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Life is short. Vacations are shorter. Relax! Trust your trip to Frommer's. The Best of New Orleans in a Nutshell: The best places to stay and eat— with exact prices and candid, in-depth reviews so you can plan the perfect trip no matter what your needs or budget.

In-the-know fishermen long ago learned the best months to pursue their catch: November to February for wahoo found in the reefs, June and July for blue marlin, and May to August for the oceanic bonito and blackfin tuna. Nassau, in particular, is ideal for sport fishing. Most boat charters allow passengers to start fishing within 15 minutes after leaving the dock. Anchoring and bottom-fishing are also options. Off the coast, the clear waters are good hunting grounds for snapper, grouper, yellowtail, wahoo, barracuda, and kingfish. Many fishermen catch dolphin the mahimahi kind, not Flipper. And Deep Water Cay is a fishing hot spot. The most popular—and the most scenic—trip is to tranquil Rose Island, 13km 8 miles east of the center of Nassau and reached after sailing past several small uninhabited cays. The oldest golf course in The Bahamas, this par green was the private retreat of British expatriates in the s. Small ponds and water traps heighten the challenge, amid more than 6, yards of wellmaintained greens and fairways. For the best panoramic ocean view—good enough to take your mind off your game—play the par-3 14th hole. Both courses have 18 holes and a par of 1. In addition, Blue Lagoon Island, 5km 3 miles northeast of Paradise Island, is a magnet for boaters, offering seven white-sand beaches with seaside hammocks. This vessel offers the best and most panoramic picture of underwater life off the coast of Grand Bahama—a view most often reserved for scuba divers. This one is more upscale than many of its Jamaican counterparts and offers 27 secluded honeymoon suites with semiprivate plunge pools. Staff members lend their experience and talent to on-site wedding celebrations: Sandals will provide everything from a preacher to flowers, as well as champagne and a cake. Guests include many older honeymoon couples. At the center is a French cloister, with carvings from the 12th century. On the grounds of this vast resort is a pool area that features the most lavish artificial waterfall this side of Tahiti; Camp Junkanoo, with supervised play for kids 3 through 12; and a long list of in-house activities such as dancing lessons. Once again, it is the leading independent choice on New Providence, serving a finely honed international cuisine. Its well-trained staff has learned the secrets of the cuisines of the Far East, and they dispense an array of some of the best-known and tastiest dishes, including teriyaki specialties. Strictly upscale, it presents superb French and international cuisine against a backdrop evoking the British colonial era. The pagoda-capped lobby is set a very short walk from the ice-cream stands, souvenir shops, and fountains of the International Bazaar. Children 11 and under stay free, and the in-house lounge presents limbo and fire-eating shows several evenings a month. The setting is glamorous, and the cuisine is top-rated, prepared with either market-fresh ingredients or exotic imported ingredients. One of the largest casinos in the islands, the Crystal Palace features blackjack tables, roulette wheels, craps tables, hundreds of slot machines, and a baccarat table. We think the Paradise Island casino has more class, though. Not even nearby Nassau and Cable Beach can come close. For a quieter night out, you can also find intimate bars, discos, a comedy club, and lots more in this sprawling behemoth of a resort. Unless you run into transportation delays because of bad weather, it should be no hassle at all before you land on a beach strip—in fact, you can find yourself on an idyllic island after just a quick minute jet hop from Miami. Package deals are easily found. These are really the places to get away from it all. It offers groves of palms and casuarinas; sandy, flat soil; the closest thing in The Bahamas to urban sprawl; and superb anchorages sheltered from rough seas by nearby Paradise Island. Its two major resort areas are Cable Beach and Nassau. The main advantages of Nassau are its colonial charm and lower price point. Its accommodations may not be ideally located, but they are relatively inexpensive, sometimes even during the winter high season. You can base yourself here and commute easily to the beaches at Paradise Island or Cable Beach. It has the best food, entertainment, hotels, and terrific beaches and casinos. With its colorful history but unremarkable

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architecture, Paradise Island remains one of the most intensely marketed pieces of real estate in the world. More recent investors have included Merv Griffin. The island today is a carefully landscaped residential and commercial complex with good beaches, lots of glitter some of it tasteful, some of it way too over-the-top, and many diversions. Thanks to the development schemes of U. Casinos, beaches, and restaurants are now plentiful. But there is no cause for panic. More tropical cyclones pound the U. Hurricanes are actually fairly infrequent here, and when one does come, satellite forecasts generally give adequate advance warning so that precautions can be taken. For an online day forecast, check the Weather Channel at [www. The Bahamian](http://www.weather.com) winter is usually like a perpetual late spring—naturally, the high season for North Americans rushing to escape snow and ice. Summer brings broiling hot sun and humidity. The compensation for that is a lower price tag on just about everything. This island, especially popular with families, also offers the best hiking in The Bahamas and some of the finest sandy beaches. Its golf courses attract players from all over the globe and host major tournaments several times a year. Expect beach parties, sports events, and musical entertainment. When you make your reservations, ask if your hotel is planning to host any big groups of kids. Winter is the driest season here. If you plan to visit during the winter, try to make reservations at least 2 to 3 months in advance. Trade winds ensure comfortable days and nights, even in accommodations without air-conditioning. Although the noonday sun may raise temperatures to uncomfortable levels, cool breezes usually make the morning, late afternoon, and evening more pleasant here than in many parts of the U. The off season—roughly from mid-April to mid-December—rate schedules vary from hotel to hotel—amounts to a summer sale. Other Off-Season Advantages Although The Bahamas may appear inviting in the winter to those who live in northern climates, your trip may be more enjoyable if you go in the off season. Note that under new Homeland Security regulations that went into effect on December 31, 2001, all Americans traveling abroad by air are required to present a valid passport to reenter the United States. Although the advantages of offseason travel far outweigh the disadvantages, there are nevertheless some drawbacks to traveling here in summer: Hoteliers save their major renovations until the off season—thus you could wake up to the sound of hammers. In the peak of winter, everything is fully operational. But in summer, many programs such as watersports might be curtailed in spite of fine weather. The websites listed provide downloadable passport applications as well as the current fees for processing passport applications. State Department at [http: The card has a carbon copy that you must keep until departure, at which time it must be turned in. You can also bring in items classified as personal effects, plus all the money you wish. Charter companies can make special arrangements with the Nassau or Freeport flight services and U. No further formalities are required upon arrival in the United States once the pre-clearance has taken place in Nassau or Freeport. Collect receipts for all purchases you make in The Bahamas. If a merchant suggests giving you a false receipt, misstating the value of the goods, be ware—the merchant might be an informer to U. You must also declare all gifts received while abroad. If you purchased an item during an earlier trip abroad, carry proof that you have already paid Customs duty on the item at the time of your previous reentry. To be extra careful, compile a list of expensive carry-on items and ask a U. Customs agent to stamp your list at the airport before your departure. From here, you can make connections to many of the more remote Out Islands. Freeport, on Grand Bahama Island, also has its own airport, which is served by flights from the U. All liquids and gels—including shampoo, toothpaste, perfume, hair gel, suntan lotion, and other items with similar consistency—must be in containers no larger than 3. Containers larger than 3. Only a handful see below fly directly to any of the Out Islands. In addition, the carrier flies three times daily from Miami to Freeport. Continental operates four round-trip flights per week between Fort Lauderdale and Andros Town on Andros. You can usually make connections to these smaller islands from Nassau. In Nassau and Freeport, you can easily rely on public transportation or taxis. Direct flights from Toronto and Montreal leave daily; flights from Toronto and Montreal, as well as other Canadian cities, make connections in the U. The airline also has at least one flight daily to Miami. From here, many connections are available to Nassau and other points within the archipelago on several carriers. Your hotel can readily arrange for taxi service if you want to](http://travel.state.gov)

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venture out. Road rules are much the same as those in the U. Budget rents in Nassau and Paradise Island. Liability insurance is compulsory. The major towns of the islands have service stations. You should have no problems on New Providence Island or Grand Bahama Island unless you start out with a nearly empty tank. These cabs, for the most part, are metered but they take cash only, no credit cards. Know your personal identification number PIN and your daily withdrawal limit.

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