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Shopping On Bahamas' Great Abaco Island

By Hana Lee

For those who shop, either out of necessity or for sport, the Bahamas' Great Abaco will provide a shopping experience that is sure to satisfy. There are a wide variety of shops and fine stores, with many unique offerings.

Great Abaco Island is home to many stores selling quality perfumes, ranging from fine, classic scents to fabulous island originals. Abaco Treasures, found right at the Marsh Harbor stop light, is one of these stores. In addition to an array of perfumes, Abaco Treasures also carries fine china, crystal and a selection of gift items. John Bull sells quality perfume and cosmetics, including products by Iman and Lancome, in addition to Rolex watches and fine jewelry. Solomon's Mines, a duty-free shop, found right by the entrance to Abaco Beach Resort, carries high quality perfumes and cosmetics, in addition to better watches, including those by Tag Heuer and Patek Philippe and fine china.

Abaco Ceramics sells a broad range of pottery items, including their trademark design, white clay pots with blue fish. Iggy Biggy, easy to find, as it is housed in two bright pink cottages in Marsh Harbor on Queens Highway, offers a variety of island flavored clothing, sandals, jewelry and souvenir items. Island-style gifts, located in Royal harbor Village. Offers classic straw hats and woven baskets, in addition to household items, such as coasters and candlesticks ornamented with seashells and beautiful bed linens in quality natural fibers.

Java in Acabo is an enjoyable shopping experience. It's meant to be a comfortable place, it's meant for browsing. They even have a paperback book exchange. Shoppers can enjoy a good cup of coffee or an iced latte as they take their time in examining the broad array of beautiful, artistic craftwork. There are many useful and unique items to be found in this shop in the Royal Harbor Village. There are pieced quilts with artistically wrought patterns in vibrant, rich colors, and several styles of pillows. There are ceramics and hand carved goods. Some of these are for practical use and others are more artistic in nature, but all are beautifully crafted, a pleasure to see and a pleasure to touch. There is also a variety of works created by local artists. The staff is knowledgeable about the inventory and happy to provide information about the local artists and crafters.

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Johnston Studios Art Gallery is another good place to stop and browse for those in pursuit of art, though the works displayed and sold here are of a different nature. The gallery is a little less than an hour's drive away from Marsh Harbor, and features original creations in bronze, which are the works of the Johnston's. The gallery also carries a line of gift items and art prints.

Shopping on Great Acabo Island is a pleasant experience, particularly in the smaller establishments where there is the opportunity for interesting conversations with local residents. The range of products available throughout the island is immense, from internationally known brands and designers at bargain prices to one-of-a-kind items produced by locals. It's a lovely way to spend the day.

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Travel & Vacation In The Bahamas

By Heather Colman

If you're traveling to or planning a vacation in the Bahamas you might be interested in knowing a little about the area.

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is an independent English-speaking nation in the West Indies. Where in the world are they? The Bahamas are located in the Atlantic Ocean, east of Florida in the US, north of Cuba and the Caribbean, and west of the British dependency of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Bahamas are a group of about 700 islands in the western Atlantic Ocean, of which only between 30 and 40 are inhabited. That may sound like a large place but on a comparison basis, the Bahamas are only slightly smaller than the state of Connecticut.

The largest of the islands is Andros Island, located 120 miles south-east of Florida. The Bimini islands are to its northwest. To the North is the island of Grand Bahama, home to the second largest city in the country, Freeport, Bahamas.

The island of Great Abaco is to its east. In the very south is the island of Great Inagua, the second largest island in the country.

A few facts and figures: Nassau is the capital and largest city, located on New Providence. The islands have a subtropical climate, moderated by the Gulf Stream. Most people are ethnic Christians, and English is the official language.

The islands are surface projections of three oceanic banks, the Little Bahama Bank, the Great Bahama Bank and the westernmost Cay Sal Bank. The highest point is only 2480 inches (just less than half a mile) above sea level on Cat Island; the island of New Providence, where the capital city of Nassau is located, reaches a maximum elevation of only 1,457 inches.

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The land on the Bahamas has a foundation of fossil coral, but much of the rock is oolitic limestone; the stone is derived from the disintegration of coral reefs and seashells. The land is primarily either rocky or mangrove swamp. Low scrub covers much of the surface area. Timber is found in abundance on four of the northern islands: Grand Bahama, Great Abaco, New Providence, and Andros. On some of the southern islands, low-growing tropical hardwood flourishes.

Although some soil is very fertile, it is also very thin. Only a few freshwater lakes and just one river, located on Andros Island, are found in the Bahamas.

The climate in the Bahamas is semitropical. They have only two seasons, summer and winter.

During the summer, which extends from May through November, the climate is dominated by warm, moist tropical air masses moving north through the Caribbean. Midsummer temperatures range from 70° to 93° F with a relative humidity of 60– 100%.

In winter months, extending from December through April, the climate is affected by the movement of cold polar masses from North America. Temperatures during the winter months range from 59° to 75° F.

Yearly rainfall averages 52 inches annually and is usually concentrated in the May–June and September–October periods. Rainfall often occurs in short-lived, fairly intense showers accompanied by strong gusty winds.

Winds are predominantly easterly throughout the year but tend to become northeasterly from October to April and southeasterly from May to September. These winds seldom exceed 15 mph per hour except during hurricane season.

Although the hurricane season officially lasts from June to November, most hurricanes in the Bahamas occur between July and October. The last hurricane to strike was Hurricane David in September 1979. Damage was estimated at US\$1.8 million and mainly affected agricultural products. The most intense twentieth-century hurricane to strike the Bahamas was in 1929. Winds of up to 140 mph were recorded. Many lives were lost, and there was extensive damage to buildings, homes, and boats.

Don't let the hurricanes and heat scare you. The Bahamas are a wonderful place to vacation, any time of the year. Pick up your sunglasses, find your swim suit and call your travel agent today!

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