

BAHAMAS OCEAN EXPEDITION

July 20 to August 6, 2011 *UPDATED 4/30



ORIENTATION DAYS

July 20 to July 21 Arrive in George Town on Great Exuma in the Bahamas. Your instructors will be waiting for you as you arrive. Once our group is assembled and everyone has called home to check in, we will take a short ride to our modest bunkhouse for the night, go for a swim and prepare dinner as a group. The next day will be spent getting to know each other and figuring out our daily routines and responsibilities. We will also spend time provisioning and planning our trip. We will likely have time to explore the island on a short hike, go for a swim and snorkel, and discuss our plan for the next few weeks.

SEA KAYAKING EXPEDITION IN THE EXUMAS

July 22 to August 4 We spend some more time organizing our group and personal gear in preparation for our sea kayaking expedition in the protected waters of this remarkable island chain. The Exumas are renowned as a destination for cruising sailboats, adventurers and kayak paddlers because of the calm turquoise waters and hundreds of islands and sandy spits. After spending some time, learning kayak safety and wet-exits from our Instructors, we set out to begin our exploration. Paddling tandem and single kayaks, we learn paddling techniques and basic marine navigation. Our first few days, we embark from Great Exuma north-bound through this amazing tropical island chain, camping each night on a sandy beach, taking time to explore remote islands and spending time getting to know the rest of our group. As the trip progresses, we focus on building our skills in wilderness living, paddling and coastal navigation. This island chain is a perfect paddling destination, as we kayak through crystal-clear water over a sandy bottom generally no more than 8-10' deep. Our path is largely dictated by wind and weather, but we make our way north through the protected waters of this amazing archipelago likely stopping at Lee Stocking Island, Big Farmer's Cay and Great Guana Cay, Big Major's Spot and on to Exuma Land & Sea Park and Staniel Cay.

SNORKELING & MARINE ECOLOGY

Over the course of our expedition, we spend lots of time exploring the amazing tropical marine life of the Bahamas. Our kayaks afford us a great way into enchanting mangrove creeks and over reefs teeming with tropical fish. We explore turtle grass communities, mangrove communities and coral reef communities, spending time discussing their ecological role and significance in the Exumas. Our mask, fins and snorkel enable us to get up-close with tropical marine species like brain corals, elkhorn corals, parrotfish, angelfish, hawksbill sea turtles, basket stars and spiny lobsters. During the course of our sea kayak expedition, we will likely stop for several break days so that we can spend some time intensively studying and exploring particular areas that we pass through.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We immerse ourselves in the communities that we travel through, many with fewer than 50 inhabitants. We interact with locals when we resupply and explore these remote islands – Lee Stocking Island, Staniel Cay, Great Guana Cays and others. During our expedition, we participate in a conservation-based community service project as a way to give back to this special place working with a local conservation organization in the Exumas – the Bahamas National Trust and Nature Conservancy.

FINAL DAYS

August 5-6 Our final days will find us back on Great Exuma where we started our trip. On our last evening together, we enjoy a final-farewell-feast and recount our time together. In the morning we say farewell to each other where we began 18 days earlier, at the airport in George Town, after an amazing experience exploring in The Bahamas under paddle.