



Turks & Caicos

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Why Go?

The Turks and where? That's the reaction most people have when you mention these tropical isles. Like all great Shangri-Las, this one is hidden just under the radar. Be glad that it is, as this tropical dream is the deserted Caribbean destination you've been looking for. And the best part – it's only 90 minutes by plane from Miami.

So why would you want to go there? How about white-sand beaches, clear blue water and a climate that defines divine. Secluded bays and islands where you'll see more wild donkeys than other travelers. Historic towns and villages where life creeps along at a sedate pace.

Divers and beach aficionados will rejoice: clear warm waters teem with marine life, yet are devoid of crashing waves. Islands like Grand Turk – set in a time long since past, with its dilapidated buildings, salt ponds and narrow lanes – contrast with the ever expanding Providenciales. While development is on the rise, all one has to do is catch a boat to the next island over and the solace of solitude returns.

When to Go

January to April is the islands' high season and is rightly popular – the weather is normally dry and warm. In July, the country's biggest fishing competition, the Grand Turk Game Fishing Tournament, arrives. Come in November to blow a conch shell or just head for the tasting tent at the Turks & Caicos Conch Festival.

Best Beaches

- » Grace Bay Beach (p812)
- » Mudjin Harbor (p821)
- » Bambarra Beach (p821)
- » Governor's Beach (p824)

Best Places to Eat

- » Grace's Cottage (p816)
- » Terrace (p819)
- » Coyaba (p817)
- » Osprey (p825)

Itineraries

THREE DAYS

Spend the day admiring Grace Bay on Providenciales then wake up the next day to go for a snorkeling trip to French Cay to frolic with some stingrays. On the last day rent a bike and explore the island under your own steam.

ONE WEEK

Add on a trip to the islands of North Caicos and Middle Caicos and discover what solitude is really all about. Complete the trip by heading to Grand Turk to explore the town, do some great diving and spend a day or two on Salt Cay – the best-kept secret in the country.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

There are no scheduled ferry services to neighboring islands from the Turks and Caicos. Flying is the way to get around and there are regular flights to Nassau (Bahamas), Puerto Plata and Santiago (Dominican Republic), Cap-Haitien and Port-au-Prince (Haiti) and to Kingston (Jamaica).

Essential Food & Drink

» **Conch** This grilled gastropod remains the dish of choice across the islands, and rigorous controls on the fishing industry mean that its numbers are not declining here.

» **Lobster** Don't miss tasting the fresh lobster during your stay – traditionally served in a butter sauce with lime, it's the culinary highlight of the country.

» **Turk's Head** The local brew is a great way to cool down in the height of the Caribbean afternoon.

AT A GLANCE

Currency US\$

Language English

Money ATMs abundant on Providenciales, less common elsewhere

Visas Not required for citizens of the US, Canada or Western Europe

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 430 sq miles
- » **Population** 44,800
- » **Capital** Cockburn Town
- » **Telephone country code** 649
- » **Emergency** 911

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** \$80
- » **Two-course evening meal** \$50
- » **Museum entrance** \$5
- » **Beer** \$3

Resources

- » **Official tourism website** (www.turksandcaicos tourism.com)
- » **Government website** (www.tcgov.tc)
- » **Time of the Island** (www.timespub.tc)