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# PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions  
to help you put together your perfect trip

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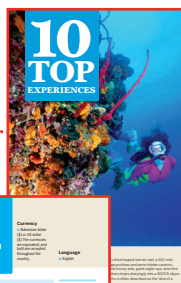
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# UNDERSTAND THE BAHAMAS

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

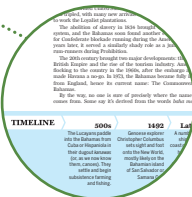
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**Emily Matchar**  
**Tom Masters**



Look out for these icons:



Our author's  
recommendation



A green or  
sustainable option



No payment  
required

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# The Bahamas



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# Top Experiences >



# itineraries

*Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to [lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travelers.*



## One Week Essential Bahamas

Touch down in **Nassau**, the country's glitzy capital. Spend a morning taking in the ornate pink-and-white buildings of the historic downtown, then head straight for Cable Beach for jet skiing or daiquiri-sipping. The next day, cross the arched bridge to Atlantis on **Paradise Island**. You can spend 24 hours gambling, riding waterslides through shark tanks and dancing at glam nightclubs. On the third day, head to western New Providence to explore the uncrowded beaches and sip sunset cocktails at a swanky Nassau resort. On the fourth day, catch a fast ferry to Eleuthera's **Harbour Island** to stroll the iconic Pink Sands Beach, and perhaps spot a celeb or two. The next day, take a water taxi to the 'mainland', **Eleuthera**, to explore hidden beaches and photograph the famous Glass Window Bridge. Hop on the ferry back to New Providence in time for some snorkeling or a day-trip to play with dolphins at the **Blue Lagoon**. On your last day, take a powerboat ride to visit the rock iguanas on a remote cay in the **Exumas**.



## One Month Island Hopping

After a few days of living it up in **Nassau** and **Paradise Island**, spend a day or two on **Harbour Island**, wandering the stunning Pink Sands Beach, shopping at deluxe boutiques and dining among the glitterati at the Landing Restaurant. Then catch a water taxi to mainland **Eleuthera** and rent a car to explore the skinny 100-mile-long island, stopping for steak and revelry at the Rainbow Inn & Restaurant and spending at least a whole day at stunning, isolated **Lighthouse Beach**. In week two, grab a flight to **Abaco** for a week of exploring the Loyalist Cays via ferry or rental boat. Don't miss the Sunday pig roast at Nipper's Beach Bar & Grill on Great Guana Cay. Week three, fly back to Nassau and on to **Exuma** to visit Stocking Island and snorkel at **Thunderball Grotto**. Then fly onto pretty **Long Island** to see the striking churches of **Clarence Town** and the world's deepest undersea blue hole at **Turtle Cove**. In week four, it's back to Nassau, then on to **Andros** for bonefishing and blue hole exploring before catching the puddle-jumper to **Grand Bahama** to spend your last few days relaxing on peaceful **Lucaya Beach**.

## Three Days A Quick Nassau Getaway

Just a few hours from many major US cities, Nassau makes a perfect quick 'n' dirty getaway for a long weekend.

Spend your first morning getting oriented with a self-guided walking tour of the pastel-pretty colonial **downtown**. Learn about dastardly sea villains at the **Pirates of Nassau** museum, then head up the **Queen's Staircase** to **Fort Fincastle** for panoramic views over the harbor. In the afternoon, hit **Cable Beach** for sunning and water sports, then head downtown for dinner at the atmospherically Gothic **Graycliff Restaurant** (be sure to buy a stogie at the adjacent **cigar factory**). The next day, take the bridge to Paradise Island for a day of theme-park fun at the enormous **Atlantis** resort. Ride on waterslides, gawk at sharks through the lobby's aquarium windows, shop for duty-free diamonds and test your luck at the casino, then dine on avant-garde sushi at celebrity chef-run **Nobu**. On your last day, watch the famous flamingos march at **Ardastra Gardens, Zoo & Conservation Park** then take an afternoon **snorkeling trip** to nearby reefs before hopping on an evening flight back home.





## Five Days Relaxing Grand Bahama

Built specifically as a tourism destination in the 1950s, clean, peaceful, modern Grand Bahama is an ideal spot for a no-fuss holiday. From the airport take a taxi to **Lucaya**, the tidy coastal suburb that's home to most of the hotels and restaurants. Spend an afternoon exploring the duty-free shops, straw markets and cafes of pastel-pretty Port Lucaya Marketplace, then strolling over to dinner at trendy Sabor. The next day, lie on silvery **Lucaya Beach** for hours and don't move a finger (except maybe to grab lunch at Billy Joe's on the Beach). On day three, rent a car or catch a cab to **Garden of the Groves** for strolling and birdwatching, then on to the Junkanoo Beach Club for DIY snorkeling and kayaking, finishing up by enjoying fried turbot and listening to rake 'n' scrape at the Smith's Point Fish Fry. On day four, go eastward for hiking in **Lucayan National Park** and splendiferous empty sands at **Gold Rock Beach**. For your last day, treat yourself to a custom-made scent at the Freeport's Perfume Factory and a peek at the eerie International Bazaar before heading back to the airport.

## Two Weeks Out Island Adventure

Start off in vast but undeveloped **Andros**, a pristine wilderness of pineyard forest, barrier reef (one of the largest in the world) and hidden blue holes. Divers head to Small Hope Bay Lodge, a laid-back ecoresort in Central Andros. From here, culture vultures should explore the Bahamas African heritage on **Cat Island**, where the mysticism of obeah folk magic still reigns. Canoe around quiet **Turtle Cove** and take in the sunset from atop the striking **Mt Alvernia Hermitage**. Remote and unspoiled, the **Crooked Island District** offers a remote natural setting with a few splendid beaches, bat caves, birds (especially flamingos) and nesting turtles. **Mayaguana** is one of the least developed Bahamian islands, known for fantastic diving, populations of iguanas and its flamingos and isolated beaches. Finally, head for semiarid, scrub-covered **Great Inagua**. Nature rules here, with a **turtle reserve** at Union Creek and the famous **Bahamas National Trust Park**, where a hike takes you into the heart of one of the world's largest flocks of flamingos. Unfortunately none of the islands are connected by air to each other, so you'll have to zip in and out of Nassau regularly.



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Emily Matchar

**Coordinating author; Plan Your Trip, Diving in the Bahamas, Nassau & New Providence; Grand Bahama; Biminis, Andros & Berry Islands; Abacos;**

**Eleuthera; Understand; Survival Guide** Emily's first trip to the Bahamas, as a callow college student, was not particularly promising (let us never speak of Spring Break 2003 again, please). But subsequent trips opened her eyes to

the wonders of pink-sand beaches, blue holes, sweet little colonial villages and cracked conch. In fact, she's kind of annoyed that she's not on Eleuthera's Lighthouse Beach right now. When she's not traipsing the globe, Emily lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and writes about culture, travel and food for a number of magazines and newspapers. She's contributed to nearly a dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks.

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[lonelyplanet.com/members/emilymatchar](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/emilymatchar)



### Tom Masters

**The Exumas; Cat & San Salvador Islands; Southern Bahamas; Turks & Caicos** Tom is a long-time lover of all things Caribbean, particularly anything to do with diving, which he's done everywhere in the region from Cuba to the Cayman Islands and from Dominica to the coast of Venezuela. Taking on the remote 'Out Islands' of the Bahamas and the little-known Turks and Caicos for this book was pure pleasure, despite a series of disasters on the road ranging from missed planes to crashed cars and lost passports. Tom lives in Berlin and can be found online at [www.tommasters.net](http://www.tommasters.net).

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