

**The Bahamas High Commission  
London**

**FACT SHEET# 3**



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**GEOGRAPHY**

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The Bahamas is a 100,000-sq-mile archipelago that extends for more than 500 miles between the southeast Florida and northern Hispaniola between longitudes 72°35'W and latitudes 20°50'N and 27°30'N.

The waters surrounding the Bahamas are virtually free of pollution and silt, making them among the clearest and most colourful in the world. Bordered on the west by the Gulf Stream and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, the islands have a subtropical climate. Highest land elevation is 206 ft.

The mile deep- Tongue of the Ocean is located east of Andros, and flanked by the world's third-longest barrier reef. These waters are used for oceanographic research by the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre (AUTEC), a multimillion-dollar US Navy research base.

The estimated land area of The Bahamas has been listed as 5,382 sq miles by the Dept of Lands and Surveys. Figures are subject to change as more accurate surveys and maps are completed.

Modern mapping techniques are allowing advances in remeasuring the islands, some of which have suffered considerable loss of coastline due to erosion and man-made features, while there is some accretion to others.

**Climate**

The Bahamas has a subtropical maritime climate with winter incursions of modified polar air and generally experiences neither frost, snow, sleet nor extreme temperatures. An exception occurred on Jan 19, 1977, when parts of the northern Bahamas experienced a brief flurry of light snow as the temperature in Freeport plunged to 39°F, the lowest ever recorded in The Bahamas. The lowest recorded temperature for New Providence was 41.4°F on Jan 20, 1981.

In centrally-situated New Providence, winter temperatures seldom fall much below 60°F and usually reach about 75°F in the afternoon. In summer, temperatures usually fall to 78°F or less at night and seldom rise above 90°F during the day. Winter temperatures are cooler in more northerly islands than in New Providence, and about five degrees warmer in the south. In summer, temperatures tend to be similar all over The Bahamas. Sea surface temperatures normally vary between 74°F in February and 83°F in August.

Humidity is fairly high, especially in summer months. Winds are predominantly easterly throughout the year but have a tendency to blow from the northwest, north and northeast from Oct-Apr and southeasterly from May-Sept. Wind speeds are, on average, below 10 knots; in winter months winds of about 25 knots may occur.

There are more than seven hours of bright sunshine per day in New Providence on average, though periods of cloudy weather can occur at any time of year. Daylight hours vary from 10 hours, 35 mins in late Dec to 13 hours, 41 mins in late June.

Rain showers occur any time of year, but the rainy months are May-Oct; eg, in New Providence, rainfall averages two inches a month from Nov-Oct. In the northern islands, it is up to 20% more. The southern islands normally receive only half the New Providence total. Rainfall is mainly in the form of heavy showers or thundershowers, which clear quickly.

### **Climatological Means (1971-2000\*)**

**Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec**

#### Highest temperatures recorded

86.9 88.7 88.5 91.4 94.3 97.7 95.4 95.0 95.2 93.2 92.1 86.9

#### Lowest temperatures recorded

41.4 45.8 46.0 48.6 55.5 59.0 64.2 64.4 59.5 56.0 51.0 41.5

#### Mean temperature

69.9 70.0 72.0 74.4 77.5 80.4 82.3 82.2 81.1 78.7 74.9 71.4

#### Mean of daily minimum temperature

62.1 62.5 63.8 66.2 69.8 73.3 74.7 74.8 74.4 71.9 68.0 63.8

### **Rainfall**

Mean in inches

<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
1.55	1.95	2.14	2.73	4.17	8.59	6.33	9.28	6.46	6.37	3.17	1.96

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