

# Grand Bahama & Beyond, Bahamas

## 10 Night Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** 17:00
- **Disembarkation:** 08:00
- **Meeting point:** Bradford Marine, Freeport at 16:45

Transfers to and from Bradford Marine on embarkation and disembarkation days are provided free of charge with specific pick up times from Freeport Airport, Fortuna Beach, Bell Channel and Pelican Bay to arrive at the embarkation point at 17:00.

Bradford Marine, where Bahamas Master will be moored, is approximately 15 minutes drive from Grand Bahama Airport. *Early embarkation is not possible*, and there is no waiting area; therefore *guests are kindly asked not to arrive at the marina earlier than the specified meeting time*.

**Marine & Port Fees:** 190 USD per person (to be paid on board)

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Marine and port fees are subject to change without notice. The applicable amount at the time of departure will be added to your onboard extras to be paid prior to disembarkation.*

### Minimum certification, experience and requirements

Divers must have **Open Water certification** with a **minimum of 50 logged dives**, preferably with experience of diving in currents. However, **PADI Advanced Open Water** certification, or equivalent, is strongly **recommended** to be able to fully participate in all dives.

**Minimum age is 18 years** for participation in shark dives.

Please refer to our [Bahamas Trip Info](#) document for further important information about shark diving and equipment requirements.

*Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience recommendations, or who the crew have insufficient experience in certain conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives.*

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have suitable insurance which covers all scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

## Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions).

**Number of scheduled dives:** Up to 34

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, a number of factors, including *weather and sea conditions can hinder the boat's ability to reach, or remain at a specified area and may therefore affect the number of dives possible.*

The following is an example of the day-to-day schedule.

**Day 1: Embarkation at 17:00** followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and dinner. There is no diving on embarkation day.

**Days 2-9:** Typically we will offer up to 4 dives per day, scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, Dive 3
- Snacks, relaxation period, Dive 4 (where possible)\*
- Dinner

**NOTE:** *At Tiger Beach, Dives 1-3 are scheduled baited/ shark feeding dives during which divers are strategically positioned on the bottom facing the shark feeder.*

A comprehensive safety briefing will be given before the shark dives outlining expected shark behaviour and the dos and don'ts of observing the shark activity.

### **\*Night / Sunset Dives**

We will do our best to offer sunset or night dives at a range of sites throughout the itinerary, depending on weather conditions and where the vessel is moored at any given time. All divers will be issued with a colour-coded beacon to attach to their first stage to ensure our guides can keep track of your whereabouts at all times on the night dive. Conversely, our guides will have beacons of a different colour for your ease of recognition. Underwater torches are also required for night dives and are available to rent on board in case you don't have your own.

**Day 10:** For your final full day on board we schedule two morning dives\* before the boat heads back to port after lunch.

\*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and their flight home.

**Day 11:** After breakfast on board, disembarkation is at 08:00

***All safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or understand English, please contact us.***

**PLEASE NOTE:** While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors will determine which sites are included on each trip. ***Diver experience, weather conditions,***

*tides and currents* are among the considerations which *determine the Cruise Director and Captain's decision of which route the boat takes and which sites are selected* for diving.

The safety of the vessel and everyone on board is paramount and we will always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit any of the sites listed below. Dive sites we may visit during your Grand Bahama and Beyond liveaboard diving holiday on Bahamas Master include, but are not limited to:

## Grand Bahama Island

Grand Bahama Island is best known for Tiger Beach which is located off the West End area of the island. As well as being world famous for its crystal-clear waters and powdery, white sandy bottom, the Tiger Beach area is also home to a multitude of reef networks, pinnacles, and of course the continental shelf with drop-offs to more than 600 metres (2,000 ft), although our average dives in these areas are no deeper than 30 metres (100 ft).

However, there is so much more to experience around Grand Bahama including wrecks, walls and swim-throughs, many of which are located along the southern shoreline of the island.

## West End / Tiger Beach

Tiger Beach is a 52 km<sup>2</sup> (20 square miles) area located around 30 nautical miles off the West End of Grand Bahama Island and the best-known point for tiger sharks, Caribbean reef and lemon shark encounters, as well as the occasional appearance of great hammerheads. At a depth of around 8-10 metres (26-33 ft), and an average visibility of 25 metres (80+ ft), this white sandy bottom area is the ultimate site for photographers and videographers to get their dream close-up shots.

We usually meet pregnant female tiger sharks that remain in these shallow waters for several months at a time. During a trip to Tiger Beach, you will not only encounter these impressive sharks but are likely to get to know and discern several individuals, like Emma and Princess. The theory is that female tiger sharks, after mating in the deep waters, seek the protection of the shallow sandy plateau to fulfil their pregnancy. Where these ladies give birth is yet to be discovered.

## Baited / Feeding Shark Dives

We have various mooring/ anchor points throughout the Tiger Beach area at relatively shallow depths where we will stop for these breathtaking dives. Guests will be invited to dive in groups of 8 where they will form a 'V' formation kneeling in the sand, with one of our expert shark divers at the apex of the 'V'. The tiger sharks typically arrive soon after we enter the water, at which point the show will begin. An average dive can bring as many as 6 (sometimes many more) tiger sharks into the area. The majestic tigers will swim from the outer limits of your 'V' formation to the apex where our feeder will be waiting with the bait box.

After feeding, the sharks will be redirected back down the middle of the 'V' allowing for some amazing close encounters and jaw-dropping photograph opportunities. In addition to the tiger sharks, there are good chances of seeing bull sharks, black tip reef sharks, lemon sharks and, if you're lucky, you may even see a great hammerhead!

## Sugar Wreck

Located not far from Tiger Beach, Sugar Wreck was an old sailing ship that sank whilst carrying, unsurprisingly, sugar, to the Caribbean. Abundant in fish life, the bones of the ship are now home to congregations of snappers, grunts, wrasse, gobies, angelfish and parrot fish that can be seen all over the wreck. Lying in only 6 metres (20 feet) of water, this is a dive site accessible only with our tender. In addition to the wide array of fish that can be seen at the site, sometimes you will also see reef, lemon, nurse and tiger sharks lingering.

## Mount Olympus

Located offshore of Grand Bahama Island, Mount Olympus is a very large underwater coral pinnacle. Looking on the map, it's on the outer reaches of the Tiger Beach area and, as the name suggests, this site really is the "home of the gods".

The peak of the coral pinnacle starts at about 18 metres (60ft) and drops off to over 450 metres (1,500ft). Although Mount Olympus is best explored as a deep or technical dive, there is plenty to see within recognised recreational depths. As a reef dive, this site is definitely one of the best dive sites in the Bahamas with awe-inspiring canyons of coral that dwarf the scuba divers.

As an extra cherry on the stunning cake, we see some really special things on Mount Olympus. Occasionally there are hammerheads, manta rays, dolphins, turtles, and even tiger sharks cruising along the wall.

## Mini Wall

The affectionately named 'Mini Wall', or Shark Ledge as you may find it called in some guides, is exactly as it sounds. A beautiful ledge that drops from around 5 metres to 21 metres (approx. 15 - 70 feet). The site is covered in a mix of healthy soft and hard coral, and is patrolled by multiple Caribbean reef sharks, and large groupers. Occasionally, you will also see turtles and eagle rays here. You may even be lucky enough to spot one of the large great hammerheads that also visit the area.

## [Theo's wreck](#)

Built in Norway in 1958, the 70 metre (229ft) long cargo vessel was owned by the Bahama Cement Company and used for transporting cement during the 1970s under the name MV Island Cement. She was taken out of service in 1980 and scuttled to create an artificial reef and dive site in 1982.

Located approximately 2.5 km (1.5 miles) off the coast of Grand Bahama, the wreck rests on her port side on the sandy bottom at a depth of approximately 30 metres (100ft) between the reef and the continental shelf drop-off. Due to her location, currents can be strong depending on the tides; Her position is marked by buoys attached to her stern and bow, which are also used as descent and ascent lines.

During her 30 years at rest on the ocean floor, Theo's Wreck has become rich in marine life with sponges and corals covering many parts and is easily penetrable for those with the certification and experience to do so.

## **'Caves'**

Situated close to the edge of the reef, near the drop-off along the Port Lucaya coastline, 'The Caves' are actually an arrangement of reef formations with a lot of swim-throughs. With so many cracks and crevices providing hiding places for fish and critters it's hard to know where to look for fear of missing something. Along the reef, sharks can frequently be spotted as well as a variety of groupers and jacks.

## **Sea Star Wreck**

Intentionally sunk in April 2002, the Sea Star II, formerly known as Emmanuelle, is a 55 metre (180 ft) long freighter, split into two parts, which rests upright at a depth of around 28 metres (92 ft). Cement ballast and holes that were part of the preparation for the vessel's sinking are still visible in the large cargo hold which is easily accessible for exploration from the main deck. Divers who are more experienced in wreck penetration can also explore other areas such as the kitchen, crew quarters and wheelhouse.

The wreck is home to a varied species of marine plants and fish including grunts, jacks, the occasional barracuda and schools of snapper which hang out in the small crane located on the main deck.

## **Shark Junction**

Shark Junction is one of the signature dive sites of Grand Bahama and is famous for its large schools of reef sharks. Located close to the reef on the south coast of the Grand Bahama, just outside of Port Lucaya, Shark Junction is also known for its large groupers. The sandy bottom, with scattered coral boulders, also plays host to a variety of more elusive marine creatures, including stingrays and moray eels.

## **Bimini Islands**

The westernmost island group of the Bahamas, North and South Bimini are truly 'islands in the stream' as they are situated southwest of Grand Bahama Island on the edge of an underwater cliff that drops hundreds of metres into the blue abyss. Bimini is the most famous spot in the Bahamas for Great Hammerhead sharks which are drawn in by the cooler water temperatures during the winter months from December to April. Other regular encounters around these islands include nurse sharks and bull sharks.

## **Bimini Barge wreck**

The 60 metre (200 ft) long Bimini Barge wreck sits upright on sand at a depth of 30 metres, on the north-western edge of the Great Bahama Bank. Due to her proximity to the wall, along the edge of the Atlantic Gulf Stream, currents can be strong and unpredictable but, with them come a variety of sharks and other pelagics. Around the wreck, nurse sharks and southern stingrays are often spotted resting on the sand while the vessel itself is overgrown with corals and sponges creating a beautiful artificial reef where grouper, jacks and barracuda can be found hanging around the vessel's hull.

## Bimini Trader wreck

Just south of the Bimini Barge is the wreck of the Bimini Trader; a 27 metre (90 ft) freight vessel that suffered substantial damage during Hurricane Andrew in 1992. She sank offshore from South Bimini and now rests upside down at a depth of approximately 26 metres (85ft).

As with the Bimini Barge, currents can be very strong as the wreck is close to the continental shelf and Gulfstream, but it's a great location for schooling fish, goliath groupers, turtles and a variety of sharks.

## SS Sapona wreck

Built by Liberty Ship Building Company and launched in 1920, the SS Sapona was a concrete hulled cargo steamer which was used as a floating warehouse for liquor storage and distribution during the US Prohibition Era. She ran aground and sustained substantial damage during a hurricane in 1926 and was subsequently used for military target practice by the US Navy during WWII. Today she remains upright in just 5 metres (16 ft) of water with her superstructure more or less intact and sitting proud above the water.

## Tuna Alley reef

Often called one of the best dive sites in the Caribbean, Tuna Alley gets its name from the large numbers of tuna that are frequently spotted along the reef. Gulf Stream currents keep the corals vibrant and healthy and, when present, make for a great drift dive along the wall which starts at 13 metres (45 ft) and slopes gently down to 30 metres (100 ft) with caves and swim-throughs to explore along the way.

## Hawksbill Reef

Running parallel to the western shoreline of North Bimini for almost 1.5km (1 mile) this stunning reef is teeming with life from small, brightly coloured reef fish to dolphins, rays and sharks. Despite its namesake, it is rare to find Hawksbill turtles here but the abundance and variety of other marine life will not leave you disappointed.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team [dive@masterliveboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com) who will be pleased to assist and advise you.