

The Government of The Bahamas Introduces New Travel and Testing Protocols Designed to Eliminate the Need to Quarantine

NASSAU, Bahamas, 1st October 2020 – The Islands of The Bahamas remains committed to welcoming visitors to its shores and providing an exceptional tropical vacation coupled with our world famous warm and friendly hospitality, while, responsibly enforcing public health and safety measures to protect residents and visitors alike.

While 15th October is still set for the reopening of the tourism sector, until 31st October all incoming visitors must “Vacation in Place” for 14 days or the duration of stay, whichever is shorter, which means limiting the vacation experience to the grounds and amenities of a traveler’s hotel or accommodations. Beginning 1st November, The Bahamas will remove the mandatory “Vacation in Place” requirement for all visitors, returning citizens and residents thereby, enabling everyone to move about and explore the destination beyond the confines of their hotel or other accommodations.

The new protocols will require visitors, and returning citizens and residents to obtain a **RT-PCR (swab) test no more than seven (7) days prior to their travel to The Bahamas.**

In addition, and to ensure that travelers remain COVID free, a **rapid antigen test will be conducted upon arrival, and then again four days (96 hours) after arrival in The Bahamas.** Children ten (10) and under are exempt from taking a rapid antigen test.

Specifics are as follows:

Prior to Travel:

- **COVID-19 RT-PCR Test:** All persons traveling to The Bahamas must obtain a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR (swab) test taken no more than seven (7) days prior to the date of arrival. The name and address of the lab, where the test was performed, must be clearly displayed on the test result.
 - Children ten (10) and under and pilots and crew of commercial airlines, who remain overnight in The Bahamas, are exempt from obtaining the RT-PCR test.
- **Bahamas Health Travel Visa:** Once in possession of a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test, all travelers will then be required to apply for a Bahamas Health Travel Visa at **travel.gov.bs** (click on the International Tab) where the required test must be uploaded.

The cost of the visa will depend on the length of stay.

Upon Arrival

- **Day of Arrival (Day One): Rapid Test** – All persons entering The Bahamas, at an approved Port of Entry, will receive a Rapid COVID-19 antigen test.

If arriving by **air**, an approved Port of Entry will be: Nassau, Freeport, Marsh Harbour, North Eleuthera, Georgetown (Exuma), Bimini (and Cat Cay) and San Andros (Andros).

If arriving by **sea**, an approved Port of Entry will be: Nassau (Atlantis, Bay Street Marina, Lyford Cay, Albany and Nassau Yacht Haven); Grand Bahama (West End – Old Bahama Bay and Freeport – Lucaya); Abaco (Marsh

Harbour Government Dock); Eleuthera (Spanish Wells Marina); Berry Islands (Chubb Cay Club); Bimini (Big Game Club and Cat Cay Club); Exuma (Georgetown Government Dock).

American Airlines has indicated that, beginning in late October, they wish to provide each passenger traveling to The Bahamas from Miami with a Rapid COVID-19 antigen test **before** boarding the plane. These passengers, along with the passengers of any other airlines wishing to provide a similar service, will **not** be required to complete the Rapid Test upon arrival in The Bahamas.

After Arrival

- **Day Five (96 hours after arrival): Rapid Test** – All persons who entered The Bahamas, and who are staying longer than four nights and five days, will be required to take a second Rapid COVID-19 antigen test. To be clear, all visitors departing on Day Five will **not** be required to obtain this test.

The cost of the rapid tests on and after arrival will be included in the cost of the visa.

The rapid tests are easy, quick and will yield results in 20 minutes or less with results being provided electronically.

Many hotel properties will provide relevant information on testing arrangements, while others will facilitate the required rapid test for their guests.

All persons on yachts and other pleasure craft will be able to make arrangements for their required rapid tests at the port of entry or via the relevant website.

All other visitors, returning residents and citizens will be able to make arrangements for their required rapid tests at the port of entry or via the relevant website.

The On Island Experience:

All islands in The Bahamas require the wearing of masks and appropriate social distancing in public places.

The Bahamas has remained diligent in its efforts to minimize the spread of COVID-19 throughout the islands, and these measures are imperative to ensure that remains the case. The health and wellbeing of both residents and visitors remain the number one priority of our public health officials. It is important to note, however, that due to fluidity of the COVID-19 situation, both in The Bahamas and worldwide, protocols are subject to change.

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