

EXCITING



Special Bahamas Itinerary Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable.
If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures.

Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerverventures.com/bahamas

THE VESSEL

- 20 guests
- 10 air-conditioned rooms with private bath & shower
- 3 configuration choices; twin bunks, twin/queen or queen
- 110 V outlets in bath & near bed

The M/V *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* comfortably accommodates 20 passengers in 10 double staterooms, each of which has private bathroom facilities, individually-controlled air conditioning, hanging closet and wardrobe. The air-conditioned main salon on the main deck includes dining tables, TV, VCR, CD/DVD, video library and lounge area. A large sun deck with lounge chairs and buffet area is located aft of the upstairs deckhouse, which contains two additional passenger staterooms, pilothouse and captain's cabin. A large, awning-covered flybridge with wet bar, barbecue and seating for 15 is accessed from the sun deck as well.

The dive deck is equipped with a bathroom, individual gear bins, camera table, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks, freshwater showers, and a separate fresh water rinse for both scuba and underwater camera equipment. There are two large stairways accessing the dive platform, where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water. The *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* is also equipped with a satellite telephone for outgoing calls worldwide.

DIVING CONDITIONS

- Water temps vary between 72-82°F spring & summer
- Visibility 75-150 feet
- Water entry directly from vessel

The weather in the southern Bahamas is fairly consistent year-round. The temperatures range from the 70s (F) or higher in the winter months to the low-90s during the summer, with nearly constant sea breezes. Water temperatures range from a low of about 72°F in winter to a high of about 82°F in summer. There is normally little appreciable current at the sites we visit, and visibility is generally between 75 and 150 feet. Most divers are comfortable with a 3 mm wetsuit in summer and a 5 mm wetsuit with hooded vest in fall, winter and spring.

Your dives will be done from the vessel itself, taking advantage of the easy-access dive platform and other on board amenities. Entries are usually made from the side exit gates into the water, a drop of 4 feet or so.

DIVING LOGISTICS

- Up to 5 dives offered daily
- Diving is done from the vessel

The majority of dives aboard our vessels are offered at scheduled times, up to 5 times daily. This is to allow adequate surface intervals, provide the option for guided dives on as many sites as possible, and allow the vessel to travel on a schedule to different locations. It also permits us to offer island tours on the islands which we visit.

MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

- Under the age of 15 must dive with parent/guardian

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most scuba certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-olds to a maximum depth of 40 feet. Explorer Ventures therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

1. All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor.
2. Our itineraries offer very few diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-olds will be significantly less than those for older divers.
For these reasons, a minimum age of 12 for divers is strongly suggested.

SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as open water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. All divers should have logged at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel, or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board.



3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system, unless certified, equipped and adhering to standards for solo diving.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible console including SPG & depth gauge, timepiece or dive computer with these functions.
6. On night dives, a cyalume lightstick or marker beacon must be worn by each diver.
7. Decompression diving is not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130 feet (110 feet on nitrox).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that, due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, neither rebreathers nor diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) may be used aboard Explorer Ventures vessels.

WHAT TO BRING

- **Soft luggage for easy storage**
- **Very casual attire**
- **All linens, soaps and shampoo are supplied**
- **Hairdryers are not available on board**

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits (you may consider slacks, dress shorts or sundresses for dinner ashore). Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sunscreen, sunglasses, a visor or hat is recommended. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite CDs or DVDs, feel free to bring them.

All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, dive towels, and wash cloths) are provided on board.

If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, a swimsuit, change of clothes, necessary medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these few items with you will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- **Bring your application/liability forms**
- **Certification card**
- **Rental equipment is available on board**

The vessel provides tanks, hard weights and weight belts for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your

application form what equipment you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Certification card
- Diving log book (strongly encouraged; required for solo diving course)
- Mask/Snorkel *
- Fins *
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Buoyancy Control Device (required) *
- Regulator w/alternate air source *
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)*
- Underwater time piece (required)
- Dive light *
- Tank Marker Lights (required for night dives)*
- For solo divers: pony bottle (or independent or isolated-manifold twin tanks), whistle, knife, compass, and safety sausage or flag deployable from safety stop depth *
- Dive computer (recommended) *
- Wetsuit – 3 mm to 5 mm *
- Repair kit w/ spare parts

* Available for rent on board

ARRIVAL

- **Passport required**
- **Valid return airline ticket**
- **Transfer costs are not included**
- **If you are delayed call 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) Operations office**

Please note that a passport is required of all visitors arriving in the Bahamas or Turks & Caicos. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required. Visitors from most countries do not need a visa. If you have questions about entry requirements, contact the Bahamas Government.

Delayed luggage issues on all airlines can occur, and for this reason we recommend either (1) arriving a day prior to the vessel's departure and spending the night at a local resort or hotel, and/or (2) carrying all necessities for the week in your carry-on bag. Due to the vessel's itinerary, we are normally unable to wait to retrieve delayed baggage that arrives later than Saturday night.

Though transfers are not included in the package, if you are arriving on the day of departure you will be met at the airport by a local driver; if you have indicated you will be staying at a local hotel, arrangements will be made to pickup you up and take you to the vessel. Please contact the vessel if your travel itinerary has changed.

If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the vessel on schedule, please call the operations office at 1.800.322.3577. Notify the crew of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime.



SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Days aboard *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* generally involve breakfast from 7 am to 8 am (cold breakfasts are available for late risers), followed by two morning dives, lunch at 12:30 pm, two afternoon dives, dinner at 6:30 pm, and a night dive.

Please note also that this itinerary is an example only, and will change depending on weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion.

Saturday:

- 3:00 pm Guests board vessel
- 6:30 Dinner (snacks or dinner available for those arriving on later flights)
- 8:00 Captain's Briefing, documents, etc.
- 9:00 Shore leave or simply relax aboard.

Sunday - Thursday:

Up to 5 dives offered each day depending on logistics.

Friday:

Dawn dive and morning dive, with departure for port after morning dive. Afternoon at leisure; dinner ashore, with night spent aboard vessel.

Saturday:

- 7-8:30 Continental breakfast
- 9:00 Depart the vessel. Should you be leaving on an afternoon flight, feel free to leave your luggage on the dock alongside the vessel until you depart; we will watch over it.

Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 9 am departure.

MEALS

- **Please list on the application form any dietary needs you have.**

Aboard the *Turks & Caicos Explorer II*, evening meals usually consist of lots of fresh vegetables, rice, pasta, chicken, beef, turkey, pork and fish. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, bacon, pancakes, French toast, muffins, danish and fresh fruits. Lunches vary from soup and sandwiches, burgers, pasta, assorted salads and quiche. Homemade baked breads, cookies and brownies are offered between dives. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in the islands, and that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products, fresh fruit, fish and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

CURRENCY

- **US dollars are widely accepted**
- **Most major credit cards are accepted**

The Bahamian dollar (equivalent in value to the US dollar) is the official currency; change is often given in US dollars if requested, and both currencies are used interchangeably. Most major credit cards are accepted widely throughout the island.

DEPARTURE

- **Departure tax may not be included in airline ticket. If not, cash will be required.**

The *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* arrives back into port midday Friday. Transportation will be provided for a casual dinner on Friday evening; passengers spend Friday night and have Saturday breakfast on board; there will be sufficient time to catch a flight out at any time on Saturday. There is a departure tax, payable in cash, of approximately US\$23 upon leaving (subject to change).

ONBOARD CHARGES

- **Major credit cards are accepted on board**
- **Traveler's or personal checks are not**

Though all meals (except Friday's dinner), beverages, transportation between islands, and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your on board bill. These include retail items, incoming and outgoing telephone calls, scuba instruction, rentals, nitrox, port tax, fuel surcharge and crew gratuities.

The bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover or cash. Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted on board and we are unable to provide cash for credit card charges more than invoice amounts.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Vital messages may be passed to guests by calling the operations office at 1.800.322.3577**
- **Internet access is not available aboard**

You can be reached aboard the *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* from North America via Iridium phone. Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls. Please contact the operations office for current contact information.



CREW GRATUITIES

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and up to 12 weeks at a stretch, providing the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the package price per passenger. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus between-dive snacks
- Up to 5 dives daily
- Use of tanks, weights and belts
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Airport transfers
- Friday evening dinner
- Optional island tour
- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Trip Cancellation & Dive Insurance (recommended)
- Port fee
- Departure taxes
- Fuel surcharge

OVERVIEW

Additional items not covered in the package price include:

- Airline ticket to and from vessel.
- Transfers from airport or hotel to vessel
- Optional land tour (if available)
- Friday evening dinner
- Rental equipment
- Courses taken while aboard
- Retail items purchased aboard
- Crew gratuity (Typical is 10-15% for trip cost but is totally at the discretion of the guest)
- Port fees
- Fuel surcharge
- Departure tax

*All prices are subject to change.
Please feel free to call us if you have any questions.*

Updated July 2013



Have a wonderful trip!

Explorer Ventures

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