

EXCEPTIONAL



Turks & Caicos 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/turks

THE VESSEL

- 20 guests; 10 air-conditioned rooms with private bath & shower
- 3 configuration choices; twin bunks, twin/queen or queen
- 110 V outlets in bath & near bed

The M/V *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* comfortably accommodates 20 passengers in 10 double staterooms, each of which has private bathroom facilities, individually-controlled air conditioning, hanging closet and wardrobe. The air-conditioned main salon on the main deck includes dining tables, TV, VCR, CD/DVD, video library and lounge area. A large sundeck with lounge chairs and buffet area is located aft of the upstairs deckhouse, which contains two additional passenger staterooms, pilothouse, and Captain's cabin. A large, awning-covered flybridge with wet bar, barbecue and seating for 15 is accessed from the sundeck as well.

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

DIVING CONDITIONS

- Water temps in summer average 82 °F, 72 °F in winter
- Visibility 75-150 feet
- 3mm to 5mm wetsuit

The weather in the Turks & Caicos Islands is remarkably consistent year-round. The temperatures range from the 70s (F) or higher in the winter months to the low 90s during the summer, with nearly constant sea breezes. Water temperatures range from a low of about 72 degrees F in winter to a high of about 82°F in summer. There is normally little appreciable current at the sites we visit, and visibility is generally between 75 and 150 feet. Most divers are comfortable with a 3 mm wetsuit in summer and a 5 mm wetsuit with hooded vest in winter.

DIVING LOGISTICS

- Up to 5 dives offered daily
- Diving is done from the vessel

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.

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' (110' 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**
- **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, though all restaurants are "casual"). Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sun screens, sunglasses, 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, a swimsuit, change of clothes, necessary medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these few items with you 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 arrangements are made for you**
- **Transfer costs are not included to Caicos Marina & Shipyard**
- **If delayed call 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) Operations office or 1.649.242.8267 (boat's cell)**

All US citizens traveling by air to the Turks & Caicos are required by the US Government to have a valid US passport. Canadian visitors may enter without a passport, if they have an original or notarized birth certificate and a photo ID. Visitors from other countries do require passports, but for most other countries visas aren't necessary (except from countries of the former Eastern Bloc). Travelers are encouraged to contact the nearest British Consulate Office for specific entry requirements. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required.

For Arrivals on the Saturday of Boarding: Though transfers are not included in the package, you will be met at the airport by a local driver who will be aware of the boat's location. Due to tides, weather conditions and her size, the vessel's weekend location and schedule is tide-dependent, and she may be located either in Caicos Marina or anchored offshore. If you are not met at the airport and are unsure where to meet the boat, simply ask your cab driver to call the boat's cell phone number or VHF Channel 16 and ask for instructions. Cab fares can vary but generally are \$36 each way for up to 2 people and \$18 for each additional person. This can also vary depending on the time of day. If you arrive on an early flight, you'll be given the option to stay at the airport restaurant to relax or to go to the shopping/restaurant area called Salt Mills (this is a few dollars more than a direct taxi ride to the vessel). In either case, the



driver will deliver you to the vessel around the 3 pm boarding time. The marina where the vessel docks does not have any amenities available. Since you may be picked up by dinghy at a beach, you will be more comfortable if you wear sandals or deck shoes and either shorts, or trousers or pants that can be rolled up.

If you are staying overnight on Providenciales prior to boarding: While the vessel normally docks at Caicos Marina, tides and/or weather may dictate an early departure. Please be sure that your application form has included your hotel information on Providenciales, and call the vessel prior to checking out of your hotel to determine where and when to board. The boat is available for boarding after 3 p.m.

If you experience travel difficulties and are delayed, please contact the vessel or Operations office.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Days aboard *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* generally involve breakfast from 7 am to 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.

Please note also that this itinerary is an example only, and will change depending on weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion.

Saturday:

NOTE: The location and departure schedule of the vessel may change .

- 15:00 Guests may begin to board the vessel
The vessel will normally be located at Caicos Marina but may depart early due to tides or weather. If you are staying on island, please check in with the vessel on Saturday morning to determine when and where to meet the boat. If you are arriving on Saturday, you will be met at the airport.
- 18:30 Dinner (snacks or dinner available for those arriving on later flights)
- 20:00 Captain's Briefing, documents, etc. (or prior to departure)

Sunday:

Provo's Northwest Point. Four to five dives, with night spent at mooring.

Monday:

2 Morning dives at Northwest Point, followed by 2-hour trip to West Caicos. 3 dives, with night spent at mooring.

Tuesday:

Up to dive dives at West Caicos. Night spent at mooring.

Wednesday:

2 dives at West Caicos, transit to French Cay, 3 dives at French Cay.

Thursday:

Up to 5 dives at French Cay.

Friday:

Dawn dive and morning dive at French Cay, with departure for the

2-hour trip back to port. Afternoon at leisure; dinner ashore, with night spent aboard vessel.

Saturday:

07:00/08:30 Continental breakfast

09:00 Depart the *Turks & Caicos Explorer II*. Should you be leaving on an afternoon flight, you may leave your luggage aboard for pickup later. However, cabs are very expensive and it may be costly to return to the vessel.

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 *Turks & Caicos Explorer II*, evening meals usually consist of lots 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**

The US dollar is the official currency; most major credit cards are accepted widely throughout the island. The taxis require cash.

DEPARTURE

- **Departure tax may not be included in airline ticket. If not cash will be required.**

The *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* arrives back in Providenciales midday Friday. Transportation will be provided for a casual dinner on Friday evening; passengers spend Friday night and have Saturday breakfast on board; there will be sufficient time to catch a flight out at any time on Saturday. There is a departure tax, payable in cash, of approximately US\$23 upon leaving (subject to change).



ONBOARD CHARGES

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

Though all meals (except Friday's dinner), beverages, and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your on board bill. These include retail items, incoming and outgoing telephone calls, scuba instruction, rentals, port tax, fuel surcharge, nitrox 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 *Turks & Caicos Explorer II* from North America via Iridium phone at 011.88.163.185.9096 or cell +1.649.242.8267. When calling from Provo, it is easiest to call the cell phone at 242.8267. Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls on the satphone.

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 taxes
- Departure taxes
- Fuel Surcharge

OVERVIEW

Additional items not covered in the package price include:

- Airline ticket to and from vessel. *Note the Turks & Caicos Explorer II departs from Providenciales (airport code PLS)*
- Transfers from airport or hotel to vessel
Usually around US\$36 to \$40 for 2 each way
- 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 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 Turks & Caicos Explorer II

Explorer Ventures

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