

8 Reasons Turks & Caicos Should be Your Next Island Vacation

By Michele McIntyre, GoGirlfriend contributor

Hone in on Providenciales and find your bliss

I've recently returned from Providenciales, a tropical paradise in the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI), where I spent 9 days soaking up the sun, fun and culture. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it is for US and Canadian residents to travel to TCI, a British Overseas Territory consisting of 8 inhabited islands and 30+ uninhabited islands.



sun, sand and a hammock!

Just 575 miles southeast of Miami, Providenciales is an accessible, family-friendly vacation destination offering natural beauty, more than 100 restaurants, abundant outdoor activities, every water-sport imaginable and a laid-back vibe. If relaxation is on your agenda, you'll find that the relaxed island pace is the perfect tonic to a stressful and busy life.

8 reasons to travel to Providenciales

Safety – TCI boasts one of the lowest crime rates in the Caribbean. The islands are best known for tourism and they take the safety of their guests very seriously. There was a large security presence at the hotels we stayed at, but we're told this is merely as a precaution.



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the Spa at Regent Palms

All beaches are public – Up to the high water mark, all beaches in Providenciales are public, which means you can walk the famed Grace Bay Beach and plant yourself and your sand toys anywhere. Of course hotel and condominium facilities such as beach chairs, towels and outdoor showers are for the use of registered guests only, but you can bask along the same stretch of beach as the guests at even the most high-end resorts as long as you don't pass the no trespass point.

Currency – The US dollar is the official currency of TCI. This means that credit card transactions for US cardholders don't carry a foreign currency exchange fee. For Canadian visitors, choose a credit card that waives this fee.

On the downside, Providenciales is a pricey island. Since nearly everything needs to be imported, plan on spending more here on food and other essentials than you might at other island destinations. A 12% Government tax and 10% service fee is automatically added to most goods and services. Once you get used to the concept, it takes the guesswork out of tipping (although additional gratuities are always welcome and appreciated for good service).

Transportation – Renting a car and exploring the far reaches of the island will add adventure to your experience. Driving is on the left with many roundabouts and no traffic lights. Gas is expensive here (around \$6.75/gallon) but if you choose a fuel-efficient rental car (most of them are), even the most avid explorer won't spend much on gas. Taxis are widely available, although a more expensive way to get around.



revealing the beach view at Blue Haven

Language – The official language of the islands is English and the population also speaks Turks & Caicos Islands Creole, which is similar to Bahamian Creole.



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Weather – During our visit, every day was hot and mostly sunny with the exception of a rare rain event caused by Tropical Storm Cristobal. When the sun is out in full, it gets intensely hot. Evenings didn't dip below the low 80's and we rarely needed even a light sweater. This is a trip that you can plan to leave the bulky clothing at home.

Casual – Aside from some fine dining experiences, Providenciales is a very casual island. For daytime, beachwear is in order and in the evenings most men wear khaki-style shorts and polo shirts and the ladies wear shorts or casual sundresses. It's easy to avoid dressing up if that's your desire, which sure makes packing a cinch! We didn't wear half the clothes we packed and only traveled with carry-on luggage. Unless you're cycling or pursuing activities that require closed-toe footwear, sandals and flip-flops will be your footwear of choice day and night.

We saved the best for last: the beach! Grace Bay Beach is often voted as one of the top beaches in the world due to its warm, clear blue water and soft, white powdery sand that goes on for miles.

Where to stay



Luxurious Seven Stars Resort

[Alexandra Resort](#) offers one of the best values on the island, especially for studio units that sleep two. It's in a great location within walking distance to many of the island's favorite restaurants, bars and shopping. Full beach service is provided to guests. Find them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [TripAdvisor.com](#).

[Seven Stars Resort](#): On a beautiful stretch of Grace Bay, Seven Stars offers luxury accommodations, fine and casual dining and outstanding service. Find them on [TripAdvisor.com](#).

[Beach House](#): Beach House is located on one of the nicest, quietest and most low key stretches of Grace Bay Beach. Second floor beachfront suites have the best unobstructed views of Grace Bay. When you want to totally chill out and get away from it all, Beach House is where you'll want to stay. Find them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [TripAdvisor.com](#).



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Blue Haven Resort, Turks and Caicos

Blue Haven: As soon as your taxi drops you off in front of the pastel sherbet colored buildings, you see a view you'll never forget. Rooms and suites are luxurious, invoking the feeling of being on a luxury yacht with infinitely more space. If this hotel isn't on your radar it should be. Find them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [TripAdvisor.com](#).

Where to eat

Somerset on Grace Bay: Go on Tuesday nights for the weekly Beach BBQ party for rum, excellent food and dancing in the sand. Find them on [TripAdvisor.com](#).



also the Seven Restaurant at the Seven Stars Resort

Parallel23 at the Regent Palms: Have dinner on the marble terrace when Julian Garland is performing. The truffle mac and cheese is out of this world.

Grace Bay Club: Everything is red at the casual Rouge Grill at Grace Bay Club: the oil lamps, placemats and umbrellas. The food is wonderful. Try the simply grilled South Caicos Reef Red Snapper or the Spicy Chili Crab Pasta.

Beaches Turks and Caicos: If staying here is out of your budget, get a day pass and eat and drink your way around the 19 restaurants and 12 bars scattered among four distinctly different villages.