

"The Voice of the Western Skier"



FWSA TURKS & CAICOS SCUBA DIVE TRIP

September 16 - 23, 2023

Basic Cost excluding air travel:

6 Day (17 boat dives) Dive Package	\$ 2,211
Non-Dive Package	\$ 1,945
Single Supplement	\$ 527

Price Includes: East Bay Resort

7 nights Standard Room at East Bay Resort – based on 2 per room
All meals daily (à la carte and buffet)
21 drink alcohol / non-alcohol package
All non-motorized water sports and activities
Resort fees, taxes & staff gratuities (dive gratuities not included)

Dive Package Includes:

6 days of 2 tank morning & 5 days of 1 tank afternoon boat dives
Complimentary use of dive computer

Add-On Costs:

Beachfront Suite	\$ 341 per person (dbl occ)
1 Bedroom Deluxe Beachfront Suite	\$ 442 per person (dbl occ)
2 Bedroom Deluxe Beachfront Suite	\$ 255 per person (quad occ)

Payment Schedule:

Initial deposit	Immediately	\$ 700 per person
2 nd payment	June 1, 2023	\$ 800 per person
Final payment	July 24, 2023	\$ balance

Cancellation Penalties:

Prior to June 16, 2023	\$ 0 per person
June 17, 2023 – July 16, 2023	\$ 100 per person
July 17, 2023 - August 15, 2023	\$ 300 - \$ 500 per person
August 16, 2023 – departure date	no refunds

Travel on this FWSA trip to Turks & Caicos requires a valid Passport. Your Passport must be valid until March 23, 2023 (six months after your return). It is your responsibility to ensure your required travel documents are in order and with you.

DIVE and TRAVEL INSURANCE

FWSA highly recommends that you purchase travel insurance. Roatan Charters offers trip insurance on their website at [Trip Insurance – Roatan Charter](#). Additional travel insurance vendors can be found on FWSA website at <http://www.fwsa.org/Travel/insurance.html>. In addition, all scuba divers will be required to have diving accident insurance through Divers Alert Network (DAN), the premier dive insurance. You can get their insurance info at <http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/>

Location/Geography

Commonly referred to as “The Big South”, the island is a marine paradise best known as the fishing capital of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The 18 square mile island has a brilliant blend of luxury and quaint accommodations

Climate

The average temperature ranges between 85 and 90 degrees (29-32 degrees Celsius) from June to October, sometimes reaching the mid 90's (35 degrees Celsius), especially in the late summer months.

Water Temperature

Warm water averages 82-84° F in summer and 74-78 °F in winter. The water is usually clear with visibility 80-130 feet.

Currency

The U.S. Dollar is the official currency. Credit cards widely accepted.

Electricity

120-volt U.S. style plugs / 60 cycle

Documents

All visitors to Turks & Caicos must present valid passports. Your passport must be valid until March 23, 2024.

Entry Requirements

All visitors to Turks & Caicos must be vaccinated. All visitors 18 and older must show proof of vaccination.

Time Zone

Eastern Standard Time (EST) as the year-round time observed in Turks and Caicos.

Language

Officially English

U.S. Consular Agency

Venture House, Grace Bay Road, Grace Bay, Providenciales
(649) 946-5713

The Turks and Caicos is a British Overseas Territory, located in the Atlantic Ocean and considered a part of the Caribbean region. With more than 40 small islands and cays, the eight inhabited islands are separated into two island groups; to the east of the Turks Island Passage are the Turks Islands of Grand Turk and Salt Cay and the west are the Caicos Islands South Caicos, Middle Caicos, North Caicos, Providenciales, Pine Cay and Parrot Cay. The islands are located 575 miles southeast of Miami, Florida, south of the Bahamas and east of Cuba and the country of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti).

The islands are home to over 31,000 full time residents, and attract more than 1 million tourists annually.

A dive vacation in Turks & Caicos is for those who want pristine turquoise seas, year-round sunshine, and a really good chance of swimming with sea turtles, who can be found in abundance here. Two main features define the diving here: the third largest barrier reef in the world, and excellent sheer walls.

As the country's name suggests, they have two island groups: the *Turks Islands* of Grand Turk and Salt Cay to the east, and the larger *Caicos Islands* archipelago of Providenciales, North Caicos Middle Caicos, East Caicos, South Caicos and West Caicos to the west. The 20-mile wide and 5000-foot deep Columbus Passage divides the two island groups.

The Turks and Caicos had an elected government similar to the structure of the United Kingdom, with the title of Premier being the highest local elected office. As a British Overseas Territory, King Charles III is head of state, and is represented by a Governor appointed by the United Kingdom Crown.

The majority of the population of Turks and Caicos resides on the island of Providenciales. Grand Turk supports the second greatest population, as well as the nation's capital city of Cockburn Town.

Unlike many Caribbean countries, the Turks and Caicos has one of the lowest annual rainfall averages in the region, and consequently a high percentage of sunny days and great weather.

The islands in the Turks and Caicos are generally quite small, with low-elevation terrain. Drought-resistant tropical dry forest and marine mangrove wetlands make up the majority of vegetation in the country.

EAST BAY RESORT

East Bay Resort is located in the Turks and Caicos on the quintessentially Caribbean Island of South Caicos. It is a beachfront resort, and the vast majority of their 86 beachfront suites feature views of the Caribbean Sea and the sugar-white sands of East Bay Beach.

The peaceful setting makes East Bay Resort an ideal place to unwind, rejuvenate, and enjoy effortless relaxation. Adventurous guests have no shortage of options though, and their location within the Admiral Cockburn Land and Sea National Park provides easy access to diving, snorkeling, kayaking, and fishing.

East Bay Resort is located minutes from world-class dive and snorkel sites, and their guests enjoy exclusive access to their PADI dive center, the only dive operation on South Caicos. The renowned South Caicos Wall, known for its dramatic drop from 35 to 7000 feet, is a short boat ride away. The Aquarium, where guests can snorkel in the clear blue waters and experience diverse wildlife firsthand, is minutes from the resort.

In addition to being located on the most beautiful white-sand beach South Caicos has to offer, East Bay Resort offers an abundance of services and conveniences: a beachfront pool, swim-up bar, open-air restaurant, spa, fitness center, tour desk, PADI-certified dive shop, tennis court, free Wi-Fi throughout the property, free airport transfers and more. On East Bay Beach guests have access to free kayaks, paddleboards, and snorkel equipment.

Perched on the most stunning beach in South Caicos, all rooms at East Bay Resort feature breathtaking views of their expansive, private 1.5 mile long beach. East Bay Resort has all the amenities for a great worry-free vacation: private entrances, private balconies, fully-equipped kitchens, AC and free Wi-Fi.

Standard Queen Rooms (5 available) - Modern and comfortable, these 288 square foot air-conditioned rooms feature a queen size bed, bathroom with walk-in shower, coffee maker, microwave, mini-fridge, flat screen TV with cable, complimentary Wi-Fi, and a safety deposit box. These are not beachfront rooms, and they do not have a balcony or kitchen.

Beachfront Suite (4 available) has astonishing ocean views with a full kitchen, beach front living room, and a large balcony overlooking the swimming pool and the beach. These 592 square foot rooms feature:

- King size bed
- Queen size pullout bed in the living room area
- 16-foot ocean front balcony with breathtaking ocean views
- Beautiful patio furniture
- Full bathroom with marble top vanity
- Dining area
- Kitchen equipped with stove, microwave, dishwasher and refrigerator
- Air Conditioning
- Complimentary Cable TV and high-speed internet

One Bedroom Deluxe Beachfront Suites (4 available) include astonishing panoramic ocean views, 992 square feet of living space with full kitchen, ocean front living room, and a large balcony overlooking the swimming pool, beach and the ocean. Maximum occupancy 2 adults and 2 children.

- Queen size bed with a panoramic ocean view and private bathroom
- King size bed in the living room
- 32 feet of beach frontage with breathtaking ocean views
- 16-foot ocean front balcony with beautiful outdoor furniture
- 1 powder room
- Fully equipped kitchen including dishwasher
- Air Conditioning
- Complimentary Cable TV and high-speed internet

One Bedroom Deluxe Beachfront Suites (10 available) include astonishing panoramic ocean views, 992 square feet of living space with full kitchen, ocean front living room, and a large balcony overlooking the swimming pool, beach and the ocean. Maximum occupancy 2 adults and 2 children.

- King size bed with a panoramic ocean view and private bathroom
- Queen size pullout bed in the living room
- 32 feet of beach frontage with breathtaking ocean views
- 16-foot ocean front balcony with beautiful outdoor furniture
- 1 powder room
- Fully equipped kitchen including dishwasher
- Air Conditioning
- Complimentary Cable TV and high-speed internet

Two Bedroom Deluxe Beachfront Suite (1 available) this 1,268 square foot unit features panoramic ocean views and occupies 32 feet of beach frontage. The large 16-foot

oceanfront balcony flows seamlessly to the living area, blurring the line where indoor living ends and outdoor living begins. The grand open concept living area includes a fully equipped kitchen with modern appliances, a dining area, and comfortable living room complete with a queen size sofa bed and flat screen TV with cable television service.

- King size bed in master bedroom with a private bathroom and ocean view
- Queen size bed in second bedroom with a private bathroom
- 32 feet of beach frontage with breathtaking panoramic ocean views
- 16-foot ocean front balcony with beautiful outdoor furnishings
- A large fully equipped kitchen
- A powder room and laundry facility
- Complimentary cable TV and high-speed internet in the living room and the master bedroom
- Air Conditioning
- Hair dryer, iron and ironing board
- Laptop size safety deposit box
- 4'X6' private storage locker

East Bay Resort's culinary vision is a blend of simplicity and sophistication. **BLU Bar & Grill** features an internationally inspired menu incorporating island flavors. The restaurant is open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and features à la carte and buffet dining options. What better way to start the day than breakfast and an ocean view? At night, their talented culinary team presents a wide selection of dishes including fresh-caught seafood, choice cuts of meat, vegetarian options and more.

A delicious selection of libations can be found at **BLU Bar**, which is also located on the main level of the resort and presents equally impressive Caribbean views.

Their beachfront swimming pool is located front and center, and offers stunning views of our two-mile long beach and the turquoise ocean. The pool deck is furnished with comfortable loungers, umbrellas, chairs and tables. It's easy to spend the day here with a good book, in the company of friends and family, or simply to enjoy a leisurely nap.

When it's time to cool off, order a refreshing tropical cocktail from Splash, their swim up pool bar. It is named after an ancient mermaid that was sighted by pirates who visited South Caicos centuries ago. Light meals and snacks can also be ordered and enjoyed poolside.

Whether you are a fitness enthusiast or finally finding time for a long-overdue workout, East Bay Resort's fitness center has the equipment needed to stay active while on vacation.

Enjoy beautiful views while you work out at the resort's gym. Equipment includes exercise bikes, an elliptical machine, fitness stations, and free weights. Why not take your workout outside, and enjoy a game of tennis on our private court? There is no shortage of ways to stay in shape on your vacation! And if none of these options appeals, there is always their two-mile-long stretch of beach for walks or morning runs, and the pool and ocean await if you prefer to swim or snorkel.

Another way to have a relaxing vacation is to visit the **Ayur Spa Turks and Caicos** at the resort. They offer relaxation massages in their treatment room, in the privacy of your own suite, or at the beach where you can listen to the soothing waves.

Their spa therapist will help you choose the right massage treatment to soothe sore muscles or simply to unwind and enhance your Turks and Caicos spa resort experience.

East Bay Resort is located on the island of South Caicos, a beautiful and tranquil island in the Turks & Caicos. Providenciales is the most densely populated island in the Turks & Caicos and home to the Providenciales International Airport (PLS).

The Turks and Caicos are served by numerous airlines, with over 70 flights weekly into Providenciales from North America and Europe.

interCaribbean Airways

The easiest way to get to South Caicos is by catching a scenic 15-minute flight with [interCaribbean Airways](#).

Flights from Providenciales (PLS) to South Caicos (XSC)
Daily at 8:30 AM and 3:45 PM

Flights from South Caicos (XSC) to Providenciales (PLS)
Daily at 9:10 AM and 4:30 PM

To ensure that your travels go smoothly, we recommend booking your preferred interCaribbean flights as soon as your international flights have been arranged.

REEF DIVERS

REEF DIVERS is a full-service scuba diving operator, based at the East Bay Resort on South Caicos. The company is the sole diver operator on South Caicos, and likewise the only company regularly visiting the spectacular reefs off South Caicos, East Caicos, and Ambergris Cay. Reef Divers has a team of PADI and SSI certified dive professionals, and is dedicated to ensuring the safety of divers and protecting the environment, while providing memorable diving adventures and exclusive valet diving services.

Reef Divers offers daily diving to many excellent dive sites on the eastern side of the Caicos Islands, as well as scuba diving instruction and courses, equipment rental, and snorkeling charters. The site most frequented by Reef Divers are those in the incredible [Admiral Cockburn Land and Sea National Park](#), which is right at the doorstep of the dive shop. Upon special request, it's also possible to visit the shear walls of Grand Turk, or the more remote and majestic reef of [East Caicos](#) and *Philips Reef*.

Divers will have great opportunities to see large marine life year-round including several species of Sharks, Turtles, Rays, Eels and Large Schools of Jacks in addition to other diverse reef creatures and fish.

Reef Divers operates custom Newton dive boats, with 42' to 46' length vessels with 16' beams, which are safe, stable, comfortable, and spacious.

Their valet-style service takes the hard work out of your diving experience by handling the heavy lifting and care of your boat dive gear—from your first dive with them through your

last dive. They rinse, dry, and store your BCD and regulator daily, so they're set up and ready for your next day's diving. The only finger you'll have to lift is the one to point out your gear as you relax in the boat, ready to go diving.

Equipment Rental

Reef Divers offer a full array of dive and snorkel gear available for rental on a daily basis. Tanks, weights, and weight belts are included in all Dive Packages.

Nitrox: \$10 per tank / \$170 for 17 boat dives

All prices exclude tax.

Equipment Rental	USD
BCD & Regulator Only (per day)	\$ 35
Shorty Wetsuit (per day)	\$ 10
Wetsuit (per day)	\$ 15
Mask / Fins / Snorkel (per day)	\$ 15
Dive Computer (REQUIRED)	Complimentary

PLEASE NOTE that if your last dive was longer than 6 month ago and less than 2 years, we highly recommend you to do a **Pool Check** > \$40 USD.

If you do at least 6 dives, we offer you the pool check free (even if you have been diving in the past year), so you can check your weights etc. in the pool.

> Depending on your experience and date of your last dive, you might be required to do either a Shallow dive first or do an assessment at the start of the dive.

Scuba Dive Safety

Every diver should carry an audible signal device such as a whistle or Dive Alert horn, along with devices capable of being seen from far away in the day or night, such as a flashing strobe, mirror or dive light, and an inflatable signal tube ("safety sausage").

Every diver is also **required** to have and use a dive computer on each and every dive. Each diver is responsible for his/her own dive profile, bottom times, nitrogen loading and No Decompression Times. In addition, Nitrox divers are responsible for their own PO2 times.

Divers Alert Network:
001-919-684-9111

PROVIDENCIALES

Providenciales is the third largest island in the Turks and Caicos chain and the hub of tourism activity. More commonly known as Provo, the 38 square mile island is home to Grace Bay Beach, recipient of the [World's Best Beach award](#) year after year from several travel and tourism publications. Your vacation experience will begin with your arrival at the

Providenciales International Airport and you can choose to stay in one of the many ultra-luxurious [villas](#), [resorts and hotels](#) throughout the island.

Providenciales Public Beaches

While Grace Bay Beach is renowned for its powder like sand and crystal clear waters, the island also boasts additional unspoiled beaches worth exploring such as Long Bay, Sapodilla Bay, Blue Hills Beach, Pelican Beach, Taylor Bay, amongst others.



Grace Bay Beach, Providenciales

For the discerning traveler, Providenciales guarantees exclusive opulence and luxury as well as serene solitude and unspoiled nature. Whether it's a round of golf at the 18-hole Provo Golf Club, Thursday's Island Fish Fry, indulging in rejuvenating spa treatments, sampling our culinary delights, snorkeling at Smith's Reef or swimming with Jojo the dolphin and his friendly counter parts, there is no shortage of ways to relax and unwind.

SOUTH CAICOS

Commonly referred to as "The Big South", the island is a marine paradise best known as the fishing capital of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The 18 square mile island has a brilliant blend of luxury and quaint accommodations that includes Ocean & Beach Resort, East Bay Resort and the island's only five-star property – Sail Rock Resort.

South Caicos is a quick and impeccable island getaway as it is only a ninety-minute ferry ride or short twenty-minute flight from Providenciales. The close proximity makes the Island ideal for dual island vacations in Turks and Caicos. Visitors are drawn for its fishing, snorkeling and scuba diving along the wall. Go bone fishing in the flats guided by expert fishermen or snorkel right off the immaculate beaches. Head to the heart of the town to enjoy a down-home island meal or treat yourself to a gourmet meal in a restaurant. Experience superior diving at Amos' Wall, Eagle Nest and The Arch.

Ditch your flip flops and prepare to unwind and unplug while making personal connections with the friendly Harbonians (a colloquial term for natives of the island). Spend a day on the water catching seafood for your dinner or visit one of the popular plants to purchase fresh fish for a proper 'sea to table' dining experience. Catch, tag and release turtles with

local tour operators then end your evening with exotic cocktails and dancing to the sound of ripsaw music.

South Caicos is geographically the last island to the east in the Caicos Islands group. The terrain largely consists of low hills and dry bushland vegetation, with central saline wetlands and salt flats.

Due to being bordered on the northern side by the uninhabited East Caicos, and separated from the Turks Islands by the twenty-mile wide *Turks Island Passage* on the other, South Caicos feels a bit more isolated than the rest of the country.

The main settlement on South Caicos is Cockburn Harbour named in 1840 after an official visit by the then Governor of the Bahamas—Sir Francis Cockburn. Many of the older buildings in Cockburn Harbour reflect the British Colonial heritage of the country, with Bermudian architecture and cut limestone block construction.

Currently, the main economic income for South Caicos comes from the fishing industry. Conch, lobster and fish are caught, processed, packed and shipped to the international market.

South Caicos is also home to The School for Field Studies' Center for Marine Resource Studies, which currently occupies the old *Admiral's Arms* hotel building.

South Caicos has had a varied history. According to the theory that Columbus first made landfall on Grand Turk (on his historic 1492 voyage to the New World), South Caicos was probably the second island sighted by him. The island subsequently got its heads start from the fact that it has a sheltered natural deep water harbor, something the other islands in the country really don't naturally offer.

Along with Grand Turk and Salt Cay, South Caicos produced salt by evaporating seawater in shallow ponds. This industry was begun on South Caicos in 1850 when the output from the rest of the country failed to meet global and regional demands. Due to its larger acreage of wetlands, South Caicos eventually came to produce most of the salt exported from the Turks and Caicos. Today, dividing walls, windmills and sluice gates can still be seen in the salinas, along with the Boiling Hole, a unique and natural subterranean tidal passage that was utilized to supply the salinas with seawater for evaporation.



The water catchment area at the abandoned United States Coast Guard LORAN Station, South Caicos.

Over the years, several different ventures were started on South Caicos. Sea sponge farming was tried in the 1930s and was initially somewhat successful, yet a fungus blight disease killed off the sponges and put an end to it. A lobster cannery was also tried. In the 1950s, a Canadian businessman started exporting conch shells to the United States for ornamental purposes. None of these attempts lasted long, and South Caicos has generally experienced a downturn over the last few decades.

The United States Government also used to have an interest in South Caicos. In 1944, the US established an anti-submarine base on the island, along with the first airstrip in the country. Later, the U.S. Coast Guard constructed a [LORAN station](#) on the north end of South Caicos. This site was completed in 1959 and was part of the low-frequency radio signal navigation system that was eventually replaced largely by satellite GPS. Both bases have long been decommissioned, although much of the LORAN station facilities still exist.



South Caicos has many historical buildings, such as this old warehouse from the days of salt production.

A thorough history of South Caicos would have to include the unfortunate mention of narcotics smuggling. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Caribbean was plagued by drug runners on the sea and in the air, and the Turks and Caicos was no exception. Because the Turks and Caicos lies about halfway between Colombia and the United States, and due to the seclusion, the island proved to be a popular refueling stop. Many planes and ships were confiscated by the authorities and it was during this period that South Caicos picked up its nickname of *The Big South*.

One annual event that temporarily swells the population on the island is the *South Caicos Regatta*. This [Caicos Sloop](#) sailboat race is a tradition that commemorates Queen Elizabeth's visit to South Caicos on 1966.

The [Admiral Cockburn Land and Sea National Park](#) is a designated National Park protecting a large portion of the sea and parts of the coast.

CLIMATE

The Turks and Caicos experiences great weather year-round. The climate in the Turks and Caicos perfectly complements the beaches, with sunny days and temperatures ranging from 75° F (24° C) to 90° F (32° C).

Rainfall and cloud cover is statistically low, ocean temperature ranges from 79° F (26° C) to 85° F (29° C), and wind conditions usually vary from calm days to breezy conditions from the eastern trade winds.

BIODIVERSITY

CLOTHING

Clothing at the Caribbean coast is very casual no ties are required anywhere. Some upscale restaurants do have a medium dress code. During the winter months, we suggest you bring light sweater with you. Comfortable, flat-heeled walking shoes, such as sneakers, are recommended all year round so that you can safely explore the archeological zones and islands

CUISINE

As a small archipelago nation, it's no surprise that the traditional cuisine of the Turks and Caicos is centered on seafood.



Until relatively recently, Turks and Caicos was generally a very poor country, and food imports were quite limited. Most of the ingredients that factored into local dishes were caught or raised in the islands. Conch, lobster, fish, and turtle was collected from the ocean, and maize, beans, okra, squash, and plantains were grown in small farm plots. These products were used to create

stews, soups, *johnny cake* cornbread, and fish with *peas n' grits*, which was hominy with legumes.

As trade into the Turks and Caicos increased, the maize hominy was largely replaced by imported rice, which led to peas and rice being the quintessential side for most dishes. Neighboring countries such as the Bahamas and Jamaica have influenced many of the modern popular foods in the Turks and Caicos today, such as deep-fried conch fritters, and jerk chicken.

CULTURE

The Turks and Caicos share many cultural elements with the Bahamas, as many local residents have Bahamian ancestry and have lived or were born in the Bahamas. The Turks and Caicos Islands are geographically part of the Bahamas, and a loose union was proposed in 2009 to link the two countries.

Attempts have been made to encourage the preservation of local culture, such as through cultural awareness programs and the creation of the Chief Cultural Officer post. In 2003 the annual Conch Festival event was also created, which along with a food festival atmosphere incorporates elements of the local culture (through live music and Junkanoo).

Ripsaw is a local music genre developed during slavery times. It consists of scrapping an instrument, such as a screwdriver, over a saw blade to create a scrapping sound. Playing ripsaw is called *ripping the saw*. Common accompaniments are the guitar, drums and triangle. Junkanoo, a Bahamian music genre, was brought back to the islands by returning Turks and Caicos Islander who left to find work in nearby Bahamian Islands.

“Ripsaw Music”. Another name for this type of music is ‘Rake ‘n’ Scrape’. The basic instruments used are the saw, the goatskin drum, the hand accordion, also known locally as the Constentina, hand-made maracas and the acoustic guitar. The main instrument featured is the ordinary carpenter’s handsaw found in any hardware store. The saw is held with either end in a number of ways to produce a bend in the center of the blade. A metal scraper, usually a long nail, a fork or knife or a screwdriver, is raked and scraped over the teeth of the saw to produce a unique percussive scraping sound, this action is called “Ripping the Saw”. Bending the body and ripping the saw in time with the beat of the music produces a wobbled overtone. This gives you the characteristic sound of ripsaw music. Lovey Forbes and his son Corry Forbes are the fore runners in composing and recording

Ripsaw music in the Turks and Caicos.



Lovey Forbes came up with the name “Combina Music” to describe the new mix of Ripsaw and popular foreign music. Jamaican Reggae, Bahamian Calypso and Eastern Caribbean Soca all play a major role in the local music scene. Another popular form of music emerging in Turks & Caicos is Junkanoo.

The exact origin of Junkanoo is not known, but it dates back to the early days of slavery, when the Christmas and New Years holidays were the only times slaves were given any recreational freedom. In the early days, Islanders would wear old clothes painted with bright colors or they would tie colorful strips of ribbons and cloth to their clothes along with other costumes made from cardboard and crepe paper.



In these costumes they would dance to the rhythm of the goatskin drums, cowbells and other handmade percussion instruments, they went house to house singing songs and performing for money, food, candy and drinks.

These days Junkanoo is more organized. Groups from different settlements would compete against each other for the most outrageous costumes or the best drummers and rhythm section. The costumes have become elaborate, depicting different themes and characters.

Junkanoo happens throughout the year for public holidays and local events. Visitors can see the biggest Junkanoo celebrations on the early morning of New Years Day in particular.

The most popular dance style in the Turks & Caicos is “winin” also known as “Wine-up” or “The Wine”. To “wine” is to gyrate the hips from the waist in a circle in time to the beat of the music being played, usually Rip-Saw, Soca or Calypso. More stylized dances such as the “Shati,” which is a waltz dance and the heel and toe polka combine a mix of European and African heritage and are preferred by the older generation. The “Conch Style” is a local dance that is done by stepping and hooking one foot behind the ankle of the other in time to the ripsaw music.

GEOGRAPHY

The Turks and Caicos consists of 40 different islands and cays, only 9 of which are inhabited. The islands of the Turks and Caicos are almost as diverse as its people. From the main tourist center of Providenciales to the quiet and tranquil islands of North and Middle Caicos to the historic Capital of Grand Turk; each one offers a different experience and a unique character but all offer year-round great climate, beaches and underwater activities.

Many small islands and cays found throughout the Turks and Caicos, most of them uninhabited, and some are popular like: Ambergris Cay, Parrot Cay, Pine Cay, Little Iguana, Water Cay and many more.

HISTORY

Turks and Caicos Islands History begins long before Christopher Columbus first set foot on the capital island of Grand Turk during his discovery voyage of the new world in 1492, the islands of the Turks & Caicos were inhabited by Taino and Lucayan Indians. These

original settlers left a rich heritage of seafaring, salt raking and farming, which still lingers on today. Words such as “canoe”, Caribbean and “caicos” are derived from the Arawak language. Even the name of the country comes from these earliest inhabitants. Turks is a reference to the indigenous Turk’s head cactus and Caicos is from the Lucayan term “caya hico” meaning string of islands.



Another peculiarity that has been passed down through the generations is a love of shellfish, particularly conch – which is actually available in abundance to this day, thanks to the work of the Caicos Conch farm, the only commercial conch farm in the world.

For almost 700 years, the Taino and Lucayan Indians were the sole residents of the islands, settling mainly in Middle Caicos and Grand Turk. They lived peacefully and were skilled in

farming, fishing and gardening. They cultivated almost 50 types of plants, some of which can still be found on undeveloped sections of the islands.

Shortly after Columbus arrived in 1492, the Lucayan civilization disappeared and the islands remained sparsely populated for about 30 years. During this time, the salt making industry was born. Bermudians came to Turks & Caicos to rake the salt and take it back to Bermuda. Salt was a precious commodity back then as it was used not only for flavoring food but for preserving it as well. The shallow waters surrounding the islands were ideal for salt raking but treacherous for nautical navigation and more than 1000 ships were wrecked during the journey to and from.



In 1706, the French and the Spanish briefly captured the Turks & Caicos Islands from the Bermudians. Four years later the British reclaimed the islands for Bermuda but in subsequent years the place became primarily a haven for pirates and British Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution. Ultimately, Britain retained the island country by the end of the century as part of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1766, after being controlled by the Spanish, French and British, Turks & Caicos became part of the Bahamas colony and was placed under the Bahamian government. Attempts to integrate the two distinct communities failed and in 1874 after “the Great Bahamas Hurricane” devastated much of the chain of islands, the Turks & Caicos Islands became dependencies to the British Crown Colony of Jamaica.

Jamaica won independence from Britain in 1962 and so Turks & Caicos then became a British Crown colony on its own and still is one today. It was not until the early 1980’s when Club Med Turquoise Resort opened that Providenciales – and Turks & Caicos in general – started to become a viable tourist destination. Since then, increasingly more development has taken shape, and the small, salt raking island country of Turks & Caicos has grown into what is quickly becoming recognized as one of the world’s premier beach destinations.

Though the days when the Lucayans fished and sailed the turquoise waters of Turks & Caicos have given way to live-aboard dive boat operators, commercial fishing and off-shore financial services, their gentle temperament and love of nature can still be felt today, after almost 1200 years. Turks & Caicos is quickly becoming a leading international investment center for the offshore investor. The islands are a “zero tax” jurisdiction and therefore have no taxes on income, capital gains, corporate profits, inheritance or estates.

Today, Turks & Caicos stands on the threshold of an exciting future boasting the fastest growing economy in the Caribbean coupled with strictly controlled development to protect the islands heritage as a pristine sanctuary for both local residents and tourists to enjoy for the next thousand years.