

**S**un and sand, moderate weather and friendly people who love Canadians—these islands rock! If you only read one thing before you go, read and take this Inside Scoop with your documents. It's packed with tips to pave your way.

**travel:** delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

### Dress Up or Down

Island dress codes are less casual than some other warm-weather destinations. With moderate temperatures and breezes, pack a jacket. Locals observe Sundays as a religious day: in town, be respectful, cover up that bikini and keep hats off in restaurants.

**Tip:** many restaurants require men to wear a jacket and long pants or—Bermuda shorts.

### Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- cancellation/interruption and medical insurance
- airport transfers
- sites and specialties
- differences between hotels and housekeeping cottages.

**Maritime Travel**

We Know Travel Best.™

# Maritime Travel

## Inside Scoop:

# BAHAMAS & BERMUDA

**Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey**

**C**ome to the islands for miles of pink-hued beaches and classic turquoise waters (really! just like those beach and ocean photos in travel brochures!). Some helpful tips:

- Be realistic: we know you want value for money in balancing amenities and choices with your budget. No matter what your budget is, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are requests only, such as for room location and bed type. Unless you've paid for an oceanview room, be aware these are premium (why upgrade fees apply).
- Both islands observe Daylight Saving Time.
- Most people speak English.
- Electric service is 120 volts/60Hz, so you won't need adaptors. Most hotels provide hair dryers so save that space for souvenirs.
- Make sure you have a valid passport [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp)
- Banks (and hotels) change money and generally accept Canadian debit cards. Funds both islands are on par as the US dollar with cash and travellers cheques accepted.
- Inform your credit card company of the dates you'll be away.
- For cell phone use, check with your provider (beware of roaming charges!).
- Internet access is affordable, also at hotels.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

**Tip:** If you're not staying at an all-inclusive, meal costs add up so find a local food market and buy food and drinks for a picnic.



### Don't Leave Without Insurance

We strongly recommend Maritime Travel insurance such as cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. Insurance is an investment in your peace of mind—if declined, you're responsible for all expenses.

### Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage and doctor's phone number and documents on medical conditions.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available before airport security), then place the bag in the tray. You may take formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years old (0-24 months).

In carry-on, pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg over borders). Items permitted in carry-on include: cell phones, laptops, canes, disposable razors, umbrellas and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include knives, corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats, racquets and pool cues. Check with your airline for their restrictions and [www.catsa.gc.ca/home](http://www.catsa.gc.ca/home).

### Scooter/Moped Rentals

In Bermuda, tourists can't rent cars so renting motorized scooters/mopeds is popular and makes it easy to get around. But, don't forget standard legal and safety rules. According to travel doctors, motor vehicle incidents are the top cause of death and injury for travelling Canadians—don't get added to the statistics. Unless you hold a valid Canadian driver's license (take it), you are *not covered* even under purchased LeGrow's Travel insurance.

- British rules apply, so drive on the left (a safety concern if you're not used to it). Practice practice practice before going on a road.
- Don't drink any alcohol prior (or during).
- Don't worry about helmet hair! Besides common sense, you must wear a helmet.
- Remember, these are not bicycles—if you must react quickly, you may not have much control. Keep the keys so others—such as children and bad guys—can't drive off.

## Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3 hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served.

**For check-in or carry-on baggage allowances and restrictions**, check your airline’s website or ask your counsellor. Size and weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies by airline. Ask your counsellor about required documentation (such as proof of your return flight). Keep a separate photocopy or cell photo of your passport’s ID page.

**Arriving in Bahamas:** Everyone must fill out/sign an immigration form, keep a portion until departing and pay \$15. The fee is often in your ticket: ask your counsellor (no fee 6 years old/under).



### “Get Packing Checklist” and “General Planning & Packing Tips”

at [www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops](http://www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops)  
 Your sense of adventure & humour!

### Before Leaving For Home

Do a room sweep for belongings. A noon check-out is usual; your hotel might offer late checkout for a fee. Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs: plants, meat/animal products, drugs or endangered species parts. At [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html), click on the Travellers tab, see “Bring Goods Across the Border.” With connections, unless it’s in checked luggage, buy duty free alcohol before your last flight into Canada (and be aware of Canada’s duty free exemption limits).



**Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!**

**Canadian citizens:** Emergency? Canada’s Consulate in Nassau, **Bahamas:** 242-393-2123. The Consulate in **Bermuda** in Hamilton, 441-292-2917. Or call Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca), <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info>

## Bermuda...

...packs an incredible variety in its 21 square miles and its legendary pink-sand beaches are well known. Semi-tropical, it doesn’t have a rainy season. The climate is temperate and moderate, making it a terrific destination year-round (with off-season discounts!). November to March, expect spring-like temperatures (high 60-70sF/20-26C) with virtually no rain. Bermudian culture blends with British heritage in charming towns, with unique cuisine. Whether staying in a housekeeping cottage or 5-star resort, you’ll quickly find out why hospitality here is legendary.

- Explore famous shipwrecks and reefs in an underwater paradise: snorkelling, diving and helmet-diving (family-friendly way to enjoy coral reefs). Try sailing, parasailing, kayaking and even cruising in glass-bottom boats—it’s a magical way to enjoy the ocean.
- With more courses per square mile than any other country, Bermuda is golfing heaven: 9 championship courses, lush fairways and seaside vistas make it hard to concentrate. **Tip:** book well in advance.
- A \$35US departure tax is usually included in the cost of your airline ticket. See [www.bermudatourism.com](http://www.bermudatourism.com).

### Wherever I Hang My Hat (make sure you take one) That’s Home...

**B**y now, you and your counsellor will have discussed and booked exactly what you want: a luxury hotel or the convenience of a housekeeping cottage with cost-effective private amenities and space—an advantage when travelling with family, children and/or friends. Hotels offer worry-free amenities such as room and maid service.

After clearing customs, if on a charter (your counsellor will confirm), meet your rep outside the baggage area for the bus for your hotel. Others might say they’ll drive you and you’ll be reimbursed—this is not true! Before you get on the bus, check your luggage to ensure it’s secure and loaded. Your bus may drop travellers at other resorts (a great way to see other properties). On an off-chance your room isn’t ready when you arrive, start on the fun. If you’ve packed a swimsuit in carry-on or can shed clothes, head to the pool or beach: your hotel’s front desk will hold luggage. If something is broken or your room is unacceptable, immediately notify the front desk.

### The International Language of Courtesy

**D**elays and cancellations are all part of travelling. Indeed, a slower pace is guaranteed in the islands: enjoy it! Tread lightly—on holiday we’re more casual but don’t litter, observe no smoking areas and dispose cigarette butts properly. For buffets, start with small portions. Most staff work long hours—a smile, patience and a kind word are always welcome. When dining out, many places add a 10% to 15% service charge: tip more if you’ve enjoyed the service.

## Bahamas...

...is actually *The Bahamas*, comprised of some 700 islands including rocks and uninhabited cays (pronounced “keys”), 14 of which are main locales. Trade winds blow throughout the islands for a warm, moderate climate which varies little year-round. September to May, temperatures average 70-75F/21-25C with other months at 80-85F/26-30C degrees.

- Harbour Island is famous for the pink sand beaches encircling it.
- Nassau (the main city) has many attractions; music, art and dance is everywhere with the Straw Market and festivals.
- Junkanoo is its wild parade (December 26 to January 1).
- When cruise ships arrive, Nassau gets very busy and “duty free” sales clerks can get assertive...
- On the People-to-People program, experience friendship, culture, history and meals. For a fee (under 12 free), you get transportation to and from the host and other benefits. Ask your counsellor or book at your hotel, [www.bahamas.com/people-to-people](http://www.bahamas.com/people-to-people).
- If you love to snorkel, bring your own gear as some resorts might limit time (or gear might not be as new or clean as you like). See [www.bahamas.com](http://www.bahamas.com).

### Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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