

EXPERIENCE



Northeastern Caribbean Itinerary Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable.
If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures.

Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerventures.com/necaribbean

THE VESSEL

- 18 guests
- 9 air-conditioned rooms with private bath & showers
- 110 V outlets in bath & near bed

The M/V *Caribbean Explorer II* comfortably accommodates 18 passengers in 9 double staterooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities and most of which have queen-sized beds. The semi-enclosed, air-conditioned salon on the upper deck includes dining tables, TV, VCR, CD/DVD, video library and lounge area; a large sundeck with lounge chairs is aft of the main salon. The vessel's boutique is located on the main deck.

The large dive deck is equipped with a bathroom, individual gear bins, camera table with low pressure air hose, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks, and a separate fresh water rinse for both scuba and underwater camera equipment. There are two sets of stairs accessing the dive platform, where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water. The *Caribbean Explorer II* is also equipped with a satellite telephone for incoming and outgoing calls worldwide.

DIVING CONDITIONS

- Water temps in summer average 85 °F, 76 °F in winter
- Visibility 50-150 feet
- Water entry directly from vessel

The weather in the Eastern Caribbean is remarkably consistent year-round. The temperatures range from the 70s F or higher in the winter months to the low 90s F during the summer, with nearly constant sea breezes. Water temperatures range from a low of about 76 °F in winter to a high of about 85 °F in summer. Visibility is generally between 50 and 150 feet. Most divers are comfortable with a 3 mm wetsuit in summer and up to a 5 mm wetsuit in winter.

Your dives will be done from the vessel itself, taking advantage of the easy-access dive platform and other on board amenities. Entries are usually made from the side exit gates into the water, a drop of 4 feet or so.

DIVING LOGISTICS

- Up to 5 dives offered daily
- 3 optional land tours offered

The majority of dives aboard our vessels are offered at scheduled times, up to 5 times daily. This is to allow adequate surface intervals, provides the option for guided dives on as many sites as possible, and allows the vessel to travel on a schedule to different locations. It also permits us to offer island tours on the islands which we visit, and to work within the guidelines of the marine parks in which we dive.

MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

- Under the age of 15 must dive with parent/guardian

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most scuba certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-olds to a maximum depth of 40 feet. Explorer Ventures therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

1. All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor.
2. Our itineraries offer very few diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-olds will be significantly less than those for older divers.

For these reasons, a minimum age of 12 for divers is strongly suggested.

SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as open water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. All divers should have logged at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel, or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board.
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system, unless



certified, equipped and adhering to standards for solo diving.

4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible console including SPG & depth gauge, timepiece or dive computer with these functions.
6. On night dives, a cyalume lightstick or marker beacon must be worn by each diver.
7. Decompression diving is not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130 feet (110 feet on nitrox).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that, due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, neither rebreathers nor diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) may be used aboard Explorer Ventures vessels.

WHAT TO BRING

- **Soft luggage for easy storage**
- **Very casual attire**
- **All linens, soaps and shampoo are supplied**
- **There are no hairdryers onboard**
- **Carry-on packing**

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits (you may consider slacks, dress shorts or sundresses for dinner ashore in St. Maarten or St. Kitts). Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sunscreen, sunglasses and a visor or hat is recommended. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite CDs or DVDs, feel free to bring them.

All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, dive towels, and wash cloths) are provided on board.

If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, swimsuit, change of clothes, necessary medications & toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these items will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- **Bring your application/liability forms**
- **Certification card**
- **Rental equipment is available onboard (please indicate need on application)**

The vessel provides tanks, hard weights and weight belts for your

use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. **Please indicate on your application form what equipment you will require.** Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Certification card
- Diving log book & dive computer manual (strongly encouraged; required for solo diving course)
- Mask *
- Snorkel *
- Fins *
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Buoyancy Control Device (required) *
- Regulator w/alternate air source *
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)*
- Underwater time piece (required)
- Dive light *
- For solo divers: pony bottle (or independent or isolated-manifold twin tanks), whistle, knife, compass, and safety sausage or flag deployable from safety stop depth *
- Dive computer (recommended) *
- Wetsuit – 3 mm to 5 mm *
- Repair kit w/ spare parts

* Available for rent on board

ARRIVAL

- **Passport required**
- **Valid return airline ticket**
- **Transfer costs are not included**
- **Arrangements are made to pick you up**
- **Bobby's Marina - St. Maarten**
- **Porte Zante - St. Kitts**
- **If delayed call 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) Operations office or (011) 599.554.5186 (boats' cell)**

Please note that a passport is required of all visitors arriving in the St. Maarten or St. Kitts. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required.

Though transfers are not included in your package, you will be met at the airport by a driver; the price will vary from \$5 to \$12 per person each way, depending on the size of your group. If by chance you miss the driver, simply catch a taxi to either Bobby's Marina (St. Maarten) or Port Zante (St. Kitts) – the vessel will be waiting there.

If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the *Caribbean Explorer II* on schedule, please call the operations office at 1.800.322.3577 or the vessel's cell 011.599.554.5186. Notify the crew of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime. The *Caribbean Explorer II* will not leave port until after the last arrival on Saturday. If you are delayed and do not arrive until Sunday, all is not lost! It is always possible to get to the boat, either by arranging a pickup with



us while still at St. Kitts (St. Kitts departures) or at Saba, as there are several flights daily from St. Maarten on Windward Island Airways (offices at the airport). Simply contact the vessel (see above) and coordinate your pickup with the captain.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES

■ Three optional land tours are offered

Days aboard *Caribbean Explorer II* generally involve breakfast from 7-8 am (cold breakfasts are available for late risers), followed by two morning dives, lunch at 12:30 pm, two afternoon dives, dinner at 6:30 pm, and a night dive. Island tours will be arranged at each island visited for those interested; further island access is available daily upon request. *Please note also that these itineraries are examples only, and will change depending on weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion.*

St. Maarten Departures

If meeting the vessel in St. Maarten, look for our driver upon exiting the baggage claim area - arrangements have been made based on your arrival information. If no one is present, simply catch a cab to Bobby's Marina in Philipsburg; the vessel will be located near the end of the dock.

Saturday: St. Maarten

- 15:00 Guests board the *Caribbean Explorer II*
- 18:30 Dinner (snacks or dinner available for those arriving on later flights)
- 20:00 Captain's Briefing, documents, etc.
- 22:00 Depart for Saba (3 hours; departure may be delayed for late arrivals)

Sunday – Tuesday: Saba

- Sunday: 5 dives; Nights spent at mooring.
- Monday: 5 dives; optional island tour (miss 1 dive)
- Tuesday: 5 dives each day. Night crossing to St. Kitts (2 ½ hours)

Wednesday-Friday: St. Kitts

- Wed-Thursday: 5 dives; Night at mooring.
- Friday: 2 dives and lunch; return to Port Zante
- Optional afternoon island tour and dinner ashore, with night spent aboard vessel at dock.

Saturday: St. Kitts

- 07:00 Continental breakfast
- 09:00 Depart the *Caribbean Explorer II*. Should you be leaving on an later flight, you may leave your luggage on the vessel (or on the dock alongside) until you depart.

St. Kitts Departures

If meeting the vessel at St. Kitts, look for our driver upon exiting the building after clearing Customs. If no one is present, simply take any waiting taxi from the airport to Port Zante in downtown Basseterre.

Saturday: St. Kitts

- 15:00 Guests board the *Caribbean Explorer II*

- 18:30 Dinner (snacks or dinner available for those arriving on later flights)
- 20:00 Captain's Briefing, documents, etc. Night at dock.

Sunday – Tuesday: St. Kitts

- Sunday: 5 dives; Nights spent at mooring
- Monday-Tuesday: 5 dives; optional island tour (miss 1 dive).
- Night crossing to Saba (2 hours).

Wednesday-Friday: Saba

- Wednesday: 5 dives; Nights spent at mooring.
- Thursday: 5 dives; optional island tour (miss 1 dive), night spent at mooring
- Friday: 2 early dives at Saba, with a late morning crossing to St. Maarten (3 hours).

Friday afternoon to Saturday: St. Maarten

- Friday: Lunch upon arrival at dock. Afternoon at leisure and dinner ashore, with night spent aboard vessel at dock.

Saturday:

- 07:00 Continental breakfast
- 09:00 Depart the *Caribbean Explorer II*. Should you be leaving on an afternoon flight, feel free to leave your luggage on the *Caribbean Explorer II* (or on the dock alongside) until you depart.

Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 9 am departure.

MEALS

■ Please list on the application form any dietary needs you have.

Aboard the *Caribbean Explorer II*, evening meals usually consist of fresh vegetables, rice, pasta, chicken, beef, turkey, pork and fish. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, bacon, pancakes, French toast, muffins, danish and fresh fruit. Lunches vary from soup and sandwiches, burgers, pasta, assorted salads and quiche. Homemade baked breads, cookies and brownies are offered between dives. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in the islands, and that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products, fresh fruit, fish, and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

CURRENCY

- US dollars are widely accepted
- Most major credit cards are accepted

If you are spending additional time on St. Kitts, you may wish to obtain Eastern Caribbean Dollars. The US dollar is widely accepted and preferred on all islands; therefore, it is not necessary to purchase currency before arriving. Most major credit cards are accepted widely throughout the islands.



DEPARTURE

- **Payable in cash. Departure tax may not be included in airline ticket.**

The *Caribbean Explorer II* arrives at its final destination port on Friday afternoon at approximately 1 pm, and passengers spend Friday night and have Saturday breakfast on board. There will be sufficient time to catch a flight out of St. Maarten or St. Kitts at any time on Saturday. If you have a flight on Saturday afternoon, you are welcome to leave your luggage on board the boat until time to go to the airport. There is a departure tax, payable in cash, of US\$20-\$25 upon leaving on a flight from either St. Maarten or St. Kitts.

ONBOARD CHARGES

- **Major credit cards are accepted on board**
- **Travelers or personal checks are not**

Though all meals (except Friday's dinner), beverages, transportation between islands, and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your onboard bill. These include retail items, incoming & outgoing telephone calls, scuba instruction, rentals, nitrox, port, immigration and Marine Park fees, fuel surcharge and crew gratuities.

The bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover or cash. Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to provide cash for credit card charges more than invoice amounts.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Vital messages may be passed to guest by calling the operations office at 1.800.322.3577**
- **Internet access is not available aboard**

You can be reached aboard the *Caribbean Explorer II* from North America via Iridium phone at 011.88.163.185.9097. Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls.

CREW GRATUITIES

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and up to 12 weeks at a stretch, providing

the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the package price per passenger. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus between-dive snacks
- Up to 5 dives daily
- Use of tanks, weights and belts
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Airport transfers
- Friday evening dinner
- Optional island tours
- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Trip Cancellation & Dive Insurance (recommended)
- Port, Immigration and Marine Park diving fees
- St. Maarten or St. Kitts departure taxes
- Fuel Surcharge

OVERVIEW

Additional items not covered in the package price include:

- Airline ticket to and from vessel.
Please note the Caribbean Explorer II departs one island and disembarks in another.
- Transfers from airport or hotel to vessel (usually around US\$20 each way)
- Optional land tours
- Friday evening dinner
- Rental equipment
- Courses taken while aboard
- Retail items purchased aboard
- Crew gratuity (Typical is between 10% and 15% for trip cost but is totally at the discretion of the guest.)
- Port & park fees
- Fuel surcharge
- Departure tax

All prices are subject to change.

Please feel free to call us if you have any questions.

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Have a wonderful trip aboard the Caribbean Explorer II

Explorer Ventures

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