

# Eleuthera



When it comes to wishing for the archetypal ‘idyllic island,’ it is impossible to think past the delicate pink-sand beaches and sparkling turquoise seas of tranquil Eleuthera. On the east coast, dramatic cliffs, sheltered coves and offshore coral reefs add to this vivid panorama.

However, barely 50 miles east of Nassau, Eleuthera’s infamous Devil’s Backbone reef has claimed plenty of ill-fated ships over the centuries. Although divers explore these evocative remains, many other vessels still wait to be found. The hurricanes of 1992, 1999 and 2004 have also whacked many villages across the main island.

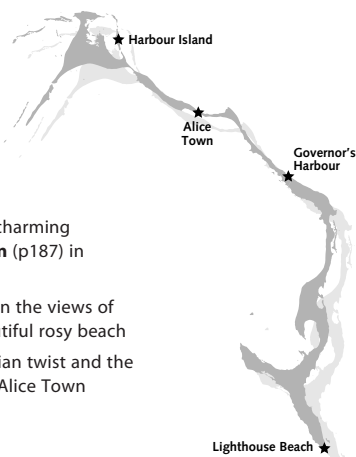
The Queen’s Hwy runs the length of this fashionably thin 100-mile-long island, making exploration easy, while the Bight of Eleuthera to the west is a vast expanse of shallow scalloped waters where bonefish hunters await their prey.

The high-speed ferry service makes Nassau accessible and day-trippers can visit the haunt of the rich, famous and beautiful – Harbour Island, coined the prettiest Caribbean island. It still has an attractive Bahamian character, despite the laconic wealth displayed by visitors and expats. An indescribably lovely coral pink beach runs along the windward shore, and breakers are stopped by coral reefs, guaranteeing superb bathing and snorkeling.

While hotels on these isles cater for the seriously wealthy, boutique hotels and self-contained accommodations make these rosy beaches and warm azure waters accessible to us all.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Strolling hand in hand with your beloved at sunrise on **Pink Sands Beach** (p178), Harbour Island
- Toasting the world’s largest coconut with a tumbler of rum, before dancing to reggae under the stars at the **Vic Hum Club** (p181), Harbour Island
- Watching the sun set over Cupid’s Bay from the charming cottages and orchid-filled garden at the **Duck Inn** (p187) in Governor’s Harbour
- Climbing up to East Point Lighthouse to delight in the views of **Lighthouse Beach** (p191), Eleuthera’s most beautiful rosy beach
- Savoring delectable Bahamian dishes with a Sicilian twist and the lively company at the **Rainbow Inn** (p187), near Alice Town



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 242

■ POPULATION: 8545

■ AREA: 198 SQ MILES

## History

The name ‘Eleuthera’ comes from the Greek word *eleutheros*, meaning freedom (the Lucayans who originally settled the island called their home ‘Cigatoo’). In 1648, English refugees fleeing religious persecution in Bermuda during the English Civil War era landed in Eleuthera after the Devil’s Backbone reef ripped open their boats. They were later joined by Loyalists, who brought their slaves and founded new settlements.

Massive pineapple exports in the late 1800s and early 1900s were replaced with less intensive farming crops. Abandoned silos recall the thriving cattle and chicken industries that evolved in the 1950s. Alas, following independence the government bought out the farmers, and within a short period of time the farms were derelict. Since then, with the exception of Harbour Island, tourism on Eleuthera has also withered and many once-fashionable resort hotels are now closed. St Georges Island’s Spanish Wells, however, has a thriving lobster industry.

Hurricane Andrew knocked the socks off much of North Eleuthera in 1992, and Hurricane Floyd hit the island with a right hook in 1999. The 2004 hurricanes also added to the general damage sustained by the infrastructure and many villages.

## Getting There & Away

Most travelers to Eleuthera fly into Governor’s Harbour Airport or North Eleuthera International Airport (if they are heading to Harbour Island). Others take the twice-weekly fast ferry from Nassau. A number of day trips to the cays from Nassau on super-zippy powerboats are also very popular. Cheaper but slow mail boats and expensive private boat charters round out the options.

## Getting Around

You’ll need your own transport if you want to explore Eleuthera outside of Governor’s Harbour or Harbour Island. Fortunately, car-rental agencies can be found at the airport and through accommodations. If you fly in, you’ll have to catch a ferry or water taxi to Harbour Island where bicycles or golf carts are the modus operandi; they’re easily rented at the dock.

# NORTH ELEUTHERA

Eleuthera is neatly divided by a tendril-thin strip of land called The Glass Window, one-quarter of the way down the island. Immediately north, the isle broadens out in a rough triangle with Current Island to the west. To the east, Harbour Island and neighboring cays enclose a vast harbor. North Eleuthera includes Governor’s Harbour.

## HARBOUR ISLAND

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It is hard to live up to the accolade of being the prettiest island in the Caribbean, but ‘Bri-land,’ as it is known, is especially charming. The lovely little pastel-colored cottages with their tiny and immaculate gardens, the narrow streets hung with vibrant garlands and that indescribably beautiful coral pink beach running the length of the windward shore are all simply entrancing. Although many Eleutherans shudder at the island’s tourism, for visitors it is an entrancing mix of Old World Bahamas and island living at a very comfortable level, all underscored by the undeniable charm and friendliness of the Brilanders.

Harbour Island discreetly houses well-known Bahamian artist Eddie Minnis, singer Jimmy Buffett, Aussie supermodel Elle Macpherson and many other celebrities.

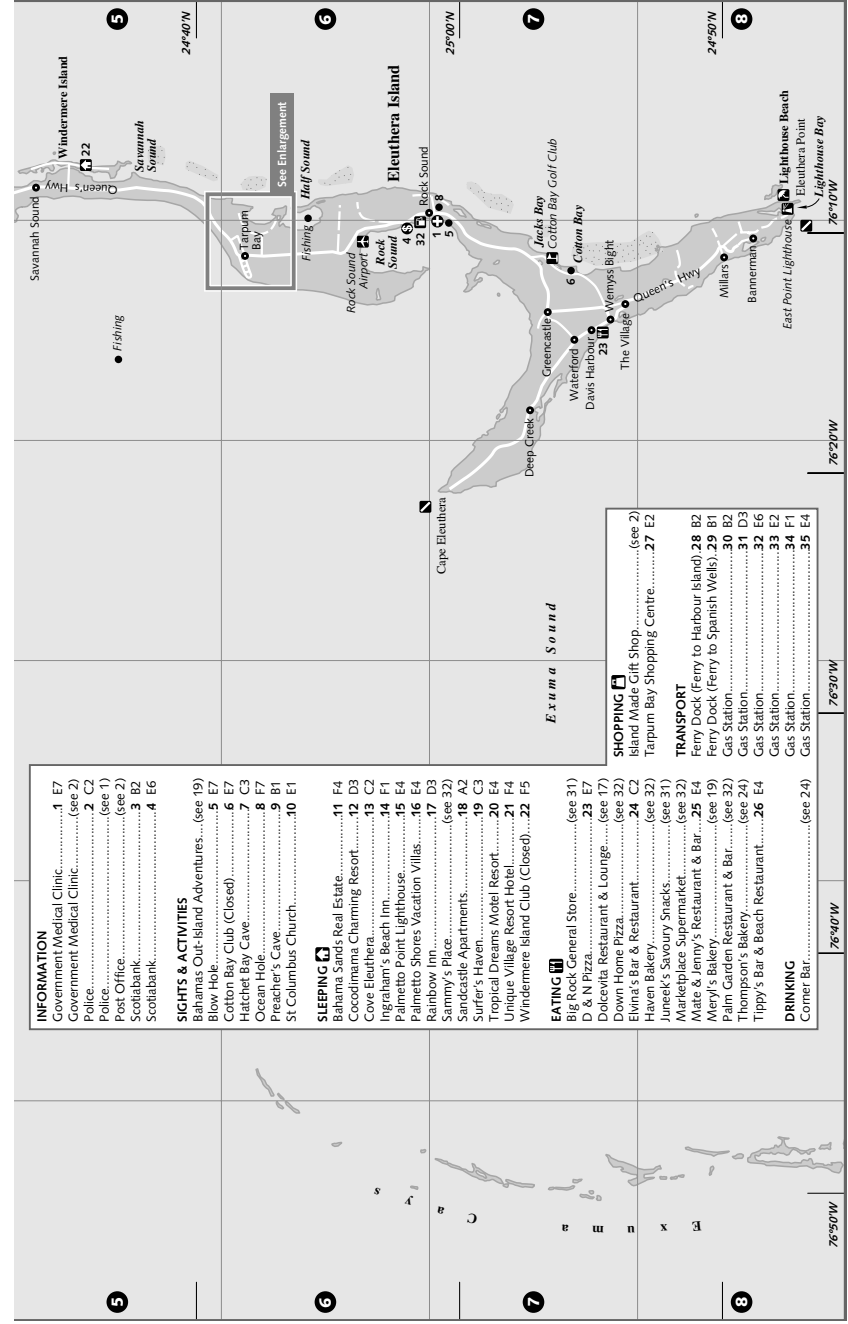
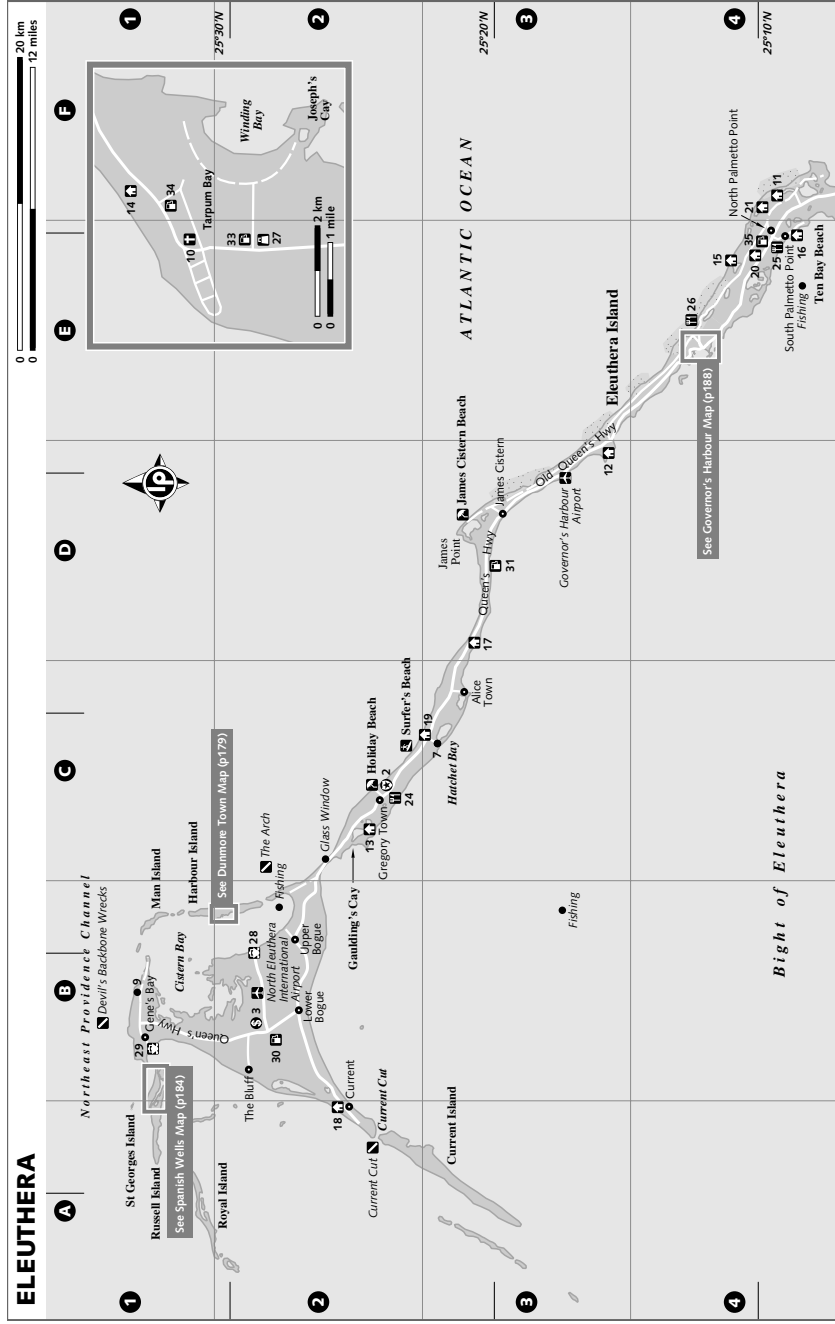
Quaint **Dunmore Town**, on the harbor side, harks back 300 years. The town was laid out in 1791 by Lord Dunmore, governor of the Bahamas (1787–96), who had a summer residence here. Maybe the clip-clop of hooves has been replaced with the whir of golf carts, but the daily pace has not changed much. Once a noted shipyard and a sugar-refining center from which a rum-making tradition evolved, today most adults are employed at the hotels or in fishing.

The Bahamas Billfish Championship regularly heads this way around May (see boxed text, p152).

## Orientation

The ferry alights on the corner of Bay and Church Sts. Church St and other streets rise gently inland to Dunmore St. The resorts run along Pink Sands Beach, to the east.

Colebrook St runs south to a private residential estate, while Bay St extends north to Nesbit St at the northern end of the town.



## Information

Public telephone booths sit along Bay St. **Bahamas Ministry of Tourism** (☎ 242-333-2621; Dunmore St; ☎ 9am-5:30pm Mon-Fri) **BaTelCo** (☎ 242-333-2648; Colebrook St) **Harbour Island Medical Clinic** (☎ 242-333-2227; Church St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) **Harbourside Pharmacy** (☎ 242-363-2514; Bay St) Also sells papers, including the *New York Times*. **Police** (☎ 242-332-2111, 919; Goal Lane) **Post office** (☎ 242-332-2215; Goal Lane) **Red Apple Internet Lounge** (☎ 242-333-2750; Colebrook St; per 20 min \$10; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat) South of the center. **Royal Bank of Canada** (☎ 242-333-2250; Murray St; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri) The only bank here.

## Sights & Activities

One of the finest examples of loyalist architecture is the **Loyalist Cottage** (1797) on Bay St. The 1843 **Wesley Methodist Church** (cnr Dumore & Chapel Sts), with beautiful hardwood pews and a huge model sailing ship that honors the seafaring tradition of the Brilanders, is close to the 1768 **St John's Anglican Church** (Dunmore St). St John's, near Church St, is claimed to be the oldest church in the Bahamas.

Also worth a visit are the ancient graves at the **cemetery** on Chapel St. Bahamians give it a wide berth at night, being fearful of spirits. The handsome 1913 **Commissioner's Residence** sits on Goal Lane at Colebrook St.

There's a bizarre collection of **international license plates** and **driftwood signs** painted with humorous limericks and aphorisms on Dunmore St, opposite the Royal Palm Hotel.

Cannons can be seen at the southern end of Bay St. Named **Roundheads**, this now overgrown 17th-century battery was built by the English to defend the island.

No exaggeration, the wide and stunning length of **Pink Sands Beach** is really pink; a faint blush by day, turning a rosy red when fired by the dawn or sunset. The sea is great for swimming and snorkeling, while nearby hotels have public bars and restaurants. It's perfect for self-indulgent beach bumming.

## DIVING & SNORKELING

Fish have long been protected off Harbour Island, where groupers are so tame that they will nuzzle divers, hoping to be fed. The island is surrounded by superb dive sites, highlighted by the **Devil's Backbone**, with more than 3 miles of pristine reefs littered

with ancient wrecks. Among them are **Cienfuegos**, a cruise ship, and the **Potato & Onion**, a massive 19th-century wreck just 15ft down. Dive operators also head for the **Arch**, where sharks, rays and schools of jacks swim through a coral archway which begins at 75ft, and **Current Cut**, where you're whipped along at speeds of up to 10 knots, in depths down to 65ft. Here coral walls encourage voluminous sea life.

Snorkelers also have a lot of choice: **Bird Cay** has large populations of conch and fish; **Blue Hole's** cavern features a low-lying reef; **Gaulding's Cay** is where soft coral, sea anemone and bonefish abound across a large area; **Oleander Reef**, which is close to shore, has a tremendous variety of tropical fish; and **Paradise Beach's** barrier-reef system has heaps of coral and fish species. Moreover, **Pineapple Rock's** shipwreck, now claimed by myriad tropical fish, is great, as is **Seafan Gardens**, where Gorgonians await, along with Baron, the friendly barracuda.

Dive prices here soar considerably with equipment rental costs included. The following companies rent snorkel gear for \$10 and provide snorkeling trips for approximately \$30.

**Valentine's Dive Center** (☎ 242-333-2080; www.valentinesdive.com; Bay St) offers two-tank (\$65) and one-tank night dives (\$60). All-day dive excursions (\$115) and reef-running underwater scooters (\$125) are also to be enjoyed. Fishing fans can also charter boats (per half-day/day \$400/650). Deep-sea fishing is also offered (\$575/775 per half-day/day).

**Romora Bay Dive Shop** (☎ 242-333-2325; Queen's Hwy), south of the center, has two-tank dives (\$110), twilight and night dives (\$126), Sandy Point wall and reef dives with lunch (\$189) and cave diving including Nitrox for decompression. It also rents Sunfish and sailboards (\$20/60 per hour/day).

**Ocean Fox Divers** (☎ 242-333-2323; www.oceanfox.com; Harbour Island Marina), south of the center, is a small outfit that caters for up to six on its 34ft-custom dive boat. It also has two-tank dives (\$105), one-tank night dives (\$90), dive tours to Grouper Hole (\$65) and Current Cut & Wreck dives (\$125). It also has deep-sea fishing (\$525/895 per half-/full-day).

## BONEFISHING & SPORTFISHING

Fishing guides and boats cost around \$250 to \$350 per half-day and \$400 to \$600 per

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full-day. See p178 for alternative arrangements.

**Bonefish Stuart** (☎ 242-333-2072)

**Maxwell Higgs** (☎ 242-333-2323)

**Patrick Roberts** (☎ 242-333-3014)

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Horseback riding on Pink Sands Beach is around \$20 per half-hour; wave down the gent strolling the sands with his untethered four-legged friends or call on ☎ 242-333-2317. **Ron & Cleotis** (☎ 242-333-2317) also offer horseback riding. Ask about rates.

Bicycles can be rented (\$30 per day) from **Michaels Cycles** (☎ 242-2384).

Kayaks are rented (\$25 per hour) from Dunmore Beach Club (right).

### Sleeping

There are some great-value rental and self-contained places listed on the island. Contact **Bahama Sands Real Estate** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-2662) and **Krataios Real Estate Rentals** (☎ 242-333-2750; www.redapple.bb.com; Queen's Hwy).

### MIDRANGE

**Bahama House Inn** (☎ 242-333-2201; www.bahamahouseinn.com; cnr Dunmore & Hill Sts; r \$140; ☎ ☎) This super and spacious B&B is a charming and subtly restored colonial home. Outdoor decking connects cool and comfortable living, dining and library/lounge areas, while bedrooms are furnished with eclectic colonial furniture, some with draped four-poster beds. En-suite rooms overlook a large garden and patio deck, just made for a quiet read and a glass of chilled rum and pineapple juice. A studio apartment is also offered. No children under 12 are allowed.

**Landing** (☎ 242-333-2707; landinghl@aol.com; Bay St, r \$155; ☎ ☎ ☎) This lovely old colonial building (circa 1899) on the waterfront in town has a few rooms with creaky polished wooden floors, and four-poster beds made up with crisp white cotton sheets. A library, TV lounge and lovely back garden are open to guests, and a popular restaurant (reservations required) serves classic dinners.

**Tingum Village** (☎/fax 242-333-2161; Queen's Hwy; r/ste \$115/125, ste with Jacuzzi \$175; ☎ ☎ ☎) This pleasant and friendly place has a choice of spick-and-span rooms and suites, all furnished with Bahamian cane and handmade wooden furniture (suites have kitchen and Jacuzzi). The on-site restaurant and bar (Ma

Ruby's; opposite) open on to a pleasant garden. A path leads from the garden over hill to the beach, probably a 10-minute walk away.

**Red Apple B&B** (☎ 242-333-2750; www.redapplebb.com; Queen's Hwy; r per night/week \$129/903; ☎ ☎ ☎) These fabulous self-contained units are great value and very tastefully decorated. Light wood and white surrounds are the setting for large and comfortable one- and two-bedroom apartments. Large bathrooms and useful kitchens are also well maintained. The friendly owners, Rosita and Joseph Roberts, also rent golf carts and offer bone-fishing expeditions.

**Royal Palm Hotel** (☎ 242-333-2738; www.royalpalmhotel.com; Clarence St; r \$97-120; ☎ ☎ ☎) This small and modern motel-style lodging is very popular with divers. Spotless rooms are tiled in white and are simply but comfortably furnished. This nice, attractive part of town is more Bahamian in character and very good value.

### TOP END

**Coral Sands Hotel** (☎ 242-333-2350; pamela@coralsands.com; Chapel St; r \$235; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This classy and intimate beach resort extends over 14 acres. Rooms blend Caribbean colors, wicker furniture and artwork to create a homey feel; oceanfront rooms have French doors opening to balconies, while a library, games room, tennis court and water sports are all on site. Bicycles, scooters and golf carts are also available for rent.

**Dunmore Beach Club** (☎ 242-333-2200; www.dunmorebeach.com; Court Rd; r \$499; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) An unpretentious, friendly but elegant place with warmly hued and comfy rooms, and units scattered back from the beach. Options include deluxe room/ocean house (\$579/1600), and all rates include meals, served on a deck overlooking the beach. There's a handsome clubhouse with bar and lounge, complete with fireplace, and a highly rated restaurant requiring men to wear jackets and ties at dinner.

**Pink Sands** (☎ 242-333-2030; www.islandoutpost.com/pinksands; Chapel St; r \$655; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Just made for its exotic and wealthy rock-star and super-model clientele, this place has to be seen (and lunch must be eaten on the Blue Bar's patio overlooking Pink Sands Beach). Stone floors and Moroccan furnishings are used in secluded luxurious cottages, dotted throughout a tropical garden. Cottages

contain a full sound and TV system, wet bar, private patio and exotic bathrooms. Rates include full breakfast and dinner in the exotically splendid Moroccan lounge bar.

**Ocean View** (☎ 242-333-2276; fax 242-333-2459; Court Rd; r \$250-375; ☎ ☎ ☎) A beautifully yet eclectically decorated nine-bedroom mansion where all rooms have ocean views.

**Romora Bay Club** (☎ 242-333-2325; www.romorabay.com; Queen's Hwy; r per night/week \$370/2100; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This place south of town faces west, with self-contained cottages spilling down through riotously colorful gardens to wooden sun decks, a Jacuzzi and nice little pool with sea views. Rates include breakfast and dinner.

### Eating & Drinking

You won't go hungry and thirsty here!

Some super classic meals with a twist are served at the Landing (opposite), such as rack of lamb with mint sauce, pomegranates, green beans and mashed potatoes, or fragrant chicken curry with fried plantain and all the trimmings. Specialty pastas include *capellini* with lobster, chili and lime. The desserts are to die for! Mains are \$30 to \$38. It's open for dinner from Thursday to Tuesday, and lunch on Sunday; reservations are suggested.

**Arthur's Bakery** (☎ 242-333-2285; arthursbakery@yahoo.com; Crown St) You can buy fresh herb bread, scrumptious pastries, croissants and pies at this family bakery.

**Angela's Cafe** (Bay St) This café is no more than a little outdoor stall across from The Landing. The women cook fabulous crispy fritters and chicken wings (two for \$4), along with slices of moist coconut cake.

**Angela's Starfish Restaurant** (☎ 242-333-2253; Nesbit St; mains \$5-12; ☎ lunch & dinner) Bahamian food is served in this nice little place with an outside garden and very friendly owners. Popular dishes include burgers and pork, and rice and peas.

**Harbour View Lounge** (☎ 242-333-2031; Bay St; mains \$15-36; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) The cosy pink-and-mint-green restaurant has a nice casual indoor restaurant and outdoor deck; ideal for lounging and watching people stroll along the waterfront. Meals are pricey, but tasty. Try the grilled fish with spicy sauces and curried pumpkin soup.

**Ma Ruby's** (☎ 242-333-2161; Tingum Village, Queens Hwy; mains \$10-20; ☎ lunch & dinner) Serving Bahamian dishes, the outdoor/indoor café and

bar are bright and airy with upbeat decor. Ma Ruby's 'Cheeseburgers in Paradise' are featured in Jimmy Buffett's *Parrot Head Handbook*.

**Sip Sip** (☎ 242-333-3316; Pink Sands Beach; mains \$14-21; ☎ lunch) This hugely popular place has grand sea views and attracts young trendies with lots of shiny flicked hair, designer shades and golf carts with go-faster stripes. The lime green house is easy to spot, and serves drinks, salads and burgers.

**Pink Sand's Blue Bar** (☎ 242-333-2030; Chapel St; mains \$20-30; ☎ lunch & dinner) A must for lunch, overlooking Pink Sands Beach. À la carte lunches for all-comers, with chicken tikka, spring rolls, jerked chicken Caesar salad and super grilled-fish burgers. The fresh-fruit cocktails are luscious and unmissable, as is the view from the patio.

**Charlie's Bar** (Dunmore St; mains \$8-14; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This friendly bar is quite elegant, serves bar meals and a great selection of rums.

**Willie's Tavern** (☎ 242-333-2121; Dunmore St) Another popular, down-to-earth bar with a lofty ceiling festooned with fishing nets. It has a pool table and sports on TV.

A number of grocery stores include **Johnson Grocery** (☎ 242-333-2279; Dunmore St); **Patricie's Fruits & Vegetables Food Store** (☎ 242-333-2289; Pitt St), just north of the village center; **Sawyer's Food Store** (☎ 242-333-2356; Dunmore St); **Piggy Wigly Store** (☎ 242-333-2120; King St); **Pineapple Fruit 'n' Veg** (☎ 242-333-2454; Bay St); and **Sybil's Bakery** (cnr Duke & Dunmore Sts). **Harry O's**, a stall north on Bay St, serves all manner of burgers and fried chicken.

### Entertainment

**Vic Hum Club** (☎ 242-333-2161; Barrack & Munnings Sts; ☎ 11am-late) This funky and sometimes fiery locale has a fine collection of rums, a checkered court that doubles as a dance floor, busy pool table and live reggae music from performers like Maxi Priest or the bar's own Paddy 'Big Bird' Lewis. Most importantly the world's largest coconut sits behind the bar. The place can get rowdy, fights often break out, and the owner has a running battle with locals who don't like the noise. Here's a promise, you won't suffer from ennui here.

Then there's **Gusty's Seafood Dining Deck & Club**, at the north end of town, which claims to be Jimmy Buffett's original 'Margaritaville' and where the musician has been known to

jam. Nearby, **Garfield's Hill Top Game Room** has video-game machines.

The bar at Pink Sands (p180) offers upscale ambience and some grand people-watching opportunities (count the number of air kisses in one evening). There's riffs off the Island Records label on the sound system (Mr Blackwell of Island Records is the owner of this place).

The Harbour View Lounge (p181) has live music and a dance club on weekends.

## Shopping

There's a waterfront straw market facing Sugar Mill Gifts. You can buy newspapers, batteries and Cuban cigars at **Tropical Treasures** on the waterfront. And **Sanya's Music Spot** sells tapes and CDs of island music.

**Princess St Gallery** (☎ 242-333-2788; Princess St) Local artists are represented here, along with Bahamian star-dauber Eddie Minnis. Works include original oils, acrylics and prints, hand-colored maps, antique prints and driftwood paintings.

**Kevin Cooper** (☎ 242-334-2478) A local man and modest artist who really appreciates the glorious colors of his surroundings, Kevin is one of a few artists selling their affordable wares near the ferry dock (outside The Landing).

**Miss Mae's Fine Things** (Dunmore St) You wouldn't guess from the name or the flowered sign, but this store sells sophisticated designer resort wear; lots of cream linen and light cotton clothes.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Most flights arrive at **North Eleuthera International Airport** (ELI; ☎ 242-335-1242), located in North Eleuthera, at the top end of the mainland, or at **Governor's Harbour Airport** (☎ 242-332-2321), halfway down the island. Some also fly to **Rock Sound Airport** (☎ 242-334-2177) down south.

For international flights to the Bahamas and Eleuthera please refer to p288.

These airlines fly between the Bahamian islands and Eleuthera:

**Abaco Air** (☎ 242-367-2266; www.abacoaviationcentre.com/abacoair) Hub Marsh Harbour, Abaco.

**Bahamasair** (UP; ☎ 242-377-5505; www.bahamasair.com) Hubs Nassau & Freeport.

**Cherokee Air** (☎ 242-367-3450; www.cherokeear.com) Hubs Marsh Harbour, Abaco.

**Major's Air Services** (☎ 242-352-5778; www.thebahamasguide.com/majorair) Hubs Grand Bahama and Eleuthera.

**Southern Air** (Nassau ☎ 242-377-2014; www.southernaircharter.com) Hub Nassau.

Quoted fares are one-way.

Route	Price	Frequency
Governor's Harbour—Freeport, Grand Bahama	\$135	2 weekly
Governor's Harbour—Nassau	\$70	3 daily
Governor's Harbour—North Eleuthera	\$30	3 daily
North Eleuthera—Freeport, Grand Bahama	\$135	2 weekly
North Eleuthera—Marsh Harbour, Abaco	\$90	once daily
North Eleuthera—Nassau	\$70	3 daily
Rock Sound—Nassau	\$70	2 daily

### BOAT

Also see p80 for daily boat excursions to Eleuthera and Harbour Island from Nassau.

### Ferry

**Bahamas Ferries** (☎ 242-323-2166, 242-322-8185; www.bahamasferries.com; Potters Cay, Nassau) offers a daily fast luxury passenger catamaran, the *Bo Hengy*, from Nassau to Harbour Island, North Eleuthera and Spanish Wells (\$128 return). The ferry leaves Nassau at 8am and there's an extra sailing on Fridays at 1:30pm. The trip takes two hours each way. Daily excursions from Nassau to Harbour Island are also offered, which include tours and a grand picnic lunch at Pink Sands Beach.

### Mail Boat

These leave from Potter's Cay dock in Nassau; please call the **Dockmaster's Office** (☎ 242-393-1064) for further details on these schedules. One-way fares are from \$30.

**Eleuthera Express** Departs Nassau for Governor's Harbour and Spanish Wells on Monday and Thursday.

**MV Bahamas Daybreak III** Departs Nassau for Rock Sound, South Eleuthera, on Monday, and the Bluff and Harbour Island on Thursday.

**MV Current Pride** Departs Nassau for Current, Lower Bogue, Upper Bogue and Hatchet Bay every Thursday.

### Marinas

**Valentine's Resort & Marina** (☎ 242-333-2142; VHF Channel 16; info@valentinesresort.com; Bay St, Eleuthera) Offers transient/long-term dockage and has all facilities.

**Harbour Island Marina** (☎ 242-333-2427; VHF Channel 16; www.harbourislandmarina.com; Queen's Hwy, Eleuthera) Has 35 slips and offers transient/long-term dockage. It's south of town.

## Getting Around

This information is solely for Harbour Island.

Flights arrive at **North Eleuthera International Airport** (☎ 242-335-1242), at the top end of the mainland. Taxis from the airport to the dock are \$4 per person.

The dock for ferries to Harbour Island is 2 miles east of North Eleuthera International Airport.

Water taxis also operate from North Eleuthera to the ferry dock, Harbour Island (\$5 one way).

**Briland Rentals** (☎ 242-333-2342; Bay St) rents bikes from \$20 per day.

Everyone walks or uses a bicycle or golf cart if staying awhile. You can rent carts from taxi drivers and rental agencies who are based at the dock for \$40 to \$50 per day. Try **Dunmore Rentals** (☎ 242-332-3372; Bay St) or **Red Apple Rentals** (☎ /fax 242-333-2750; Queen's Hwy), which are located south of the center.

On Harbour Island taxis are slightly pricier than elsewhere in Eleuthera.

**Big M Taxi Service** (☎ 242-333-2285)

**Percival Johnson** (☎ 242-333-2174; Taxi 3)

**Reggie & Jena's Taxi** (☎ 242-333-2116)

## SPANISH WELLS

### pop 1631

The first thing that may unnerve you when heading for Spanish Wells on the early morning ferry is that the younger men getting on the boat may be swaying a little under an alcoholic cloud. The second thing that you may notice is that your smiles and 'good day' wishes are deliberately ignored by fellow passengers and the ferry operators. Mainland Bahamians will warn you that the islanders here do not want tourism on their island, and may not give you much of a welcome. It is unfair to say that all islanders here will react this way, but do be prepared for some frosty stares and displays of passive hostility. It may well even suit you if you want a quiet holiday!

St Georges Island only lies 1 mile offshore from Gene's Bay. The village of Spanish Wells dominates the island and dates back to the days of the Eleutheran Adventurers.

The deeply religious and mainly white population follows an alcohol-free, ordered and reticent lifestyle. Generations of isolation have concentrated the gene pool, reflected in traits much of the population shares, another slightly unnerving characteristic of this place. It seems as if half of the island is named Pinder. Many of the neat and pretty little houses are over 200 years old, and display handmade quilts for sale. Fishing and diving fans will enjoy these pristine waters and a beautiful beach rims the north shore.

Loobstering is its major trade and the source of phenomenal incomes (the locals are among the wealthiest of all Bahamians). Fishermen operate from state-of-the-art trawlers and go out as far as 250 miles for a month at a time. When the 'boys' are away the town is deathly still.

## Information

For emergencies contact the **police** (☎ 242-333-4030, 919; Main St) or **Spanish Wells Clinic** (☎ 242-333-4064; Adventurer's Ave). The **Royal Bank of Canada** (☎ 242-333-4131; Main St; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon, to 1pm Tue-Thu, to 4:30pm Fri) has an ATM. The **post office** (☎ 242-333-5254; Main St) is also central; telephone boxes can be found here.

## Sights & Activities

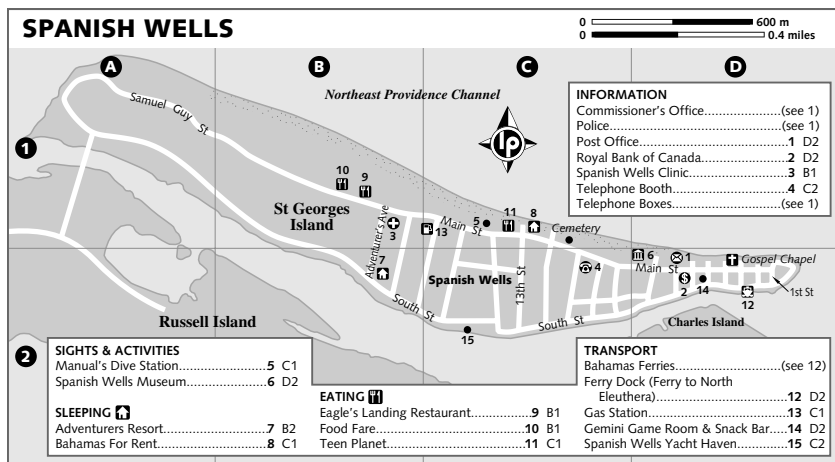
The island's history is told at **Spanish Wells Museum** (☎ 242-333-4710; Main St; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-3pm Mon-Sat), which contains a motley collection of photos and bric-a-brac. It's next to the Islander Shop (the owner will open up for you).

**Manual's Dive Station** (☎ 242-333-4495; fax 242-333-4622; Micky & Karen Pinder sign on Main St) is a hardware store that also rents out some dive equipment. It may be wise to call ahead to see if they stock your requirements, as there is not a great range of gear available.

**Spanish Wells Pilot Service** (☎ 242-333-4427; VHF Channel 16) offers fishing, snorkeling and boat rentals; prices upon application.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Adventurers Resort** (☎ 242-333-4883; mapeleaf@batelnet.bs; Adventurer's Ave; r \$80; ☎ ☎ ☎) Carpeted one- and two-bedroom motel-style rooms are pleasantly, if modestly, furnished. Some have kitchenettes, and there are eateries within a short drive or walk. This L-shaped block has two stories that surround a small green. The beach is half a mile away.



**BahamasforRent** (☎ 242-333-4080; www.bahamasvacationhomes.com; 13th St; r \$850; (P) ☒ ☒) With not even a gate twist you and the sea, and a stunning unspoiled beach, this is a pretty super option. The sliding-glass doors of this rental house let you make the most of this pretty little bay, and the modest property is clean and excellent value.

**Eagle's Landing Restaurant** (Main St; mains \$4-14; ☒ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This big hall welcomes families with cheap sandwiches and burgers. The seating area is in front of the canteen, while the rest of the hall contains table games, an amusement arcade and pool tables.

**Teen Planet** (☎ 242-333-4001; Main St; mains \$7-15; ☒ lunch & dinner) A very modern setup covers a few bases: downstairs is a café/bakery serving hot snacks such as burgers; upstairs is the theater in which you can call and book a movie at your own convenience. A great idea for getting your adolescents out of the place!

**Food Fare** (☎ 242-333-4675; Main St; ☒ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat) This well-equipped supermarket contains a pharmacy and virtually all of your edible requirements.

In Gene's Bay there's parking, a phone booth and a **duty-free liquor store** (which should be called the Last Chance Saloon!).

### Getting There & Around

For information on travel to North Eleuthera and Spanish Wells, see p182.

Government ferries run all day between Spanish Wells and the ferry dock at Gene's

Bay (\$5 per person if sharing or \$10 for a ride as a sole passenger for the five-minute journey).

You can also charter a water taxi between Harbour Island and Spanish Wells (from \$50 one way).

**Spanish Wells Yacht Haven** (☎ 242-333-4255; fax 242-333-4649; VHF Channel 16) has 40 slips and a Laundromat.

**Gemini Game Room & Snack Bar** (at Ferry Dock) rent out carts for \$9/45 per hour/day. Many only spend an hour on the island in between ferries.

### PREACHER'S CAVE

This large cave, about 2 miles east of Gene's Bay, is said to be where the Eleutheran adventurers found shelter after foundering in 1648. They made an altar here and surely prayed to be rescued. Some remnants of their belongings remain, and regular prayer meetings in the cavern keep their memories alive. The cave is fronted by a glorious beach, one of several beaches along the north coast.

### CURRENT

Current may be the 'Oldest Settlement on the Island,' and some of the friendly townsfolk claim to also be descendants of Native Americans exiled here after a massacre at Cape Cod. While fishing is their industry, some are known for their basketware. Follow the western road for 5 miles at Lower Bogue's junction, and don't miss the lovely beach on the west side of town.

The half-mile-long channel, Current Cut, separates North Eleuthera from Current Island. It is a popular dive and snorkel spot for very experienced swimmers who want to 'ride' the strong current.

**Sandcastle Apartments** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-3244; fax 242-393-0440; r \$90; (P) ☒ ☒) has two very plain beachfront cottages a quarter-mile east of town; each contains a kitchen and sleeps three people. Bicycles may be rented (\$5 per day). A small grocery store is nearby.

For information on travel to North Eleuthera and Current, see p182.

A taxi from North Eleuthera International Airport will cost \$28 one-way.

### GREGORY TOWN

This large settlement lies 25 miles north of Governor's Harbour and 5 miles south of the Glass Window. Here Eleuthera narrows down to a pencil-thin strip that separates the deep blue of the thundering Atlantic rollers from the placid, teal green shoals of the Bight of Eleuthera. A very uneven and narrow concrete bridge fills the gap on Queen's Hwy where the natural rock once arched. Do look out for other traffic, and if walking around, be aware; the cliffs are unstable and the pocked terrain is treacherous underfoot.

Gregory Town sits on a steep-sided cove, surrounded by small plots growing onions, peppers, cabbage, watermelons and other vegetables. Most famous as the center of

pineapple farming, the industry is now so atrophied that local farmers have difficulty mustering a respectable supply of their usually large and succulent fruits to display at the annual Pineapple Festival. Gregory Town's young men have turned to lobstering, where the big bucks reside.

Gauldings Cay, 4 miles north of Gregory Town, is a splendid stretch of pure-white sand, while offshore the cay's waters are home to large communities of multihued sea anemones. The Cove Eleuthera (p186) offers a daily complimentary shuttle to Gauldings Cay for its guests.

### Information

For emergencies call the **police** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-3325-5322, 919) or **Gregory Town Clinic** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5108) which is down by the harbor, along with the **post office** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5180).

**Captain 2** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5185) offers deep-sea fishing charters from \$100 for three hours, and bonefishing for \$200 for five hours.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Cocodimama Charming Resort** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-3150; www.cocodimama.com; Queen's Hwy; r \$210; (P) ☒ ☒) Some Italian style has definitely crept into the decor of these pretty fab beachside villas. Inside the brightly colored exteriors are rooms decorated with cool Italian tiles and rich Indonesian fur-

### JUICY & SWEET: ELEUTHERA'S PINEAPPLE FESTIVAL

Throughout the 18th century, pineapple production blossomed in Eleuthera, and a local variety – the Eleutheran sugar loaf – earned recognition for Eleuthera and Gregory Town as an especially succulent fruit. In 1900 production peaked, and 7 million pineapples were exported, many heading for London's Convent Garden Market. Alas, they were eventually supplanted by fruit from Cuba, Jamaica and Hawaii. Eleuthera's pineapple farmers are now a dying breed. Some pineapples are still grown here, but raising pineapples is labor-intensive, requiring backbreaking work that has little appeal for young people.

In early June the town hosts the three-day Annual Eleuthera Pineapple Festival, highlighted by the Miss Teen Pineapple Princess Pageant and the Pineathlon, which is a swim-bike-run competition. There's also the Pineapple-on-a-Rope Eating Contest in which participants with hands tied behind their backs attempt to nibble a dangling pineapple; a basketball shootout; a kayak race; and the Saturday-night Junkanoo Rush, a street party offering music, dancing and some easy fun. You can find nonalcoholic pineapple smoothies and locally made pineapple rum at the Corner Bar, and the most wonderful juicy and fragrant pineapple tarts at **Thompson's Bakery** (☎ 242-335-5053; Johnson St; ☒ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat).

**Bahamas Ministry of Tourism** (☎ 242-332-2142; fax 242-332-2480; www.bahamas.com; Governor's Harbour) is the place to go for more detailed information on this fine event.

niture. The attention to detail is excellent, and the off-season rates (\$170) are particularly realistic. These lodgings and the small beach on which they sit are modest and perfect for a little getaway.

**Cove Eleuthera** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5142, US ☎ 800-552-5960; www.thecoveeleuthera.com; Queen's Hwy; r standard/deluxe \$195/345; P ☒ ☕ ☺) Just north of Gregory Town, this place is aptly named, with views over two coves and its own beach where the snorkeling is splendid (snorkel gear is provided), all fringed by 28 acres of vegetation. Each room is furnished in white rattan, with tile floors and private porch or deck. Facilities include kayaks, tennis courts and swinging hammocks. The Golden Grouper lounge and dining room serves very good Bahamian dishes and some choice fried chicken. A Saturday night buffet is very popular and is often accompanied by live music.

**Elvina's Bar & Restaurant** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5032; Queen's Hwy) is a surfer-dude bar when they're in town, as well as being a quiet local bar with a pool table and occasional live music.

**Thompson's Bakery** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5053; Johnson St; ☕ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) A reminder; don't forget the scrumptious pineapple tarts at this bakery.

## Shopping

**Island Made Gift Shop** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-335-5369; Queen's Hwy) Worth a stop, this shop sells imaginative artworks, including island scenes painted on shells and driftwood, jewelry made from shells and glass, and some gorgeous handmade quilts using Bahamian batik prints.

## Getting There & Around

Gregory Town is midway between the North Eleuthera and Governor's Harbour Airports.

**Albury's Taxi** (☎ 242-335-1370) and **Wendell's Taxi Service** (☎ 242-333-0165) both offer guided island tours.

## GREGORY TOWN TO GOVERNOR'S HARBOUR

In the 25 miles between Gregory Town and Governor's Harbour – Eleuthera's main settlement – there are only two towns of any size: **Alice Town** (Map pp176-7), 7 miles south of Gregory Town and just south

of Hatchet Bay, the former center of an Angus cattle enterprise; and **James Cistern** (Map pp176-7), a picturesque albeit wind-battered waterfront hamlet 8 miles further south. The Governor's Harbour Airport is 3 miles south of James Cistern.

Waves kicked up by the various hurricanes have ravaged the road between Gregory Town and Governor's Harbour and you should look out for potholes here.

The Hatchet Bay Fest in Alice Town each August features dinghy races and partying.

## Sights & Activities

Calling all surfers! **Surfer's Beach**, about 2 miles south of Gregory Town has some killer breaks rolling in from the Atlantic that you many want to ride. This 2-mile-long, lonesome, sugary beach lives up to its name, especially with southwest winds at low tide. The beach is reached by a horrendously potholed and rocky track from Queen's Hwy.

The half-mile-long **Hatchet Bay Cave** (turn south onto the dirt road near the three old silos) contains several chambers, which bear charcoal signatures dating back to the mid-19th century. Some harmless leaf-nosed bats reside within, as do stalactites and stalagmites – no touching! Bring a flashlight and rubber-soled shoes, as the going is slippery. There's a ladder to climb at one stage. You can hire a guide locally.

A bone-jarring dirt road leads north from James Cistern to **James Cistern Beach**, where waves sometimes reach 10ft with a brisk south wind. There's a shipwreck offshore, which is a good spot for snorkeling when the water is calm.

The couple who operate Surfer's Haven (below) also run **Bahamas Out-island Adventures**, offering kayaking and snorkeling excursions for \$99. They offer overnight camping trips (adult/child \$299/150). Trips can run from Nassau (for an additional \$100/50 per adult/child).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Surfer's Haven** (☎ 242-333-3282; www.bahamasadventures.com; d/upstairs apt \$50/75; P ☒ ☕) This pretty blue building has sea views and is only a five-minute walk away from Surfer's Beach. Guestrooms here are cosy, clean and comfortable and all have access to the large open-air deck overlooking the tropical foliage and ocean. Rooms share a bathroom, while the

## NORTH ELEUTHERA REGATTA

This brilliant three-day event, held every October, is one of the granddaddies of Bahamian sailing events and the highlight of the Eleutheran year, when islanders with their locally-built sloops descend for three days of racing. Ashore the action is just as lively, with Bahamian cooks and bands whipping up a storm, while everyone dances and parties hard. Special air and boat charters depart from Nassau. Contact the **Ministry of Youth & Culture** (☎ 242-322-3140) for more information.

apartment is self-contained with a kitchenette. Great for families.

**Rainbow Inn** (☎ /fax 242-335-0294; www.rainbowinn.com; Queen's Hwy; r \$110; P ☒ ☕ ☺) Attractive one-, two-, or three-bedroom octagonal villas have kitchenettes, ceiling fans and private decks facing onto a beach. The peaceful little resort has tennis courts, a small saltwater lap pool, snorkeling, fishing, and bicycles for hire. It also has an excellent restaurant, **Dolcevita Restaurant & Lounge** (☕ breakfast, lunch & dinner Tue-Sat), furnished with varnished, rough-hewn tables and captain's chairs, and serving some pretty fab Bahamian food with a definite Italian slant. 'Dr Seabreeze' plays many Wednesday and Friday nights.

**Juneek's Savoury Snacks** (James Cistern) Craving pizza? Try this place, where outdoor clay ovens are still used. It also sells meat patties and ice cream.

For groceries, stop at **Big Rock General Store** 2 miles west of James Cistern.

## GOVERNOR'S HARBOUR

This sleepy and amiable island capital surrounds an attractive broad harbor that is as still as the day is long. People live quietly here, until the Friday and Saturday Fish Fry kick off and the *goombay* beats drift across the harbor. The smell of frying chicken entices the populace along for a beer and a bite, and the stars shine overhead in the clear sky.

There are many faded remnants of past glory days here. During the 19th century, the harbor was filled with schooners shipping pineapples and citrus fruits to New York and New England, or unloading fineries for the wealthy merchants and their wives. The merchants' well-preserved old

white clapboard houses, many with ornate gingerbread gable trims, nestle on the hillside east of Queen's Hwy, where royal poincianas blaze vermilion in spring.

## Information

**Bahamas Tourist Office** (☎ 242-332-2122; fax 242-332-2480; Queen's Hwy)

**BaTelCo** (☎ 242-332-2476; Haynes Ave) Atop the hill. There's a telephone booth here and another on Queen's Hwy.

**First Caribbean International Bank** (☎ 242-332-2300; Queen's Hwy; ☎ 9:30am-3pm Mon-Thu, to 4pm Fri) Has an ATM.

**Government Medical Clinic** (☎ 242-332-2774; Haynes Ave; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri)

**Police station** (☎ 242-332-2111; Queen's Hwy)

**Post office** (☎ 242-332-2060; Haynes Ave; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri)

## Sights & Activities

A stroll along the harborfront passes **St Patrick's Anglican Church** and cemetery; the historic, pink **Commissioner's Office**; and the lovely old **Haynes Library** (1897).

There are some beautiful little beaches over the hill on the Atlantic shore, where the azure seas lazily drift onto pink sands and where you can easily while away a day or three...

**Clearwater Dive Shop** (☎ 242-332-2146; fax 242-332-2546) in the town center offers dive and snorkel trips.

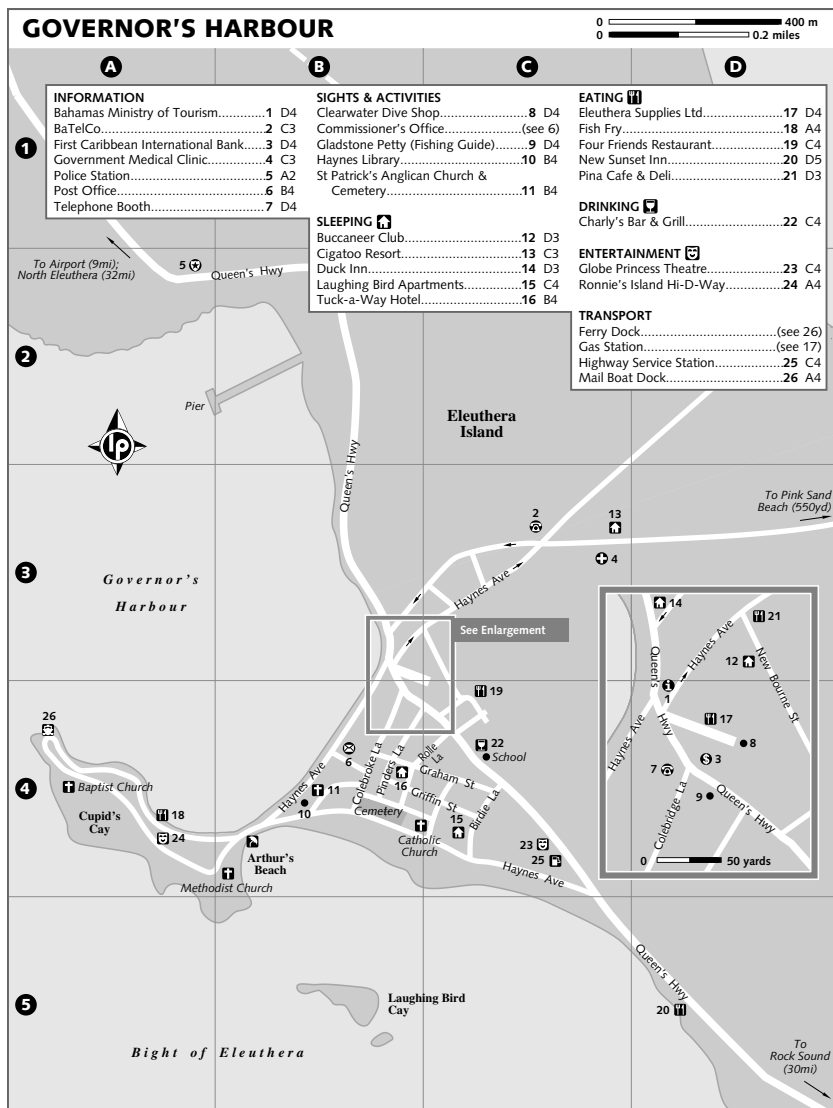
**Gladstone Petty** (☎ 242-332-2280; Queen's Hwy) will take you reef- and bonefishing. He has an office downtown.

## Sleeping

**Laughing Bird Apartments** (☎ 242-332-2012; ddavies@batelnet.bs; Birdie Lane; r \$80; P ☒ ☕) These cozy one-bedroom studio apartments sit amid grounds full of hibiscus and palms. Each has a lounge-cum-bedroom and separate kitchen. Some have king-size beds. The great plus here is that the gardens face onto the sea and Town Beach which lie just over the road. Lie in a hammock and listen to the wind and wild birds.

**Tuck-a-Way Hotel** (☎ 242-322-2005; fax 242-322-2775; Graham St & Rolle Lane; r \$80; P ☒ ☕) These small, dark rooms and units benefit from their location in town, and are within walking distance of Town Beach. All come with TV, some with kitchenettes.

**Duck Inn** (☎ 242-332-2608; www.theduckinn.com; Queen's Hwy; d \$110; P ☒ ☕) A 200-year-old



colonial complex set amid an orchid garden, incorporating the comfortable and fully equipped Hunnie Pot, Flora and Cupid's Cottage. Worth the trip alone, Cupid's Cottage overlooks the serene and beautiful bay waters. All three homely cottages are a delight, decked with orchids, personal knick-knacks and paperbacks, while the

kitchens have all mod cons. An excellent liquor store around the corner can supply you with most of your requirements, which should be consumed on the veranda at sunset. Cheers!

**Cigatoo Resort** (☎ 242-332-3060; www.choicehotels.com; Haynes Ave; r \$100; P ☒ ☕ ☺ ☻) Sitting astride the top of a hill that overlooks the

sea, this small hotel is clean and comfortable. The main building contains some lovely local art and a courtyard surrounds the pool. There's also an Italian restaurant, bar, tearoom and tennis courts.

**Buccaneer Club** (☎ 242-332-2000; fax 242-332-2888; New Bourne St; r \$110; P ☒ ☕ ☺ ☻) On the north side of town, this club has small yet tastefully appointed rooms with sliding glass doors opening onto a balcony. There's a small pool and a well-tended lawn.

### Eating & Drinking

**New Sunset Inn** (☎ 242-332-2487; Queen's Hwy; mains \$10-18; lunch & dinner) This friendly seaside bar and restaurant serves some of the best food in town. The walls are festooned with the works of local artists, and a tucked-away bar has a widescreen TV, great rums and friendly patrons.

**Pina Cafe & Deli** (☎ 242-332-3350; New Bourne St; mains \$6-17; ☕ breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This is a cutie; an enticing little orange building with a grand outdoor deck, pretty garden and a range of homemade goodies. Breakfasts (from \$3) and pizzas (from \$6) are cheap. Daily freshly baked cookies and homemade jams will also help make you happy.

**Four Friends Restaurant** (☎ 242-332-3488; off Haynes St; mains \$12-23; ☕ dinner Mon-Sat) Satisfy your hunger with a grand meal of mixed Bahamian and continental dishes such as rack of lamb. Monday, Wednesday and Friday buffets are very popular; book ahead.

**Charly's Bar & Grill** (☎ 242-332-3477; Queen's Hwy; mains \$7-16; ☕ lunch & dinner) Watch for the blue light outside; when it's on, the bar is ready to open. It may not look much from the outside, but you know what they say about looks.

**Eleuthera Supplies Limited** (☎ 242-332-2728; ☕ 6:30am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 2:30pm Sun) The local supermarket.

**Fish Fry** (Cupid's Cay) On the dockside; starts at 7pm Friday and Saturday, but the music kicks off a little earlier.

### Entertainment

**Ronnie's Island Hi-D-Way** (Cupid's Cay) A lively bar with a pool table and wide-screen TV, plus dancing on Friday and Saturday; don't even think of arriving before 10pm.

**Globe Princess Theatre** (☎ 242-332-2735; Queen's Hwy; admission adult/child \$.50/\$0.3) This town-center cinema shows movies at 8.15pm nightly, except Thursday.

### BEACH HEDONISM

*The Elusive Beaches of Eleuthera* by Geoff & Vicky Wells is a little handbook that these two self-described 'beachologists' have compiled with sincere devotion to the art of beach-bumming. Every beach on the island is awarded scores for ease of access, privacy, swimming, diving and snorkeling, and shelling. Directions and a brief description of each of these little bits of paradise accompany the scorecards. Beg, borrow or steal one of these books when you arrive, or contact these clever people yourself; email Geoff and Vicky at elusive@batelnet.bs.

### Getting There & Around

Please refer to p182 for flight, ferry and mailbox information to Eleuthera and Governor's Harbour.

Governor's Harbour is served by the Governor's Harbour Airport, about 10 miles north of town. Taxis from the airport to town are \$25 one-way for two people.

Many enterprising individuals act both as taxi drivers and car-rental agencies. This means that it is often easier to book a car rental from the airport with a taxi ride to the airport when you depart. Car hire costs from around \$70 per day.

To hire a taxi or rent a car, call:

**Edgar Gardiner** (☎ 242-332-266)

**Tommy Pinder** (☎ 242-332-2568)

**Winsett Cooper** (☎ 242-332-1592)

### NORTH & SOUTH PALMETTO POINT

There are some happy retirees living 4 miles south of Governor's Harbour. North Palmetto Point enjoys a stunning 5-mile-long blushing pink beach and South Palmetto Point sits on a smaller beach and rocky shore with good bonefishing and snorkeling. There's a post office, clinic, pharmacy, grocery store and gas station. Fish stalls line South Palmetto beach, where there's a nice, little beach bar.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Tropical Dreams Motel Resort** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-1632; www.bahamasvg.com/tropicaldream.html; Dry Hill Rd, North Palmetto Point; d per night/week \$80/\$40; P ☒ ☕ ☺ ☻) These modern, clean and comfortable units with TV and kitchen facilities are a good mile from the beach, but are neat and a great budget option.



**Palmetto Shores Vacation Villas** (Map pp176-7; ☎/fax 242-332-1305; psvacvillas@batelnet.bs; South Palmetto Point; r \$110; P ☒ ☒ ☒) These modest and pleasant apartments are perfect for couples and have verandas that look out over a private beach. Water sport and car rentals can be arranged. This property was for sale at the time of research.

**Unique Village Resort Hotel** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-1830; www.uniquevillage.com; North Palmetto Point; r \$130; P ☒ ☒ ☒) This small hotel offers attractively furnished rooms, two two-bedroom villas, and a one-bedroom apartment, all with ocean view, full kitchen, satellite TV and radio. There's a pleasant restaurant and bar with panoramic windows and an outside deck, plus grassy lawns with hammocks slung between palm trees. Nonguests are welcome to enjoy omelettes and fruit plates for breakfast, and Bahamian dishes (mains \$7-25), plus steaks and fresh seafood at lunch and dinner.

**Palmetto Point Lighthouse** (Map pp176-7; US ☎/fax 561-395-0483; info@pinksandbeach.net) You can even rent a lighthouse! This fully-appointed three-bedroom home with king-size bed in the master bedroom also has a sliding glass door leading to a patio with a whirlpool. It rents for \$1400 weekly in the low season, and \$1680 in the high-season for four people.

**Mate & Jenny's Restaurant & Bar** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-1504; South Palmetto Point; mains \$8-18; ☒ lunch & dinner) This place has a lot of character and cooks up some yummy pizzas as well as broiled fish and other Bahamian dishes. A jukebox and pool table add to the fun, as do their killer cocktails.

**Tippy's Bar & Beach Restaurant** (Map pp176-7; ☎ 242-332-3331; Banks Rd, North Palmetto Point Beach; mains \$7-25; ☒ lunch & dinner) With a prime spot on this gorgeous beach, Tippy's offers up mouth-watering roasted vegetable ravioli and all manner of hot juicy pizzas; perfect after a hard day of lying in the sun.

**Meryl's Bakery** (North Palmetto) Buy bread and baked goods here. It's opposite the post office and police station.

## Getting Around

**Asa Bethel** (☎/fax 242-332-1305; Palmetto Shores Vacation Villas, South Palmetto Point) rents cars, scooters as well as boats, as does **Arthur's Taxi** (☎ 242-332-2006).

For information on travel to North and South Palmetto Point, see p182.

## SOUTH ELEUTHERA

Heading along the Queen's Hwy, the accumulated effects of a series of hurricanes and a downturn in tourism on this part of the island are sadly all too apparent. Nevertheless, the beaches down here are superb and remnants of days gone by will catch your eye and pique your curiosity.

### WINDERMERE ISLAND

The near-destitute hamlet of **Savannah Sound** (Map pp176-7), which dates back to the 18th century, enjoys roaming goats and chickens among its tumbledown shacks and collapsed colonial-era buildings. The sound actually is good for bonefishing and nearby is **Ten Bay Beach** (Map pp176-7), another beauty that just calls out to you to abandon your life and live here for ever, padding along the soft sand and breathing in that clean sea air...

Secluded, broom-thin Windermere Island boasts a pristine blush-hued beach running the 4-mile Atlantic shore. It is speckled with snazzy homes reflecting its long-standing status as one of the most exclusive hideaways for the rich and famous. The chic Windermere Island Club, once the Bahamas' most fashionable resort, was a favorite of Lord Mountbatten and, later, Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Although the club is closed, the beach is still another made for fun and dreams.

The island is reached by a bridge straddling Savannah Sound (the turnoff from Queen's Hwy is 2 miles south of the village).

### ROCK SOUND

The road south from Savannah Sound passes **Tarpum Bay**, a former pineapple-trading

port, now a desolate place comprising some quaint old stone buildings, including **St Columbus Church**, and beaten-up clapboard houses. Bonefishing is good in Half Sound, south of Winding Bay.

Rock Sound is a small, charming village from where the original townsfolk set out on their prime occupation – wrecking. Hence the settlement's early name, Wreck Sound.

There are several historic buildings of note, plus the **Ocean Hole** (see boxed text, opposite) and, on the bay shore south of town, the **Blow Hole**, which erupts like a geyser during strong swells. Be sure to secure your car and belongings while you're out of sight having a look at these natural wonders.

Rock Sound famously comes alive each summer during the All-Eleuthera Regatta, one of the most vibrant let-your-hair-down affairs in the Bahamas, and the setting for all-out dinghy races. There are few beaches hereabouts.

Junkanoo traditionally begins at 5am on Boxing Day (December 26), when groups from the various settlements come together at Rock Sound.

For emergencies contact the **police** (☎ 242-334-2244) or try the **Government Medical Clinic** (☎ 242-334-2226; ☒ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri). **Scotiabank** (☎ 242-334-2620; Queen's Hwy; ☒ 9am-3pm Mon-Thu, to 4pm Fri) can help with the dollars!

A little north of Tarpum Bay, **Ingrahams Beach Inn** (☎ 242-334-4066; fax 242-334-2257; Tarpum Bay; r/apt \$80/120; P ☒ ☒) is a two-story building overlooking the sea and a lovely little beach. A gym, game room and dining room add to the facilities of this large and very well-maintained place. The rooms are spotless, simple but modern, and very good value. Car and bicycle rentals, and deep-sea fishing can also be arranged.

The most popular restaurant in Rock Sound is **Sammy's Place** (☎ 242-334-2121; P ☒ ☒), which also has four rooms with satellite TV (\$80). Everyone packs in for the

fritters and burgers. Cheese omelettes are grand for breakfast.

Take your pick among several down-home eateries serving Bahamian fare. Try the **Palm Garden Restaurant & Bar** or **Down Home Pizza**, and the **Haven Bakery** (☎ 242-334-2155). The **Marketplace Supermarket** is north of town, near the Shell gas station.

For information on travel to Eleuthera and Rock Sound, see p182.

Rock Sound Airport is 3 miles north of town. A taxi from the airport to Rock Sound settlement costs \$14.

### COTTON BAY TO ELEUTHERA POINT

Mile-long Cotton Bay, 6 miles south of Rock Sound, is favored by wealthy expats who own fancy villas above the shore. The homes are part of the Cotton Bay Club. Once beloved by hobnobbing socialites, the club has a troubled history and closed in 1995.

South of Cotton Bay, the island flares out in a lopsided, inverted 'T'. At Wemyss Bight, Queen's Hwy splits. One branch leads north 10 miles to Cape Eleuthera via Davis Harbour and the settlement of **Deep Creek**; the shore is lined by mangrove swamps. The beach here is lovely, and you can get a grand pizza at **D & N Pizza** in Davis Harbour.

The other branch heads towards **Bannerman** town, where a vastly deteriorating road and dirt track (for 4WD only) leads south to exquisite **Lighthouse Bay**. Offshore reefs and two small islands are good for snorkeling and scuba diving, but beware strong currents. A short trail leads up to the **East Point Lighthouse**, the southernmost point of Eleuthera.

On the Atlantic side of Eleuthera Point, hidden away behind sand dunes, is a dazzlingly beautiful 6 miles of rosy-pink beach, **Lighthouse Beach**, reckoned to be the best in Eleuthera. It really doesn't get much better than this – bring snorkel gear, a picnic and your soulmate.

#### OCEAN HOLE

This crater-like curiosity, along Fish Rd on the south edge of Rock Sound, is said to be bottomless. No one knows, but it is a 100yd-wide tidal blue hole populated by saltwater fish that move to and fro through subterranean sea tunnels. Throw some bread in and a surge of fish will head for the surface, taking great delight in a quick feed. Set off a rocky edge, it is also possible to descend some steps and hop in for a cool swim.

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