



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND OFF TO A GREAT START IN THE NEW YEAR WITH ACCOLADES, SPECIAL OFFERS AND RENOVATED PRODUCT

**Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, January 20, 2020.....**The Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board (GBITB) is optimistic about the island's prospects in the New Year, as the recovery continues apace, and confidence in their tourism product expands.

Carnival Cruise Lines bestowed on UNEXSO the prestigious "Caribbean's Leading Tour Operator" award, which recognizes the company that receives the highest ratings from both their passengers and onboard shore excursion staff for shore excursions conducted the previous season. In accepting the award Linda Osborne, General Manager of UNEXSO, credited her staff -- shore excursion reps, front desk operations, boat captains, dolphin trainers, dive instructors and maintenance -- whose excellent customer service makes each guest experience a memorable one.

Carnival Cruise Lines are the largest provider of cruise ship guests for Freeport, averaging 15 calls a month.

Grand Bahamian restaurant Flying Fish in Freeport has been named one of the Top 20 restaurants in the Caribbean by esteemed culture magazine, *Caribbean Journal*. According to *Caribbean Journal*, "this year's edition of the 50 Best Caribbean Restaurants...retains our core criteria: food, service and ambience, the three pillars which are the foundation of any great restaurant."

"We are humbled and incredibly proud of this recognition, and even more proud to bring some good publicity to the island of Grand Bahama, especially during such a difficult rebuilding period for our island" said Chef Tim, Owner and Chef at Flying Fish.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> *USA Today* launched their 2020 Caribbean Readers' Choice Awards, and Grand Bahama Island earned four nominees in several categories - Beaches, Beach Bars and Restaurants. The nominees follow:

- Best Caribbean Beach - Fortune Beach
- Best Caribbean Beach - Gold Rock Beach
- Best Caribbean Beach Bar - Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience
- Best Caribbean Restaurant – Banana Bay Restaurant & Bar

The GBITB is encouraging all stakeholders, partners, friends and supporters of Grand Bahama Island to share the list far and wide, and vote for our nominees. Votes can be cast once per day in each category until February 3. The winners will be announced on February 14th.

### **Special Offers by Air and Sea**

**Silver Airways** has launched a special new year's promotion – using the promo code MYBAHAMAS at booking you can instantly save 25 percent off\* your fare on all non-stop and connecting flights to/from Freeport, Grand Bahama, good for travel through February 1, 2020. This limited time offer is available exclusively at [SilverAirways.com](http://SilverAirways.com); #happynewyear2020 #flySilver #bahamas #freeport. \*Terms and conditions apply.

**Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line** announced a flash sale on sailings to Grand Bahama island. As part of its “Roaring Twenties” offer\*, from just \$99 per person, guests who book two-night sailings to Grand Bahama Island – departing now through June 30, 2020 – will receive 50 percent off the second guest. In addition, travelers who book an ocean view or suite stateroom will enjoy FREE “Roaring Perks,” including:

- \$20 onboard credit
- Five drinks for \$20
- 20 percent off specialty dining, spa treatments, and Wi-Fi
- Children ages 12 and under sail free

This limited time offer is valid for *MV Grand Celebration* departures from the Port of Palm Beach. \*Some restrictions may apply; visit [BahamasParadiseCruise.com](http://BahamasParadiseCruise.com) or call 888-530-2775 for full terms and conditions.

**Balearia Caribbean** has launched Snowbird winter getaways, offering savings of up to 25 percent\* on sailings from January 17<sup>th</sup> through February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Special terms and conditions apply; no promotional code is required. The booking window is January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for travel January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The offer is valid for one day trips to Freeport, and for round trip travel to Freeport; hotel is not included. All trips must originate in Fort Lauderdale, and all sales are final and non-refundable. Date changes are allowed and subject to penalty fee and rate difference if applicable. \*The discount is applied to the base rate prior to taxes/port fees of \$69 per person and hotel resort fee. For complete information and bookings visit [baleariacaribbean.com](http://baleariacaribbean.com)

Following are the latest updates from the stakeholders:

### **Accommodations**

As of January 7, 2020, 1,416 rooms are available on Grand Bahama island, representing 85% of the room inventory. Several vacation rentals are also available, complimenting the current hotel and timeshare rooms on island.

### **Freeport/Lucaya**

- Viva Wyndham Fortuna Beach Resort re-opened on December 10<sup>th</sup> featuring newly renovated rooms of over 50% of its inventory. This winter, guests of the resort will experience refreshed restaurants and bars, spa and amphitheater along with beach and pool areas
- Bell Channel Inn, Castaways Resort & Suites, Lighthouse Pointe/Grand Lucayan, Ocean Reef Resort, Pelican Bay Hotel, Royal Islander and Sunrise Resort & Suites, and are all **open for business**.
- The Village Bahamia is currently housing displaced local residents and will reopen for leisure travelers in **Summer 2020**.
- Flamingo Bay Resort & Marina have plans to reopen in the first quarter of **2020**.

### **West Grand Bahama**

- Old Bahama Bay Resort & Marina, Paradise Cove, and Blue Marlin Cove are all **open for business**.
- Bootle Bay Fishing Lodge will be open for its season which is May to September.

### **Timeshare**

- Dundee Bay Villas, Mayfield Beach & Tennis Club, Island Seas Resort and Taino Beach Resort are **open for business**.

### **On-Island Transportation and Attractions/Dive & Watersports**

- H. Forbes Charter Services, S & D Coach Tours, First Class Transportation and Tours, Paradise Cove, Reef Tours, Taxi Services, Hertz, Avis and other rental car services are available.
- International Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO): Diving and Diving operations are available. Retail Facility is fully operational.
- Grand Bahama Nature Tours: Revised limited tours include canal-kayak & beach, Bicycle, ATV and Jeep tours are operational.
- Garden of the Groves: Now open for business and fully operational. Guided Tours are available.

- Lucayan National Park & Gold Rock Beach: The park has reopened; access is now available to get to Gold Rock Beach. Clean-ups and bridge repairs are ongoing.
- Pirate's Cove Zipline & Waterpark: Full operations restored; Zipline has been tested, recertified and upgraded with automated breaking mechanisms. It is up and running along with all other activities, including paddle boards, kayak, etc.
- Bahamas Adventures is fully operational with the park and other activities.
- Port Lucaya Marketplace reopened on October 18 with 85% of tenants. Anticipating vacancies being filled by end of first quarter; repairs will commence early February 2020 continuing throughout the year.
- Ocean Motion Watersports is open. Reservations are mandatory; operations are limited.
- Crystal Beach/Celebrity Eco-Adventures' Swim with Pigs Tour, beach and snorkel activities are all available.
- Fragrance of the Bahamas Perfume Factory is open and operating; tours are offered from 10:00AM – 4:00PM.
- Rand Nature Centre reopened on December 6, 2019 and hosted the 25th Annual Festival Noel.
- Westend Ecology (stingray tour, etc.) is operational with a maximum capacity of 6 persons per trip.
- Blue Green Outdoors' tours of the Eastern end of the island are suspended indefinitely. The western heritage tour is operational and can accommodate up to 7 persons.
- Caribbean Divers, Calabash Eco Adventures, Exotic Adventures, Grand Bahama Scuba, Lucaya Watersports, Paradise Watersports, Sunn Odyssey, are all open and operating.
- Coconutz Cruisers is operating motorized bicycle tours.
- Pinetree Stables (Horseback riding tours) is open for business.
- Renu Day Spa is open and offering all services; hours are 9:00AM – 3:00PM Monday-Wednesday and 9am-6pm Thursday -Saturday.
- Westend Ecology (Educational Stingray, fishing and snorkeling tours) is operational.
- West End Watersports reopened at a new location in the community of West End, Grand Bahama, offering day trips to Sandy Cay.

## **Restaurants**

- Bahamian restaurants Better To Serve You, Out Da Sea Bar & Grill, Dive-In Bar & Restaurant, Greek Express, Flying Fish Gastro Bar & Restaurant, Geneva's Place, Mary Ann's Restaurant, Merport Bistro, Ocean's Grill (Ocean Reef Resort), Pepper Pot Restaurant, East Sushi Bar/Pier One Restaurant, Sabor's Restaurant, Sire's Restaurant, Banana Bay Restaurant, The Sand Bar, The Stoned Crab Restaurant and Upstairs on the Bay Restaurant at Bell Channel are all open for business.
- The Wednesday Fish Fry (Penny's, Outriggers and Da Bus Stop) in Smith's Point, including Gully Wash, Terry's Conch Stand, and Toads on the Bay in William's Town, are all back in business.
- Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience at Taino Beach is open for business Sunday to Friday, from 12 noon.
- Fast food restaurants Burger King, KFC, Subway, Wendy's, Pizza Hut and Marco's Pizza are open.

## **Health Services**

- The Rand Memorial Hospital, a full-service community hospital operated by Grand Bahama Health Services, provides acute and secondary care through a wide range of services, both surgical and diagnostic.
- Due to the recent catastrophic and unprecedented Hurricane Dorian in early September 2019, the hospital was adversely impacted. Samaritan's Purse, a Humanitarian Organization installed an Emergency Field Hospital on property adjacent to the Rand Memorial Hospital, which ensured seamless provision of health care services.
- Samaritan's Purse is a 40-bedded hospital, which has the capacity to serve more than 100 patients daily. It is resourced with an emergency room, intensive care unit, pharmacy, and an operating room to facilitate up to 10 surgeries per day.
- The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department is resourced with ambulances that have satellite radios connected to the Accident/Emergency & Urgent Care Centre and all clinics.
- Across the island, a network of community clinics, also operated by Public Hospitals Authority, Grand Bahama Health Services, are staffed by doctors and nurses who provide primary health care services under the supervision of an assigned Clinical Manager. A resident doctor and/or nurse are available for emergencies during public holidays, weekends and after normal working hours.

For more information, and to assist with the recovery and reconstruction process on Grand Bahama Island, please visit the following sites: <https://www.gbdisasterrelief.org/>; <https://rotary6990.org/>; and <https://www.bahamas.com/relief>.

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**About Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board**

The Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board (GBITB) is the private sector marketing and promotion agency for Grand Bahama Island. The GBITB is mandated to support economic growth for tourism stakeholders on Grand Bahama Island.

Activities include the development and execution of various marketing and promotional initiatives designed to enhance and increase Grand Bahama Island's awareness and profile in the market. The Board's membership includes a wide range of tourism related businesses including the accommodation sector, restaurants, bars, attractions, transportation providers, artisans and retailers.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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