

the buzz on the flyfishing biz

Angling[®] TRADE



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Travel

“Out There” in the Bahamas...

Written by the Editors



photos: Kirk Deeter

For any angler making a “bucket list” of places to go and fish to catch, bonefishing in the Bahamas should be a priority. The laid back élan of this country makes clear that, despite its relative close proximity to the mainland United States, you are in a different world. Trust us, the first time you settle in behind a plate of cracked conch and an icy Sands or Kalik beer, especially after spending a day watching silver bullets dart across pristine shallow flats, you’ll figure it out.

To be sure, the Bahamas offer more angling vacation options than any one person can tackle in a lifetime. With over 2,000 islands and cays, you’ll find everything from all-inclusive family resorts to minimalist fishing bungalows to tailor a family vacation—or, in the case of the fly shop, a unique travel excursion to share with clients. In this light, there are many well established resorts in Andros and Abaco especially with arguably the best flats guides in the world, yet there are also some appealingly affordable no frills options to consider as well... especially if you go “out there”

Mayaguana

Mayaguana is perhaps better appreciated for what it doesn’t have than for what it does. By that, we mostly mean people. Mayaguana is one of the largest islands in the chain, roughly 110 square miles (significantly larger than Manhattan, or Bermuda, or St. Thomas), and yet the population is around 300 people. You won’t find any high-rise resorts here, only the 16-room Baycancer Beach Resort, which offers comfortable beachside lodging and great food for less than per couple, per week, all-in. There are a number of small bars and hangouts, but you pretty much create your own entertainment on Mayaguana

For the snorkeler, scuba diver, or fly fisher, that’s usually easy. There weren’t any slick flats skiffs or full time guides when we were there last year, so we hopped a ride with a local lobsterman, who took us to the most remarkable flat we’d ever seen. Four- to 10-pound bonefish poured over the flat with

stunning regularity. Even more remarkable, when we made our casts, the bones came charging like we were ringing the dinner bell. Air transfers are sporadic and pricey compared with other islands, but it was well worth fishing here... blow your mind good. See mayaguana.island.com

Long Island

This 90-plus-mile stretch of sand, and rocky hills (one of the few hilly islands in the Bahamas) slices the open Atlantic from a sheltered western flank where the waters are bathtub calm, and accentuated by a labyrinth of bonefish flats. Pressure isn’t an issue here either, as only a handful of guides work this area. You’ll find enormous schools of bonefish moving on the tides most days. And as a bonus, the deep sea action for wahoo and tuna is close to shore; we landed a 60-pound yellowfin within a couple miles of the beach

Consider Stella Maris Resort (stellamarisresort.com) which offers single rooms from \$160 per night to four-bedroom homes with a pool for \$675 per night. The resort also flies you to its own private airstrip from Nassau

Acklins and Crooked Island

From the air, Acklins and Crooked Islands look like a giant boomerang, and all the water in the sheltered crook are prime bonefish flats. Again, low pressure, high reward is the angling mantra here. We fished with guide Reno Taylor and enjoyed a particularly active daylight stalk among mangrove creeks. You’re most likely to find schoolies in the 2-3 pound range here, but you are very likely to encounter a double digit bone on most days, or even the occasional permit. This is a flat where, if you have even a semi-decent cast, you can catch a dozen fish or more on a great day

Lodging: Check out Crooked Island Lodge (yellowdogflyfishing.com or frontierstravel.com). On Acklin’s stay at the wonderfully-appointed Ivel’s bed & breakfast (ivelsbedandbreakfast.com), a family-run operation in Mason’s Bay. 