

General Trip info

Map

Trip Code: IITMC

Trip Length: 7

Trip starts in: Marsh Harbour - Elbow Cay

Trip ends in: Marsh Harbour

Meals:

Accommodation: Yacht 6 Nights

Transport: Yacht

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

Marsh Harbour - Elbow Cay

Welcome to paradise! White beaches, blue skies and even bluer water is what you have to look forward to for the next week. Oh, and maybe a little fishing, snorkelling, kayaking, paddle boarding and hoisting the sails. The Bahamas [along with the Turks & Caicos] form the Lucayan Archipelago which covers an area in excess of 14,000 km and over 29 islands, 660 cays and nearly 2,400 islets making the Bahamas a true sailor's paradise. The archipelago was named after the first known inhabitants the Lucayans, an indigenous people who were the first Americans to come into contact with Christopher Columbus. The most western reach of the Bahamas is Bimini which is 80 km from Florida while Cay Sal Bank is only 50 km from the coast of Cuba, making it closer to Cuba than its nearest Bahamian island neighbour. Our trip starts in Marsh Harbour, the main town on the Abaco Islands. The Abacos chain is formed in a boomerang shape and stretches nearly 210 kms from Walkers Cay in the north, to Hole-in-the-Wall in the south. Abaco is the second largest island in the Bahamas and Marsh Harbour, our starting point, is the 8th largest town in the Bahamas with a population of 5,300. Marsh Harbour has all the available services required to provision yachts as well as post offices, supermarkets and banks [please refer to Money Matters for information on ATM's and credit cards]. The outer cays and islands of the Abacos create naturally protected waters commonly referred to as the Sea of Abaco. The temperatures in the island chain are generally cooler than the other islands with summer temperatures average 26.5°C to 29.4°C. Your group will meet at the Marina at 3pm for a group meeting which includes a detailed safety briefing and an introduction to your home for the next week, S/V Abel.. The first port of call after the briefing is the local supermarket to buy supplies for your trip. For the ease of group meals prepared on board [breakfast, snacks and at least one lunch or dinner] we recommend travellers contribute to a kitty. For more information see Money Matters. If you have any special dietary requirements, please make sure you notify us at the time of booking so we can accommodate your requests. After the formalities over the skipper will take you on an orientation walk of Marsh Harbour before settling down to watch your first Bahamian sunset. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant.

Day 2 - 6

The Abacos Islands

After an early breakfast we'll set sail. Please note The beauty of sailing is that each day is unique and, while we have a destination to reach, if the weather changes or something takes the group's fancy, we are flexible on the day's itinerary. The itinerary is subject to change and may vary depending on weather and berth availability. Your skipper will make the final call to ensure your safety at all times. **ELBOW CAY** Tahiti Beach Framed by a grove of coconut palms, Tahiti Beach is a white sand beach on the the southern tip of Elbow Cay. Because catamarans have a shallow draft you are able to step off the boat and wade through crystal blue waters onto Tahiti Beach. This is the perfect first stop on our sailing adventure, you can choose from a quiet stroll along the palm fringed shore, a dip in the crystal-blue waters, a paddle, or you might want to don a snorkel and mask and try to spot a sea turtle. The picturesque Hope Town Lighthouse is visible from the beach. Hope Town Hope Town, or Great Harbour as it was formally known, is a small colonial township and is most famous for it's candy stripe lighthouse. Many of the buildings that you will see in Hope Town and the lighthouse are fine examples of Loyalist architecture. The 'Loyalists' were American colonists who were loyal to the British flag who fled their newly independent nation and settled in Hope Town. There are a number of food markets, boutiques, museums and restaurants located around the harbour and there is great snorkelling directly off the beach. **Elbow Cay Lighthouse** The British Imperial Lighthouse Service built this lighthouse to mark the Elbow Cay Reef during the 1860's. Hope Towner's at the time resented this and opposed the project as they saw it as a direct threat to their salvage business. Despite their efforts the lighthouse at Hope Town went into operation in 1863. It is one of the only two remaining beacons saved from automation, a process vigorously opposed by residents. Extraordinary efforts are undertaken by the local residents to secure spare parts for the light apparatus most of which are no longer manufactured. **MAN-O-WAR CAY** Man-O-War settlement is small, peaceful and well- kept town; its clean, narrow streets are used by pedestrians, motorbikes and golf-carts. The houses are mostly wooden and are painted in a variety of pastel colors. It is also a disciplined community in that no alcoholic beverages are sold on the cay and local grocers were encouraged to cease the sale of tobacco products. **GREAT GUANA CAY** Set with a back drop of a beautiful Atlantic long white beach Great Guana Cay is that perfect spot for those iconic white sand beach shots that grace the pages of glossy travel magazines. Great Guana is surrounded by coral reefs and it is also home to many migrating birds and species endemic to the Abacos. Loggerhead, Green and Hawksbill turtles nest on the islands. **NONAME CAY** Although there is no formal settlement on Noname Cay we may not be alone when we visit as the cay is home to pigs, swimming pigs to be in fact. Left behind by the original settlers or having made their own way from shipwrecks or other islands, the once feral pigs have made their home at Noname Cay. **GREEN TURTLE CAY** Green Turtle Cay is home to the settlement of New Plymouth. With typical Bahamian architecture, you can walk from one end of town to the other in less than 15 minutes. Known for its pristine white beaches and crystal clear waters it's the perfect spot for kayaking and snorkelling. **TREASURE CAY** Whenever there is a list of the 'Top beaches in the world' Treasure Cay usually gets a mention. The sand is incredible, soft, fine and white. The water, clear, all shades of blue and full of marine life. For these reasons there are a number of high end resorts and hotels on the islet.

Day 7

Marsh Harbour

After a delicious breakfast and maybe one last swim, snorkel or paddle, we head back to Marsh Harbour where, sadly, our Bahamas sailing adventure comes to an end at about 10am. If you are flying out today, we recommend not to book a flight prior to 12 noon.

Additional Information

Notes for Bahamas

The idyllic islands of the Bahamas are a veritable paradise! The dazzling blue ocean, the sparkling white beaches, and of course the stunning weather make for one of the most spectacular destinations in the world. Perfect for sailing around the colourful reefs and exploring birdlife-rich mangroves, a boat adventure around some of the country's 700 islands will immerse you in a world of blissful Caribbean charm!

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries will not need a visa to enter The Bahamas as a tourist for up to 3 months. Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required, if it is then you will need to obtain it in advance.

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited as described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, and information about kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

These notes are updated regularly, so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

The planned route and itinerary is the intention, but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed. It occasionally happens that there must be a change to our planned itinerary - this may be for a variety of reasons, such as climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions. By their very nature, adventure travel needs to be approached flexibly and some regions can be unpredictable. Some Imaginative Traveller journeys go through off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure and less stringent safety standards than we are used to at home.

Our Groups

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are usually an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that adventure travel should be open to as many people as possible and so although some trips have a minimum age limit, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you. One of the highlights of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

The maximum group size depends on the operator and the style of transport, but will usually be a maximum of 15-16 or up to 21-22 on our overland journeys.

Accommodation

Imaginative Traveller trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether staying in hotels, hostels, homestays or campsites, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and those that book together will usually be able to share accommodation.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available in the region you are travelling; hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be twin-share. Hostels, gers and yurts are nearly always multi-share.

Many trips will feature a stay in a local homestay or community tourism initiative, allowing us to experience a slice of local life in the areas we travel through. On our overland trips, we will sometimes camp in campsites ranging from rather basic or even wild camps to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your leader at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible.

Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip

please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with the style of travel on that trip. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Imaginative Traveller or our partner operators reserve the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

Altitude

Imaginative Traveller offers some trips that travel to above 2,800m altitude above sea level - it is imperative at high altitudes to drink lots of water to stay hydrated, be careful not to get burned by the sun, and try not to exert yourself too much. Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor.

Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate - please see each country's note above for details. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

Malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases

Some areas we travel to have the risk of contracting malaria. If this applies to your trip, please get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements and to find the right option for you. If advised by your doctor to take a course of anti-malarial tablets, please complete the course as instructed as malaria can often manifest itself upon your return home if the course is not followed.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever, Chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, use a mosquito net where possible and use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: www.nathnac.org or www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive,

up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

Activities

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Please note that certain activities may not be available on your particular visit if they are overbooked, underbooked, out of season, or for any other reason - the list of activities is made according to our latest information and in the best faith, but please be aware that things may change between our last visit and your arrival. Please also note that it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, and it is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there.

If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip. This can be arranged by Imaginative Traveller through our website or by contacting our team of travel consultants.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should have a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £2,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000. Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, tablets, phones etc. Please note that Imaginative Traveller and our partner operators are not responsible for your personal effects and are not insured for their loss.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should cover you for any activities that you may wish to participate in, such as white-water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc. and the 24-hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries if applicable (e.g. they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or trekking in the Andes). If you are travelling to high altitude (such as embarking on a trek to the summit of Kilimanjaro), please make sure that this is also covered.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not suitable with adventure travel to remote areas. Many credit card medical insurance policies are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

Please also check the age limits on any policy you wish to take out and make sure that you thoroughly inform the insurance company of any pre-existing conditions.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or emergency passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Transfers

At Imaginative Traveller we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? We can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

Responsible Tourism

Imaginative Traveller is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We recognise that we are guests of local communities and strive to make them benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Imaginative Traveller's responsible tourism policy on our website.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

customer-relations@imtrav.net

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.