

H2O BONEFISHING

GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND, BAHAMAS



TACKLE & TRAVEL PLANNER

GPS Coordinates: 26°30'52.46"N | 78°38'25.99"W

WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM



Trip Questionnaire: Please click on the link below. This will take you an electronic questionnaire form that we ask you to complete and submit to The Fly Shop. Please be sure to click the **“Submit”** button at the end of the form. The information provided will help us and the outfitter best coordinate your trip.

THANK YOU!! Click [HERE](#)

Getting to H2O Bonefishing

Freeport is the second largest airport in the Bahamas, and there are numerous daily connecting flights into Freeport through Orlando, Atlanta, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and more.

Please make your flight accommodations as soon as possible to secure seats and the best fare. We recommend giving Alicia at Holdy Tours a call at (800) 446-1111, to help with your flight information and fares. She books the majority of the travel for The Fly Shop’s travel staff, and many anglers traveling throughout the world.

Contact Numbers

Should any problems occur during your travel, including significant flight delays, please be sure to have the following emergency contact information with you. Please feel free to contact The Fly Shop®, or the outfitter directly.

H2O Bonefishing

Jason Franklin

Office (954) 364-7590 | Mobile: (242) 727 1655

Jason@h2obonefishing.com | Info@h2obonefishing.com

The Fly Shop®

(800) 669-3474 | (530) 222-3555 | travel@theflyshop.com

H2O Bonefishing and Pelican Bay Information

Guests at H2O Bonefishing at Pelican Bay may be reached by phone at (242) 373-9550. The concierge will see that the message is delivered to your room or to the desk in the hotel lobby.

Emergency Assistance:

In case of emergencies involving the death, injury, welfare, or arrest of an American citizen in the Bahamas, please call (242) 328-3496 or (242) 311-1181 x9 during business hours, and (242) 357-7004 at all other times. Please note that the Duty Officer who answers this number will not be able to assist with visa or routine passport matters.

General Travel Information

Visa & Documents:

A valid passport is required for all travelers, and must be valid for six months beyond the arrival date. All travelers must have return or continuing tickets to pass through customs. A visa is not required for Americans, Canadians, or most European countries. Residents of other countries should contact the Bahamian embassy in their country to check on visa requirements.

You will complete an immigration card upon arrival. It will be checked at your first point of entry, and a copy will be given to you. Be careful not to lose this copy, as it must be returned to immigration upon departure. For charter flights only, there is a departure tax payable at the airport upon departure.

The Fly Shop® 530 222 3555 | 800 669 3474 | travel@theflyshop.com

**Airport Transfers:**

Once you have cleared immigration and customs, you will enter the public domain of the terminal. Immediately in front of the terminal there are plenty of taxis available. Guests should take a cab to Pelican Bay Resort – cost is \$25 one way for one or two persons.

Anglers Fishing on Arrival & Departure Days

Please note that check in is at 3:00 pm and check out is 11:00 am at Pelican Bay Resort. H2O will do their very best to ensure that rooms are ready, but they cannot guarantee that rooms will be ready prior to the scheduled 3:00 pm check-in time. Just in case a room is not available for early check-in, we suggest being prepared to pack or dress in such a way that a quick transition to the boats is easy on arrival. If necessary, there is a room to change clothes and to store luggage safely at the resort. Guests can then check in officially after their fishing day.

Checking out is similar. All check outs cannot exceed 3:00 pm, as that would be considered another night.

Jason Franklin or another H2O representative will be in the resort parking lot to meet all clients to introduce them to their guide. Your guide and skiff will be in the parking lot and ready to go, 45 minutes after the scheduled arrival time of your plane.

If fishing on your day of departure, anglers will return to Pelican Bay Resort, where a driver will be waiting with your luggage at the front desk. For security reasons, H2O will not keep your luggage in the trucks while fishing.

Anglers Not Fishing on Arrival:

Once you arrive at Pelican Bay Resort, simply check in at the front desk by giving your name or reservation number. All reservations are guaranteed. Your host, Jason Franklin will meet guests for orientation at 6:00 pm at the ' Bones Bar ' Clubhouse, located on the waterfront at Pelican Bay Resort. If flights are delayed or arrive on island after 6.30pm, it may not be possible to meet on arrival. Guests who want to speak with Greg for any reason, once checked in can use the room phone (dial 9 for outside line) and dial Greg's cell phone at 1-242 359 4958. Please do not call after 10:00 pm. Make sure you have given your flight information to The Fly Shop, so that we can make sure Jason know what time to expect you.

Important:

Any food allergies or diet requirements must be confirmed at least 1 week prior to arrival, as well as notice of fishing equipment rentals. If your luggage is lost, H2O Bonefishing can easily provide equipment. Phone Jason in the evening before 10 pm or between 6:45 and 7:00 am, and he will have gear ready for your day.

Currency:

The Bahamian dollar is equal to the U. S. dollar.

Other Useful Information:

- Within a 2 minute walk of the hotel is a great selection of restaurants within Port Lucaya including, Pizza, Gourmet Burgers, Bahamian infusion, Greek, Italian and tapas.
- Great selection of non-fishing related activities is available nearby, including, Kayak tours, Diving & Snorkeling, Sharks Dives, Jeep tours or personalized tours with our outfitter staff.
- Great selection of offsite restaurants to choose from within a 20 minute taxi ride, includes:
- East Sushi Restaurant, by the harbor with hourly shark feeding
- Stoned Crab, located on the beach, newest restaurant in Freeport
- Banana Bay located on the beach, for lunch and Friday dinners



- Dolphin Cove on the canal
- Terry's Conch Stand for freshly made conch salads

General Information

Bahamas License Requirements:

To pre-purchase a Bahamas Fishing License, please use this link. www.gooutdoorsbahamas.com

Electrical:

The electrical outlets are AC 110 volts (same as the U.S.) and most appliances will work fine. Make sure that you have plenty of spare batteries for cameras and other small appliances, as the cost for replacements in the Bahamas is high.

Insects:

Mosquitoes and “doctor flies” in the Bahamas are prominent during the rainy season, from April through September. Year round, tiny biting “No See’ums” can also come out at dawn and dusk and whenever the winds are exceptionally calm. The Bahamian doctor fly is basically a large horsefly on steroids, whose bite will draw blood. (Why do they call them doctor flies? “Because when de bite, mon, it feels like a SHOT!”) They prefer salt-coated skin, and love to harass anglers who are wading shallow waters and mangrove-filled areas.

Wearing long pants and long sleeves while fishing, and insect repellent (with DEET) will deter these bugs. If you can find it, Avon Skin-So-Soft is the best deterrent for No-See-Ums.

Gratuities:

Gratuities come in two forms: daily tips for guides at the end of each day, and a single tip for the resort staff at the end of your stay. The economy is primarily cash-based, so the preferred method for tipping is in cash. US Dollars and Bahamian currency are interchangeable on the island, and works fine.

Guide Gratuities:

Guide tips vary widely, but have averaged roughly \$100 per boat per day (\$50 per angler if two anglers share a boat). Tipping for guides can be done at the dock each day or at the end of the week. If guides are tipped at the end of the week, you will need to indicate what amount is intended for each guide and on which day. If you intend to tip at the end of the week, be sure to let your guide know that at the end of each day. The best time to give the guide his tip is at the dock just before getting out of the boat. It's helpful to be prepared, have cash handy and if possible, to discuss tipping with your fishing partner before reaching the dock. When preparing for your trip, it's helpful to come with enough \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills to cover tipping each day, and to allow for the possibility of an exceptional tip for an exceptional day.

When settling your account with the fishing outfitter, please use personal check or cash. They do not accept credit cards. The hotel and restaurants, however, do accept credit cards and there are ATM machines available.

Laundry:

Laundry service is available at the resort.

Dining:

Many fine restaurants are within a five-minute walk from your hotel. A list of restaurants will be given to you at check-in. Dress is casual in most restaurants and you will find that gratuities are frequently added to your check. If not, 15% is the customary tip. Dinners are not included in your package, so you are free to sample the dining at any of the eating establishments in Freeport.

**Currency:**

The Bahamian dollar is equal to the U. S. dollar.

Non- Angler Options:

This is the perfect destination to take a non-angler. Freeport offers an endless list of activities including golf, a casino, restaurants, shopping, swimming with dolphins, horseback riding, and scuba trips, and more. Next door to the hotel is the world famous under water explorer's society (UNEXSO) who not only provides great scuba diving but also, host the "Dolphin Experience" where guests can interact with Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin. Also available are all of the water sports, including kayaking, snorkeling, parasailing, sailing etc.

A Day at H2O Bonefishing

Your fresh morning coffee is available in your suite, overlooking the sunrise across the water. A complete buffet breakfast waits in the hotel dining room, with waterfront tables available. Your guide will be waiting with your skiff on the trailer, ready to depart for your chosen destination. Lunch will be in your iced cooler, along with plenty of water and beverages. You'll quickly drive out of Freeport and into the forested countryside. After launching the skiff at one of the many launch sites available, the run to the flats typically ranges from 15 – 30 minutes. You'll fish until late afternoon, returning to the hotel for a cool beverage at Bones dockside pub where you'll meet with the fishing manager and plan out your next fishing day. The swim up pool is the perfect place to cool down and take a leisurely swim. Dinner is at your leisure and several fine restaurants only a short walk away.

Bones, the meeting place:

Bones, located on the first floor and waterfront, will be your meeting place for orientation upon arrival. Please note that Bones provides all our anglers bringing their non-angling wives a quality place to enjoy a few sundowner cocktails overlooking the bay. A swim up bar is also part of the clubhouse.

Weather:

Cooled by the prevailing south-easterly trade winds in the summer and warmed by the surrounding waters and the Gulf Stream in the cooler months, Grand Bahama is rarely uncomfortably hot or cold. Although similar in latitude to Palm Beach, Florida, the winter temperatures average 10° (F) warmer than Florida, and the summer highs are generally somewhat lower than those found on similar Florida latitudes due to the moderating effects of the surrounding waters. The average daily highs and lows rarely differ by more than 12 degrees (F), with monthly rainfall averaging about 2 inches in the winter and 6 inches in the summer, primarily in the '20-minutes-and-they're-gone' afternoon showers.

General Tackle & Equipment

Rental-fishing equipment is available for \$20 per day. Flies, lures, leaders, tippet material and other fishing supplies are available at the Bones Clubhouse.

Multiple Rods:

We strongly suggest that you have an arsenal of fly rods strung-up, handy and ready to fish. Most of the flats fishing you'll encounter is what we call "opportunistic fishing." This means that at any given time, on any given day, on any piece of water, you may see bonefish, permit, tarpon, barracuda or jacks and it may all happen in a matter of minutes or all at the same time. The idea here is to be ready for anything at any time. If you have three or four rods, bring them with you. Have the rods ready to fish, one with a bonefish fly, and another with a permit crab, or maybe a 'cuda fly, and another with a tarpon streamer or shark fly. If you are



wading the flats, have your guide take one of the other rods along. At the least, it will double as a great fish pointer.

Personal Gear

Flats Boots & Socks:

There are often daily opportunities to get out of the boat and wade the flats. Most flats are hard white sand, so either the hard sole boot or softer neoprene boot will work fine. We are often asked about what socks work best, and strongly recommend the Simms lightweight neoprene socks.

Wading Pants:

Lightweight pants are strongly recommended for both sun and insect protection.

Chest, Back, or Fanny Pack:

You may be wading for hours and the boat will be just a speck on the horizon. Be sure to bring a wading pack to carry your flies, leaders, tippet, clippers, a water bottle, camera, etc.

Tools:

Pliers, hemostats, knot tying tool, snips, hook sharpener.

Rain Gear:

Lightweight and breathable is the best for the climate. Bring your rain gear with you on the boat everyday no matter how clear it looks. Squalls pop up quickly and the boat ride can be wet.

Sunglasses:

Polarized glasses with amber or copper lenses are the most popular, and having an extra pair in your boat bag is always the smart thing to do.

Bonefish Tackle

The big draw on Grand Bahama is the sight fishing for bonefish. The Bahamas offers some of the best bonefishing in the world. Bonefish range in size from 2 - 15 pounds. On the average, bonefish will be in the 4 - 5 pound range. Smaller bonefish (1 - 2 pounds) tend to swim together in large schools, a natural defense against sharks, barracudas and other predators. Large bonefish travel alone or in pairs. We have found that most times when fishing to big schools of moving bonefish, the largest fish tend to be in the back of the pack. Bonefish are active feeders and a variety of flies and fishing strategies are effective in taking them. One of the nice things about bonefishing is that the proper equipment needed to catch them successfully is also one of the most common fly rod weight and size. The following suggestions and recommendations should help in assembling your bonefish tackle.

Fly Rods:

We strongly suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 7, 8 and 9 weights. We prefer fast tapered rods that generate high line speed. Rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category, we like rods built by Sage, Scott, and Winston. Traveling with a spare rod is always a good idea.

Fly Reels:

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels



are a great choice and retrieve line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include those built by Hardy, Galvan, Hatch, and Abel.

Fly Lines:

A weight forward floating line designed for the tropics is extremely important. Scientific Anglers and Rio each produce excellent lines for bonefishing. These lines are specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing and have a special core that provides the proper stiffness to allow excellent shooting while resisting tangles, even in tropical heat. They are extremely accurate lines, and the running portion is a large diameter and floats on top of the water, making it a pleasure for wade fishing. Traveling with a back-up fly line is a smart thing to do. It weighs almost nothing, takes up little space in your luggage, and won't spoil before your next trip.

Leaders:

We typically fish 9' - 12' tapered saltwater leaders made from clear monofilament or fluorocarbon, with 12 - 20 lb. test are the most popular choices. 12lb. leaders are common, but there are situations where you want to go heavier, 16lb. to 20lb, making the release quick and easy. You should bring along some tippet material, clear monofilament and fluorocarbon in spools of 12, 16 and 20-pound test. Fluorocarbon leaders and tippet are great choice as they are nearly invisible in water, perfect for spooky fish in very clear water.

Bonefish Flies:

Day in and day out, year after year the standard Gotcha has proven to be a "go to" fly. If it were the only fly you brought you would do just fine. Spawning Shrimp patterns in varied weights are an important fly on Grand Bahama, as well as the Bully Special. You could ask any guide on Grand Bahama what the single best fly is and each one will tell you something different. The important factor in your fly selection is to have flies varied sizes and weights to meet the specific situation. The guides on Grand Bahama tend to favor larger flies, so be sure to have some #2's and #4's in your box.

Bring the usual suspects; Gotchas, Charlies, Puffs, spawning shrimp and crab patterns, etc., in white, pink, pearl, brown, and tan in sizes #2 and #4. Be sure to bring a few crab patterns tied in size #6. Also bring a few weighted flies for fishing the deeper edges and high tides. If you do get a couple refusals change the fly. You might have to change the pearl Gotcha that worked all morning to a pink one in the afternoon. One school of fish will hit a certain pattern aggressively and next school might refuse it. On another day the only fly that works is a natural buggy looking fly like a mantis shrimp or tan crab pattern.

If you search the web, you can find endless resources on tying any of these bonefish flies, and You-Tube is a good source. There are basically two color groups; the pinks/pearls and the naturals like brown, tan, or blonde. Bonefish are fond of rubber legs, and they are common additions to many patterns. On the natural colored flies, try adding a few strands of copper or gold flash in the wing or tail.

Experienced anglers agree that sometimes having the right fly can make the difference between a good trip and a great one. Having a broad selection of bonefish flies will help to insure a successful trip. An important aspect of fly selection is sink rate. When tying or purchasing bonefish flies, vary the sink rate of your flies by including some with no eyes, bead chain eyes, and lead barbell eyes. This allows you to fish different depths of water and to fish tailing (cast close with light fly) and fast cruising fish (cast well ahead with quick sinking fly), effectively.

As a general rule, use light colored flies on a sand bottom, and dark colored flies on turtle grass or rubble bottoms. In nature, overt visibility can make any animal prey. Most prey on bonefish flats are well camouflaged. Try smaller flies for fish that are spooky or tailing on shallow flats in calm weather conditions. On deeper flats, or in windy conditions, larger flies work well, especially on fish that are cruising fast. Larger flies should typically be cast further away from bonefish.



Subtle earth tone flies, (tan, brown, olive, green, gold, yellow) work best on sunny, bright days in shallow water when bonefish are spooky. Bright flies, (pink, orange, chartreuse) typically work best on cloudy or overcast days, and especially at sunset.

Bonefish Flies:

- Gotcha - #2, 4 & 6... an absolute must have fly!
- Bunny Gotcha - #2, 4 & 6
- Orange Butt Gotcha - #4, 6 & 8
- Bonefish Clouser - #4 & 6; tan/white, & chartreuse/white
- Mini Puff - #4 & 6; pink & tan
- E.P. Spawning Shrimp - #4; bead chain and lead eyes, tan and translucent
- Borski's Bonefish Slider - #2 & 4
- Squimp - #2, 4 and 6
- Miheves Flats Fly - #6
- Beck's Sili-Legs - #6; tan
- Bully Special - #4 & 6
- Bonefish Junk - #4
- Spawning Mantis - #2; tan/orange
- Raghead Crab - #2; tan
- Pop Up Crab - #4; tan

Jason Franklin of H2O Bonefishing at Pelican Bay lists the following flies as favorites for their waters:

- Ragin Cravin - #6
- Cathy's fleeing crab - #6 & 4
- EP Crab - #6 & 4; light brown and tan
- Antron Crab - #4; tan or merkin
- McKnights Crimp - #4; merkin and tan
- Puglisi spawning shrimp - #6
- Peterson Spawning Shrimp - #6 & 4
- Foxee Clouser - #6 & 4

Another three patterns that are favorites here are Bonefish Gaz, the Kwabbit and bone voyage.

Crab Patterns - I would also include some specific crab patterns for bonefish. – things like cathy's fleeing crab for example. Having smaller crab patterns is also a good idea with size X-small (1/50 oz) or large bead head. You do want a little weight with them but not as much as for permit. The body size being about somewhere around the size of your middle fingernail – generally size 4 hooks.

Clousers - we like the white and tan or tan/brown (tan on the bottom and natural brown as the wing) – The foxee clouser for example is much like that color scheme. We do not use too much of the white/chartreuse or white/pink.

Crazy Charlies - We would suggest a minimum size of 4.

The main focus is on bonefish, but there are some opportunities for other species as well, and you may want to be prepared for encounters with these other great game fish, too.



Tarpon Tackle

Although tarpon are not what most fly fishers are chasing in the Bahamas, they are available. Tarpon in the Bahamas are most often seen in and around creeks or around freshwater springs and blue holes. Most tarpon in the Bahamas range in size between 30 - 60 pounds; however, bigger fish are not out of the norm. Big tarpon, up to and over 100 pounds, are often sighted. If you have a "Big Gun" (10 - 12 weight fly rods) bring it, as it may come in handy and there is no use leaving it at home.

Fly Rods:

Fast action 9', 4 piece travel rods in 10, 11, & 12 weights are standard. The Sage, Scott, and Winston rods are excellent choices.

Fly Reels:

A heavy-duty saltwater reel is a must here. Look for a reel with a smooth drag, plenty of backing capacity (minimum 200 yards of 30-lb. backing), and a sturdy one-piece, machined, aluminum anodized frame. Models to consider include those built by Hardy, Galvan, Hatch, and Abel.

Fly Lines:

Ninety percent of tarpon fishing is done with a weight forward floating line and Scientific Anglers Amplitude Tarpon Taper is one of the best. In some situations where tarpon are holding or feeding in deeper water, and intermediate line is an excellent option, as it will take your fly down into the strike zone.

Leaders:

Leaders for tarpon can be simple, or complex. The knots used in building class tippet tarpon leaders take some practice to learn, and it can be very rewarding to acquire those skills. We often build a simple tarpon leader with 8 foot of 40# fluorocarbon followed by 2 feet of 60#, 80#, or 100# bite tippet. Pre made tarpon leaders are available as well.

Tarpon Flies:

In general, tarpon flies for the Bahamas should be tied on 1/0 through 3/0 size hooks. Slight variations in shape and color can be all that is needed to entice tarpon into striking. Flies to consider are:

- Tarpon Rabbit Toad - #1/0; purple/black, tan, chartreuse
- Cockroach - #1/0 & 4/0
- Bigeye Tarpon - #3/0; orange/grizzly, sand devil, yellow
- Black Death - #3/0
- Tarpon Toad - #2/0; yellow, chartreuse, red/black

Permit Tackle

Permit frequent the waters of the Bahamas in good numbers, and it's not uncommon to see them on the flats while pursuing bonefish. Permit in the Bahamas range in size from 3 - 40 pounds. Most often you will sight permit in deeper water (4 to 6 feet), along the edge flats or at the top of a high tide change. They call permit the fish of 10,000 casts, and casting to one of these sickled tailed ghosts is about as exciting as it gets. We recommend taking a 9 or 10 weight rod, and having it rigged and in the boat.

Fly Rods:

We suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 9 or 10 weights. We like fast tapered fly rods that generate high line speed. Rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston rods.

**Fly Reels:**

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for in reels are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and take up line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include those built by Hardy, Galvan, and the Hatch and Abel.

Fly Lines:

Scientific Anglers and Rio each produce excellent tropical floating lines designed for permit fishing. They cast permit crabs and shrimp flies with ease, and are very accurate.

Leaders:

Fluorocarbon leaders are your best choice for permit as they are virtually invisible in water, and abrasion resistant. Nine to twelve foot leaders and tippet in sixteen and twenty pound test are standard.

Permit Flies:

Permit flies typically represent a variety of crab and shrimp imitations. Below are some of our favorites:

- Bauer's Flats Crab
- Raghead Crab
- Casa Blanca Raghead Crab
- Cath's Fleeing Crab
- Spawning Mantis
- Enrico's Spawning Shrimp
- Squimp

Barracuda & Jacks

Barracuda in the Bahamas get big, and they are very aggressive. They attack a fly at an unbelievable rate of speed, and often skyrocket into the air when hooked. When hooked, few fish can match a 'cudas initial run for speed and sheer violence...hold on!

Jacks are very fast, pull like a freight train, and will destroy both surface poppers and streamers. Watching them blow up on your popper while you strip it as fast as you can is a sight to remember. Endurance is their strong point, and no jack gives up without a fight that you will remember.

Fly Rods:

Flies for these fish are often large streamers and poppers, so 9', 4 piece travel rod in a 9 or 10 weight are good choices. We like fast tapered fly rods, that generate good line speed. Fly rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston.

Fly Reels:

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for in reels are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and take up line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include those built by Hardy, Galvan, Hatch and Abel.

Leaders:



Leaders for barracuda and jacks can be simple. We often build a leader with 8 foot of 40# fluorocarbon for jacks, and add a bite tippet of 40 lb. Rio Powerflex Wire Bite Tippet for barracuda.

Flies:

- In-Shore Popper - #3/0; chartreuse
- Tandem Cuda Fly - #2/0
- Cuda Killer - #4/0

Bonefish Behavior

Feeding:

Bonefish feed on the bottom, and through the water column. While feeding on very shallow flats their wavering tails are often visible out of the water. In deeper water their tails are not visible but the fish can still be seen. While bonefish are feeding, the condition of the surface of the water affects their feeling of security. Bonefish are more nervous in calm water. Conditions determine how best to present the fly. On most days there is a slight chop or ripple on the surface and the fly must be presented three to five feet in front of them. On very still days the fly should be cast further from the fish and stripped back into his area of awareness.

Mudding:

During the warmer months very large schools of bonefish will often back off the shoreline into about 5 to 10 feet of cooler water. As they grub for food, they stir up the bottom creating a visible cloud of mud, referred to as “milk”. This cloud of mud moves as the bonefish move and makes these bones feel quite secure because they are not visible to predators. Often the angler can catch one fish after another without spooking the school. It is generally not a common practice to fish muds because the desired challenge of sight fishing is eliminated. However, guides will fish muds with you at your request, and this can be good for beginners to feel the first lightning-fast tug of a bonefish.

Traveling:

Traveling bonefish are intent on changing location but are very aware of their surroundings and not necessarily interested in feeding. When casting to traveling bonefish place your offering well ahead of the fish and let it settle. Your guide will tell you when the fish is in range and when to strip.

Tarpon & Permit

Tarpon are not always present, but we certainly come across them. They range in size from 30 to 200 lbs. Tarpon are the largest, strongest, and most acrobatic of flats fish. Even juvenile fish will put your angling skills to the test and strain your tackle. We highly recommend having a rod set up for tarpon each day as the moment of opportunity does not last long.

We also see permit on occasion. They are by far the most difficult, picky and frustrating fish you will encounter on the flats. Permit are very finicky about what they eat. They will often charge your fly, only to stop at the last moment and refuse it. When you are presenting the fly, focus first and foremost on landing your fly near the fish and getting the slack out of your line. Your guide will help you “read the fish” by watching its behavior, and will instruct you on fly manipulation in regards to the fish.

Technique:

On the flats, your guide will be standing on the poling platform and poling the boat while scanning for fish. You will be standing on the front deck of the boat with your rod in one hand and your fly in the other.



When you are not fishing from the boat, you will be wading the flats. When wading, walk slowly and stop often to look for fish. If you see the fish moving in a specific direction, move quietly into position so you will be able to present the fly in front the fish. You usually have more time than you think to make a precise presentation.

Bonefish are almost always moving, and movement is often the first sign of fish. Scan the water slowly from side to side, within the range that you can cast. The guide will be looking further out, responsible for finding fish at a distance and poling the boat into good casting position. Look for the flash of an exposed tail, nervous water, a wave or wake on top of the water, or the shadow of a cruising fish. When casting to a fish that is moving towards you, land the fly in front of the fish, let it sink while the fish moves towards it, and begin stripping when the fish is close to the fly.

Typically, the guide will see the fish before you, and will put the boat in position for your cast. You will hear him direct you to the fish by saying something like “10 o’clock, 40 feet, going left”. Point your rod where you think he is directing you, and he will often help by saying, “more left” or “more right”, and tell you when to cast.

If you do not see the fish, do not cast until your guide asks you to. He will put the boat in position for the cast, tell you how far to cast and in which direction, and when to cast. Follow his directions in when to begin stripping your fly.

After you cast, let the fly sink to the bottom and make your first strips long and slow to get the fishes attention. Now you are going to “read the fish” by observing its behavior. If it moves quickly to your fly and stops, it probably ate your fly. Make a long strip to set the hook. If there is no resistance, stop, let the fly sink, and begin stripping again. If you do feel resistance, **pull on your line to set the hook without lifting your rod**, and prepare to “clear your line” as the fish runs. The first run often takes all the line quickly off the deck, and it is important that you guide the line off the deck and onto the reel. Your drag has been preset, so hold your rod tip high and enjoy the run! Occasionally the fish will turn and run towards you. If you can’t strip fast enough to keep a tight line, push your rod tip into the water and the drag of the fish pulling the line through the water will keep tension on the hook. Bonefish have tough mouths and having sharp hooks is important. Check your hook point regularly by pulling it across your thumb nail. If it digs into your nail, it’s sharp. If it drags across your nail without sticking, it’s time to sharpen the point.

Be certain to pinch down the barbs on your hooks. This makes it easier to release fish with minimal handling, and also minimizes the risk of injury to yourself and others.

YOU & YOUR GUIDE ARE A TEAM:

Please introduce yourself and get to know your guide. Discuss which species you want to fish, how you want to fish (wading or from the boat), your abilities and fishing experience.

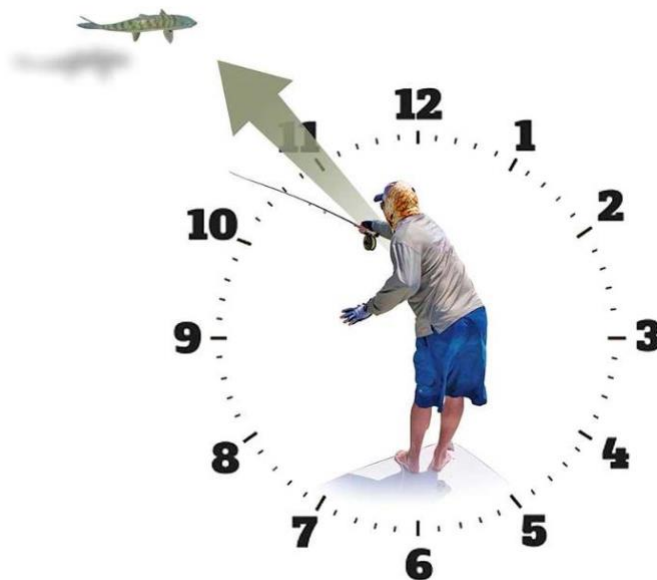
Encourage the guide to check your equipment, knots, leaders, tippet material, flies, rod and reel, etc.

On the flats, the guide will often spot fish before you. When this happens, your guide will refer the numbers on a clock to give you the fish’s general direction. For example, the bow on the boat would represent 12:00 O’clock. Perpendicular to the boat off of your right is 3:00 O’clock; perpendicular to the boat off your left is 9:00 O’clock, etc. In addition to the direction, the guide will also refer to the distance and the direction that the fish is swimming. For example: “1:00 O’clock --- 50 feet, going left”.

When you first step up on the casting platform, strip out some line and make a short cast as the guide watches. Ask the guide how far you just cast. Next, make a medium cast. Then, make a long cast. Make sure you are both agree in judging distance.

If your guide spots a fish and you do not see it, don't cast until you see that fish. Point your rod in front of you as if a pointer on a chalk board and have your guide direct your rod to where he sees the fish. Your guide might say, "2 o'clock, more right, keep going, stop!" That is where you should concentrate your vision and again do not cast until you see the fish, or your guide instructs you to do so.

Setting the hook in saltwater fishing is very different from what most of us have learned in freshwater. You want to learn and practice the "Strip" strike or set. This is done NOT by lifting the rod tip as in trout fishing, but by keeping your rod pointed at the fish and pulling on the line, or stripping. In this way, the hook is either buried in the fish with the static line driving the hook, or at least the fly will remain in front of the fish for another chance. Lifting the rod tip will likely pull the hook out of the mouth of the fish without a hookup and spook the fish from the area. Each species of fish has subtle variations of the strip set to maximize your hook up rate with each take.





H2O Bonefishing Clothing & Equipment Checklist

- ___ Hat with bill and neck protection
- ___ Polarized sunglasses and a backup pair
- ___ Buff® neck gaiter
- ___ Long sleeve fishing shirts
- ___ Evening wear shirts
- ___ Raingear (light-weight for thunder showers or wet boat rides)
- ___ Wading pants
- ___ Sun gloves
- ___ Shorts and swimsuit
- ___ Wading socks (we recommend the Simms light neoprene socks)
- ___ Wading shoes or booties (should have heavy sole for maximum protection)
- ___ Sandals or flip flops
- ___ Belt
- ___ Sunscreen SPF 30+ UVA/UVB
- ___ SPF Lip balm
- ___ Insect repellent (DEET as the active ingredient is best)
- ___ Line dressing & cleaner
- ___ Forceps, pliers, hook file, line clipper
- ___ Reel lube / oil
- ___ Zip-lock® bags and garbage bags
- ___ Small flashlight or headlamp
- ___ Flexx-Rap or finger guards
- ___ Toiletries
- ___ Camera & Battery Charger & storage Cards
- ___ Smartphone | Tablet & charger
- ___ Small binoculars
- ___ Wading pack and boat bag
- ___ Airline tickets
- ___ Notebook & pen
- ___ Passport
- ___ 2 Copies of passport (packed separately in Zip-Lok baggies)
- ___ Book | magazines
- ___ Cash and credit cards
- ___ Emergency contact numbers
- ___ Prescription glasses
- ___ Pre-trip information
- ___ Aspirin, Prescription drugs



10 Best Things to Do in Or Near Freeport, Bahamas

By Michele Herrmann

<https://www.thetravel.com/>

From waterside activities to Bahamian dining, here's what to find around this city.

In the Bahamas, Freeport is a bustling city on the island of Grand Bahama in the northwest Bahamas. The second-largest city in the Bahamas is known for its upscale resorts, historical and cultural venues, ecological sights, shopping opportunities, and underwater cave exploring. Get ready to plan a trip to Freeport with these 10 best things to do in or near there

10/10 Bahamas Maritime Museum:

Based right in the heart of Freeport, the Bahamas Maritime Museum teaches about the islands' maritime legacy with intriguing stories and interesting artifacts. Exhibition areas tell of the Bahamas' Lucayan people and the horrors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, along with recovered objects from Maravillas, a Spanish ship that sunk in the Bahamas in 1656. Founded by Allen Exploration, the museum is a newcomer to the Bahamas, too, having opened in August 2022.

9/10 Bahamas Distilling Company:

Bahamas Distilling Company is a small-batch rum distillery that schedules tours and tastings on weekdays. While there, sample their signature spiced and coconut rums and perhaps purchase one of their brands, and order a cocktail from their onsite bar. Currently, the company puts out about six types of rum, from their Floating Pig spiced rum to their Hammered coconut rum, with eye-catching label art.

8/10 Port Lucaya Marketplace:

For visitors seeking souvenirs or a meal away from their resort of stay, the Port Lucaya Marketplace is the place to go. It is the Bahamas' largest shopping, dining, and open-air entertainment facility. There are many specialty stores and boutique shops, restaurants and bars, and lounges, so you can spend both the day and/or night here. Retail options also extend to Duty-Free stores, craft centers, and push carts. Tip: Be sure to place an order from Daddy Brown's Conch and Seafood Stand.

7/10 Coral Vita:

This commercial enterprise in the Bahamas is working to restore the Commonwealth's coral reefs at a global level, and the public is able to tour their facilities to learn more about their efforts. Having partnered with science institutions, Coral Vita farms resilient coral at scale and supplies them to restoration projects for transplanting them in reefs. Visitors to Coral Vita can learn more about coral farming and the ocean's threatened reefs.

6/10 Fish Fry at Smith's Point:

This popular foodie tradition is said to happen on Wednesday nights at Smith's Point, a settlement that is adjacent to Taino Beach. The Fish Fry at Smith's Point consists of beachfront shacks in which their vendors fry up seafood over oil-drum cookers. Along with trying some Bahamian cuisine, this nightly event becomes a dance party scene. The festivities usually begin at 6 p.m.

5/10 Rand Nature Centre:

Step away from the sand and surf for a bit, and head to the Rand Nature Centre in downtown Freeport. This park has a native pine forest and is a major birding spot where wintering birds flock here, usually from October to May. A number of walking trails lead across the park, and the entrance building holds restrooms and natural history exhibits on island geology and ecology. There is an admission entry fee.

4/10 Underwater Exploration:



The Bahamas is the world's third-largest barrier reef, and these waters are full of caves and dive sights. In and near Freeport, there are locations where you can don a pair of fins and other aquatic apparatus to snorkel or dive. Confirm with tourism companies that offer these experiences on the specifics of these excursions. Tiger Beach in Freeport is one of the best spots for shark diving, while Ben's Cave, also in Freeport, provides an underwater trek as one of two inland blue holes within the Lucayan National Park. There are also wreck dive sites near Freeport, such as Theo's Wreck, which is the site of a 1982 ship sinking.

3/10 Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience:

Tony Hanna, or might be more recognized by the name Tony Macaroni, has been running his beachside shack, Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience, since 1992. This eatery overlooking Taino Beach not only can be popular during the famous Fish Fry at Smith's Point, but Tony attracts crowds during the day, too. His conch burgers and homemade hot sauce bring in diners faithfully. Check out this interview with Tony on The Bahamas' YouTube channel.

2/10 Peterson Cay National Park:

The one-and-a-half acre Peterson Cay National Park is big on its stance as a protected marine habitat and an important bird area. In partnership with the Freeport Harbour Company, a coral reef nursery has been developed southwest of this cay. Tour excursion companies can run outings to this park.

1/10 Lucayan National Park:

Referred to as "The Welcome Mat of Grand Bahama," Lucayan National Park is an incredible biodiversity site with underwater caves and nature trails. This 40-acre national park has Ben's Cave, a chartered underwater cave system, and a quite diverse topography. It has pine forests, mangrove creeks, and coral reefs; it also holds Bahamian vegetative zones. Part of Lucayan National Park, Gold Rock Beach, stands out on its own because it is both beautiful and secluded. It's also referred to as The Welcome Mat of Grand Bahama Island, as the shoreline spans greatly during low tide.