



SPIRIT
OF THE WEST
ADVENTURES

THE BAHAMAS | LAND AND SEA PARK

RESERVATION PACKAGE

SPIRIT OF THE WEST ADVENTURES | Box 569 | Heriot Bay | British Columbia | V0P 1H0 | Canada
Toll free 1 800 307 3982 | Overseas 1 250 285 2121 | info@kayakingtours.com



LAND AND SEA PARK EXPEDITION

6 NIGHTS / 7 DAYS SEA KAYAK EXPEDITION & BEACH CAMPING | STANIEL CAY DEPARTURE

Thank you for choosing Spirit of the West for your kayaking adventure. Please read through this package of information to help you to prepare for your tour. Please also remember to return your signed medical information form as soon as possible and read and understand the liability waiver which we will ask you to sign upon your arrival in the Bahamas. We hope you are getting excited for your adventure!

ITINERARY

We are so glad that you will be joining us for this incredible adventure. This route will take us into the world-famous Land and Sea Marine Park. The bountiful and rich wildlife (including colourful tropical fish, corals, sea turtles and many species of birds), long sandy beaches and clear blue water will help you fall in love with the Bahamas. Please read this customized trip itinerary closely so that you are familiar with how the trip is planned to unfold.

DAY PRIOR

Depart your home for the Bahamas today or earlier if you wish to do some exploring on your own before your tour. The easiest entry point is to arrive in Nassau. Once you arrive in Nassau you will clear customs and immigration. Upon entry you will be given a piece of paper which will be collected from you when you depart, so please put it in a safe place. Please note, bringing animal and vegetable matter is prohibited – do not bring any fruit, meats, dairy etc. into the country. They will inform you of restricted items on the plane. Next, pick up your bags and make your way to the domestic terminal to find the desk for Flamingo Air to continue on to Staniel Cay (pronounced “kee”) that same day (see our more detailed travel document for details on booking these flights).

There are only a few flights each day to Staniel Cay so please ensure your connections will allow you to arrive in time to clear customs and then check-in for your flight to Staniel Cay. Once in Staniel Cay it is less than a 10-minute walk to most accommodation options (for accommodation options please see the Where to Stay section of the reservations package). When you reserve your hotel you can ask for an airport pick up or just ask someone to point you in the direction of your hotel, folks are very friendly. We will meet at 6pm on the deck outside the Staniel Cay Yacht Club for our pre-tour meeting. Here we will discuss our plans for

the next few days and get to know the others in the group. Then it's time for a good night's sleep. Expenses this day are NOT included in tour costs.

DAY 1

Time to start kayaking! Since there aren't many breakfast places open before 8:30am in Staniel Cay, we will provide a “continental breakfast” this morning at the upstairs kitchen at the Isles Inn. We will organize a time for this breakfast and go over details on where to meet at the pre-trip meeting the night before (breakfast will be roughly 7:30am-8:30am). After breakfast we will load up our kayaks, have a safety orientation to kayaking and make sure everyone is comfortable before heading out on the water. Today we will paddle past the famous swimming pigs of Big Major's Cay, and we will set up our first camp near Pipe Cay (apx. 9 nautical miles).

DAY 2

After breakfast we will pack up and head towards O'Brian's Cay (apx 8 nautical miles). We will likely set up camp here for the night as it is a great location for accessing snorkelling at a place known locally as the “Sea Aquarium” which is home to many interesting corals, fish and, if we are lucky, sea turtles. You can also wander out to the exposed side of the island and watch the power of ocean from this location.

DAY 3

Today we will continue heading north to arrive at Sandy Cay also known as Osprey Cay due to the osprey nests on the cliffs of this island. This breathtaking cay features beautiful sand dunes, and a shoal that dries up on a low tide and becomes covered with conch, perfect for a short walk and lunch stop. Then it is onwards to Warderick Wells Cay which will be our home for the night (apx 6 nautical miles). Our campsite here will make for a great base for exploring the Land and Sea Park trails the next day.



DAY 4

Today we explore the heart of the Land and Sea Park. We will paddle north to visit the park headquarters on Warderick Wells Cay and search for the endangered native Bahamas hutia, a large nocturnal rodent and the Bahamas' only native land mammal. From the park headquarters there are several walking trails which are a great way to explore the island and get to some higher points for a commanding view out over the cays. There is of course also some good snorkelling to be had for those wishing to spend more time in the water. Tonight we will camp at the same site on Warderick Wells.

DAY 5

Today we will start heading back southeast, heading towards Cambridge Cay which will be our home for the night (apx 7 miles). If we missed it on the way up, we'll also pass by Johnny Depp's own little island in paradise and see if we run in to any pirates. We will also stop and see if we can spot any of the friendly iguanas on Pasture Cay. On Cambridge Cay we will take a short hike across the island to a beach that feels the full power of the exposed ocean. Here we can beachcomb for interesting corals and things that the sea brings ashore.

DAY 6

Today we will pack up our kayaks and head further down Cambridge Cay where there is a short walk to another beautiful snorkling spot with coral heads that are 4-5 feet tall! After this optional snorkle, we will continue kayaking down towards Compass Cay where we can relax, read a book, swim, and set up our last camp.

DAY 7

On our last morning, we will pack up our kayaks one last time and paddle to the Compass Cay Marina where we will enjoy a burger lunch and get an opportunity to swim with docile nurse sharks that live around the marina (don't worry, they are harmless bottom dwellers and it is seriously cool to get a chance to snorkel with

them!). After lunch we will meet our boat transportation that will take us and our gear back to Staniel Cay. Once back on Staniel Cay, it is down to business: a refreshing shower and a cold drink back at your accommodation. This concludes your kayaking adventure, however groups often choose to gather one last time together at the Staniel Cay Yacht Club to celebrate a trip well done! (Please note that tonight's dinner and hotel costs are not included in the tour).

ADDITIONAL DAYS If you are lucky enough to be spending additional time in the area, we are happy to help with suggestions, but please remember you will be responsible for any additional expenses.

SPECIAL NOTE The itinerary is weather and group dependant. As with travel to any international destination, logistics are vulnerable to weather and delays, so please plan your onward travel and post-trip obligations accordingly. We also require all international tour guests to purchase trip cancellation and interruption insurance.

MEETING LOCATION

PRE TRIP MEETING - DAY PRIOR

WHERE? We will meet you on the deck of the Staniel Cay Yacht Club for our welcome orientation at 6pm the night before your tour departs. Here we will discuss our plans for the next few days and get to know the others in the group.

TOUR START - DAY ONE

WHERE? We will meet you at the Isles Inn for a light continental breakfast, times will be arranged at the pre-trip meeting the night prior. We will then pack our kayaks on a local beach.



WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Professional guiding service, all kayaking equipment (including kayaks, PFDs, paddles, pumps, ropes and sponges), meals prepared by your guides (starting with breakfast on day 1 through lunch day 7), camping equipment including tents, a light fleece sleep sac and sleeping pads, park and land use permits. If you are planning on bringing any of your own equipment please double-check the packing list to ensure you have the appropriate gear and please let our office know in advance of the tour to avoid us bringing duplicates.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED?

Not included in the tour cost are accommodation before or after the kayaking portion of your trip, flights, airport transfers, taxis, travel/medical insurance, alcoholic or carbonated beverages or personal items (toiletries, clothing, etc.). Meals outside of the kayaking portion of the tour.

ABOUT THE PACKING LIST

SANITATION

The kayak cuts no grooves and leaves no scars, as it travels freely through the waters. However on land, with the increasing number of kayakers venturing into new territory and seeking the un-traveled path, we must respect our surroundings and be aware of our impact on these environmentally sensitive areas. Spirit of the West Adventures makes every effort to ensure we leave the areas we travel through as we found it or better.

We will be using a portable toilet set up in a private place on this tour to pack out our waste for safe dis-

posal. Your guides will carry a toiletry bag, and will generally designate a private area for you to answer nature's calling.

Our guides will go over these details before the tour and if you have any concerns while on tour please do not be shy to ask your guide. All paper and sanitary products will be taken out with us.

Once on the kayaking portion of the tour there will be no shower facilities, however the ocean temperatures are quite inviting and make it easy to stay feeling fresh.



WHAT TO BRING

The following is a list of suggested items recommended for your safety and comfort while on your kayak tour. Jeans and nice tops are acceptable for most hotels and restaurants,

TEMPERATURES

During an average March day in the Bahamas the temperature will reach somewhere around 24 degrees Celsius (76F) by early afternoon. Evening temperatures are generally in the vicinity of 21 degrees Celsius (70F). Overall, temperatures in the Bahamas during March average around 21 degrees Celsius (70F).

Rainfall during this time is rare, but also possible, with an average monthly accumulation of 4.8 cm (1.9 inches). Ocean temperatures are between 22-24 degrees Celsius (72-75F). However we always find it best to come prepared for any type of weather. Remember there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad gear!

If you have any concerns or questions about this list, please don't hesitate to contact us.

PLEASE NOTE WHAT WE PROVIDE

- Expert Guides
- Tents, Therma-Rest sleeping pads and small pillow.
- Folding camp chairs,
- Hearty and healthy meals prepared by your guides
- Dry bags – 3-4 per person
- All kayaking equipment – Including kayak, PFD, spray skirt, paddle, spare paddle, charts, pump, rope etc.
- Paddling splash jacket
- A natural history library including books for learning about local flora, fauna, landscape and history.
- Fleece sleep sac and cotton sleep sheet – Temperatures are generally quite warm so these will be lightweight in nature.
- Non-alcoholic beverages – water, juice, coffee & tea
- Mask, fins and snorkel

If you have your own gear and would prefer to use it on your tour, please call our office in advance of the tour to let us know, to ensure it is appropriate and to avoid us bringing duplicates.

The following is a list of suggested items to bring along. If you have any concerns or questions about the list, please do not hesitate to contact us.

GENERAL ITEMS

- ❑ Passport & money belt – Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return flight. A money belt helps to keep your important documents and money close to your body and takes away the worry of travel.
- ❑ Copies of all your important documents – A simple photocopy of your passport and travel insurance details can save you a lot of hassle if you ever lose them.
- ❑ Wet shoes – A pair that can get wet such as crocs or similar footwear. Remember something easy to rinse sand out of may make you a happy camper! We highly recommend Crocs or Hooley Soles as you can wear socks in them at night, they dry quickly and they have a heel strap which helps to protect your heel from chaffing against sand on the bottom of your kayak.
- ❑ Hat – A wide brimmed sun hat and/or baseball cap or visor is essential in the sun of the Bahamas.
- ❑ High SPF sunscreen & lip balm with sunscreen – A must for protection from sun and glare off of the water.
- ❑ Sunglasses – A safety cord on your glasses is a good idea.
- ❑ Bathing suit – For snorkelling and enjoying the warm water!
- ❑ Bath towel – Quick drying towels and or a sarong are handy and less bulky to pack.

- ❑ Medication – If you are bringing medication please ensure that... 1) The name and expiry date of drug is on container; 2) you have a copy of your original prescription in case they question your drugs at the border; 3) you have the detailed instructions of your dosage and frequency; 4) it is packed in a water- and sun-proof container; and 5) you bring a full extra dosage of your medication in a separate container and leave with your guides, in case you misplace or lose yours. PLEASE CARRY MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CARRY ON LUGGAGE IN CASE OF LOST OR DELAYED BAGGAGE.
- ❑ Personal items – Toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable and saltwater friendly soap, washcloth, feminine hygiene products, hairbrush, etc.
- ❑ Wet wipes and hand sanitizer – Good for sanitizing or a quick wash.
- ❑ Ziploc bags – These and a large garbage bag are always handy when traveling- especially for taking home dirty laundry at the end of the trip.
- ❑ Small flashlight or headlamp – Don't forget spare batteries (we will have about 11 hours of daylight in March). Headlamps are preferable as they allow for hands free use.
- ❑ Camera & film/memory cards – Waterproof is best (great for snorkelling) or packed in waterproof bag or case. Be sure to bring lots of memory cards and spare batteries, you won't want to miss these photo opportunities. Voltage and plugs are the same as in North America (120 volt, 3 prong wall outlets).
- ❑ Book and/or journal – For enjoying on the beach under a palm tree
- ❑ Cash for souvenirs, drinks, gratuities (tips) – US dollars are used interchangeably with local currency.
- ❑ Water bottle with a clip such as a carabineer- this will help with securing your water bottle to the deck of your kayak. We recommend a bottle of at least 1 litre in size as we tend to drink lots in the heat.

CLOTHING FOR PADDLING

- ❑ Lightweight pants – Quick-drying, non-cotton- light colours are nice in the sun.
- ❑ Lightweight long sleeved shirt – Quick drying, non-cotton.
- ❑ T-shirts and or tank tops (2) – Can be a combination of cotton and non-cotton. Synthetic material dries quickly so you can wash in the evening and wear it the next day.

- ❑ Undergarments – As you see fit. A couple pairs of synthetic underwear for paddling can be comfortable even when wet. Cotton underwear is good for evenings.
- ❑ Shorts – One quick dry nylon pair.
- ❑ Fleece or similar socks- one pair you don't mind getting wet, as you may want to wear these in your sandals to help protect your feet from sand chafing/blisters.
- ❑ Raincoat- something lightweight and breathable will make you a happy camper on cooler days or if we see some rain or wind. It is unlikely that you will need this coat but better safe than sorry!

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ❑ Bug repellent – For the occasional mosquitoes and noseems (usually just around dusk, unless it is a very still night then there are a few bugs)
- ❑ Ear plugs – Just in case your friends snore!
- ❑ Binoculars
- ❑ Personal snacks - Snacks will be provided, but if you have a favourite that you just can't live without please feel free to bring it (remember entry restrictions into the Bahamas)
- ❑ Shorty wetsuit – For snorkelling. We found the water plenty warm for shorter snorkelling trips, but you are welcome to bring it if you have one.
- ❑ Bandana – To cover your neck from the sun. Doubles well as a face cloth.
- ❑ Gloves – For kayaking. Biking gloves or light neoprene gloves work well to protect your hands from blisters and sunburn.
- ❑ Alcohol, Beer, Wine etc. – No alcohol is provided with the tour, but you are welcome to bring your own. You can purchase upon arrival in the Bahamas in the Nassau airport. There is a limited and expensive selection of alcohol available in Staniel Cay.



TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE BAHAMAS

Travel to the Bahamas is fairly simple, quick and straightforward. At Spirit of the West Adventures we aim to make your travel experience as relaxed and comfortable as possible, and below we have outlined a few of the tips and tricks we've learned over the years as well as the basic information to help you plan your journey and get the most out of your time in the Bahamas. You'll find out about Bahamian nuts and bolts info (currency, electricity, communications etc.), health and safety, what to bring, how to get to the Bahamas from your home country, where to stay and how to get around once you're there. To learn more, read on.

BEFORE YOU GO

It is important to take a few easy precautions that will help to make your trip run smoothly and help you get over any obstacles you may face. Do the following before leaving and your trip will be that much more relaxing knowing that you're prepared:

- Ensure your passport is current and will remain valid for 6 months after your return date.
- Visitors from most countries including Canada, the USA, the EU and Australia do not require a visa for entry, just a valid passport and return air ticket. For entry requirements for specific countries visit www.bahamas.gov.bs
- Please do not bring any fresh fruit or veggies or animal products. You can bring most packaged foods, i.e. your favourite granola bars etc, just remember to tell customs that you have them.
- Spirit of the West Adventures requires you to purchase travel (interruption and cancellation) and medical insurance. This will cover you in the event of needing medical help while abroad and will cover any expenses incurred from unexpected changes in travel plans or circumstances out of your control (i.e. missed flights because of weather, lost baggage, theft, family illness). There are various levels of travel insurance for sale and it is often worth reading the fine print to ensure it is the right coverage for you. All travel agents as well as AAA and CAA sell travel coverage. Caution: often the coverage provided by credit card companies is minimal. Ensuring adequate coverage is your responsibility.
- Make sure your inoculations are current and carry a copy of your vaccination record with you when traveling. See the health section below for more details.
- Set up a pin code that can work internationally on both your debit and credit cards. Take your card into any branch with your current pin and you can reset it to something easy to remember. This comes in handy for withdrawing cash and taking cash advances on your credit cards without having to go into a bank. (PC Financial cards will not work overseas. I also pre-pay a lump sum on my credit card so that I do not get charged interest when taking cash advances from the ATM). Remember there is no ATM in Staniel Cay.
- Foreigners leaving the Bahamas pay a \$20 USD departure fee which is often included in your ticket price.



- Invest in some good sunglasses complete with a strap as well as a sunhat with strap which will help you enjoy each day on the water and protect you from overexposure to the sun.
- Send yourself an email with a scanned copy of your passport, immunization record, flight details, and important numbers including travel insurance policy numbers, credit card numbers (make sure you leave out a few numbers you will easily remember in case someone else accesses your email) as well as contact details for the company in case of loss or theft. This way if you happened to lose your bags you can go to the internet and have all the information handy. It is also a good idea to leave all of the above with a trusted friend or relative at home who could help you out in a pinch.
- Have fun learning about the country: Watch the James Bond movie Thunderball which was filmed in the Bahamas, enjoy some Sir Sidney Poitier movies (he was born in the Bahamas), start studying your tropical fish for when you are snorkelling and or mix a few rum drinks up at home. This will all help you to get you excited for your trip and help you get the most out of your experience.

WHEN TO GO

The perfect time to travel in the Bahamas is February/March. Temperatures are warm, but not too hot, rainfall is virtually non-existent. This conveniently is also the same time when the rain of the Pacific Northwest winter is at its peak and the deep freeze is taking hold of Central Canada and the American Mid-west. What a great way to extend your kayaking season!

GETTING TO AND FROM THE BAHAMAS (STANIEL CAY)

This is an easy flight for those in Canada and the US! Direct connections to Nassau are available from many cities including Toronto, Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Flights from Toronto to Nassau take approximately 3 hours. Once in Nassau you catch a smaller regional flight to Georgetown for additional details, please don't hesitate to contact us.

AIRLINES THAT FLY FROM CANADA TO NASSAU

- Air Canada (from Toronto and Montreal with connections from many other cities).
- West Jet (from Toronto direct, Montreal, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Edmonton, Charlottetown, Comox and others); also fly to Freeport, Bahamas
- Sun Wing Charter

AIRLINES THAT FLY FROM THE USA TO NASSAU

- American Airlines /American Eagle (from Dallas and Miami)
- United (from Houston, Charlotte, New York, Newark and Cleveland)
- Delta Air Lines (from Detroit and Atlanta)
- Continental
- US Airways
- Bahamas Air (from Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Philadelphia)
- Air Tran
- Chalk's Ocean Airways
- Jet Blue
- Florida Coastal Airlines
- Gulfstream International Airlines
- Sky Bahamas
- Spirit Airlines
- Twin Air
- Vision Airlines



AIRLINES THAT FLY FROM EUROPE TO THE CARIBBEAN

- Air France
- British Airways
- British West Indian Airways
- Condor
- Virgin Atlantic

AIRLINES THAT FLY TO/FROM STANIEL CAY

- Flamingo Air (from Nassau)
- Goldenwings (from Fort Lauderdale)
- Watermakers Air (from Fort Lauderdale)

WHERE TO STAY

Please note the below are a list of options we think would be suitable for our kayaking guests. Please also note that accommodation options for Staniel Cay are limited and fill quickly. Staniel Cay is a relatively small island and most places are accessed using golf carts. There are also a fair number of vacation rentals and upscale resorts on the islands if you would like an alternative to a hotel style room. The following have been chosen because they are simple, clean and in convenient locations to access the downtown areas as well as our pretour meeting locations which is held 6 pm the night before your tour.

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS FOR STANIEL CAY

ISLES INN AND GENERAL STORE

mwpr.com/islesinn.html | \$135-\$185 plus taxes per night. Run by the friendly and helpful Vivianne and Berkie Rolle who double as the towns pastor and general store owners. A great location, just steps from the airport and the most economical option in town. Walking distance from the restaurants and shops. Has 2 suites which include two bedrooms and kitchen fa-

cilities (weekly basis only) but will accept one night reservations in standard hotel rooms. Best is to call 1-242- 355-2007 or 1-242-355-2036 or email Vivianne directly at RollesRoost@batelnet.bs

STANIEL CAY YACHT CLUB

stanielcay.com | \$165-\$380 plus taxes per night. The center of most things on Staniel Cay- the local restaurant and bar! A fun place with a nice pool and the use of small boats included in most room rates. They do also offer package rates which include meals if you are planning on staying for a while. Also own and operate Watermaker's Air which flies direct from Fort Lauderdale to Staniel Cay. The location where we will have our pre-tour meeting. Only accept 2 night reservations if over a weekend. Can book online or call 1-954-467-6658 (US) or 1-242-355-2024 (Bahamas)

STANIEL CAY COTTAGES

stanielcaycottages.com | \$130-\$250 plus taxes per night. Small cottages overlooking a quiet road and the ocean. All cottages decorated by local artist and owner Bernadette Chamberlain. Prefers a minimum of a 2 night rental. 1-242-355-2043

THE BASICS

The Bahamas are rich for exploring, starting way back when Columbus found the islands in 1492. Since then the islands have been full of adventure and intrigue including being home to pirates, rum runners, blockade dodgers and now a vacation playground for stars such as Johnny Depp and Faith Hill. The big drawing card for travelers these days is the miles of stunning beaches, laced with Palm trees. This regions' over 700 islands and 2400 shallow cays are perfect for exploring by kayak which allow us wind our way in and out of the cays and get to places too shallow for yachts and larger boats.



TIME

The Bahamas is on GMT -5 (GMT -4 from March until November due to Daylight Savings Time).

LANGUAGE

The official language is English. Patois can be found around the islands and Creole is sometimes spoken amongst Haitian immigrants.

ELECTRICITY

The electrical current is 120 volts and 60 Mhz. The pin shape is the same as North America, 2 flat and a rounded ground. You will need an adaptor plug for any NON North American appliances. Universal adaptor plugs can be purchased at any travel shop or in the airport, but check to ensure your device can handle the voltage (most electronics are dual voltage, but appliances like hair driers are not).

SEASONS

The Bahamas enjoy about 320 days of sunshine per year! Winter is considered between December and April but daytime temperatures still average 21C or 70F, pretty warm in comparison to Canadian temperatures at that time of year. Hurricane season in The Bahamas is between June and November. Total average rainfall in February and March is 4.3 cms or apx 1.7 inches. Most days are quite warm and pleasant. For appropriate clothing suggestions please see our packing list.

TIPPING

Generally 15% is standard in restaurants, tourist facilities and generally for most services. Most restaurants include a 15% charge in your bill, so double check to ensure it isn't already included. Tip taxi drivers at least 15%, Bellhops minimum of \$1 per bag and housekeepers' \$2/day minimum. If you wish to leave a gratuity for your kayaking guides this can be done at your own discretion.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

The Bahamas are generally a fairly laid back place. With more churches per capita than most places around the world the effects of religion, in particular the Baptist

church can be seen throughout daily life. This being said, there is a 'live and let live' attitude towards visitors and religious beliefs of Bahamians will not be forced on you. Some local customs include:

- Holding doors for women
- Common courtesies are exchanged when meeting someone, ex. good morning, good afternoon, good evening, how are you, etc.
- Beach wear is reserved for the beaches. While not strictly enforced or expected it is a way to show respect for local values and customs. Some restaurants also have dress codes.
- If you are partaking in business meetings or attending church the dress is quite formal
- There is a strong emphasis on family and spending time with family
- Being polite and smiling can go a long way anywhere.

INTERNET AND PHONE

Internet cafes can be found throughout The Bahamas. Wireless internet is also very popular with most hotels, cafes and restaurants offering the service including on the larger Out Islands. It is often expensive, but it is available.

The country code for The Bahamas is +242. You also need to dial this code when making inter-island calls. There are no local area codes. If calling within an island, you only need to dial the 7 digit local number. To make calls to outside the country from The Bahamas you need to dial 011+ then the applicable country code and then the number. Pay phones can be found in most towns and you can purchase pre-paid long distance cards to use at these phones. The mobile (cellular) coverage is also quite good, but beware of high roaming charges. You can purchase local SIM cards if you have an unlocked phone.



CURRENCY/MONEY

The Bahamian Dollar (BS\$) is linked one to one with the US dollar. You can use US cash most places and change will be given in either currency. To determine approximate current exchange rates check out www.xe.com.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are common in the larger centers. They are more scarce in the smaller Out Islands or if Island hopping. **There is NO ATM in Staniel Cay so bring cash for any expenses in this area.**

If you have a bank card from a major network such as Cirrus or Plus and a 4-digit pin code it should work in the ATM's in the larger centers.

Visa, MasterCard and to a lesser extent American Express credit cards are accepted at most hotels, larger restaurants and shops.

There is however often a 5% credit card fee charged for using your credit card to pay for things in the Bahamas. These cards can also come in handy for cash advances from ATMs in case you have any problems with your debit/bank card.

Traveler's cheques are fairly useless. You can use them in major centers, but are often charged a premium on top of your purchase to use them. You often also lose out in the currency conversion process. While nice to have, most credit card companies will also advance you cash if something was to happen to your wallet.

SAFETY

The Bahamas is a relatively safe and enjoyable place to travel. However, the usual petty crime of any city in the world can be found in the major centers including Nassau, but if using common sense and keeping your wits about you, you are unlikely to have any problems.

Where we will be kayaking and exploring in the Out Islands crime is almost unheard of. Being discreet about your wealth will go a long way in keeping you out of trouble – minimize your risks by not wearing flashy

jewellery, carrying a wallet full of cash or having a giant camera dangling around your neck at night. A money wallet for carrying your passport and valuables in close to your body helps give you a sense of comfort when transiting in busy places (and makes it virtually impossible for pickpockets to take your important documents). Carrying only the money you will need for the day in your wallet or pocket helps make you a less desirable target for theft.

Travelling with a buddy after dark is never a bad idea, but most major streets in tourist areas are fine to walk after dark. When in doubt take a cab; most restaurants etc. can call you a cab or they are readily found on most streets and rates are set by the government.

Avoid big protests or large gatherings in the streets so you don't get caught up in any tense situations. The national police, in their crisp white uniforms, are incredibly helpful and professional. To reach the police, fire or ambulances dial 911 or 919 from any phone, mobile or payphone. Never try to bribe the police in the Bahamas.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR WOMEN

Women should take the usual precautions including not walking alone after dark etc. Keeping a careful eye on your drinks to avoid being drugged if out at a bar is never a bad idea. Don't accept drinks from strangers. It's a good idea to bring with you a supply of your preferred brand of feminine hygiene supplies. Birth control pills and the morning after pill can sometimes be difficult to access.

HEALTH

Ensure you have adequate travel medical insurance. No one ever plans to get sick, but it sometimes happens and having good coverage including the option of returning to your home country for continued treatment is comforting to say the least. Credit cards often offer some coverage, but often have low limits or only partial coverage for a limited number of days. Health care in Nassau is quite good, but expensive so come well covered.



While there are no required vaccinations for travelling to the Bahamas it is suggested you have measles, rubella, polio, hepatitis A & B and tetanus vaccinations (you need a tetanus booster ever 10 years). If you are coming from a country with yellow fever you will also need a yellow fever vaccination. Spirit of the West also asks all guests to have a current tetanus/polio/diphtheria shot (you need a booster every 10 years).

Having a routine medical and dental check-up before travelling can also help to eliminate any unforeseen pain or problems that could take away from your trip. It is a good idea to carry a copy of your prescriptions and any necessary medications in their original containers. Please carry any essential medications in carry on luggage in case of delays in travelling or losing bags etc.

Knowing your eyeglass prescription and carrying a back up pair of glasses will also be helpful in case something happens to your glasses. The sights here are so beautiful you won't want to be visually impaired for even a minute.

There are well stocked pharmacies in Nassau, but options are limited in the outer islands. The best option though is to come prepared so you don't have to spend your vacation time searching out pharmacies etc. Water is generally safe, but it is never a bad idea to treat tap water before drinking or to purchase bottled water if you are concerned. The water here may also taste slightly salty.

We like to take Pristine drops (or similar) with us. They are a quick and easy way to treat water and it cuts down on the waste of buying plastic bottles all the time.



THE FINE PRINT

The degree of difficulty of each tour depends a great deal on the wind and weather conditions presented. This of course cannot be determined in advance, so please be prepared for anything including winds.

If you are concerned about your paddling ability, we recommend 'The Southern Exuma Cays Route' as it provides the most flexibility with route and more sheltered paddling than our other tours in the Bahamas.

The Land and Sea Park Tour includes some time spent traveling by motorboat. This gives us the ability to access the best areas for kayaking.

All tours can involve some open crossings, which can present large waves and swell. We of course only kayak when we determine the conditions are deemed appropriate, but please be advised that we may encounter some larger water during several short crossings.

Our tours here are all designed to take advantage of relaxing, including time for snorkelling, beachcombing as well as kayaking. Each tour is designed to move at a slightly different pace and has varying levels of difficulty in terms of kayaking distances and conditions. Please feel free to contact us to discuss the various trips to ensure the right trip for you.

Spirit of the West Adventures does not provide any alcohol as part of the tours, but you are more than welcome to bring your own, which can be purchased upon arrival.

We will try our best to accommodate dietary needs, restrictions and allergies, but please note that supplies

can be limited in the Bahamas. Please contact us in the office to discuss any dietary requirements.

For tours starting and ending in Staniel Cay, hotel accommodation is limited and we suggest reserving your accommodation as soon as possible.

Airport transfers are NOT included in the tour price.

Meals outside of the kayaking portion of the tour are at your own expense.

All accommodation (outside of the nights we are camping) is at your own expense.

We require all guests to purchase trip cancellation, interruption and medical insurance to cover any unexpected costs that may be incurred due to circumstances beyond our control. This is your own responsibility and it is up to you to ensure you have proper coverage. Please see our Terms and Conditions for more details.

All flights and baggage charges are at your own expense.



TOUR TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVING YOUR TRIP

Reserving your adventure with Spirit of the West Adventures is simple. Just call 1-800-307-3982 to speak with one of our friendly and helpful office crew, e-mail your request to info@kayakingtours.com or reserve your trip on the web through our [online reservation request system](#).

If you're not sure if a particular trip is right for you or you're looking for more information, let us know and we would be happy to answer your questions or put you in touch with a past guest who has experienced the trip before.

To reserve space on our tours we ask for a deposit as well as a completed reservation form submitted online, over the phone or by fax. We require a deposit of 25% per person.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A deposit to reserve your space on a tour is due at time of booking. The balance of your trip cost is due 90 days prior to departure. For your convenience, with your authorization, we automatically charge your credit card when the balance is due unless otherwise arranged. Payment can be made by cheque, money order, Visa or MasterCard; any processing charges or fees are your responsibility.

PRICING

All pricing for Canadian-based tours is listed and charged in Canadian dollars. All tours that take place outside of Canada are listed and charged in US dollars. Any foreign currency pricing is only approximate. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. charges in the listed currency and it is your credit card company or bank who determines your exchange rate on the day your transaction takes place. Pricing is subject to change.

For all Canadian tours there is an additional 5% tax called the GST (Goods and Services Tax). Tours that take place outside of Canada are not taxed. Non-tour add-ons such as equipment rentals or merchandise must be charged both 5% GST and 7% PST (Provincial Sales Tax).

CANCELLATION POLICY

If you find it necessary to cancel your tour, please let us know as soon as possible. No refunds are given once tours have departed. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for any additional costs that may arise in the event of a trip alteration or delay caused by circumstances beyond our control. To avoid confusion we require written notice of cancellation, by email, fax or standard mail. The following fees will apply to cancellations and are calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation notice.

CANADIAN TOURS

If you must cancel your tour, your refund is as follows:

- Earlier than 90 days before trip – If we have not had to turn customers away, full amount is refunded less a \$100 administration fee. If we have had to turn customers away, the deposit is retained.

- 89-30 days before trip – 50% of total tour price is refunded.
- Later than 30 days before trip – No refund will be given, unless we can find someone to fill your space. In this case, only the deposit is retained.

INTERNATIONAL TOURS

If you must cancel your tour, your refund is as follows:

- Earlier than 90 days before trip – deposit is refunded less a \$250 administration fee and the guest is responsible for any costs incurred for cancelling any additional tours or travel arrangements. If we have had to turn customers away, the entire deposit is retained.
- 90-60 days before trip – 50% of total tour price is refunded.
- Less than 60 days before trip – No refund will be given, unless we can find someone to fill your space. If we can fill your space, only the deposit is retained.

We highly recommend that all guests purchase trip cancellation and interruption insurance. Trip cancellation and interruption insurance is mandatory for all international tours. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for ensuring the appropriate level or amount of coverage is purchased. Please contact your travel insurance provider to ensure you have appropriate coverage for your entire trip.

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. reserves the right to cancel any trip prior to departure for any reason whatsoever, including insufficient bookings, safety threats including natural disasters, political instability, terrorism or logistical problems that may impede trip operations.

If we have to cancel a tour due to insufficient bookings you may choose between an alternate trip or a full refund. We will inform participants of cancellations due to insufficient bookings no later than 60 days prior to the tour. If the alternate trip chosen is of a lower value than the originally booked then you are entitled to a refund of the difference. If the alternate tour chosen is of a higher value then you will pay the difference in price.

If a tour has to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control, e.g. political instability, natural disasters, labour strikes etc, there will be no refund from Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Please contact your travel insurance provider for details on how to start a claim.

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for expenses incurred by trip participants in preparing for a cancelled trip (for example non-refundable advance purchase plane tickets, visa fees, inoculations, equipment etc. or for any additional arrangements for other travel plans associated with this tour.) Spirit of the West will make every reasonable effort to contact you as soon as it appears that a trip may be cancelled.

TRIP PREPARATION

Once you've made your choice and sent in your deposit, we'll send you a detailed document that includes everything that you will need to prepare

for your tour including an itinerary, packing list, transportation options, directions, meeting times and frequently asked questions. For international tour destinations, we include information about issues such as passports, visas, immunizations and currency exchange. All you need to bring is your passport, a sense of adventure, your clothing and personal items.

Let us know if you're planning a birthday or anniversary trip. We'll pack a surprise! If you have special dietary considerations, please let us know in advance and we'll make all the accommodations necessary if you're vegetarian, vegan or have food allergies. Please note we are not a peanut or nut free facility. On international tours the availability of ingredients or restaurant kitchens outside of our control may limit the type of dietary accommodation we are able to offer.

MEDICAL AND RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/ LIABILITY RELEASE FORMS

Each participant is required to fully fill out the medical form and liability release form. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. must receive medical forms at least 30 days prior to tour departure. Please read and understand the liability waiver upon registration. You will be asked to sign the liability waiver on your arrival and before tour departure.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITY

Although no previous kayaking experience is required on our tours, as with any adventure there is always an element of risk. While our trips are not considered to be strenuous or physically demanding, and we do not require a high level of fitness, good general physical condition is necessary. If you have any physical limitations or concerns please let us know. As we are not qualified to evaluate your level of fitness we ask that you (possibly along with your doctor) determine whether or not you are able to join one of our adventures. If you have any special medical conditions, we encourage you to check with your doctor before you reserve your trip. Please also note that all of our tours take place in remote areas and evacuations can take a great deal of time and can be expensive. Persons with various disabilities are welcome on Spirit of the West tours, pending a discussion of any special needs and requirements.

You must also acknowledge that travel with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. requires a degree of flexibility and understanding that the trip's route, itinerary, accommodation and modes of transport are subject to change without prior notice due to local circumstances. While traveling with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. you agree to accept the authority of the leader at all times. You need to be aware that group travel may involve compromise to accommodate the diverse desires and abilities of group members. We ask that you welcome your adventure with an open mind and be able to laugh and have fun when encountering the unexpected. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is dedicated to providing safe, environmentally sensitive, well-organized, fun-filled adventures.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

You must carry a valid passport and/or necessary documentation and have obtained the appropriate visas when travelling with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Please ensure your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of your trip. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in pos-

session of the correct visas for your travels. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. does not accept responsibility if you are refused entry to a country because you lack the correct documentation or the authorities deem you unsuitable for entry.

ACCOMMODATIONS ON TOUR

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. will do our best to make you comfortable and feel at home on your tour.

Canadian Tours: Keep in mind that our sea kayaking tours are a true wilderness experience that can involve camping in established and non-established sites with minimal facilities and rustic surroundings. This is all part of what we call an adventure! Tenting and lodging is generally based on double occupancy, however if you are traveling alone we do our best to provide you with your own tent or a suitable tent partner.

International Tours: Hotels in the Bahamas are NOT included in tour costs. Hotels in Chile are included in the tour price and are based on double occupancy. There is a \$200 single supplement for Chile tours if you require your own hotel room. Single accommodation on the Mothership in Chile is NOT possible. All tenting is also based on double occupancy, however if you are travelling alone we do our best to provide you with your own tent or a suitable tent partner.

TIPPING

Gratuities are always appreciated. If you feel the guides & crew have done an exceptional job, tipping is a great way to show your appreciation. We also appreciate other expressions of thanks including cards, letters etc.

STORAGE OF PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Due to the nature of our services, it is necessary to collect and store a certain amount of personal and financial information. By providing us with your address, personal and financial information, you consent to the storage of this information for a period of time deemed appropriate by Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, your first name, last name, phone number, email address and billing address. Financial information includes, but is not limited to, your card account number, card expiration date and cardholder name.

PRIVACY POLICY

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. occasionally sends out an e-newsletter and updates that we think you'll want to hear about. We will NEVER to sell or share your email address with any third party company (unless it is for the purpose of coordinating trip logistics, for example booking airline tickets). You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing or clicking on the links in newsletters. For more information please feel free to call us at 1-800-307-3982 or email us at info@kayakingtours.com.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd, reserves the right to take photographic or film records of any of its tours. Trip members should be aware that Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. may use these photos or film for promotional and or commercial purposes without remuneration to the trip participants.

SPIRIT OF THE WEST ADVENTURES LTD

Box 569 | Heriot Bay | British Columbia | V0P 1H0 | Canada
Toll free 1 800 307 3982 | Overseas 1 250 285 2121
info@kayakingtours.com | kayakingtours.com

