nassau and transfer to Albany Marina. Welcome aboard your yacht, enjoy lunch, then cruise to Highbourne Cay for sunset drinks and a peaceful night at anchor or marina.

Day 2 – Highbourne → Warderick Wells

Relaxed morning, beach time or water toys. Sail to Warderick Wells in the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park. Snorkel vibrant reefs and spot wildlife.

Day 3 – Warderick Wells → Hog Cay

Cruise towards Hog Cay. Snorkeling, scenic hikes like Boo Boo Hill, or pure relaxation onboard.

Day 4 – Hog Cay → Fowl Cay → Staniel Cay

Stop at Fowl Cay, then explore highlights:

- Swimming pigs at Big Major Cay
- Snorkeling at Thunderball Grotto
- End the day at Staniel Cay for a lively evening ashore.

Day 5 – Staniel Cay → Bell Island

Sail to Bell Island. Enjoy world-class snorkeling, turquoise waters, and a relaxed dinner under the stars.

Day 6 – Bell Island → Norman's Cay

Head to Norman's Cay. Explore beaches and snorkel the famous plane wreck linked to Pablo Escobar.

Day 7 – Norman's Cay

Easy day: watersports, jet ski, beach time, or fishing in the shallow lagoon.

Day 8 – Return to Nassau

Cruise back to Albany Marina.
Optional stop at Paradise Island before disembarkation.

MUST SEE ISLANDS

New Providence (Nassau)

- The Vibe: The "Big City" with luxury resorts and pirate history.
- What to See & Do:
 - Atlantis Resort: Visit the "Dig" (massive aquarium) and the Aquaventure water park.
 - The Queen's Staircase: 66 steps carved by hand into solid rock in 1793.
 - Arawak Cay (Fish Fry): The place to go for authentic conch salad and Bahamian sky juice.
- Distance to next: 80 km (50 miles) East to Eleuthera.



Eleuthera & Harbour Island

- The Vibe: Wild, long, and natural on Eleuthera; chic and celebrity-style on Harbour Island.
- What to See & Do:
 - Pink Sands Beach: (Harbour Island) World-famous pale pink sand and turquoise water.
 - Glass Window Bridge: A narrow bridge where the dark Atlantic meets the turquoise Bight of Eleuthera.
 - Surfer's Beach: One of the best spots in the Caribbean for catching waves.
- Distance to next: 100 km (62 miles) North to The Abacos



The Abacos

- The Vibe: A sailor's paradise with colonial-style villages and calm bays.
- What to See & Do:
 - Hope Town: See the candy-striped lighthouse (the last manual one in the world).
 - Green Turtle Cay: A charming village with historic architecture and wild turtles.
 - Treasure Cay: Often voted one of the top 10 most beautiful beaches in the world.
- Distance to next: 160 km (100 miles) South back to Nassau (to catch a flight to Exuma).



The Exumas

The Vibe: The most beautiful water on Earth; home to the "Instagram" animals.

- What to See & Do:
 - Big Major Cay: Swim with the famous Wild Pigs.
 - Thunderball Grotto: An underwater cave for snorkeling (featured in James Bond films).
 - Compass Cay: Get in the water with dozens of friendly Nurse Sharks.
- Distance to next: 130 km (80 miles) Northwest back to Nassau.



Spanish Wells (St. George's Cay)

Just off the north tip of Eleuthera. This is a wealthy, immaculate fishing village known for lobster.

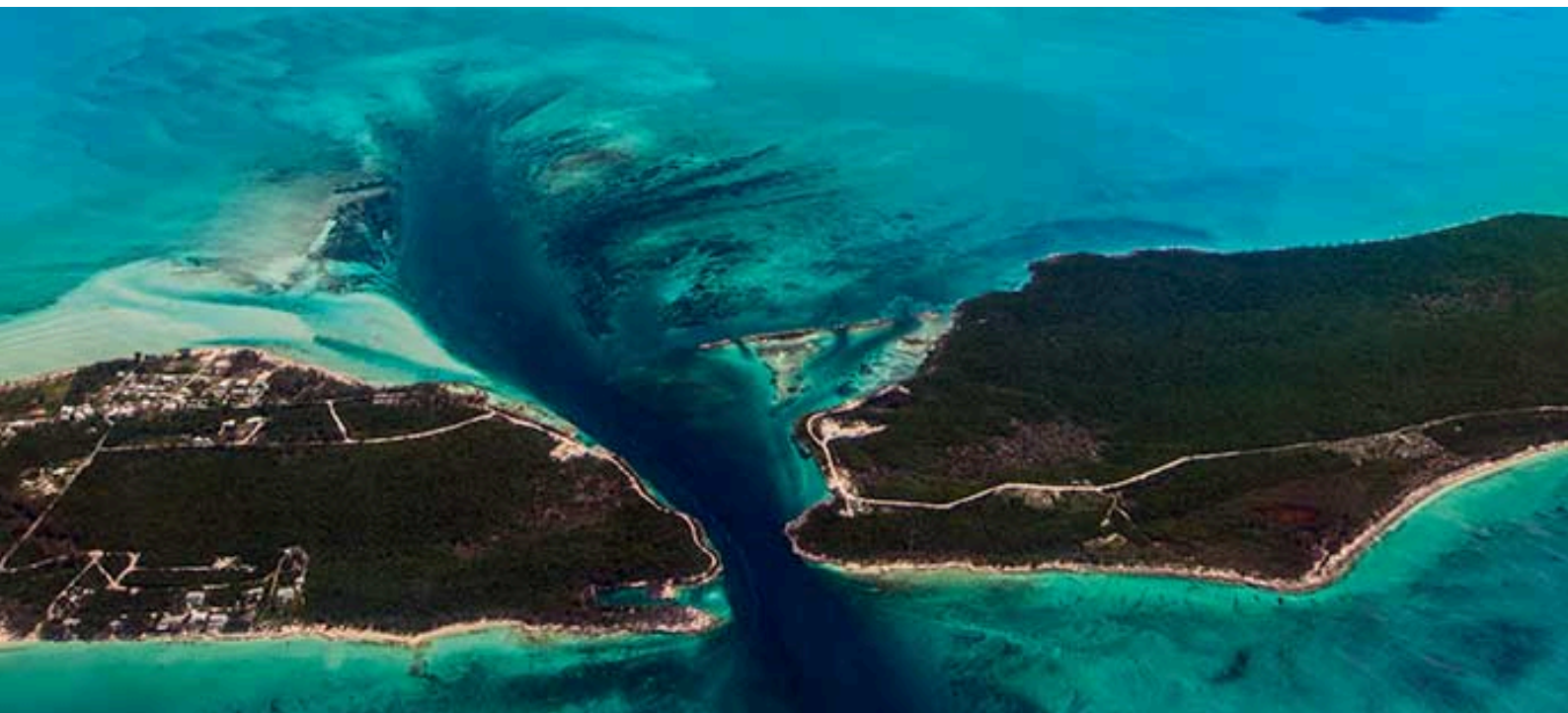
- What to See & Do: Rent a golf cart and explore the pastel-colored houses. It's the "Lobster Capital" of the Bahamas, so eat fresh seafood.
- Distance to Current Cut: ~10 km (6 miles).



Current Cut

A narrow channel between the village of Current and Current Island.

- What to See & Do: High-speed drift snorkeling. When the tide changes, the water rushes through this narrow gap like a river. You jump in and let the current "fly" you over reefs and rays.
- Distance to Spanish Wells: ~10 km (6 miles).



Governor's Harbour

The historic and administrative heart of Central Eleuthera.

- What to See & Do: Visit the Haynes Library (a beautiful pink building) and attend the Friday Night Fish Fry at Haynes Oval—it's the biggest party on the island.
- Distance to Spanish Wells: ~75 km (46 miles) South (about a 1 hour 15 min drive).



Rock Sound

Located in South Eleuthera.

- What to See & Do: The Ocean Hole. A massive, inland saltwater blue hole that legend says is "bottomless" (it's actually about 100m deep). You can jump in and swim with the tropical fish that live there.
- Distance to Governor's Harbour: ~45 km (28 miles) South (about a 45 min drive).



Royal Island & Egg Island

Private or uninhabited islands just west of Spanish Wells.

- What to See & Do:
 - Egg Island: Famous for being a nesting ground for sea turtles and having a very shallow, protected beach.
 - Royal Island: Mostly private, but the surrounding waters are incredible for snorkeling shipwrecks (like the Arimoroa).
- Distance to Spanish Wells: ~10–15 km (6–9 miles) by boat.



FAQ

Where can I securely pass under the bridges in Nassau?

If you want to visit Atlantis Resort or Nassau downtown by boat, it is important to pass under the highest part of the 2 bridges, otherwise the boat could be seriously damaged. If you are uncertain, don't hesitate to communicate with the base before passing under. VERY IMPORTANT the catamarans longer than 43ft CANNOT go under the bridges, they have to go around Paradise Island on the North side then reach Atlantis Marina.

Do I need a visa to travel to the Bahamas?

Most travelers (including from the US, Canada, and Europe) do not need a visa for short stays. A valid passport is required.

Can I anchor anywhere?

Anchoring is generally allowed, but some areas like the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park have strict rules (no fishing, designated moorings only).

FAQ

Is the sea calm in the Bahamas?

Generally yes, especially in the Exumas, which are protected by surrounding cays. Conditions can vary with wind, especially in winter.

How far in advance should I book?

For peak season, booking 6 to 12 months in advance is recommended.

What VHF radio channels are used in the Bahamas?

- Channel 16: International distress, safety, and calling
- Channel 09 / 68 / 72: Common working channels (marinas & yachts)
- Some local nets (weather/info) operate on specific channels depending on the area

How shallow are the waters in the Exumas?

Very shallow in many areas — often 2–4 meters (6–12 ft) or less. Careful route planning is essential.

FAQ

Are there speed or navigation restrictions?

- Slow speed/no wake near marinas and populated areas
- National parks like Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park enforce strict rules

Is AIS or radar necessary?

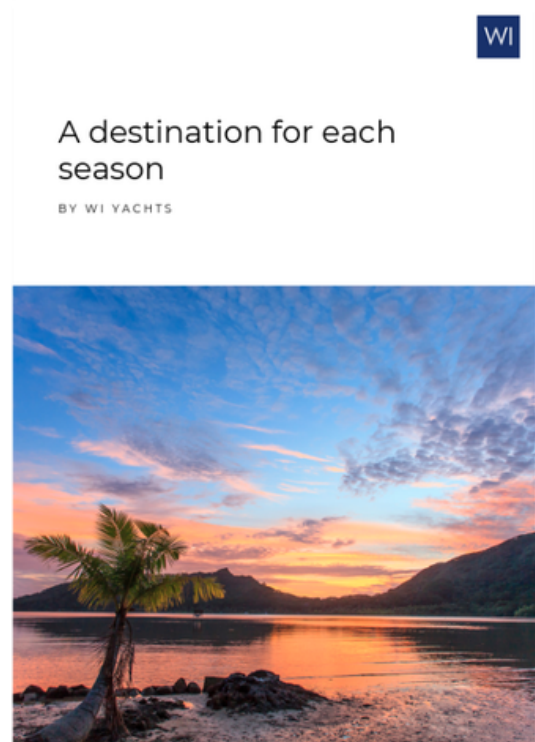
Highly recommended, especially for:

- Night navigation (though generally avoided)
- Traffic awareness near Nassau

Can you sail at night in the Bahamas?

Not recommended. Many hazards (reefs, sandbanks) are unlit. Most navigation is done during daylight only.

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