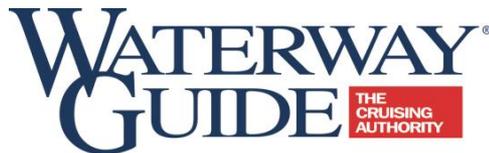




Cruising the Caribbean and Bahamas

Jessica Grimm
Navionics Sailing Specialist



Webinar Hosts

Jessica Grimm, Navionics Sailing Specialist, has been sailing and boating for most of her life. She and her husband spent a year in the Bahamas and Caribbean living on their sailboat and are currently planning their next “big trip” with their 1 year old son.

Ed Tillett, GM / Editor-in-Chief of Waterway Guide Media. Sailor, fisherman, author and multimedia producer, his career spans 40 years of broadcast, instructional design and publishing. Owner of a classic 1947 yacht, he and his wife Anne live in eastern Virginia along the Rappahannock River.

Matt & Lucy Claiborne, Bahamas Cruising Editors for Waterway Guide. Both USCG captains with over 15 years of boating and cruising experience. Full-time liveboard cruisers, working online while sailing. Winter in the Bahamas on their 38-foot catamaran with their boat dog Hastings.

Mark Bunzel, Editor and Publisher of the annual *Waggoner Cruising Guide* and the co-author of *Cruising the Virgin Islands*. Mark presents seminars at boat shows around the country and leads flotilla groups to Alaska, through the Virgin Islands and on the Canals of France and Italy. (Seen below with Foxy)

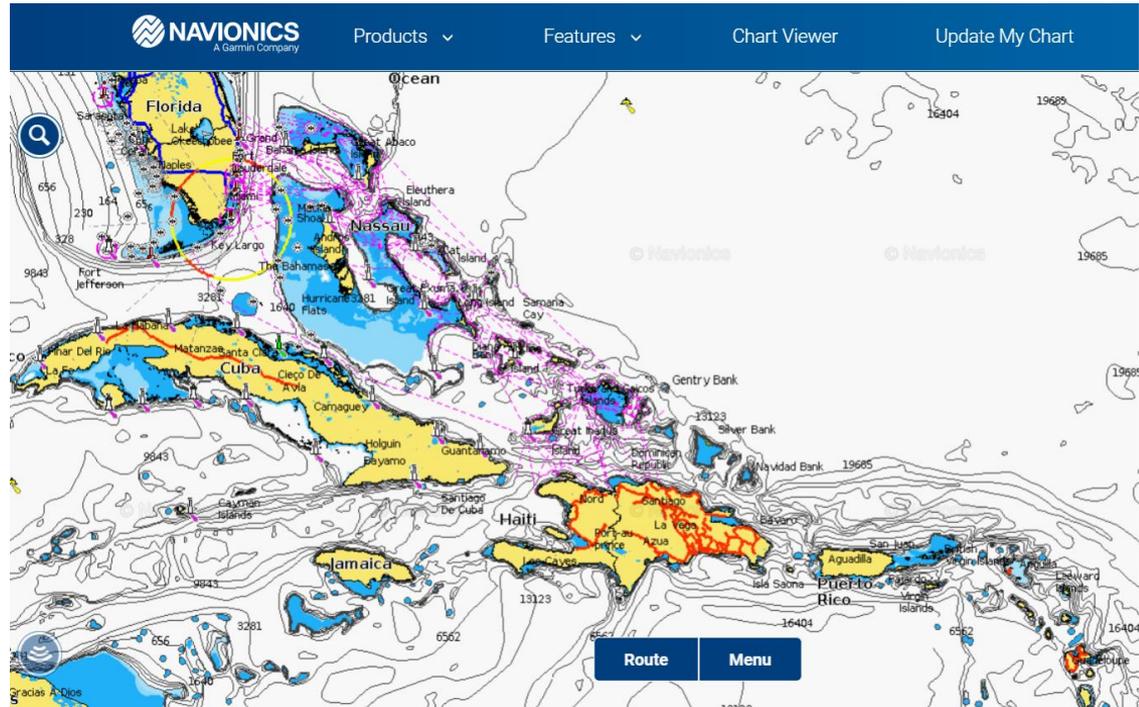


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Agenda

- Post Hurricane Update
- Navigation
- Preparation
- Provisioning
- Destinations
- Routes
- Anchorages
- Favorite stops



Post Hurricane Status – Virgin Islands

The devastation from Hurricanes Irma and Marie in 2017 was staggering



Post Hurricane Status – Virgin Islands

The devastation from Hurricanes Irma and Marie in 2017 was staggering

- 600+ boats sunk or heavily damaged
- Resorts, like the Bitter End Yacht Club destroyed



Post Hurricane Status

Mother nature recovered. The BVI is resilient. IT IS BACK!

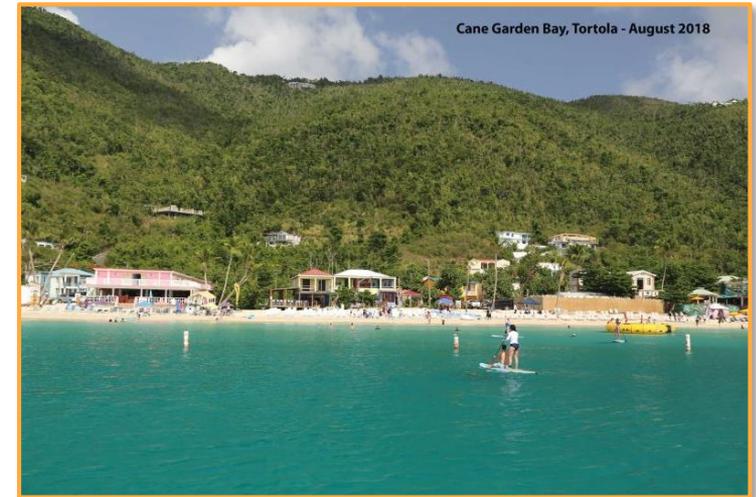
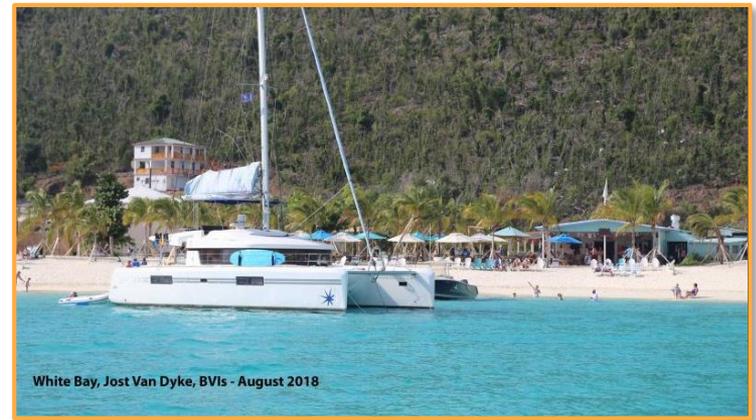
New boats and repairs are in place.

The infrastructure for the charter business is in place.

The Islands are beautiful.

The people are happy to see you and they appreciate your business.

The new restaurants look great.



Navigation

Essential to update your charts before leaving
using wifi or cell signal

Plan and transfer your route with plotter sync

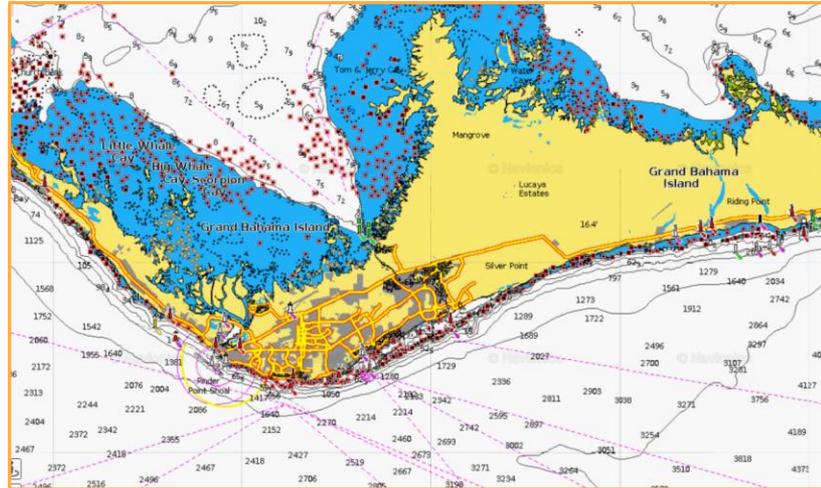
Navionics app on your phone and tablet for backup



Navigation

Always use multiple resources and never rely on a single source

Chart plotters can be inaccurate in the islands due to remote locations and vast stretches of open water - regardless of the manufacturer or base maps loaded on the devices.



Navigation

Always use multiple resources and never rely on a single source

You must “read the water” and always compare what you see to what is expected

Look at your charts and at your chart plotter,
but respond to what you see in the water
in front of - and below - your vessel

Charts can be inaccurate in the islands due to the lack of government services and funding for navigation-related items like hydrographic surveys, ATONs, etc. that we take for granted in the US. Charts are produced by companies with limited on-the-ground infrastructure.



Navigation

Always use multiple resources and never rely on a single source



Suggested charts are Navionics and Explorer, which both provide valuable data.

Even for those of us who use digital navigation, most skippers want paper charts in the islands for planning, studying and sharing “secret spots” with new friends.

Routes from different cartographers are often very similar. Many vessels crowd these routes on busy days. If in open water, consider a course (carefully) 0.5-1 NM off-route and always maintain a proper lookout.

Navigation

Always use multiple resources and never rely on a single source

Navigation is done along recommended routes. Set waypoints and paths to keep you in deep water.

Auto routing is not a good option in the Bahamas due to frequently changing conditions. It is not recommended to use this feature in the Bahamas.

Preparation

What sort of schedule are you on?

The best advice:
don't have a schedule.

You must plan most big jumps from island to island based on weather, not on your schedule.

Weather windows come up every 5-20 days.



Preparation

What sort of schedule
are you on?



If you only have a week or a month, consider a charter.

Preparation

Carefully select a charter company with boats that fit your interests, crew and trip plans.

Power or Sail to start.

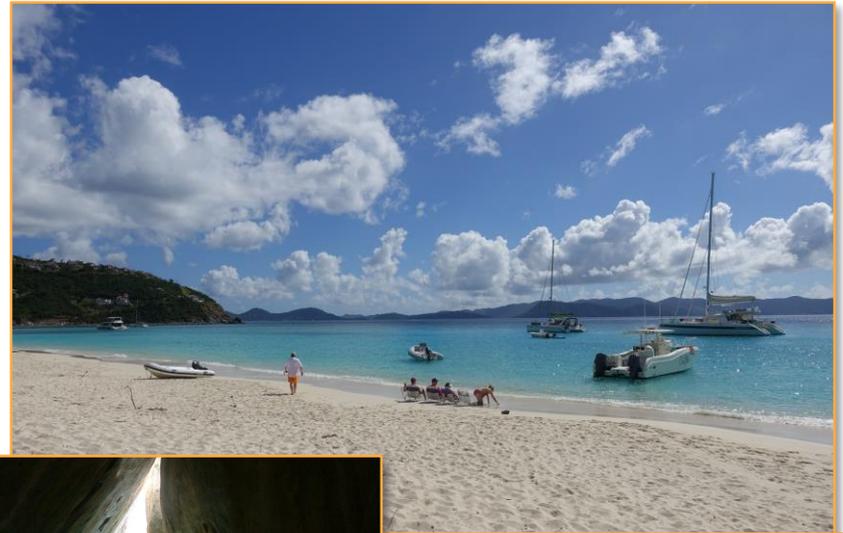


Preparation

What type of trip?

Visit special sites like:

- The Baths
- The Indians
- The Caves at Norman Island
- Anegada
- Sandy Cay
- Jost Van Dyke and US VI.



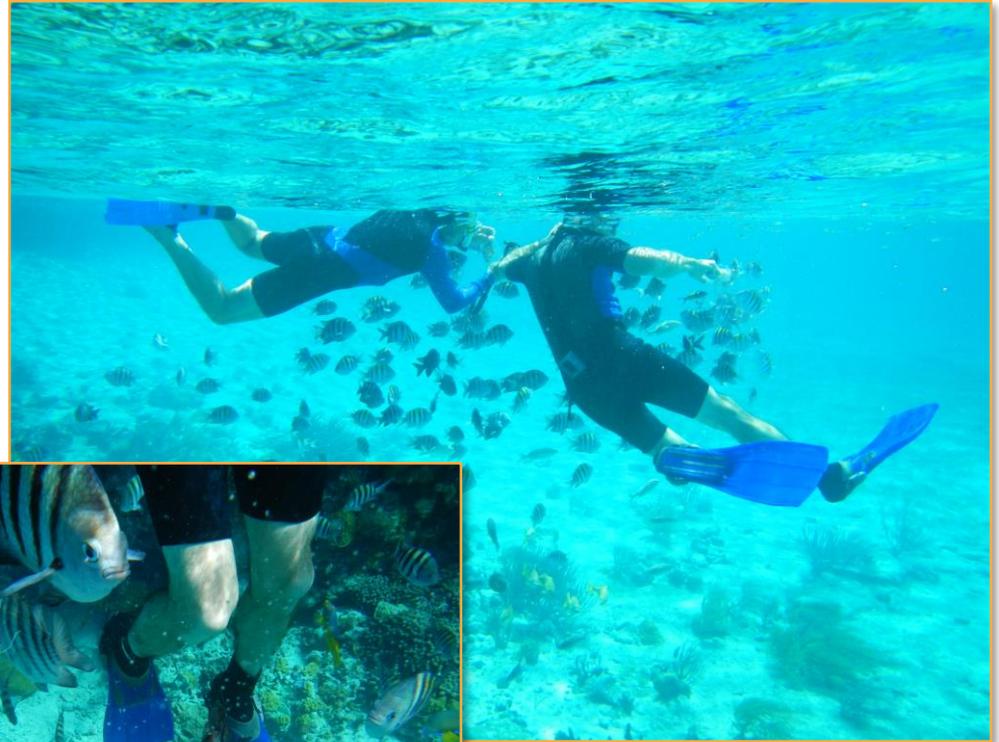
Sailing & Cruising or Beach Bars. Or both?

Preparation

Scuba Diving, Snorkeling,
or small boat sailing.

What gear do you take?

What should you rent?



Preparation

What sort of schedule are you on?

Try to plan your stops in fun places because you might be waiting a while for weather.



Preparation

How will you get
your weather?

Chris Parker email,
webcast, SSB

Receive-only with
a portable radio
or

2-way with a proper
transmitter



Preparation

How will you get
your weather?

Cellular phones through
BTC or Aliv – then each
country's provider

Or

Roam through T-Mobile
Int'l Plans



Preparation

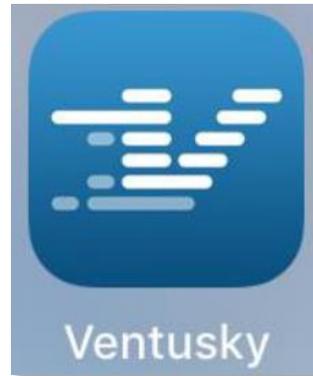
How will you get
your weather?



[Weather App Shootout](#)

Whichever apps
you prefer

Plenty to choose from
but not always accurate



Preparation

How will you get
your weather?

Email only from a
satellite connection

Iridium GO!

- Somewhat costly
- Slow
- Email/text only
- Best with a dedicated program like PredictWind

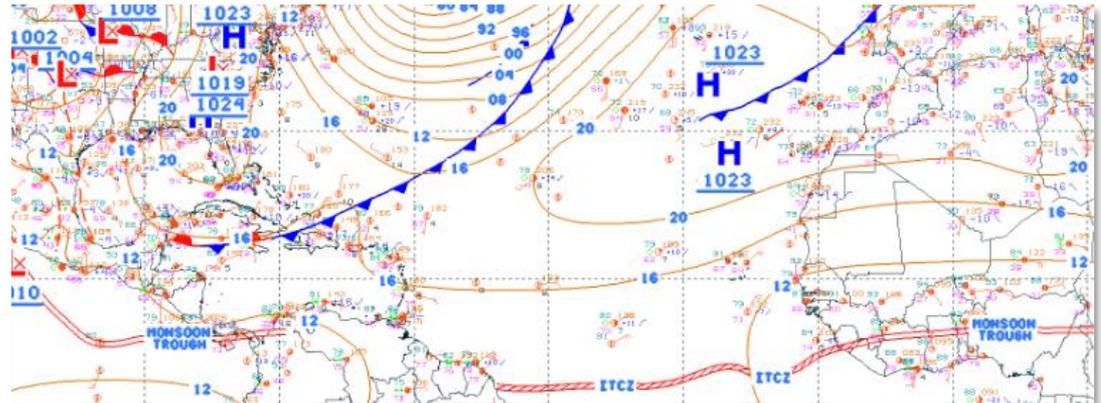
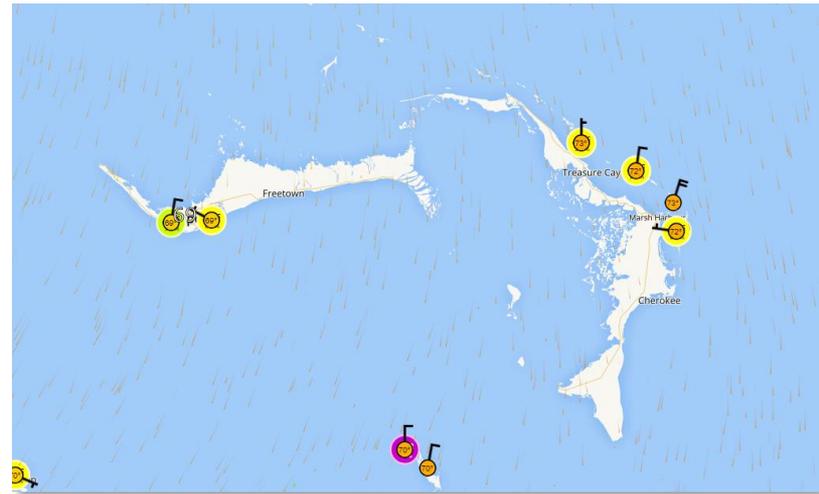


Preparation

How will you get your weather?

Learn how to interpret the weather and decipher different model solutions for future forecasts –

Or simply pay for Chris Parker



Provisioning - Bahamas

They eat in the islands too, so don't go overboard. Potatoes, onions and eggs are always available and inexpensive.

Plan stops at the major hubs along the way to reprovision, and have enough on board for 1-2 weeks in between (maybe longer if you gunkhole).



Provisioning - Bahamas

If it's imported from America, it's expensive. British and Canadian imports are much cheaper in the Bahamas. Try new brands to save money. Eat like the locals.

Examples:

A box of Oreos = \$6.00+

Hills Chocolate Biscuits from UK = \$1.25

5 lbs. of Gold Medal US brand flour = \$6.00 – \$8.00

Robin Hood flour from Canada, \$2.00 - \$3.00

If you must have your brand — bring it



Provisioning - Bahamas

A few random things that we recommend bringing with you that are either hard to get or expensive:

- Toiletries
- Coffee
- Propane (1-lb cylinders for grills, big tanks are refilled in major ports)
- Powdered milk and powdered eggs for cooking
- Freeze dried fruit
- Bring pet food if the pet needs a certain brand
- Gluten-free or organic options won't be available, especially in the Out Islands



Provisioning - Bahamas

Fresh fruits and veggies are rare in the family islands, check for “mailboat day”

Plan what you will do with your trash.

Many islands charge \$5 or more per bag of garbage. There is no recycling. Garbage is burned.

Dispose of excess packaging before you leave.

Take reusable kitchen towels to reduce paper products.



Provisioning – Virgin Islands

Meals on board or a mix. Breakfast and lunches on board, many or most dinners?

Pre-order for delivery of water, beer, wine
Riteway superstore has extensive groceries. There are small grocery stores throughout the islands to fill in.

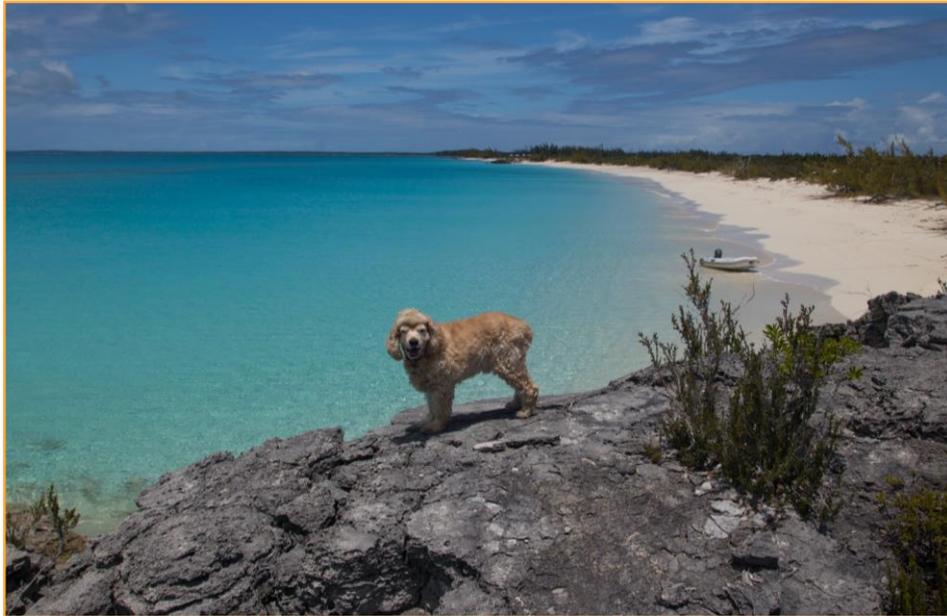
You do not need to stock for the entire trip.

Research the restaurants where you would like to dine before departure.



Pets

Each island nation has it's own animal import requirements that must be met. Some require a vet exam upon arrival.



Turk & Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands and other “British Islands” require Titer Test for rabies. This blood test takes WEEKS to get completed by Kansas State University. Don't trust your home vet to get the paperwork right. Find a vet who has done it before and follow up!

Some islands are so restrictive that many cruisers with pets decide to skip them

Pets

Please don't
leave me
home...



The Bahamas is simple...but you must do it right. FedEx or DHL your fee and application, and receive the reply via FAX.

Take that form to your vet as soon as possible before crossing. There is also now an agent handling pet import permits for a fee. We have not tried.

Highly recommend Coconut Grove Animal Hospital in Miami/Dinner Key if leaving from South Florida. Walk-ins only. Does it all the time.

Repairs and Maintenance

Plan on being self-sufficient. Have spare parts: belts, filters, alternator, starters, fuel lines, hoses, etc.

Getting parts can be tricky.

Always try to get things locally.

Even if you need a part in Georgetown, buying the part from Nassau and flying it in is faster and cheaper because it avoids customs.

Major ports have large, reputable service facilities with most everything you need.



Visitors

Friends flying in or out?

Will you have visitors coming in and out, or will you need to get home?

Figure out what ports are good for flying in and out of and plan accordingly.

The Bahamas has easy direct flights to Marsh Harbour, Freeport and Nassau (sometimes George Town).



Visitors

Friends flying in or out?

Local commuter flights connected to Out Islands get more difficult and more expensive.

Direct (cheapest) flights to Provo, San Juan, St. Thomas, St. Maarten and other major islands.



To the Virgin Islands via I-65 from Florida

Routes

To the Virgin Islands via the Caribbean 1500



65° W

Routes

Easting to the Virgin Islands via the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.



Routes

The “Thornless Path” uses day hops and the fewest overnights possible, and makes easting possible by waiting for cold fronts and riding their SW-NW winds.

FL to Abacos-Exumas or FL to Exumas
George Town, Exuma to Long Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador, Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI).

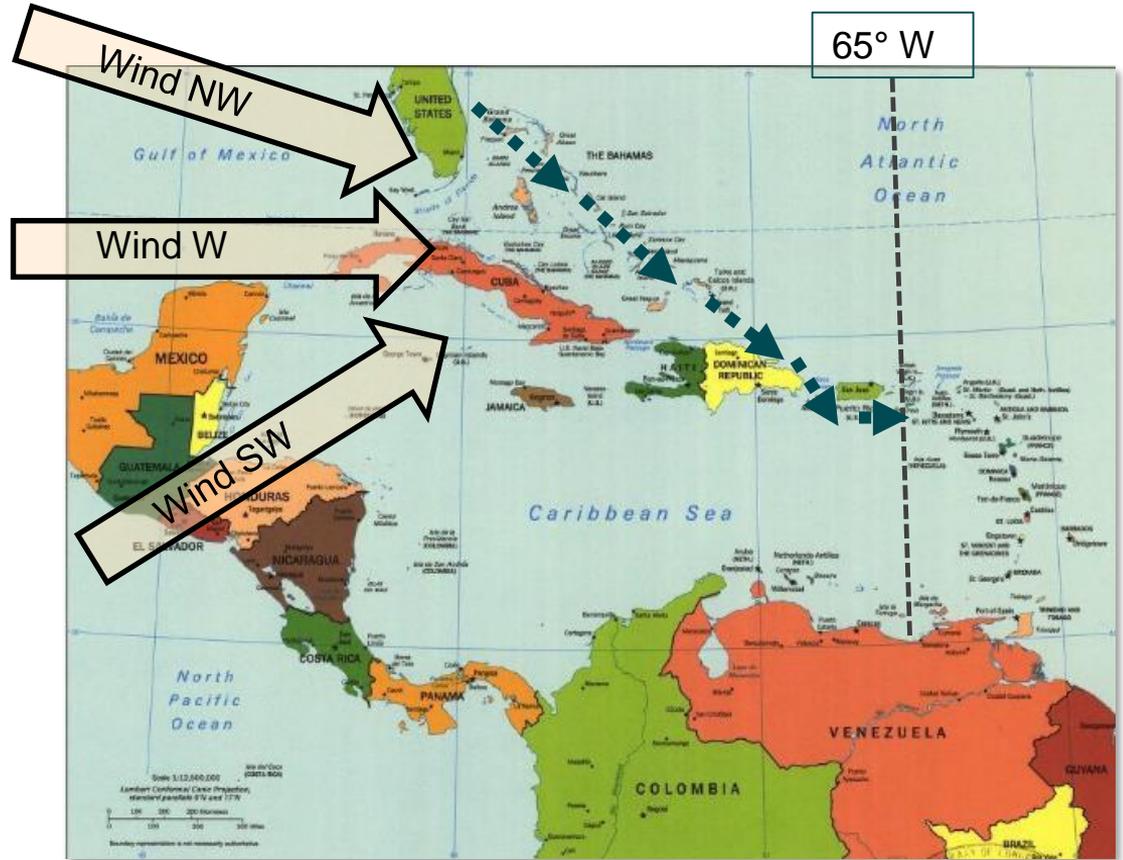
TCI overnight to Luperon, Dominican Republic

Luperon overnight to Samana using the diurnal land breeze

Mona Passage crossing, then day hops along the south side of Puerto Rico

USVI - BVI, then day hops to Grenada on the prevailing trade winds

Gentleman’s Guide to Passages South
by Bruce Van Sant.



Routes

Newer Option: *Thinking Man's Guide to Voyaging South* by Frank Virgintino

Sail through the Windward Passage and use the south coast of Haiti and Dominican Republic to protect from prevailing trades to get you farther south faster.

Get familiar with as many guidebooks as you can. They are the basis for modern cruising in the Caribbean and the basis for Chris Parker's weather forecasts.



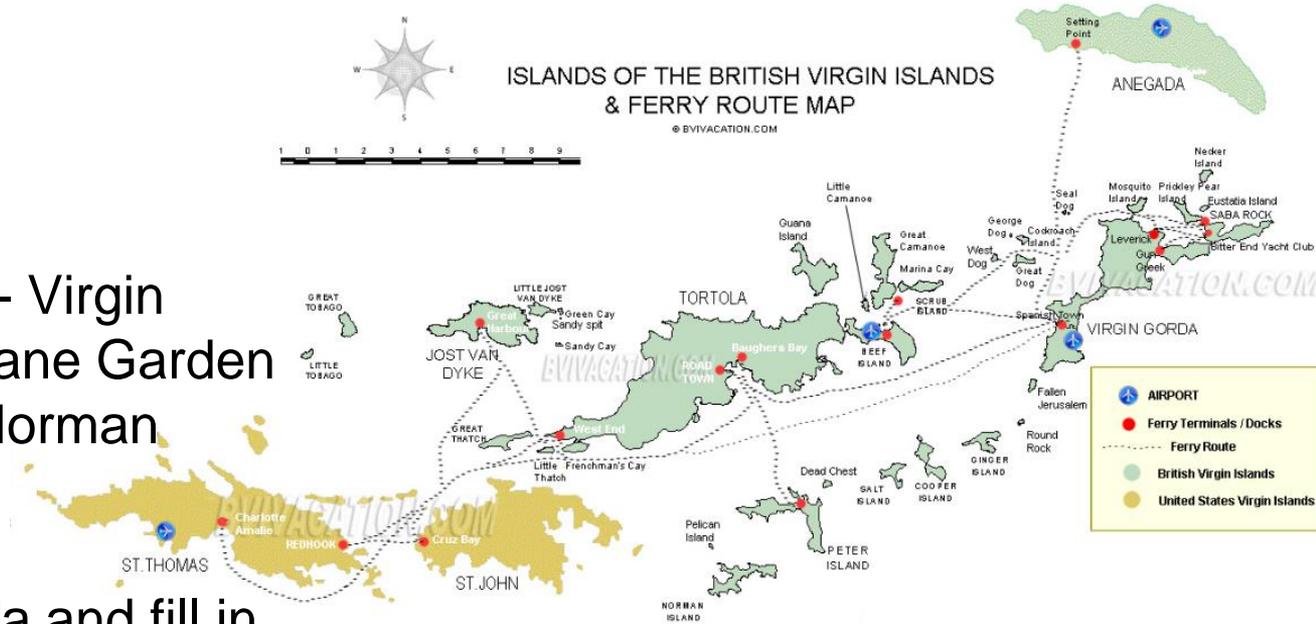
Routes

How many days?

7 days - Stay close in - Virgin Gorda, Marina Cay, Cane Garden Bay, Jost Van Dyke, Norman Island, Cooper

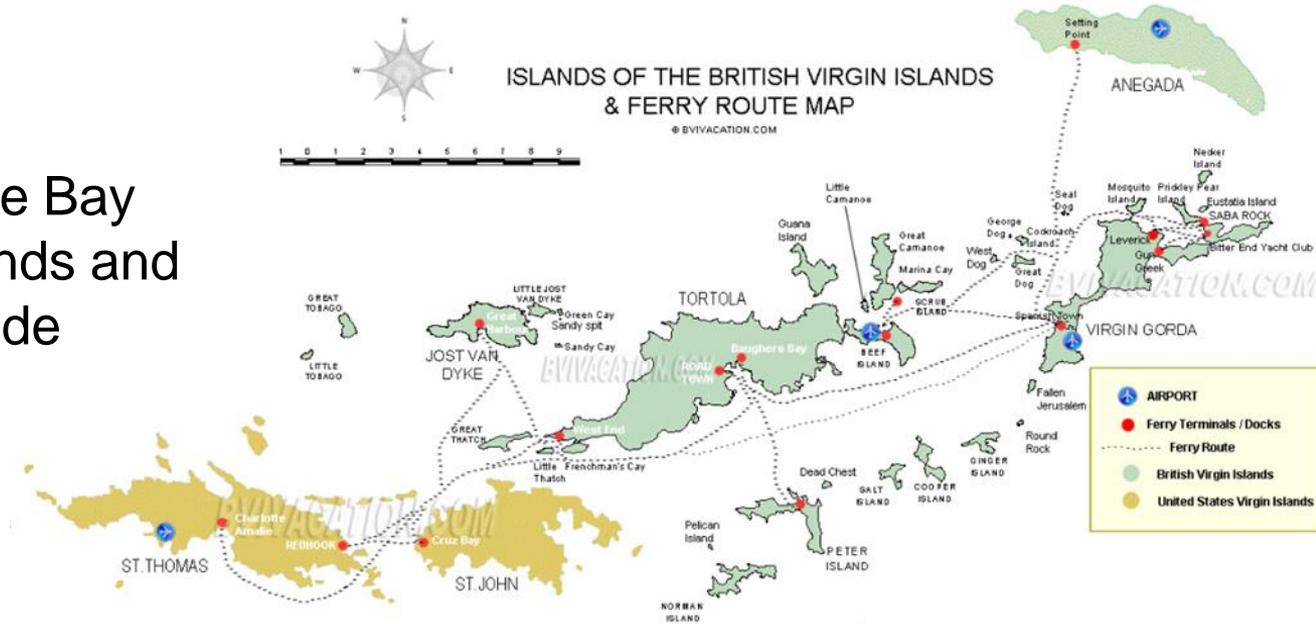
10 days - Add Anegada and fill in locations like Peter Island

14 days+ - Add the USVI or have a relaxing trip with multi-day stays



Routes

Sail Sir Francis Drake Bay or outside of the islands and Anegada with the trade winds.



Easy navigation within sight of the islands. Bring an iPad or tablet for nav help and to see the reefs and rocks.

Anchorage

In the Bahamas, picking your anchorage is more about the weather than where you'd like to be.

Cold fronts bring strong NW squalls and winds, so you must be protected from the clocking winds from S through NE and the swells they produce.

Easier said than done in many places.



Anchorage

The Abacos have fair weather anchorages or moorings. Marsh Harbour is the only “all-around” protection, and it’s still miserable in W winds and very crowded.

Places like Eleuthera, Cat Is, Long Is are wonderful cruising but have NO protection from W-NW winds. These are dangerous places to be stuck if your planning is poor.



Anchorage

The Exumas have few good anchorages - mostly roadsteads. Places between cays may look good on the chart but are narrow, windy, shallow and often have swift currents.

Don't follow the pack: many people will hang out in dangerous and uncomfortable places instead of finding a safer harbor.



During every frontal passage you will see people rocking and rolling outside Green Turtle, Hope Town, Big Majors and others.

Anchorage

Most popular anchorages

Marsh Harbour, Hope Town
moorings, Man-O-War
Cay moorings

Big Major's Spot, Staniel Cay

George Town - moving from one side to the other
depending on weather, many options in Elizabeth
Harbour especially if you get away from town



Favorite Stops

Bahamas

Our favorite islands (shhhh!)

- Abacos: Green Turtle Cay, Man-O-War, Hope Town
- Berry Islands: Great Harbour Cay
- Exumas: Staniel Cay, Black Point Settlement
- Eleuthera: Spanish Wells, Governors Harbour, Rock Sound
- Long Island: Calabash Bay, Salt Pond
- Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park
- Conception Island Park



Favorite Stops

The Baths - the boulders are a wonder of the world. Be prepared with the right gear. Spanish Town and taking a taxi may be an alternative.

Trellis Bay - Time your trip for the Full Moon Party

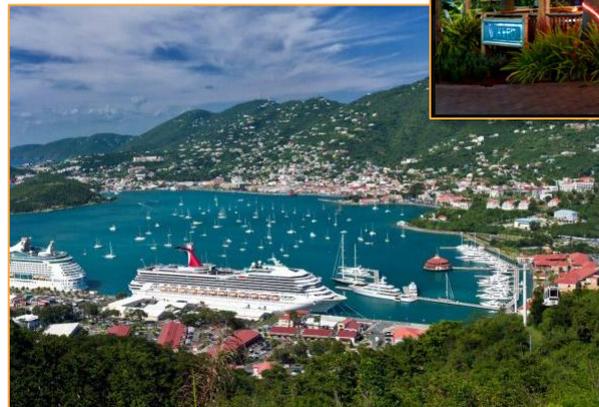
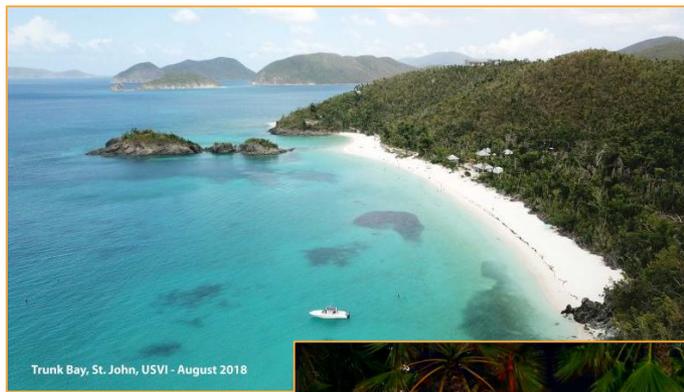
Anegada - Cow Wreck Beach, Loblolly Beach, Flash of Beauty - don't miss a lobster dinner



Favorite Stops

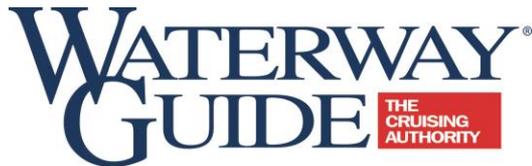
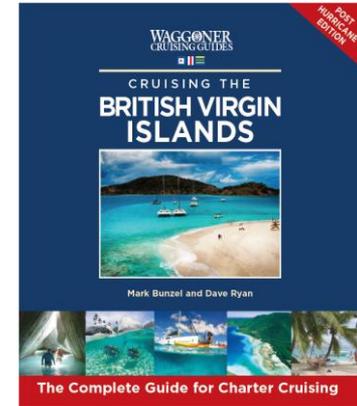
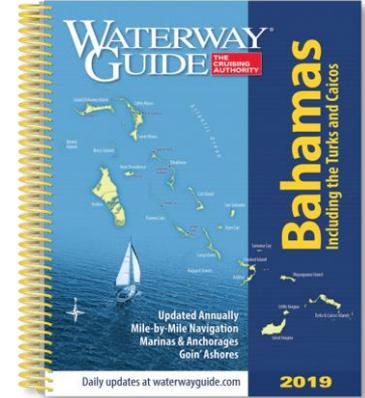
Special Events - Special parties

Check the internet for special parties like Foxy's or Cane Garden Bay



Resources

- Navionics Charts (ENC) & Apps
- *Waterway Guide Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands* for info on making the crossing, clearing customs, Goin' Ashore, etc.
- Waterway Explorer (Web App at www.waterwayguide.com)
- Explorer Chart Books
- *Gentleman's Guide to Passages South* by Bruce Van Sant
- noonsite.com - Cruising info and requirements by nation
- Chris Parker @ Marine Weather Center
- Waggoner Cruising Guide *British Virgin Islands*



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Thank You for Attending!

More Questions? Reach us at:

Jessica Grimm: jgrimm@navionics.com



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