



INFORMATION BOOKLET ON **IMMIGRATION / VISAS /** **EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL** **ENTRY TO THE BAHAMAS**

Information provided by:

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Section 1 - Public Holidays

New Year's Day	1 January
Good Friday	
Easter Monday	

Whit Monday	(seven weeks after Easter)
Labour Day	(First Friday in June)
Independence Day	10 July
Emancipation Day	(First Monday in Aug)
Discovery Day	12 October
Christmas Day	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December

Section 2 - Working in the Bahamas

1 HOW DO I OBTAIN A WORK PERMIT**

Work permits must be applied for and obtained from the Department of Immigration in Nassau, Hawkins Hill, PO Box N-831, Nassau, The Bahamas, Tel: 001 242 322 531 Fax: 001 242 326 0977

2CAN I APPLY FOR A WORK PERMIT WHILE I AM IN THE BAHAMAS**

No; work permit applications from persons already in the Bahamas would not be entertained. Applications must be made while you are outside the Bahamas.

3WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR A NON-BAHAMIAN PERSON TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT IN THE BAHAMAS?**

The Bahamas is a small developing country and Government regulations ensure that employment may be only offered to non – Bahamians in posts for which there are no suitably qualified Bahamians. In order to obtain employment as a non – Bahamian, the following criteria must be met:

An employer who has a vacant post is required to advertise the post locally. If he is unsuccessful in filling the post locally, he may apply to the Immigration Board for permission to recruit outside the country. He must also obtain a certificate from the Ministry of Justice and Immigration indicating that a Bahamian is not available to fill the position.

When the prospective expatriate employee has been contacted, the employer must apply for a permit which is issued by the Immigration Board. An application will not be entertained if the prospective employee was already in the Bahamas, having entered as a visitor. Permits are issued for specific posts and the renewal of a permit is not automatic. Each application would be considered on its merits.

Employers may apply for permits for longer periods than one year in respect of certain key personnel on contract. Such contracts should indicate that their renewal would be subject to obtaining the applicant's replacement within a stipulated period.

Fees of varying amounts up to \$15,000 (for senior managerial and professional people) are charged if a permit is granted. The same amount is payable upon renewal of the permit annually. If approval is granted the employer will be asked to enter onto a bond equivalent to the cost of repatriating the employee.

4I HAVE SPECIALIST SKILLS. WHICH MINISTRY OR DEPARTMENT SHOULD I CONTACT TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF JOBS IN THE BAHAMAS?**

Qualified persons interested in employment with the Government of The Bahamas should write to respective Ministry / Department as follows:

**Nurses, Doctors and Kindred Services - Ministry of Health,
P.O. Box N-3730, Nassau, The Bahamas Tel: 242 322 7425**

Teachers, Professors – Ministry of Education, P.O. Box N-3913, Nassau, The Bahamas Tel: 242 322 8140 Fax: 242 322 8491

Legal and Judicial Services – The Legal Department, P.O. Box N-3007, Nassau, The Bahamas Tel: 242 322 1141

Public Works (Water Supplies) – Ministry of Public Works, P.O. Box N-8156, Nassau, The Bahamas, Tel: 242 322 – 4831

Radio and Telephone Technicians - Bahamas Telecommunications Corporation, P.O. Box N-3048, Nassau The Bahamas Tel: 242 323 4911

Administrative, Clerical and Financial – Department of Labour, P.O. Box N-3915, Nassau, The Bahamas Tel: 242 325 – 6511

Section 3 - Money Matters

1WHAT IS THE EXCHANGE RATE OF THE BAHAMIAN DOLLAR?**

The rate is approximately \$1(USD) = 0.96 Bahamian cents. You should check with a bureau de change in order to obtain the rate at the time of travel.

2WHAT CURRENCY CAN I USE IN THE BAHAMAS?**

American Dollars are the most accessible currency to obtain from a bank or a bureau de change and is widely accepted throughout the Bahamas Islands. Once in The Bahamas, you may also use Bahamian Dollars. The two currencies are used interchangeably.

3CAN I LEAVE THE BAHAMAS WITH BAHAMIAN MONEY?**

The currency of The Bahamas is restricted; therefore it is illegal to depart the country with more than \$200 Bahamian dollars in your possession.

4CAN I USE TRAVELLER'S CHEQUES IN THE BAHAMAS?**

Internationally known traveller's cheques in dollar denominations may be cashed almost anywhere.

5WHAT HOURS CAN I DO MY BANKING?**

Banks in New Providence and Grand Bahama are open from 09:30 to 15:00 Monday to Thursday and on Fridays until 17:00. On the Out Islands service is often very limited.

6CAN I USE CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS IN THE BAHAMAS?**

Yes; major credit cards and most debit cards are acceptable for payment throughout the Islands. In addition, most ATMs on the Islands will offer cash advances from your cards subject to a small fee.

Section 4 - General Immigration and Entry Questions

1 I KNOW THAT I DO NOT REQUIRE A VISA TO ENTER THE BAHAMAS – WHAT DOCUMENTATION SHOULD I HAVE IN MY POSSESSION TO ENTER?**

- A valid passport with six months validity from the date of departure from the Bahamas;
- A return or onward ticket if flying by commercial carrier
- A letter and further documentation if flying by private aircraft
- If travelling by private vessel, documentation from the Captain giving entry and exit details of the vessel;
- Passengers travelling by commercial cruise ships should have their travel vouchers or passbooks
- Visa or entry permits for any other country that you would be visiting
- Sufficient funds to finance the visit (approx. \$200USD per day)
- A letter of invitation if residing at a private address
- A confirmed hotel booking if applicable

1bMUST I HAVE A BIOMETRIC OR MACHINE READABLE PASSPORT TO ENTER THE BAHAMAS?**

Machine readable or biometric passports are not needed for entry to the Bahamas.

2IF I AM A PERMANENT RESIDENT OF THE US (A GREEN CARD HOLDER), WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS?**

Green card holders do not require visas to visit The Bahamas. They should have a travel document that is valid for six months from the date of departure from The Bahamas; sufficient funds to finance their trip; onward or return tickets to leave The Bahamas and proof of accommodation.

3WHAT FORMS OF ID DOES A BRITISH PERSON NEED TO TAKE WITH THEM ON THEIR HOLIDAY FOR ENTRY INTO THE BAHAMAS?**

A valid passport for six months from the date of leaving The Bahamas.

4CAN A PERSON TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS ON AN EXPIRED PASSPORT?**

No; passports must have a minimum of six months validity from the date of departure from The Bahamas. In addition, airlines would not let passengers board with expired travel documents.

5IF I ONLY HAVE FOUR MONTHS LEFT ON MY PASSPORT, CAN I STILL TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS?**

Only British and American nationals may travel to the Bahamas with less than six months left on their passports. However, British nationals are advised to have at least six months left on their passports, as they need this requirement for British Immigration purposes. British passport holders that travel to the Bahamas with less than six months validity on their passports would be allowed entry to the Bahamas as long as the duration of their visit to the Bahamas is less than three weeks (21 days).

6WHAT IS THE VALIDITY ON A BRITISH PASSPORT FOR ENTRY INTO THE BAHAMAS?**

Citizens of the United Kingdom, on temporary visits not exceeding three weeks, may travel to the Bahamas *without* a passport. The traveller should be in possession of evidence of citizenship, i.e. voter's card, birth certificate or other documents showing proof of citizenship along with an acceptable photo I.D. (for this purpose, a driver's licence would not suffice), a return or onward ticket or other means of travelling to some other country to which you have the right of entry and sufficient funds (\$200

USD per day) for your maintenance during their stay in The Bahamas. However, as passports are required for re-entry into the United Kingdom, we would strongly advise that you travel on a passport valid for at least six months after the date of departure from the Bahamas as per United Kingdom Immigration regulations.

7IS IT ACCEPTABLE FOR A CHILD TO BE ON THE MOTHER'S OR FATHER'S PASSPORT TO GAIN ENTRY INTO THE BAHAMAS?**

Yes, this is acceptable to the Govt. of The Bahamas. Minors up the age of sixteen years old may travel to the Bahamas on their parent's passports.

8WHAT HAPPENS IF MY NAME APPEARS DIFFERENTLY ON THE PASSPORT AS IT APPEARS ON THE TICKET?**

If the name change were due to Marriage, you would need a copy of the marriage certificate with other proof of citizenship (birth certificate, voter's card, driving license etc.) If the name change is due to adoption or legal name change (deed poll) you would need a certified copy of the legal document showing the name change with other proof of citizenship. If you do not have a legal document, you would need a parent or other relative that knew of the name change to have an affidavit sworn to that fact.

9 AT WHAT AGE CAN CHILDREN TRAVEL UNACCOMPANIED TO THE BAHAMAS AND WHAT DOCUMENTATION SHOULD THEY HAVE TO GAIN ENTRY?**

An authorization letter from their parents stating consent has been given for children of sixteen years and under.

10 ARE PETS ALLOWED TO TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS WITHOUT A PERIOD OF QUARANTINE?**

A valid import permit (\$10) is required to import any animal in to the Bahamas. Unless otherwise indicated, a permit can only be used once and only during the period specified on the permit. Dogs and cats imported from countries with rabies must be six months and older. To apply for an import permit, please telephone 001 22 325 7502 in the Bahamas or 001 242 325 7503. You may also write to the Director of Agriculture at P O Box N – 3028, Nassau. State your name and address, the type, age and number of animals you wish to import, the country of export and origin, the purpose for importing the animal(s), as well as anticipated date of arrival and destination in the Bahamas.

11CAN I TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS USED AS MEDICATION FOR AN EXISTING ILLNESS?**

It is suggested that a letter from the doctor stating that the medication is needed for your health be obtained and presented to customs if questioned.

12ARE THERE ANY FEES I HAVE TO PAY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY?**

Yes; departure tax is \$15 from all islands with the exception of Freeport, which is \$20; this fee may be already incorporated in your ticket or holiday package.

13CAN I TRAVEL TO THE BAHAMAS WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD?**

You should contact the Immigration Department of the Bahamas in Nassau for further advice and clarification. The telephone number is 001 242 322 7530 or 001 242 322 7532.

14WHAT CAN I BRING INTO THE BAHAMAS AS FAR AS FOOD ITEMS?**

You may take any item up to a value of \$100USD Duty free. However, no fresh fruit or vegetables allowed. Chicken and beef are taxable. One quart of alcohol including beer and wine and 200 cigarettes and 50 cigars are allowed for persons over 21. Additional information may be obtained from The Comptroller of Customs, Customs House, Thompson Blvd, PO Box N-155, Nassau, The Bahamas. (tel: 001 242 326-4401).

Section 5 - Vaccination and Inoculations

1ARE THERE ANY VACCINATIONS REQUIRED?**

Most visitors to The Bahamas do not need special vaccinations before entering the country. However, travellers over one year of age must provide a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate if they are coming from the following countries: Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, French Guiana, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Peru and Sudan. Travellers are required to be vaccinated 10 days prior to entering The Bahamas.

2 WHAT IF MY DOCTOR RECOMMENDS THAT I HAVE CERTAIN INNOCULATIONS?**

You are always welcome to seek the advice of a doctor; any decisions to proceed with Vaccinations or inoculations would be a personal decision that you have made on the

Advice of your doctor.

Section 6 - Visa Information

1I HAVE A UNITED KINGDOM PASSPORT. DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR A VISA?**

United Kingdom passport holders do not require visas to enter the Bahamas for a maximum duration stay of up to eight (8) months.

2WHICH PASPORTS DO NOT REQUIRE VISAS FOR THE BAHAMAAMS?**

The full listing of passport holders that do not require visas for the Bahamas may be viewed at the following websites:

www.bahamas.co.uk

www.mfabahamas.org

In addition, you may e-mail the following address to obtain a fact sheet that fully lists which passports do require visas and those that do not require visas for the Bahamas:

visainfobahamahouse@myway.com

3HOW DO I OBTAIN A VISA APPLICATION FORM?**

Visa forms may be obtained by telephoning the visa section on 02076590829 and requesting an application form to be posted or e-mailed to you;

OR

Visa forms may also be obtained by sending a *Stamped Self Addressed Envelope* to:

The Visa Section – 2nd Floor
Bahamas House
Bahamas High Commission
10 Chesterfield Street
London W1J 5JL

OR

Visa forms may also be obtained by collecting the applications with guidelines in person from the address above.

OR

The applicant may e-mail Bahamas House to ask for the form.
(visainfobahamahouse@myway.com)

OR

Application forms may be downloaded from the website: www.bahamas.co.uk -
Click under the section: About the Bahamas, then click under entry requirements.

4CAN APPLICATION FORMS BE DOWNLOADED FROM A WEBSITE?**

Yes: forms may be obtained from the following website: www.bahamas.co.uk.
Forms may also be obtained by telephoning 02076590829 or by sending in a stamped self – addressed envelope, by e-mail form Bahamas House or by collecting them in person from 10 Chesterfield Street, Mayfair W1J 5JL.

5WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO PRODUCE FOR THE VISA?**

There are eight pieces of documentation required:

- visa application form – must be completed and signed by the applicant; in the case of minors the parent or legal guardian may sign
- passport which is valid for six months from the date of entry, with ONE FULL BLANK page to affix the visa
- two passport sized photographs
- travel ticket and itinerary
- documentation to enter any other country for which the applicant is ticketed (eg: a valid US visa if transiting the USA or a British Visa if returning to the UK)
- proof of employment or enrolment in school
- proof of sufficient funds to finance the visit - £100 per day (bank statement, credit cards, travellers cheques, cash)
- proof of hotel booking or letter of invitation if staying at private home (letter must include address and telephone number of host)
- depending on individual circumstances additional documents may be required

APPLICANTS ARE REMINDED THAT EACH APPLICATION FOR A VISA IS EXAMINED INDIVIDUALLY AND ACCORDING TO BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS. THE HIGH COMMISSION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ANY VISA, OR TO REQUEST ANY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION WHERE REQUIRED. MISSING DOCUMENTATION MAY LEAD TO UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS AND DENIAL OF GRANTING THE TOURIST VISA FOR THE BAHAMAS.

5b DO I STILL NEED TO PRODUCE ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS LISTED ABOVE EVEN THOUGH I HAVE APPLIED FOR A BAHAMAS VISA BEFORE?**

Yes, even though you may have made an application for a Bahamas visa in the past, you would still need to produce the documents that are outlined above.

6aWHAT IS THE PROCESSING TIME? HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO APPLY FOR THE VISA?**

The minimum processing time is 48 hours (two full working days) once we are in receipt of the application. This excludes Bahamian and British holidays. Some applications may take longer to process; therefore it is advisable to apply well in advance of the travel date. Once your visa application has been lodged, you would be informed of the collection date. The maximum time it would take to process a visa is 6 weeks. Successful applications are those, which are issued between 48 hours to 120 hours; full documentation must be submitted in order to be granted a visa within this time frame. Applications that are submitted with missing documentation may lead to the denial of granting the visa. It is strongly urged that applicants view the full list of documentation required for submission listed above.

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE TO BE MADE IN PERSON.

6bHOW FAR IN ADVANCE CAN I APPLY FOR THE VISA?**

Bahamian visas are only valid for a period of three months from the date of issue. Therefore, you should ideally lodge your application in the two weeks before you intend to travel to the Bahamas. E.g. If you intend to travel to the Bahamas in January, your application should be lodged in December. You cannot lodge the application before November, as the visa would expire before you even depart for the Bahamas.

7HOW MUCH IS THE VISA FEE?**

£45 cash or postal order for a three-month single entry

£55 cash or postal order for a six month multiple entry

Postal orders are to be made payable to: BAHAMAS HIGH COMMISSION

Please note that we do not accept charge cards, debit or credit cards.

8I WANT A MULTIPLE ENTRY VISA. HOW DO I OBTAIN ONE?**

Multiple entry visas are issued to the following persons for periods of three (3) months to one (1) year:-

- (i) The spouse of a person legally working in The Bahamas
- (ii) Persons who maintain houses in The Bahamas

- (iii) Persons who maintain bank accounts in The Bahamas
- (iv) Persons conducting business in The Bahamas
- (v) Crewmen on cruise ships. Letter from cruise line must be presented
- (vi) Students studying at a Bahamian institution

Additional documentation would be requested from the applicant and approval would be sought from the Immigration Department, Nassau, therefore applicants are asked to allow six weeks for processing.

9FOR WHAT PERIOD IS A VISA ISSUED?**

Single entry visas are issued for three (3) months only.
Multiple entry visas can be issued for three (3), six (6) or twelve (12) months duration.

10WHAT SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ACCEPTABLE FOR THE APPLICATION FORM?**

Original passport photos size 2in x 2in are acceptable (normal UK passport sized photos); the photos can be black and white or colour, but they must not be taken in a photo booth. Applicants should not wear any glasses or hats; ears must be visible in the photo. Photos must NOT be taken at an angle or in profile; the applicant must face forward.

11IF I AM A PERMANENT RESIDENT OF THE UK DO I STILL REQUIRE A VISA TO ENTER THE BAHAMAS?**

Visas are issued based on nationality (i.e. the passport that you hold that will be used for entry to The Bahamas); therefore, yes, visas are required to enter the Bahamas, even if you do have leave to remain in the UK or the right of entitlement of abode.

12I HOLD A UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TRAVEL DOCUMENT. WOULD I STILL NEED A VISA?**

Visas for the Bahamas are issued based on the nationality of the applicant; therefore, if your nationality were listed below, as requiring a visa, you would need to make an application to the Bahamas High Commission.

13a)WHICH NATIONALS REQUIRE VISAS TO VISIT THE BAHAMAS?**

AFGHANISTAN, ALBANIA, ALGERIA, ANGOLA, BELARUS, BENIN, BHUTAN, BURKINA FASO, BURUNDI, CAMBODIA, CAMEROON, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CHAD, CHINA (PEOPLES REP. OF), COMOROS, CONGO (DEM. POP. REP.), CONGO (REP. OF.), COTE D'IVOIRE, CUBA, DJIBOUTI, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EGYPT, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, ERITREA, ETHIOPIA, GABON, GHANA, GUINEA, GUINEA-BISSAU, HAITI, INDIA, INDONESIA, IRAN (ISLAMIC REP.), IRAQ, JORDAN, KAZAKHSTAN, KOREA – NORTH, KYRGYSTAN, LAOS, LEBANON, LIBERIA, LIBYA, MACAU (CHINESE PPT.), MADAGASCAR, MAURITANIA, MICRONESIA, MONGOLIA, MONTENEGRO, MOROCCO, MAZAMBIQUE, MYANMAR, NEPAL, NIGER, FED.REP. OF NIGERIA, OMAN, PAKISTAN, PALAU, PALESTINE, PHILIPPINES, QATAR, RWANDA, SAUDI ARABIA, SENEGAL, SERBIA, SOMALIA, SUDAN, SYRIA, TAIWAN, TAJIKISTAN, THAILAND, TIMOR-LESTE, TOGO, TUNISIA, TURKMENISTAN, UKRAINE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UZBEKISTAN, VIETNAM, YEMEN, ZAIRE.

b) WHICH NATIONALS DO NOT REQUIRE VISAS TO VISIT THE BAHAMAS?

AMERICAN SAMOA, ANDORRA, ANGUILLA, ANTIGUA & BARBUDA, ARGENTINA, ARMENIA, ARUBA, AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, AZERBAIJAN, AZORES, BAHRAIN, BANGLADESH, BARBADOS, BELGIUM, BELIZE, BERMUDA, BOLIVIA, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, BOTSWANA, BRAZIL, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, BULGARIA, CANADA, CAPE VERDE, CAYMAN ISLANDS, CHILE, COLOMBIA, COOK ISLANDS, COSTA RICA, CROATIA, CURACAO, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, DOMINICA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR, ESTONIA, FALKLAND ISLANDS, FIJI, FINLAND, FRANCE, FRENCH GUIANA, FRENCH POLYNESIA, GAMBIA, GALAPAGOS ISLANDS, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GIBRALTOR, GREECE, GREENLAND, GRENADA, GUADELOUPE, GUAM, GUATEMALA, GUYANA, HONDURAS, HONG KONG (HKSAR OR HK COF I), HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ISRAEL, ITALY, JAMAICA, JAPAN, KENYA, KIRIBATI, KOREA-SOUTH, KUWAIT, LATVIA, LESOTHO, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MACEDONIA, MALAWI,

MALAYSIA, MALDIVES, MALI, MALTA, MARSHALL ISLANDS, MARTINIQUE, MAURITIUS, MEXICO, MOLDOVA, MONACO, MONTSERRAT, NAMIBIA, NAURU, NETHERLANDS, NETHERLANDS ANTILLES, NEW CALEDONIA, NEW ZEALAND, NICARAGUA, NORFOLK ISLANDS, NORWAY, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PANAMA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, PARAGUAY, PERU, PITCAIRN, POLAND, PORTUGAL, PUERTO RICO, REUNION, ROMANIA, RUSSIA, SAINT BARTHELEMY, SAINT HELENA, SAINT KITTS & NEVIS, SAINT LUCIA, SAINT MARTIN, SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES, SAINT MARTEN, SAINT PIERRE & MIQUELON, SAN MARINO, SAO TOME & PRINCIPE, SEYCHELLES, SIERRA LEONE, SINGAPORE, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, SOUTH AFRICA, SPAIN, SRI LANKA, SURINAME, SWAZILAND, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, TAHITI, TANZANIA, TOKELAU, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, TONGA, TURKEY, TURKS & CAICOS, TUVALU, UGANDA, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, URUGUAY, VANUATU, VATICAN CITY, VENEZUELA, VIRGIN ISLANDS (US & UK), WESTERN SAMOA, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE.

You may also view our website at www.bahamas.co.uk to see this listing.

14 I AM A JOURNALIST OR CAMERA PERSON; WOULD I NEED A VISA OR ANY ENTRY CLEARANCE?**

If persons were travelling on one of the passports listed above, a visa would be needed. For those persons travelling with passports where visas are not needed, entry clearance would need to be obtained from the Ministry of Tourism in The Bahamas. The contact details are: **MINISTRY OF TOURISM, P.O. BOX N 3701 NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS TEL: 001 242 302 2000 OR 001 242 322 7500.** Please visit our website at [www. Bahamas.co.uk](http://www.Bahamas.co.uk) for further information or you may send a query in writing to the following e-mail info@bahamas.co.uk

15HOW LONG CAN A BRITISH NATIONAL STAY IN THE BAHAMAS WITHOUT A VISA AND WHAT CAN THEY DO TO EXTEND THEIR STAY?**

A British national may stay for a maximum period of eight months without a visa in The Bahamas. Should they wish to extend their stay, application must be made to the

Immigration Department for an extension of stay. The applicant must contact the Immigration Dept. (tel: 001 242 322 7530) directly to enquire as to the documents needed for the extension.

15b I DO NOT HAVE A UNITED KINGDOM PASSPORT AND I DO NOT NEED A VISA. HOW LONG CAN I STAY IN THE BAHAMAS?**

Those passport holders who do not require visas to enter the Bahamas would be granted leave to stay for any period of up to four weeks by the Immigration Official at the Bahamas border who lands you. Should you wish to stay beyond the time of leave granted, you would need to apply for an extension of stay for up to a maximum time frame of eight months. The visitor would need to apply at the Immigration Department, PO Box N-831, Nassau The Bahamas Tel: 001 242 322 7531 Fax: 001 242 326 0977.

16DOES A PERSON WHO HOLDS A BRITISH OVERSEAS NATIONAL PASSPORT REQUIRE A VISA TO VISIT THE BAHAMAS?**

Please refer to the website WWW.MFABAHAMAS.ORG for further information.

17CAN A VISA APPLICATION BE ACCEPTED IF IT IS A FAX COPY?**

Yes, this is acceptable, but only if the application is legible. If the processing visa officer at the time of submission of the application deems the forms to be illegible, the applicant would be required to fill in a new form. To ensure clarity, it would be best to download the form from www.bahamas.co.uk or have the form posted out to you.

18CAN I MAKE APPLICATION FOR A VISA ON BEHALF OF FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS OUTSIDE OF THE UK?**

Only immediate family members (spouse or sibling) may make a visa application on someone's behalf.

19CAN I BE ISSUED A VISA ON SPOT OR WITHIN A DAY?**

Emergency situations do occur and Bahamas House attempts to make every effort to respond to these emergencies. Please call to enquire whether your application may be entertained under your extenuating circumstance.

20ARE APPOINTMENTS NEEDED FOR THE VISA?**

Appointments are not necessary; for those persons who are in transit to another country within 24 hours, appointments may be requested to have the visa processed within the working day (5 hour timeframe – lodged before 12 noon and collected at 5pm). Proof would be requested that you are in transit i.e. airline tickets. Requests for appointments must be e-mailed to: visainfobahamahouse@myway.com

Persons, who reside outside the United Kingdom and require visas to enter the Bahamas, may also request to have their visas issued within the 24-hour timeframe.

21CAN A BAHAMAS VISA BE ISSUED AT THE AIRPORT ON ARRIVAL?**

Visas are not issued at the airport or the harbour dock; therefore must be obtained before arrival in The Bahamas.

22IF I AM TRAVELLING WITH AN ADOPTED CHILD AND THEY DO NOT HAVE A BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR ANY OTHER DOCUMENTATION WHAT CAN I DO?**

The adoption papers with photo identification should be in their possession. If those documents are not available, then a sworn affidavit from a notary public, along with photo identification.

23I WANT TO APPLY FOR A VISA BUT THERE ARE NO BLANK PAGES LEFT IN THE PASSPORT WHAT CAN I DO?**

One full blank page must be in the passport in order to issue the Bahamas visa. You must therefore renew your passport at the nearest Consulate or Embassy in order to obtain a new passport.

24WHAT ARE OTHER ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PHOTO ID BESIDES A PASSPORT OR DRIVER'S LICENCE?**

None.

25ARE VISAS REQUIRED FOR PERSONS HOLDING A Hong Kong SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION PASSPORT?**

No, visas are not required. However, if you hold a HK COFI, yes, you would require a visa for entry to The Bahamas.

26WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED FOR CHILDREN TO GAIN ENTRY TO THE BAHAMAS WHO ARE TRAVELLING WITH PERSONS NOT THEIR LEGAL GUARDIANS OR PARENTS?**

A letter from the child's parents must be obtained, along with proof of citizenship.

27HOW SHOULD AN INDIVIDUAL OBTAIN A VISA IF THEY ARE NOT RESIDENT IN BRITAIN?**

They should contact the nearest British Consulate or Embassy in their country of residence to obtain the Bahamas visa. Visas cannot be obtained by postal, courier or third party methods for applicants who are not physically present in the UK.

28IF THE BRITISH CONSULATE CANNOT ASSIST IN ISSUING VISAS ON OUR BEHALF WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

The applicant should travel to a Bahamas Consulate in either one of the following places: London, Miami, Ottawa, New York or Washington.

29IF A PERSON IS RESIDENT IN THE UK BUT LIVES OUTSIDE OF LONDON, IS IT NECESSARY FOR APPLICATIONS TO BE MADE IN PERSON?**

Applications may be made through the postal system by special or recorded delivery for those persons who live in the United Kingdom but reside outside of London.

30IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING A BAHAMIAN VISA IF THE PASSPORT HOLDER HAS NO VISA FOR THE OTHER COUNTRY FOR WHICH THEY ARE TICKETED?**

If the applicant is transiting or travelling to any other country before the visit to The Bahamas, they must obtain visas for that country first (if applicable).

31CAN A COURIER SERVICE OR THIRD PARTY BE USED TO LODGE AN APPLICATION FOR A VISA?**

Yes, provided that the applicant lives in the United Kingdom.

32DOES THE VISA WAIVER SCHEME APPLY TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE TRAVELLING FROM HERE VIA THE USA TO THE BAHAMAS?**

You should check with your ticket salesperson or airline carrier.

33IF SOMEONE TRAVELS TO THE BAHAMAS ON A SINGLE TICKET, INTENDING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY BY OTHER MEANS (PRIVATE YACHT, PLANE ETC.) WILL THEY BE ALLOWED ENTRY AND WHAT SORT OF PROOF SHOULD THEY HAVE THAT THEY INTEND TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY?**

You should have in your possession proof that you intend to leave the country by other means; i.e. a letter from the captain of the yacht with docking permission for the Bahamas, or a letter from the captain of the private plane with flight permission, etc.

34IF AN AIRLINE TAKES A PASSENGER TO THE BAHAMAS WHO HOLDS AN EXPIRED PASSPORT, WILL THE BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT LEVY A FINE ON THE AIRLINE?**

This is ordinary what happens in this situation. However, security checks are very stringent at the airport nowadays and it is very unlikely that an airline would carry a passenger with an unexpired passport.

35IS A VISA REQUIRED TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES FROM THE BAHAMAS?**

You should check with the Embassy of the United States of America to enquire whether or not you would require a visa. Please call them on 020 7499 9000.

36ARE TRANSIT VISAS REQUIRED EVEN IF THE NATIONAL DOES NOT LEAVE THE AIRPORT?**

Yes, visas issued based on the passport one holds in their possession and not duration of stay in The Bahamas.

37ARE VISAS REQUIRED FOR THE BAHAMAS IF I AM VISITING BY WAY OF CRUISE SHIP AND I DO NOT INTEND TO STAY IN THE BAHAMAS FOR MORE THAN ONE DAY?**

Yes, visas are required by those nationals listed at question 11, even though their stay in The Bahamas is less than 24 hours and they are travelling on a cruise ship.

38I HAVE A DIPLOMATIC OR SPECIAL PASSPORT. WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD I PRESENT FOR MY VISA APPLICATION?**

Diplomatic and Special passports that require visas should be submitted with two passport photographs, travel itinerary and a Note Verbal from their Consulate/High Commission or Embassy. Diplomatic and Special passports submitted without a Note Verbal must submit all documents that an Ordinary passport holder would submit.

39IS THERE A FEE CHARGED FOR DIPLOMATIC OR SPECIAL PASSPORTS?**

No, diplomatic and special passports are issued gratis (free) once they are accompanied by a Note Verbal from the relevant Embassy.

40WHAT IF I HOLD A SERVICE PASSPORT? DO I NEED TO PAY AND WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD I PRESENT?**

Visas for Service passports are charged at £30; the documentation required is the same as for an ordinary passport.

41WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS FOR OBTAINING A VISA IN THE ABSENCE OF A BAHAMAS CONSULATE OR EMBASSY IN MY COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE?**

In the first instance, you should approach the British Consulate or Embassy in your country of residence to obtain a Bahamas visa. Nationals, who wish to visit The Bahamas and cannot obtain a visa in their country of residence, for whatever purpose, would have to travel to a Bahamas Consulate to obtain the visa in person. Overseas applications by post or courier services would not be accepted. These are located in Ottawa, New York, Washington, Miami, and London. You should contact the Consulates in writing to ascertain the documentation required and procedure involved.

42I INTEND TO VISIT THE BAHAMAS BY PRIVATE AIRCRAFT OR BY PRIVATE VESSEL; WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED IN ORDER TO BE LANDED IN THE BAHAMAS?**

Travellers to The Bahamas by private aircraft are advised to seek permission from the Civil Aviation Authority at the Nassau International Airport. The telephone contact is 001 242 377 7281. You should ensure that when you contact them you have the following details at hand for reference: details of the aircraft (make and model number), year of the aircraft, call sign of the aircraft, crew and passenger manifest, the arrival and departure details and the airport details of intended landing.

For those persons entering the Bahamas by private vessel, you are advised to have a letter of invitation from the owner of the vessel, along with documentary evidence (docking papers, registration slips etc.) that the vessel would be in The Bahamas at the time of your stay. You may also wish speak with an Immigration Official for further clarification – tel: 001 242 322 7530.

Further information may also be obtained by writing your query to facsimile 020 7499 9937 or by e-mail to visainfobahamahouse@myway.com

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