



Better in the Bahamas

This Spring, United Airlines will unite Denver with Nassau—inviting you to unite with shimmering turquoise waters so bright, they can be seen from space.

TEXT STEPHANIE WILSON

Good news, jet-setters: Starting this spring, you can go lie on the white powdery beaches of the Bahamas without enduring a layover. Unit-

ed Airlines begins nonstop service between Denver International Airport and Nassau in the Bahamas beginning March 7. You know what's

a hop, skip, and a short footbridge from Nassau, right? Paradise Island. In the spirit of full disclosure, I audibly sighed while typing that because

it just sounds so very nice.

Even if you weren't aware that Paradise Island even existed, you know what it looks like almost instinc-

tively. No, not because the visuals on this page give it away, although it is a bit of a #spoiler-alert. Stay with me anyway. Pull out your phone or fire



During astronaut Scott Kelly's year aboard the International Space Station, he was captivated by the Bahamas, calling it "the most beautiful place from space."

up your laptop, and do a quick Google Images search for "paradise."

Powdery sand beaches dotted with palm trees and lapped by shimmering *turquoise* waters kissed by a golden sun. The concept of paradise conjures up a universal image of tropical escapes around the world, places where the water is so blue it seems to be illuminated from beneath the surface. Waters so turquoise

that they make the word turquoise pale in comparison. That's what paradise looks like.

And that's what Paradise Island looks like. It's part of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a string of 700 islands and 2,400 cays stretching over 100,000 square miles. The brilliant aquamarine waters surrounding the archipelago are so vibrant, they are one of only two

natural landmarks clearly visible from space. During astronaut Scott Kelly's year aboard the International Space Station, he was captivated by the Bahamas, calling it "the most beautiful place from space."

If you've still got your phone out, google "Bahamas seen from space," and you'll see what he means. Go ahead, we'll wait...

Stunning, right? You want to be there right now. I

know. United can't get you there until March, but you can book your flight right now. If the thought of floating in that gemstone-hued salt-water bath isn't reason enough to get you on the plane, we are motivated by very different things. That's ok; there's more to the Caribbean-adjacent destination than can be seen from above.

Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, is located on New

Providence Island at the heart of the archipelago. It's the 11th largest island in the Commonwealth. The aptly named Paradise Island is less than a half mile away. International travelers and locals alike are lured to Nassau by its charm, rhythms, flavors, beaches, and—worth mentioning again—some of the clearest waters in the world.

And they are never far from

EVERY DOLLAR HELPS RECOVERY

While Nassau escaped the brunt of Hurricane Dorian's wrath, Bahamian islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco were devastated. The best way to support the relief and recovery effort is through a monetary contribution to one of the trusted partners listed on bahamas.com/relief.

view in Nassau. A combination of low tidal range and shallow depths result in the stunning hues. Visibility often tops 250 feet, making this a prime spot for snorkeling with

stingrays, diving with dolphins, seeking out shipwrecks, and checking out coral reefs.

Back on land, part of Nassau's allure is its harmonious blend of old and new. The

streets are lined with a wall of pastel-hued boutiques, restaurants, and bars, offset by the Parliament, the Supreme Court, and other government offices. The result: Nassau's distinctive

colonial-meets-modern flair.

The island's history is as colorful as its architecture. The Bahamas became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth in 1973, but 200-plus years of British rule left a lasting mark on the culture. In Parliament Square, Nassau's lawmakers still wear white wigs inside the candy-pink Georgian-style government buildings, which date from

the late 1700s. The Queen's Staircase—65 steps carved out of the side of a limestone cliff—lead to Fort Fincastle and its 126-foot Water Tower. That's the highest point on the island. Just imagine how much oxygen is in the air there.

While the local attractions are plentiful, perhaps the most notable is the Ardastra Gardens and Zoo—the only place in the world to see the marching flamin-

The candy-hued seat of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas government dates from the late 1700s.



Pastel buildings line the waterfront in the capital city.





Why swim with the dolphins when you can paddle with the pigs? Take a day trip to Big Major Cay, a.k.a. Pig Beach, and you'll be greeted by snorting bovine swimming out to greet you.

DIA BY THE NUMBERS

177K
PASSENGERS

The average number of people per day who take off or land in DIA

44,255
SPACES

The amount of public parking—more than 23 football fields' worth

52.38
SQUARE MILES

The amount of land the airport occupies

215+
DESTINATIONS

The number of locations reached with nonstop flights

gos, which literally march on command.

You can find places to stay on Nassau, but you'll want to consider instead the main attraction just across the way: Atlantis, Paradise Island, the lost city brought to life. Featuring five distinct properties, the most recognizable of which are the Royal Towers, Atlantis is also home to the largest open-

air marine habitat in the world. It's also got Aquaventure, a 141-acre waterscape that includes a glass-tube slide through a shark tank, a 14-acre marine mammal habitat, an incredible spa, a Tom Weiskopf-designed golf course, a huge casino, duty-free shopping, and more than 40 restaurants, Fish by José Andres, Nobu by Nobu Matsuhisa, and

Olives by Todd English among them.

It's pretty swanky. To balance it out, make sure you take a day trip to the nearby island to swim with the wild pigs. Trust us: the photos alone make it worth the time and cost.

United's new service operates once a week year-round on Saturdays, except during the height of hurricane season from mid-August



through late October. It's about a five-hour flight on a Boeing 737.

It's the first non-stop flight between Nassau and Denver, and it makes Denver the western-most stop for direct flights from the Caribbean. Un-

til the flight debuts, Denver is the third largest US market without nonstop service to the Bahamian capital. As of press time, a Basic Economy roundtrip ticket was going for \$457 for the inaugural flight. **S**