

ABACO



**RESEARCH AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF TOURISM
2011**

Abaco is located in the northern region of the Bahamas archipelago. To many of the world's sailing enthusiasts it is known as the "Boating/Sailing Capital of the World." Abaco is more than just one island. It is really a chain of islands and cays that stretches like jewels for 120 to 130 miles through beautiful turquoise sea.¹ Each island in the chain offers a different experience. The island of Abaco is 650 sq. miles with a population of approximately 16,000 residents.² Because there are so many islands in Abaco it is also known as The Abacos.

Abaco is unlike any other island in the Bahamas. It was settled by the Loyalists in the 1700's. The Loyalists left behind their legacy in the form of the architecture scattered all across the Abacos. The Abacos have quaint little settlements that take you back in time to New England fishing villages with beautiful wooden houses and cute picket fences all adorned in pastel colours. The Loyalists also left behind a skill for boat building. Some natives of Abaco are known for their incredible boat building skills. These skills have been passed down for generations and can be seen in Man-O-War Cay.

Abaco is not only known for its boat building. Once upon a time in Abaco, shipwrecking was a big business for the island residents. The ships that did not wreck on their own sailing through the treacherous reefs were encouraged to do so by the residents who were not above giving false signals to unsuspecting ships. When ships would wreck on the nearby reefs the residents of Abaco would salvage what they could for their own use.³

Shipwrecking off the coast of The Abacos was once big business. Now the island economy earns a healthy living from Tourism. The Abacos have many attractions that are unique to the island archipelago. There are two lighthouses that are located in the island chain. One of them is the famous 120 ft. kerosene operated candy striped lighthouse in Hope Town, Abaco that was built in the 1800's.⁴ It was originally built to guide boaters around the reef in Elbow Cay to a safe harbour. This lighthouse is manual and is often featured in photos of the island. There is another lighthouse that is located in "Hole in the Wall" Abaco. This lighthouse is automatic. Some of the attractions of today like the lighthouses were once the bane of the residents of the islands. Abaco's other attractions include Historical Museums, national parks, incredible wildlife with wild boars, Bahama parrots, wild horses (Spanish Barbs), ocean holes and caves.⁵

¹ Jeritzan Outten-Sr. Director, Abaco Tourist Office & www.myoutislands.com/natural-vacations/abaco-attractions.cfm
² Jeritzan Outten-Sr. Director, Abaco Tourist Office
³ www.myoutislands.com/natural-vacations/abaco-attractions.cfm
⁴ www.myoutislands.com/natural-vacations/abaco-attractions.cfm
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1. Why Did Stopover Visitors Come to Abaco?

- 76% of stopover visitors came to Abaco for a vacation;
- 12% came to visit friends & relatives;
- 3% of them came on a business trip;
- 3% of them came on a honeymoon, 2% of them to attend a wedding, 1% to get married, & the rest of them for other reasons.

2. What Influenced Stopover Visitors to Visit Abaco?

TOP INFLUENCES FOR DECIDING TO VISIT THE BAHAMAS ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS 2011

	Bahamas	Nassau/P.I.	Grand Bahama	<i>Abaco</i>
Beaches	59.5%	58.4%	59.2%	56.9%
Climate	52.7%	54.6%	45.7%	43.4%
Rest and Relaxation	42.1%	42.3%	42.1%	35.9%
Friendly People	26.5%	25.1%	27.4%	27.5%
Safety of Islands	17.6%	16.7%	15.1%	21.9%
Sports	10.4%	7.4%	11.8%	16.8%
Had Friends in Bah.	8.5%	7.8%	8.4%	15.9%
Friend recommended Bah.	10.8%	10.8%	7.5%	14.6%
Exotic Islands	14.5%	13.6%	12.8%	14.0%
Easy to Get to	21.1%	22.3%	19.4%	12.8%
Never Been Here Before	22.2%	22.3%	24.5%	12.6%
Heard a lot about Bahamas	8.6%	9.3%	6.9%	6.4%
Hotel Facilities	24.7%	28.8%	13.5%	5.4%
Best Value for Money	10.2%	10.4%	14.3%	5.1%
Good Package Deals	15.1%	15.8%	20.2%	3.2%
Casinos	9.3%	12.3%	6.2%	0.7%

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Survey 2011

- More than half (57%) of the stopover visitors to Abaco were influenced to visit the Bahamas because of the beaches;
- Approximately four in ten (43%) stopovers were influenced to visit by the climate;
- Roughly one in three (36%) stopovers were influenced to visit by the rest and relaxation that they expected to enjoy in Abaco;
- Approximately three in ten (28%) stopovers were influenced to visit by the friendly people in Abaco and roughly two in ten (17%) were influenced to visit by the sporting activities available in Abaco;
- Sixteen percent (16%) of them were influenced to visit because they had friends in Abaco.

3. What Activities Did Visitors Intend to Do While in Abaco?

- Seven in ten (71%) stopover visitors to Abaco intended to enjoy the beaches and six in ten (60%) intended to rest and relax;
- Approximately four in ten (37%) stopovers to Abaco wanted to go snorkeling;

- Approximately two in ten (22%) stopovers intended to go shopping;
- Sporting activities in the Abacos were of particular interest to visitors to the island chain. Roughly two in ten (18%) stopovers wanted to go sailing. One in ten (11%) stopovers wanted to go diving and one in ten (11%) wanted to go deep sea fishing. Other stopovers to Abaco wanted to go bone-fishing (7%) and golfing (7%).

**ACTIVITIES VISITORS INTENDED TO DO ON THIS VISIT TO THE BAHAMAS ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
2011**

	Bahamas	Nassau/P.I.	Grand Bahama	<i>Abaco</i>
Enjoy Beaches	82.3%	82.5%	85.0%	70.7%
Rest and Relax	72.4%	73.5%	73.8%	59.7%
Go Snorkeling	32.7%	29.4%	32.9%	36.8%
Shop	34.8%	36.8%	45.3%	21.9%
Go Sailing	8.5%	7.1%	8.6%	17.7%
Go on Island Tour	16.0%	14.5%	21.6%	12.8%
Go Diving	9.5%	7.2%	11.0%	11.0%
Go Deep Sea Fishing	5.0%	3.8%	6.2%	10.7%
Go Bonefishing	4.2%	2.5%	2.8%	7.0%
Go Golfing	4.3%	3.5%	4.5%	6.5%
Go Birdwatching	3.1%	2.8%	3.5%	3.2%
Other Activities	3.3%	3.3%	4.6%	2.3%
Go to Casinos	21.2%	26.9%	20.5%	0.8%

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Survey 2011

4. When Did the Stopover Visitors to Abaco Make Their Reservations?

**WHEN DID YOU MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS
STOPOVER VISITORS
2011**

	All Bah.	Nassau/P.I.	Grand Bah.	<i>Abaco</i>
Same Week of Travel	7%	7%	11%	10%
Same Month of Travel	16%	17%	17%	16%
1 to 3 Months Before Travel	46%	47%	44%	37%
4 to 7 Months Before Travel	22%	22%	18%	25%
8 to 12 Months Before Travel	5%	5%	5%	7%
More than 12 months Before Travel	1%	0%	3%	2%
Non-Response	2%	2%	2%	4%

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Survey 2011

- Stopover visitors to Abaco primarily booked their reservations anywhere from the same month of travel to seven months in advance of travel. One in ten (10%) stopovers booked their reservations the same week of travel. Approximately four in ten (37%) stopover visitors booked their reservations one to three months before travel and one in four (25%) stopovers booked four to seven months in advance of travel.

5. **Did Stopovers Use an Online Service to Book Their Reservations to Abaco?**
- Approximately two in three (65%) stopover visitors to Abaco used an online service to book some or all of their reservations.
- a) **Which Online Services Were Used Most by Stopover Visitors to Abaco?**

**MOST POPULAR ONLINE BOOKING SERVICES USED
ABACO
2011**

Expedia.com	Jetblue.com	Gradcity.com
Aa.com	Usairwaysvacations.com	Homeaway.com
Orbitz.com	Vayama.com	Ibctravel.com
Continental.com	Aircanada.com	Interturnet.com.br
Bahamasair.com	Airjourney.com	Itravel2000.com
Travelocity.com	Americanexpress.com	Kayak.com
Moorings.com	Angleradventures.com	Linktotravel services.com
Cheapoair.com	Brownelltravel.com	Rbctravelmanagement.com
Priceline.com	Carlsonwagonlit.com	Trailfinders.com
Cheaptickets.com	Cheapcaribbean.com	United.com
Vrbo.com	Delta.com	Vacationstogo.com
Bahamas.com	Dialaflight.com	Watermakersair.com
Onetravel.com	Flybahamasexpress.com	Worldtvl.com
Westjet.com	Flybia.com	
Ba.com	Frontierstravel.com	

Some online services listed for Abaco were also used by visitors to book their reservations for Nassau because of the fact that some stopovers visited both destinations during their visit. Online services with yellow background were the top 18 and the other top online services are listed in alphabetical order.
(Source: Immigration Cards and Tour Media Exit Survey, 2011)

6. **Did Stopover Visitors to Abaco Use a Tour Operator/Travel Agent to Book Any of Their Reservations?**

**ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
USE OF TRAVEL AGENT
2011**

	All Bah.	Nassau/P.I.	Grand Bah.	<i>Abaco</i>
Used Travel Agent	31%	32%	30%	15%
Did Not Use Travel Agent	65%	64%	68%	78%

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Surveys 2011

- Roughly one in ten (15%) stopover visitors used a travel agent to book some or all of their reservations to Abaco. The percentage of stopovers booking their reservations to Abaco using a tour operator/travel agent was low due to the fact that the island chain has a large repeat visitor rate. Many stopover visitors to Abaco already knew before they came how and where they wanted to book their reservations and did so online or directly.
- Some stopovers to Abaco who used tour operators/travel agents used the following: American Express Travel, Odessey Travel, AAA Travel, Twin Air

Calypso, Flight Centre, Travel Leaders, Liberty Travel, Altour International, RCI Travel, Marlin Travel, Mann Travel, and Pro Travel.

7. What Electronic Media Did Stopover Visitors to Abaco Use Most When Planning Their Vacation?

- Seven in ten (70%) stopover visitors used the Internet as the electronic media most frequently used when planning their vacation.
- 7% of them used Network television, 5% of them used Specialty Cable Channels when planning their vacations and 5% used Specialty News Channels the most when planning their vacations.

8. What Were the Favorite TV Stations Watched by Stopovers to Abaco?

**TOP 15 FAVORITE TELEVISION STATIONS BY VISITORS
ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
2011**

	Bahamas	<i>Abaco</i>
1	ESPN	NBC
2	ABC	CNN
3	NBC	ESPN
4	CNN	ABC
5	CBS	CBS
6	FOX	FOX
7	HBO	FOXN
8	HGTV (Home & Garden Network)	DISC (Discovery Channel)
9	FOOD (Food Network)	FOOD (Food Network)
10	DISC (Discovery Channel)	HBO
11	FOXN	HIST(History Channel)
12	TNT	USA
13	MTV (Music Television)	HGTV (Home & Garden Network)
14	USA	TNT
15	LIFE (Lifetime)	MTV (Music Television)

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Surveys 2011

9. What Time Were Stopover Visitors Most Likely to Watch Television?

- Stopover visitors to Abaco were most likely to watch television between the hours of 7:00 am to 8:59 am and 6:00 pm to 10:59 pm at night. The hours of 8:00 pm to 8:59 pm were of course prime time and almost one-half (47%) of stopovers watched television during that time.

10. Did Stopover Visitors Use Print Media When They Were Planning Their Vacations?

- Approximately two in ten (22%) stopover visitors to Abaco used print media when they were planning their vacations. Of the stopover visitors to Abaco who used print media to plan their vacations, roughly four in ten (44%) used newspapers and two in three (67%) used magazines.

11. Use of Newspapers

TOP 16 FAVORITE NEWSPAPERS READ BY VISITORS ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS 2011

	Bahamas	<i>Abaco</i>
1	USA Today	New York Times
2	New York Times	USA Today
3	Wall Street Journal	Wall Street Journal
4	Daily News	New York Post
5	New York Post	Miami Herald
6	Other	Other
7	Miami Herald	Daily News
8	Globe & Mail	Washington Post
9	Toronto Star	Times
10	Washington Post	Boston Globe
11	Boston Globe	Palm Beach Post
12	Times	New York Daily News
13	Local	Local
14	Chicago Tribune	Atlanta Journal Constitution
15	New York Daily News	Sun Sentinel
16	Newsday	Denver Post

The Abaconian was the no. 17 newspaper for Abaco.

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Surveys 2011

- Although only 22% of stopover visitors to Abaco used print media when planning their vacations, nearly two in three (65%) stopovers read newspapers for their personal enjoyment and edification.

12. Use of Magazines

- Although only 22% of stopover visitors to Abaco used print media when planning their vacations approximately seven in ten (69%) stopovers read magazines for their enjoyment or personal edification.

**TOP 20 FAVORITE MAGAZINES READ BY VISITORS
ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
2011**

	Bahamas	<i>Abaco</i>
1	People	Better Homes & Gardens (BHG)
2	Better Homes & Gardens	People
3	Cosmopolitan (Cosmo)	Food & Wine
4	In Style	Architectural Digest
5	Good Housekeeping	National Geographic (Explorer)
6	National Geographic (Explorer)	Bon Appetit
7	Glamour	Economist
8	Men's Health	Business Week
9	Time Magazine	Conde Nast Travel
10	Sports Illustrated	Good Housekeeping
11	Food & Wine	Cosmopolitan (Cosmo)
12	O (Oprah)	Time Magazine
13	Architectural Digest	Newsweek
14	Bon Appetit	Glamour
15	Reader's Digest	New Yorker
16	Economist	Golf Digest
17	Conde Nast Travel	Sports Illustrated
18	Newsweek	Reader's Digest
19	In Touch/In Touch Weekly	Men's Health
20	Golf Digest	In Style

Travel & Leisure and Southern Living magazines were 21st and 22th respectively for stopover visitors to Abaco.

Source: Tour Operator and Media Exit Surveys 2011

13. What Were the Top Compliments & Complaints Given by Visitors to Abaco?

**TOURIST COMMENTS
POSITIVE VS. NEGATIVE COMMENTS
ABACO ISLAND**

TOP 4 COMPLIMENTS			TOP 4 COMPLAINTS		
	2011	2010		2011	2010
General Positive	42%	47%	Prices (neg)	22%	16%
People	28%	24%	Airlines (neg)	12%	10%
Scenery/Sightseeing	6%	9%	Food (neg)	11%	5%
Beaches	4%	5%	Airport (neg)	6%	6%
No. of Comments	286	366	No. of Comments	90	114

In 2010, BEC Utilities and Poor service were among the top 4 complaints for the island.

- 22% of the complaints received were about the high prices in the island destination. High prices was the number one complaint made by stopover visitors to Abaco;
- Approximately one in ten (12%) complaints received was about the Airlines flying into Abaco, i.e. airlines not on time, missing/lost luggage, cost of airline tickets;

- One in ten (11%) complaints received was about the food, i.e., high cost of food, lack of healthy choices, lack of food variety;
- 6% of the complaints received were about the airport in Abaco i.e. airport in need of upgrade;

14. How Did Stopover Visitors Rate Their Product Experiences?

PRODUCT SATISFACTION RATINGS 2011

Rating Area	Not as Good or Worse	
	The Bah.	Abaco
Hotel Rooms	10%	3%
Food in Hotels	11%	2%
Hotel Service	8%	1%
Value for Money in Hotels	15%	4%
Easy to Get to	7%	8%
Beaches	3%	2%
Climate	6%	9%
Attitude of People	6%	2%
Food in Restaurants	9%	7%
Restaurant Service	10%	7%
Overall Value for Money	16%	11%
Bahamas Overall	4%	2%

Source: Research & Statistics Dept., Ministry of Tourism

- 3% of the stopover visitors thought that the hotel rooms were not as good or worse than expected;
- 2% thought that the food in the hotels was not as good or worse than expected;
- 1% thought that the hotel service was not as good or worse than expected;
- Abaco like many islands in The Bahamas did have a problem with providing overall value for money to stopover visitors. One in ten (11%) stopover visitors to Abaco thought that the overall value for money in the island was not as good or worse than they had expected it to be.

15. How Did Stopover Visitors to Abaco Get There?

- Approximately seven in ten (69%) stopover visitors to Abaco travelled to Abaco via a commercial airline.
- Two in ten (21%) stopovers travelled to the island destination via a private plane and 7% by a yacht/private boat.

16. Where Did Visitors to Abaco Stay While There?

- Approximately three in ten (29%) stopovers to Abaco stayed in an apt/villa, three in ten (28%) in a hotel and roughly two in ten (17%) on a private boat/yacht. One in ten stopovers stayed in their own property (10%) or with friends or relatives (9%).

17. Which Stopover Visitors to Abaco Tended to Stay the Longest?

- On average, stopovers from the region known as Australasia stayed 24.3 nights;
- Stopovers from Africa stayed 20.4 nights;
- Stopover visitors from Europe stayed 16.8 nights;
- Stopovers from Canada stayed an average of 16.0 nights;
- Stopovers from the Caribbean stayed an average 11.5 nights, those from the United States 9.8 nights and those from Latin America stayed an average 9.0 nights.

18. What Were the Busiest Months for Stopover Visitors to Abaco?

- Although stopover visitors visit Abaco all year round, the busiest months are normally between the months of March to July. The summer months of June and July are normally the busiest months;
- Although visitors to Abaco from the US come all year round, the peak month is normally June;
- Although visitors to Abaco from Canada come all year round, the peak month for Canadian Visitors to Abaco is normally March.

19. What Were the Slowest Months for Stopover Visitors to Abaco?

- The slowest months for stopover visitors to visit Abaco were normally September and October. It is not unusual for some hotel properties to close during these months.

20. How Many Stopover Visitors Did Abaco Receive and Where Did They Come From (2011)?

- In total, Abaco received 82,460 stopover visitors.

United States: 90% (74,490) of the stopover visitors came from the United States. Stopovers to Abaco from the United States primarily came from the states of Florida (41%), Georgia (5%), Texas (4%), New York (4%), North Carolina (4%), South Carolina (4%) and California (3%).

Canada: 4% (3,140) of the stopover visitors came from Canada. Stopovers to Abaco from Canada primarily came from the Canadian Provinces of Ontario (52% of them), Quebec (15%), Alberta (7%), and British Columbia (5%).

Europe: 3% (2,815) of the stopover visitors came from Europe. Stopovers to Abaco from Europe primarily came from the UK (38% of them), Germany (13%), France (10%), Switzerland (7%), Italy (7%) and Austria (4%).

Latin America: 0.6% (504) of the stopover visitors came from Latin America. Stopover Visitors to Abaco from Latin America primarily came from Argentina (25%), Mexico (15% of them), Venezuela (12%), Colombia (11%) and Brazil (11%).

**DEMOGRAPHIC & PSYCHOGRAPHIC PROFILE
ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS
2011**

	Abaco	All Bah.
MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT		
Vacation	76%	72%
Visiting friends and relatives	12%	6%
Business	3%	5%
Honeymoon	3%	5%
DECISION TO VISIT INFLUENCED BY:		
Beaches	57%	60%
Climate	43%	53%
Rest and Relaxation	36%	42%
Friendly People	28%	27%
Safety of Islands	22%	18%
Sports (Sporting Attractions Available)	17%	10%
ACTIVITIES VISITORS INTENDED TO DO		
Enjoy Beaches	71%	82%
Rest and Relax	60%	72%
Go Snorkeling	37%	33%
Shop	22%	35%
Go Sailing	18%	9%
Go on Island Tour	13%	16%
Go Diving	11%	10%
Go Deep Sea Fishing	11%	5%
LIKELY RETURN IN 1-5 YEARS	92%	88%
LIKELY RECOMMEND TO FRIENDS/RE	94%	94%
USED ONLINE SERVICE	65%	65%
USED TRAVEL AGENT	15%	31%
AGE*		
25 - 54 years old	46%	54%
55 years old or older	33%	21%
SEX*		
Male	54%	48%
Female	43%	48%
RACE		
White	92%	80%
Black	1%	8%
Hispanic	3%	4%
Mixed Race/Mixed Heritage	1%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%
EDUCATION		
College Graduate or Above	70%	66%
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
\$25,001 to \$50,000	7%	9%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	9%	11%
\$75,001 or more	55%	54%
PREVIOUS VISITS		
First Time Visitor	24%	41%
Repeat Visitor	68%	58%
TRAVELLING PARTY SIZE		
One	12%	18%
Two	23%	39%
Three or more	45%	37%
HOUSEHOLD SIZE		
One	13%	12%
Two	41%	40%
Three-Four	27%	34%
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN		
USA	90.3%	79%
Canada	3.8%	9%
Europe	3.4%	6%
Other Countries	2.5%	6%
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY	10.4 nts.	6.8 nts.

*Information on age, sex and avg. length of stay were obtained from immigration card data.

*Source: Tour Operator & Media Exit Study 2011. Some rounding may have occurred

Information in this brochure is based on the Tour Operator & Media Exit Survey 2011, Immigration Card, The Bahamas Tourist Office Abaco, and myoutislands.com.

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