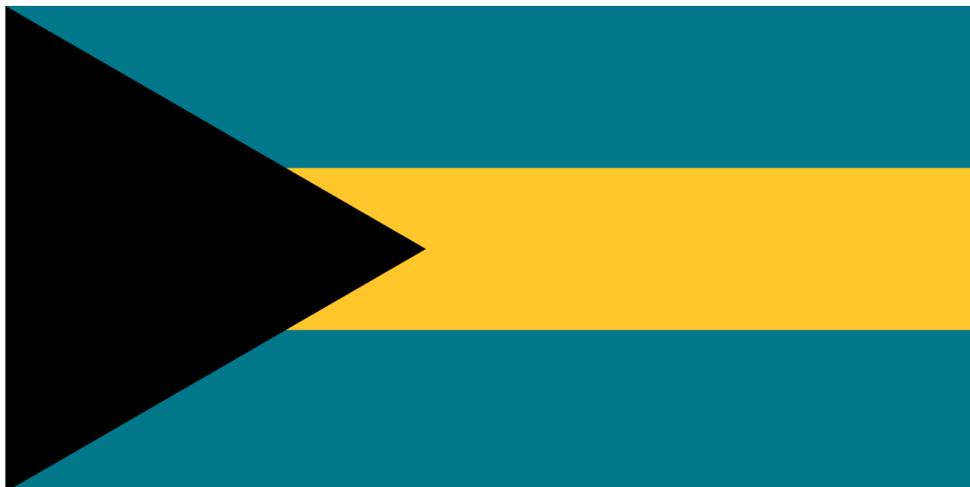
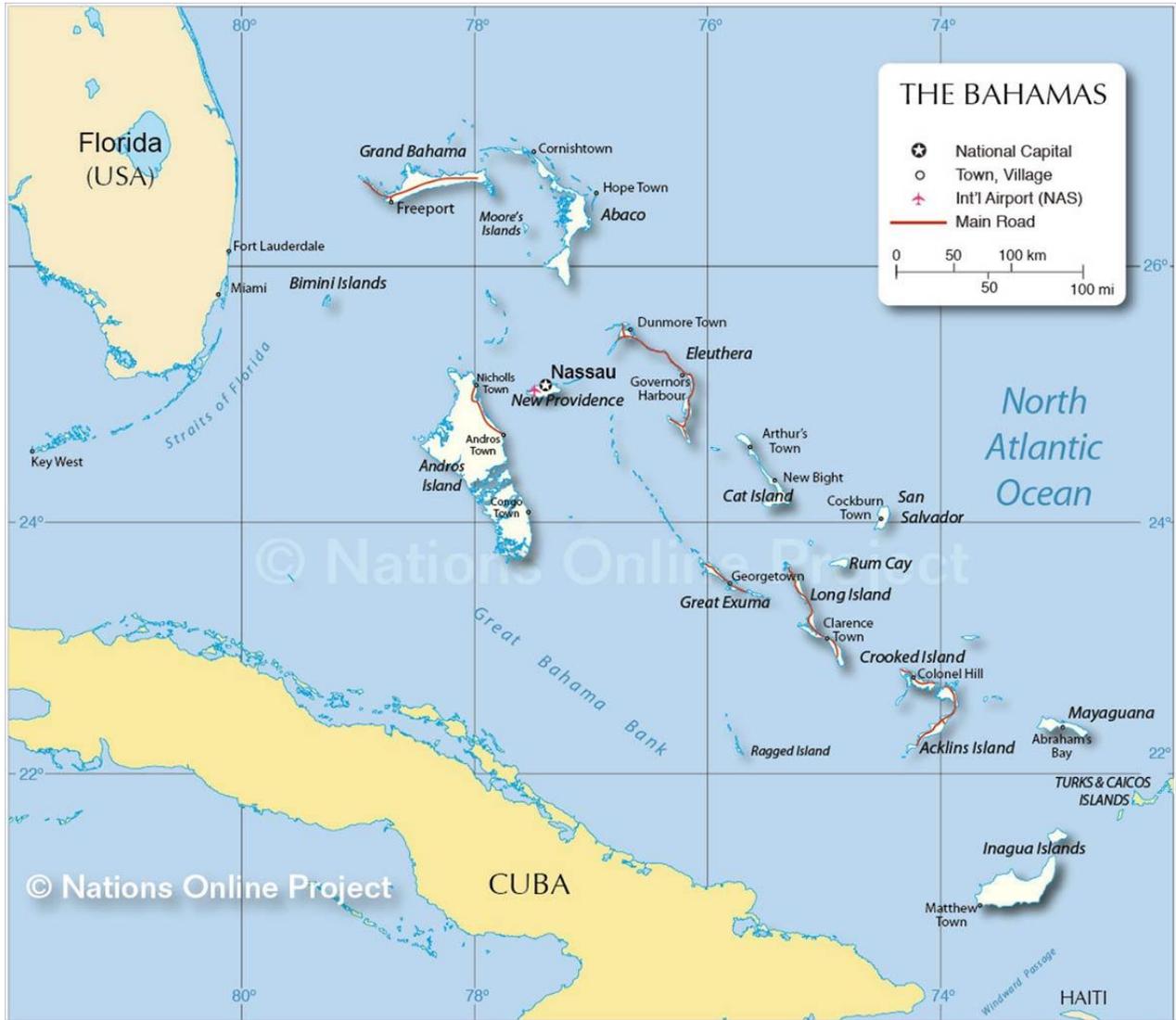




**Nassau, Bahamas**  
**Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic**  
**Grand Turk Island, Turks & Caicos**

# NASSAU, BAHAMAS





# Fun Facts about the Bahamas

## **The name Bahamas comes from the Spanish term “baja mar.”**

Baha mar means shallow sea in Spanish. As can be seen in any satellite image, the water around the Bahamas is indeed shallow—the entire region has a delightful turquoise color to it. The turquoise comes from the white calcium carbonate sand and the color of light when it’s reflected off the bottom and unabsorbed by the water. The water around the Bahamas is so saturated with calcium carbonate (the stuff that makes up sea shells) that it will often precipitate directly out of the water.

## **The Bahamas was the landing site of Christopher Columbus.**

It is widely believed that Columbus’ first landfall in the new world was on the island of San Salvador. In 1986, National Geographic postulated that he landed on Samana Cay. Either way, the European land rush in the new world began in the Bahamas.

## **The Bahamas has the 3rd highest per capita GDP in the western hemisphere.**

After the United States and Canada, the Bahamas is the third richest country in the new world. The largest industry in the country is tourism (which makes sense) and that accounts for a whopping 60% of the country’s income and half of all employment. The Bahamian dollar is pegged 1-to-1 with the U.S. dollar.

## **The Bahamas is the second closest non-bordering country to the United States.**

The island of Bimini is only 50 miles from Miami. Only Russia is closer, with the distance between Big and Little Diomed Islands being only 2.5 miles. Regular ferries can actually take you between Miami and Bimini in about two hours flat.

## **It has snowed in the Bahamas!**

Yep, close your gaping jaw—it happened. On January 17, 1977, a cold wave swept southern Florida and brought cold weather all the way to the Bahamas. On that day, for the only time in recorded history, snow fell on the city of Freeport on the island of Grand Bahama. The snow didn’t accumulate, but snowflakes did fall!

## **The world’s deepest blue hole is found in the Bahamas.**

The Great Blue Hole in Belize’s Great Barrier Reef is probably better known, but Dean’s Blue Hole on Long Island is actually the deepest in the world. Unlike the blue hole in Belize, the blue hole in the Bahamas is right next to the shore. You can go from knee deep water on the shore to a sudden drop off of 202m (663 ft). This is the spot many free divers choose when attempting world records.

**The Bahamas is one of two countries in the Western Hemisphere that lies on the Tropic of Cancer.**

The Tropic of Cancer happens to miss both Cuba and Florida. It does, however, bisect Long Island and Exuma in the Bahamas. Mexico is the only other country in the western hemisphere that it crosses it.

**The highest point in the Bahamas is only 63m (207 feet) above sea level.**

Almost all land in the Bahamas is made of raised coral reefs or sandbars. As a result, there is very little elevation in the entire country. The highest point is 'Mount' Alvernia on Cat Island which is a raised, tilted reef. There are only four countries in the world with a lower "highest point" than the Bahamas: The Gambia, The Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and the Maldives.

**The Bahamas is the only country with a marching band on their currency.**

The Bahamas' \$1 note has an image of the Nassau Police Marching Band on the currency, making them the only marching band in the world to appear on any legal tender.

**The Bahamas is technically NOT in the Caribbean.**

The Bahamas archipelago (aka the Lucayan Archipelago) is technically not part of Caribbean. It is located north of the Caribbean as you can clearly see on a map. The islands were formed from a totally different process than the volcanism that formed the islands in the Lesser and Greater Antilles. The greater region that they would technically be a part of with the Caribbean would be the West Indies. That said, it's often grouped with the Caribbean because of its proximity and similar climate and history, so you'd be forgiven for thinking it a fact.

**The Bahamas should have been bigger.**

The nation of the Bahamas comprises most, but not all of the Lucayan Archipelago. When they became independent from the United Kingdom in 1973, the remaining part of the archipelago remained a British Territory as the Turks and Caicos. Many people today think that the Turks and Caicos should have been part of the Bahamas when they became independent. There is a small but growing movement of people who wish for the Turks and Caicos to join the Bahamas today.

**The Bahamas is made up of over 700 islands.**

There are over 700 islands in the Bahamas. All of them are some sort of sand or limestone island. Of the 700 islands, only about 30 of them are inhabited. Of the almost 400,000 people who live in the country, about 70% of them live on the island of New Providence, the location of the capital, Nassau.

**The Bahamas has the biggest Boxing Day celebration in the world.**

The big festival in the Bahamas is called Junkanoo, and it is held on December 26 every year. It's the Bahamian version of Carnival and features bands, parties, parades, floats, and costumes. Given its proximity to Christmas, it is the hardest time of the year to find a hotel in the Bahamas.

**The Bahamas is one of the best places in the world for cave diving.**

Because it's mostly made of limestone, the islands are riddled with caves that were created thousands of years ago when the seas were over 100 feet lower than they are today. As the sea levels rose after the last glaciation, they became filled with water, making them the perfect place to go cave diving.

**It's one of 11 countries in the world with the word "The" in its official name.**

The official name of the country is the "Commonwealth of the Bahamas."

**The Bahamas has the seventh highest number of registered ships in the world.**

Ships often register their ships in certain countries for tax purposes. These are called "flags of convenience." The Bahamas is a huge draw for ships because of its laws, especially cruise ships that sail in the Caribbean. If you see a cruise ship in the Caribbean, there's a good chance that's flying a flag from the Bahamas.

**There is no sales or income tax in the Bahamas.**

Because of its ship registries and heavy reliance on tourism, the Bahamas collects no tax on income or sales. Most of their revenues from tariffs on imported goods and from tourists to visit the country.

**Glass Window Bridge, Eleuthera Island, Bahamas**



# Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic





## Fun Facts About Dominican Republic

**Did you know that the island of Hispaniola (which holds both Haiti and Dominican Republic) was the first permanent European settlement in the Americas?** In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on the island during his first voyage across the Atlantic in search of a new route to India for the trade of spices. Aboard his flagship, the Santa Maria, Columbus reached the north coast of the island.

**Santo Domingo is the oldest city in the Americas.** The city capital of the Dominican Republic is the oldest European settlement in the Americas. Founded by Bartholomew Columbus in 1496, Santo Domingo hosted the first colonial rule of the Spanish Crown in the New World. A city of firsts, it hosts the first Cathedral, the first municipal building and the first university in the New World.

**The Dominican flag has three colors: red, white and blue.** Each of the colors of the flag has a meaning. The white of the cross in the center represents salvation, the red rectangles represent the blood of the heroes who fought for the independence, and the blue rectangles stand for liberty. It's the only in the world to have the image of the holy bible in it. The bible is open to the Gospel of John chapter 8, verse 32, which reads: "And the truth shall make you free".

**Defy gravity in Barahona!** In the southwestern part of the Dominican Republic, there is a town called Polo. There you can go challenge gravity at the Magnetic Pole (El Polo Magnético). If you stop your car in neutral gear downhill, your car will roll up! As cool as it sounds, this is what's called a gravity hill. This is caused by an optical illusion that has to do with the shape of the road and the landscape. Still, pretty cool to experience in person!

**Unique, precious stones.** The Dominican Republic has two unique endemic stones that can't be found anywhere else in the world: **Dominican Amber and Larimar**. The first one was created millions of years ago due to the warm climate in the DR and the extinct prehistoric leguminous tree, *Hymenaea Protera*. It is considered the finest amber available worldwide because of the high concentration of fossils included and its clear composition. The second one, Larimar, it's a rare blue variety of the silicate mineral pectolite, with a color that changes from light blue, to green blue to deep blue.

**Have fun down the water falls!** If you've never heard of the 27 Waterfalls of Damajagua you've been missing out! This is a great adventure spot for families with kids over the age of 12 who enjoy nature, rivers and jumping down waterfalls. You hike all the way up and then come down through a series of caves and water slides for a super fun ride.

**Winter home of massive, beautiful creatures.** Every year, the northeastern coast of the Dominican Republic, the Bay of Samaná, welcomes between 2,000 and 3,000 of giant humpback whales. They migrate from the north Atlantic to the warm Dominican waters for calving and breeding as their newborns don't have enough fat to survive the cold winter waters up north. They stay until March before returning to their summer feeding grounds between North America, Greenland, and Iceland. Technically, the humpbacks are native Dominicans living abroad for the summer, how cool is that?!

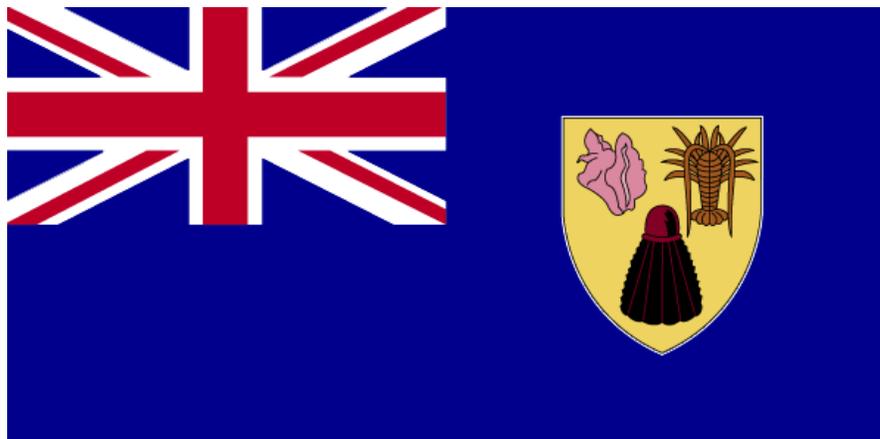
**The highest peak in the Caribbean, Pico Duarte.** As if it wasn't cool enough that the Dominican Republic has the lowest elevation in the Caribbean, it is also home of the highest elevation in the region. With 3,087 meters altitude, Pico Duarte welcomes over 3,000 climbers who make the ascend to experience its incredible beauty.

**A very salty lake, Lago Enriquillo.** The lowest elevation in the Caribbean, Lake Enriquillo, it's an hypersaline lake that covers 375 square kilometers. A very diverse and interesting wildlife inhabits the lake and surrounding areas, among them, beautiful pink flamingos! It is also home to the largest population of American crocodiles (*Crocodylus acutus*) living free in their natural habitat in the Caribbean,. There are more than 400 species in its waters.

**Palmchat, the national bird of the country it's totally unique!** Known in Spanish as "cigua palmera," it takes its name after the palm trees. This is where she creates her nests to live and harvest its fruit to feed on it. Palmchat are community-driven. They build their elaborate nests together with a bushel pile of sticks that form an apartment. Each pair of birds (up to 50 pairs) has its own portal to the exterior as well as internal passages. The sticks used in the nests come from wood, coffee, and orange trees. Like Dominicans, Palmchats are known to be joyful, noisy, social and love singing. Who knows, maybe they are singing to the tunes of merengue music, our national rhythm!



# Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos



## FUN FACTS

### **The Turks and Caicos are located in the Atlantic, not the Caribbean**

With its beautiful turquoise waters, white sand beaches and tropical climate it would seem that the Turks and Caicos are located in the Caribbean. But we're not! We're actually located in the Atlantic Ocean—the Caribbean Sea is a long way away. However, the Turks and Caicos is part of Caribbean culture. You can enjoy the great food, culture and hospitality of the region.

### **The water temperature is almost like a bathtub**

The water is warm here. In the the summer a dip in the surf at Grace Bay Beach will be almost like taking a bath—82 to 84 degrees (28-29 degrees Celsius) to be exact! Tn winter the water temperature is a little cooler at about 74 to 78 degrees (23-26 degrees Celsius).

### **We may be little, but we're long**

Although the Turks and Caicos Islands are one of the smallest countries in the Caribbean, we boast nearly 400 kilometers of coastline and 40 islands.

### **More than half of our coastline is soft sand**

There is over 230 miles of beach, most of it softest white sands on Earth. Need we say more?

### **We have our own “ambassador dolphin”**

The dolphin's name is JoJo, an Atlantic Bottlenose who has visited the crystal clear waters of the Turks and Caicos Islands for thirty years, one of a rare handful of dolphins around the world who voluntarily interacts with human beings in the wild. These types of dolphins are known as lone, sociable or ambassador dolphins. Loved by the islanders and visitors alike, the government has recognized JoJo as a National Treasure, and has appointed a warden to protect him.

### **The Turks and Caicos is the site of an annual Humpback whale migration**

From January to March, the Humpbacks make their way from the northern waters of the Bay of Fundy in Canada to Silver Bank off the Dominican Republic where they mate and calve. Along this migration route is they travel near Providenciales and around Salt Cay, in the Turks and Caicos.

### **There are no lakes or rivers in Turks and Caicos**

There are no lakes or rivers – freshwater supplies depend entirely on rainfall or expensive desalinated water.

### **We have the largest above-ground caves in the Caribbean**

The Conch Bar Caves, located on Middle Caicos, is the largest above-ground cave system in the Bahamas-Turks and Caicos Islands archipelago.

### **The Turks and Caicos played a role in the space race**

NASA's Friendship 7 mission, 1962, ended when John Glenn splashed down in his capsule in the Atlantic, off the Turks and Caicos Islands.

### **It's a British territory that uses American currency**

The islands have gone through plenty of different owners. Currently, the British own the islands. However, the currency most commonly used on the islands, is the US dollar.

# The Turks & Caicos *at a glance*



Technically speaking, the Turks & Caicos Islands are located in the North Atlantic (though generally described as being part of the Caribbean). They are a British Dependent Territory comprised of 40 islands and small cays, 8 of which are inhabited. The main industries are fishing, tourism and offshore finance / banking.

Total Area:  
**9,487 sq. km**

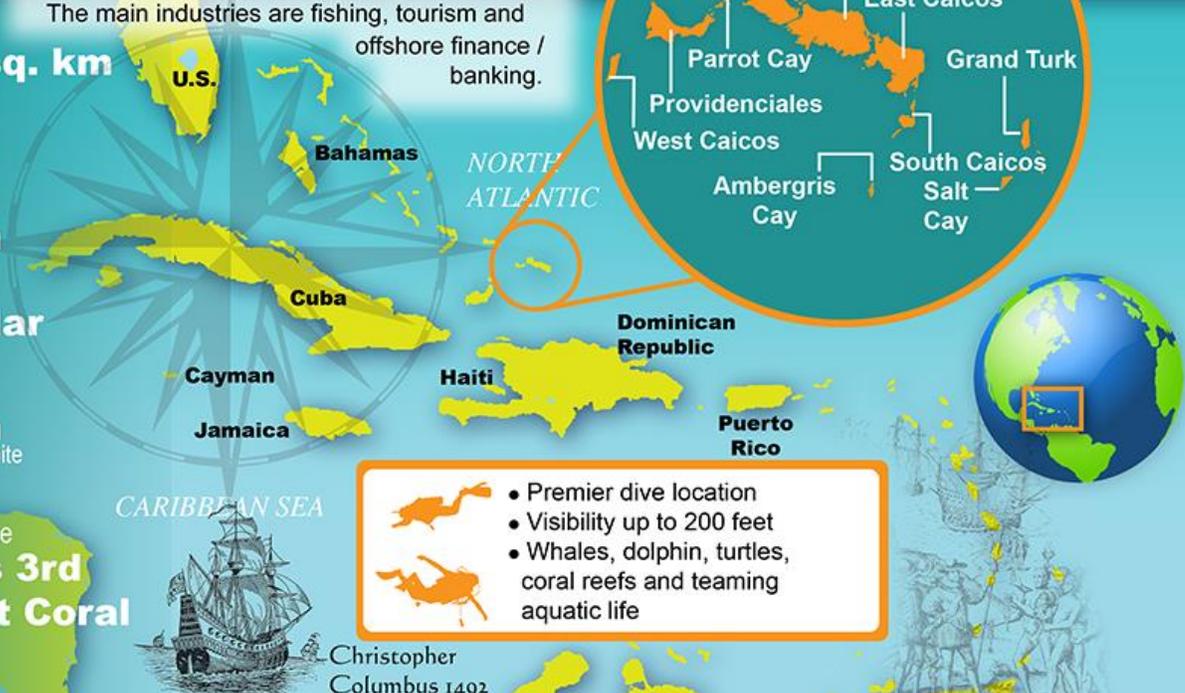
Population:  
**47,754**

Language:  
**English**

Currency:  
**US Dollar**

Coastline:  
**389 km**  
Mostly sugar-white sandy beach

Situated on the  
**World's 3rd Largest Coral Reef**



CARIBBEAN SEA



Christopher Columbus 1492

- Premier dive location
- Visibility up to 200 feet
- Whales, dolphin, turtles, coral reefs and teeming aquatic life