



GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND

Fact Sheet

City/Settlement: Freeport/Lucaya

Location: 55 miles east of the Florida coast

Size: 96 miles long from east to west; 17 miles across at its widest point

Population: Approximately 50,000

History:

The earliest settlers on Grand Bahama Island were possibly the Siboney Indians, a Stone Age culture which arrived in the Caribbean about 4,000 years ago but subsequently disappeared. The next to settle were the Lucayans, of whom there were an estimated 4,000 living on Grand Bahama Island at the time of Christopher Columbus's sighting of San Salvador. Great Britain claimed The Islands Of The Bahamas in 1670, after British colonists left Bermuda for the island of Eleuthera, where they sought religious independence. The island experienced an economic boom during the Civil War, as smugglers profited from the Union blockade on the Confederate states, and again during Prohibition. The island changed forever in the 1950s with the dawn of tourism, largely initiated by Wallace Groves, an American financier living on the island. He approached the Bahamian government in 1955 with the idea to build a town that catered to both industry and tourists. The result was economic success and a community now ideal for tourism and vacationing.

Shopping:

Grand Bahama Island offers an exciting array of crafts, souvenirs, and other items to the interested shopper. Port Lucaya Marketplace & Marina, another shopping

destination, is a complex on the harbour filled with shops, restaurants and bars, as well as nightly live entertainment. Named after the famous jazz entertainer, Count Basie Square lies in the center of Port Lucaya's entertainment district. At any time of day, tropical beats pulse from this popular gathering spot. The square's busy event calendar includes parades, festivals, calypso and limbo dancing. Additionally, The Bahamas Arts & Crafts Straw Market sells locally made jewelry, paintings and colorful handicrafts constructed from straw and wood.

Activities:

Vacationers to Grand Bahama Island experience world-class water sports including snorkeling, scuba diving, bonefishing, sport-fishing, kayaking, parasailing and boating. Tennis, volleyball, horseback riding and cricket are popular on the island, which is furthermore known as the "golf capital of the Caribbean."

Airline and Cruise Service:

Only 55 miles east of the coast of Florida, Grand Bahama Island is a convenient and accessible place to visit. The following airlines provide service to Grand Bahama Island:

American Eagle (800-433-7300), **Bahamasair** (800-222-4262),
Continental/Gulfstream International Airlines (800-231-0856), **Delta Airlines** (800-241-4141), and **US Airways** (800-622-1015), **Discovery Cruise Line** (800-259-1579)

There are numerous hotels and resorts on Grand Bahama Island. Listed below are a number of accommodation options available to travelers:

Radisson Our Lucaya Resort and Reef Village (242-373-1333), **Viva Wyndham Fortuna Beach** (877-999-3223), **Pelican Bay Hotel & Suites at Lucaya** (800-373-9500), **Castaways Resort & Suites** (866-410-9676) and **Old Bahama Bay at Ginn Sur Mer** (888-800-8959), 888-311-7945 (888-420-6202), **Ocean Reef Yacht Club and Resort** (242-373-4661) and **Taino Beach Resort & Clubs** (888-311-7945).

Attractions:

The Heritage Trail: A stretch of the road near Freetown, this has become one of the island's chief nature walks. Along the easy, five-mile trek are over 30 species of plants, 18 types of birds, seven species of butterfly, and what remains of "The Hermitage," the oldest intact building on Grand Bahama, dating back to 1901.

Lucayan National Park: Established in 1982, Lucayan National Park contains upland forests, rare flower species, mangrove creeks, and Gold Rock beach, a magnificent beach providing an unparalleled glimpse into the complexities of the Grand Bahamian environment. It is the only place where you can see all six of the islands' ecosystems. It is also home to one of the world's longest underwater systems of limestone caves, which served as a burial place for the Lucayan people.

UNEXSO: Located on the Port Lucaya Marina, UNEXSO, the Underwater Explorers Society, offers a wide variety of diving and dolphin experiences, including the popular Dolphin Swims, where travelers can interact with the dolphins in a protected lagoon.

Pinetree Stables: As the biggest stable in The Bahamas, Pinetree Stables has more than 50 horses ready to jaunt down the beach. The two-hour, guided horseback trail rides take visitors through endangered pine forests, past orange groves, along the beach and into the ocean. Riding experience not required.

Grand Bahama Nature Tours: As a leading eco-tour operator on Grand Bahama Island for the past 15 years, Grand Bahama Nature Tours offers guided kayaking, snorkeling, biking, hiking, jeep and bird watching tours. All tours involve light to moderate activity and are fully guided by friendly, highly trained, professional personnel. Most guides are natives of The Bahamas, and they take pleasure in acquainting visitors with the flora, fauna, history and culture of the islands.

Other Information:

U.S. currency is accepted and is interchangeable with the Bahamian dollar. In September through May, the temperature on the Island averages 70 to 75 degrees

Fahrenheit; the rest of the year is warmer, with temperatures between 80 and 85 degrees. Nighttime temperatures are generally cooler by 5-7 degrees. All U.S. citizens and foreign nationals traveling to/from the United States to/from The Bahamas are required to present a valid passport, passport card or WHTI-compliant document to re-enter the United States. All Canadian citizens traveling to/from Canada to/from The Bahamas are required to present either a valid passport, an official birth certificate or an original naturalization/citizenship certificate. For more information please visit Bahamas.com.

#