The Bahamas

Gateway to the Caribbean



American Flamingo by Adam Riley

Our Rockjumper Gateway Tour has been specially designed to introduce travellers to the birds, wildlife and natural beauty of The Bahamas in a comfortable and enjoyable way. By focusing on the contrasting islands of Abaco and Andros, we explore some of the finest birding habitats in the archipelago, from extensive Caribbean pine forests and coastal coppice to wetlands, mangroves and pristine sandy shorelines.

Abaco offers an excellent introduction to Bahamian birdlife, with its beautiful pine forests, quiet roads and productive coastal habitats supporting many of the islands' most sought-after species.

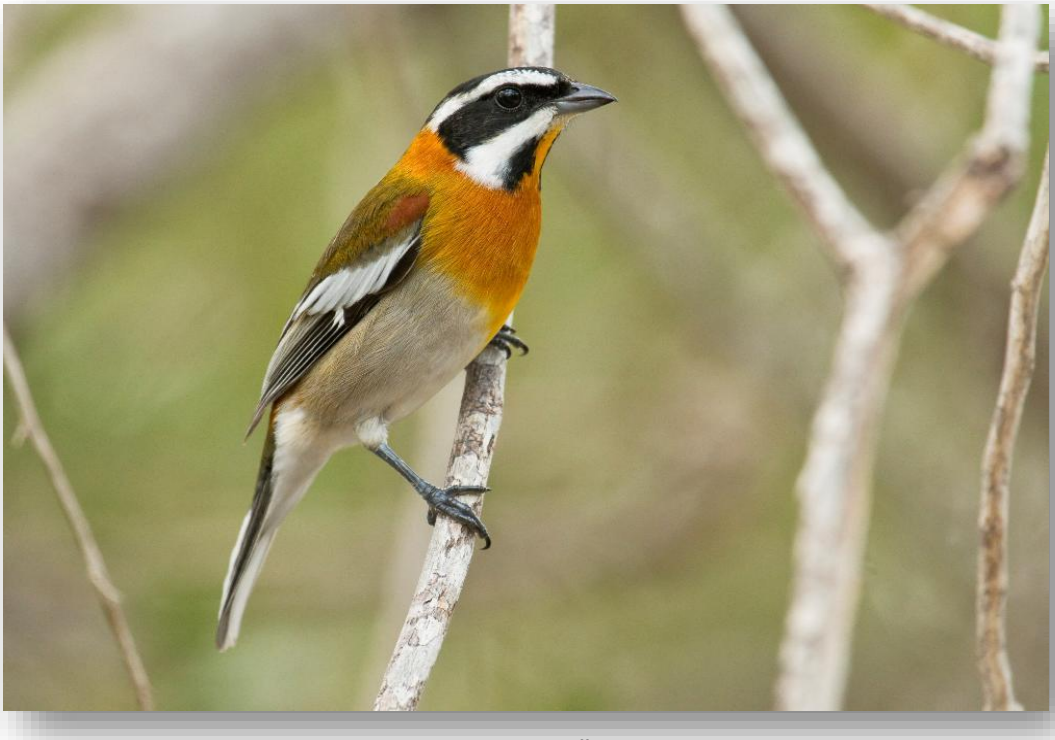
Here we will search for regional specialties such as Bahama Woodstar, Bahama Warbler, Cuban Emerald, Bahama Mockingbird and Thick-billed Vireo, while enjoying the relaxed pace and scenic landscapes that make the island such a rewarding destination.

Our journey continues to Andros, the largest island in The Bahamas and one of the least developed. Vast expanses of pine forest, wetlands and mangroves provide habitat for species such as Bahama Oriole, West Indian Whistling Duck, Great Lizard Cuckoo and numerous herons, shorebirds and migrant warblers. The island's peaceful atmosphere and excellent birding opportunities make it a fitting highlight of this Caribbean adventure.

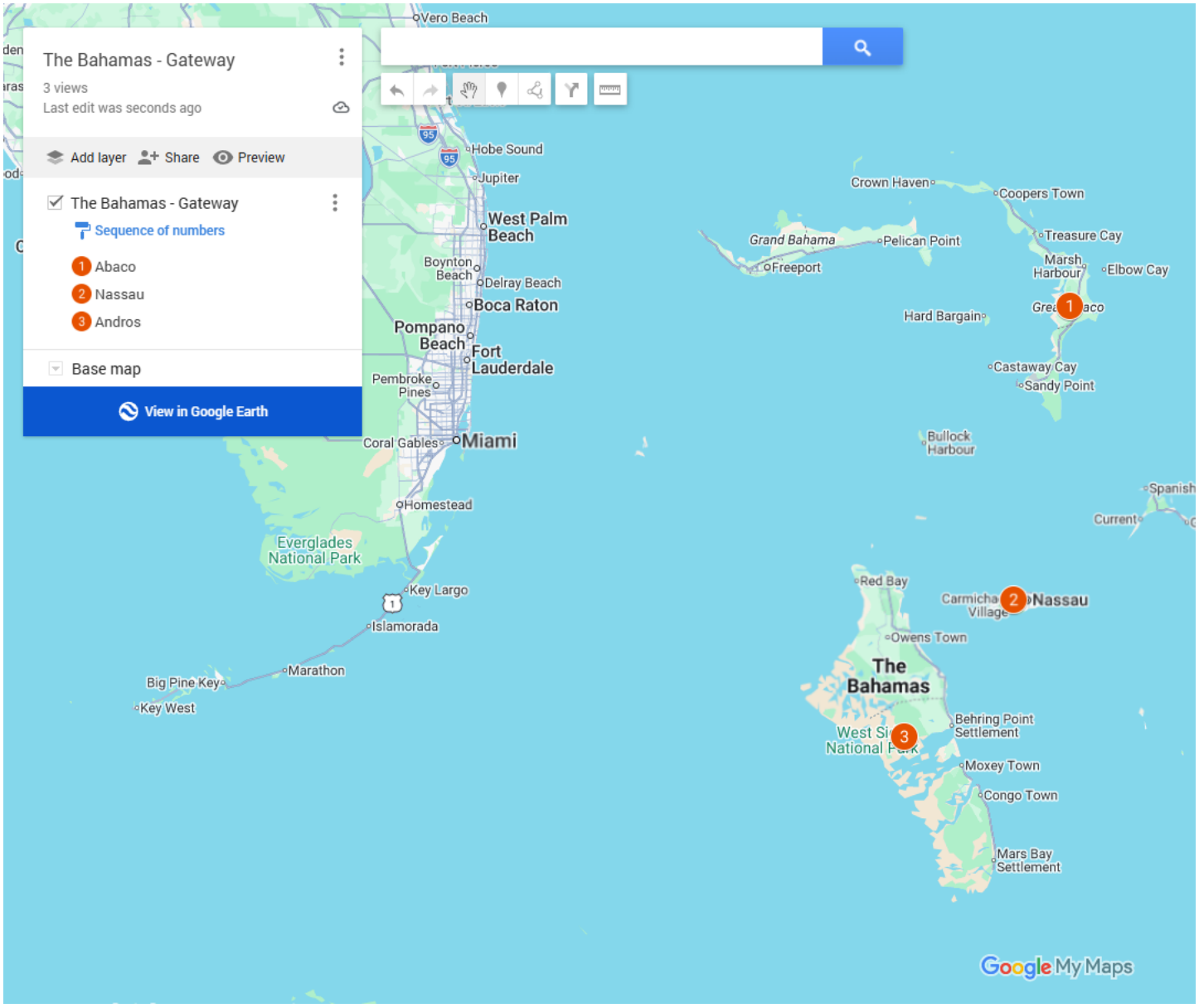
In addition to the enjoyable birding, guests can look forward to beautiful tropical scenery, welcoming hospitality and a relaxed pace of travel. Comfortable accommodations, manageable travel days and straightforward logistics throughout make this tour an ideal introduction to Caribbean birding and wildlife travel.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Abaco & welcome group dinner**
Day 2	**Birding Abaco**
Day 3	**Abaco; flight to Nassau**
Day 4	**Nassau; flight to Andros**
Day 5	**Birding Andros**
Day 6	**Andros; flight to Nassau**
Day 7	**Final departure**



Western Spindalis by Dušan Brinkhuizen



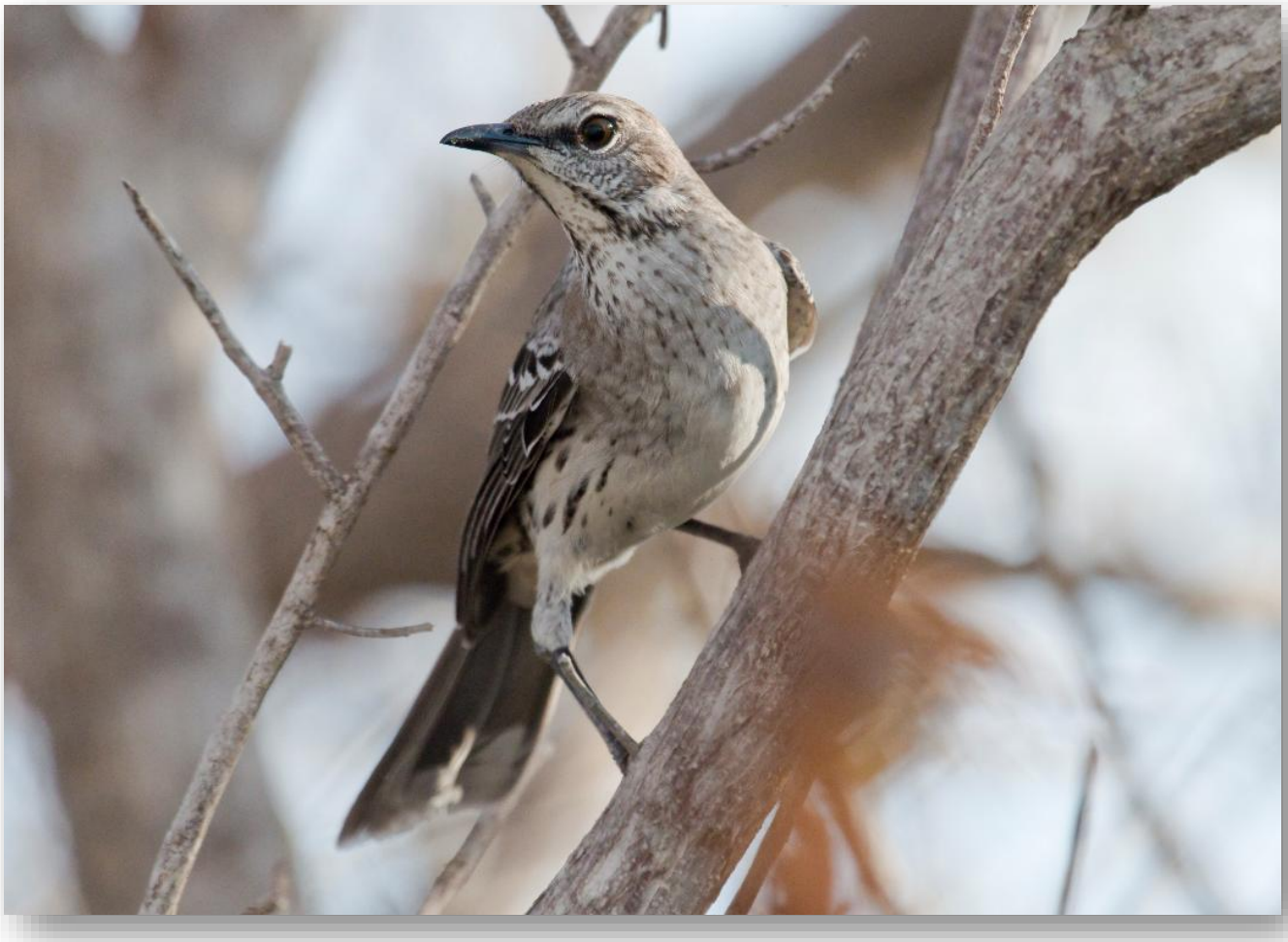
Endemic species

Excellent **photography** opportunities

Coastal & Caribbean **scenery**

Birding sites in detail

Abaco. Situated at the northern end of the Bahamian archipelago, Abaco combines beautiful Caribbean pine forests, coastal coppice, wetlands and pristine beaches, making it one of the finest birding destinations in The Bahamas. The island offers a wonderful introduction to Bahamian birdlife, with a relaxed atmosphere, excellent accessibility and a remarkable diversity of habitats packed into a relatively small area.



Bahama Mockingbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Our birding will focus on the island's extensive pine forests and coastal habitats, where we will search for a range of Bahamian specialties. Among the highlights are the attractive Bahama Warbler, dazzling Bahama Woodstar, Bahama Mockingbird, Cuban Emerald, Thick-billed Vireo and Western Spindalis. Pine woodlands may also produce Loggerhead Kingbird, Cuban Pewee, Olive-capped Warbler and West Indian Woodpecker, while wetlands and coastal areas support American Flamingo, White-cheeked Pintail, numerous herons and egrets, shorebirds and a variety of seabirds.

Birding on Abaco is generally easy and highly rewarding, with many species seen well along quiet roads, open woodland and accessible reserves. Combined with turquoise waters, white-

sand beaches and excellent photographic opportunities, Abaco provides a memorable introduction to the birds, wildlife and scenery of The Bahamas.

Andros. The island of Andros offers a remarkably peaceful and undeveloped Caribbean landscape, with extensive pine forests, wetlands, mangroves and quiet coastal habitats supporting some of the Bahamas' most characteristic birdlife. Despite being the largest island in the archipelago, Andros remains sparsely populated and provides a wonderfully tranquil setting for birding and wildlife viewing.



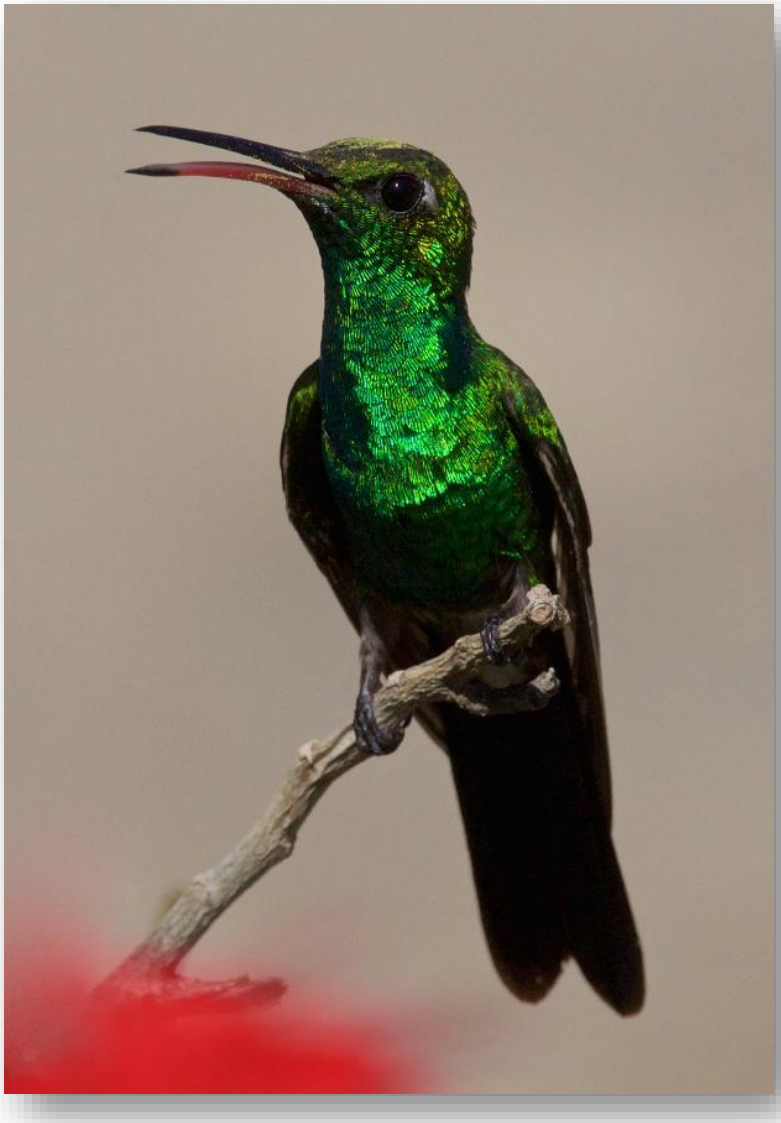
Bahama Woodstar by Rob Williams

We will spend our time exploring a variety of habitats in search of Bahama Woodstar, Bahama Oriole, Bahama Mockingbird, West Indian Whistling Duck, Cuban Emerald and the impressive Great Lizard Cuckoo. Caribbean pine forests support a variety of additional species including Loggerhead Kingbird, West Indian Woodpecker, Thick-billed Vireo, Cuban Pewee, Olive-capped Warbler, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Black-faced Grassquit and Western Red-legged Thrush, while wetlands and mangrove areas may produce herons, egrets, White-cheeked Pintail, Least Grebe, shorebirds and migrant species depending on the season.

Birding on Andros is generally easy and highly enjoyable, with much of our time spent along quiet roads, open woodland and lodge grounds where birds are often seen well. The island's combination of approachable birding, peaceful atmosphere and beautiful tropical scenery makes it a fitting highlight of our introduction to Caribbean birding and wildlife travel.

Nassau & New Providence. Our time on New Providence is limited, but the island provides a convenient gateway between Abaco and Andros and an opportunity to sample some of the wetlands and coastal habitats for which The Bahamas is renowned. Depending on flight schedules and departure arrangements, we may visit nearby lagoons, mangroves or coastal wetlands where species such as American Flamingo, White-cheeked Pintail, Black-necked Stilt, Cuban Emerald, Bahama Mockingbird and a variety of herons, shorebirds and seabirds may be encountered.

Birding throughout the day remains pleasantly unhurried, with time to enjoy the beaches, coastal viewpoints and beautiful tropical surroundings that make New Providence such an attractive island destination.



Cuban Emerald by Clayton Burne

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	☐ ☐ ■	Designed specifically for first-time international birders and travellers. A gentle-paced tour with comfortable accommodations, manageable travel distances and limited strenuous activity throughout.
Birding Ease / Pace	☐ ☐ ■	Easy. Birding is conducted at an enjoyable pace with a strong emphasis on visually rewarding Caribbean species and scenic wildlife experiences rather than difficult or highly technical birding.
Accommodation	☐ ☐ ■	Comfortable hotels and lodges with private bathrooms, reliable amenities and convenient access to birding areas.
Walking / Trails	☐ ☐ ■	Easy. Most birding is conducted on quiet roads, boardwalks, beaches, lodge grounds and short walking trails with generally level terrain throughout.
Vehicles / Roads	☐ ☐ ■	Travel is conducted in vehicles on generally good roads. Driving distances are moderate and broken up with regular birding and sightseeing stops.
Climate	☐ ☐ ■	Warm tropical conditions are experienced throughout the tour, with coastal areas often sunny, breezy and humid. Occasional tropical rain showers may occur.
Photography	☐ ☐ ■	Good to excellent. Many species are seen well in open habitats, and numerous opportunities exist for scenic, wildlife and bird photography throughout the tour.
Annoyances	☐ ☐ ■	Warm temperatures, humidity and occasional tropical rain showers may be encountered. Mosquitoes and biting insects can occasionally be present in wetter areas. Some early mornings are necessary for optimal bird activity.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Domestic flights during the tour;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve & site entrance fees;
- All guiding services,
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- International and domestic flights unless specifically stated;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Optional gratuities for your Rockjumper leader/s;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Typical additional personal costs may include travel insurance, airport hotels, alcoholic beverages, personal shopping and optional tour leader gratuities.

Single Supplement: Many accommodations use twin-bed rooms. Guests who prefer private accommodation may request a single room for an additional fee. If you elect to share accommodation but a suitable roommate cannot be found, the applicable single supplement will become payable. We will always make reasonable efforts to match guests wishing to share.

Tipping: Gratuities for drivers, hotel staff, restaurants and local services are included on this tour. Tipping your Rockjumper leader/s is entirely optional and based on your satisfaction with the tour.

- **Tour prices are fixed in the primary currency shown in bold on our website. Prices listed in other currencies are approximate and may vary slightly due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of final invoicing.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement may be offered to confirm departure.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour-related costs and may need to be adjusted accordingly.**
- **Designated tour leader/s may change due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only and minor adjustments to the order of travel, accommodations or sites visited may occasionally be necessary.**

Rockjumper Gateway Tours are specially designed for travellers taking their first steps into international birding travel, as well as those seeking a more comfortable and approachable tropical birding experience. These tours combine enjoyable birding, comfortable accommodations and manageable travel days with a relaxed pace and a high level of support throughout the journey.

While birding remains the primary focus of these tours, the overall pace and structure are designed to be enjoyable and accessible rather than intensive. We avoid demanding hikes, difficult travel schedules and overly strenuous birding conditions wherever possible, allowing guests to focus on enjoying the birds, wildlife, scenery and overall travel experience.

Gateway Tours are intentionally designed around comfort, atmosphere and enjoyable birding experiences rather than long species lists or physically demanding schedules. These tours provide an ideal introduction to tropical birding travel while still offering exciting wildlife encounters and memorable birding throughout.

These tours are not suitable for guests seeking demanding, fast-paced, highly target-driven birding experiences or intensive photography-focused itineraries.

Some days begin with optional early morning birding when bird activity is at its best, followed by breakfast and a relaxed pace through the remainder of the day. Afternoons generally include additional birding, scenic travel between locations or time to enjoy the surroundings and accommodations. Optional evening birding may occasionally be offered.

Guests are welcome to participate at a pace comfortable to them throughout the tour.

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that luggage is kept to a reasonable minimum. Kindly limit baggage to 20kg (44lb) for checked luggage and 8kg (18lb) for hand luggage.
- The Bahamas experiences warm tropical conditions throughout much of the year. Lightweight clothing, sun protection and adequate hydration are recommended throughout the tour.
- Occasional tropical rain showers may occur, particularly around wetlands and coastal habitats, so a lightweight waterproof jacket or rain layer is advisable.
- Accommodation throughout the tour is comfortable and well situated for birding and sightseeing. The Bahamas offers a good variety of western and Caribbean-style cuisine throughout the trip.
- The Bahamas has a well-developed tourism infrastructure, and electricity, Wi-Fi and mobile coverage are widely available throughout most of the tour.
- Mosquitoes and small biting insects may occasionally be encountered, particularly around wetlands and mangrove areas. We recommend bringing a good quality insect repellent containing DEET or a suitable alternative.
- The Bahamas is generally regarded as a safe and traveller-friendly destination with a well-developed tourism infrastructure. As with travel anywhere, guests should take normal precautions regarding valuables and personal belongings, particularly in busy urban or airport areas.

Arrival and Departure Details

Day 1 of the tour is set aside as an arrival day, allowing guests time to settle in after their international journey. Guests may arrive in Abaco at any time during the day, with a welcome dinner held in the evening to meet your fellow travellers and tour leader before the tour begins. The tour will conclude in Nassau after breakfast on Day 8.

The above information regarding arrivals and departures is intended as a general guide only. Precise arrival and departure details will be provided in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive earlier and/or depart later and require assistance with additional accommodation or travel arrangements, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Please do not book any flights until the Rockjumper Team has officially confirmed the tour.

Rockjumper Gateway Tours are specifically designed around destinations with straightforward entry requirements for most travellers, with little or no visa or travel authorization requirements typically necessary. At the time of booking, we will advise guests of any known visa, entry or travel authorization requirements relevant to the tour.

Visa and entry requirements can vary depending on nationality and may occasionally change at short notice. Guests are ultimately responsible for ensuring they meet all entry requirements for the countries visited and should verify the latest information with the appropriate consulate, embassy or official government authority prior to travel.