



Fact Sheet

The Turks and Caicos Islands is a British Overseas Territory, located in the Atlantic Ocean and considered a part of the Caribbean region. With more than 40 small islands and cays, the nine inhabited islands are separated into two island groups; to the east of the Turks Island Passage are the Turks Islands and the west are the Caicos Islands. The islands are located 575 miles southeast of Miami, Florida, south of the Bahamas, east of Cuba and north of the country of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti). The nine inhabited islands are:

1. Grand Turk
2. Providenciales
3. South Caicos
4. Salt Cay
5. Middle Caicos
6. North Caicos
7. Parrot Cay
8. Pine Cay
9. Ambergris Cay

Brief History – For almost 700 years, the Taino and Lucayan Indians were the sole residents of the islands, settling mainly in Middle Caicos and Grand Turk. Shortly after Columbus arrived in 1492, the Lucayan civilization disappeared and the islands remained sparsely populated for about 30 years. During this time, the salt making industry was born. Bermudians came to Turks & Caicos to rake the salt and take it back to Bermuda. In 1706, the French and the Spanish briefly captured the Turks & Caicos Islands from the Bermudians. Four years later the British reclaimed the islands for Bermuda but in subsequent years the place became primarily a haven for pirates and British Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution. Ultimately, Britain retained the island country by the end of the century as part of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1766, after being controlled by the Spanish, French and British, Turks & Caicos became part of the Bahamas colony and was placed under the Bahamian government. Attempts to integrate the two distinct communities failed and in 1874 after “the Great Bahamas Hurricane” devastated much of the chain of islands, the Turks & Caicos Islands became dependencies to the British Crown Colony of Jamaica. Jamaica won independence from Britain in 1962 and so Turks & Caicos then became a British Crown colony on its own and still is one today.

Official Language – English

Traditional Dishes – The Turks and Caicos Islands does not have a national dish however the traditional dishes are as follows:

- Grand Turk – Hashed shark with pear bush buds and rice
- Salt Cay – Wilkes soup, Salt Cay candies and cream cakes
- South Caicos – Hashed lobster, peas and grits and fried bonefish
- North Caicos – Crab and rice and fried fish
- Middle Caicos – Conch and grits and potato bread

National Anthem – God Save the Queen

National Song – We Salute This Land of Ours

National Colours – Navy blue and gold

National Dress - Six colours were chosen for the main islands of the Turks and Caicos and two more for symbols of our national pride. Pink for the conch shell and our flamingos and yellow, the colour of the sun shining down on our beautiful islands and cays and also the sun is a major factor in bringing us all our tourist visitors. Colours were selected for each island:

- Red for Grand Turk representing the red/pink fruit of the national plant, the Turks Head Cactus;
- White for Salt Cay and the colour of salt;
- Orange for South and East Caicos showing off the colours of the spiny lobster and fish as well as the fishing industry in South Caicos;
- Tan for Middle Caicos and the natural colour of the island's thatch that covered most of the early homes and roofs and today the colour represents the crafts of basket weaving, straw hats and brooms;
- Green for North Caicos and Parrot Cay where fruit trees and others flourish in the fertile soil along with Wades Green Plantation where cotton grew and flourished in days gone by;
- Turquoise for Providenciales, Pine Cay and West Caicos where the turquoise water surrounds us and contributes to bringing us our newest resource of tourism.

National Coat of Arms - The coat of arms of the Turks and Caicos Islands was granted in 1965. The arms consist of a shield bearing a conch shell, lobster, and Turks Head Cactus on a yellow background. The dexter and sinister supporters are flamingos. The crest is a pelican between two sisal plants representing connection to the rope industry. Beneath the crest and above the shield is a helmet and accompanying mantling. In paper heraldry mantling is a depiction of the protective cloth covering worn by knights from their helmets to stave off the elements, and, secondarily, to decrease the effects of sword-blows against the helmet in battle, from which it is usually shown tattered or cut to shreds. The shield from the arms is featured on the flag of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and on the 6 defaced Union Flag of the Governor.





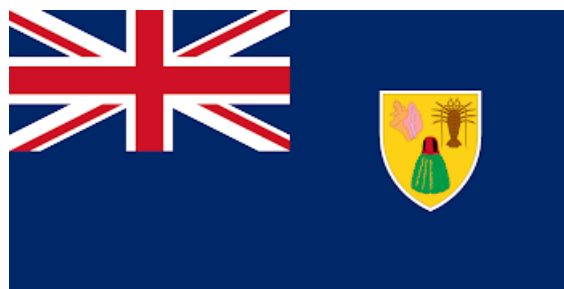
National Plant – Turks Head Cactus

National Tree – Caicos Pine

National Flower – Heather

National Bird – Brown Pelican

National Flag - The flag of the Turks and Caicos Islands is similar to the flags of other British dependencies and colonies as it has the Union Flag in the canton. It was adopted on November 7, 1968. It is a defaced Blue Ensign; the yellow (badge) shield is taken from the territory's coat of arms and contains a conch shell, lobster, and cactus, it is being encompassed by an imaginary circle of diameter measuring 4/9 hoist width of flag.



Currency – The US Dollar is the official currency of Turks and Caicos. Most hotels, restaurants and taxi services accept traveler's cheques, which can be cashed at local banks. Most major credit cards are accepted and banks offer ATM's as well as cash advances on credit cards.

Population - The population of the Turks and Caicos was 42,953 in 2019. Source: Department of Statistics (<https://www.gov.tc/stats/>)

Tipping is normally paid to waiters, taxi drivers, room attendants and porters at 15%.

Time Zone – Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Electricity – 110 volt/60 cycle, suitable for U.S. appliances. FortisTCI Limited, a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., provides electricity throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands, serving Providenciales, North Caicos, Middle Caicos, South Caicos, East Caicos and adjacent Cays. Turks and Caicos Utility Limited serves the Islands of Grand Turk and Salt Cay and was acquired by FortisTCI in 2012.

Climate – The average temperature ranges between 85 and 90 degrees fahrenheit (29-32 degrees celsius) from June to October, sometimes reaching the mid 90's (35 degrees celsius),

especially in the late summer months. From November to May the average temperature is 80 to 84 degrees fahrenheit (27-29 degrees celsius). Water temperature in the summer is 82 to 84 degrees (28-29 degrees celsius) and in winter about 74 to 78 degrees (23-26 degrees celsius). A constant trade wind keeps the climate at a very comfortable level. There is an annual rainfall of 21 inches on Grand Turk and South Caicos, but as you go further west the average rainfall could increase to 40 inches. In an average year the Turks and Caicos has 350 days of sunshine.

Hurricane Season - Runs from June 1 to November 30 each year.

People – Turks & Caicos Islanders are mostly descendants of African slaves who were brought in to work the salt pans or the cotton plantations, (or who escaped from the Americas). The expatriate population consists of British, Canadians, Americans, Europeans, and persons from throughout the Caribbean and the world.

Economy – The economy of the TCI relies primarily on the tourism industry, but also real estate development and the exportation of seafood. A wide variety of financial services are available, including company formation, offshore insurance, banking, trusts, limited partnerships and limited life companies. The Financial Services Commission regulates, develops and promotes the industry in major world markets.

Government – The Turks & Caicos Islands are a British Overseas Territory, and Her Majesty the Queen appoints a Governor as her representative based in the islands. Having an internal self-government structure, the head of the Turks and Caicos Islands government is the politically elected Premier, formerly called Chief Minister. The Premier heads up the slate of elected officials serving as representatives of constituencies and Ministers of key sectors in the country. Elections are held every four years in the Turks and Caicos Islands. House of Assembly is located in the capital island, Grand Turk, and government offices and departments are found throughout the islands. The legal system is based on English Common Law.

Courier Service – Daily delivery service is provided by FedEx, with offices on Providenciales and Grand Turk. Service is also provided by DHL and UPS.

Cable Television – Satellite television service is provided throughout the islands, with most major American networks available. Local cable providers are People's Television (PTV) and Digicel Play.

Water – As on many islands, fresh water is precious, and dependent upon rainfall or desalinated water produced by reverse osmosis for the supply. Please be conservative in using water.

Telephone Service – The Turks & Caicos country code is 649. Local and international telephone, internet and cellular services are available through local companies FLOW and Digicel. If you have cell service in the USA you may enable international roaming which would allow you to place and receive calls whilst in the Turks and Caicos. You are also able to rent or purchase a SIM card or a telephone from one of the local services providers.

Postal Service – Post Offices are located on all inhabited islands. All mail is transported by air. There are many different issues and denominations of stamps for enthusiasts to collect. Philatelic Bureaus are located on both Providenciales and Grand Turk.



Driving License Requirements – Visitors from the British Commonwealth Countries, the United States of America, Canada and holders of International driver's license are permitted to drive for 30 days on their respective license. Visitors from all other countries are required to possess a Visitors Permit, which can be obtained at the Road Safety Department.

Public Nudity is illegal throughout the islands.

Customs and Immigration – Duty free goods that may be brought in to the Islands include: 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, 1.136 liters of spirits or wine and perfume for personal use. There are no restrictions for travelers on the import of cameras, film or sports equipment, except spear guns and Hawaiian slings. To bring in firearms of any type (including spear guns and Hawaiian slings), you must have written approval from the Commissioner of Police. Controlled drugs and pornography are illegal.

Entry Requirements – All visitors traveling to the Turks & Caicos Islands must have a valid passport. Visas are necessary from some countries of the former Eastern Bloc. They are advised to contact the nearest British Consulate Office. All visitors must hold a round trip ticket. Visitors are allowed to stay for 90 days; this is renewable one time only. From 22 July 2020, all travelers (residents and visitors) to the Turks and Caicos Islands will be required to visit the TCI Assured Travel Authorization Portal in order to obtain a travel authorization for arrival in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Persons without an authorization either physical or electronic copy will not be able to travel to the islands. The TCI Assured travel authorization application is accessible on the Tourist Board's website www.turksandcaicostourism.com.

Arriving by Air – International commercial flights enter the Turks and Caicos Islands at the Providenciales International Airport (PLS). Other domestic airports in the Sister Islands include: JAGS McCartney International Airport in Grand Turk, North Caicos Airport, South Caicos Airport, Salt Cay Airport, Pine Cay Airport and Ambergris Cay Airport. There are currently direct flights to PLS from many major United States cities, as well as the United Kingdom, Canada, and several Caribbean countries. Inter-island travel is available through local airlines Caicos Express and InterCaribbean.

Arriving by Sea – Most visitors to the Turks and Caicos Islands arrive via cruise ship. Grand Turk is home to a state of the art luxury cruise ship center which was awarded Best Caribbean Beach Port by Porthole Magazine in 2019. The Grand Turk Cruise Center consists of a 3000-foot pier, the welcome facility and the recreational area. The Turks and Caicos Islands is also a sought-after yachting destination with several impressive full-service marina facilities. Owing to its ideal geographic location in relation to Florida, the islands serve as a 'gateway to the Caribbean' for many mariners. Inter-island travel is available through local ferry TCI Ferry.

Health Care – There is national healthcare through a modern hospital system comprising two state-of-the-art medical centres, managed by InterHealth Canada; Cheshire Hall Medical Centre on Providenciales and Cockburn Town Medical Centre on Grand Turk. Health services provided at the centres include: emergency care, dental, dialysis, internal medicine, surgical, orthopedic, obstetric and endoscopic procedures, physiotherapy and diagnostic imaging. Tele – medicine is also currently being introduced to improve inter island healthcare delivery. Providenciales also has a number of private general practitioners and all of the other Sister Islands have community clinics.



Banking – Several international banks have branches operating in the Turks and Caicos Islands including FirstCaribbean International Bank, Royal Bank of Canada and Scotia Bank. Typical banking hours are Monday to Friday for 9:00am to 3:00pm.

