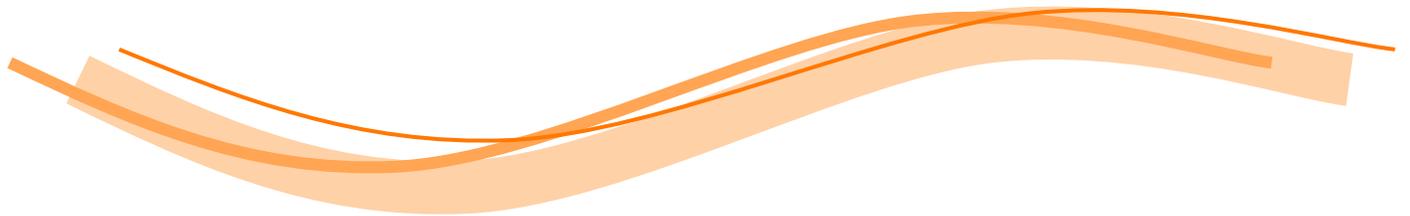




NASSAU PARADISE ISLAND, BAHAMAS



NASSAU PARADISE ISLAND

Jump into clear, warm turquoise waters and take advantage of the best diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean – in Nassau Paradise Island, Bahamas.

Just 3 hours flight from Toronto and only 290 kms off the coast of Southern Florida – Nassau Paradise Island awaits. The larger island of New Providence is home to Nassau and world renowned Cable Beach. Paradise Island, linked by a bridge to Nassau, is where many of the luxury hotels are found.

Getting there is easy and so is your whole vacation. English is widely spoken in this former British colony. American dollars are at par with the Bahamian dollar. And there are beach activities, fine dining, exciting nightlife and exquisite shopping to make your relaxed vacation just as active as you want it to be.

Right now is a perfect time to travel! Book an air-inclusive package by October 03, 2011 and get \$300 Instant Savings on future travel through to February 15, 2012 (some blackout dates apply). Check out www.nassauparadiseisland.com for more details.

This offer is available from all of the tour operators in the Canadian market that sell packages to Nassau/Paradise Island: **Westjet Vacations, Air Canada Vacations, Sunquest, Holiday House and Sunwing.**

Of course, Nassau Paradise Island is best known for the crystal clear, tranquil waters that surround it. A dive or snorkel trip is a must to see vibrant undersea gardens of coral reefs. Over a dozen dive and snorkel sites include wrecks of small planes and even a freighter.

Visit with the dolphins or better yet – swim with them. Relax on a sparkling white-sand beach – or make a splash on a waterslide at AQUAVENTURE, a revolutionary waterscape, filled with slides and river rides.

Away from the water, indulge in world-class pampering at one of five luxurious spas. Or tee off at two spectacular golf courses. The duty free shopping in Nassau offers bargains on luxuries such as high end jewelry, liquor, watches, crystal, china and perfume. Plus you can pick up local handicrafts like straw hats and handmade wood carvings at markets and craft shops.

Part British, part Spanish, part West African – the mix of cultures gives Nassau Paradise Island a spirit all its own. So in one visit to this fascinating island you can climb the 66 steps of the Queen's staircase to get a spectacular view of the harbour, visit Versailles Gardens with elegant terraces and French Cloisters, and join the Caribbean festivities of the weekly fish fry or the Junkaroo carnival celebrations.

As night falls choose from a host of gourmet options. From local

	<p>favourites like Conch salad and fried snapper to haute Continental cuisine, the dining reflects the fusion of many cultural influences. And you can dine at the refined, old world Graycliff Restaurant, the Caribbean's first 5-star establishment. Then party the night away at Aura, a 9000 sq ft nightclub, one of many vibrant night spots in Nassau Paradise Island. Or try your luck at the two largest casinos in the Caribbean.</p> <p>Vacationers can fly WestJet non-stop from Toronto to Nassau to start the holiday in style. See www.westjet.com for details and prices.</p>
Location	<p>The Bahamas is one of the most geographically complicated nations of the Atlantic. A coral-based archipelago, it is composed of more than 700 islands, 2,000 cays (pronounced "keys," from the Spanish word for small islands), and hundreds of rocky outcroppings that have damaged the hulls of countless ships since colonial days.</p> <p>Paradise Island is a small island linked by 2 bridges to Providence Island on which is situated Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas. The international airport is situated close by on the main Providence Island.</p>
Geography	<p>The 700 islands total an estimated land area of 5,382 sq miles, and register a highest land elevation of 206 ft. Most notable, however, is that each island has its own diversity that continues beyond geography, carrying through to the heart of The Bahamas, the Bahamian people.</p> <p>Nassau The capital city of The Islands of The Bahamas is found on 34km-long New Providence, the 11th largest island. The fine harbour of Nassau is protected by tiny Paradise Island for a three-mile stretch. This sheltered harbour attracted settlers from the early days. When British colonists discovered the harbour in the late 1600s, some left the island of Eleuthera to live on New Providence. Nassau's history can be traced back to days of the legendary pirate Blackbeard. Its sheltered harbor, mansions, cathedrals and 18th-century fortresses have been beautifully preserved.</p> <p>Paradise Island Once known as Hogg Island, Paradise Island is 685 acres of pure bliss connected to Nassau by two 600-foot bridges. The island was developed almost exclusively to delight and accommodate visitors, with resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, a golf course, an aquarium, and a casino rounding out the amenities.</p>
Name	After observing the shallow sea around the islands, Columbus said "baja mar" (shallow water or sea), and effectively named the area The Bahamas, or The Islands of the Shallow Sea.
Population	Estimated at 330,000
Language	Bahamian English is fascinating mixture of Queen's diction, African influences, and island patois. Unfamiliar sounding words you'll hear on the streets may be survivors from early English settlement (true Shakesperian English!), echoes of Africa, or local words.
Currency	In The Bahamas, the legal tender is the Bahamian dollar (B\$1), which is equivalent in value to the U.S. dollar. Even though The Bahamas mint and circulate their own legal tender, both U.S. and Bahamian

	dollars are accepted interchangeably throughout the islands. The Canadian Dollar and the Bahamian Dollar are therefore close to parity currently (Sept 24 th 2011).
Tipping	Tip according to quality of service. Bellboys and porters usually receive \$1 per bag, while most other servers (waiters, taxis, etc.) receive 15%
Government	The Constitution of The Bahamas is based on the Westminster Model; Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Executive Branch, The Legislative Branch, and Judicial Branch. As a member of the Commonwealth of Nations The Bahamas recognizes Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State. The Governor-General is Her Majesty's representative in The Bahamas and constitutes a symbol of the nation's unity.
Documentation	To enter The Bahamas, Canadian citizens must have a valid passport or Birth Certificate and Photo ID. No visa is required. The visit period is three months. Departure Tax is \$20 US as at Sept 2011 for everyone over 6 years.
Time zone	Eastern Time Zone
Health	Few health risks; no vaccinations are required
Safety tips	Normal safety precautions

CLIMATE	
General climate	The trade winds that blow almost continually throughout The Islands of The Bahamas give the islands a warm, agreeable climate which varies little year round. The most refreshing time is between September and May, when the temperature averages 24C degrees. The rest of the year is a bit warmer with temperatures around 29C degrees.
Today's weather	30 degrees Centigrade and sunny for 24 September 2011
Best time to visit	Mid December to Mid April – but really any time of year is good

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	Direct flights with Westjet and Air Canada from Montreal to Nassau take just 3 hours – one of the shortest flights to winter sunshine!
Cities	<p>Nassau The capital of The Bahamas, the historic city of Nassau is the main destination for Canadians. Despite the development and the modern hotels, a laid-back tropical atmosphere still pervades the city, and it still offers a good dose of colonial charm. The commercial and banking hub of The Bahamas, as well as a mecca for shoppers, Nassau lies on the north side of New Providence, which is 34km long and 11km wide at its greatest point.</p> <p>The shops might draw a lot more business than the museums, but no city in The Bahamas is as rich in history as Nassau. You can take a "royal climb" up the Queen's Staircase to Fort Fincastle. These 66 steps are said to have been cut in the sandstone cliffs by slaves in the 1790s.</p> <p>Other Nassau attractions include Ardastra Gardens, which feature 2 hectares of landscaping and more than 300 exotic birds, mammals, and reptiles. Most popular are the trained pink flamingos that march for audiences daily to their trainer's commands.</p> <p>It's surprising that Nassau has retained its overlay of British colonial charm despite its proximity to Florida and the massive influx of North American business. It hasn't become completely Americanized, at least</p>

	not yet; despite new development, traffic, and cruise-ship crowds, Nassau's still a long way from becoming another Miami. Stately old homes and public buildings still stand proudly among the modern high-rises and bland government buildings. Tropical foliage lines streets where horse-drawn surreys still trot by, carrying visitors on leisurely tours. Police officers in white starched jackets and dome-shaped pith helmets still direct traffic on the main streets, as they have long done.
Distances	The 1200 km-long chain of islands, cays, and reefs is rightfully known as the playground of the Western world. The northernmost island is Grand Bahama, whose western point is about 120 kms almost due east of Palm Beach, Florida. The southernmost is Great Inagua, some 100 kms northeast of Cuba and less than 130 kms north of Haiti.
Ferries	Local ferries link Paradise Island to Nassau across the harbour, and also link Nassau to Cable Beach to the west along the shore of New Providence Island. Fast Ferry service is a fun and convenient way to hop between islands. But be ready for a high-speed experience as a fully air-conditioned ferry whisks you from Nassau to one of the other islands. There are also 19 Mail Boats connect the islands – for those with time!
Trains	None
Car Rental	Most major firms are represented; rates start at \$70 Driving: British rules apply, so please drive on the left and be extra careful on roundabouts. Visitors may use their home licenses for up to three months.
Buses & Taxis	Buses: The buses (also called jitneys) are 32-seaters and travel to many parts of the island. They operate from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily, except on Sundays when there is reduced service. The basic fare is \$1 per person and \$3 for out-of-town zones. Exact fare is required Taxis: Cabstands are conveniently located at the airports and most hotels. Taxi service is available by telephone, on the street or at taxi stands. Although metered rates vary by island, they are reasonable and are fixed by law. Surcharges often apply for more than two persons and extra luggage. Taxi rates in Nassau/Paradise Island are zoned, or can also be metered. You can request to be charged by the taximeter, if you prefer.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	There's a huge variety of accommodations to choose from in The Bahamas – our prize trip resort is the Sheraton (see below). Nassau Paradise Island has a choice of hotels in the two areas: Cable Beach – Sandals, British Colonial Hilton, Graycliff, Marley Resort, Sheraton, Wyndham Paradise Island – Best Western Bayview Suites, PI Harbour Resort, and of course the fabled Atlantis. (Reef, Cove, Beach, Coral and Royal Tower along with all else they have to offer!)
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	The Bahamas is one of the top family-vacation destinations in North America. The smallest toddlers can spend blissful hours on sandy beaches and in the shallow seawater, or in swimming pools constructed with them in mind. There's no end to the fascinating

	<p>pursuits offered for older children, ranging from boat rides to shell collecting, to horseback riding, hiking, or even dancing. Some children are old enough to learn to snorkel and to explore an underwater wonderland. Some resorts will even teach kids to swim or windsurf. Most families with kids head for New Providence (Nassau) or Paradise Island.</p> <p>Pirates of Nassau is a world-class pirate attraction in the heart of downtown Nassau. Experience the true story of pirates in an amazing, historically accurate, interactive environment, which will entertain, excite and educate visitors of all ages. Pirate themed pub and Courtyard bar and PLUNDER! The Pirate Gift Shop.</p> <p>Also try: TropiKids entertainment centre, Ardastra Gardens, Zoo & Conservation Centre, the Crystal Cay Marine Park</p>
Teens	Opportunities abound for shared family adventure and relaxation, including spectacular beaches and reefs, water parks, historical museums, nature and conservation centres.
Romance	Nassau Paradise Island is perfect for lovers. The beaches, the nightlife, the gourmet dining and spas all combine for a heady cocktail of romantic time together.
Honeymoons & Weddings	<p>Weddings are very popular in this destination. It's the reason celebrities like Mariah Carey, Cindy Crawford, Deion Sanders and even Sergey Brin, Google's co-founder, chose these islands as the place to start their new lives.</p> <p>Island weddings have in recent years become accessible to more couples looking to add an "exotic spin" to their special ceremony. Properly planned, a destination wedding can not only save you upwards of \$20,000 off the cost of a traditional wedding, it can also turn your wedding day into an unforgettable "mini-vacation" for you and your guests.</p> <p>Weddings are so easy to plan in the The Islands of The Bahamas, especially when you choose to work with our professional consultants and the staff at the resort where you are staying. Keep it simple and pick a convenient package already designed to create the wedding of your dreams. Many Bahamas resorts cater especially to newlyweds, and provide romance, bridal and honeymoon packages.</p> <p>Couples may apply a day after their arrival and can be married once they receive their approved license the day after application.</p>
Seniors	A good choice for seniors: easy to get around, comfortable resorts, short flights from Canada, spring-like weather in winter

UNIQUES	The ratio of flamingos to people on Great Inagua is 61:1
Surprising	Cascarilla bark grown in a few Out Islands is used to flavor Campari and Vermouth
History	<p>Geography played a crucial role in Bahamian history. In 1492, Christopher Columbus made his first landfall in the New World on the island of San Salvador in the eastern Bahamas. Recent archaeological digs indicate people lived in The Islands Of The Bahamas as early as 300 to 400 AD. These people probably came from Cuba and relied on the ocean for their food. In the 10th century, Lucayan Indians - a subgroup of the Arawaks – settled in The Islands Of The Bahamas. When Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492 on San Salvador (some</p>

	<p>historians think he landed on Cat Island), there were about 40,000 Lucayans living in The Islands Of The Bahamas. Taking advantage of the people's gentle nature, he enslaved them three years later and shipped them off to Hispaniola to work in his mines. Slavery, disease and other hardships wiped out the entire tribe within 25 years of Columbus' arrival. In 1648, a group of dissident English Puritans (known as the "Eleutheran Adventurers") arrived here in their quest for religious freedom.</p> <p>The first English settlers of Eleuthera shipped Braselitto wood to Boston as a thank you for the support given by the people of Massachusetts. The proceeds from the sale of this precious wood went to purchase the land for Harvard College, which eventually became Harvard University. Charles Town on New Providence Island was burnt to the ground by the Spanish in 1684, but later rebuilt and renamed Nassau in 1695 to honor King William III (formerly Prince of Orange-Nassau)</p> <p>The Bahama Islands became the free and sovereign Commonwealth of The Bahamas on 10th July 1973, ending 325 years of British rule.</p>
Books	Frommer's Bahamas 2011
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Andros Island for diving and bone fishing</p> <p>Dolphin Dive, Little Bahama Banks to swim with wild dolphins</p> <p>The pink sands of Harbour Island</p> <p>Shark Rodeo at Walker's Cay to swim with the sharks</p>
Must Sees	<p>Best Beaches: Cable Beach, Cat's Island Beaches</p> <p>Best diving: Exuma, New Providence and Andros Islands</p> <p>A Ride in a Horse-Drawn Surrey: if you'd like to see Nassau as the Duke of Windsor did when he was governor, consider this archaic but charming form of transportation. It's elegant, romantic, and nostalgic. Surreys await passengers at Rawson Square, in the exact centre of Nassau.</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Golf	The Cable Beach Golf Course is the oldest golf course in the country. The widely known Ocean Club Golf Club has unusual obstacles - a lion's den and a windmill - which have challenged the skill of both Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus. It also boasts the world's largest sand trap.
Fishing	<p>May to August are the best months for the oceanic bonito and the blackfin tuna, June and July for blue marlin, and November through February for the wahoo found in reefy areas.</p> <p>Arrangements can be made at any of the big hotels, but unfortunately, there's a hefty price tag. With equipment included for parties of between two and six, prices usually begin at around \$500 for a half-day and from \$1,000 for a full day's fishing.</p> <p>One of the most reliable companies, Born Free Charters (tel. 242/393-4144) offers a fleet of three vessels, each between 11 and 14m long, that can seat six comfortably</p> <p>Deep sea fishing: The Bahamas has produced over 50 record catches. Come for big-game tournaments, deep-sea charters, or to witness the vigorous strike of the bonefish. The flats and deep waters of The Bahamas are suitable for beginners and sport fishing enthusiasts.</p>

	<p>Bone Fishing: Bonefishing has become a local favorite within The Islands Of The Bahamas. Bonefishing takes place in the flats where guides slowly pole small flat-bottomed boats for anglers, or the truly dedicated quietly stalk these elusive fish by wading through knee-deep water. These quicksilver fighters, weighing up to 15 pounds, inspire both fly fishermen and spin casters alike with their power and speed.</p>
Horse riding	<p>Windsor Equestrian Centre & Happy Trails Stables, Coral Harbour, on the southwest shore (tel. 242/362-1820; www.bahamahorse.com), offers a 90-minute horseback trail ride, which is limited to a maximum of eight riders at a time, for \$150 (as at 2011). The price includes free transportation to and from your hotel. Happy Trails Stables has been operating in The Bahamas since 1977. The brainchild of Duke and Susan Smith, the stables began offering trail rides for visitors and residents from its location in Coral Harbour, a small scenic settlement on the beach, about 25 minutes from downtown Nassau, the Bahamas' capital, and only 7 minutes from the prestigious Lyford Cay.</p>
Hiking	<p>Hotels and resorts on each of the Out Islands provide a variety of nature trails and hikes. You can choose to join a guided tour, or head off on your own to explore. Check with resorts for maps and best bets for nature hiking tours.</p> <p>The Bimini Nature Hiking Trail gives visitors a rarely seen glimpse of the island. You will not only be able to learn more about Bimini's animal and plant life, but also hear stories about the ecology and history of Bimini. Guided tours of the nature hiking trails are led by professionals who provide a hands-on experience with unique animals on this small island. Even if you venture off on your own, signs identifying plants and wildlife can be found along the trail.</p> <p>Andros Island is a naturalist's wonderland thanks to numerous deserted beaches, "blue holes" (fresh- and salt-water-filled caves found inland and in the ocean, respectively), pine forests, mangrove marsh, and the carefully protected fresh water reservoir. Tour Forfar Field Station in Blanket Sound. This international research facility for studies in tropical ecology and marine biology offers inland nature hikes and offshore expeditions. A nature hiking trail explores the island's flora and fauna and medicinal plants. Guided nature walks, kayaking and bird watching tours can be arranged through a number of hotels</p>
Cycling	<p>Most biking or scooter riding is done either on New Providence Island (Nassau) or on Grand Bahama Island; both have relatively flat terrain. Biking is best on Grand Bahama Island because it's bigger, with better roads and more places to go. Getting around New Providence Island is relatively easy once you're out of the congestion of Nassau and Cable Beach. In Nassau many hotels will rent you a bike or motor scooter.</p>
Diving	<p>Coral reefs. Blue holes. Walls. Caves. Shipwrecks. Sharks. Dolphins. Stingrays. The variety of islands in The Bahamas present a variety of diving experiences. Beginners and experts are welcome. Lessons and guides can be found throughout the islands. The Bahamas has the clearest waters in the world with visibility of over 200 feet</p> <p>Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas, Southwest Bay Street, South Ocean (tel. 242/362-4171; www.stuartcove.com), is about 10 minutes from</p>

	<p>top dive sites, including the coral reefs, wrecks, and an underwater airplane structure used in filming James Bond thrillers. For the island's most exciting underwater adventure, divers head to the wreck of the Caribe Breeze, depicted in the film Open Water. Here the staff feeds reef sharks some 15m below the water; from a position of safety, divers in full scuba gear can witness the show. Steep sea walls and the Porpoise Pen Reefs (named for Flipper) are also on the diving agenda. A two-tank dive in the morning costs \$109; an all-day program goes for \$155. (2011 prices) All prices for boat dives include tanks, weights, and belts.</p>
<p>Sailing</p>	<p>Cruises from the harbors around New Providence Island are offered by a number of operators, with trips ranging from daytime voyages for snorkeling, picnicking, sunning, and swimming, to sunset and moonlight cruises.</p> <p>Marinas and hotels offer a wide range of charters and rentals: fully crewed and catered sailing trips, "bareboat" rentals for experienced sailors, day cruises, small sailboats, motorboats, and jet-skis. Even around the most popular islands, you can drop anchor at some remote spot and enjoy sunny, silent swimming and snorkeling right off shore.</p> <p>Barefoot Sailing Cruises, Bay Shore Marina, on East Bay Street (tel. 242/393-0820; www.barefootsailingcruises.com), runs the 41-foot Wind Dance, which leaves for all-day cruises from this dock, offering many sailing and snorkeling possibilities. This is your best bet if you're seeking a more romantic cruise. The cruises usually stop at Rose Island, a charming, picture-perfect spot with an un-crowded beach and palm trees. Their all day cruise is \$115 pp (2011)</p>

<p>CULTURE</p>	<p>The National Art Gallery of the Bahamas: This is the nation's showcase to display its talented artists. In a restored 18th-century building in the center of Nassau, (Villa Doyle, W. Hill St. in downtown Nassau) the gallery features Bahamian art, which as an entity has existed for only 50 years. Museum curators claim that the present collection is only the nucleus of a long-range strategy to beef up the present number of works. Most of the paintings on exhibit are divided into a historical and a contemporary collection. Pioneering Bahamian artists are honored, as are younger and more modern painters.</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>The Bahamas maintains great pride in its original musical idioms, often comparing their vitality to the more famous musical traditions of Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad. Other than the spirituals whose roots were shared by slaves in colonial North America, by far the most famous musical products of the archipelago are Goombay and its closely linked sibling, Junkanoo.</p> <p>Goombay music is an art form whose melodies and body movements are always accompanied by the beat of goatskin drums and, when available, the liberal consumption of rum. Goombay is a musical combination of Africa's tribal heritage (especially that of the Egungun sect of the Yoruba tribe) mingled with the Native American and British colonial influences of the New World. Although its appeal quickly spread to other islands, its traditions remain strongest within The Bahamas.</p>

Films	Film locations: The Outsider, Silence of the Lambs, Cocoon I & II, Flipper, Thunderball, Splash, Never Say Never Again, Zeus and Roxanne, Jaws the Revenge and Speed 2
Museums	Junkanoo Expo: wharfside museum, culture and history of event Pirates of Nassau: A wax museum dedicated to the life and times of Pirates. Self guided tours of the facility takes approximately thirty minutes and there are plaques on the wall and audio to listen to.
Festivals	Junkanoo (which has been compared to Carnival in Rio and Mardi Gras in New Orleans) is a colorful and uniquely Bahamian parade held on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Nassau's Bay Street lights up each year for Junkanoo - an adrenalin rush of colours, costumes and floats driven by the beat of the goatskin drum. This is a festival unique for its raw Afro-Caribbean flavour. Spectators line Bay Street from about 2am until 8am. A mounting clamour of bells, whistles and goombay drums throbs forward to the rhythm of the music until dawn streaks across the sky, revealing revellers in extraordinary costumes. Secret Junkanoo "shacks" all over the island are the venues for the creation of these costumes, made of thousands of tiny pieces of coloured paper. Competition to win is always fierce. The groups who compete in the Junkanoo have crazy names such as the Vikings, the Music Makers and the Z-Bandits. The winners are announced on the local radio and television stations and there is a cash prize for the winning group. Plan early for a good vantage point. Upstairs locations on Bay Street are prime viewing venues. Although it is possible to stand and watch the parade, it is highly recommended to purchase seating space in advance, as there are over 50,000 spectators and standing space is limited. You can purchase your tickets a few weeks before the event online at www.tajiz.com .

ATTRACTIONS	Highest Point: Mount Alvernia on Cat Island at a mere 63 meters is the highest point on any of the islands
Beaches	The emerald and turquoise waters of The Bahamas archipelago naturally form breathtaking beaches. Seclusion. Activity. Countless meandering miles of sand - white, or pink. The glittering shoreline of famous Cable Beach proffers easy access to shops, casinos, restaurants, watersports, and bars. It's a sandy 6.5km-long strip, with a great array of facilities and activities. Cabbage Beach, Paradise Island is one of the more beautiful beaches on Nassau/Paradise Island. It is ideal for beach walking, swimming or sunbathing. Such water sports as water-skiing, snorkeling and parasailing take place. Pink Sands Beach (Harbour Island) - Running the entire length of the island's eastern side, these pale-pink sands stretch for 5km past a handful of low-rise hotels and private villas. A coral reef protects the shore from breakers, making for some of the safest swimming in The Bahamas.

Wildlife	<p>Swim with Dolphins: Blue Lagoon Island close encounter: After an educational talk on their deck, wade into waist-deep water for close-up contact with the dolphins. Swim with the dolphins: Spend approximately 30 unforgettable minutes in the water.</p> <p>More than 80,000 West Indian Flamingos, national bird of The Bahamas, reside in the Inagua National Park, which makes up almost half of Great Inagua Island; Other exotic birds on the island include pelicans, herons, egrets, and Bahama pintail ducks. 109 species of birds breed in the Islands of the Bahamas Several species of whales and dolphins, including blue and humpback whales and spotted dolphin are found in the waters of The Bahamas</p>
Parks	<p>National Parks: Abaco NP - This National Park, comprising 20,500 acres in Southern Abaco near Hole In The Wall, has been designated a preservation area by the Bahamas Government and is managed by The Bahamas National Trust. Included are 5,000 acres of pine forest – the nesting area and habitat of about 1000 endangered Bahama or "Abaco" Parrots.</p> <p>The Lucayan National Park on Grand Bahama Island is the site of the world's longest known underwater cave and cavern system.</p>
Gardens	<p>Ardastra Gardens & Conservation Centre - More than 300 birds, mammals and reptiles from The Islands Of The Bahamas, the Caribbean, Latin America and around the world are on display among lush tropical gardens. The main attraction of the Ardastra Gardens, almost 2 hectares of lush tropical planting about 1.5km west of downtown Nassau near Fort Charlotte, is the parading flock of pink flamingos. The Caribbean flamingo, national bird of The Bahamas, had almost disappeared by the early 1940s but was brought back to significant numbers through the efforts of the National Trust. They now flourish in the rookery on Great Inagua. A flock of these exotic feathered creatures has been trained to march in drill formation, responding to the drillmaster's commands with long-legged precision and discipline. The flamingos perform daily at 10:30am, 2:10pm, and 4:10pm.</p> <p>Versailles Gardens - Stroll through these spectacular gardens, a popular spot for weddings. Bronze and marble statues - like a life-sized Hercules sculpted in Greece in the 12th century - as well as fountains, reflecting pools and waterfalls are scattered throughout. A lacy gazebo sits high above the boat-filled harbor.</p>
Castles/Forts	<p>Fort Charlotte is by far the largest and covers 100 acres. Located on a hill overlooking the far west end of the harbour, it commands an impressive view of Paradise Island, a good part of Nassau and the harbour. Built in 1788 by Lord Dunmore, this fort has a moat, dungeons, underground passageways and 42 cannons, which have never been fired in an act of aggression. It is one mile west of downtown Nassau, just off West Bay Street.</p>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	The Bahamas has abolished all import duties on 11 categories of items. Perfumes and Fragrances, Crystal, Leather Goods, Jewelry, Fine Linens and Tablecloths, Watches and Clocks, Photographic

	<p>Equipment, China, Binoculars, and Telescopes are all duty free. Savings on these items are between 25% - 50% below normal prices.</p> <p>Bahamas Philatelic Bureau sells the island's justly admired stamps featuring island scenes and shells – a very portable souvenir or gift for children.</p> <p>Enrico Garzaroli, operates the Graycliff Cigar Company on the grounds of his hotel at 12 W. Hill St. This is the only cigar factory in The Bahamas. If you call for an appointment, you can see the old-fashioned way that Cuban cigars were created - from breeding to planting and leaf selection, right up to the final hand-rolling and shaping in the factory itself.</p>
<p>Markets</p>	<p>A tremendous fire in 2001 destroyed virtually all of the merchandise and most of the infrastructure of the permanent home of Nassau's Straw Market, a few steps from the administration of the Bahamian Tourist Board, at the corner of Bay and Market streets. Since then, the Straw Market has occupied a tent on Bay Street, opposite the intersection of Bay Street with George Street, about 2 blocks from its original premises. Merchandise is what it's always been: hats, weavings, baskets, valises - all woven from reeds, straw, and grasses. Hours of the Straw Market are daily from 7am to around 8pm, although each individual vendor (there are around 200 of them) sets his or her own schedule.</p>
<p>Nightlife</p>	<p>Aura, a 9,000-square-foot Jeffrey Beers-designed nightclub, operated by PURE Management Group, brings a new late night experience to Atlantis. Take the grand staircase from the casino up to this pulsating nightclub. The glass dance floor is surrounded by banquette seating, two bars, two VIP sections and a private VIP Parlour.</p> <p>Try Club Fluid in Nassau, It attracts an animated crowd of local residents, most of them between 20 and 45, who groove to the reggae, soca, hip-hop, and R&B music. It's open Wednesday to Saturday from 9pm to 2am.</p>
<p>Casinos</p>	<p>The 50,000-sq.-ft. Atlantis, Paradise Island Casino, is a spectacular themed casino bringing the outside in with its panoramic windows and skylights.</p> <p>At the 35,000-sq.-ft. Crystal Palace Casino, slots are open 24 hours. Table games are open 24 hours on weekends and it features 750 slot machines, 51 blackjack tables, nine roulette wheels, seven craps tables, and a baccarat table</p>
<p>CUISINE</p>	<p>If you want to go local, the most raffish-looking and densest concentration of low-end bars and eateries on New Providence rises in boxy, brightly colored rectangles from the sand and rock of Arawak Cay. Known as "Fish Fry" to many locals, it lies in the heart of Nassau, across West Bay Street (from the Botanical Gardens, walk back along Chippingham Rd.). Early in the day, you'll be able to buy fresh conch; vendors will crack the mollusk before your eyes (this cracking and cleaning process isn't everybody's favorite attraction). They'll give you some hot sauce and tell you to chow down. Beginning around noon, you'll find at least a half-dozen simple bars and kiosks</p>

	dispensing cracked conch, fried fish, and grits garnished with either spicy corned beef or tuna salad. With it, you can sample a favorite drink of the islands, coconut milk laced with gin (an acquired taste, to say the least, but you'll feel like a real Bahamian). It's at its most crowded and popular every Sunday night, beginning around 5pm until around midnight, when hundreds of Bahamians gather together next to bonfires to gossip, flirt, raise hell, and hang out.
Food	Seafood, callaloo, cassava, tropical fruits, spices, meat pies...There's lots of ways of sampling the distinctive Bahamian fare. Bahamas Culinary Classic festival in Nassau in Nov: Top chefs from major hotels across the islands turn out sumptuous Caribbean dishes at the Bahamas Culinary Classic on Nassau every year.
Drinks	Kalik Beer ; rum, and cocktails such as the Tranquil Turtle Try a " Bahama Mama ", a heady mix of rum, fruit juices and Nassau Royale Liqueur.
Restaurants	The restaurants of Nassau/Paradise Island offer virtually every type of cuisine, from simple dishes to exotic Bahamian and international menus. If you're looking for local specialties, the fish fry at Arawak Cay provides excellent outdoor dining and offers Bahamian delicacies like conch salad and fried fish, while the stalls at Potter's Cay dock serve up scorched conch – all made before your eyes. The Graycliff Restaurant is a five star restaurant situated in a 250 year old mansion in Nassau. It has one of the largest wine cellars in the Western Hemisphere with over 200,000 bottles of the world's finest vintages and also has its own cigar factory. At the other end of the spectrum, the Bahamian Kitchen is located next to Trinity Church, within one of the most congested neighborhoods of downtown Nassau, this is one of the best places for good Bahamian food at modest prices. Solid, unpretentious, and decent, it evokes the kind of restaurant you might find on a remote Bahamian Out Island. Down-home dishes include lobster Bahamian style, fried red snapper, conch salad, stewed fish, curried chicken, okra soup, and pea soup and dumplings. Most dishes are served with peas 'n' rice. You can order such old-fashioned Bahamian fare as stewed fish and corned beef and grits, all served with johnnycake. If you'd like to introduce your kids to Bahamian cuisine, this is an ideal choice.

MORE INFO	
Brochures	1-800- BAHAMAS
Deal	Fall 2011 offer - Offer: \$300 Instant Savings Booking Window: Effective now through October 3, 2011 Travel Window: September 6, 2011 through February 15, 2012 Blackout Dates: November 23 - 27, 2011 & December 22 - 31, 2011
Websites	www.nassauparadiseisland.com

WESTJET	Westjet fly to Nassau twice a week from Toronto allowing for 3, 4 and 7 night vacations. Their flights depart at 09.40 in the morning, so you arrive in time for lunch on the same day.
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	<p>Westjet Vacations feature a wide range of hotels and resorts, including our featured prize hotel, the Sheraton Nassau Beach resort from just \$859 for 3 nights in Jan 2012. Go to www.westjetvacations.com .</p>
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<p>SHERATON NASSAU BEACH RESORT</p>	<p>Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort Address: P.O. Box No - 4914 · West Bay Street · Nassau, Bahamas Tel: (242) 327 6000 Website: www.sheratonnassau.com</p> <p>The Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort is located on a wide stretch of Cable Beach and close to the Cable Beach Golf Club, Crystal Palace Casino and the city’s bustling nightlife.</p> <p>The resort features seven acres of spectacular waterscape with three freshwater pools with flowing waterfalls, oversized whirlpools and a swim up bar. Complimentary non-motorized watersports include snorkeling, sailing and kayaking. The hotel also provides daily supervised children’s activities. Six restaurants and lounges offer Italian, Caribbean, Cajun/Creole and International cuisine.</p>
<p>Accommodation</p>	<p>The 694 stylish and comfortable guest rooms and suites make it easy for you to enjoy a relaxing stay. You’ll find thoughtful features like High Speed Internet Access, 32-inch flat screen LCD TV, dual-line phones, and generous workspace in every room. You’ll also find a feeling of welcome unlike any other.</p> <p>Experience the celebrated “ahhhhh” of The Sheraton Sweet Sleeper™ Bed, with its plush mattress and feather-down pillows. It’s a great way to end a busy day.</p> <p>Every guest room and suite also boasts a large private balcony or patio where you can enjoy breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean, lush gardens, or waterscape.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort features seven acres of spectacular waterscape, including three freshwater pools with flowing waterfalls, oversized whirlpools, and a swim-up bar. While you’re busy enjoying the tropical surroundings, your children will enjoy a great time at our Kids Club, an adult-supervised daily program of activities designed just for them.</p> <p>Try your luck at neighboring Crystal Palace Casino. Go snorkeling, sailing, or kayaking. Take your pick from a full array of non-motorized water sports. Or enjoy a workout in our complete fitness centre.</p> <p>The Link@Sheraton experienced with Microsoft offers guests a comfortable place to work, play, or just relax. Free wireless, Ethernet, or Internet access, complimentary newspapers and weekly magazines, as well as varied food and beverage options are all available for your enjoyment. Nightly activities such as wine tastings, book signings, and organized games will keep you entertained well into the evening.</p>
<p>Sports and Facilities</p>	<p>Outdoor Heated Pools Beach Basketball Court Jacuzzi Golf Lessons</p>

	<p>Beach Volleyball Sailing Kayaks Snorkeling Water Sports Wind Surfing</p>
Golf	<p>Cable Beach Golf Club is very close. It boasts a links-style golf course that offers some of the most affordable prices on golf in the Bahamas. The course is popular among both tourists and locals not only for its value but also for its unpretentious and vibrant atmosphere. With water hazards coming into play on many holes, this course requires precision. Tropical trees accent rolling fairways for added challenge. Although Cable Beach & Golf Club is not a long course, it is consistently in good condition and the club provides excellent service. This player-friendly golf course is perfect for visitors looking for a more authentic Bahamian experience.</p>
Dining	<p>Savor exquisite Italian cuisine at Amici, A Trattoria, sip on a tropical drink at Edgewater Bar or sample traditional Caribbean fare at Dolphin Grill. With additional local restaurants nearby, ranging from casual to fine-dining, there's something for everyone. If you prefer to dine in the privacy of your own room, room service is available from 6am – 11pm</p>
Promotions	<p>Book a four-night or longer Flight + Hotel package for two at the Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort by October 3, 2011, and receive the following: \$300 Instant Air Credit Food & Beverage Credit up to \$200 Complimentary Non-Motorized Water-Sports: kayaks, water bikes, snorkel equipment and more.</p>