



Pre trip information |

ABACO LODGE [Abaco Island, Bahamas]

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Location

Google earth coordinates: 26°33'32.56"N 77°08'07.76"W

The Abacos are a string of Bahamian islands located approximately 175 miles east of Palm Beach, Florida. The "mainland" is Great Abaco, third largest island in the Bahamas.

Abaco Lodge is located on the western side of Great Abaco Island which is home to the "Marls", a unique environment that provides the perfect habitat for Bonefish. For twenty miles the average depth is four feet. Abaco lodge has unrivalled access to all of the most productive flats the Marls has to offer. Although it would take a lifetime to fish the entire Marls, Abaco also offers some incredible fishing on the eastern side of the island as well.

Marsh Harbour is the principal town on the island and is only a 10 minute drive from the lodge. It has the largest protected deep water harbour in Abaco and an international airport serviced by major US and Bahamian carriers. Naturally, it has many shops, restaurants and marinas.

Historically different from other areas in the Bahamas, the population of the Abacos hails from Loyalists during the War of Independence from the United States. These blonde-haired, blue-eyed Abaconians still work at traditional occupations, such as farming, fishing, and boat building. Guests can embrace the relaxed culture and before long will feel like locals.

Getting there

Unlike the majority of other islands in the Bahamas it is possible to fly directly to Marsh Harbour from the U.S. mainland. While it is also possible to fly via Nassau, a direct flight from Florida is by far the easiest.

Major commercial carriers fly directly to Marsh Harbour, from several Florida airports:

American Airlines flies to Marsh Harbour from Miami

Website: www.aa.com Phone: 800-433-7300

Continental Airlines flies to Marsh Harbour from Ft. Lauderdale

Website: www.continental.com Phone: 800-231-0856

Bahamas Air flies to Marsh Harbour from West Palm Beach

Website: www.bahamasair.com Phone: 800-222-4262

Twin Air Calypso flies to Marsh Harbour from Ft. Lauderdale

Website: www.flytwinair.com

Baer Air flies to Marsh Harbour from Melbourne, FL

Website: www.flybaerair.com

Air Gate flies to Marsh Harbour from Daytona Beach.

Website: www.flyairgate.com

For larger groups, a private or shared charter can be an easy and cost efficient option:

Cherokee Air flies to Marsh Harbour from the West Palm Beach Exec. Terminal

Website: www.cherokeeair.com Phone: 866-920-9971

Sky Limo flies to Marsh Harbour from Ft. Lauderdale Excec. Terminal

Website: www.skylimoaircharter.com

Air Flight Charters flies to Marsh Harbour from Ft. Lauderdale Jet Center

Website: www.airflightcharters.com

There are several local carriers that fly between Nassau and Marsh Harbour, including:

Bahamas Air

Website: www.bahamasair.com Phone: 800-222-4262

Western Air

Website: www.westernairbahamas.com Phone: 242-377-2222

Abaco Air

Website: www.flyabacoair.com Phone: 242-367-2266

Sky Bahamas

Website: www.skybahamas.net Phone: 242-377-8993

On arrival at Marsh Harbour you will be met by a lodge representative, who will transfer you to the lodge. It is a short 10 minute drive and the cost is included in the package.

If you are delayed or miss your flight please contact the lodge at **242-458-4659**.

When you arrive at the lodge, our welcoming staff will greet you and show you to your room.

There is no organized fishing scheduled for your arrival day, but this can be arranged prior to arrival. If not you may spend the day either wade fishing in front of the lodge, or relaxing in the pool with a refreshing drink. Our staff would be happy to help you assemble your gear if you do choose to fish.

On your departure day, you will be taken back to Marsh Harbour with plenty of time to catch your flight. Abaco Lodge Manager will assist you with timing your departure from the lodge the night before.

Travel documents

You will need a valid passport. No Visa is required for US or UK passengers, but other nationalities should check with their local consulate.

Health concerns

You do not need any inoculations to travel to the Bahamas. If you have a health condition, please make sure to bring ALL the medication you will require for your stay.

Please notify the lodge of any health conditions or concerns we should be aware of. You can do this with the Pre Trip Questionnaire, which you can submit online at www.nervouswaters.com/PreTrip.aspx

The lodge has a basic first aid supply but please bring any item you think you might need.

There is an efficient Air Ambulance service available for serious emergencies. The service evacuates to Florida or Nassau and it is very costly. We recommend you always buy private travel insurance before any trip to cover you in case of an emergency.

Medical Insurance and Evacuation

As outlined above, we strongly recommend you purchase both health and trip cancellation insurance. Once we have received the trip payment we are unable to make a refund in the instance of a cancellation.

On the other hand, Nervous Waters values your safety. Although we do everything possible to ensure our guests have a safe experience, unavoidable accidents do happen. An illness or injury in the remote areas we frequent could require a medical evacuation costing over \$100,000 that is not covered by medical or trip insurance.

For this reason, we strongly recommend that you purchase a Global Rescue membership. Global Rescue is a worldwide crisis response company that provides advisory services from in-house medical experts, field rescue from the point of illness or injury and evacuation to your home hospital of choice.

For standard travel insurance, we can recommend Travelex

www.travelexinsurance.com: +1-800-228-9792

For emergency medical evacuation, we can recommend Global Rescue

www.globalrescue.com/NervousWaters: +1-800-381-9754 or +1-617-459-4200.

Pre-Trip Questionnaire

You should already have received our 'Pre-Trip Questionnaire', if not it can also be completed online at www.nervouswaters.com/PreTrip.aspx. If this is your first visit to one of our lodges, it is very important that this is completed in full and returned at least one month before your trip. This information will help us provide the highest levels of service at the lodge and allow us to prepare for any medical issues or allergies that we should be aware of. For repeat clients, it is important that you send us your updated information and please inform us of your flight arrival information at least one month before the trip begins.

The Fishing

The typical trip does not fish on arrival or departure, but we can arrange this if your flights allow and upon special request. Breakfast is served at seven and we leave the dock at eight. We will plan to return around four. This schedule can be tailored to your needs with advance notice. Picnic lunches and cold drinks are taken to the flats in a cooler, by your guide.

Fishing areas

The Marls encompass a huge area of flats on the west side of Abaco. For twenty miles the average depth is four feet. The lodge is centrally located directly on the Marls side of the island with access to them all directly from the lodge dock. This location gives our guests easy access to the flats, while providing many sheltered locations irrespective of wind direction.

The majority of the fishing is done from the boat but wading opportunities exist. Runs to the flats vary from 10 to 45 minutes. Cherokee Sound, the Bight of Robinson and Snake Cay are minutes from the lodge and offer opportunities at incredible, challenging Bonefish.

The flats on the ocean side require only a short drive. All of the skiffs are equipped with padded seats with backrests and a lean bar in the front.

The bonefish on the Marls average 2-4 lb., with the occasional shot at bigger fish. The ocean side flats offer opportunities at some of the largest bonefish in the Bahamas, but they are incredibly wary creatures. The Bahamas is primarily composed of bone-fisheries, and Abaco is no different. There are the occasional shots at Permit, Tarpon, 'Cudas, Jacks, and sharks. We recommend you bring the appropriate tackle just in case. There is nothing quite as frustrating as seeing a 20 lb Permit tailing, or the juvenile Tarpon cruising the flat while not having the right gear set up.

Off-shore Fishing

In addition to the wonderful flats, Abaco has incredible blue water fishing. We are happy to coordinate a day, or two, with the best captains available. On these outings we are in search of Marlin, Sailfish, Dorado, Wahoo, and Tuna, depending on the season. Arrangements can be made at the lodge, but the best captains book early and we recommend you do as well. There will be an additional charge for this type of fishing.

Fishing techniques

One of the biggest mistakes a bone fisherman can make is not to adjust his fly to changing water depth. Your fly should be weighted such that it sinks quickly to the bottom and then stays near the bottom within view of the fish, after you begin stripping. However fishing too heavy a fly (Lead Eyes), in shallow water will undoubtedly spook many fish. Often Bonefish are spooked by seeing flies that do not match the environment in which they are swimming. A fly that matches the background color of the flat you are fishing can pay dividends. The watchword, in general, is flexibility. Listen to your guide, no-one in the boat has a better idea of technique or choice of fly.

Typical depth

The average flat depth, whether you're wading or poling, ranges from 12"-30". In this depth, a Gotcha or Shrimp pattern with medium sized bead chain eyes should provide close to the perfect sink rate, without overweighing the fly (and potentially spooking the fish). A good rule of thumb is your fly should reach the bottom in about 3 seconds. If you find your fly is not getting to the bottom, you should switch to a fly with lead eyes, or add a few wraps of lead wire to the eye of the fly.

Deeper flats

The angler who is willing to fish deeper flats will often be rewarded with the largest Bonefish. Big Bonefish prefer the protection of deeper flats, or shallow flats close to deep water. When you're fishing water 3-4 ft. deep, you'll need a fly with lead eyes to get to the bottom quickly. A proven deep water fly is the Clouser minnow. The two best color combinations for bonefish are tan and white, and chartreuse and white. Another killer deep water fly is the Simram, which is a fuzzy (rabbit fur) version of the Gotcha fly, with lead

eyes. Lead eyes come in a variety of weights. You'll want to carry flies with the smaller lead eyes, as well as the heavier lead eyes that cause many of us to duck when forward casting!

Shallow flats & tailing fish

The last thing a bone-fisherman wants to do is scare an actively feeding fish by casting too heavy a fly, too close to the fish. Therefore, you must go light in skinny water. By light, we mean no weight other than the weight of the hook. For this we recommend mono (or plastic) eyes and a body that lands softly. A perfectly designed fly for this situation is a pattern called the bunny bone. The bunny bone is made with rabbit fur, rug yarn, and mono eyes. Good color combinations would be the same as the other productive flies we've already described; tan and white, brown and white and the Gotcha colors, pink and white. Tie this fly in sizes 4, 6, and 8. Its entry into the water is almost imperceptible. You can throw this un-weighted fly right on the nose of a tailing fish. The rabbit fur makes it look alive, even before it's stripped. If it's within view of a hungry Bonefish, all you need to do is give it the tiniest of strips.

Fishing tackle

Bonefish:

We recommend 9ft., 7-8 wt. rods. Under normal or windy conditions, you can still make a delicate presentation with a 7 wt. rod and a long leader with an un-weighted fly. Also recommended is a quality fly reel, preferably with adjustable brake, cork disc drag, and a capacity of at least 150yds. of 20lb. test backing. A weight forward floating line should be paired off with clear fluorocarbon leader.

A general rule of thumb is 10' 10 lbs. Bring extra leaders and a few spools of tippet in the 8-15lb. range. Fly wise, stick to tan patterns with rubber legs and you will be fine. The list of options is endless, but will depend on the kind of flat you are fishing, and its background color and depth. A few we wouldn't want you to go without include: Puglasi's spawning shrimp, Mieheve's Flats Fly, Kwabbit, mink shrimp, and of course the Gotcha.

Tarpon:

Most of our Tarpon are small juveniles and an 8 or 9 wt. rod such as; Sage's: Xi3 with an Abel 7/8 and a Rio line. These smaller tarpon don't require elaborate leader systems; a section of 30-40 bite tippet is perfect. Flies we recommend are the Toad, Black Death, or any smaller baitfish tarpon imitation.

Predators:

For Barracuda and sharks you will need wire bite tippet with about 12" of wire. We prefer single strand in the 40lb range but the knotable wire will work as well. For sharks we like a large popper in bright colors; think red, orange and yellow. For Barracuda a classic needle fish fly, or Lety's shark and 'Cuda fly are great choices if you can move it fast enough!

The Guides

Our guides are some of the best in The Bahamas and we are proud to have them working with us at the lodge. They are highly professional, hard working, and sincerely personable. They do more than meet the high standards of our operation.

Our guides are also commercial fishermen for lobster and conch in the off season, and as such they know these waters inside out. They understand the effect of the tides and know where to go under different

weather conditions. They also know the honey holes where a Permit, Snook or Tarpon can be found, and this can be a nice addition to bone-fishing. With their skills as boat handlers, and great eyes developed over years of spotting Bonefish, they will put you on fish and give you as much or as little guidance and instruction as you want.

Each day your guide will decide where to go, given the weather conditions and guest preferences discussed with the lodge manager. You should express any special preferences to the lodge manager, such as wading versus boat fishing. If you only want to target large individual Bones or if you prefer to fish to schooling fish, let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your request. Our policy of rotating guides gives anglers the opportunity to fish with all 5 of our top notch guides. We would be hard-pressed to recommend one over the other!

The Boats

Our Hells Bay Waterman's are the ideal boat for the ultra shallow Marls. Drafting less than 5" of water and requiring less than two feet to step up on plane, we spared no expense in getting the best equipment to get you to the best fishing. We have outfitted them with a leaning bar and comfortable seats with backrests. The guide has an elevated platform, trim tabs, and a jack plate to get you where you need to be. Powered with Yamaha 50HP, the boats plane well and cut down on the run time.

Safety is always paramount and each boat is equipped with life jackets, a first aid kit, satellite phone, flare gun, and other basic tools in addition to all of the necessary fishing equipment.

The Lodge

Abaco Lodge sits on the rocky shoreline of the Marls, on the west side of Abaco. We are just north of Marsh Harbour, on the way to Treasure Cay. Here you can enjoy a cold Kalik in the pool as you watch the sun set, after a day of fishing. Sharing fishing stories by the ocean side fire pit is a great way to spend the evenings. The lodge consists of ten air conditioned private rooms, with private bathing rooms, a fully stocked bar, pool, sitting room, an outside fire pit, and plenty of patio space. You can fish all day and not miss a beat of what is going on at home. We have a computer with high speed internet available, as well as a wireless connection. Phone service is available and the lodge has a flat screen television for all the games. Fly-tying equipment is on hand for those that wish to use it. The lodge's main bar is fully stocked with spirits, cold beer, soft drinks, plenty of ice, and mixers for cocktails.

We also have a world class fly shop at the lodge that is fully stocked with anything you may need –from fishing tackle to apparel and everything in between. It is our goal to be able to outfit you from head to toe.

Electricity, Internet and Phone

The electrical system in the Bahamas is the same as the U.S. (110 volts). Abaco Lodge is on a standard electric grid and has 24 hour electricity.

The fly shop has a computer where guests can access the Internet and send emails. There is also a wireless network that guests can access with their wireless enabled devices. Internet and phone service are provided by the local provider and are not 100% reliable.

There is GSM (AT&T and T-Mobile, not Sprint and Verizon) cell phone coverage in the area, but you should check with your provider to ensure that your phone will work on Great Abaco Island. You can use the lodge phone to call home and pay for the calls when you check out, or you can use a prepaid calling card. Check with your calling card company to make sure they have a calling code for calls placed in The Bahamas.

Schedule

6:30 am Coffee ready at the buffet table

7:00 am Breakfast

8:00 am Depart dock

4:00 pm Return to lodge

4:00 pm onwards Cocktail hour

5:30 pm Appetizers

7:00 pm Dinner

Food and drink

We pride ourselves on serving delicious fresh local produce, specializing on fresh fish (Mahi Mahi, Tuna, Grouper, and Snapper), conch, and lobster. Our chef bakes bread, pastries, and cookies daily. The coffee is made from freshly ground beans and will be waiting for our guests at the buffet. Breakfast will be cooked to order and a lunch menu allows you to choose the content of the boat coolers.

Our emphasis is on incorporating local cuisine and flavors into our dishes. The chef uses as much local seafood as possible. Expect dinners of lobster, conch, and whatever fish are in season.

We happily cater to special dietary needs. When you complete your pre-trip questionnaire please mention any requirements or food allergies you might have, so we can inform the chef. Salads are offered in our cooler lunches for those on low-carbohydrate diets. The lodge has a good supply of drinking water from our reverse osmosis system. You will find bottled water in your bedroom and on your boat. The tap water here is safe to drink. In our arid climate, conservation is always appreciated!

We have an open bar policy at the lodge. If you have a preferred brand of liquor, please be sure to let us know in advance so the lodge can have it ready upon your arrival (payable upon arrival to the lodge). Otherwise, you can bring your own bottle. Please note that local spirits will be available free of charge at the lodge.

What to bring

While the lodge has a well stocked shop, we recommend bringing the following:

Clothing

- * Our dress code is informal and temperatures vary from 70 to the mid 90s, so you can pack light!
- * A good quality waterproof lightweight rain jacket is a must for the occasional rain shower
- * Light colored trousers (full length) and long sleeved shirts will protect you from the sun and insect bites
- * Saltwater wading boots are a good idea when wading to protect your feet from coral
- * A good long-billed cap to protect you from the sun and enhance your vision
- * Light clothes for the evening and a swimsuit for relaxing in the pool
- * Sun gloves and a buff are highly recommended

Others essentials

- * Brown or amber tinted polarized sunglasses
- * Sunscreen--we suggest no lower than SPF 50, ideally waterproof, and a good lip balm

* Insect repellent and after bite cream

Optional/Useful

- * Clippers and needle-nosed pliers
- * Hook sharpener
- * Leatherman or multi-tool
- * Fly-line dressing
- * Reel cover for the boat ride
- * Leader material
- * A suitable waterproof bag to hold your tackle in the boat

Currency

The Bahamian dollar is at par with the US dollar and can be used interchangeably. Purchases from the Abaco Lodge tackle shop can be made with cash or credit cards. MasterCard, Visa, and American Express are accepted for all lodge purchases, but cash is appreciated for tipping.

Gratuities

Managers:

Managers at Abaco Lodge work hard to provide you the best staff and services. Gratuities are not expected, but any amount you wish to give will be greatly appreciated.

Guides:

You may want to tip your guide directly, but we are also happy to handle it for you. As we generally rotate guides, you will fish with more than one guide during your stay. The recommended tip is \$ 80-100 per day, per boat. However, if you feel your guide has really put in a lot of work for you, you may wish to tip more. Remember that even a fishless day involves a lot of work for the guide.

House staff:

We recommend \$ 30-40 per night, per room. It is best to give this to the manager at the end of the stay so that it can be allocated among the chef, waitresses, maids, and maintenance help.

Airport shuttle:

The lodge provides airport transfers to and from the lodge. However, our driver is always grateful for any gratuities.

Emergency contact

CONTACT AT THE LODGE

Oliver White
white.oliver@gmail.com
242-577-1747

MAIN OFFICE

Santiago Garcia Seeber
santiago@nervouswaters.com
Toll Free: (001) 877-260-4332



www.nervouswaters.com