

# Fun Things to Do in Nassau, Bahamas While on a Cruise

 By **Angela Minor** April 1, 2017  0

Ports Bahamas and Caribbean

One of the most popular ports for cruise ship shore excursions is Nassau, capital of the Bahamas. This tropical destination offers cruisers a wide range of fun things to do while in port.



## Beaches

I thought I had seen powdery white sand beaches before going to Paradise Island, but I was mistaken! The sand and the sea around Nassau are like no other. These islands even caught the attention of astronaut Chris Hadfield while on the International Space Station: “The most beautiful to me are The Bahamas...the vast glowing reefs of every shade of blue.”

There are miles of public beaches, all equally beautiful. Take your sunscreen and sunglasses – the islands have 300 days of sunshine per year!

## Water activities and wildlife

There are several options in Nassau to snorkel and scuba in secluded coves and even see the sunken wrecks of airplanes and ships. For the brave, you can swim with stingrays and sharks. I would recommend grabbing some snorkel equipment, and going right out into the safe-to-swim water for a breath-taking view of coral reefs and tropical fish at Paradise Island.

Sponsored Links

Also, take the time to visit the popular water park and aquarium at Atlantis Resort on the island. Open to the public, this destination has water slides that plunge through a shark lagoon, and one of the world's largest outdoor aquariums.

If scheduling allows, you can see dolphins and sea lions up-close and personal while swimming with them at the respected marine mammal program on Blue Lagoon Island. This private island wraps you in the natural environment of non-commercial life in the tropics.

Related Post: [Best Things to Do in Nassau on a Cruise](#)

## History and culture

No cruise ship shore excursion in Nassau is complete without a dose of history and culture. Hop on a guided tour to learn about the local music and dance (Junkanoo); specialized food and drink (Bahamian chocolate and

sugarcane molasses rum); and architecture (National Art Gallery of the Bahamas at Villa Doyle) that reflect the British, Spanish and West African influences on Bahamian tradition.

Be sure to climb the Queen's Staircase up to Fort Fincastle. While it may sound odd to recognize a set of 66 steps carved into limestone, these are special. Made by slaves, they protected the troops and were named for Queen Victoria's efforts to end slavery in the Bahamas. The fort at the top of the hill, constructed in 1793, was built to resemble the bow of a ship. Bring your camera. This location is the best panoramic view of the islands and surrounding azure waters.

## **Nature on land**

The best way to experience island flora and fauna is at the Ardastra Gardens, Zoo and Conservation Center. This organization works to educate visitors and protect indigenous plants and wildlife. A guide will tell you about native plants and animals that you see all over the islands. There is a petting zoo, and the opportunity to see the world-famous 'marching flamingos.'

## **Shopping**

Shopping doesn't always make it into the history books. But the Bahamas are different – they have straw markets. Processing palmetto straw and sisal fiber, weaving it into useful and attractive items, and selling to tourists is one of the country's oldest industries. The Nassau Straw Market located on Bay Street near the port is the most famous, with additional markets located throughout the area.

I would only recommend these markets, however, to those who love treasure hunting followed by intense negotiating. It will take some attention to find the local-made crafts amid the 'imports.' But searching is half the fun. The other half is making 'the deal.' You'll be expected to haggle with the vendors for the best price on that must-have straw hat, bag or carved item! Bring US or Bahamian cash, and enjoy a local drink or snack while you browse.

For a quieter shopping experience, there are dozens of duty-free shops in the downtown and surrounding areas. You'll find something for everyone on your souvenir list as well as some nice travel purchases for yourself in stores ranging from high-end boutiques to local artisan shops.

As the shore excursion in Nassau edges toward evening, take the cigar rolling and rum tasting tour. Yes, it's everything you'd hope it would be!

*Angela is a professional freelance travel writer and published indie author – [AngelaMinor.com](http://AngelaMinor.com)*

Learn the **cruise secrets** most people don't know and cruise like a boss. Check out [Intelligent Cruiser here](#) for a better cruise vacation. (Sponsored)

---

Looking for the **Best Cruise Deals?**

Search Multiple Sites at Once

Instant Real Time Pricing

[Search Now](#)

### Check Prices for the Best Cruise Deals

Caribbean (All) 

August, 2020 

Norwegian Cruise Line 

3 Night Bahamas (Miami Roundtrip) 

Norwegian Sky - August 21, 2020

Inside

Oceanview

Balcony

Suite

**\$149\***

 **NORWEGIAN**  
CRUISE LINE®

[View Deal](#)