

Providenciales Turks & Caicos

The best things to see



© backpackandsnorkel.com

Providenciales Travel Guide

Content

[1. Overview of Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands](#)

[2.1 Disclaimer](#)

[2.2 Copyright](#)

[3. General Information](#)

[3.1 History of the Turks and Caicos Islands](#)

[3.2 Providenciales Weather - Providenciales Weather by Month](#)

[3.2.1 The best time to visit Providenciales](#)

[3.3 How to get to Providenciales?](#)

[3.4 VISA entry requirements for Turks and Caicos](#)

[3.5 Getting around in Providenciales](#)

[3.5.1 Providenciales Car Rental](#)

[3.5.2 Driving a car in Providenciales](#)

[3.6 Is tap water safe to drink in Providenciales?](#)

[3.7 Are credit cards accepted in Providenciales?](#)

[3.8 Will my cell phone work in Providenciales?](#)

[4. The best beaches in Providenciales](#)

[4.1 Taylor Bay Beach](#)

[4.2 Sapodilla Bay Beach](#)

[4.3 Hidden Beach near Turtle Tail Beach](#)

[4.4 Turtle Tail Beach](#)

[4.5 Long Bay Beach](#)

[4.6 Leeward Beach](#)

[4.7 Grace Bay Beach](#)

[4.8 Coral Gardens - Bight Reef](#)

[4.9 Smith's Reef](#)

Providenciales Travel Guide

Content

[5. The best snorkeling in Providenciales](#)

[5.1 Snorkeling at Sapodilla Bay Beach](#)

[5.2 Snorkeling at Coral Gardens - Bight Reef](#)

[5.3 Snorkeling at Smith's Reef](#)

[6. Kayaking in Providenciales](#)

[7. The best historical sites in Providenciales](#)

[7.1 Rock Carvings at Sapodilla Hill](#)

[7.2 Rock Carvings at the airport check-in hall](#)

[7.3 Cheshire Hall Plantation](#)

[8. Places to stay in Providenciales](#)

[8.1 Flamingo Villa](#)

[9. Providenciales best restaurants](#)

[9.1 Las Brisas Restaurant](#)

[9.2 Chalkies Sports Bar and Grill](#)

[9.3 Mr. Grouper's Restaurant](#)

[10. Grocery shopping in Providenciales](#)

[10.1 Sunny Foods](#)

[10.2 IGA Graceway](#)

[11. Gas stations in Providenciales](#)

Providenciales Travel Guide

Content

[12. Lakes in Providenciales and Lagoons in Providenciales](#)

[12.1 Chalk Sound](#)

[12.2 Turtle Lake, Flamingo Lake, Juba Point Salina and Pidgeon Pond](#)

[13. Closing Remarks](#)

Providenciales Travel Guide

1. Overview of Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands

Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands is a beach goer's paradise and its most famous beach, Grace Bay Beach, is consistently ranked among the best beaches on the planet. In 2022, TripAdvisor named it the #1 best beach in the world – again. Besides Grace Bay beach, Providenciales has many other beaches and some of them are absolutely spectacular too. So spectacular, as a matter of fact, that we actually preferred them over Grace Bay beach.



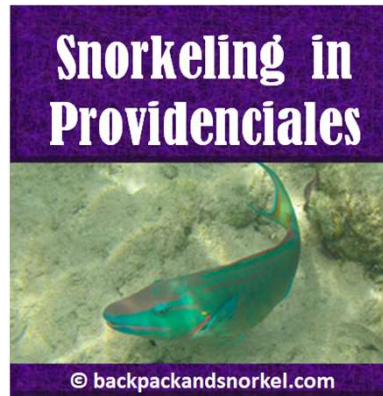
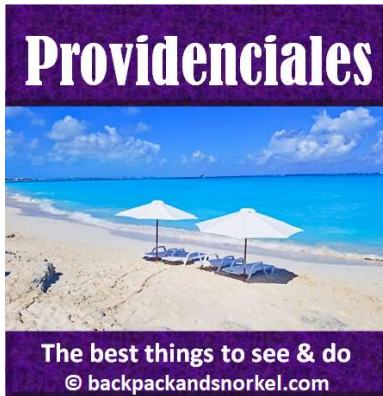
In this Providenciales Purple Guide, we will tell you why and will help you find your perfect beach(es) and other things to see and do. To help you find out what best fits you, we have added lots of photos and links to additional reviews.

Join us to explore the best things to see and do in Providenciales. This is not an in-depth Providenciales guide. You can buy those from the big travel guide companies. Our goal is to help you Make Memorable Moments on a relaxing Providenciales trip and help you build the perfect itinerary for your trip.

Please also check out the other exciting destinations and travel guides on our Backpack and Snorkel [website](#).

Providenciales Travel Guide

We have made some videos about Providenciales. Please check them out.



Providenciales Travel Guide

2.1 Disclaimer

In this guide I am doing my best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and backpackandsnorkel.com cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

2.2 Copyright

This website and its content is copyright of “Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel”. All rights reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. The content on this site (including photos) may not be sold, reprinted, or used for commercial purposes without the written consent of “Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel”. You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.

Providenciales Travel Guide

3. General Information

The Turks and Caicos Islands are a British Overseas Territory. The western islands are called the Caicos Islands and they are separated from the much smaller Turks Islands by the deep Turks Island Passage which is up to 7,200ft (2.2km) deep.

The word Turks comes from the bright red cephalium (structure of wool and bristle at the growing tip of the native cap cactus, *Melocactus intortus*) which looks like the fez hat Turkish men in the Ottoman Empire used to wear.

The word Caicos comes from the native Lucayan language in which “caya hico” means “string of islands”.

Providenciales is the most populated island of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Locals and many visitors call Providenciales Island: Provo. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 58,000 Turks and Caicos residents live in Provo. The total land mass is 366 square miles (948 km²) and the highest elevation is 157ft (48m).

Annually, the Turks and Caicos Islands see roughly 1 million visitors of which $\frac{3}{4}$ come from the US and $\frac{3}{4}$ come by cruise ship to Grand Turk (see our [Grand Turk Purple Guide here](#)), which lies 75 miles (120km) to the east.

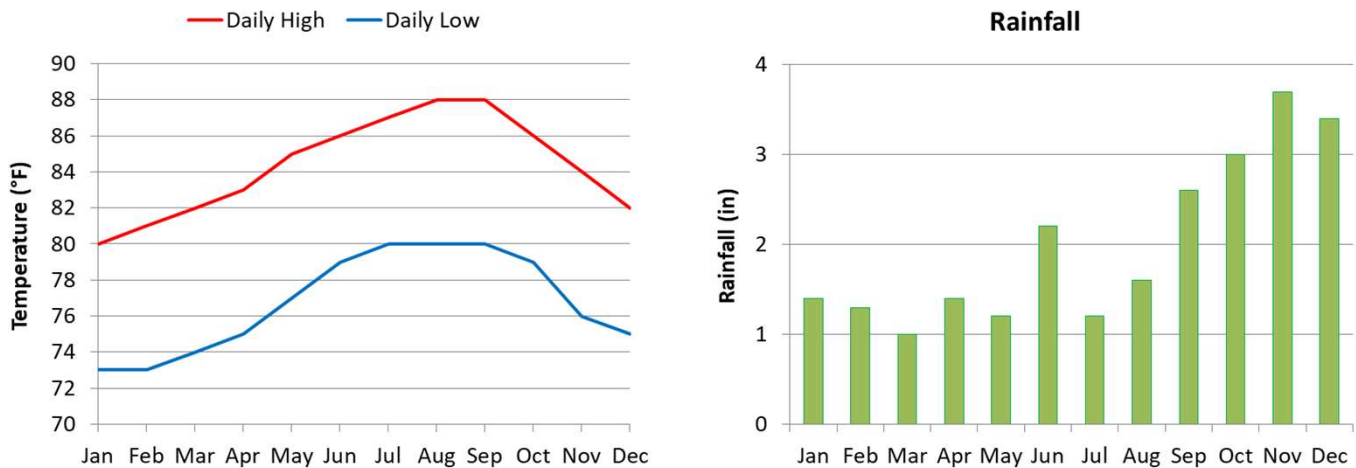
Grand Turk is much smaller than Provo and only has a population of about 5,000 people. But it is home of the capital city of the Turks and Caicos Islands: Cockburn Town.

Providenciales Travel Guide

3.2 Providenciales Weather - Providenciales Weather by Month

The Turks and Caicos Islands have relatively consistent temperatures throughout the year with summer temperatures rarely exceeding 91°F (33°C) and winter nightly temperatures rarely falling below 64°F (18°C). Compared to other Caribbean islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands are drier, and only rarely suffer hurricane hits.

The weather that you can expect during your Turks and Caicos vacation is shown here:



3.2.1 The best time to visit Providenciales

The high season is from mid-December through April. December is at the end of the rainy season and January through April have some of the lowest precipitation.

The low season coincides with the Atlantic hurricane season and goes from June through November. The While Grand Turk still sees cruise ships during that time, Providenciales is much quieter and some tourist businesses even shut down. As mentioned earlier, the chance of Providenciales taking a direct hurricane hit is very low, but there can still be significant rainfall at time from passing tropical storms or hurricanes.

Providenciales Travel Guide

3.5.2 Driving a car in Providenciales

As in much of the Caribbean, cars in Turks and Caicos drive on the left hand side of the road like they do in e.g. England. Providenciales has no traffic lights, but many roundabouts.

The way roundabouts work is that cars in the roundabout have the right of way. So, be careful when you enter one.

Cars on the Leeward Highway may enter the roundabouts way above the 40 mph (64 km/h) speed limit, so be careful when you come from one of the side streets and yield to those cars.

The speed limit on the Leeward Highway and most rural roads is 40 mph (64 km/h). In residential areas, the speed limit is typically 20 mph (32 km/h). Speed limit signs are frequent and easily visible.

You will find that the speed limit is almost never obeyed. That is probably, because Turks and Caicos police do not appear to enforce the speed limit.

Most cars have license plates, but quite a few cars do not. Police do not appear to crack down on these unlicensed cars, and we have observed that several had poor driving habits. Our advice is to stay away from those cars and use extra caution as I doubt that you will get any positive resolution in case of an accident.

There are quite a few gas stations on Providenciales and the vast majority is on the Leeward Highway. Gas costs about 50% more than in the eastern US and a gas station attendant will pump the gas for you. Gas is measured in gallons.

Most gas stations have similar prices, but we found that Grant's Gas Station ([map](#)) had the lowest price when we were there.

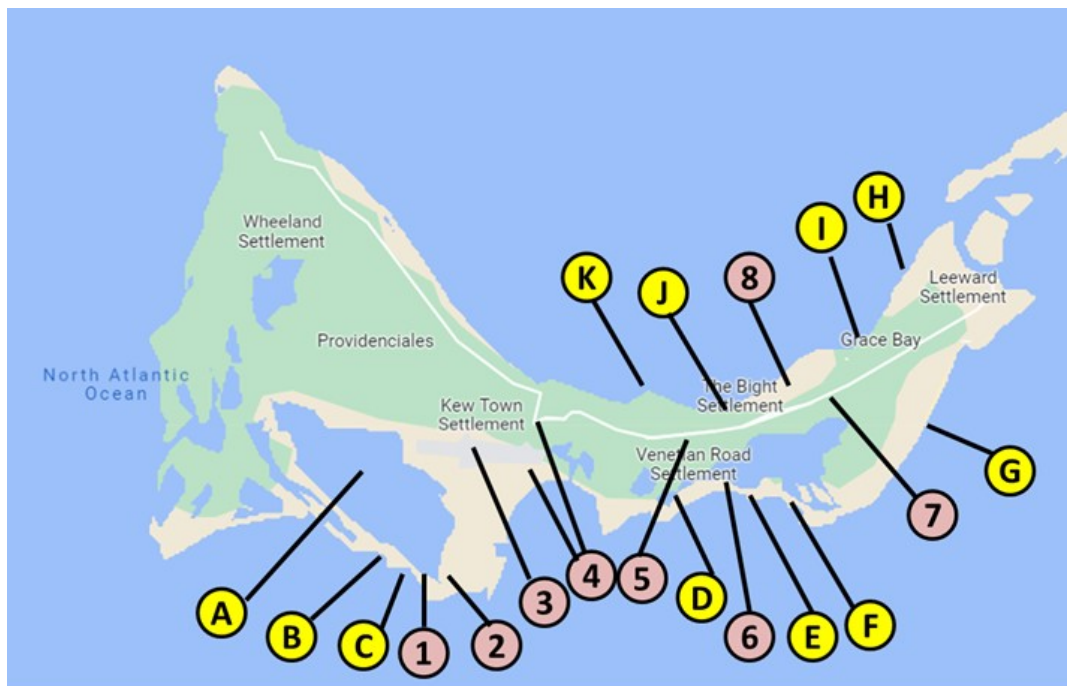
Providenciales Travel Guide

4. The best beaches in Providenciales

Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands is a beach goer's paradise and its most famous beach, Grace Bay Beach, is consistently ranked among the best beaches on the planet. In 2022, TripAdvisor named it the #1 best beach in the world – again. Besides Grace Bay beach, Providenciales has many other beaches and some of them are absolutely spectacular too.

This **Backpack and Snorkel Providenciales Purple Guide** provides detailed information about the main beaches on Providenciales.

Providenciales Map



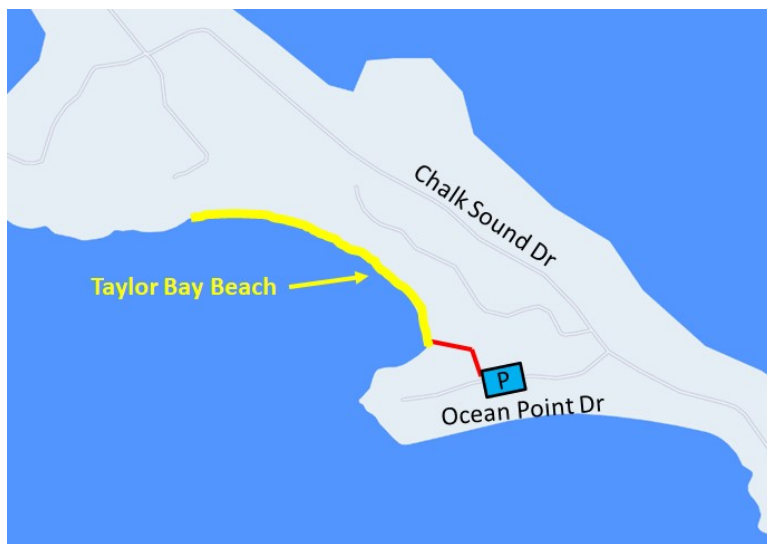
- | | |
|---|---|
| (B) Taylor Bay Beach | (C) Sapodilla Bay Beach |
| (E) Hidden Beach near Turtle Tail Beach | |
| (F) Turtle Tail Beach | (G) Long Bay Beach |
| (H) Leeward Beach | (I) Grace Bay Beach |
| (J) Coral Gardens - Bight Reef | (K) Smith's Reef |

Providenciales Travel Guide

4.1 Taylor Bay Beach in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos ([map](#), [parking](#), [reviews](#))

Taylor Bay Beach is a 2,000ft (610m) long beautiful beach which never gets too crowded as there is only one public access with very limited parking. The small roadside parking lot can fill up quickly leaving you to scramble for additional parking as there are “no parking” signs in front of some of the private residences.

Map of Taylor Bay Beach in Providenciales



Taylor Bay beach is located near [Sapodilla Bay beach](#) and [Chalk Sound](#). The bay is lined with private residences and guest houses and the beach has fine and soft white sand. The water is shallow, making it a wonderful spot for families with small children, but it means that you will need to walk out far if you want to swim. There is no good snorkeling at Taylor Bay Beach.

Providenciales Travel Guide



Interesting fact: Dick Clark, the legendary host of “American Bandstand” and the New Year’s Eve celebration at New York City’s Times Square, used to own a vacation home at the western end of Taylor Bay. This house is long gone.

Providenciales Travel Guide

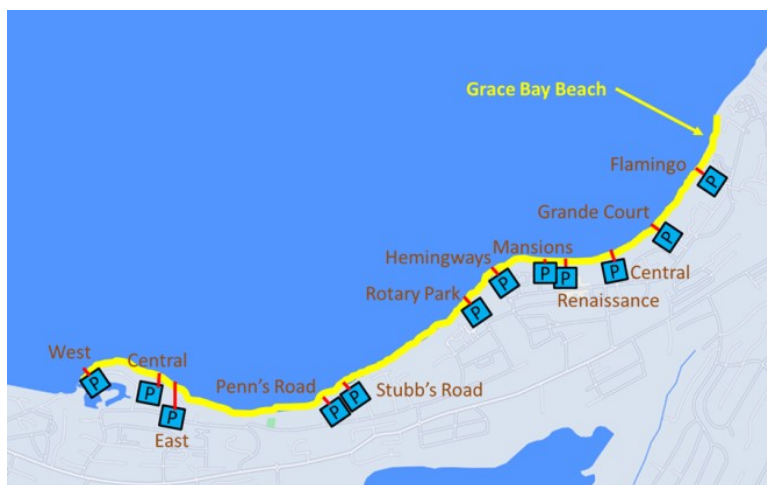
4.7 Grace Bay Beach in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos ([map](#), [reviews](#))

Grace Bay Beach is the main attraction of Providenciales in Turks and Caicos as it is consistently ranked among the best beaches on the planet. In 2022, TripAdvisor named it the #1 best beach in the world – again.

Grace Bay Beach is a gorgeous 3 mile (4.8km) stretch of powdery and soft white sand with some of the most beautiful turquoise water on the planet. Some sources claim that it is longer – 7 miles or even twelve miles long – but this math only works if you add the neighboring beaches of [Leeward Beach](#), [Smith's Reef](#) and [Bight Reef](#). Technically, this math works as all of them are located on a continuous stretch of sand, but officially those are different beaches.

Grace Bay Beach has 7 public access points. Even though not very large, there is typically enough parking capacity at each access point.

Map of Grace Bay Beach in Providenciales



Providenciales Travel Guide

Photos of Grace Bay Beach near the Flamingo Cafe in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos



The following photos were taken where Grace Bay Beach meets Leeward Beach ([map](#))



Providenciales Travel Guide

Map of Bight Reef in Providenciales



The beach has soft white sand and the water is beautifully turquoise. It is not as shallow as many other beaches on Providenciales. The reef is about 60ft (20m) off the beach and the area within the buoys is off limits.

To learn more about snorkeling at Coral Gardens and other spots in Providenciales, check out the “[Best Locations to Snorkel in Providenciales](#)”.

Providenciales Travel Guide



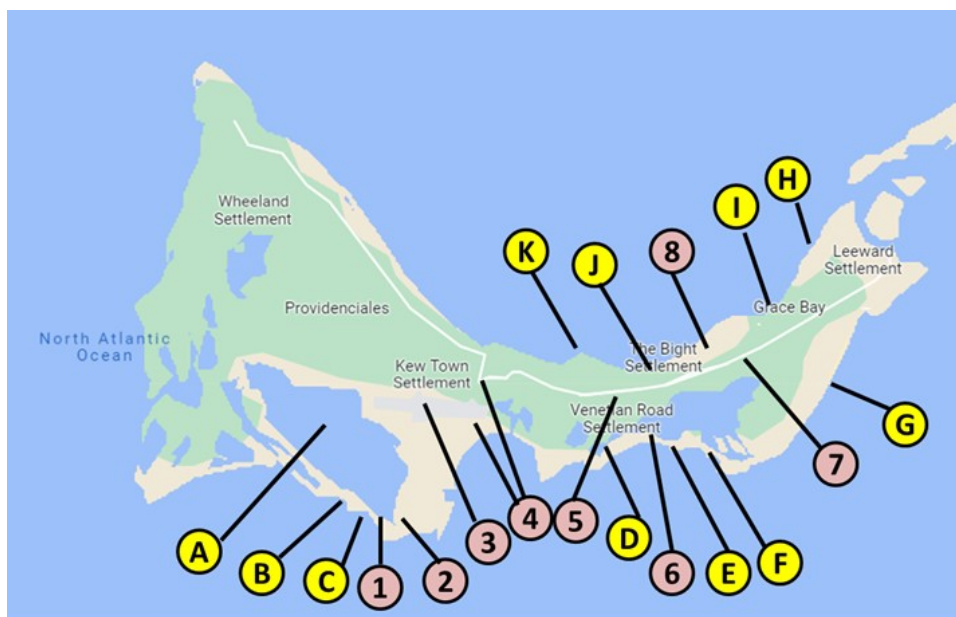
Providenciales Travel Guide

5. The best snorkeling in Providenciales

Grace Bay Beach is the most popular beach in Turks and Caicos. Unfortunately, Grace Bay Beach has no snorkeling at all. Fortunately, Coral Gardens at Bight Reef and Smith's Reef at the western end of Grace Bay Beach have very good snorkeling and are widely regarded as the two best spots for snorkeling right near the beach in Providenciales. The flora and fauna is different in both spots, so make sure to visit them both.

For beginners and families with small kids, there is some snorkeling at Sapodilla Bay Beach.

Map of Providenciales in Turks and Caicos



- (C) [Sapodilla Bay Beach](#)
- (J) [Coral Gardens - Bight Reef](#)
- (K) [Smith's Reef](#)

The best snorkeling spots are, however, out by the reef and can only be accessed by commercial snorkeling and diving boat tours.

Providenciales Travel Guide



Providenciales Travel Guide

Map of Smith's Reef in Providenciales



The beach here is rockier than other parts of [Grace Bay Beach](#). Especially the transition into the water is mostly rocky, even though there are some sandy areas between the rocks that you can use to enter the water if you don't have water shoes. Once you are in the water, swimming and snorkeling is good. The water is crystal clear.

As with [Coral Gardens](#), buoys mark the best part of the reef which is off limits for anyone. This is to prevent damage from swimmers and snorkelers who have severely damaged (and in some cases obliterated) the reef outside the buoys. Please help preserving the protected area by not entering the area within the buoys.

If you take the West beach access, then you have to walk 530ft (160m) to the right on the beach to get to the area marked by the buoys. The buoys are about 90ft (28m) away from the beach in the water. From the East access it is a 1,800ft (550m) walk on the beach to the left.

Providenciales Travel Guide



Providenciales Travel Guide

Here are some photos that we took:



If you don't want to kayak, then you can join a 2h motor boat tour of Chalk Sound or just relax at the restaurant and bar.

Providenciales Travel Guide



Some "rescued" stones are displayed in the check-in hall at the [Providenciales airport](#).

Besides the historic value, the views from the top of the hill are phenomenal – you can see Chalk Sound and the Caribbean Sea.



Providenciales Travel Guide

The main industries of the Turks and Caicos Islands are tourism and offshore financial services. Fishing is another important industry and



Providenciales Travel Guide



Providenciales Travel Guide

9.1 Las Brisas Restaurant ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Las Brisas Restaurant is located directly on [Chalk Sound](#) and offers spectacular views on its unbelievably turquoise waters. It is also close to [Sapodilla Bay Beach](#) and [Taylor Bay Beach](#) and the shop where you can rent kayaks or a boat ride on Chalk Sound is right next to it.

The restaurant is all open air but and all tables are covered in case it rains. There is also a pool right next to the restaurant.

For lunch, simple sandwiches, wraps or deep fried fish, shrimps, conch or chicken are served.

The dinner menu features various seafood and meat dishes, salads, pizzas and tapas appetizers.

We liked the food and found the service and atmosphere to be very friendly and welcoming.



Providenciales Travel Guide

10.2 IGA Graceway ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

IGA Graceway is part of the Turks and Caicos branch of the Independent Growers Alliance (IGA) supermarket chain that has stores in almost 30 countries on all continents but Antarctica.

This is probably the busiest and likely best supermarket on Providenciales. Besides groceries, you can buy all kinds of household items here. It is a clean and well maintained store and the selection is excellent. It is very much comparable to a supermarket that sells alcohol in the US.

Since there is only little food production in Turks and Caicos, almost everything has to be imported. This is reflected in the prices. You will typically pay 2-3 times of what you pay in the US.



Providenciales Travel Guide

12.1 Chalk Sound ([map](#))

Chalk Sound is the largest, most accessible and the most stunning of them all. With its unbelievably turquoise waters and myriads of small islets, it is one of the most beautiful lagoons we have ever seen.

Chalk Sound is a protected National Park – which is almost landlocked and only connected to the ocean through a long winding channel. The larger islands are inhabited by Turks and Caicos Rock Iguanas and if you are lucky, you may see bonefish and barracudas in the shallow waters.

Motor boating and fishing are prohibited and no designated lookouts exist. Your best options to see Chalk Sound in all its beauty are:

- by kayak – [Las Brisas](#) rent kayaks
- by guided boat tour – there is a guided boat tour at [Las Brisas](#)
- by driving Chalk Sound Dr on the southern shore of the lake and by visiting a viewpoint ([map](#)) which is nothing more than a street ending at the rocky shore





13. Closing Remarks

ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.



MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music. Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!



PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see my [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.