

LIVE BEYOND TRAVELS

GOLF IN THE BAHAMAS



An advisor's guide to where to play, when to go, and how to plan it.

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START HERE

Why The Bahamas

Golfers spend a lot of time and money chasing warm-weather rounds. The Bahamas is one of the few destinations that delivers championship golf, turquoise water, and a short flight at the same time.

- **It is close.** The islands begin roughly 50 miles off the Florida coast. Most trips from the Midwest are a single connection and a half-day of travel, not a red-eye.
- **No currency headache.** The Bahamian dollar is pegged one-to-one with the US dollar, and US currency is accepted everywhere. English is the official language.
- **Golf year-round.** Courses play twelve months a year. The prime window is November through April, when daytime highs sit in the high 70s and humidity drops off.
- **Designers you know.** Tom Weiskopf, Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Robert Trent Jones Jr., Tom Fazio, and Ernie Els all have work in the islands.
- **It travels well with non-golfers.** Every golf island here has beaches, boating, diving, and dining, so a foursome trip and a couples trip can be the same trip.

The one thing every first-timer gets wrong

Wind is the course. Bahamian layouts are largely open, low-lying, and coastal. Most are not long on paper, and most will still beat you. Club up, keep the ball down, and take the safe side of the fairway. Scores that look unreasonable on the card are usually a wind story, not a talent story.

When to Go

SEASON	MONTHS	WHAT TO EXPECT
Peak	Dec – Apr	Best weather and course conditions. Book tee times and rooms early; holiday weeks sell out first.
Shoulder	Nov, May	Nearly identical golf conditions with softer pricing. The sweet spot for value.
Low	Jun – Oct	Hot, humid, and inside hurricane season (June 1 – Nov 30). Lowest rates; travel protection is essential.

Getting There

Nassau (NAS) and Freeport (FPO) are the two main gateways, and both are reachable from the Midwest with a single connection through Charlotte, Atlanta, Miami, or Fort Lauderdale. Plan on six to eight hours door to gate.

The Out Islands take one more step. Great Exuma (GGT) and Marsh Harbour on Abaco (MHH) are served by a mix of seasonal nonstops from Florida and short hops through Nassau. That extra leg is the price of admission for the quieter golf, and it is worth sequencing carefully so you are not spending a playing day in an airport.

THE COURSES

Nassau & Paradise Island

New Providence is the easiest island to reach and holds the deepest concentration of golf. It is the right base for a first Bahamas golf trip, a mixed group, or anyone who wants dining and nightlife within reach of the tee.

The Ocean Club Golf Course

Tom Weiskopf • Par 72 • Paradise Island • Resort guests & limited public

The most photographed round in the country. The course is routed around wetlands, waste areas, and lagoons with water on three sides, and the wind comes off the Atlantic with nothing to stop it. The 12th, a long par three known as Spyglass, is the hole everyone talks about afterward. Play it with the Ocean Club or Atlantis and the logistics take care of themselves.

Royal Blue Golf Club at Baha Mar

Jack Nicklaus redesign • Par 72 • Cable Beach • Open to resort guests & public

Nicklaus rebuilt the historic Cable Beach layout into something with real variety. The front runs more open; the back tumbles through limestone outcroppings and dense tropical growth before the signature par-three 16th. Pairs naturally with the Baha Mar complex, three hotels, a casino, and a deep restaurant lineup within walking distance of the clubhouse.

Albany

Ernie Els • Par 72 • 7,400+ yards • Private — resort guests only

A links-style layout on the southwest shore and the most serious test on the island, best known to television audiences as a Hero World Challenge host. Play is limited to those staying within the Albany community, which puts it firmly in the luxury tier. If the budget is there, it is the best golf experience in New Providence.

Lyford Cay Club

Dick Wilson • Par 72 • Private — members and their guests

A 1950s Dick Wilson design at one of the most exclusive addresses in the Caribbean. Listed here for completeness: unless your group has a member, this one is not bookable.

THE COURSES

The Out Islands

Leave New Providence and the golf gets quieter, more dramatic, and considerably harder to book on your own. This is where an advisor earns their keep.

Great Exuma

Sandals Emerald Bay Golf Club

Greg Norman • Par 72 • ~7,001 yards • Resort guests & public tee times

The best all-inclusive golf value in the country, and arguably the most scenic round in the Bahamas. Norman routed the finish out onto a rocky peninsula, with six signature holes hugging the water. The seashore paspalum turf gives you a lush, deep green canopy underfoot and a different roll than you are used to at home. When the wind is up, and it usually is, stop worrying about your card and enjoy the views.

Best for: couples, honeymooners, and golfers who want everything bundled into one price.

The Abacos

The Abaco Club on Winding Bay

Donald Steel & Tom Mackenzie • Par 72 • 7,182 yards • Private, accepts first-time guests

Billed as the world's first tropical Scottish-style links, carved out of jungle and rock along the Atlantic shore. Hard, fast, running turf on low sandy ground, with the ocean in view for most of the round. It hosts a Korn Ferry Tour event each January, which tells you how seriously the course is taken. Members and homeowners come first, but the club does accept guests who have not stayed before, and that access is exactly what needs to be arranged in advance.

Best for: serious golfers and buddies trips willing to trade convenience for a great golf course.

Baker's Bay Golf & Ocean Club

Tom Fazio • Great Guana Cay • Private — members only

A 2010 Fazio design on a sliver of shoreline, regularly ranked the finest course in the Bahamas. Genuinely members-only. Included so you know what it is when someone at your club mentions it.

Grand Bahama

The Reef Course at Grand Lucayan

Robert Trent Jones Jr. • Par 72 • 6,909 yards • Open to the public

Freeport is the closest Bahamian island to Florida, which makes this the easiest golf to reach and the simplest to add onto a cruise or a short getaway. The Reef is open, breezy, and forgiving off the tee, with wide fairways and relatively few bunkers, but thirteen of the eighteen holes are influenced by water and the wind off the open ground is constant.

Note. Grand Bahama is still rebuilding from Hurricane Dorian and course conditions vary by season. I confirm current conditions directly before I book anyone here.

PLAN IT RIGHT

Before You Book

Courses you will find online that you cannot currently play

The internet has not caught up with the last few years. These still appear on directories and old top-10 lists.

- **The Lucayan Course** (Grand Lucayan, Freeport) — the 1962 Dick Wilson layout is closed.
- **Treasure Cay Golf Club** (Abaco) and several historic Out Island courses — status has shifted repeatedly since 2019. Always verify before a trip is built around one.

This is the single most common way a self-planned Bahamas golf trip goes wrong.

Know Before You Go

- **Passports are required** for all air travel, and they should be valid for the length of your stay. US citizens do not need a visa for short visits.
- **Book tee times when you book the room**, not after. From December through April the marquee courses fill well ahead, and resort guests get first call.
- **Bring your clubs if you can.** Rental sets exist at every open course, but quality varies and a checked club bag is usually cheaper than a week of rentals. Confirm your airline's sporting-equipment fee before you pack.
- **Expect paspalum or Bermuda turf.** Both hold the ball up more than what you play at home, and paspalum grain will push putts. Give yourself a practice round to adjust.
- **Dress codes are enforced.** Collared shirts and soft spikes at every private and resort course. Some clubs still prohibit denim entirely.
- **Carts are standard and often mandatory.** Walking is rarely permitted at the resort courses.
- **Travel protection matters more here.** Hurricane season runs June 1 through November 30, and prepaid golf packages are typically non-refundable. Coverage is inexpensive relative to the trip.

Three Ways People Do This Trip

THE BUDDIES TRIP

4 – 6 nights • 4 to 12 players

Nassau based, two or three courses, one big dinner out. Easiest to organize, easiest to get everyone flights for, and the most forgiving on skill spread.

THE GOLF + BEACH WEEK

5 – 7 nights • couples or two couples

Exuma or Nassau, all-inclusive, golf two or three mornings and leave the afternoons open. Works when one person plays and one does not.

THE SERIOUS GOLF TRIP

5 – 7 nights • low handicaps

Abaco or Albany, one great course played repeatedly, minimal distraction. Requires the most lead time and the most coordination on access.

LET'S PLAN IT

Ready to Play?

Bahamas golf rewards planning. The best courses are private or resort-restricted, tee times move fast in season, and a handful of well-known layouts are no longer open at all. Getting it right is mostly a matter of knowing which doors open and how far ahead to knock.

I am a Certified Bahamas Specialist, and I build golf trips for foursomes, couples, and corporate groups. That means I handle tee time access and sequencing, resort and villa selection, flights and island transfers, group rooming lists and payment splits, travel protection, and the details nobody thinks about until they matter, including club shipping, caddie and cart policies, dress codes, and what happens if weather moves your round.

What happens next

1. **A short conversation.** Who is going, when, what you want out of it, and what you want to spend.
2. **A plan built around your group.** Two options, priced, with the trade-offs spelled out plainly.
3. **I handle the moving parts.** Bookings, confirmations, tee times, and one point of contact from deposit through the flight home.



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Course access, conditions, and operating status change. Everything here is verified at the time of writing and re-confirmed before any trip is booked.