



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



FotoDawg

Luxury Nassau

Nassau, 3 Days

Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 4

Nassau Snapshot 9

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Few places offer the lavish luxuries of Nassau. From glittering casinos to exclusive hotels, mega-resorts to super-yachts, Nassau is where the well-heeled and high-rolling go to let loose. Mingle with celebrities, royalty and the impossibly wealthy for three extravagant, beach-set days. You'll cruise the crystal waters, golf the green courses, dine on the decadent offerings of Nassau's finest restaurants. You'll visit casinos and white-sand beaches, sip cocktails at gentlemen's clubs and lounge poolside. And enjoy more than one ocean-view dinner. It's not easy, but someone's gotta do it.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Nassau

DAY NOTE: Begin your first indulgent day at the Graycliff Hotel, your high-end home base in Nassau. Luxury-soaked exclusivity has made this resort a favorite among celebrities, royalty and the extremely well-heeled. Spend the morning strolling their lush gardens, then head over to lavish-beyond-belief Atlantis. Spend a couple hours strolling through the complex, making sure to stop in the Cable Court boutiques. Gaze out onto the recreated ruins of Atlantis as you feast on fine seafood in Fathoms, the Casino's best restaurant. Walk your luxurious lunch off along the Marina, taking stock of the super yachts, then head back to Graycliff for a little poolside lounging and cigar smoking. For dinner, you won't even need to leave the grounds; the Graycliff Restaurant is one of the finest on the island and retains an elegant historic ambiance. If you're in need of a little more hedonism, head out to plush Joker's Wild Comedy Club for upscale evening entertainment.

	Graycliff Hotel Exclusive, Luxurious, Serene
	Atlantis Larger than life
	Marina at Atlantis Paradise for your Yacht
	Graycliff Restaurant Nassau's Finest Tradition
	Joker's Wild Comedy Club Luxuriant Surroundings, Headline Entertainment

Day 2 - Nassau

DAY NOTE: Your second day is set aside for extravagant exploration of the Cable Beach area. Head down West Bay Street and arrive at one of island's most glittering jewels. No, it's not the beach; it's Crystal Palace Casino, one of the world's top gaming palaces, where you'll rub shoulders with high rollers. Lunch in style at the Casino's Black Angus Grille, where you'll feast on steak, sip on fine wines and gaze out on the ocean. Get your white-sand fix at world-famous Cable Beach, then proceed to the green courses at the Cable Beach Golf Club at the plush Sheraton Resort. Dinner will be at the elegant, refined Sole Mare, where you'll enjoy more ocean views, this time paired with delectable Italian. Don't linger too long though; you've got tickets to Magical Voyage, an over-the-top evening event.

	Crystal Palace Casino State-of-the-Art Gaming Facility
	Black Angus Grille Classic Steakhouse atop the Casino
	Cable Beach World Famous Bahamas Beach
	Cable Beach Golf Club For the Long Hitters
	Sole Mare Intimate, Elegant, Authentic
	Magical Voyage Las Vegas meets the Caribbean

Day 3 - Nassau

DAY NOTE: Start your third day with a leisurely gourmet breakfast at Verandah. Fuel up, because you'll be spending the rest of the day at sea. Venture Tours will be your luxury-yacht guide through the crystal waters of the Caribbean. Snorkel around the reefs and laze on the tranquil shores of remote Rose Island. Take a little time to shower and gussy up before heading out to a formal dinner at Runaway Hill Club, where the melt-in-your-mouth cuisine is matched with melting ocean sunsets. End the day in elegance at Bahamian Club, where you can toast to the good life..

	Runaway Hill Club Prix-fixe Perfection
	Venture Tours Snorkeling and Sightseeing Tours
	Bahamian Club Stylish Comfort, Continental Cuisine

Day 1 - Nassau

QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: +1 242 302 9150
fax: +1 242 326 6188
<http://www.graycliff.com/>

location:

8/12 West Hill Street
Nassau 10246

1 Graycliff Hotel

DESCRIPTION: Now in a kind of nostalgic decay, Graycliff remains the grande dame of downtown Nassau even though she is showing her age. Originally an 18th-century private home reflecting Georgian colonial architecture, it's now an intimate three-story inn with old-fashioned atmosphere. Visiting celebs today head for Paradise Island, but some devotees, especially the older set, still choose Graycliff because it epitomizes the old-world style and grace of Nassau back when the duke and duchess of Windsor were in residence. Beach lovers usually go by taxi to either nearby Goodman's Bay or the Western Esplanade Beach, nearly adjacent to Arawak Cay. The historic garden rooms in the main house are large and individually decorated with antiques, though the better units are the more modern garden rooms. The Yellow Bird, Hibiscus, and Pool cottages are ideal choices, but the most luxurious accommodation of all is the Mandarino Suite, which sports Asian decor, an oversize bathroom, and a private balcony overlooking the pool. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 888 528 7155
fax: +1 954 809 2332
<http://www.atlantis.com/>

location:

1 Casino Drive
Nassau

2 Atlantis

DESCRIPTION: A lavish and royal lifestyle awaits you at Atlantis. Spread across a massive piece of land in Paradise Island, this place is one of the largest establishments in the city, and offers a wide range of accommodations, fine dining and shopping options to visitors. Additionally, its beautiful landscape, elegant set up and quality service have made Atlantis the most preferred holiday destination of celebrities and international tourists alike. Be it the special sightseeing tours arranged by the resort authorities or simple walks through quaint streets—this place guarantees complete fun and satisfaction to one and all. Check the website for further details. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of jmb41280

contact:
tel: +1 242 363 6068
fax: +1 242 363 6008
<http://www.atlantisresort.com/>

location:
Atlantis Resort & Marina
Nassau

hours:
24hrs

3 Marina at Atlantis

DESCRIPTION: Want to see and be seen? You can cruise your super yacht into this US\$15 million, world-class marina. Or, for those who are yacht-less, this is where you can charter a skippered vessel for a day, a week or more. Those arriving by boat can take advantage of every resort privilege, all services and amenities offered Atlantis Resort guests. Marina Services: Tie-up assistance for arrivals and departures; dock assistance (via golf cart) for transfer of luggage and provisions; transportation between marina and resort; sanitary sewer pump-out facility at each slip; single- and three-phase power; freshwater/ice; 24-hour staffed security; complimentary daily newspaper delivery; complimentary cable television hook-up; telephone service at every slip; 24-hour room service to vessels; laundry and dry cleaning services; daily trash pick-up; crew lounge with TV and vending machines. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of jonworth

contact:
tel: +1 242 302 9150
fax: +1 242 326 6188
<http://www.graycliff.com/>

location:
8 West Hill Street
Nassau 10246

hours:
Mon-Fri noon-3pm; daily
6:30-10pm

4 Graycliff Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: Part of the Graycliff hotel, an antiques-filled colonial mansion located in Nassau's commercial core (opposite the Government House), this deeply entrenched restaurant retains a history and nostalgia for the old days of The Bahamas as a colonial outpost of Britain. The chefs use local Bahamian products whenever available and turn them into old-fashioned cuisine that appeals to tradition-minded visitors, many of whom return here year after year. Try such dishes, neither completely traditional nor regional, as grouper soup in puff pastry or plump, juicy pheasant cooked with pineapples grown on Eleuthera. Lobster, another specialty, comes half in beurre blanc and half with a sauce prepared from the head of the lobster. Other options include escargots, foie gras, and lamb. The pricey wine list is praised as one of the finest in the country, with more than 200,000 bottles. This hotel and restaurant are managed by the same entrepreneurs who run a cigar-making facility; as such, its collection of Bahama-derived cigars is the world's most comprehensive. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:
tel: +1 242 363 2000

location:
Casino Drive
Nassau

5 Joker's Wild Comedy Club

DESCRIPTION: This posh little club features comedy acts from around the world. If you want to make a night of it you might want to get the package deal which includes a meal at Murray's Delicatessen. The interior of the club is plushy. Dim lights, rich green wallpaper and large potted plants are highlights of the décor. © wcities.com

Day 2 - Nassau

QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: +1 242 327 6200

fax: +1 242 327 6818

<http://www.wyndham.com/hotels/NASBS/casino/main.wnt>

location:

West Bay Street
Nassau

1

Crystal Palace Casino

DESCRIPTION: High rollers and slot pullers alike will find it hard to stay away from this 35,000-square-foot casino, located within the Wyndham Nassau Resort. Even on sunny days, the lure of the instant win draws hundreds of people away from the beach and shops and into the casino. Fast-paced table games are always in session. Hundreds of slots and video-gaming machines are located throughout the casino. Sports fans will appreciate the enormous Sports Book, which features nine big-screen televisions. Should you get hungry or thirsty, the buffet and the sweet shop are only a few steps away. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 242 327 6200

fax: +1 242 327 6818

<http://cablebeachresorts.com/wyndham/dining.php>

location:

West Bay Street
Nassau

2

Black Angus Grille

DESCRIPTION: Elegant, romantic and sophisticated, this is the quintessential steakhouse. The menu is short, and mainly features thick cuts of prime beef. Certified Angus beef is served. The wine list is eclectic, with vintages from around the world. The restaurant is located on the second floor of the Crystal Palace, and features ocean views. The dining area is spacious, but thanks to dim lighting and plenty of drapery, diners can maintain a certain amount of privacy. © wcities.com



Black Angus Grille

contact:

tel: +1 242 322 7500

location:

West Bay Street
Nassau

hours:

24hrs

3

Cable Beach

DESCRIPTION: Not to be missed—this beach is world famous for its fabulous sand and crystal waters and for the myriad upscale resorts that line it. It was a beach with no name until 1907 when it became the landing point for the Trans-Atlantic cable, which stretched from here to connect The Bahamas to mainland America at Jupiter, Florida. Today, it's the ultimate playground for fun in the sun. There are all the usual water sports and activities and plenty of space for sunbathing. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 242 327 1705
fax: +1 242 327 6987
<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html>

location:

West Bay Street, Cable Beach
Nassau

4 Cable Beach Golf Club

DESCRIPTION: Be sure to bring your driver and be prepared to use it - these holes are long! This 7040 yard, par 72, set of links is a beautifully manicured challenge for players of all skill levels. The front nine are generally considered to be easier than the back so don't get too excited until your round is over. Guests of the Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort receive discounts and tee privileges. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 242 327 6200
fax: +1 242 327 5898

location:

West Bay Street
Nassau

5 Sole Mare

DESCRIPTION: Gorgeous ocean views, deliciously authentic Italian cuisine and polished service make this a truly enjoyable dining experience. Perhaps best of all, the prices are reasonable, especially given the restaurant's location in the gorgeous Crystal Palace. Broiled specialties, such as the Filetto alla Zafferano, are the most expensive items on the menu. The dessert selection consists of lighter-than-air soufflés in flavors such as Marsala strawberry. Marble steps lead up to a stately, elegant reception area. Maroon leather banquettes and thick carpeting muffle the chime of crystal and silver. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 242 327 6200

location:

Marriot Crystal Palace
Nassau The Grand Bahama Island

Magical Voyage

DESCRIPTION: This Las Vegas-style revue features a world-class magician, leggy showgirls, a Broadway tribute and more. Set against backdrops that depict everything from the tropical jungle to the lights of New York City, the show is fast-paced, glittery and intense. The performers come from all around the Caribbean, and special guest artists hail from around the world. © wcities.com

Day 3 - Nassau

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Start your third day with a leisurely gourmet breakfast at Verandah. Fuel up, because you'll be spending the rest of the day at sea. Venture Tours will be your luxury-yacht guide through the crystal waters of the Caribbean. Snorkel around the reefs and laze on the tranquil shores of remote Rose Island. Take a little time to shower and gussy up before heading out to a formal dinner at Runaway Hill Club, where the melt-in-your-mouth cuisine is matched with melting ocean sunsets. End the day in elegance at Bahamian Club, where you can toast to the good life..

contact:
tel: +1 242 333 2150

1 Runaway Hill Club

location:
Colebrook Street
Dunmore Town

DESCRIPTION: Located right on world famous Pink Sands Beach, diners here will enjoy a formal experience augmented by stunning views of the Atlantic. Vibrant pastel colors surround you as you indulge your taste buds. The restaurant has earned its place at the top of the Harbour Island dining scene with innovative prix-fixe meals. The menu changes often, but expect to find such dishes as shrimp scampi, conch marinara, peppercorn encrusted pork tenderloin and a variety of fresh fish with French and Bahamian inspired spices. Salad and soup du jour are served with each meal. An extensive wine list provides the perfect vintage for each entree. © wcities.com

hours:
M-Sa 8p

contact:
tel: +1 242 557 8248

Venture Tours

location:
Marina Bridge
Nassau

DESCRIPTION: Venture Tours offers a classy snorkeling tour, where you are pampered aboard the 31 foot yacht called the Tender. The tour sets sail from the main harbor at Paradise Island to the tranquil beaches of Rose Island. This uninhabited island is close to the barrier reef, and the crystal clear waters make for excellent snorkeling, where you can easily spot tropical fish and coral. More snorkeling is offered at nearby Athol Island, also close to the reef and blessed with clear, shallow water. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: +1 242 363 3000
<http://www.atlantis.com/dining/gourmet/bahamianclub.aspx>

2 Bahamian Club

location:
Atlantis Resort, Coral Towers
Nassau

DESCRIPTION: Comfortable yet elegant, this Atlantis restaurant has the feel of a traditional gentleman's club. The cuisine and décor are classic continental/American. Start with a Baby Spinach Salad if you need greens in your daily diet. The entrees tend to be meaty and rich. The wine list includes labels from Australia, France and California. The gleaming oak floor and the pine-green walls make the dining room feel somewhat like a large drawing room. Cushioned banquettes and gently whirring ceiling fans make for a deliciously cool, comfortable atmosphere in which to enjoy the food. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Bahamian Club

Nassau Snapshot

Local Info

Nassau is one of the places that first injected the Caribbean into the American popular consciousness (remember the song "Funky Nassau" in 1971?). Another influential factor was the Bahamas' tropical atmosphere and its splendid pink and white sand beaches, which still sparkle today-- though you'll often find them obscured by the crowds of visitors who are attracted here for the sun, the fun, the good food and the many island activities, which include snorkeling, scuba diving and golfing.

Sand and Surf

Apart from the very occasional hurricane, Nassau enjoys fine weather most days of the year, ideal for relaxing at one of the many, many beaches. If you're looking for seclusion or good snorkeling, make your way to Love Beach, which is outside of town and usually empty.

Many vacationing families steer toward Cable Beach, which has powdery white sand and calm waters welcoming to swimmers of all ages. Kids can build sandcastles or ride the big floats, while adults can cool off in the water by swimming, snorkeling, jet skiing or parasailing.

For a once-in-a-lifetime experience, swim with the friendly dolphins (or sea lions) at Dolphin Encounters on Blue Lagoon Island. Kids are welcome.

Shopping and Dining

In Nassau's downtown proper, bustling Straw Market is a popular draw for visitors looking for local crafts, nifty souvenirs (and lots of things made of straw, like hats and dolls). While you're there, stop and watch one of the free shows at the street theater. There are plenty more shops and galleries located up and down Bay Street, including some that specialize in designer items and branded goods.

For affordable but delicious meals, check out the row of colored huts in Arawak Cay. This is where the locals eat and the food is cheap and delicious. Try the fish fry or other Bahamian specialties with a cold beer. Children will like the conch fritters, a popular street food, and the many different fresh tropical fruits sold here.

Attractions

Minutes from downtown Nassau is where you'll find some of the most interesting tourist sites. The Ardastra Gardens Zoo and Conservation Center is a 5-acre zoo that's home to some 300 exotic birds, mammals and reptiles, many of them indigenous and endangered inhabitants of the Bahamas. Watching a performance by the marching flamingos is a must.

Not far from Ardastra is Fort Charlotte, an 18th-century English outpost. Don't forget to bring your camera for shots of the gloomy dungeons and the brilliant views of Nassau Harbor. Admission is free but to get the best of your visit join a guided tour for a minimal fee. Another attraction near downtown is Nassau's most-visited site, the Queen's Staircase. It's a staircase carved from solid limestone by slaves in the 18th century.
© NileGuide

History

The Nassau-Paradise Island probably brings to mind steel-drum music, a take-it-easy attitude, to-die-for conch dishes and lots of tourists. However, what Nassau-Paradise Island is like today is a far cry from how it used to be.

Like other areas of the Caribbean, it has a romantic and bloody history of foreign occupation, piracy, slavery and smuggling. But Nassau's rich history is really the history of the Bahamas as a whole: one of resilience and pride.

Until 1492, when Columbus "discovered" America, Bahamians lived a straightforward life, relying on the bountiful sea and the island land. But in the mid 1500s the

Spanish decided they had found a slave-labor force easily put to work which led to the near depopulation of the islands.

In the mid 1600s, English settlers in other Caribbean Islands realized that Nassau's proximity to the recently settled New World provided opportunities. The settlers wanted to use Nassau for shipping and trade, as well as a launch point to the New World to escape from England's religious persecution.

Unfortunately piracy also became common around the same time, and lasted for more than a century. With numerous hiding places in the remote and densely vegetated islands, along with a proximity to mainland North America the buccaneers had found the ideal location.

In 1756, the Seven Years War broke out and trade positively flourished. But when the war ended in 1763 the black-market economy faltered. Piracy again became the primary economic market, including the likes of Blackbeard. Life became tough and difficult for those who weren't pirates.

When the slave trade was discovered, in the 1800s, and Nassau/Paradise Island and other islands were used as weigh stations for ships transporting slaves to North America. The large ships could only steam or sail for a few days at a time which made Nassau a perfect stopover to the United States. That meant Nassau's maritime workers flourished. But when Civil War in the United States ended, it ended Nassau's prosperity. Residents turned to working the wrecks from the fleets that sank decades or centuries earlier.

Nassau's economy was unwittingly revived again when the United States enacted Prohibition in 1919. Nassau gained a lively and profitable liquor bootlegging industry. But when prohibition was repealed in 1933 Nassau's prosperity came to an end.

However Nassau was always able to rebound from adversity again. And like its pirate, slave-trading, bootlegging past, it did so through illicit means, by becoming a stop-off point for drug runners and for

Nassau Snapshot continued

setting up offshore corporations so illegally gotten gains could be hidden.

But that is only part of the story. In 1973, the islands gained their independence from England, although they remain a part of the British Commonwealth. This is similar to Puerto Rico, which remains a part of the United States, but has autonomy. Following independence in 1973, Bahamians in general, and in Nassau especially, started exploiting the jewel they lived on. No longer would the islands rely on shipping, legal and otherwise, alone. They could rely on the millions of people curious about this most beautiful collection of Caribbean Islands.

They would accept and cater to the tourists.

Yes, the Bahamas are still an attraction to the smuggler. Downed DC-3s litter the waters surrounding the islands, remnants of cocaine shipments gone bad in the 1970s and 1980s. But now they are attractions, wrecks to explore for the scuba divers who want to get up close and personal with the tropical fish and stunning coral.

But that's not all. Other nations may have their gambling palaces, but there are few places besides Nassau where one can bask in the sun of the tropics by day while fulfilling one's passion for betting at night. Of course, shopping, a fun nightlife and the rest of the trappings of an island paradise await as well.

With a thriving tourism economy and a government that recognizes that environmental protection is crucial to that economy, the Nassau residents may have finally discovered that their islands' natural beauty is attraction enough.

©

Hotel Insights

If you've got money to burn and energy galore, Nassau is the place to be. Hotels on the island are large, busy, opulent and expensive. The majority of them are just steps away from the beach, shopping and dining. The island is small, and the tourist districts—of which there are just a few—offer a bit of everything. Most of the major

hotels offer a number of on-site dining and shopping options, just in case visitors are too lazy to even venture outside.

While it's possible to find mid-range accommodations on the island, budget lodgings are hard to locate. Budget hotels tend to be shabby or in a seedy location. In order to get good prices, the best idea is to book well ahead of time, and to take advantage of special deals or packages. By doing this, you can shave up to 50 percent off the rack rate of even the finest hotels. That will leave you with more money in your pocket to spend at the shops or the bars.

Cable Beach

This strip of beach is Nassau's most famous hotel district. While only about five hotels are located on Cable Beach, all of them are large and luxurious. Each one has a distinct personality, so if you don't like the atmosphere of one, you'll probably like another. Sandals, the Bahamas' most famous all-inclusive resort, is the first hotel you'll see when coming from the airport. While it's unassuming from the outside, once you get inside it is a veritable fantasy palace. With colonnaded aquamarine pools, white marble spas and opulent restaurants, this is a honeymooner's paradise. Further down are the three major business-or-pleasure hotels: the Radisson Cable Beach Resort, the Marriott Crystal Palace and the Nassau Beach Hotel. These three are linked together; guests of one can easily enjoy the facilities of another. The Marriott is the most expensive of the three, and the most elegant. With its two shopping arcades, several restaurants and enormous casino (one of two on the island) it is almost like a small city. The Nassau Beach Hotel has a smaller, homier feeling, and is the least expensive. The Radisson lands somewhere in the middle. Cool and elegant, it is the quintessential business hotel. A bit further down is Breezes, a fun, wild, all-inclusive resort that's popular with vacationers of all ages and nationalities. All of these hotels are set on the beach, with restaurants and shops located across the wide, busy street.

Downtown Nassau and Bay Street

Hotels in this district are scattered, unlike the hotels on Cable Beach. They range in price and quality from economy to ultra-luxurious. While some of the hotels are medium-sized, none of them are overly large or busy. Three of Nassau's best boutique hotels are located in this district.

Easily the most famous hotel in downtown Nassau is the stately British Colonial Hilton. With its hundred-year history, opulent décor and serene ambience, this hotel proudly distinguishes itself from the other major hotel franchises located on the island. For business travelers who can't afford to splurge, the Holiday Inn Junkanoo Beach offers pleasant and functional accommodations about two blocks from the British Colonial. The Red Carpet Inn, located a few miles down Bay Street—past the major shopping area—is a great choice for families and budget travelers. It's quiet, clean and close to the center of the action.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are two hotels in and around Bay Street that offer the ultimate in luxury accommodation. Both of these hotels are beautiful, unique, and seemingly set apart from the hustle and bustle of Nassau. The lovely Compass Point Beach Club, which is part of the opulent Island Outpost chain, has a tastefully tropical theme, complete with wooden furniture and bright, cheerful trim. The majestic Graycliff Hotel is set in a 250-year old mansion, in the midst of a lush tropical garden. It is favored by royalty and international luminaries.

Paradise Island

Just over the bridge is the Bahamas' little patch of Paradise. While it's certainly a sight to behold these days, just a few years ago it was largely undeveloped, and graced with the title "Hog Island." One resort in particular is responsible for the transformation of Paradise Island, and that resort is also the island's primary attraction.

The Atlantis Resort is in a class of its own in the Bahamas, and there are few places that can compare to it anywhere in the world. With several hundred rooms, seventeen restaurants, a dozen bars, an

Nassau Snapshot continued

aquarium and a water park located on the property, it's enough to impress even the most seasoned travelers. On a typical day at the Atlantis, two major pop stars and the entire editorial staff of a world-famous fashion magazine were all guests of the hotel.

Several other fabulous properties are located on Paradise Island. While none of them can match up to the Atlantis in terms of sheer size and theatrics, they offer elegant accommodations and top-notch service. The Sheraton, the Clarion South Ocean Resort and tiny Club Land'Or all have a loyal following among Nassau visitors. Club Med, the original all-inclusive vacation resort, occupies a large strip of property known as Porcupine Island. If you want to take a peek at the fabled Club Med action and see if it's your cup of tea, get an evening pass, which allows you to dine, drink, and take in the entertainment. If you're looking for mid-priced lodging on Paradise Island, the closest you'll come is the Comfort Inn. The Paradise Harbour Club is also reasonable. Many of these hotels have an arrangement with the Atlantis that allows guests to have full access to the Atlantis's guest services. It's worthwhile to find a hotel that has this privilege, as the Atlantis's facilities are unparalleled.

While much Bahamian business is conducted in Nassau, it is well aware of its "tourist attraction" status in the rest of the world. Nassau hotels cater to pleasure travelers, and the results are delightful, if not always economical: while it's almost impossible to place a direct phone call from a hotel, it's always easy to find a good tropical rum concoction and a chaise lounge in the sun.

And it's possible to get a bargain, if you start looking in plenty of time. Remember to book well a month or two early, and be flexible with dates. Check the Web sites of each hotel for special deals and corporate rates—more than likely, they'll be listed. Always ask travel agents for good package deals. Don't forget the various Bahamian hotel taxes, which raise the rates

a bit. When quoted a rate, ask if taxes are included—it makes a difference.

Millions of visitors come to Nassau, as part of conventions or retreats, Spring Break and wedding parties, in groups, and alone. No matter what your status or your requirements, you can be accommodated here. It's all a matter of finding the hotel that can best match your needs.

©

Restaurants Insights

As both the capital of the Bahamas and a world-famous vacation destination, Nassau boasts a wide variety of dining and entertainment options. Many of the island's restaurants and bars keep to a tropical theme in terms of ambience and cuisine, but a more eclectic dining scene is beginning to flourish, and different kinds of night spots are also beginning to crop up. One can find Chinese takeout, European bistros and Italian trattorias throughout downtown Nassau and Paradise Island. Gourmet rooms and upscale cocktail lounges are also scattered throughout the island, with a few restaurants making the "Top Ten" list in gourmet publications and trade magazines.

However, people don't come to Nassau to eat Chinese food or French food. They come to Nassau to drink rum and eat conch—that deliciously chewy sea creature rumored to have extraordinary libido-boosting properties. Spring Breakers visit the island for the inexpensive liquor and the thumping reggae and calypso music, while entire families can enjoy Junkanoo parades and inexpensive local seafood. The quintessential Nassau dining experience includes chipper Calypso music, fresh fish or lobster, friendly service and a view of the sea. One can find all of these qualities at dozens of restaurants in Nassau and Paradise Island.

Downtown-Bay Street Dining options on Bay Street aren't quite as plentiful as one might expect. The street is primarily a shopping area, and there are just a few restaurants interspersed with the stores. Most restaurants are located

on side streets, a short distance from the thoroughfare. At the beginning of Bay Street, the majestic Colonial Hilton offers several dining options, all of them expensive. The Wedgwood Room is a perfect choice for very special occasions, say anniversary dinners or 50th birthdays. Portofino Italian Café, located on the ground floor of the Hilton, is less formal than the Wedgwood; it's appropriate for business lunches or dinners.

Fine dining choices don't stop at the Hilton, however. A number of gourmet restaurants are located within a few blocks of the landmark hotel. Graycliff and Chez Willie are known around the world for ambience and cuisine.

Although Nassau boasts a high number of world-class gourmet rooms, especially given its diminutive size—it has plenty of less formal options. Across the street from the Hilton is an extremely popular, extremely touristy restaurant, Conch Fritters. This place blatantly panders to drunken tourist families and bored businessmen, but in spite of its kitschiness, it has a certain appeal. Prices are relatively low and portions are large. It's a great place to try conch for the first time; it's also a perfect spot for daquiri-downing. Two doors down, the dingy Imperial Cafeteria offers authentic Bahamian fare. Only the bravest tourists venture in here, but locals flock to the counter day and night. Skans Café is smack dab in the middle of Bay Street. Busy and informal, it does a brisk lunchtime business. On a side street of Bay, the Brussels Brasserie serves delectable brunch and lunch dishes in a casually cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Most of Nassau's nightlife is located downtown. Bahama Boom, the latest hot spot, also claims the distinction of being Nassau's first techno club. Waterloo is a popular dance club, featuring all kinds of music and an outdoor patio. The Drop Off is famous for its intriguingly seedy mixed crowd and its late-night food service.

East Bay While it's not known for much else, the area around the foot of the Paradise Island Bridge has become a

Nassau Snapshot continued

sort of restaurant district. Several popular restaurants, including the jazzy Pink Pearl and legendary Poop Deck, are clustered here, near Nassau Harbour. The recent addition of two popular restaurant franchises, the Outback Steakhouse and Hooters, makes this an even more popular dining destination.

Cable Beach This part of Nassau is known for its world-class hotels, but it has plenty of fine independent restaurants as well. BBQ Beach, a newcomer to the Nassau dining scene, features nouveau barbecue. Androsia Steak and Seafood is famous for its pepper steak and its fresh seafood.

Each of the major hotels on Cable Beach boasts a full complement of restaurants, and while the all-inclusives (Sandals, Breezes) don't allow outside guests, the other hotels are quite welcoming. The Marriott Crystal Palace has the fabulous Seaside Buffet, a casual restaurant by the name of Goombay Mama and a wonderful coffee shop and pastisserie, Crystal Sweets. Fine dining options—Italian, Chinese and Continental—are located on the second floor of the main building. One of Nassau's most popular local restaurants, Café Johnny Canoe, is located next to the Nassau Beach Hotel; eat here if you want to try conch or listen to calypso.

Paradise Island If you're in the mood to splurge, Paradise Island is the place to go. Dozens of restaurants are located on this tiny patch of Paradise—most of them within the gigantic Atlantis Resort. Over half of PI's restaurants are pricey and semi-formal. Highlights of the Paradise Island fine dining scene include Fathoms at the Atlantis and beloved Blue Lagoon at Club Land'or.

Finding mid-range or inexpensive restaurants on Paradise Island can be quite a challenge. However, there are a few options, although none of them are located at the major hotels. Anthony's Caribbean Grill, located in the Paradise Shopping Plaza, offers large, inexpensive tropical drinks and a laid-back atmosphere. The News Café is a great place to sip a cappuccino in the morning or evening. Each

of Paradise Island's shopping centers has its own deli, where tourists can buy sandwiches and chips for a few dollars.

Around the Island Some of Nassau's best and most unique dining options aren't located in any specific area, but manage to flourish by drawing customers away from the main drag. Foremost among these restaurants is the famous Sun and... Not only is its name enough to catch the eye over and over again, its cuisine is sufficient to draw rave reviews from the world's toughest critics. Seashells, the only restaurant on tiny Crystal Cay, offers stunning ocean views and a unique atmosphere. For genuine Bahamian cooking at low prices, dine at Traveller's Rest. It's far off the beaten path, but the restaurant often runs specials to make the drive worthwhile.

Nassau is a fun city for dining and drinking. With the exception of a few five-star gourmet rooms, the prices are not prohibitively expensive, and the cuisine is often inventive and flavorful. There are dozens of places to get a mixed drink for a few dollars, and the atmosphere at restaurants and bars is usually pleasant. Whether you're a student on Spring Break or a millionaire on a pleasure cruise, you're sure to find something that suits your palate and wallet.

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Nightlife Insights

Perhaps the two words that come to mind when people consider Nassau entertainment are Paradise and Island. Developed in large part in the 1970s, it features the Atlantis Paradise Island, a resort that ranks among the largest in the world. It has 3,779 rooms, a mega-casino, golf course, tennis courts and a water-slide pool. And it's growing. If not a resort, it could be its own small city.

Start with its renowned casino—all 1,100 slot machines and more than 90 gaming tables, including roulette, poker and blackjack. But that's only the beginning, because it has what it calls the Entertainment Complex that incorporates

nightclubs, restaurants, shopping. Travel agents fawn over Paradise Island, just over a bridge from Nassau proper. The toll is a dollar American.

The Atlantis showroom has the Sunsation, a stage show featuring everything you would find in a cabaret. The Nassau Beach Hotel on Nassau proper also has an exciting stage show where dancers and singers work to make your heart pump. The Palace Theatre at the Marriott does the same type of dinner-theater type thing. Don't forget the smashing casino at the Crystal Palace.

But not all entertainment in Nassau revolves around resorts. Nassau teems with all sorts of fun, from underwater adventures at the reefs to museums to mere window-shopping. It's especially popular with residents of and visitors to South Florida (USA), who have easy access via small aircraft that can be chartered, popular cruise lines, and private vessels that can make the trip in just a few hours.

Quite fun is the interactive museum Pirates of Nassau, where you can get the islands' history from Blackbeard to Anne Bonney, pirates all. Also check out the Pompey Museum, another pirate museum whose building goes back to the 1700s. Folk art and slavery—Nassau's past is intimately tied (unfortunately) to the slave trade—are featured prominently.

On Elizabeth Hill is the Queen's Staircase, so named for Queen Victoria of England. The attraction does, indeed, consist of a structure with 65 steps. There also is a straw market for all things Bahamian, although it's not nearly as substantive as the straw markets in, say, Freeport and Port Lucaya on Grand Bahama. You might want to save your straw-market spending money for the latter two if you take an island trip.

Junkanoo, a musical form unique to the Bahamas, is celebrated at the Junkanoo Expo at the Prince George Wharf, basically an homage to the annual festival marked each Christmas season, when the locals and visitors get down and do some serious partying to celebrate the islands' heritage. However, it's undergoing some renovation,

Nassau Snapshot continued

so at this writing, you might find it only nearly close to reopening. Call or stop by to confirm.

When the boat or plane drops you off, what do you think? You think beaches, you think surf. You think diving, you think Jet Skis, you think fishing, you think shelling. There are numerous opportunities for all of that, and operators are more than willing to cater your trip from land to the sparkling water. Are you a family? A newlywed couple? A group of kids on spring break from school? They can make your water experience yours alone.

Part of that experience should be the Dolphin Encounter, at Blue Lagoon. Humans are only slight brighter than marine mammals, and you can find out first-hand here.

And what about The Dig? You will dig this. This is a re-creation of the mythical underwater city of Atlantis. It has an aquarium and more. You can even walk under the aquarium through glass tunnels to look up and see the marine life, a nice play on the usual glass-bottom boats where you go to the reef and look down to see that same marine life.

But you also would do well to see the island and its reefs from the air. In Nassau, give a call to +1 242 363 4016. And bring your Kodak.

OK, so now your day is done. You've gone back to your hotel room, you've napped, you've awoken and showered. You are ready to hit the night. The night in Nassau is ready to greet you, as well. As a certain Internet pioneer says, where do you want to go today? Just change that to night.

You first want to go to anywhere that serves the native cuisine. That consists of conch, of course, and bull dolphin (mahi-mahi game fish, not the Flipper sort), grouper, bonefish and more ocean delicacies. And anywhere means anywhere, from the large resorts to the mom-and-pop local operations.

Then you want music, dancing, drink. You'll find far too many fun places to list here, but a sampling includes, besides Atlantis, the Joker's Wild, a comedy club; the We

Place on Thompson Avenue, where locals make up the clientèle for the most part; Kings& Knights at the Nassau Beach Hotel; the Waterloo, a five-bar disco on East Bay Street; Cocktails& Dreams, where you can smush your feet in the sand, since it's the only club directly on the beach. Or if the night still seems young to you but most places are closed, stop into the Drop Off Bar for that last hoorah.

And when you are all done with that nightlife, go to your hotel, kick off the shoes, toss the clothes on the floor, turn out the lights, and get ready to do it all over gain the next day.

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Things to Do Insights

Welcome to New Providence Island, known to the world as simply Nassau/Paradise Island. Touring can take several forms here depending on your interests and physical predilections. Whether you prefer a self-guided tour or to join up with an organized tour group, taking in the city of Nassau is pure pleasure. It offers colorful local shopping, fascinating examples of colonial architecture, museums, culture and history all within easy touring range. Most tours originate from Port George Wharf near the cruise ship area. The wharf area is a wonderful place to get your first "feel" of Nassau—it's where over a million visiting cruise-ship passengers disembark yearly.

Downtown Nassau

Consider the downtown district in and around Bay Street, recently refurbished and beautified. It's the main avenue that runs along Nassau Harbour's south end and goes to the Government House, Junkanoo Museum, Pompey Museum and Rawson Square. This is a great place to book a horse-drawn surrey tour. The Junkanoo Museum at Prince George Wharf is basically located in an old warehouse, but what it houses is, quite frankly, pretty cool. It is really the Junkanoo Museum—a tribute to participants in past Junkanoo celebrations, the traditional festival time the week between in between Christmas and New York. Junkaroo generally refers to a

specific type of music. Old costumes and the like are the highlights.

The Government House is the official residence of the nation's leader, on Duke Street just off Cumberland. It's been the leader's official home since 1801. A statue of Christopher Columbus honors the man considered the discoverer of Nassau, and there is a marvelous ceremony for the changing of the guard. The Royal Bahamas Police Force Band, dressed to the nines, provides the soundtrack. Parliament Square is at Parliament and Bay, three blocks from the Government House, and is the seat of Bahamian government. Like in most countries, there are two houses, the lower Assembly and the upper Senate. The buildings comprising the government complex are tropical pink, and in the centre of the square is a statue paying tribute to Queen Victoria.

The Bahamas Supreme Court, where ordinary folks can watch the justices debate and rule on points of law, is open to the public. The Colonial Secretary's Office also is at Parliament Square. Downtown is also home to the interactive museum, Pirates of Nassau, which dramatizes the colonial days of piracy during the 17th-century Bahamas. It's located in the Lofthouse building on Marlborough Street and is guaranteed to thrill visitors of every age.

Don't miss the 200-year old Queen's Staircase, constructed by slaves who hand-carved each of the 66 steps out of limestone rock indigenous to the island. It leads to Bennet's Hill and famous Fort Fincastle and Water Tower, raised in 1793 to protect the city. The water tower presides as the highest point in Nassau, at 126 feet itself and 200 feet above sea level overall. Don't forget a camera, perhaps with a zoom lens, because the vista from the fort is remarkable. The Pompey Museum at Cumberland at Marlborough pays tribute to those who were victimized during the slave trade of the 1700s. It's named for a rebel slave who called the Bahamas home in the 1830s. It was the site of slave auctions and used to be called the Vendue House.

Nassau Snapshot continued

Cumberland and Marlborough is where you'll find the Christ Church Cathedral, erected in the 1830s. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Cathedral is on West Street, just down Cumberland. At East and Shirley is the Bahamas Historical Society Museum, which contains displays and artifacts, reflected in its name. It's small, but for those whom details—archaeological and the like—are the key, it's a paradise.

Paradise Island

Speaking of Paradise, do take the trek across the bridge from Nassau to Paradise Island. It houses the world's largest aquarium, a championship golf course, casino, oodles of restaurants, resort and a world-class marina (accommodating yachts up to 200 feet). This is where you'll find Cable Beach, the famous two-mile stretch.

Day Tours

Of the 700 islands which make up The Bahama Islands, only about 30 are inhabited. Book an island-hopper flight or a day cruise to Abacos with its pristine waters, the Biminis (which are world-renown for game fishing), Eleuthera with its dramatic cliffs and pink sand, or to the largely undiscovered Exeumas.

Harbour Island Day Trip

For an unforgettable day, take the Bahamas Fast Ferries day trip to Harbour Island. It begins in the morning, when guests are picked up at Nassau Harbour. The boat itself is a state-of-the-art vessel, a sleek, high-powered catamaran that travels at a speed of up to 35 knots, or 40 miles an hour. The trip to Harbour Island only takes two hours. With a comfortable air-conditioned cabin, plenty of refreshments for sale and stunning views of the ocean as it whips by, this is anything but a normal ferry ride.

Once the boat docks in Governor's Harbour, passengers can enjoy an edifying tour of historical downtown Harbour Island, which was the Bahamas' first capital city. Stroll through the picturesque streets, and don't forget to take a peek at Town Hall: it's painted in the cheerful color known

these days as "Bubblegum Pink." Enjoy a Bahamian lunch, courtesy of the Fast Ferry. The remainder of the day is spent at Harbour Island's world famous pink sand beach. Stroll along the rosy shores, and dabble your toes in the clear aquamarine waves. You may never want to leave—and for a few days at least, you won't have to.

While Bahamas Fast Ferries offers a one-day tour package for USD150, many people decide to use the boat as an alternative to air travel. For a slightly lower price, you can skip the tour and the lunch, and head off to a hotel or a tour of your own devising. Return on the ferry a few days later. Or if, one day of pink sand and pink government buildings is enough, hop on the boat at dusk and be back in Nassau in time for dinner.

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Travel Tips

By Air: The Lynden Pindling International Airport (+1 242 377 7281), formerly known as the Nassau International Airport, offers easy access to the Bahamas. The following airlines provide service to and from the airport:

American Airlines (+1 800 433 7300/http://www.aa.com)

Air Canada (+1 800 776 3000/http://www.aircanada.com)

Bahamasair (+1 800 222 4262/http://www.bahamasair.com)

British Airways (+1 800 247 9297/http://www.british-airways.com/)

Continental (+1 800 525 0280/http://www.continental.com)

Delta (+1 800 221 1212/http://www.delta.com)

US Airways (+1 800 428 4322/http://www.usairways.com)

There are no public transit options to and from the airport. Taxis and rental cars are the best means to reach your final destination. Taxis are available just outside the airport terminal. You can call for Eddie

Major's Taxi E. Majors' Tour & Taxi-Cab Service

Taxi 516 Taxi 516

The following rental agencies operate out of Nassau:

Avis (+1 800 831 2847/http://www.avis.com)

Budget (+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com)

Hertz (+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com)

By Train:

There are no train services in Nassau or Paradise Island.

By Bus:

Visitors must reach Nassau via boat or air.

By Car:

Visitors must reach Nassau via boat or air.

Getting Around:

Jitney buses provide service around Nassau from the early morning hours until about 7p. Ferries and charter boats are also a common method of transportation. Bahamas Fast Ferries (+1 242 323 2166/www.bahamasferries.com) is the largest provider.

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Fun Facts

Nassau/Paradise Island

Country: Bahamas

Nassau/Paradise Island by the Numbers:

Population: 226,000.

Average Winter Temperature: 70 degrees F

Average Summer Temperature: 82 degrees F

Quick Facts:

Electricity: 120 volts AC

Time Zone: GMT-5

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 242

Nassau Snapshot continued

Did You Know?

Nassau and Paradise Island are connected by two 600 ft bridges. Legend has it that these two cities were once home to the notable pirates including Blackbeard and

Calico Jack. It is now one of the world's most popular tourist and resort destinations.

Orientation:

Nassau is the capital of and largest city in the Bahamas. It is situated on the northeast

coast of New Providence Island in the Atlantic Ocean and to the east of Miami.
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