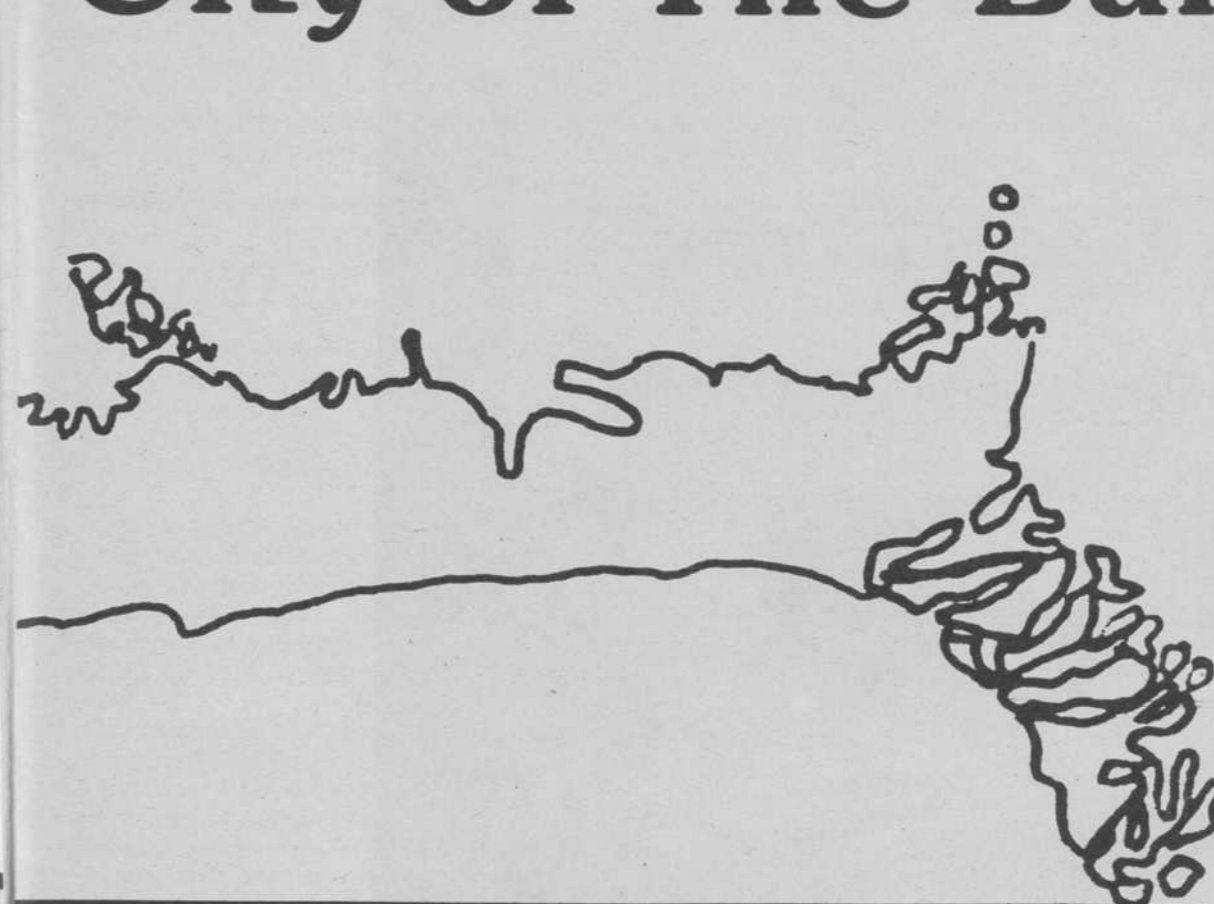
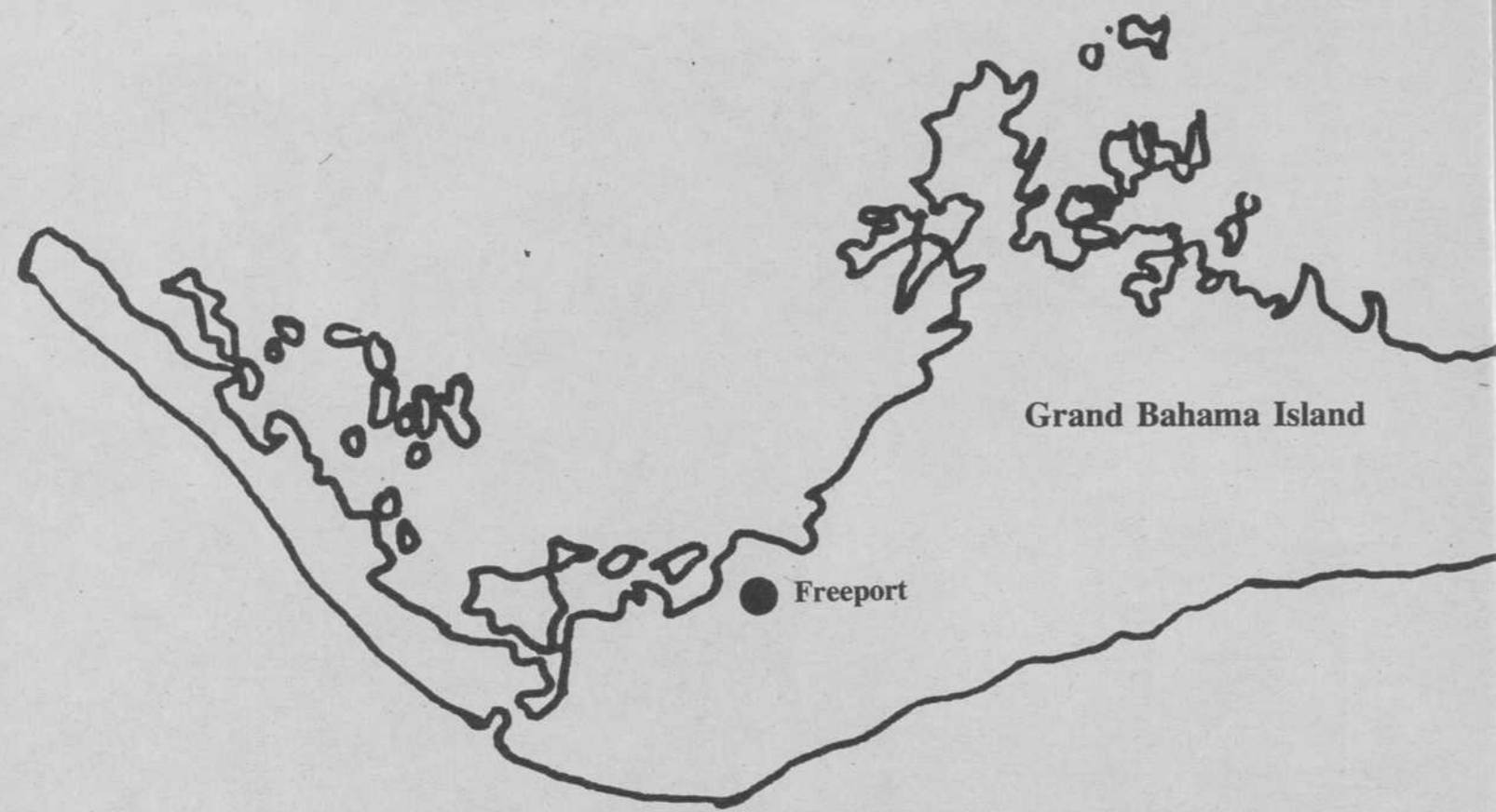


FREEPORT

Garden

City of The Bahamas



Freeport is located on Grand Bahama Island, which is at the northern end of the string of 700 islands that comprise the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Beginning about 50 miles offshore from Florida's Palm Beaches, the islands of The Bahamas continue in a southeasterly arc to a point less than 50 miles north of the Windward Passage that separates Cuba and Haiti and marks the entrance to the Caribbean Sea. The total land area of The Bahamas is just 5,358 square miles, but these islands are scattered over 100,000 square miles of ocean. The marvelous results are unending miles of white sand beaches lapped by water that is world renowned for its clear turquoise color.

Climate

An early name for The Bahamas was "The Isles of Perpetual June." The climate of The Bahamas is delightful year round because of the Gulf stream that caresses its western shores and the gentle trade winds that come from the southwest. The temperature range from 70° to 80° is perfect for water sports, tennis, golf, or just lying in the sun.

Government

Although slavery ended in The Bahamas

in 1834, the government remained firmly in the hands of the White minority until the 1960's. Some have described what happened there as a quiet revolution.

In 1967, a Black majority government, led by Lynden O. Pindling, was elected. On July 10, 1973, that government secured its independence from Great Britain.

They chose to remain a part of the British Commonwealth and recognize Queen Elizabeth II as monarch. Their's is a parliamentary form of government with a court system based on English law.

Freeport—Easy to Reach

Freeport is easy to reach. Delta, Eastern, Pan Am and United all offer nonstop or one-stop service from many major U.S. cities to Freeport. Bahamasair, the national airline of The Bahamas, offers frequent daily flights to Freeport from Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, Atlanta and Newark. Bahamasair also provides convenient flights within the Bahamian family of islands.

Customs Procedures

Citizens of the United States do not need

a passport or visa to visit The Bahamas—if the visit is no longer than eight months. Proof of U.S. citizenship may be requested by Bahamian immigration officials. Acceptable proof can be a birth certificate, voter registration card, or a driver's license with photograph. When re-entering the United States, our officials may also request proof of citizenship—and the items just mentioned are acceptable.

However, seasoned travelers have found it saves time to carry their passport whenever leaving the U.S. Generally, re-entry into the U.S. is much easier, since there is usually an "express" line for returning citizens who have their U.S. passports. Since you are fast becoming a "seasoned" traveler, we know you will want to follow this suggestion and take your passport on every trip abroad.

A travel plus when returning to the U.S. through Freeport International Airport is that you clear U.S. Customs and Bahamian Immigration at the same time. This means getting off the plane in the U.S. is an uncomplicated procedure.

Grand Bahama Island

Grand Bahama, fourth largest of the Bahamian islands, was largely unpopulated just 20 years ago. Since then it has been

developed as a tourist haven and now boasts of a population of 35,000, playing host to more than 650,000 visitors each year.

The 530 square mile-interior of Grand Bahama contains thick forests of palmetto and casuarine pines. The southern coastline of the island is 96 miles long and is dotted with innumerable sheltered harbors and miles of magnificent white sand beaches.

The development of the last 20 years has included a major industrial complex, a deep-water cruise ship port, a modern international airport and one of the most posh residential-resort-country club centers of any island in The Bahamas.

A Garden City

Some call Freeport a "garden city," and it deserves the name. There are beautiful palms and lush greenery everywhere. Freeport has a magnificent hundred-acre park called The Rand Memorial Nature Center. It is sanctuary for thousands of native and migratory birds, as well as a preserve for more than four hundred varieties of subtropical plants, trees, flowers and foliage indigenous to the Bahamas.

Follow the well-marked nature trails and you come to a photographer's paradise. The park has a 30-foot waterfall that tumbles into a beautiful blue lagoon that is home to the brilliantly-hued pink flamingo, national bird of The Bahamas.

Another lush nature spot is the Garden of the Groves. These botanical gardens are named after the founders of Freeport/Lucaya—Wallace and Georgette Groves. The gardens contain approximately five thousand varieties of subtropical and tropical trees, shrubs, plants and flowers. There are well-marked paths that meander past waterfalls, fountains, streams and lagoons. There are many inviting beaches throughout the park, as well as a children's playground. History buffs will be fascinated by a small museum within the gardens called Discovery House which contains historical information about the Grand Bahama Island over the last 400 years.

There is a two-hour tour that stops at most of the hotels, which gives an overview of Freeport and its suburbs. You will see downtown Freeport, the lovely residential areas, the parks, the International Bazaar and the quayside fish market at Hawksbill Creek where you will be introduced to conch, which is one of the

basics in Bahamian cuisine, but may not be exported.

Shoppers' Delights

The International Bazaar and the Strawmarket are two shopping "musts." Someone entering the International Bazaar through its great 35-foot high red lacquered Torii Gate, traditional symbol of welcome in Japan, gasped that they felt they were on a Hollywood set. In one sense they were, because the Bazaar was created by one of Hollywood's leading set designers. The 12-acre Bazaar needs more than one trip to be fully appreciated. There are street markets and shops from around the world in organized confusion that is intoxicating to the shopper. You will find German and Japanese electronic and optical goods, Swiss watches, French perfumes, Spanish silver and leather, African handicrafts, Irish linens, British china, Colombian emeralds and Chinese jade. The prices are often 10 percent to 40 percent below retail prices at home.

The Strawmarket is located just to the right of the entrance to the International Bazaar. Here you will find thousands of handcrafted items from straw, raffia and palm fronds. There are also jewelry made

by hand from conch, tortoise shell, coconut husks, as well as wood carvings and sculptures in Bahamian pine and mahogany. All prices in the Strawmarket are subject to negotiation—so bargain to your heart's content.

People-to-People Program

If you want to know more about Freeport and The Bahamas, we suggest their unique "People-to-People Program. Over 200 Bahamian volunteers have signed up to act as hosts for interested tourists. The program matches visitors and Bahamians with similar professional, occupational, cultural, or sports interests and gives them an opportunity to know each other as individuals.

This program is popular, so if you are interested make sure to sign up well ahead of your travel date through your travel agent or the nearest Bahamas Tourist Office. The Tourist Information Center at the International Bazaar or the International Airport in Freeport can give you more information. However, we do not suggest that you wait until you arrive in Freeport to investigate this unusual and deservedly popular program.

Accommodations

Freeport and the Grand Bahama Island offer a large and varied selection of accommodations. Your travel agent can help you make the best choice for you.

One hotel complex that you will certainly visit while in Freeport is the Bahamas Princess Resort and Casino. Located next to the International Bazaar, this 965-room resort complex offers a variety of gourmet and specialty restaurants, dancing and entertainment plus the multi-million dollar Princess Casino and Soiree Show Reviews.

Freeport is a garden city that offers a variety of vacation pleasures. We hope you will be able to sample some of them in the near future.

