

Grand Bahama (Freeport/Lucaya)

Big, bold, and brassy describe Grand Bahama Island, home to the resort area of Freeport/Lucaya. Though there's a ton of tourist development, it doesn't have the upscale chic of Paradise Island, but it does have fabulous white-sand beaches and a more reasonable price tag.

It may never return to its high-roller days with the gloss and glitz of the '60s, when everybody from Howard Hughes to Frank Sinatra and Rat Packers showed up, but recent improvements and massive redevelopment have brought a smile back to its face, which had grown wrinkled and tired over the latter part of the 20th century.

The second-most-popular tourist destination in The Bahamas (Nassau/Cable Beach/Paradise Island is first), Grand Bahama lies just 81km (50 miles) and less than 30 minutes by air off the Florida coast. That puts it just 122km (76 miles) east of Palm Beach, Florida. The island is the northernmost and fourth-largest landmass in The Bahamas (118km/73 miles long and 6.5–13km/4–8 miles wide).

Freeport/Lucaya was once just a dream. Wallace Groves, a Virginia-born financier, saw the prospect of developing the island into a miniature Miami Beach, and in the 1950s, almost overnight, the low-lying pine forest turned into one of the world's major resorts. Today, with the casino, the International Bazaar, high-rise hotels, golf courses, marinas, and a bevy of continental restaurants, Groves's dream is fully realized.

The Lucaya district was developed 8 years after Freeport, as a resort center along the coast. It has evolved into a blend of residential and tourist facilities. As the two communities grew, their identities became almost indistinguishable. But elements of their original purposes still exist today. Freeport is the downtown area and attracts visitors with its commerce, industry, and own resorts, whereas Lucaya is called the "Garden City" and pleases residents and vacationers alike with its fine sandy beaches.

Grand Bahama is more than an Atlantic City clone, however. If you don't care for gambling at one of the island's two casinos, or if

Grand Bahama Island



you're not interested in Vegas-style cabaret revues, try one of the alternatives. Because the island is so big, most of it remains relatively unspoiled. You can get close to nature at plenty of quiet places, including the Rand Nature Centre and the Garden of the Groves. Lucayan National Park—with its underwater caves, forest trails, and secluded beach—is another major attraction. Just kilometers from Freeport/Lucaya are serene places where you can wander in a world of casuarina, palmetto, and pine trees. During the day, you can enjoy long stretches of open beach, broken by inlets and little fishing villages.

The reviews of Grand Bahama Island are definitely mixed. Some discerning travelers who could live anywhere have built homes here; others vow never to set foot on the island again, finding it “tacky” or “uninspired.” Judge for yourself.

1 Orientation

For a general discussion on traveling to The Bahamas, refer to chapter 2.

ARRIVING

A number of airlines fly to Grand Bahama International Airport from the continental United States, including **American Airlines** (☎ 800/433-7300; www.aa.com) and **Bahamasair** (☎ 800/222-4262; www.bahamasair.com), both with daily flights from Miami. **GulfStream Continental Connection** (☎ 800/231-0856; www.gulfstreamair.com) flies to Freeport from Miami and West Palm Beach once daily, and from Fort Lauderdale five times daily. **US Airways** (☎ 800/428-4322; www.usairways.com) flies once daily from Charlotte, North Carolina.

Other competing airlines include **AirTran** (☎ 800/247-8726), flying daily nonstop from Atlanta as well as Baltimore Thursday to Monday. **Delta Connection** (☎ 800/221-1212) flies daily from Atlanta.

Many visitors arrive in Nassau, then hop on one of the five daily Bahamasair flights to Freeport. These 35-minute hops run \$162 round-trip.

No buses run from the airport to the major hotel zones. But many hotels will provide airport transfers, especially if you've bought a package deal. If yours does not, no problem; taxis meet arriving flights and will take you from the airport to one of the hotels in Freeport or Lucaya for about \$11 to \$20. The ride shouldn't take more than about 10 minutes.

A great way to get from the eastern coast of Florida to Freeport is aboard a modern ferryboat, the sleek *Cloud X*, which will transport you there in 3 hours. Launched in 2004, this 367-passenger ferry embarks from the port of Palm Beach Wednesday to Monday, offering one daily departure and one daily return. The round-trip fare is \$99 for adults, \$49 for children 6 to 12, and free for kids 5 and under. A \$34 port charge is levied on passengers of all ages. On board are a trio of comfortable lounges, two bars, and a casino. For more information, call ☎ **866/Go-Ferry** (fax 561/841-0472; www.cloudx.com). MasterCard and Visa are accepted. The main office for booking is at 301 Broadway, Suite 142, Riviera Beach, FL, 33404, open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Discovery Cruise Lines (☎ **888/213-8253**; www.discoverycruiseline.com) offers daily passage between the Fort Lauderdale Seaport and Grand Bahama Island. Frankly, the Discovery vessels making this 89km (55-mile) jaunt haven't been the newest or glitziest cruise ships sailing in the past three or four decades, but they are shipshape and fit the bill. The trip over from Florida takes about 5 hours, and they have the required pool deck and bar, along with a casino, bar show lounge, and dining facilities. They do feed passengers very well. A round-trip fare runs \$157 per person, and you can make reservations online.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Assistance and information are available at the **Grand Bahama Tourism Board**, International Bazaar in Freeport (☎ **242/352-6909**; www.grand-bahama.com). Two other information booths are located at the **Freeport International Airport** (☎ **242/352-2052**) and at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ **242/373-8988**). There's also a branch at the cruise-ship docks. Hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday.

ISLAND LAYOUT

Getting around Freeport/Lucaya is fairly easy because of its flat terrain. Although Freeport and Lucaya are frequently mentioned in the same breath, newcomers should note that Freeport is a landlocked collection of hotels and shops rising from the island's center, while Lucaya, about 4km (2½ miles) away, is a waterfront section of hotels, shops, and restaurants clustered next to a saltwater pond on the island's southern shoreline.

Freeport lies midway between the northern and southern shores of Grand Bahama Island. Bisected by some of the island's largest roads, it contains the biggest hotels, as well as two of the most-visited attractions in the country: the Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino

at the Royal Oasis and the International Bazaar shopping complex. The local straw market, where you can buy inexpensive souvenirs, lies just to the right of the entrance to the International Bazaar.

To reach **Port Lucaya** from Freeport, head east from the International Bazaar along East Sunrise Highway, then turn south at the intersection with Seahorse Road. Within about 4km (2½ miles), it will lead to the heart of the Lucaya complex, Port Lucaya.

Set between the beach and a saltwater pond, Port Lucaya's architectural centerpiece is **Count Basie Square**, named for the great entertainer who used to have a home on the island. Within a short walk east or west, along the narrow strip of sand between the sea and the saltwater pond, rise most of the hotels of Lucaya Beach.

Heading west of Freeport and Lucaya, the West Sunrise Highway passes industrial complexes such as The Bahamas Oil Refining Company. At the junction with Queen's Highway, you can take the road northwest all the way to **West End**, a distance of some 45km (28 miles) from the center of Freeport. Along the way you pass Freeport Harbour, where cruise ships dock. Just to the east lies Hawksbill Creek, a village known for its fish market.

Much less explored is the **East End** of Grand Bahama. It's located some 72km (45 miles) from the center of Freeport and is reached via the Grand Bahama Highway, which, despite its name, is rather rough in parts. Allow about 2 hours of driving time. First you pass the **Rand Nature Centre**, about 5km (3 miles) east of Freeport. About 11km (7 miles) on is **Lucaya National Park**, and 8km (5 miles) farther lies the hamlet of **Free Town**; east of Free Town is **High Rock**, known for its Emmanuel Baptist Church. From here, the road becomes considerably rougher until it ends in **MacLean's Town**, which celebrates Columbus Day with an annual conch-cracking contest. From here, it's possible to take a water taxi across Runners Creek to the exclusive Deep Water Cay club, catering to serious anglers.

In Freeport/Lucaya, but especially on the rest of Grand Bahama Island, you will almost never find a street number on a hotel or a store. Sometimes in the more remote places, you won't even find a street name. In lieu of numbers, locate places by prominent landmarks or hotels.

2 Getting Around

BY TAXI

The government sets the taxi rates, and the cabs are metered (or should be). Metered rates are \$3 for the first quarter mile (¼ km)

and 40 cents each additional mile (1.6km). Additional passengers over the age of 2 are \$3 each. If there's no meter, agree on the price with the driver in advance. You can call for a taxi, although most taxis wait at the major hotels or the cruise-ship dock to pick up passengers. One major taxi company is **Freeport Taxi Company**, Logwood Road (☎ 242/352-6666), open 24 hours. Another is **Grand Bahama Taxi Union** at the Freeport International Airport, Old Airport Road (☎ 242/352-7101), also open 24 hours. **Note:** Typical taxi rates are as follows: From the Harbour to: Royal Oasis Golf Resort & Casino, \$16; Xanadu Beach Hotel, \$17; Port Lucaya Marketplace, \$24; Taíno Beach Resort/The Ritz, \$24; Viva Fortuna Beach, \$29. From the airport to: Lucaya, \$19; Viva Fortuna, \$15; Royal Oasis, \$11; Xanadu/Woodbourne/Running Mon Marina, \$14.

BY BUS

Public bus service runs from the International Bazaar to downtown Freeport and from the Pub on the Mall to the Lucaya area. The typical fare is \$1 for adults, 50¢ for children. Check with the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above) for bus schedules. There is no number to call for information.

BY CAR

If you plan to confine your exploration to the center of Freeport with its International Bazaar and Lucaya with its beaches, you can rely on public transportation. However, if you'd like to branch out and explore the rest of the island (perhaps finding a more secluded beach), a rental car is the way to go. Try **Avis** (☎ 800/331-2112 or 242/352-7666; www.avis.com) or **Hertz** (☎ 800/654-3001 or 242/352-9250; www.hertz.com). Both of these companies maintain offices in small bungalows outside the exit of the Freeport International Airport.

One of the best local companies is **Dollar Rent-a-Car**, Old Airport Road (☎ 242/352-9325; www.dollar.com), which rents everything from a new-style Kia Sportage to a Toyota Corolla. Rates range from \$49 per day manual or \$55 automatic, with unlimited mileage, plus another \$15 per day for a CDW (Collision Damage Waiver; \$500 deductible). Gas is usually \$3 per gallon, and remember to drive on the left as British rules apply.

BY SCOOTER

A scooter is a fun way to get around as most of Grand Bahamas is flat with well-paved roads. Scooters can be rented at most hotels, or, for cruise-ship passengers, in the Freeport Harbour area. Helmets

are required and provided by the outfitter. You can find dozens of stands along the road in Freeport and Lucaya and also in the major parking lots, charging rates ranging from \$40 to \$55 a day.

ON FOOT

You can explore the center of Freeport or Lucaya on foot, but if you want to venture into the East End or West End, you'll need to rent a car, hire a taxi, or try Grand Bahama's erratic public transportation.

FAST FACTS: Grand Bahama

Banks In Freeport/Lucaya, banks are open from 9:30am to 3pm, Monday to Thursday, and 9:30am to 5pm on Friday. Most banks here have ATMs that accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and any other bank or credit card on the Cirrus, Honor, Novus, and PLUS networks.

Climate See "When to Go," in chapter 2.

Currency Exchange Americans need not bother to exchange their dollars into Bahamian dollars, because the currencies are on par. However, Canadians and Brits will need to convert their money, which can be done at local banks or sometimes at a hotel, though hotels tend to offer less favorable rates.

Doctors For the fastest and best service, just head to Rand Memorial Hospital (see "Hospitals," below).

Drugstores For prescriptions and other pharmaceutical needs, go to Mini Mall, 1 West Mall, Explorer's Way, where you'll find **L.M.R. Drugs** (☎ 242/352-7327), next door to Burger King. Hours are Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm and Sunday 8am to 3pm.

Embassies & Consulates See "Fast Facts: The Bahamas," in chapter 2.

Emergencies For all emergencies, call ☎ 911, or dial 0 for the operator.

Eyeglass Repair The biggest specialist in eyeglasses and contact lenses is the **Optique Shoppe**, 7 Regent Centre, downtown Freeport (☎ 242/352-9073).

Hospitals If you have a medical emergency, contact the government-operated, 90-bed **Rand Memorial Hospital**, East Atlantic Drive (☎ 242/352-6735 or 242/352-2689 for ambulance emergency).

Internet Access Visit the **Cyberclub** at Seventeen Center (☎ 242/351-4560; cyberclub@grandbahama.net), open Monday to Saturday 9am to 8pm.

Information See "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter.

Laundry & Dry Cleaning Try **Jiffy Cleaners and Laundry**, West Mall at Pioneer's Way (☎ 242/352-7079), open Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm.

Newspapers & Magazines *The Freeport News* is a morning newspaper published Monday through Saturday except holidays. The two dailies published in Nassau, the *Tribune* and the *Nassau Guardian*, are also available here, as are some New York and Miami papers, especially the *Miami Herald*, usually on the date of publication. American news magazines, such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, are flown in on the day of publication.

Police In an emergency, dial ☎ 911.

Post Office The main post office is on Explorer's Way in Freeport (☎ 242/352-9371).

Safety Avoid walking or jogging along lonely roads. There are no particular danger zones, but stay alert: Grand Bahama is no stranger to drugs and crime.

Taxes All visitors leaving Grand Bahama Island must pay an \$18 departure tax—in cash. (Both U.S. and Bahamian dollars are accepted.) No sales tax is charged, but you will have to pay a 6% hotel tax.

Taxis See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

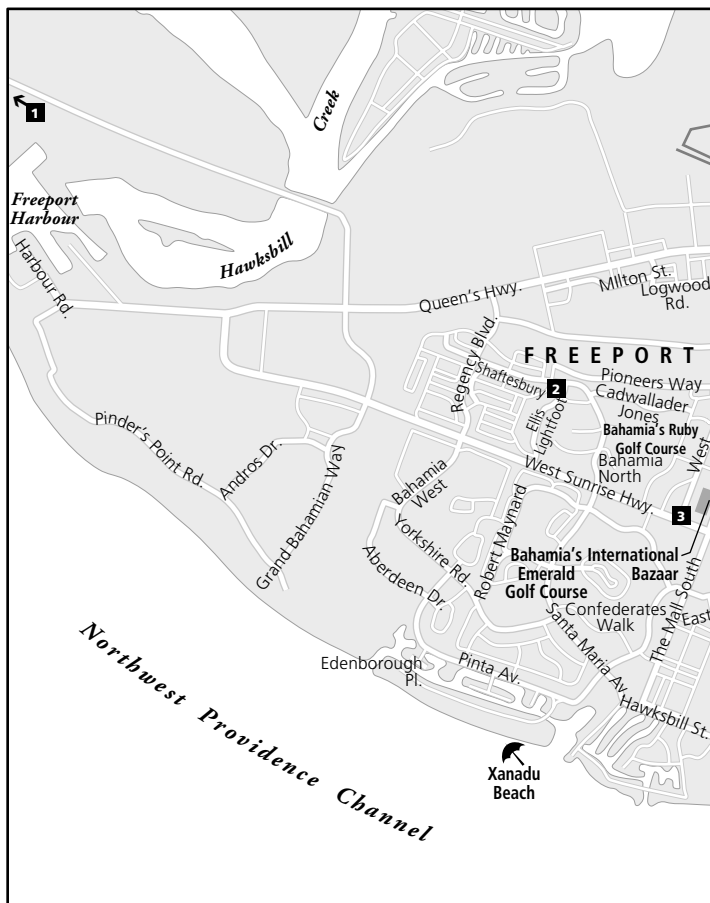
Weather Grand Bahama, in the north of The Bahamas, has temperatures in winter that vary from about 60°F to 75°F (16°C–24°C) daily. Summer variations range from 78°F to the high 80s (26°C to the low 30s Celsius). In Freeport/Lucaya, phone ☎ 915 for weather information.

3 Where to Stay

Your choices are in the Freeport area, near the Bahamia Casino and the International Bazaar, or in Lucaya, closer to the beach.

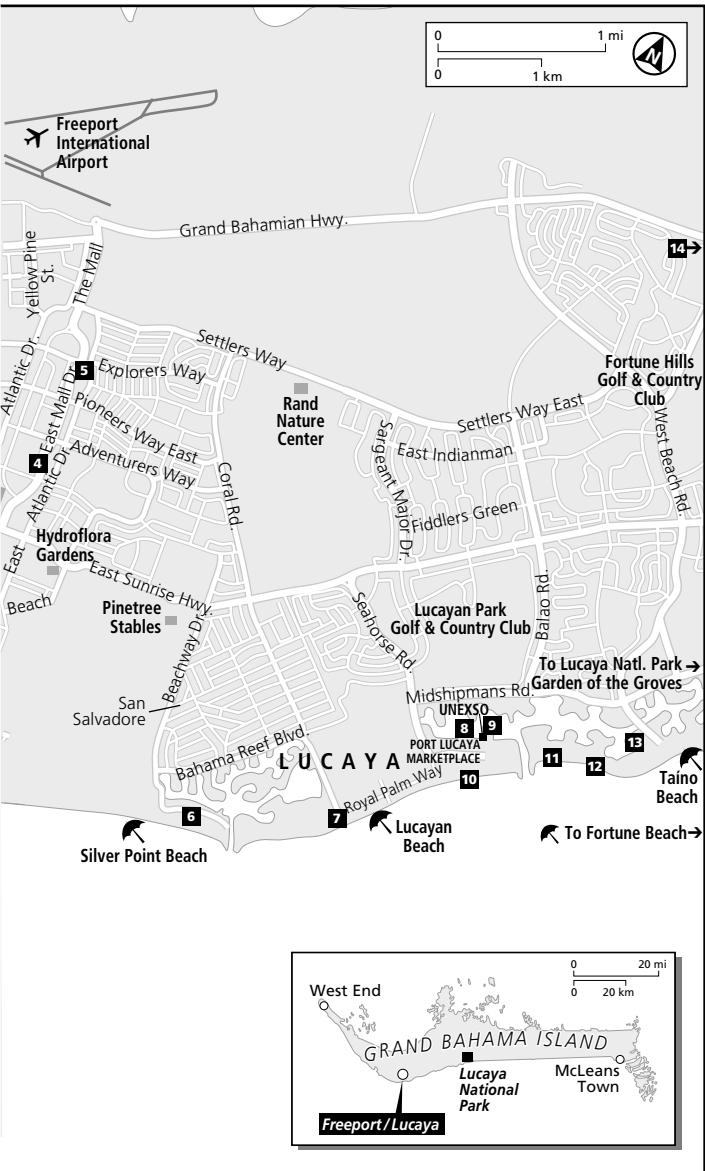
Remember: In most cases, a resort levy of 6% and a 15% service charge will be added to your final bill. Be prepared, and ask if it's already included in the initial price you're quoted.

Where to Stay in Freeport/Lucaya



Best Western Castaways **4**
 Coral Beach **7**
 Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis **3**
 Flamingo Bay Yacht Club & Marina Hotel **13**
 Island Palm Resort **5**
 Island Seas Resort **6**
 Lakeview Manor Club **2**

Old Bahama Bay **1**
 Paradise Cove **1**
 Pelican Bay at Lucaya **9**
 Port Lucaya Resort & Yacht Club **8**
 Ritz Beach Resort **11**
 Royal Islander **4**
 Taino Beach Vacation Club **12**
 The Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya **10**
 Wyndham Viva Fortuna **14**



FREEPORT EXPENSIVE

Island Seas Resort A timeshare property open to nonmembers, this resort opens onto a secluded beach, although it also offers its own water fun in the form of a pool, hot tub, and waterfall. Also on-site is a Tiki-hut restaurant and bar. The location is convenient for the Port Lucaya Market and the Lucaya Golf and Country Club. Depending on their individual owners, each condo is different, ranging from one-bedroom units to large two-bedroom suites. Each contains a full bathroom with tub/shower, plus a full kitchen and balcony. Although not part of the hotel facilities, many watersports outfitters are right on the beach.

William's Town (P.O. Box F-44735), Freeport, Grand Bahamas, The Bahamas. ☎ 242/373-1271. Fax 242/373-1275. www.islandseas.com. 149 units. Winter \$399 double, \$499 2-bedroom suite; off season \$219 double, \$319 2-bedroom suite. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool; tennis court; bike rentals; limited room service (9am–4pm). *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, coffeemaker, iron/ironing board, safe.

MODERATE

Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis ★ *(Kids)*

Badly hit during the 2004 hurricane, this hotel—the most famous one on the island—spent most of 2005 under restoration. It should be up and running for your visit, but ask about rates: There's a chance the prices will increase. This mammoth complex actually consists of two differently styled resorts combined under one umbrella: the 10-story Crowne Plaza tower and the less glamorous, three-story Crowne Plaza Country Club. Reinventing itself to stay competitive, the resort spent some \$42 million on its once-tired, built-in-the-1960s properties, hoping to revive some of their old glitz and glamour.

Flanked by a pair of fine golf courses, the Ruby and the Emerald, and thus catering to the convention crowd, the resorts are set on 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) of tropical grounds. As it lies inland from the sea, the complex doesn't have its own natural beach. One of the grandest additions is a marine park and a man-made, landlocked beach; otherwise, you can take frequent shuttle buses to good natural beaches nearby, where watersports are available. The two sections, also jointly share one of the largest casinos in the entire country, a serviceable site that's functional—though nowhere near as flashy or cutting edge as, say, the Atlantis Casino on Paradise Island.

The Crowne Plaza Country Club attracts families, honeymooners, frugal couples, golfers, and others who don't need or want luxury. The hotel's design is rather like an enormous low-rise wagon wheel, with a Disney-inspired minimountain surrounded by a swimming

pool at its core. The hotel is so spread out, guests often complain that they need ground transport just to reach their bedrooms. (Nine wings radiate from the pool.) Some of the rooms have kitchenettes and are sold as timeshare units. Regular accommodations come in several classifications; even standard rooms are well equipped, with two comfortable double beds, dressing areas, and full-size bathrooms. Rooms in the 900 wing are the largest and best furnished—and are usually the ones that sell out first. Both resorts also rent out a number of suites, each furnished in summery fabrics plus beachy but durable furniture.

Crowne Plaza Tower, lying across the mall from its larger sibling, is smaller and more tranquil, and a bit more posh, containing 32 suites and 362 luxuriously furnished large units. The tower structure adjoins the Casino and the International Bazaar. A light, California-style decor prevails, with a skylit lobby and rooms that most often contain cherry hardwood furnishings. Lots of conventioners and folks on quick getaways from Florida tend to stay here, as do high rollers.

The Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. (P.O. Box F-207), Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 800/545-1300 in the U.S. and Canada, or 242/350-7000. Fax 242/350-7002. www.theroyaloasis.com. 876 units. Crowne Plaza Country Club: Winter \$145–\$155 double, \$240 suite; off season \$115–\$125 double, \$180 suite. Crowne Plaza Tower: Winter \$175–\$205 double, \$350 suite; off season \$145–\$155 double, \$250 suite. Up to 2 children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 6 restaurants; 6 bars; nightclub; casino; 3 pools; golf; 11 tennis courts; fitness center; spa; kids' activity center; limited room service (6:30am–11pm); massage; babysitting. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport (in some), minifridge, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Best Western Castaways *Kids* Castaways is a modest and unassuming hotel despite its platinum location adjacent to the International Bazaar and the casino. You stay here because of its location and the low price. It's not on the beach, but a free shuttle will take you to nearby Williams Town Beach or Xanadu Beach. Surrounded by gardens, the four-story hotel has a pagoda roof and an indoor/outdoor garden lobby with a gift shop, a clothing shop, a game room, and tour desks. Rooms are your basic motel style, and the best units are on the ground. The Flamingo Restaurant features remarkable Bahamian and American dishes daily from 7:30am to 10pm; it also serves one of the island's best breakfasts. There's also a swimming pool area with a wide terrace and a pool bar serving sandwiches and cool drinks. A children's playground adjoins the pool.

42629 E. Mall Dr., Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 800/780-7234 or 242/352-6682. Fax 242/352-5087. www.bestwestern.com. 118 units. Winter

\$125–\$155 double, \$205 suite; off season \$95–\$125 double, \$145 suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars, pool; bike rentals; babysitting; self-service laundry; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

Island Palm Resort *√**Value* Set within the commercial heart of Freeport, this simple three-story motel consists of four buildings separated by parking lots and greenery. Within an easy walk from virtually everything in town, and 2km (1¼ miles) from the International Bazaar, it offers good value in no-frills, eminently serviceable rooms with well-kept bathrooms equipped with shower/tub combinations. Complimentary shuttle-bus service ferries anybody who's interested to nearby Williamstown Beach (also called Island Seas Beach), where you can use the beachfront facilities (including jet skis and snorkeling equipment) of its sibling resort, a timeshare unit known as Island Sea.

E. Mall Dr. (P.O. Box F-44881), Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 242/352-6648. Fax 242/352-6640. <http://islandpalm.tripod.com>. 143 units. Winter \$85 double; off season \$75 double. Extra person \$5. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; nightclub; pool; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, iron/ironing board, safe.

Lakeview Manor Club Today this 1970s-era resort is a timeshare, but it was originally built as private apartments. It's a good bargain for those who want peace and privacy, but the staff seems a bit lax. Catering to self-sufficient types, it offers midsize one-bedroom and studio apartments, each with tropical furniture, a private balcony, plus small bathrooms with shower/tub combinations. The club overlooks the 5th hole of the PGA-approved Princess Ruby Golf Course. It's 8km (5 miles) from the beach, but it's ideal for golfers or for anyone to whom a sea view isn't important. A complimentary shuttle bus travels to the International Bazaar, the supermarket, Port Lucaya, and beach areas.

Cadwallader Jones Dr. (P.O. Box F-42699), Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 242/352-9789. Fax 242/352-2283. www.bahamasvg.com/lakeview. 52 units. Year-round \$75 double, \$100 1-bedroom apt; weekly \$450 double; \$600 1-bedroom apt. DC, DISC, MC, V. Closed last week of Oct. **Amenities:** Pool; 2 tennis courts; activities' desk; babysitting; self-service laundry. *In room:* A/C, ceiling fan, TV, full kitchen, beverage maker.

Royal Islander Don't be fooled by the corny-looking, storm-battered exterior of this place. It was built during an unfortunate Disney-style period in Freeport's expansion, during the early 1980s, with an improbable-looking pyramidal roof inspired by a cluster of Mayan pyramids. Inside, it's a lot more appealing than you might

think, with rooms arranged around a verdant courtyard that seems far, far removed from the busy traffic and sterile-looking landscape outside. Rooms have white-tile floors and bathrooms that are on the small side, with tiny sinks and shower stalls. Otherwise, the motif is Florida/tropical, with some pizzazz.

There's a coffee-shop-style snack bar and a small restaurant on the premises, but other than that, you'll have to wander a short distance, perhaps to the International Bazaar just across the street, to find diversions and dining. Free transport to the beach is available, but you'll have to take a bus or taxi anywhere else.

E. Mall Dr. (P.O. Box F-42549), Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 242/351-6000. Fax 242/351-3546. www.bahamasvacationguide.com/royalislander.html. 100 units. Winter \$97 double; off season \$87 double. Children under 14 stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; snack bar; bar; pool; Jacuzzi; self-service laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe.

LUCAYA EXPENSIVE

The Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya ★★ *Kids* This massive \$400-million resort, one of the largest in The Bahamas, is firmly anchored at the center of two of the best white sandy beaches in The Bahamas—Lucayan Beach and Taíno Beach. Expect nearly 3.2 hectares (8 acres) of soft white sand. Freeport/Lucaya, which had been losing tourist business to Paradise Island, got a big boost in 1999 when this sprawling metropolis opened its doors.

The first of the three sections was completed late in 1998 under the name **Sheraton at Our Lucaya**. It's the only one of the three branches of Our Lucaya to focus exclusively on all-inclusive holidays, whereby all meals, drinks, and most activities are included in one set price. With a vague South Beach Art Deco design, it's a massive, open-sided hexagon, with rooms facing the beach and the swimming pool. The 528-room resort is contemporary but relaxed; the developers have created a young vibe that draws a high number of families. Bedrooms are whimsical and fun, thanks to fabrics you'd expect on a loud Hawaiian shirt from the Elvis era and maple-veneered furniture, all put together with the kind of artful simplicity you'd expect in a California beach house.

In 2000, two newer subdivisions of Our Lucaya were opened, neither of which is marketed as an all-inclusive property. The smaller and somewhat more private of the two is **Westin Lighthouse Pointe**, a 322-unit, low-rise complex that focuses specifically on an adult clientele. Its larger counterpart is the 528-unit **Westin-Breakers Cay**, a grand, 10-story, white-sided tower. The three sections

stretch in a glittering profile along a narrow strip of beachfront, allowing residents to drop into any of the bars, restaurants, and gardens. A complex this big contains a staggering diversity of restaurants, each designed with a different theme and ambience. The best of the resort's cuisine selections will be reviewed under "Where to Dine," later in this chapter. And consistent with the broad themes, each of the subdivisions has a dramatic and/or unconventional swimming pool. For example, the Sheraton at Our Lucaya's pool is designed around a replica of a 19th-century sugar mill, complete with an aqueduct that might be worthy of the ancient Romans.

A spa and fitness center, a quintet of tennis courts, a convention center, a state-of-the-art casino, and a shopping mall have all also been added in recent years, and there's an increasing emphasis on golf, thanks to the opening of the spectacular Reef Course (p. 165). An innovative feature for tennis players is the Fast Grand Slam of Tennis, which features replicas of the world's best known court surfaces—red clay at the French Open, manicured grass at Wimbledon, Rebound Ace at the Australian Open, and DecoTurf at the U.S. Open.

Children aged 2 to 12 can be amused and entertained throughout daylight hours every day at Camp Lucaya.

Royal Palm Way (P.O. Box F-42500), Lucaya, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 877-OUR-LUCAYA in the U.S., or 242/373-1333. Sheraton fax 242/373-8804; Westin fax 242/350-5060. www.ourlucaya.com. 1,260 units. Sheraton (all-inclusive) year-round \$169–\$249 double; from \$469 suite; \$30 extra per day for 3rd and 4th occupant. Westin Lighthouse Pointe or Breakers Cay year-round \$199–\$259 double; from \$749 suite; \$30 extra per day for 3rd and 4th occupant. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 10 restaurants; 10 bars; 44 pools; 2 golf courses; 5 tennis courts; health club; spa; watersports equipment/rentals; kids' camp and children's programs; business center; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport (Westin only), kitchenette (in some units), minibar, iron/ironing board, safe.

MODERATE

Pelican Bay at Lucaya ⚡⚡ Here's a good choice for travelers with champagne tastes and beer budgets, a hotel with more architectural charm than any other small property on Grand Bahama. It's built on a peninsula jutting into a labyrinth of inland waterways, with moored yachts on virtually every side. Pelican Bay evokes a Danish seaside village, with rows of "town houses," each painted a different color and sporting whimsical trim, and each overlooking the harbor. The hotel opened in the fall of 1996 and later expanded with another wing in 1999. Its location couldn't be better, right next to Port Lucaya Marketplace, where restaurants and entertainment spots abound. Lucayan Beach, one of the best stretches of white

sand on the island, is just across the street, and Taíno Beach, with equally good sands, lies immediately to the east of the hotel. UNEXSO, providing some of the best dive facilities in The Bahamas, is next door. If that's not enough, the extensive amenities of Our Lucaya (see previous listing) are available for use.

The spacious accommodations have Italian tile floors and white-washed furniture, with either a king-size bed or twin beds. The end rooms have cross ventilation and are the ideal choices for those who don't want to rely entirely on air-conditioning. Each unit comes with satellite TV, as well as a balcony with a view of the nearby waterway and marina. Bathrooms, although of standard size, contain oversize cotton robes and tub/shower combos.

The hotel has one main restaurant, the Ferry House, which specializes in American and Bahamian food and serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. The Yellow Tail Pool Bar offers drinks and snacks all day.

Seahorse Rd. (P.O. Box F-42654), Lucaya, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ **800/600-9192** in the U.S., or 242/373-9550. Fax 242/373-9551. www.pelicanbayhotel.com. 186 units. Winter \$165–\$215 double, \$275 suite; off season \$135–\$190 double, \$250 suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 3 pools; Jacuzzi; business center; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport (in suites); minibar (in suites), minifridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

Port Lucaya Resort & Yacht Club ⚓ With its own 100-slip marina lying next to the Port Lucaya Marketplace, this club opened in 1993 in the heart of the Port Lucaya restaurant, hotel, and nightlife complex. The resort consists of a series of pastel-colored two-story structures that guests reach via golf cart after checking in. The wings of guest rooms separate the piers—site of some very expensive marine hardware—from a verdant central green space with a gazebo-style bar and a swimming pool. Although set back inland on a waterway, Lucayan Harbour, this resort lies within a few minutes' walk of Lucayan Beach, one of the island's finest, and is also close to Taíno Beach. Even though it's not right on the beach, it's such an easy walk that no one seems to complain. Many guests are drawn to the nautical atmosphere of the resort and its nearness to Port Lucaya Marketplace.

The medium-size rooms have tile floors and are attractively and comfortably furnished with rattan pieces and big wall mirrors. The rooms are divided into various categories, ranging from standard to deluxe, and open onto the marina (preferred by yachting guests), the Olympic-size swimming pool, or the well-landscaped garden. (If

you don't want to hear the sounds coming from the lively marketplace, request units 1–6, which are more tranquil and away from the noise.) Bathrooms with newer shower/tub combinations are tidy and well maintained, with adequate shelf space.

The hotel's restaurant, Tradewinds Cafe, offers standard Bahamian, American, and international dishes but only to groups of 50 or more. Finding a restaurant, however, shouldn't be difficult in the Port Lucaya Marketplace.

Bell Channel Rd. (P.O. Box F-42452), Lucaya, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ **800/LUCAYA-1** or 242/373-6618. Fax 242/373-6652. www.portlucayaresort.com. 160 units. Winter \$100–\$145 double, \$175–\$250 suite; off season \$80–\$120 double, \$125–\$200 suite. Extra person \$25 per day. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; pool; Jacuzzi; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, iron/ironing board.

INEXPENSIVE

Coral Beach Built in 1965 as privately owned condominiums, this peacefully isolated property near a sandy beach sits amid gardens and groves of casuarinas in a residential neighborhood. Some of the apartments and rooms have verandas, and four contain kitchenettes. More suitable for older travelers, the complex rents large but rather sparsely furnished units, with shower/tub combinations in the bathroom. A poolside bar provides finger food at reasonable prices and is open daily from 10am to 4pm. A beauty salon is on the premises. You're also within walking distance of the Port Lucaya Marketplace.

Coral Rd. at Royal Palm Way (P.O. Box F-42468), Lucaya, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ **242/373-2468**. Fax 242/373-5140. www.bahamasvg.com/coralbeach. 10 units. Winter \$95–\$115 double, \$550–\$650 weekly double; off season \$80–\$95 double, \$490–\$550 weekly double. MC, V. **Amenities:** Pool bar; pool; salon. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchenette (in some), minifridge, coffeemaker.

TAINO BEACH

MODERATE

Ritz Beach Resort ★ *Kids* Rated five stars by the government, this hotel lies adjacent to the Taíno Beach Vacation Club, sharing all the fun and amenities of its elaborate water park. Enveloped by semitropical gardens, the Ritz (not related to other fabled world hotels of the same name) also is adjacent to the Pirates of The Bahamas Beach Theme Park.

Actually, the origins of this resort date back to 1995. Over the years it was constructed in three different phases. Made up of two buildings, it also comprises a 50-room complex called Coral Suites. All the bedrooms are in concrete coral buildings, and units range

from both efficiency and studio units to one-bedroom suites to elaborate villa and penthouse accommodations. The bedrooms are spacious and well furnished and handsomely maintained, with a tub-and-shower combo in the efficiency rooms and a walk-in shower in the studios.

Everything depends on how much you want to pay. Penthouses are on the fourth levels, and include such accommodations as a studio penthouse, which is multilevel with its own sun deck and private pool. The hotel's eating facilities are actually at the Taíno Beach Vacation Club where guests can patronize two international restaurants and five bars. The Ritz also has its own pool bar.

Jolly Roger Dr., Taíno Beach, Lucaya (P.O. Box F-43819), Grand Bahama Island, The Bahamas. ☎ 888/311-7945 or 242/373-9354. Fax 242/373-4421. www.timetravelcorp.com. 110 units. Year-round \$199 efficiency, \$299 studio, \$499 penthouse. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. **Amenities:** Restaurant; pool bar; pool; tennis court; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms (all); rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board.

Taíno Beach Vacation Club This fun resort on the southern shore offers attractively furnished and breezy one-, two-, and three-bedroom condos furnished in a semitropical motif. The setting of the beach club is near an excellent 457m (1,500-ft.) strip of white sands. Although no beach here is actually private, this one comes the closest; you won't be subject to harassment from beach vendors pestering you to sell unwanted souvenirs. Yet, when you want to remove yourself from this relatively tranquil beach, you can walk over to the adjacent water park and the Pirates of the Caribbean Theme Park, where you'll find plenty of visitors and touristy attractions. These oceanfront accommodations are highly desirable, each well equipped with several extras. The location here is only a 6-minute ride from Port Lucaya and a 15-minute drive from the International Bazaar. Accommodations are divided into a series of two buildings rising three floors in this concrete structure with ocean views. Set among tropical gardens, the emphasis here is on sports, such as volleyball and basketball.

Jolly Roger Dr., Taíno Beach, Lucaya (P.O. Box F-43819), Grand Bahama Island, The Bahamas. ☎ 242/373-4682. Fax 242/373-4421. www.tainobeach.com. 37 units. Year-round \$150 efficiency; \$375 1-bedroom unit; \$475 2-bedroom unit; \$650 3-bedroom unit. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; pool bar; pool; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms (all); rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchenette, beverage maker, iron/ironing board.

INEXPENSIVE

Flamingo Bay Yacht Club & Marina Hotel Unlike the Ritz Beach Resort and the Taíno Vacation Club (its sibling properties),

this hotel is set back but lies only about a 5-minute walk from a strip of 457m (1,500 ft.) of white sand. A three-story concrete building, offers midsize bedrooms that are comfortable and attractively furnished in a Caribbean motif, with a sleek new bathroom with tub/shower combination. You have a choice of renting a room with a king-size bed or two double beds, and each unit comes with such extras as a microwave and toaster. Across the street is the Pirates of The Bahamas (p. 168). At a 20-slip marina, a water taxi runs every hour to the center of the Lucaya area. Although amenities are sparse, customers are permitted to use of the Ritz Beach Resort's, which are plentiful.

Jolly Roger Dr., Taino Beach, Lucaya, Grand Bahama Island, The Bahamas. ☎ 800/824-6623 or 242/373-4677. Fax 954/484-4757. www.timetravelcorp.com. 58 units. Year-round \$70 double. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Coin-operated laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchenette, beverage maker.

OUTSIDE FREEPORT/LUCAYA

EXPENSIVE

Old Bahama Bay ★★ A cottage-style resort, this complex is the centerpiece of an 11-hectare (28-acre) site with home sites and a marina. In an oceanfront setting, the boutique hotel has cottages adjacent to the 72-slip marina complex; a private beach is steps away. The colonial-style architecture graces a setting 40km (25 miles) west of Freeport, consisting of suites set in six two-story beach houses and three spacious buildings overlooking the marina. The living space is the most generous on the island, with custom-designed furnishings along with private beachfront terraces. The elegant marble bathrooms are luxurious with deluxe toiletries, and a whirlpool tub. The most recent addition added 12 "beachcomber" junior suites and four two-bedroom Grand Bay suites, each designed in a British colonial style. Dockside Grille serves quite good Bahamian and international dishes for three meals a day. The gourmet restaurant on-site is Aqua, featuring Caribbean, Asian, and Bahamian-inspired dishes.

West End (P.O. Box F-42546), Grand Bahama Island, The Bahamas. ☎ 800/572-5711 in the U.S. or 800/444-9469. Fax 242/346-6546. www.oldbahamabay.com. 49 units. Winter \$259–\$509 suite, from \$649 2-bedroom suite; off season \$199–\$399 suite, from \$569 2-bedroom suite. \$50 per extra person. Breakfast and dinner \$80 per person extra per day. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; pool; 2 tennis courts; fitness center; watersports equipment/rentals; car rental; limited room service (7am–10pm); massage; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms (all). *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, kitchenette, minifridge, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

MODERATE

Paradise Cove ★ *(Finds)* Paradise Cove teems with rainbow-hued tropical marine life and a vast array of coral to delight the snorkeler in you. If you want to escape the glitz and glam of Freeport or Lucaya, this secluded hideaway on a beach is the perfect place. You'll find an informal series of one-bedroom apartments and two-bedroom cottages for rent here. Away from the crowds, Paradise Cove is like Grand Bahama used to be before the tourist hordes invaded. Yet you are only a 20-minute drive east of West End. Snorkeling, swimming, kayaking, and sunbathing fill the day here. At twilight, attend the breathtaking sunset bonfire. All units are good size and have full kitchens for those who want to cook their own grub.

Paradise Cove (P.O. Box F-42771), Freeport, Grand Bahama Island. ☎ 242/349-2677. Fax 242/352-5471. www.deadmansreef.com. 12 units. Year-round \$100 1-bedroom apt, \$575 weekly; \$195 2-bedroom villa, \$1,225 weekly. Extra person \$15 per day. **Amenities:** Bar; watersports equipment/rentals. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchen.

Wyndham Viva Fortuna ★ *(Kids)* Think of this as an Italian Club Med. It caters to a mostly European, relatively young crowd, who appreciate the 14 secluded hectares (35 acres) of beachfront and the nonstop sports activities that are included in the price. Established in 1993, Viva Fortuna lies 9.5km (6 miles) east of the International Bazaar in the southeastern part of the island, amid an isolated landscape of casuarinas and scrubland. Midsize bedrooms lie in a colorful group of two-story outbuildings. About three-quarters have ocean views; the others overlook the garden. Each has a private balcony, and two queen-size beds, with a small bathroom with shower stalls. Singles can book one of these rooms, but they are charged 40% more than the per-person double-occupancy rate.

All meals, which are included in the rates, are served buffet-style in a pavilion near the beach, and the Italian cuisine is actually some of the best on Grand Bahama Island. In addition to the buffet, you'll find a casual Italian restaurant, La Trattoria, where you can order sit-down dinners within a candlelit setting.

1 Dubloon Rd. (P.O. Box F-42398), Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas. ☎ 800/898-9968 or 242/373-4000. Fax 242/373-5594. www.wyndham.com. 276 units. Winter \$124 double, \$74 per extra person; off season \$98 double, \$59 per extra person. Rates are all-inclusive. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars; disco; pool; 2 tennis courts; gym; sauna; watersports equipment/rentals; kids' club; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe.

4 Where to Dine

Foodies will find that the cuisine on Grand Bahama Island doesn't match the more refined fare served at dozens of places on New Providence (Nassau/Paradise Island). However, a few places in Grand Bahama specialize in fine dining; others get by with rather standard fare. The good news is that the dining scene is much more affordable here.

FREEPORT EXPENSIVE

Rib Room ♠ SEAFOOD/STEAKS The Rib Room serves the island's best steaks, in huge portions. Everything is served in the atmosphere of a British hunting lodge. If you don't want one of the steaks, opt instead for the blue-ribbon prime rib of beef with a passable Yorkshire pudding. Special praise goes to the broiled Bahamian lobster, but steer clear of the grouper. Shrimp can be succulent when it's not overcooked, and steak Diane, although rather fully flavored, is meltingly textured. The wine list is reasonably priced.

Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/352-6721. Reservations recommended. Jackets required for men. Main courses \$22–\$36. AE, DC, MC, V. Fri–Wed 5:30–10:30pm.

MODERATE

Silvano's ♠ ITALIAN The only authentic Italian dining spot in Freeport, this 80-seat restaurant with its Mediterranean decor serves a worthy but not exceptional cuisine. The standard repertoire from Mama Mia's kitchen is presented here with quality ingredients, most often shipped in from the United States. Service is polite and helpful. The grilled veal steak is our favorite, although the homemade pastas are equally alluring. They're served with a wide variety of freshly made sauces. The chef also works his magic with fresh shrimp. Other traditional Italian dishes round out the menu.

Ranfurley Circle. ☎ 242/352-5111. Reservations recommended. Lunch specials \$5.50–\$11; main courses \$13–\$36. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 5–11pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Becky's Restaurant BAHAMIAN/AMERICAN Go here to rev up before a day of serious shopping at the International Bazaar, which is right at hand. Owned by Becky and Berkeley Smith, this pink-and-white restaurant offers authentic Bahamian cuisine and a welcome dose of down-to-earth, non-casino reality. Breakfasts are either all-American or Bahamian and are available all day. Also popular are minced lobster, curried mutton, fish platters, baked or curried

chicken, and conch salads. Stick to the local specialties instead of the lackluster American dishes.

E. Sunrise Hwy. and E. Beach Dr. ☎ 242/352-5247. Breakfast \$5–\$11; main courses \$7–\$22. AE, MC, V. Daily 7am–10pm.

Geneva's BAHAMIAN/SEAFOOD If you want to eat where the locals eat, head for Geneva's, where the food is made the old-fashioned way. This restaurant is one of the best places to sample conch, which has fed and nourished Bahamians for centuries. The Monroe family will prepare it for you stewed, cracked, or fried, or in a savory conch chowder that makes an excellent starter. Grouper also appears, prepared in every imaginable way. The bartender will get you into the mood with a rum-laced Bahama Mama.

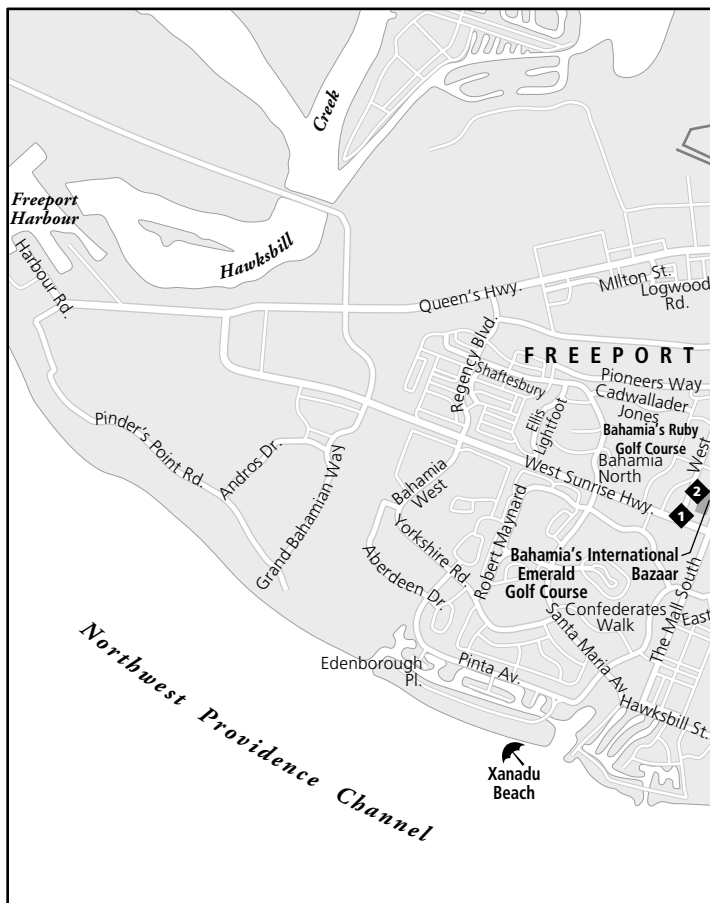
Kipling Lane and E. Mall, at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/352-5085. Lunch sandwiches and platters \$6–\$12; dinner main courses \$9–\$25. DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–11pm.

The Pepper Pot BAHAMIAN This might be the only place on Grand Bahama that specializes in Bahamian takeout food. You'll find it after about a 5-minute drive east of the International Bazaar, in a tiny shopping mall. You can order takeout portions of the island's best guava duff (a dessert specialty of The Bahamas that resembles a jelly roll), as well as a savory conch chowder, the standard fish and pork chops, chicken souse (an acquired taste), cracked conch, sandwiches and hamburgers, and an array of daily specials. The owner is Ethiopian-born Wolansa Fountain.

E. Sunrise Hwy. (at Coral Rd.). ☎ 242/373-7655. Breakfast \$3–\$5; main courses \$7–\$9; vegetarian plates \$3–\$5. No credit cards. Daily 24 hr.

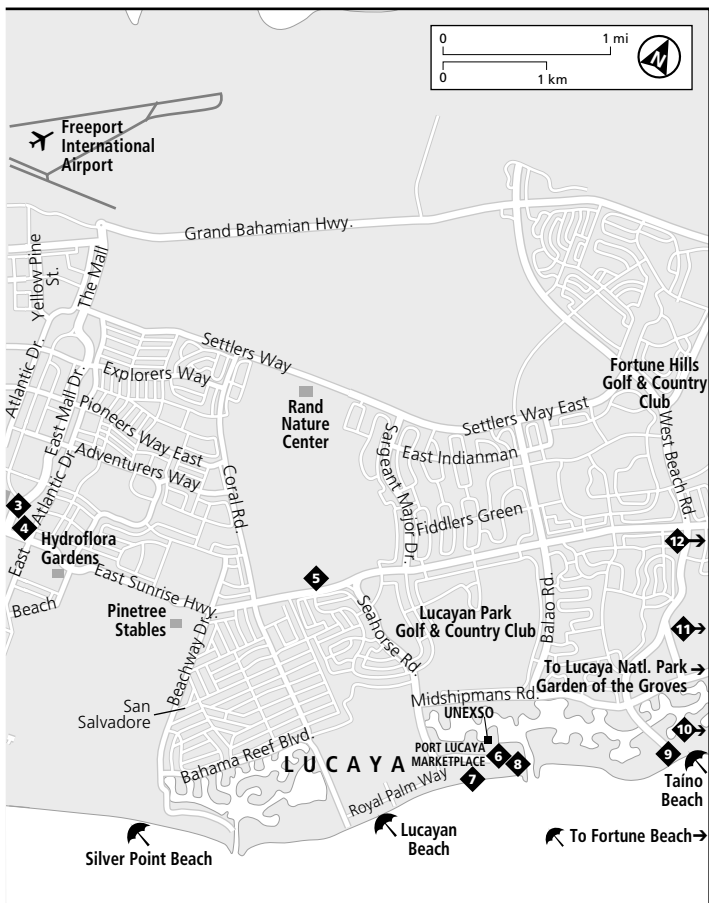
The Pub on the Mall INTERNATIONAL Located on the same floor of the same building and under the same management, three distinctive eating areas lie across the boulevard from the International Bazaar and attract many locals. The **Prince of Wales** serves such Olde English staples as shepherd's pie, fish and chips, platters of roast beef or fish, and real English ale. One end of the room is devoted to the **Red Dog Sports Bar**, with a boisterous atmosphere and at least four TV screens blasting away for dedicated sports fans. **Silvano's** (see above) is an Italian restaurant serving lots of pasta, usually with verve, as well as veal, chicken, beefsteaks, seafood, and such desserts as tiramisu. The Bahamian-themed **Islander's Roost** has a tropical decor of bright island color and a balcony overlooking the Bazaar. The food is good if not great; the main platters are a good value, usually very filling and satisfying. Menu items include sandwiches, salads, grilled fish, beefsteaks, and prime rib.

Where to Dine in Freeport/Lucaya

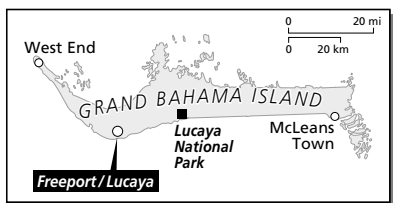


Barracuda's **6**
 Becky's Restaurant **2**
 Bishop's Restaurant **10**
 Café Michel **2**
 China Beach **10**
 China Temple **2**
 Churchill's **6**
 Club Caribe **12**
 Fatman's Nephew **5**
 Ferry House **8**
 Geneva's **3**

Georgie's **6**
 Giovanni's Café **6**
 La Dolce Vita **6**
 Luciano's **6**
 Margarita Villa Sand Bar **10**
 Oasis Café **1**
 Outrigger's Native Restaurant /
 White Wave Club **11**
 Palm Grill & Coconut Bar **1**
 Paradiso **1**
 The Pepper Pot **5**



- Pisces 6
- Prop Club 7
- Pub at Lucaya 6
- The Pub on the Mall 4
- Rib Room 1
- Shenanigan's Irish Pub 6
- Silvano's 4
- The Stoned Crab 9
- Willy Broadleaf 7
- Zorba's 6



Ranfurley Circle, Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/352-5110. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$6–\$36. AE, MC, V, DISC. Prince of Wales and Red Dog daily noon–midnight; Silvano’s daily noon–3pm and 5–11pm; Islander’s Roost Mon–Sat 5–11pm.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR INEXPENSIVE

Café Michel BAHAMIAN/AMERICAN The name implies that you’ve found a real French bistro set amid the bustle of the International Bazaar, but alas, it turns out to be a mere coffee shop. Nevertheless, it’s a good place for refueling when you’re shopping the bazaar. About 20 tables are outside under red and white umbrellas and bistro-style tablecloths. Inside are about a dozen more. Local shoppers know to come here not only for coffee, but also for platters, salads, and sandwiches throughout the day. Both American and Bahamian dishes are served, including seafood platters, steaks, and, of course, grouper. The house specialty is a Bahamian lobster platter with all the fixings.

International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-2191. Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses \$5–\$36. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11pm. Closes at 6pm in off season.

China Temple CHINESE This is a Chinese joint—and don’t expect more than just that—that also does takeout. Over the years it’s proved to be the dining bargain of the bazaar. The menu is familiar and standard: chop suey, chow mein, and sweet-and-sour chicken. It’s certainly not gourmet Asian fare, but it’s cheap, and it might hit the spot when you’re craving something different.

International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-5610. Lunch \$7–\$9; main courses \$10–\$14. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–10pm.

LUCAYA EXPENSIVE

Churchill’s ★ AMERICAN One of the island’s most elegant restaurants, Churchill’s lures discerning palates to the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya—even guests staying in Freeport. We like to arrive early for drinks in the colonial-style bar with its dark-wood floors, potted plants, and ceiling fans, even a grand piano. (All the setting needs to feel complete is a new Bogie-and-Ingrid-Bergman combo willing to remake *Casablanca* on-site.) This is the island’s best chophouse, featuring both succulent steaks flown over from the mainland and locally caught seafood. The manor house setting is a perfect foil for the finely honed service and top-quality ingredients, deftly prepared.

At the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333. Reservations required. Main courses \$25–\$65. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–11pm.

The Stoned Crab ★ SEAFOOD Tired of frozen seafood shipped in from the mainland? Come here for the sweet stone crab claws and the lobster, both caught in Bahamian waters. There's none better on the island. You can't miss this place—a triple pyramid (ca. 1968) whose four-story wood-and-steel framework is strong enough to withstand any hurricane. Swiss-born Livio Peronino is the manager and chef, preparing a seafood platter with everything on it, including grouper, conch fritters, and all kinds of shellfish. The best pasta on the menu is linguine al pesto with lobster and shrimp. For starters, try the zesty conch chowder. Have a lobster salad with your meal and finish with Irish coffee.

At Taíno Beach, Lucaya. ☎ 242/373-1442. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$22–\$45. AE, MC, V. Daily 5–10pm.

Willy Broadleaf ★ INTERNATIONAL At the first-class Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, you're treated to one of the most lavish buffet dinners in the entire Bahamian chain. The chefs conceive of their offering as a giant spread of exotic dishes based on recipes from around the globe. The decor fits the cuisine, evoking a courtyard patio in Mexico, a marketplace in old Cairo, the dining hall of an Indian maharajah, even an African village; from India comes tandoori chicken, from Greece moussaka. Another tasty treat is a sausage made from wild boar. Expect freshly made salads, both hot and cold dishes, and luscious, often fruit-based desserts.

The Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333. Breakfast buffet \$20, Tues–Fri \$34 buffet, Sat–Sun \$50 seafood buffet. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 6:30–11am and 6–10pm.

MODERATE

Barracuda's ★ AMERICAN With high ceilings and big windows, this space is the size of an airplane hanger, and it's done up with playful art and a whimsical, hip decor that would be at home in Miami's South Beach. The kitchen turns out hearty breakfast dishes that are loaded with flavor. The best examples are omelets and French toast. The weekend buffet is a table-groaning event of freshly made American and Bahamian dishes—it's one of the best food values on island.

At the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way, Lucaya. ☎ 242/373-1333. Breakfast \$14 or under; buffet \$16. DC, MC, V. Daily 7–10:30am; Sat–Sun 6:30pm–midnight.

China Beach ★ ASIAN FUSION At the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, you can cruise the Pacific Rim, feasting on exotic delights, including the spicy hot cuisines of Vietnam and Thailand,

with calls at Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The menu changes every month but some dishes appear with regularity. Our favorites among these are a savory Hong Kong roast duckling and a zesty Thai chicken. The beef marinated in soy sauce is served with fresh spring onion, and the grouper filet appears with fresh ginger and scallions. Other Far East specialties include a seafood teppanyaki and stir-fry conch.

At the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$19–\$33. AE, DC, DISC MC, V. Tues–Sat 6–11pm.

Oasis Café BAHAMIAN/AMERICAN This restaurant on the lobby of the Royal Oasis resort adjoins the casino. As you eat, you can view the gamblers winning and losing (mostly the latter). If you order a la carte, the menu consists mainly of snacks and sandwiches. But many diners come here for the hot and cold dishes on the buffet. The chefs do a good job with their roasting at night, especially with the prime rib, which can be carved for you. Homemade soups are featured daily, along with fresh salads and tasty desserts. The best time to come for island flair and fun is on Bahamian night each Friday. During most of 2005, the Royal Oasis resort—including this restaurant—underwent renovations. It expects to reopen in 2006, but call ahead before visiting.

Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/350-7000. Buffet lunch \$18–\$19 daily; buffet dinner \$23 daily. AE, DC, MC, V. Call for hours.

Palm Grill & Coconut Bar BAHAMIAN/INTERNATIONAL/SEAFOOD Off the lobby at the Royal Oasis resort, this eatery offers two distinct dining experiences. The Palm Grill is a fashionable bistro with tables inside or out; the kitchen serves a beautifully roasted prime rib at whatever doneness you prefer, fettuccine Alfredo with the tantalizing addition of fresh shrimp, and Bahamian snapper cooked just right—still moist—and served with grilled vegetables. At the more convivial Coconut Bar, you can order your fill of well-stuffed sandwiches, juicy burgers and fries, freshly made salads, and, of course, conch and other main courses from the same kitchen.

Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/350-7000. Palm Grill main courses lunch \$6.25–\$12, dinner \$12–\$22. Coconut Bar main courses \$7.50–\$18. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Palm Grill daily 6:30–11:30am, noon–3pm, and 5:30–11pm. Coconut Bar daily 10am–1am.

Paradiso ✨ ITALIAN Set among dark woods and high booths both elegant and tasteful, you'll find yourself in an oasis of fine Italian

dining here. As you enjoy an aperitif, peruse the menu of selections representing some of the best recipes from the Italian kitchen. Veal saltimbocca (the word literally means “jump in your mouth”) is a concoction with cheese and ham, and is most rewarding, as is the marinated filet mignon wrapped in pancetta. Nothing is finer nor more expensive than the lobster al Sardinia (with fresh tomatoes and vegetables). Dishes for the most part, are spiced, flavored, and sauced, especially the tender cutlets of oregano-flavored scaloppine and the fettuccine with “fruits of the sea,” including Bahamian conch, scallops, lobster, and shrimp (among other seafood). Waiters are prompt and attentive, and there’s a good wine list.

Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/352-7000. Reservations required. Main courses \$18–\$22. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues, Thurs–Sun 5:30–11pm.

Prop Club AMERICAN/INTERNATIONAL With a name like Prop Club, you expect a kind of laid-back airplane hangar decor. Instead, you get parts of aircraft that crashed off the coast of Grand Bahama Island. When the weather’s right, which it is most of the time, large doors open to bring the outdoors inside, and the party overflows onto the beach. You won’t find the most enticing menu on the island here, but the place is a lot of fun—and the offerings far exceed most pub grub. Dig into a “mountain of ribs,” or else savor the crab cakes (which actually contain a lot of crab, not just stuffing). Ever had a grilled margarita chicken sandwich? You can order one here, along with juicy burgers, fajitas, and the like.

At the Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333. Main courses \$12–\$23. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch noon–5pm. Dinner 5–10pm. Bar noon–1am on weeknights; noon–2am on weekends.

AT PORT LUCAYA MARKETPLACE EXPENSIVE

Ferry House ⚓ CAJUN/SEAFOOD This restaurant’s bar floats on pontoons, beneath a canvas canopy, above the waters of Bell Channel, the waterway that funnels boats from the open sea into the sheltered confines of Port Lucaya Marina. Lunches are relatively simple affairs, consisting of pastas, catch of the day, and meal-size salads. Dinner might feature a seafood platter laden with calamari, fish, and shrimp; a delectable duck breast with potatoes and vegetables; fresh salmon with hollandaise sauce; and savory grilled rack of lamb. But our favorite meal here is the ginger-and-honey-glazed tiger shrimp, served with a lobster bisque.

Beside Bell Channel, Port Lucaya. ☎ 242/373-1595. Reservations recommended for dinner. Lunch platters \$15–\$19; dinner main courses \$27–\$39. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm; Tues–Sun 6–9pm.

Luciano's ★ FRENCH/CONTINENTAL With its tables usually occupied by local government officials and deal makers, Luciano's is the grande dame of Freeport restaurants, with a very European atmosphere. It's the only restaurant in Port Lucaya offering caviar, foie gras, and oysters Rockefeller, all served with a flourish by a formally dressed waitstaff wearing black and white. You can go early and enjoy a cocktail in the little bar inside or on the wooden deck overlooking the marina. Lightly smoked and thinly sliced salmon makes a good opener, as do snails in garlic butter. Fresh fish and shellfish are regularly featured and delicately prepared, allowing their natural flavors to shine through, with no heavy, overwhelming sauces. Steak Diane is one of Luciano's classics, along with an especially delectable veal medallion sautéed with shrimp and lobster.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-9100. www.portlucaya.com/lucianos. Reservations required in winter. Main courses \$27–\$44. AE, MC, V. Daily 5:30–9:45pm (last order).

MODERATE

Fatman's Nephew ★ BAHAMIAN In another location, "Fatman" became a legend on Grand Bahama Island. Although he's no longer with us, the Fatman must have left his recipes and cooking skills to another generation of cooks. Today the place, which used to cater mainly to locals, has gone touristy, but much of the same traditional fare is still served with the same unflinching allegiance to Bahamian ways. The restaurant overlooks the marina at Port Lucaya from an eagle's-nest position on the second floor. You can enjoy drinks or meals inside, but we like to head out to an outdoor covered deck to watch the action below. At least eight kinds of game fish—including both wahoo and Cajun blackened kingfish—plus curried chicken, mutton, or beef are usually offered. Bahamian-style shark soup, made from the flesh of hammerheads ("little tender ones," according to the chef), is sometimes featured on the menu. Most dishes, except for expensive shellfish, fall at the lower end of the price scale. Beware, as the local staff can be flighty.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8520. Main courses \$10–\$40. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 5–11pm.

Giovanni's Cafe ★ ITALIAN/SEAFOOD Tucked away into one of the pedestrian thoroughfares of Port Lucaya Marketplace, you'll find a yellow-sided clapboard house that opens into a charming

38-seat Italian trattoria. The chefs (including head chef Giovanni Colo) serve Italian-influenced preparations of local seafood, specializing in seafood pasta (usually prepared only for two diners) and a lobster special. Giovanni stamps each dish with his Italian verve and flavor, whether it be Bahamian conch, local seafood, or scampi. Dishes show off his precision and rock-solid technique, exemplified by sirloin steak with fresh mushrooms, delectable shrimp scampi, and fattening, but extremely good, spaghetti carbonara.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-9107. Reservations recommended. Main courses lunch \$8–\$12, dinner \$13–\$33. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8:30am–10pm; Sun 5–10pm.

La Dolce Vita ★ ITALIAN Next to the Pub at Lucaya (see listing below), this small upscale Italian restaurant has a modern decor and traditional food. Enjoy freshly made pastas and Italian-style pizzas on a patio overlooking the marina or in the 44-seat dining room. Start with portobello mushrooms, fresh mozzarella with tomatoes, and a vinaigrette, or else carpaccio with arugula and spices. Home-made ravioli appears with different fillings such as cheese, lobster, or spinach. An excellent risotto flavored with black ink is served, or else you can order roast pork tenderloin or a crisp and perfectly flavored rack of lamb.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8652. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11–\$31. AE, MC, V. Daily 5:30–11pm. Closed Sept.

Pisces ★ INTERNATIONAL This is our favorite among the many restaurants in the Port Lucaya Marketplace, and we're seconded by a healthy mix of locals and yacht owners who pack the place every weekend. Decorated with Tiffany-style lamps and captain's chairs, it boasts the most charming waitstaff on Grand Bahama Island. Pizzas are available and come in 27 different varieties, including a version with conch, lobster, shrimp, and chicken as well as one with Alfredo sauce. Dinners are more elaborate, with a choice of curries (including a version with conch); lobster in cream, wine, and herb sauce; all kinds of fish and shellfish; and several kinds of pasta.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-5192. Reservations recommended. Pizzas \$12–\$28; dinner main courses \$9–\$30. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5pm–1:30am.

Pub at Lucaya ENGLISH/BAHAMIAN Opening onto Count Basie Square, this restaurant and bar lies at the center of the Port Lucaya Marketplace. Returning visitors might remember the joint when it was called Pusser's Pub, named after that popular brand of rum.

You can come here to eat, but many patrons visit just for the drinks, especially rum-laced Pusser's Painkillers. You can order predictable pub grub such as shepherd's pie or steak-and-ale pie. Juicy American-style burgers are another lure. But you can also dine on substantial Bahamian fare at night, especially Bahamian lobster tail, cracked conch, chicken breast with herbs, or the fresh grilled catch of the day. The tables outside overlooking the water are preferred, or else you can retreat inside under a wooden beamed ceiling, where the rustic tables are lit by *faux* Tiffany-style lamps.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8450. Sandwiches and burgers \$8–\$9; main courses \$13–\$40. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm (bar until 1am).

Shenanigan's Irish Pub CONTINENTAL Dark and beer-stained from the thousands of pints of Guinness, Harp, and Killian's that have been served and spilled here, this is the premier Irish or Boston-Irish hangout on Grand Bahama Island. Many visitors come just to drink, sometimes for hours at a time, soaking up the suds, and perhaps remembering to eventually order some food. If you get hungry, there's surf and turf, French-style rack of lamb for two, seafood Newburg, and several preparations of chicken. Most dishes, except for lobster, are at the low end of the price scale.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-4734. Main courses \$9–\$43. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 5pm–2am (last order at 9:45pm).

INEXPENSIVE

Georgie's BAHAMIAN/AMERICAN This laid-back, informal restaurant allows you to dine harborside at Port Lucaya for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It gets particularly busy at happy hour in the late afternoon when prices on drinks are reduced. Service shows more effort than polish, but dishes do arrive and they are quite flavorful time-tested recipes, a repertoire of old favorites like cracked conch (similar to breaded veal cutlet) served with tasty coleslaw. The catch of the day is usually pan-fried grouper or snapper served with peas 'n' rice. The chef almost daily prepares hot roast beef, serving it with mashed potatoes and mixed vegetables; for lunch, try one of the island's better chef's salads, loaded with turkey, ham, fresh tomatoes, cheese, and other good things. Other favorites here include fresh lobster, conch fritters, and barbecue chicken.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8513. Breakfast \$5; main courses lunch \$6–\$19, dinner \$8–\$19. DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues 7am–11pm.

Outrigger's Native Restaurant/White Wave Club BAHAMIAN Cement-sided and simple, with a large deck extending out toward the

sea, this restaurant was here long before the construction of the nearby Port Lucayan Marketplace, which lies only 4 blocks away. The restaurant area is the domain of Gretchen Wilson, whose kitchens produce a rotating series of dishes that include such lip-smacking dishes as lobster tails, minced lobster, steamed or cracked conch, pork chops, chicken, fish, and shrimp, usually served with peas 'n' rice and macaroni. Every Wednesday night, from 5pm to 2am, the restaurant is the venue for Outrigger's Famous Wednesday Night Fish Fry, when as many as a thousand diners will line up for platters of fried or steamed fish, priced at \$10 each, which are accompanied by a DJ and dancers. Drinks are served within the restaurant, but at any time of the week, you might consider stepping into the nearby ramshackle bar, the White Wave Club, which serves only drinks.

Smith's Point. ☎ 242/373-4811. Main courses \$10–\$16. No credit cards. Sun–Fri 4pm–midnight; Sat 11am–midnight.

Zorba's BAHAMIAN/GREEK First thing in the morning, you'll see locals standing in line for the Bahamian breakfasts served at Zorba's. From chicken souse to corned beef and grits, all the island eye-openers are on the menu. Eggs snag less daring early risers. Lunch could be a fat gyro or a souvlakia kabob. Dinner can begin with a Greek salad and then move on to moussaka, with baklava for a sweet finish. We won't pretend the food here is like a trip to the Greek isles, but it's satisfying and filling. At this casual dining spot, you can eat either inside or enjoy your meal alfresco.

Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-6137. Main courses lunch \$4–\$13, dinner \$11–\$24. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–10:30pm.

OUTSIDE FREEPORT/LUCAYA

Bishop's Restaurant ★ *(Finds)* BAHAMIAN This eatery, known mainly to East End locals, is patronized for its real down-home cooking. Just over 50km (32 miles) east of Lucaya, the restaurant opens onto views of the sea. Far from the high-rise hotels, this little restaurant and lounge looks the way they did in The Bahamas of the 1920s and 1930s. Some of the best cracked conch we've sampled on Grand Bahama Island is served here, rolled in a light batter and fried in piping hot oil so that its crust is slightly crunchy. Another favorite, always on the menu, is fried grouper with classic peas 'n' rice. Or, for a savory dish, order the chicken barbecued in zesty sauce.

High Rock. ☎ 242/353-4515. Main courses \$10–\$15. MC, V. Daily 9am–5pm.

Club Caribe AMERICAN/BAHAMIAN Set about 11km (7 miles) east of the International Bazaar, beside a beach and an offshore reef,

this restaurant is a funky and offbeat charmer. You can spend a day on the beach here, renting the club's snorkeling equipment, sunbathing or swimming, and perhaps enjoying one of the house-special cocktails (try a Caribe Delight, made with bananas, banana-flavored liqueur, and rum). When it's lunchtime, you might order up a heaping platter of cracked conch; barbecued ribs; snapper or wahoo that's fried, steamed, or grilled; or a sandwich or salad. This place is simple, outdoorsy, and a refreshing change from the more congested parts of Grand Bahama. On Friday, they're usually open until 9pm or later, with live music. Oysters on the half shell, mussels, and clams are all bought fresh on Friday for a tasty weekend treat.

Churchill Beach, Mather Town, off Midshipman Rd. ☎ 242/373-6866. Main courses \$5–\$25. AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun 11am–6pm (or later, depending on business).

Margarita Villa Sand Bar BAHAMIAN/AMERICAN Known for making the island's best Bahama Mama drink, this funky little local hangout with a rustic deck sits under coconut palms overlooking the ocean. It's an extremely casual place, with handmade barrel tables, and sand on the floor, a small menu, and an offbeat location in the little island settlement of Mather Town. When not downing some of the best margaritas and burgers in the area, patrons can be seen on the beach sunning, snorkeling, or swimming. Dig into a basket of conch fritters, a "cheeseburger in paradise," fish and chips, or steak and fries. The big event of the week is the bonfire on the beach, Tuesday from 6:30 to 10pm. A full dinner and all the activities, including music, dancing, and games, goes for \$41 per person. Mather Town. ☎ 242/373-4525. Reservations required for bonfire night. Main courses \$5–\$14. DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–10:30pm (or later, depending on business).

5 Beaches, Watersports & Other Outdoor Pursuits

HITTING THE BEACH

Grand Bahama Island has enough beaches for everyone, the best ones opening onto Northwest Providence Channel at Freeport and sweeping east for some 97km (60 miles) to encompass Xanadu Beach, Lucayan Beach, Taíno Beach, and others, eventually ending at such remote eastern outposts as Rocky Creek and McLean's Town. Once you leave the Freeport/Lucaya area, you can virtually have your pick of white sandy beaches all the way east. Once you're past the resort hotels, you'll see a series of secluded beaches used mainly by locals. If you like people, a lot of organized watersports, and easy access to hotel bars and rest rooms, stick to Xanadu, Taíno, and Lucayan beaches.

Though there's fine snorkeling offshore, you should book a snorkeling cruise aboard one of the catamarans offered by Paradise Watersports (see below) to see the most stunning reefs.

Xanadu Beach ★★ is one of our favorite beaches, immediately east of Freeport and the site of the famed Xanadu Beach Resort. The 1.6km-long (1-mile) beach may be crowded at times in winter, but that's because of those gorgeous, soft, powdery white sands, which open onto tranquil waters. The beach is set against a backdrop of coconut palms and Australian pines. You can hook up here with some of the best watersports on the island, including snorkeling, boating, jet-skiing, and parasailing.

Immediately east of Xanadu is **Silver Point Beach**, a little white-sandy beach, site of a timeshare complex where guests are out riding the waves on water bikes or playing volleyball on the beach. You'll see horseback riders from Pinetree Stables (see below) taking beach rides along the sands.

Most visitors will be found at **Lucayan Beach**, right off Royal Palm Way and immediately east of Silver Point Beach. This is one of the best beaches in The Bahamas, with kilometers of white sand. It might be crowded for a few weeks in winter, but most of the time you can find beach-blanket space. At any of the hotel resorts along this beach, you can hook up with an array of watersports or get a frosty drink from a hotel bar. It's not for those seeking seclusion, but it's a fun beach-party scene.

Immediately to the east of Lucayan Beach is **Taino Beach**, a family favorite and a good place for watersports. This, too, is a fine, wide beach of white sands, opening onto generally tranquil waters.

Another choice not too far east is **Gold Rock Beach**, a favorite picnic spot with locals on weekends, although you'll usually have this beach to yourself on weekdays. Gold Rock Beach is a 19km (12-mile) drive from Lucaya. At Gold Rock you are at the doorstep to the **Lucayan National Park** (see below), a 16-hectare (40-acre) park filled with some of the longest, widest, and most fabulous secluded beaches on the island.

BIKING

A guided bike trip is an ideal way to see parts of Grand Bahama that most visitors miss. Starting at **Barbary Beach**, you can pedal a mountain bike along the southern coast parallel to the beach. Stop for a snack, lunch, and a dip. Finally, you reach **Lucayan National Park**, some 19km (12 miles) away. Explore the cave where the Indians buried their dead in the days when Grand Bahama was theirs,

centuries before the coming of Columbus. Crabs here have been known to come up through holes in the ground carrying bits of bowls once used by the Lucayans. **Kayak Nature Tours** (☎ 242/373-2485), the company that sponsors these trips, transports you home to your hotel by van, so you don't have to exhaust yourself in the heat cycling back. The cost is \$79 for adults, half price for children ages 10 to 16. All equipment, sustenance, and round-trip transportation from your hotel is included.

BOAT CRUISES

Ocean Wonder, Port Lucaya Dock (☎ 242/373-5880), run by Reef Tours, is a gargantuan 18m (60-ft.) Defender glass-bottom boat. Any tour agent can arrange for you to go out on this vessel. You'll get a panoramic view of the beautiful underwater life that lives off the coast of Grand Bahama. Cruises depart from Port Lucaya behind the Straw Market on the bay side at 9:30am, 11:15am, 1:15pm, and 3:15pm, except Friday, when only two tours leave at 9:30 and 11:15am. The tour lasts 1½ hours, costs \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 6 to 12, and is free for children 5 and under. Make reservations a day or two ahead, as the boat does fill up quickly.

Superior Watersports (P.O. Box F-40837, Freeport; ☎ 242/373-7863; www.superiorwatersports.com), offers trips on its *Bahama Mama*, a two-deck 22m (72-ft.) catamaran. Its Robinson Crusoe Beach Party, offered daily from 11am to 4pm from October through March, but from noon to 5pm from April through September, costs \$59 per person and \$39 for children under 12. There's also a shorter sunset booze cruise that goes for \$29. (From Apr–Sept, these cruises are on Tues, Thurs, and Sat night from 6:30–8:30pm, and from Oct–Mar the same nights, but from 6–8pm.) Call for information about how to hook up with this outfitter.

For an underwater cruise, try the company's quasi-submarine, the *Seaworld Explorer*. The sub itself does not descend; instead, you walk down into the hull of the boat and watch the sea life glide by. The "semisub" departs daily at 9:30 am, 11:30am, and 1:30pm, and the two-hour ride costs \$39 for adults and \$25 for children age 2 to 12.

THE DOLPHIN EXPERIENCE

A pod of bottle-nosed dolphins is involved in a unique dolphin/human familiarization program at Dolphin Experience, located at **Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO)**, next to Port Lucaya, opposite Lucayan Beach Casino (☎ 800/992-DIVE or 242/373-1244; www.unexso.com). This "close encounter" program

allows participants to observe these intelligent and friendly animals close up and to hear an interesting talk by a member of the animal-care staff. The world's largest dolphin facility, the conditions aren't cramped here, and dolphins can swim out to sea. You can step onto a shallow wading platform and interact with the dolphins; the experience costs \$75 and is an educational, fun adventure for all ages. Children under 3 participate free, while it costs \$38 for those aged 4 to 12. You'll want to bring your camera. Dolphins also swim out from Sanctuary Bay daily to interact with certified scuba divers in a "dolphin dive" program, costing \$159.

Swimming with dolphins has its critics and supporters. You may want to visit the Whale and Dolphins Conservation Society's website at www.wdcs.org. For more information about responsible travel in general, check out these websites: Tread Lightly (www.treadlightly.org) and the International Ecotourism Society (www.ecotourism.org).

FISHING

In the waters off Grand Bahama, you can fish for barracuda, snapper, grouper, yellowtail, wahoo, and kingfish, along with other denizens of the deep.

Reef Tours, Ltd., Port Lucaya Dock (☎ 242/373-5880 or 242/373-5891; www.bahamasvg.com/reeftours), offers one of the least expensive ways to go deep-sea fishing around Grand Bahama Island. Adults pay \$90 if they fish, \$45 if they only go along to watch. Four to six people can charter the entire 13m (42-ft.) craft for \$540 per half-day or \$1,050 per whole day. The 9.6m (32-ft.) boat can be chartered for \$375 half-day and \$720 for a whole day. Departures for the 4-hour half-day excursions are daily at 8:30am

Moments Land & Sea Eco-Tours

If you're a nature lover, escape from the casinos and take one of the **East End Adventures** (☎ 242/373-6662; www.bahamasecotours.com) bush and sea safaris. You're taken through dense pine forests and along deserted beaches, going inland on hikes to such sites as blue holes, mangrove swamps, and underground caverns. You may even learn how to crack conch. A native lunch is served on a serene beach in Lightbourne's Cay, a remote islet in the East End. Most of the tour is laid-back, as you can snorkel in blue holes or shell hunt. Safaris are conducted daily between 8am and 5:30pm; the cost is \$110 for adults and \$55 for kids ages 2 to 12.

and 1pm, while the 8-hour full-day excursions leave daily at 8:30am. Bait, tackle, and ice are included in the cost.

GOLF

This island boasts more golf links than any other in The Bahamas. The courses are within 11km (7 miles) of one another, and you usually won't have to wait to play. All courses are open to the public year-round, and clubs can be rented from all pro shops on the island.

Emerald Golf Course, the Mall South, at Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis (☎ 242/350-7000), was the site of The Bahamas National. Open some years back, and more recently, in conjunction with the Ruby course (see below), it's the site of the annual January Grand Bahama Pro-Am Tournament. The course has plenty of trees along the fairways, as well as an abundance of water hazards and bunkers. The toughest hole is the 9th, a par 5 with 545 yards from the blue tees to the hole. In winter, greens fees to either of these courses are \$95 per day, reduced to \$85 in summer.

The championship **Ruby Golf Course**, Sunrise Highway, also at Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis (☎ 242/350-7000), received a major upgrade in 2001 by Jim Fazio Golf Design, Inc. The Ruby course was lengthened to increase the rating and to enhance play. A fully automated irrigation system was also installed. For greens fees, see the Emerald Golf Course, above. It's a total of 6,750 yards if played from the championship blue tees.

Fortune Hills Golf & Country Club, Richmond Park, Lucaya (☎ 242/373-2222), was originally intended to be an 18-hole course, but the back 9 were never completed. You can replay the front 9 for 18 holes and a total of 6,916 yards from the blue tees. Par is 72. Greens fees are \$26 for 9 holes, \$35 for 18. Electric 2-seater carts cost \$38 for 9 and \$48 for 18 holes. Club rental costs \$18 for 18 holes and \$14 for 9 holes.

The best-kept and most-manicured course on Grand Bahama is the **Lucayan Park Golf & Country Club**, Lucaya Beach at Our Lucaya (☎ 242/373-1333). Made over after hurricane Jeanne of 2004, this beautiful course is known for the hanging boulder sculpture at its entrance. Greens are fast, with a couple of par 5s more than 500 yards long, totaling 6,824 yards from the blue tees and 6,488 from the whites. Par is 72. Greens fees are \$120 for 18 holes, including a mandatory shared golf cart. We'll let you in on a secret: Even if you're not a golfer, sample the food at the club restaurant—everything from lavish champagne brunches to first-rate seafood dishes is delicious.

The first golf course to open in The Bahamas since 1969 made its premiere late in 2000. **The Reef Course** (★★) Royal Palm Way, at Our Lucaya (☎ 242/373-1333; www.ourlucaya.com/reef_course.asp), was designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., who called it “a bit like a Scottish course but a lot warmer.” This course requires precise shot-making to avoid its numerous lakes. You’ll find water on 13 of the 18 holes and various types of long grass swaying in the trade winds. The course boasts 6,920 yards of links-style playing grounds. Residents of Our Lucaya, with which the course is associated, pay \$110 for 18 holes or \$50 for 9 holes. Nonresidents are charged \$120 for 18 holes, \$65 for 9 holes.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Pinetree Stables, Beachway Drive, North, Freeport (☎ 242/373-3600 or 305/433-4809; www.pinetree-stables.com), are the best riding stables in The Bahamas, superior to rivals on New Providence Island (Nassau). Pinetree offers trail rides to the beach in winter Tuesday through Sunday at 9 and 11:30am, 9 and 11am off season. The cost is \$75 per person for a ride lasting 2 hours. No children under 8 are allowed. The weight limit per person is 200 pounds.

SEA KAYAKING

If you’d like to explore the waters off the island’s north shore, call **Kayak Nature Tours** (☎ 242/373-2485), who’ll take you on trips through the mangroves, where you can see wildlife as you paddle along. The cost is \$79 per person (children half-price), with lunch included. Double kayaks are used on these jaunts, and children must be at least 3 years of age. For the same price, you can take a 30-minute trip by kayak to an offshore island, with 1½ hours of snorkeling included along with lunch. Call ahead for reservations for either of these tours. A van will pick you up at your hotel at 9am and deliver you back at the end of the tours at 3pm.

SNORKELING & SCUBA DIVING

Serious divers are attracted to such Grand Bahama sites as the Wall, the Caves, Theo’s Wreck, and Treasure Reef. **Theo’s Wreck** (★★) is the most evocative site; it was a freighter that was deliberately sunk off Freeport to attract marine life. Today it does just that, as it teems with everything from horse-eyed jacks to moray eels. Other sites frequented by UNEXSO include Spit City, Ben Blue Hole, Pygmy Caves, Gold Rock, Silver Point Reef, and the Rose Garden. Keep in mind that UNEXSO’s specialty is diving, while Paradise Watersports primarily entertains snorkelers.

Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO) (★★★) (☎ 800/992-DIVE or 242/373-1250; www.unexso.com), one of the premier dive outfitters in The Bahamas and the Caribbean, offers seven dive trips daily, including reef trips, shark dives, wreck dives, and night dives. Divers can even dive with dolphins in the open ocean here—a rare experience offered by very few facilities in the world (see “The Dolphin Experience,” above).

A popular 3-hour learn-to-dive course is offered daily. Over UNEXSO’s 30-year history, more than 50,000 people have successfully completed this course. For \$85, students learn the basics in UNEXSO’s training pools and dive the beautiful shallow reef with their instructor.

6 Seeing the Sights

Several informative tours of Grand Bahama Island are offered. One reliable company is **H. Forbes Charter Services Ltd.**, the Mall at West Sunrise Highway, Freeport (☎ 242/352-9311; www.forbescharter.com). From headquarters in the International Bazaar, this company offers half- and full-day bus tours. The most popular option is the half-day Super Combination Tour, priced at \$25 per adult and \$20 per child age 5 to 12. It includes drive-through tours of residential areas and the island’s commercial center, stops at the island’s deep-water harbor, shopping, and a visit to a wholesale liquor store. Departures are Monday through Saturday at 9am and 1pm; the tour lasts 3½ hours.

See also “Beaches, Watersports & Other Outdoor Pursuits,” earlier, for details on UNEXSO’s Dolphin Experience, and “Shopping,” below, for coverage of the International Bazaar and the Port Lucaya Marketplace.

Lucayan National Park This 16-hectare (40-acre) park, filled with mangrove, pine, and palm trees, contains one of the loveliest, most secluded beaches on Grand Bahama, a long, wide, dune-covered

Finds A Sudsy Look at Grand Bahama

The **Grand Bahama Brewing Co.**, Logwood Road, Freeport (☎ 242/351-5191), offers tours Monday to Friday of its brewery at 10am, 12:30pm, and 4:40pm. In addition to Hammerhead Ales, Lucayan Lager is also made here. Tours cost \$5, but the fee is credited to any lager or ale purchases you might make.

stretch of sandy beach that you'll reach by following a wooden path winding through the trees. Bring your snorkeling gear so you can glimpse the colorful creatures living beneath the turquoise waters of a coral reef offshore. As you wander through the park, you'll cross Gold Rock Creek, fed by a spring from what is said to be the world's largest underground freshwater cavern system. There are 36,000 entrances to the caves—some only a few feet deep. Two of the caves can be seen, because they were exposed when a portion of ground collapsed. The pools in the caves are composed of 2m (6½ ft.) of freshwater atop a heavier layer of saltwater. Spiral wooden steps have been built down to the pools.

The freshwater springs once lured native Lucayans, those Arawak-connected tribes who lived on the island and depended on fishing for their livelihood. They would come inland to get fresh water for their habitats on the beach. Lucayan bones and artifacts, such as pottery, have been found in the caves, as well as on the beaches.

Settlers Way, eastern end of East Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/352-5438. Admission \$3; tickets available only at the Rand Nature Centre (see below). Daily 9am–4pm. Drive east along Midshipman Rd., passing Sharp Rock Point and Gold Rock.

Parrot Jungle's Garden of the Groves *Kids* One of the island's major attractions is this 12-acre (4.8 hectares) garden, which honors its founder, Wallace Groves, and his wife, Georgette. Eleven kilometers (7 miles) east of the International Bazaar, this scenic preserve of waterfalls and flowering shrubs has some 10,000 trees, free-form lakes, footbridges, ornamental borders, lawns, and flowers. Tropical birds flock here, making this a lure for bird-watchers and ornithologists. The new managers—Parrot Jungle of Miami—have introduced a number of animals to the site, including macaws, cockatoos, pygmy goats, potbelly pigs, and American alligators. Other species introduced include the park's first Bahamian raccoons and the white-crowned pigeon, the latter on the endangered species list. The park also has a children's playground. A lovely little nondenominational chapel, open to visitors, looks down on the garden from a hill. **The Palmetto Café** serves snacks and drinks, and a Bahamian straw market is located at the entrance gate. At press time, the garden was closed due to renovations. Please call ahead or check the website for updates.

Midshipman Rd. and Magellan Dr. ☎ 242/373-5668. www.gardenofthegroves.com. Admission \$10 adults, \$7 children 3–10, free for children under 3. Garden and cafe daily 9am–4pm.

Pirates of The Bahamas Beach Theme Park *(Kids)* Islanders think of this amusement park as their Disney World. One of the largest watersports centers in The Bahamas, it features pools for diving and swimming, along with an array of activities such as parasailing, banana boating, snorkeling, kayaking, paddle-boating, and jet-skiing. Children have their own Captain Kidd's Camp with a supervised playground. Something's always happening here, including beach or bonfire parties along with such attractions as an 18-hole minigolf course. Although you don't pay a general admission fee, you are charged for some of the attractions, such as \$6 for the minigolf and varying fees for the watersports. The Bonfire Party Night on Thursday and Sunday, lasting from 5 to 9pm, costs adults \$50, children \$40, including free transportation from your hotel, live entertainment, and an all-you-can-eat buffet dinner. A restaurant and bar are housed on-site here in a wooden structure that evokes a Spanish galleon.

Jolly Roger Dr., Taino Beach. ☎ 242/373-8456. Daily 9am–9pm.

Rand Nature Centre This 100-acre (40-hectare) pineland sanctuary, located 3km (2 miles) east of the center of Freeport, is the regional headquarters of The Bahamas National Trust, a nonprofit conservation organization. Nature trails highlight native flora and “bush medicine” and provide opportunities for bird-watching; as you stroll, keep your eyes peeled for the lush blooms of tropical orchids or the brilliant flash of green and red feathers in the trees. Wild birds abound at the park. You can join a bird-watching tour on the first Saturday of every month at 8am. Other features of the nature center include native animal displays, an education center, and a gift shop selling nature books and souvenirs.

E. Settlers Way. ☎ 242/352-5438. Admission \$5 adults, \$3 children 5–12, free for children under 5. Mon–Fri 9am–4pm.

7 Shopping

Shopping hours in Freeport/Lucaya are generally Monday to Saturday 9am to 6pm. However, in the International Bazaar, hours vary widely. Most places are open Monday through Saturday. Some begin business daily at 9:30am; others don't open until 10am, and closing time ranges from 5:30 to 6pm.

THE INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR

One of the world's most unusual shopping complexes, the International Bazaar, at East Mall Drive and East Sunrise Highway, covers

4 hectares (10 acres) in the heart of Freeport. Although it remains one of the most visited sites in The Bahamas, it frankly is a bit tarnished today and is due for a makeover. Its rising competitor, the Port Lucaya Marketplace (see below), is looking better every day. Buses at the entrance of the complex aren't numbered, but those marked INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR will take you right to the gateway at the Torii Gate on West Sunrise Highway. The fare is \$1. Visitors walk through this much-photographed gate, a Japanese symbol of welcome, into a miniature World's Fair setting (think of it as a kitschy Bahamian version of Epcot). Continental cafes and dozens of shops loaded with merchandise await visitors. The bazaar blends architecture and cultures from some 25 countries, each recreated with cobblestones, narrow alleys, and authentically reproduced architecture. True, it's more theme-park-style shopping than authentic Bahamian experience, but it's fun nevertheless. In the nearly 100 shops, you're bound to find something that is both unique and a bargain. You'll see African handcrafts, Chinese jade, British china, Swiss watches, Irish linens, and Colombian emeralds—and that's just for starters.

On a street patterned after the Ginza in Tokyo, just inside the entrance to the bazaar, is the Asian section. A rich collection of merchandise from the Far East can be found here, including cameras, handmade teak furniture, fine silken goods, and even places where you can have clothing custom-made.

To the left, you'll find the Left Bank of Paris, or at least a reasonable facsimile, with sidewalk cafes where you can enjoy a café au lait and perhaps a pastry under shade trees. In the Continental Pavilion, you can find leather goods, jewelry, lingerie, and gifts at shops with names such as Love Boutique.

A narrow alley leads you from the French section to East India, where shops sell such exotic goods as taxi horns and silk saris. Moving on from the India House, past Kon Tiki, you arrive in Africa, where you can purchase carvings or a colorful dashiki.

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For a taste of Latin America and Iberia, make your way to the Spanish section, where serapes and piñatas hang from the railings, and imports are displayed along the cobblestone walks.

Many items sold in the shops here are said to cost 40% less than if you bought them in the United States, but don't count on that. If

you were contemplating a big purchase, it's best to compare prices before you leave home. You can have purchases sent anywhere you wish.

The **Straw Market**, next door to the International Bazaar, contains items with a special Bahamian touch—colorful baskets, hats, handbags, and place mats—all of which make good gifts or souvenirs from your trip. (Be aware that some items sold here are actually made in Asia.)

Here's a description of the various shops in the bazaar.

ART

Flovin Gallery This gallery sells original Bahamian and international art, frames, lithographs, posters, and Bahamian-made Christmas ornaments and decorated coral. It also offers handmade Bahamian dolls, coral jewelry, and other gift items. Another branch is at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (see below). In the Arcade section of the International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-7564.

CRYSTAL & CHINA

Island Galleria There's an awesome collection of crystal here. Fragile, breakable, and beautiful, it includes works of utilitarian art in china and crystal by Waterford, Aynsley, Lenox, Dansk, and Swarovski. Anything you buy can be carefully packed and shipped. Another branch is located in the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ 242/373-4512). International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-8194.

FASHION

Cleo's Boutique This shop offers everything from eveningwear to lingerie. A warm and inviting destination, Cleo's prides itself on capturing the Caribbean woman in all of her moods. You can also find a wide array of costume jewelry beginning at \$25 per piece. International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-3340.

HANDCRAFTS & GIFTS

Caribbean Cargo One of the island's best, this gift shop specializes in such items as picture frames, T-shirts that change color in sunlight, and a variety of other clothes. Another branch of this store is at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ 242/373-7950). In the Arcade section of the International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-2929.

Far East Traders Look for Asian linens, hand-embroidered dresses and blouses, silk robes, lace parasols, smoking jackets, and kimonos here. A branch is located inside the Island Galleria at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ 242/373-8697). International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-9280.

Paris in The Bahamas This shop contains the biggest selection of luxury goods under one roof in the International Bazaar. The staff wears couture black dresses like you might have expected in Paris, and everywhere there's a sense of French glamour and conspicuous consumption. You can find both Gucci and Versace leather goods for men and women; crystal from Lalique, Baccarat, Daum, and Kosta Boda, and a huge collection of cosmetics and perfumes. International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-5380.

Unusual Centre Where else can you get a wide array of items made of walrus skin or goods made from exotic feathers such as peacock? There's another branch at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ 242/373-7333). International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-3994.

JEWELRY

Colombian Emeralds International This branch of the world's foremost emerald jeweler offers a wide array of precious gemstone jewelry and one of the island's best watch collections. Careful shoppers will find significant savings over U.S. prices. The outlet offers certified appraisals and free 90-day insurance. Two more branches are at the Port Lucaya Marketplace (☎ 242/373-8400). South American section of the International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-1138. www.dutyfree.com.

PERFUMES & FRAGRANCES

The Perfume Factory Fragrance of The Bahamas This is the top fragrance producer in The Bahamas. The shop is housed in a model of an 1800s mansion, in which visitors are invited to hear a 5-minute commentary and to see the mixing of fragrant oils. There's even a "mixology" department where you can create your own fragrance from a selection of oils. The shop's well-known products include Island Promises, Goombay, Paradise, and Pink Pearl (with conch pearls in the bottle). The shop also sells Guanahani, created to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first landfall, and Sand, the leading Bahamian-made men's fragrance. At the rear of the International Bazaar. ☎ 242/352-9391. www.perfumefactory.com.

PORT LUCAYA MARKETPLACE

Port Lucaya Marketplace on Seahorse Road is a shopping and dining complex set on 2.4 hectares (6 acres). Free entertainment, such as steel-drum bands and strolling musicians, adds to a festival atmosphere. A boardwalk along the water makes it easy to watch the frolicking dolphins.

The complex rose on the site of a former Bahamian straw market, but the craftspeople and their straw products are back in full force after having been temporarily dislodged.

The waterfront location is a distinct advantage. Many of the restaurants and shops overlook a 106-slip marina, home of a “fantasy” pirate ship featuring lunch and dinner/dancing cruises. A variety of charter vessels are also based at the Port Lucaya Marina, and dockage at the marina is available to visitors coming by boat to shop or dine.

Androsia This is the Port Lucaya outlet of the famous batik house of Andros Island. Its designs and colors capture the spirit of The Bahamas. Fabrics are handmade on the island of Andros. The store sells quality, 100%-cotton resort wear, including simple skirts, tops, jackets, and shorts for women, and it also offers a colorful line of children’s wear. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8387.

Bandolera The staff can be rather haughty here, but despite its drawbacks, the store carries a collection of chic women’s clothing that’s many cuts above the usual run of T-shirts and tank tops that are the norm within many of its competitors. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-7691.

Flovin Gallery II This branch of the art gallery located in the Port Lucaya Marketplace sells a collection of oil paintings (both Bahamian and international), along with lithographs and posters. In its limited field, it’s the best in the business. It also features a number of gift items, such as handmade Bahamian dolls, decorated corals, and Christmas ornaments. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8388.

Harley-Davidson of Freeport This is one of only two registered and licensed Harley outlets in The Bahamas. You can special order a motorcycle if you feel flush with funds from a casino, but it’s more likely that you’ll content yourself with T-shirts, leather vests, belts, caps, sunglasses, and gift items. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8269.

Jeweler’s Warehouse Bargain hunters looking for good buys on discounted, closeout 14-karat gold and gemstone jewelry should come here. Discounts range up to 50%, but the quality of many of these items remains high. Guarantees and certified appraisals are possible. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-8401.

Les Parisiens This outlet offers a wide range of fine jewelry and watches. It also sells crystal, Versace wear, and perfumes, including the latest from Paris. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 242/373-2974.

UNEXSO Dive Shop This premier dive shop of The Bahamas sells everything related to the water—swimsuits, wet suits, underwater cameras, video equipment, shades, hats, souvenirs, and state-of-the-art diver's equipment. Port Lucaya Marketplace. ☎ 800/992-3483 or 242/373-1244.

8 Grand Bahama After Dark

Many resort hotels stage their own entertainment at night, and these shows are open to the general public.

ROLLING THE DICE

Casino at Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya We call this casino the best on the island. It far exceeds the glamour of its rival casino in Freeport. The casino's 30 tables offer guests their choice of games, ranging from baccarat to Caribbean stud poker. Blackjack and roulette are also popular games of chance here; for the frugal gambler, some 400 slot machines await. The casino is open daily from 10am to 2am or later. Entrance is free. The Westin & Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333.

Royal Oasis Casino Most of the nightlife in Freeport/Lucaya centers around this glittering, giant, Moroccan-style palace, one of the largest casinos in The Bahamas and the Caribbean. Under this Moorish-domed structure, visitors play games of chance and attend Las Vegas-inspired floor shows. Open daily 10am to 2am. Entrance is free. In the Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino at the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/350-7000.

THE CLUB & BAR SCENE

Located in the center of the **Port Lucaya Marketplace** waterfront restaurant and shopping complex, **Count Basie Square** contains a vine-covered bandstand where the best live music on the island is performed on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from about 7:30 to 8pm. And it's free! The square honors the "Count," who used to have a grand home on Grand Bahama. Steel bands, small Junkanoo groups, and even gospel singers from a local church are likely to be heard performing here, their voices or music wafting across the 50-slip marina. You can sip a beer or a tropical rum concoction at one of the bars in the complex. (See "Where to Dine," earlier in this chapter, for details on a few of these, including **Fatman's Nephew** and **Shenanigan's Irish Pub**.)

John B. Lounge Inside a formidable pile, this club offers some of the best live entertainment on the island. At the outdoorsy John B.

Lounge, live music is presented Friday to Sunday. The bar lounge and adjoining dance club are open nightly from 9pm to 2am. Most visitors attend, however, for the Goombay production on Tuesday and Saturday. If you want dinner and a show, arrive at 6:30pm; otherwise, showtime is at 7:30pm. The cost of both is \$45. Or you can attend just to see the show, paying from \$5 per drink. In the Crowne Plaza Golf Resort & Casino in the Royal Oasis, the Mall at W. Sunrise Hwy. ☎ 242/350-7000.

Prop Club At this action-oriented sports bar and dance club, each night something different is happening: karaoke on Tuesday and Thursday, sumo wrestling on Wednesday, cultural show nights on Thursday, island “jam nights” on Friday, and ’70s revival nights on Saturday. But also expect a “get down with the DJ” snooze-a-thon on Sundays, and game nights on slow Mondays. The highlight is the cultural show with a live Junkanoo finale. You can also dine here, enjoying the likes of coconut shrimp, blackened grouper, and sirloin steak, paying from \$10 for a full meal. For decor, as the name suggests, remnants of an old airplane and antique propellers adorn the walls. The kitchen is open daily from noon to 10pm, but the bar is open noon to 1am. The DJ arrives at 10pm every night. The Sheraton at Our Lucaya, Royal Palm Way. ☎ 242/373-1333.