

Title:

Freeport in the Bahamas

Word Count:

631

Summary:

Description of Freeport in the Bahamas which is one of the closest ports on the islands to the US mainland.

Keywords:

freeport, grand, bahama, island, bahamas, caribbean, florida, travel

Article Body:

Freeport in Grand Bahama Island is the closest of all the Bahamas to the USA. A quick 45 minute flight from Fort Lauderdale or Miami will get you into Freeport. It is a very popular destination because of its close proximity and the fact that US dollars are widely accepted. There are two main clusters of hotels and resorts on Grand Bahama Island. One is at the Port Lucaya area located on the south shore of island and the other is near downtown Freeport which is more inland. There are also other individual resorts scattered around the west and south shores of the 97 by 17 mile island.

I have traveled to Freeport twice and stayed in the Port Lucaya area both times. Most of the hotels here are next to the Port Lucaya Marketplace which is a collection of restaurants, boutiques and other retail services. In addition to the higher end retail, there are also small outdoor vendors selling cheaper goods such as souvenirs and t-shirts. One should be aware that much of the items available for sale from these vendors are not actually made in the Bahamas but overseas in Asia. There is also a nice sized marina here for those coming to the island via private boat. For those interested in scuba diving, the Unexso operator is very convenient since it is located next to the marketplace. There are also deep sea fishing excursions offered here as well. At the center of the marketplace is the Count Basie Square where free entertainment is featured on some evenings. A casino is on location here as well. The white sand beach is quite nice with no rocks in the water but it could use some cleaning up since I did see some cigarette butts and small litter scattered around. This is also true for some of the areas around the Port Lucaya area in general as it seems that nobody wants to take responsibility for bottles and other trash visible to tourists.

The taxi fare to Port Lucaya from the airport was \$19 US. There is also a

public bus service which utilizes vans to take people to other parts of the island. The fare is \$1.50 US per person to downtown Freeport so this is definitely a much more economical way to get around. One can take this bus service to the nearest grocer called Winn-Dixie or the other major shopping area on Grand Bahama Island called International Bazaar. International Bazaar is actually next to downtown Freeport and near the other cluster of hotels there. This shopping area was similar to the Port Lucaya Marketplace except that it had an international theme. Unfortunately, the International Bazaar is rapidly going downhill as over half of the stores are now closed. This is not that surprising since even though there are attractive hotel rates and another casino located in this area, it is really too far from the ocean to make it a decent Caribbean spot to stay. Therefore, it is highly recommended to stay in the Port Lucaya area (or one of the individual resorts near the ocean if one prefers more seclusion).

Both of my trips to Freeport were primarily for scuba diving and with opportunities to dive with both dolphins and sharks here, I was not disappointed. There are other activities available in Grand Bahama Island including golf, horseback riding, sea kayaking and bird watching but these didn't seem to be too popular. From the conversations we had with other tourists, it seems that most people came to Grand Bahama Island for scuba diving, deep sea fishing or just to relax by the beach. Otherwise, one could get bored here quite easily as there's not much in terms of experiencing local Bahamian culture since much of the tourist services are Americanized.