

The Best of The Bahamas

The Bahamas is one of the most geographically complicated nations of the Atlantic. A coral-based archipelago, it is composed of more than 700 islands, 2,000 cays (pronounced “keys,” from the Spanish word for small islands), and hundreds of rocky outcroppings that have damaged the hulls of countless ships since colonial days.

But don't worry: We're here to help you plan the perfect getaway. In this chapter, you'll find clear and concise lists of The Bahamas' best beaches, honeymoon resorts, family vacations, and restaurants.

For more information on choosing the island that best suits your taste and budget, refer to “The Islands in Brief” in chapter 2. There, we'll explain the pros and cons of each island in detail.

1 The Best Beaches

- **Cable Beach** (New Providence Island): The glittering shoreline of Cable Beach has easy access to shops, casinos, restaurants, watersports, and bars. It's a sandy 6.5km-long (4-mile) strip, with a great array of facilities and activities. See p. 78.
- **Cabbage Beach** (Paradise Island): Think Vegas in the tropics. It seems as if most of the sunbathers dozing on the sands here are recovering from the previous evening's partying, and it's likely to be crowded near the megahotels. But you can find a bit more solitude on the beach's isolated northwestern extension (Paradise Beach), which is accessible only by boat or on foot. Lined with palms, sea grapes, and casuarinas, the sands are broad and stretch for at least 3km (2 miles). See p. 121.
- **Xanadu Beach** (Grand Bahama Island): Grand Bahama has 97km (60 miles) of sandy shoreline, but Xanadu Beach is most convenient to Freeport's resort hotels, several of which offer shuttle service to Xanadu. There's more than a kilometer of white sand and (usually) gentle surf. Don't expect to have

Xanadu to yourself, but if you want more quiet and privacy, try any of the beaches that stretch from Xanadu for many miles in either direction. See p. 160.

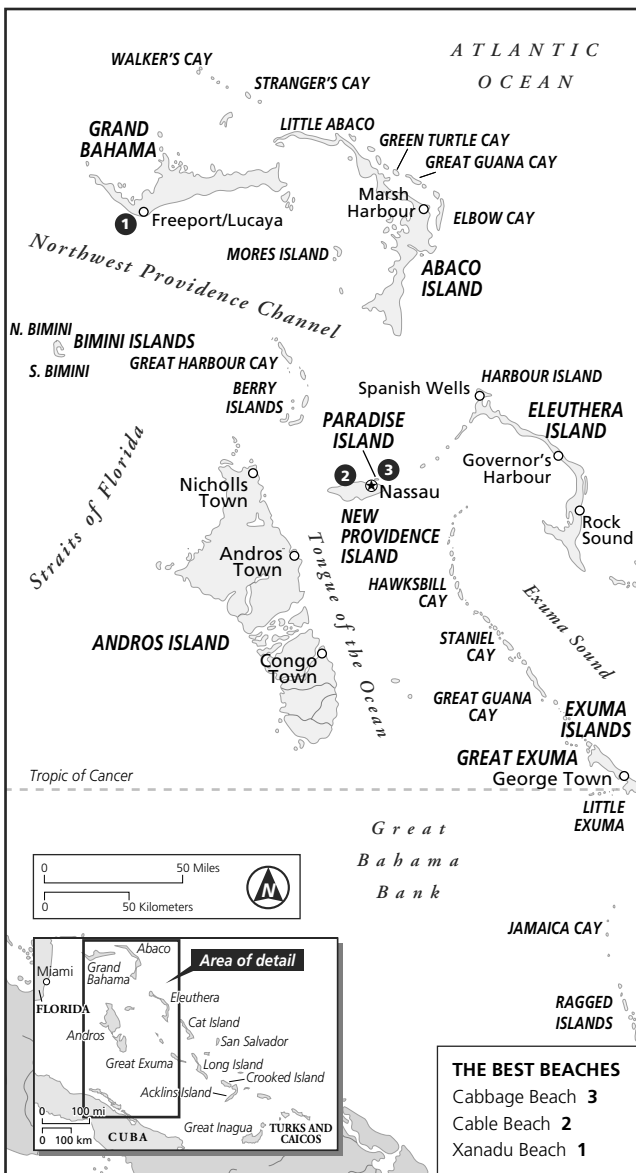
2 The Best Honeymoon Resorts

- **Sandals Royal Bahamian Hotel & Spa** (Cable Beach, New Providence Island; ☎ **800/SANDALS** or 242/327-6400; www.sandals.com): This Jamaican chain of couples-only, all-inclusive hotels is a honeymooners' favorite. The Bahamas' branch of the chain is more upscale than many of its Jamaican counterparts, and it offers 27 secluded honeymoon suites with semiprivate plunge pools. Staff members lend their experience and talent to on-site wedding celebrations; Sandals will provide everything from a preacher to flowers, as well as champagne and a cake. It's more expensive than most Sandals resorts, but you can usually get better prices than the official "rack rates" through a travel agent or a package deal. See p. 60.
- **One&Only Ocean Club** (Paradise Island; ☎ **800/321-3000** in the U.S. only, or 242/363-2501; www.oneandonlyresorts.com): It's elegant, low-key, and low-rise, and it feels exclusive. The guests include many older honeymoon couples. With waterfalls, fountains, reflecting pools, and a stone gazebo, the Ocean Club's formal terraced gardens were inspired by the club's founder (an heir to the A&P fortune) and are the most impressive in The Bahamas. At the center is a French cloister, with carvings from the 12th century. See p. 106.
- **Old Bahama Bay** (Grand Bahama Island; ☎ **800/444-9469** in the U.S., or 242/350-3500; www.oldbahamabay.com): Perfect for honeymooners seeking a quiet hideaway in a boutique-style hotel with cottages adjacent to a marina. The casinos, entertainment, shopping, and dining of Freeport/Lucaya are 40km (25 miles) away, but here you can sneak away for luxury, solitude, and romance. See p. 146.

3 The Best Family Vacations

- **Sheraton Cable Beach Hotel** (Cable Beach, New Providence Island; ☎ **800/325-3535** or 242/327-6000; www.sheraton.com/cablebeach): A family could spend their entire vacation on the grounds of this vast resort. There's a pool area that features the most lavish artificial waterfall this side of Tahiti; a health club at

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the nearby Crystal Palace that welcomes both guests and their children; Camp Junkanoo, with supervised play for children 3 through 12; and a long list of in-house activities that includes dancing lessons. Major changes and redevelopment are planned for this resort. See p. 62.

- **Atlantis Paradise Island Resort & Casino** (Paradise Island; ☎ 800/ATLANTIS in the U.S., or 242/363-3000; www.atlantis.com): This is one of the largest hotel complexes in the world, with endless rows of shops and watersports galore. Both children and adults will enjoy the 5.6-hectare (14-acre) sea world with waterslides, a lagoon for watersports, white sandy beaches, and underground grottoes plus an underwater viewing tunnel and 240m (787 ft.) of cascading waterfalls. Its children's menus and innovative, creative children's programs are the best in The Bahamas and perhaps even in the Caribbean. See p. 100.
- **Best Western Castaways Resort & Suites** (Grand Bahama Island; ☎ 800/780-7234 in the U.S., or 242/352-6682; www.bestwestern.com): Here's a good choice for families on a budget. The pagoda-capped lobby is set a very short walk from the ice-cream stands, souvenir shops, and fountains of the International Bazaar. Children under 12 stay free in their parents' room, and the in-house lounge presents limbo and fire-eating shows several evenings a month. The hotel offers a babysitting service and a free shuttle to Williams Town Beach. See p. 138.

4 The Best Restaurants

- **Sun and . . .** (Nassau, New Providence Island; ☎ 242/393-1205) has made a comeback after being closed for many years. Once again, it is the leading independent choice on New Providence Island, serving a finely honed international cuisine. It's a throw-back to Nassau in its grand heyday. Originally built in the 1930s as a private residence, it lies in an upscale residential neighborhood east of the center of Nassau. See p. 68.
- **Moso** (in the Wyndham Nassau Resort, Cable Beach, New Providence Island; ☎ 242/327-6200) is the best Asian restaurant on island. A well-trained staff here has learned the secrets of the cuisines of the Far East, and they dispense an array of some of the best known and tastiest dishes including teriyaki specialties. See p. 75.

- **Nobu** (the Atlantis Paradise Island Resort's Royal Towers; Paradise Island; ☎ 242/363-3000) brings a member of this celebrated chain to The Bahamas. It's the most talked-about and arguably the best restaurant on island, attracting a string of celebrities. The setting is glamorous and the cuisine is top-rated, prepared either with market-fresh ingredients or exotic products shipped in. See p. 116.
- **Dune** (in the One&Only Ocean Club, Paradise Island; ☎ 242/363-2501, ext. 64739): The most cutting-edge restaurant in either Paradise Island or Nassau, Dune is the creation of French-born restaurant guru Jean-Georges Vongerichten, the moving force behind several of New York City's top dining spots. Every dish served here is something special—from shrimp dusted with orange powder to chicken and coconut milk soup with shiitake cakes. See p. 114.
- **Bahamian Club** (Paradise Island; ☎ 242/363-3000): A notch down from the superb Dune, this establishment is nevertheless one of the leading restaurants in The Bahamas and our favorite at the sprawling megaresort of Atlantis. Strictly upscale, it presents superb French and international cuisine against a backdrop that evokes the British Colonial era. The restaurant serves the island's finest cuts of meats. See p. 112.