**Bahamas Facts and Culture**

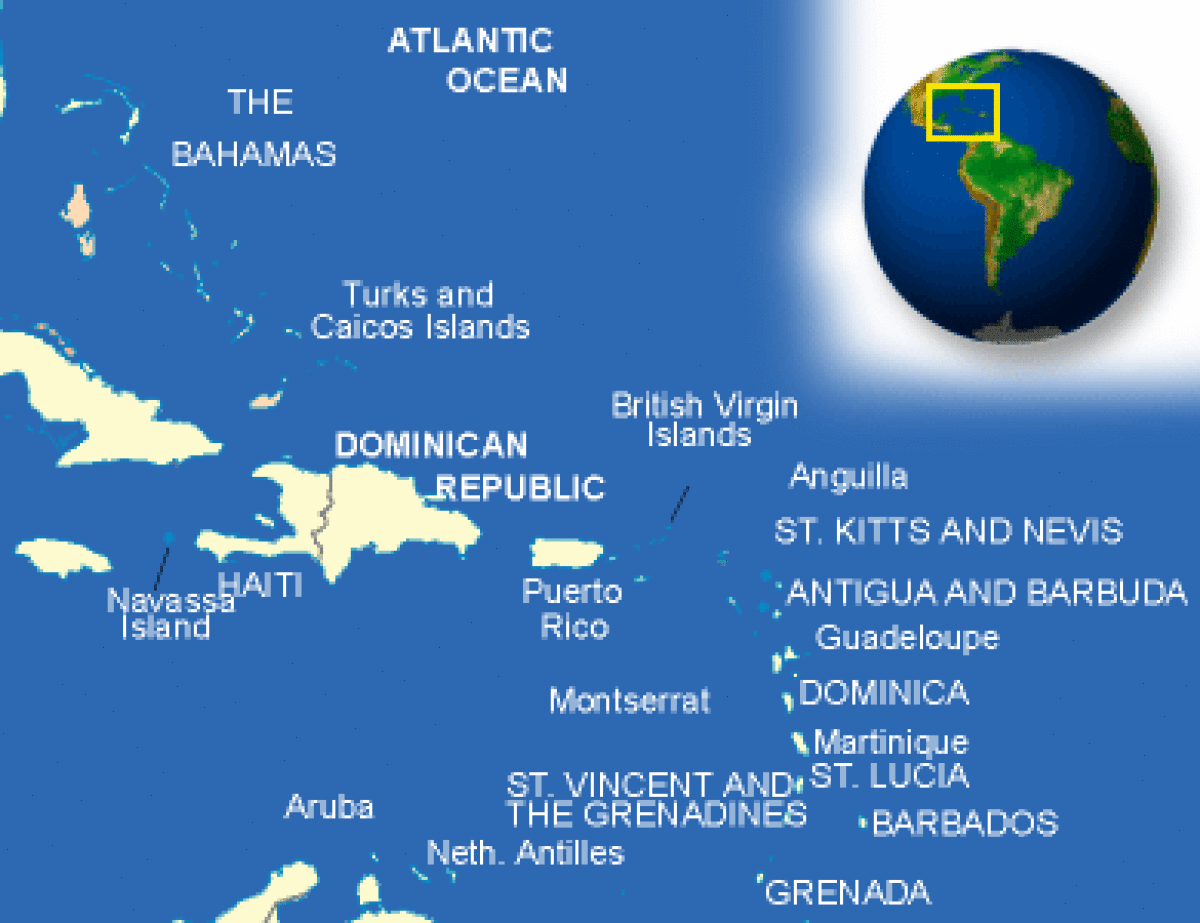
* [Food and Recipes:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipes.htm) Seafood is the most important part of the diet. The conch shellfish is used in many dishes.  Peas with rice... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipes.htm)
* [Family:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/family.htm) Adult migration to the cities of Nassau and Freeport for tourism jobs has left many families headed by grandparents or... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/family.htm)
* [Fashion:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/fashion.htm) Western style of clothing is worn, with colorful costumes seen at the festivals. Bahamians are modest and conservative in their... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/fashion.htm)

**Bahamas Facts**

Bahamas stats

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital | Nassau |
| Government Type | constitutional parliamentary democracy and a Commonwealth realm |
| Currency | BSD |
| Population | 319,031 |
| Total Area | 5,359 Square Miles 13,880 Square Kilometers |
| Location | chain of islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, southeast of Florida, northeast of Cuba |
| Language | English (official), Creole (among Haitian immigrants) |

Map of Bahamas



**Bahamas Geography**

**Terrain and geography**

The Islands of the Bahamas lie between 20 and 27°N latitude and 72 and 79°W longitude. Separated from the North American Continent by the Florida Channel and cooled in the summer by the northeast trade winds. The Bahamas extends over 100,000 square miles of sea, with slightly less than half lying in the Tropics. The Tropic of Cancer crosses the lower part of Long Island. Contrary to popular belief, the Bahamas is not in the Caribbean, but is in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Bahamas stretch over a distance of some 760 miles from northwest to southeast and includes 30 inhabited islands, 661 cays, and about 2,387 exposed reefs. The total land area is approximately 5,380 square miles, about the size of Wales or two‑thirds the size of Massachusetts. The largest island is Andros, with an area of 2,300 square miles and the smallest inhabited island is Spanish Wells, with an area of one-half mile. The highest point is 206‑foot high Como Hill on Cat Island. Some of the most beautiful beaches and lagoons in the world are located in the Bahamas.

Over 50 varieties of trees can be found here, including such exotic species as the African tulip, the casuarina, the cork tree, several varieties of palm trees, and about 40 varieties of fruit trees. In addition, large varieties of shrubs, climbers, vines, vegetables, and herbs are found here.

**Geography - note**

strategic location adjacent to US and Cuba; extensive island chain of which 30 are inhabited

**Bahamas Geography**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Geographic Location | The Caribbean |
| Total Area | 5,359 Square Miles 13,880 Square Kilometers |
| Land Area | 3,865 Square Miles 10,010 Square Kilometers |
| Water Area | 1,494 Square Miles 3,870 Square Kilometers |
| Irrigated Land | 4 Square Miles 10 Square Kilometers |
| Coastline | 2,201 Miles 3,542 Kilometers |
| Geographic Coordinates | 24 15 N, 76 00 W |
| Terrain | long, flat coral formations with some low rounded hills |
| Highest Point | 63 Meters |
| Highest Point Location | Mount Alvernia, on Cat Island 63 m |
| Lowest Point Location | Atlantic Ocean 0 m |
| Natural Resources | salt, aragonite, timber, arable land |
| Time Zone | UTC-5 (same time as Washington, DC during Standard Time) |
| Daylight saving time | +1hr, begins second Sunday in March; ends first Sunday in November |

**Bahamas Weather and Climate**

**Climate and Weather**

There are no significant seasonal changes requiring winter clothing or central heating in the Bahamas. The rainy season is from May to October with an average in Nassau of six inches per month. From November through April, average rainfall is two inches per month. The hurricane season extends from June through November, the greatest risk being in August, September, and October.

In the winter, temperatures rarely fall below 60°F, and usually reach 77°F by mid-afternoon. During the summer, temperatures fluctuate between 85–90°F in the daytime and 75°F or less in the evening. Although humidity can reach about 80% (relative humidity for September is 82%), prevailing easterly winds lessen personal discomfort. Temperatures vary from a low of 76.7°F in January to a high of 89.1°F in August. Humidity causes mildew on leather and textile products, but homes equipped with central air‑conditioning or dehumidifiers neutralize the harmful effects.

Rainfall often occurs in the form of fairly intense showers, frequently accompanied by strong, gusty winds. These storms are usually short and are followed by clear skies. Weather conditions can change rapidly. Statistically, a hurricane can be expected to occur in some part of the Bahamas every nine years.

**Bahamas Environmental Issues**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Climate | There are no significant seasonal changes requiring winter clothing or central heating in the Bahamas. The rainy season is from May to October with an average in Nassau of six inches per month. From November through April, average rainfall is two inches per month. The hurricane season extends from June through November, the greatest risk being in August, September, and October.  In the winter, temperatures rarely fall below 60°F, and usually reach 77°F by mid-afternoon. During the summer, temperatures fluctuate between 85–90°F in the daytime and 75°F or less in the evening. Although humidity can reach about 80% (relative humidity for September is 82%), prevailing easterly winds lessen personal discomfort. Temperatures vary from a low of 76.7°F in January to a high of 89.1°F in August. Humidity causes mildew on leather and textile products, but homes equipped with central air‑conditioning or dehumidifiers neutralize the harmful effects.  Rainfall often occurs in the form of fairly intense showers, frequently accompanied by strong, gusty winds. These storms are usually short and are followed by clear skies. Weather conditions can change rapidly. Statistically, a hurricane can be expected to occur in some part of the Bahamas every nine years. |
| Terrain | long, flat coral formations with some low rounded hills |
| Natural Resources | salt, aragonite, timber, arable land |
| Natural Hazards | hurricanes and other tropical storms cause extensive flood and wind damage |
| Irrigated Land | 4 Square Miles 10 Square Kilometers |
| Environmental Issues | coral reef decay; solid waste disposal |
| Environment - International Agreements | party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands   signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements |

**Bahamas Population Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Population | 319,031 |
| Population Growth Rate | 0.89% |
| Urban Population | 84.3% |
| Population in Major Urban Areas | NASSAU (capital) 254,000 |
| Nationality Noun | Bahamian(s) |
| Nationality Adjective | Bahamian |
| Ethnic Groups | black 85%, white 12%, Asian and Hispanic 3% |
| Languages | English (official), Creole (among Haitian immigrants) |
| Population - note | note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected |
| Rate of Urbanization- annual rate of change | 1.37% |

**Bahamas Medical Information**

Adequate medical care is available on New Providence and Grand Bahama islands, but visitors should be aware that serious health problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost tens of thousands of dollars in up-front costs, and air ambulance companies generally require payment or an insurer’s guarantee of payment before providing service.   
  
Ambulance service is available on the major islands; however, U.S. citizens have reported major delays in service, both in the length of time to arrive and once at the Emergency room. Ambulance service is even more limited in more remote locations. The endemic traffic congestion on New Providence Island may also impede a quick response. Service is likely to be extremely slow in the event of a major emergency or disaster.  
  
Good information on vaccinations and other health precautions can be found via the CDC website or The Bahamas Ministry of Health page. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the World Health Organization (WHO) website. The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including detailed country-specific health information. The Bahamas had an outbreak of dengue fever in 2011 with 10 reported deaths and 1,000 reported cases of individuals with dengue fever symptoms. For additional information regarding Dengue fever in the Bahamas, please visit The Bahamas Ministry of Health website.

**Bahamas Health Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Health Expenditures (% of GDP) | 7.7% |
| Death Rate/1,000 population | 6.96 |
| Obesity- adult prevalence rate | 34.7% |
| Hospital Bed Density/1,000 population | 3.1 |
| Physicians Density/1,000 population | 2.82 |
| Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 population | 12.89 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Female/1,000 population | 12.88 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Male/1,000 population | 12.9 |
| Total Fertility Rate | 1.97 |
| Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births | 47 |
| HIV Adult Prevalence Rate | 3.1% |
| HIV Aids Deaths | 300 |
| HIV Aids People Living With | 6,600 |
| Drinking Water Source: unimproved | 1.6% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of rural population improved | 98.4% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of urban population improved | 98.4% |
| Sanitation Facility Access: unimproved | 8% |
| Sanitation Facility Access - percent of urban population improved | 92% |
| Sanitation Facitlity Access - percent of rural population improved |  |

**Bahamas Crime**

**Crime Information**

The criminal threat level for New Providence Island is rated as critical by the Department of State. New Providence Island has experienced a spike in crime that has adversely affected the traveling public, with a spate of more violent criminal activity between 2009 and 2012. The U.S. Embassy has received multiple reports indicating tourists have been robbed at gunpoint or knifepoint in tourist locations in the downtown areas of Nassau, to include the cruise ship docks and the Cable Beach commerce areas; several of these incidents occurred during daylight hours. Burglaries, larcenies and “snatch-and-grab” crimes happen in Nassau and U.S. citizens have been victims of these crimes as well. The U.S. Embassy has received reports of assaults, including sexual assaults, in diverse areas such as in casinos, outside hotels, or on cruise ships. The Bahamas has the highest incidence of rape in the Caribbean according to a 2007 United Nations report on crime, violence, and development trends. The majority of sexual assaults reported occurred after excessive consumption of alcohol. The loss of ability to remember facts and details due to alcohol consumption makes prosecution of sexual assaults more difficult. Much of the violent crime occurs outside tourist spots, such as in the “over-the-hill” section of Nassau (the area inland from Bay Street, to the South of Bay Street, behind the tourist district), but can occur anywhere, including in areas frequented by tourists. Home break-ins, theft, and robbery are not confined to any specific part of the island.  
  
The upsurge in criminal activity has also led to incidents which, while not directed at tourists, could place innocent bystanders at risk.   
  
Armed robbery remains a major criminal threat facing U.S. citizens in The Bahamas. The Royal Bahamas Police Force issued a message citing concerns about the increased number of armed robberies in Nassau. AU.S. citizen was fatally shot in Nassau in May 2013 during an armed robbery. Between January 1, 2013 and April 15, 2013, there were 328 armed robberies, 111 robberies, and 660 house break-ins, according to statistics available on the Royal Bahamas Police Force website.   
  
Criminal activity in the outlying family islands does occur, but to a much lesser degree than on New Providence Island. The Embassy has received reports of burglaries and thefts, especially thefts of boats and/or outboard motors on Abaco and Bimini.  
  
The Embassy has received no reports of harassment or hate crimes motivated by race, religion, or citizenship. Visitors have reported harassment of persons based on sexual orientation; some women have reported verbal harassment and unwanted attention. Some organized criminal activity is believed to occur in The Bahamas, primarily related to illegal importation and smuggling of illicit drugs or human trafficking. The Bahamas, due to its numerous uninhabited islands and cays, has historically been favored by smugglers and pirates. As a tourist, you would typically not have noticeable interaction with organized crime elements; however, those operating their own water or air vessels should be alert to the possibility of encountering similar crafts operated by smugglers engaged in illicit activities on the open seas or in air space near The Bahamas.  
  
You are advised to report crime to the Royal Bahamian Police Force as quickly as possible. Early reports frequently improve the likelihood of identifying and apprehending suspected perpetrators. In general, the Royal Bahamian Police Force is responsive to reports of crime and takes the threat of crime against tourists very seriously. However, the police response is sometimes slowed by a lack of resources or by physical constraints imposed by geography and infrastructure.  
  
There is nobody better at protecting you than yourself. Beware of your surroundings at all times. The U.S. Embassy reports that victims of crime are often those who have let their guard down to individuals who appeared overly friendly or became victims after criminals targeted them as easy prey due to the visitor appearing excessively drunk or unaware. Take some time before travel to improve your personal security—things are not the same everywhere as they are in the United States.

**Bahamas Penalties for Crime**

**Criminal Penalties**

While traveling in another country, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. In some places driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States. You can be prosecuted under U.S. law upon return to the U.S. if you buy pirated goods overseas. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime prosecutable in the United States. If you break local laws in The Bahamas, your U.S. passport won’t help you avoid arrest or prosecution. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in The Bahamas can result in long jail sentences and/or heavy fines. It’s very important to know what is legal and what is not where you are going before you go.  
  
Mandatory Consular Notification Country: Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in The Bahamas, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of your arrest, and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.   
  
For additional information regarding arrests and the judicial process, please see the U.S. Embassy’s website on Arrests in The Bahamas. Travelers should also be aware that Bahamas laws do not include a right to a public defender in lower courts. Any legal representation is at the expense of the visitor.

**Bahamas Life Expectancy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life Expectancy At Birth | 71 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Female | 74 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Male | 69 Years |
| Median Age (female) | 32 Years |
| Median Age (male) | 29 Years |
| Median Age | 30 Years |

**Bahamas Literacy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Predominant Language | English (official), Creole (among Haitian immigrants) |
| Literacy Definition | age 15 and over can read and write |
| Literacy Female | 96.5% |
| Literacy Male | 94.7% |
| Literacy Total | 95.6% |

**Bahamas Education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Literacy - female | 96.5% |
| Literacy - male | 94.7% |
| Literacy - total population | 95.6% |
| Literacy Definition | age 15 and over can read and write |

**Bahamas Government**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital Name | Nassau |
| Country Name | Bahamas, The |
| Full Country Name | Commonwealth of The Bahamas |
| Government Type | constitutional parliamentary democracy and a Commonwealth realm |
| Capital - geographic coordinate | 25 05 N, 77 21 W |
| Daylight Savings Time | +1hr, begins second Sunday in March; ends first Sunday in November |
| Capital Time Difference | UTC-5 (same time as Washington, DC during Standard Time) |
| National Holiday | Independence Day, 10 July (1973) |
| Constitution | 10 July 1973 |
| Legal System | common law system based on the English model |
| Suffrage | 18 years of age; universal |

**Bahamas Government and Politics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Government Executive Branch | chief of state: Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952); represented by Governor General Sir Arthur A. FOULKES (since 14 April 2010)   head of government: Prime Minister Perry CHRISTIE (since 8 May 2012)   cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the governor general on the prime minister's recommendation   elections: the monarchy is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed prime minister by the governor general; the prime minister recommends the deputy prime minister |
| Legislative Branch | bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (16 seats; members appointed by the governor general upon the advice of the prime minister and the opposition leader to serve five-year terms) and the House of Assembly (41 seats; members elected by direct popular vote to serve five-year terms); the government may dissolve the parliament and call elections at any time  elections: last held on 7 May 2012 (next to be held by May 2017)  election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PLP 29, FNM 9 |
| Judicial Branch | Privy Council in London; Courts of Appeal; Supreme (lower) Court; Magistrates' Courts |
| Regions or States | 31 districts; Acklins Islands, Berry Islands, Bimini, Black Point, Cat Island, Central Abaco, Central Andros, Central Eleuthera, City of Freeport, Crooked Island and Long Cay, East Grand Bahama, Exuma, Grand Cay, Harbour Island, Hope Town, Inagua, Long Island, Mangrove Cay, Mayaguana, Moore's Island, North Abaco, North Andros, North Eleuthera, Ragged Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador, South Abaco, South Andros, South Eleuthera, Spanish Wells, West Grand Bahama |
| Political Parties and Leaders | Free National Movement or FNM [Hubert INGRAHAM]; Progressive Liberal Party or PLP [Perry CHRISTIE] |
| International Law Organization Participation | has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt |
| International Organization Participation | ACP, AOSIS, C, Caricom, CDB, CELAC, FAO, G-77, IADB, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ITSO, ITU, LAES, MIGA, NAM, OAS, OPANAL, OPCW, Petrocaribe, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer) |
| Politicial Pressure Groups and Leaders | Friends of the Environment  other: trade unions |

**Bahamas Economy Data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GDP - Gross Domestic Product | $11,400,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - official exchange rate | $8,373,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - real growth rate | 1.9% |
| GDP Per Capita | $3,200.00 (USD) |
| GDP by Sector- agriculture | 2.1% |
| GDP by Sector- Industry | 7.1% |
| GDP by Sector- services | 90.8% |
| Population Below Poverty Line | 9.3% |
| Inflation Rate | 2.4% |
| Labor Force | 184,000 |
| Labor Force By Occupation- agriculture | 3% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- industry | 11% |
| Unemployment Rate | 7.6% |
| Fiscal Year | 1 July - 30 June |
| Annual Budget | $1,030,000,000 (USD) |
| Budget Surplus or Deficit - percent of GDP | -8.2% |
| Taxes and other revenues - percent of GDP | 16.8% |
| Major Industries | tourism, banking, e-commerce, cement, oil refining and transshipment, salt, rum, aragonite, pharmaceuticals, spiral-welded steel pipe |
| Agriculture Products | citrus, vegetables; poultry |
| Currency Code | Bahamian dollar (BSD) |
| Labor Force By Occupation - tourism | 49% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- other services | 37% |
| Commercial Bank Prime Lending Rate | 4.75% |

**Bahamas Economy**

**Economic Overview**

The Bahamas is a stable, developing nation with an economy heavily dependent on tourism and offshore banking. Tourism alone accounts for more than 60% of GDP and directly or indirectly employs half of the archipelago's labor force. Steady growth in tourism receipts and a boom in construction of new hotels, resorts, and residences had led to solid GDP growth in recent years, but the slowdown in the US economy and the attacks of 11 September 2001 held back growth in these sectors in 2001-03. Financial services constitute the second-most important sector of the Bahamian economy, accounting for about 15% of GDP. However, since December 2000, when the government enacted new regulations on the financial sector, many international businesses have left The Bahamas. Manufacturing and agriculture together contribute approximately a tenth of GDP and show little growth, despite government incentives aimed at those sectors. Overall growth prospects in the short run rest heavily on the fortunes of the tourism sector, which depends on growth in the US, the source of more than 80% of the visitors. In addition to tourism and banking, the government supports the development of a ""third pillar,"" e-commerce.

**Bahamas Exports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exports | $0 (USD) |
| Major Exports | fish and crawfish; rum, salt, chemicals; fruit and vegetables |
| Top Export Partners | US 37.8%, Germany 11.8%, Spain 10.4%, Peru 8.6%, France 7.1%, Mexico 4.2% |

**Bahamas Imports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Imports | $2,401,000,000 (USD) |
| Major Imports | machinery and transport equipment, manufactures, chemicals, mineral fuels; food and live animals |
| Top Import Partners | US 18.4%, South Korea 18.3%, Germany 10.5%, Norway 9.2%, Japan 9.1%, Italy 6.6%, Venezuela 4.1% |

**Bahamas Flag Description**

has three equal horizontal bands of aquamarine or aqua blue(top), gold, and aquamarine or aqua blue, with a black equilateral triangle based on the hoist side the bands stand for the sands of the 700 bahamian islands which make up the nation and the waters that surround it. A black triangle that stands for the unity comes in from the left edge of the flag. Some people feel the golden hue symbolized the sun-warmed coasts of the islands

Bahamas flag



**Bahamas National Anthem Lyrics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anthem Lyrics English | Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahamaland, March on to glory, your bright banners waving high, See how the world marks the manner of your bearing; Pledge to excel thro' love and unity. Pressing onward, march together, to a common loftier goal; Steady sunward tho' the weather hide the wide and treacherous shoal. Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahamaland, 'til the road you've trod lead unto your God, March on Bahamal |

**Bahamas Interesting Facts**

* The Exuma Islands have been the location for James Bond films, not once, but twice!
* There is an undersea post office in the Bahamas.

**History of Bahamas**

In 1492, Christopher Columbus made his first landfall in the Western Hemisphere in The Bahamas. Spanish slave traders later captured native Lucayan Indians to work in gold mines in Hispaniola, and within 25 years, all Lucayans perished. In 1647, a group of English and Bermudan religious refugees, the Eleutheran Adventurers, founded the first permanent European settlement in The Bahamas and gave Eleuthera Island its name. Similar groups of settlers formed governments in The Bahamas until the islands became a British Crown Colony in 1717.

The late 1600s to the early 1700s were the golden age for pirates and privateers. Many famous pirates--including Sir Francis Drake and Blackbeard--used the islands of The Bahamas as a base. The numerous islands and islets with their complex shoals and channels provided excellent hiding places for the plundering ships near well-traveled shipping lanes. The first Royal Governor, a former pirate named Woodes Rogers, brought law and order to The Bahamas in 1718 when he expelled the buccaneers.

During the American Revolution, American colonists loyal to the British flag settled in The Bahamas. These Loyalists and new settlers from Britain brought Colonial building skills and agricultural expertise. Until 1834, when Britain abolished slavery, they also brought slaves, importing the ancestors of many modern Bahamians from Western Africa.

Proximity to the U.S. continued to provide opportunity for illegal shipping activity. In the course of the American Civil War, The Bahamas prospered as a center of Confederate blockade-running. During Prohibition, the islands served as a base for American rumrunners. Today, the Bahamas is a major transshipment point for narcotics on the way to the U.S.

Bahamians achieved self-government through a series of constitutional and political steps, attaining internal self-government in 1964 and full independence within the Commonwealth on July 10, 1973. Since independence, The Bahamas has continued to develop into a major tourist and financial services center.

Top of Form

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[Countries](http://www.countryreports.org/) [Activities](http://www.countryreports.org/countryreports/compare-countries.htm) [My Account](http://www.countryreports.org/user.htm)

**Bahamas History Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bahamas Year in History | Bahamas Timeline |
| 1492 | **The island called San Salvador** The island called San Salvador by Christopher Columbus when he first set foot in the new world in 1492 is believed to be one of the Bahamas. |
| 1629 | **The Bahamas were part of the territories in the Americas** The Bahamas were part of the territories in the Americas granted by King Charles I. to Sir Robert Heath. |
| 1666 | **Colonisation of New Providence Island begins.** Colonisation of New Providence Island begins. |
| 1670 | **The Carolina Company** The Carolina Company acquired a grant of the islands from Charles II. |
| 1671 | **The Bahamas were given a governor and a parliament.** The Bahamas were given a governor and a parliament. |
| 1717 | **Bahamas become a British crown colony.** Bahamas become a British crown colony. |
| 1783 | **Treaty of Paris** Spain cedes the Bahamas to Britain in accordance with the Treaty of Paris after briefly occupying the islands the previous year. |
| 1834 | **Emancipation of slaves.** Emancipation of slaves. |
| 1848 | **Turks and Caicos Islands were separated from the Bahamas** Turks and Caicos Islands were separated from the Bahamas. |
| 1955 | **Free trade area established** Free trade area established in the town of Freeport, stimulating tourism and attracting offshore banking. |
| 1964 | **The Bahamas received a new constitution** The Bahamas received a new constitution, which foresaw Self-Government. |
| 1973 | **Full independence** The Bahamas become independent. |
| 2002 | **Hurricane Frances sweeps through.** Hurricane Frances sweeps through, causing widespread damage. Weeks later Hurricane Jeanne batters the Bahamas. |

**Bahamas Holidays and Events**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Display Date | Title |
| July 10th | **Independence Day** |

**Bahamas Meals and Food**

Recipes from Bahamas

* [Chicken Souse - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipe/chicken-souse.htm)
* [Conch Chowder - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipe/conch-chowder.htm)
* [Conch Fritters - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipe/conch-fritters.htm)
* [Johnny Cakes - Soup](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipe/johnny-cakes.htm)
* [Peas and Rice - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/thebahamas/recipe/peas-and-rice.htm)

**Bahamas Recipes and Diet**

Bahamas food and meal customs

**Meals**

Seafood is the most important part of the diet. The conch shellfish is used in many dishes.  Peas with rice and *Souses* (dishes containing pickled meats) are staples, usually served with grits and johnny cake ( bread).

Food in Bahamas

[](http://d2z7bzwflv7old.cloudfront.net/cdn_image/maxW_1200/images/photos/bf/conch.jpg)

**Bahamas Languages**

**Languages**

English (official), Creole (among Haitian immigrants)

**Language Translations:**

**Greetings in Creole**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Merry Christmas | Bonn e Erez Ane |
| Goodbye | Orevwa |
| Hello | alo |
| Good morning | Bonjou |
| Good afternoon (used after 11 AM) | Bonswa |
| How are you? | Komon ou ye |
| Yes | Wi |
| No | Non |
| Thanks | Mesi |
| Please | Souple |
| Excuse me | Eskize mwen |

**Days in Creole**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sunday | dimanch |
| Monday | lendi |
| Tuesday | madi |
| Wednesday | mekredi |
| Thursday | jedi |
| Friday | vandredi |
| Saturday | samdi |

**Bahamas Clothing and Fashion**

Western style of clothing is worn, with colorful costumes seen at the festivals. Bahamians are modest and conservative in their attire. Wearing swimwear anywhere other than the beach is considered disrespectful and improper attire.

When attending a Church Bahamians dressed modestly and conservatively, for tourist this would mean no tee-shirts, shorts or tennis-shoes.

**Dating, Family and Children Bahamas**

**Family and Children**

Adult migration to the cities of Nassau and Freeport for tourism jobs has left many families headed by grandparents or by a single parent.  The primary caretaker is in charge of discipline.  Adult children often give their mothers gifts or financial assistance. Traditionally it has been  unusual for unmarried couples to live together however this has been changing in recent years. Middle- and upper-class Bahamian families usually employ a maid or domestic helper. Poorer families share the housework.

**Bahamas Gestures and Greetings**

**Gestures**

Bahamians are very friendly people who respect family and seniority. When meeting someone in the Bahamas it is proper etiquette to offer a handshake. Hugs and kissing and the informality of using first names is shown for friends and family.

Bahamians are also very open and conversational people, offering salutations and asking â€œhow are youâ€ to friends and strangers alike.

**Cultural Attributes**

Bahamians are very warm, welcoming and generally a relaxed and easygoing people. The Bahamians are know for their zest for life and slightly reserved and conservative attitudes. Religion is inherent to life in the Bahamas. The close affiliations with the Church filter down into everyday life, customs and etiquette in the Bahamas, with a focus on proper education, kindness, respect, hospitality, and common courtesy.

Public displays of affection such as hugging, and a modest kiss between a man and a woman are acceptable. However, passionate displays or improper and aggressively advances towards the other gender are thought to be vulgar and improper.

**Bahamas Church and Religion**

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by  
  
governmental or private actors.  
  
The Constitution specifically forbids infringement of a person's freedom to choose and change his or her religion and guarantees the right to practice the religion of one's choice. The law provides effective remedies to enforce these rights.  
  
Christianity is the dominant religion. Political and public discourse often refer to the country's strong Christian heritage and Christian themes in general, and the Constitution requires the Government to guarantee respect for Christian values. Religious groups are free to train their clergy.  
  
The Government observes Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, and Christmas Day as national holidays. The Government meets regularly with religious leaders, both publicly and privately, to discuss social, political, and economic issues.  
  
Churches and other religious congregations do not face any special registration requirements, although they must incorporate legally to purchase land. There are no legal provisions to encourage or discourage the formation of religious communities, which are required to pay the  
  
same tariffs and stamp taxes as for-profit companies if they legally incorporate.  
  
Religion is recognized as an academic subject at government schools, and it is included in mandatory standardized achievement and certificate tests for all students. The country's Christian heritage has a heavy influence on religion classes in government-supported  
  
schools, which focus on the study of Christian philosophy, Biblical texts, and, to a lesser extent, comparative and non-Christian religions presented in a Christian context. The Constitution allows students, or their guardians in the case of minors, to decline to participate in  
  
religious education and observance in schools

**Bahamas Sport and Recreation**

The Bahamas is famed for its long sandy beaches, clear waters, and spectacular coral reefs. Diving, snorkeling, windsurfing, deep-sea fishing, and sailing are popular water sports, and almost every inhabited island hosts a sailing regatta or fishing tournament each year.

Many Bahamians play and follow cricket and football (soccer), as  
might be expected from the islands' historical association with Britain. Basketball is growing in popularity. Bahamians also have excelled at athletics (track and field), tennis, and yachting. The Bahamas Olympic Association was formed in 1952.