

Ultimate Bahamas

14 Nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation: 17:00**
- **Disembarkation: 08:00**
- **Meeting point for embarkation: Lighthouse Pointe at 16:45**

Our crew will meet guests at the hotel and escort them with their luggage to the boat at the designated embarkation time. Early embarkation is not possible, and guests are kindly asked not to make their own way to the marina.

Transfers between Freeport Airport or local hotels and Lighthouse Pointe are guests' own responsibility.

Guests arriving into Freeport on morning or early afternoon flights on the day of embarkation can purchase day passes from Lighthouse Pointe reception to use the hotel facilities, including luggage storage.

Marine & Port Fees: 200 USD per person

Marine park fees can be paid in advance, or on board.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers are recommended to have PADI Advanced Open Water certification*, or equivalent, with a minimum of 50 logged dives. **Minimum age is 18 years** for participation in shark dives.

*Advanced Open Water Course can be completed on board (pre-booking and confirmation required).

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 insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions.

Itinerary Details

This itinerary involves some long distance (overnight) travel. Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the boat's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time.

Number of dives: Up to 45

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. Extra weights help divers to maintain their position in the water to fully enjoy the shark action.

When visiting other islands, scheduled dives will be more traditional guided dives.

All guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and for obtaining suitable dive insurance to cover all diving activities.

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 2-13: Typically, the full diving days will be scheduled as follows:

- Light breakfast and briefing followed by Dive 1
- Full breakfast, relaxation period, briefing and Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing and Dive 3
- Snacks, relaxation period, briefing Dive 4* or open platform**
- Dinner

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

*Depending on weather conditions and the boat's location, we will usually try to offer a sunset or night dive, although it may not always be possible. Guests should bring dive lamps if they have them, although we also have torches available to rent for those who need them.

**Open platform diving may be offered at some locations allowing guests to dive unguided in buddy teams, and at their leisure up until sunset, where appropriate and safe to do so.

Day 14: 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 outbound flight times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and their departure from Freeport.

Disembarkation Day: After breakfast, disembark 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.

The following is a sample of the dive sites we may visit during your liveaboard on Bahamas Master. While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors can determine which sites we are able to visit.

Our Cruise Director and Diving Director, along with the Captain will take weather, tides, currents and other factors into consideration when planning which route the vessel takes and which sites are selected for diving.

The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best in offering diving at alternative locations should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Depending on weather conditions and other factors, dive sites we may visit during your Ultimate Bahamas liveaboard holiday on Bahamas Master include, but are not limited to:

Berry Islands

Located roughly midway between Grand Bahama and New Providence, the Berry Islands are a chain of about 30 small islands inhabited by just over 500 people. Here we dive amongst the tiny cays where Caribbean reef sharks, black tip reef sharks, and eagle rays can usually be seen year-round. The months from November to March also bring chances of seeing tiger sharks, sperm whales, whale sharks, humpback whales and great hammerheads. The area is also well known for its turtle populations, being home to loggerhead, green and Hawksbill turtles.

It is from the Berry's that we first come into the 'Tongue of the Ocean' where depths drop to many thousands of feet. As well as taking in an array of marine life, we also visit some stunning reef and awe-inspiring drop-offs into the abyss.

Andros Island

Andros is the largest, yet most sparsely developed island of the Bahamas and boasts the world's third-largest fringing barrier reef; with mesmerising blue holes that some say are home to the mythical creature Lusca, the Tongue of the Ocean (a mile-deep abyss teeming with vibrant marine life), and numerous species of flora and fauna in exceptional natural surroundings.

Andros Barrier Reef

We explore the reefs running adjacent to the abyssal drop-off and, for those that are feeling brave, and have the appropriate training, we'll show you what it feels like to stare into the unknown at depths of more than 40m (130ft), from where the ocean drops to more than 1.8 km (6,000ft)!

A visit to the Bahamas also wouldn't be complete without experiencing a dive in The Great Ocean Blue Hole also known as **King Kong Cavern**, which is just one of the many beautiful blue holes around the island.

Andros also serves as our first real encounter with some impressive wrecks. We visit a 60 metre (200ft) coral covered vessel in only 18m (60ft) of water, allowing you to spend plenty of time on this special site.

New Providence - Nassau

Amongst other sites, we visit the stunning **Pumpkin Patch** reef system which offers a range of diving from shallow 10 metres (33ft) reefs and, for those wishing to enjoy the view of the coral encrusted drop-off, you can venture down to 40 metres (130ft) plus.

Off the Southwestern tip of New Providence, we also visit numerous wreck sites, many of which have been deliberately sunk, including the famous '**James Bond**' wrecks, as well as taking in the many conservation efforts around Nassau in the form of coral propagation.

In addition to the wrecks and colourful reefs, there is plenty of shark action to enjoy at various locations around New Providence. **Shark Wall** and **Runway Wall**, starring mainly Caribbean reef sharks but also stingrays, black and Nassau groupers and green-eyed moray eels. These sites can be dived shallow at around 10 metres (33ft). Nearby, the walls drop away, and you can see sharks swimming in the deep blue ocean.

For further details of New Providence dive sites that may be included on the Ultimate Bahamas liveaboard itinerary, please refer to the [Wrecks, Blue Holes and Sharks itinerary](#).

Exuma Islands

The Exumas are a chain of 365 islands, divided into three major areas: Little Exuma at the southern end of the chain, Great Exuma in the middle and the Exuma Cays to the north. ***Weather permitting***, we will sail to the Exuma Cays for a day of R&R providing a chance to snorkel, de-gas and soak up some of the Bahamian sunshine on beautiful white sand beaches.

Pig Beach, Big Major Cay

A visit to Big Major Cay provides an opportunity to swim with the world famous pigs that live on this otherwise uninhabited island; a unique and remarkable experience. How the pigs got to the island remains a mystery, but they are very friendly and used to humans. They can drink from fresh water springs on the island and are fed well by locals and tourists alike.

Thunderball Grotto, Staniel Cay

In a setting of crystal clear, shallow water sits a small and innocuous looking rocky islet beneath which lies a fantastic underwater cave system with a maze of short tunnels to swim through. The location has been used as a setting for underwater scenes in several Hollywood films including the 1965 James Bond classic, 'Thunderball', after which the site is named, the 1983 remake of Thunderball - Never Say Never Again, 'Splash' starring Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah, and 'Into the Blue' starring Jessica Alba.

Cat Island (weather dependent)

Please note: Cat Island is a considerable detour from our largely circular route in the Bahamas, and we will only include it in the itinerary if weather conditions are perfect during the months of June, July and August when oceanic white tip encounters are most likely.

Cat Island is one of the best locations in the world to see oceanic whitetip sharks; Get up close and personal with these inquisitive and impressive pelagic creatures. Most dives will be in the blue of the open sea but the sharks tend to stay close to the surface.

Little San Salvador Island

A full day of beautiful reef diving here; also known as Half Moon Cay, the island is the tip of an underwater mountain that rises up from 4.6km (15,000ft) depth. The seascape is rocky and there are many crevasses and crevices where you may find all kinds of creatures, before it ends in a stunning drop-off into the abyss. Usual suspects are turtles and, for the lucky ones, scalloped hammerhead sharks.

Eleuthera

Located east of Nassau, the dive sites that we may visit in this area are around the northern end of Eleuthera Island, Spanish Wells and nearby Harbour Island.

There are a number of reefs to choose from which offer world class scuba diving opportunities; **Devil's Backbone Reef** is possibly one of the greatest scuba sites in the world. In addition to the beautiful reef there are many shipwrecks not far off that are fantastic to explore. We'll typically explore the reef or shipwrecks, as well as **Preacher's Cave** or the famous current **Cut Dive**.

Cobia Cage

Located off Cape Eleuthera, this site was originally an eco aqua culture project set up by the University of Miami in collaboration with the Island School. The intention was for juvenile cobia raised in tanks onshore to be transferred to an offshore cage where they could grow to adulthood and provide food for the local community. However, there were several fundamental flaws in the project and it was subsequently abandoned, leaving the cage in situ.

Today, the giant diamond shaped cage floats in 24 metres (80ft) of water, tethered to the sandy seabed 90 metres (225ft) from the drop-off into deep water. The netting that forms the cage is now covered in algae and coral growth with plenty of critters to keep macro lovers happy while, for those who prefer 'bigger stuff', a local hammerhead shark and loggerhead turtle can often be seen here.

Arimoroa wreck

To the West of North Eleuthera and southwest of Spanish Wells is a 800 m² (8,611 sq ft), uninhabited islet called Egg Island where the wreck of the Arimoroa sits in the shallows at a maximum depth of 10 metres (30ft). The 80 metre (260ft) steel-hulled freighter ran aground and was abandoned by the crew in 1970 after a fire started on board. She remained upright on the reef for many years, as if simply resting at anchor, until the impact of Hurricane Andrew in 1992 broke the wreck in half. Today, a small part of her bow is visible above the water while beneath the surface large schools of fish congregate around the remains of her hull.

Egg Island itself is a natural nursery for sea turtles, juvenile fish including snapper and grouper, crawfish (lobster), conch, stingrays, sea birds and other sea life so there is plenty to see here.

South Abaco

The southern tip of Abaco is largely untouched, though there are a range of beautiful diving sites along the shoreline offering a range of depths and topographical features from reefs and walls, to marine caves and caverns. We visit South Abaco as one of the final stops on our 14 night circular route of the Bahamas before heading back to Grand Bahama.

Grand Bahama Island

Grand Bahama Island is best known for the Tiger Beach area which is located off the northwestern tip of the island. However, there is so much more to see including wrecks, walls and swim-throughs many of which are located along the southern shore line.

Tiger Beach

Located around 30 nautical miles off the West End of Grand Bahama, Tiger Beach is best known for tiger sharks, Caribbean reef and lemon shark encounters. At a depth of around 8-10m (26-33ft), and 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. In addition to the tiger sharks, there are good chances of seeing bull sharks and black tip reef sharks and, if you're lucky, you may even see a great hammerhead!

As well as being world famous for its crystal-clear waters and powdery, white sandy bottom, the area beyond Tiger Beach is also home to a multitude of reef networks mini walls, and of course the continental shelf with drop offs to more than 2,000ft, although our average dives here are no deeper than 30m/100ft.

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 breath-taking 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.

For more information relating to other Grand Bahama dive sites that may be included on the Ultimate Bahamas liveaboard itinerary, please refer to the [Grand Bahama Adventure itinerary](#).

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 who will be pleased to assist and advise you.