PIREPs of the Caribbean

OPSGROUP Team
23 November, 2022

It is heading, at a chillingly fast pace, into winter in the northern hemisphere, which means we usually write posts on ski season spot ops. But we did that last year, so this year, we thought a nice hot weather one could be fun instead.

Which is why this is a post all about operating to the Caribbean.

**There is nothing about PIREPs in this at all, I just thought that was too good a pun to not use.*

When is peak season?

That would be now: Late November to mid April.

It is peak for two reasons:

- **One,** its still nice weather there while the northern hemisphere is generally in the midst of cold and wet misery so like winged sunflowers, or maybe moths, everyone starts heading for the sunshine.
- **Two,** there are a bunch of big holidays like Christmas and New Years and people like to go somewhere nice to celebrate.

All this means **a lot more GA traffic** which means busy airspace, delays, and parking problems if you haven't pre-planned.

What to pre-plan?

Read this very helpful post from the folk at Universal Weather. We could re-write it all out for you here but seems pointless when they've done such a good job. And all that permit parking slot stuff is dull.

So, on to more interesting stuff.

We thought we might take a look at the airports themselves instead, because there are challenges that will really *shiver yer timbers* if you don't know about them.

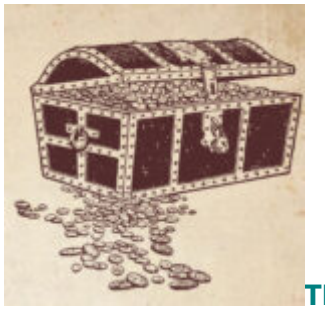
While looking up information, we also discovered this old pirate map in an ancient bottle of rum □ □☠

Click for PDF.

The Airports

TNCM/Princess Juliana, St. Maarten, *Netherlands Antilles*

Hours: 0700-2100L, O/T O/R PNR available for non-scheduled flights
Runway/Approach info: 10/28 7546'/2300m RNAV/Visual RFF9
Timber shivering stuff: You're going to need a special qualification to head in here. It has some unusual procedures because of the big old mountains near it. There is Class C airspace right above it and it all gets super congested there.

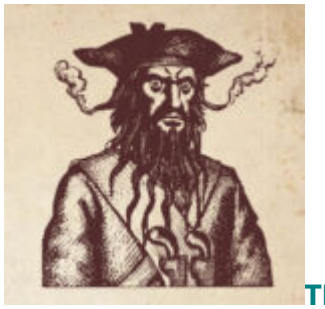


TIST/ Cyril E King, St. Thomas*, Virgin Islands*

Hours: 0700-2300L, US preclearance airport
Runway/Approach info: 10/28 7000’/2134m ILS 10 RFF7
Contact Info: Airport +1 340-774-5
Ahoy matey! What else can yer tell me?: Another one needing special qualification due hills. They also have noise sensitive areas, class c airspace and all the congestion that comes with it, and turbulence and wind shear to deal with.

TUPJ/Terrance B Lettsome (Roadtown), Tortola, *Virgin Islands*

Hours: M-F 1230-2030Z, O/T PPR
Runway/Approach Info: 07/25 is only 4646’/1416m with an RNAV to 25 RFF5
Contact Info: Airport +1 284-394-8000/ FBO: IAM jet centre +1 284-495-0303 eisops@iamjetcentre.com
Yarr! Argh! stuff: Smaller airport. It is hilly around the airport, and the short runway ends in water… There are also no VFR ops by night.



TBPB/Grantley Adams, Bridgetown, *Barbados*

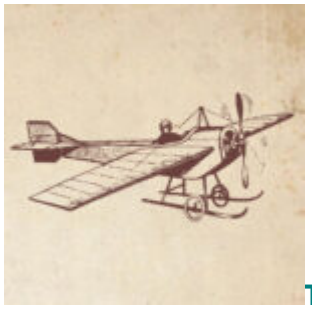
Hours: H24
Runway/Approach Info: 09/27 11017’/3358m ILS 09/RNAV RFF 9
Contact Info: Airport +1 246-536-1302/ FBO: IAM jet centre 1 246-428-1704 aviation@iamjetcentre.com
Avast, ye scurvy threats: This big one can handle big aircraft, although there are some ground restrictions for the medium and heavy folk. There are NABT procedures too. Nice one for tech stopping and maintenance action.

MYNN/Lyndon Pindling, Nassau, *Bahamas*

Hours: H24R US Pre-Clearance Airport
Runway/Aroach Info: 14/32 10925’/3330m ILS 14/RNAV RFF8 and 10/28 8302’/2530m RNAV/VOR
Contact Info: Airport +1 242-702-1010 feedback@nas.bs / FBO: Jet Aviation jnas@jetaviationnassau.com +1 242 377 3355 / Odyssey Bahamas info.mynn@odysseyaviation.com +1 242 702 0200
Yo ho ho: One of the biggers. Not without its challenges though. There are prohibited and danger areas near the airport to look out for. These mean some special IFR departure procedures if heading W, SW or NW (basically anyway involving some westwardly way). Lots of traffic below 10,000’ here too

MWCR/Owen Roberts, Georgetown, Grand Cayman, *Cayman Islands*

Hours: Ops 0700-2100L, O/T O/R; Admin M-F 0830-1700L
Runway/Approach Info: 08/26 7867’/2398m RNAV RFF7
Contact Info: Airport +1 345-943-7070 ciaa@caymanairports.com / FBO: Island air +1 345-949-5252 2 0200
Here be treasure, matey: They don’t have radar here, but they do have noise sensitive areas so navigate carefully.

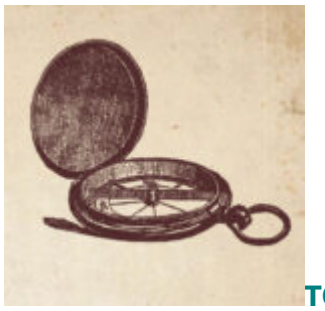


TAPA/VC Bird, St.John’s, *Antigua*

Hours: H24R
Runway/Approach Info: 07/25 9967’/3038m RNAV (GNSS) RFF8
Contact Info: Airport +1 268-484-2300 info@abairportauthority.com / FBO: Signature +1 268-462-2522 ANU@signatureflight.com
May yer compass be true: This has some skinny little taxiways that anything over 65000lbs, or with wings over 100’ (30m) isn’t allowed to use (and they can only use by day). This means backtracking aircraft on the runway which means you’ll probably have to hold on arrival for spacing. It is quite a popular tech stop airport though.

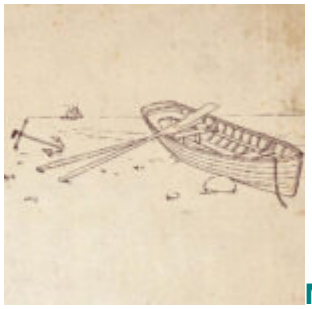
MBPV/Providenciales, *Turks and Caicos*

Hours: M-F 1230-2030Z, O/T PPR
Runway/Approach Info: 10/28 9199’/2804m RNP/VOR RFF 7
Contact Info: Airport +1 649-946-2137
Wall the plank: A bigger airport, this also has a lot go GA traffic and also some parasailing hazards to add to the fun.



TQPF/Clayton J Lloyd (Wallblake), The Valley, *Anguilla*

House: 1200-2000z
Runway/Approach Info: 11/29 5459’/1664m RNP RFF5
Contact Info: Airport +1264-497-2384/ FBO: Lloyd Aviation +1 264-498-4141 info@lloyd-aviation.com
Scallywags: Another little one that only allows IFR by night. There are a lot of poles, antenna and also birds around the airport. So keep a good look out (probably why its IFR only at night).



MKJS/Sangster, Montega Bay, *Jamaica*

Hours: H24R
Runway/Approach Info: 07/25 8735’/2662m ILS 07/RNAV 25 RFF 9
Contact Info: Airport +1 876-952-3124 Slots slotrequest@mbjairport.com/ FBO: IAM jet centre +1 876-979-3855 mbj@iamjetcentre.com
Batten down them hatches: A good tech stop spot, but look out for the mountains and the high minimas and the noise sensitive bits. Also look out for the many small airports (and traffic heading into them) which fill the airspace. They have some specific NABT procedures to look into, and it can get windsheary.

MDSD/Las Americas, Santo Domingo, *Dominican Republic*

Hours: H24
Runway/Approach Info: 17/35 11004’/3354m ILS 17/RNAV RFF9
Contact Info: Airport +1 809-947-2225 operador@aerodom.com/ FBO: Servair +1 809 549 1404 fbo@servair.com.do
Other stuff: Don’t confuse San Isidro AB for MDSD. And don’t head in unless you have the qualification – it’s one of those because of the airbase and prohibited areas nearby. Terrain nearby is also a bit of a concern, as is FOD on the runway (not sure why, but enough to permanently mention it apparently). There are also minimum ceiling restrictions of approaches so worth familiarising yourself with the charts before heading in.

MDLR/La Romana Casa de Campo intl, *Dominican Republic*

Hours: H24
Runway/Approach Info: 11/29 9678’/2950m RNAV(GNSS) RFF8
Contact Info: Airport +1 809-813-9000 info@lrm.com.do/ FBO: Swissport Dominicana +1 809 813 9123 lrmexecutive@swissport.com.do / Universal Aviation +1 809 813 9070
Hoist the mainsail: This place requires a 180 turn and backtrack on both ends of the runway and has limited taxiway and apron space. There is a nearby restricted area and noise sensitive bits.
ATC often seek in Spanish for local traffic so watch out.

TJSJ/San Juan Luis Munoz Marin, *Puerto Rico*

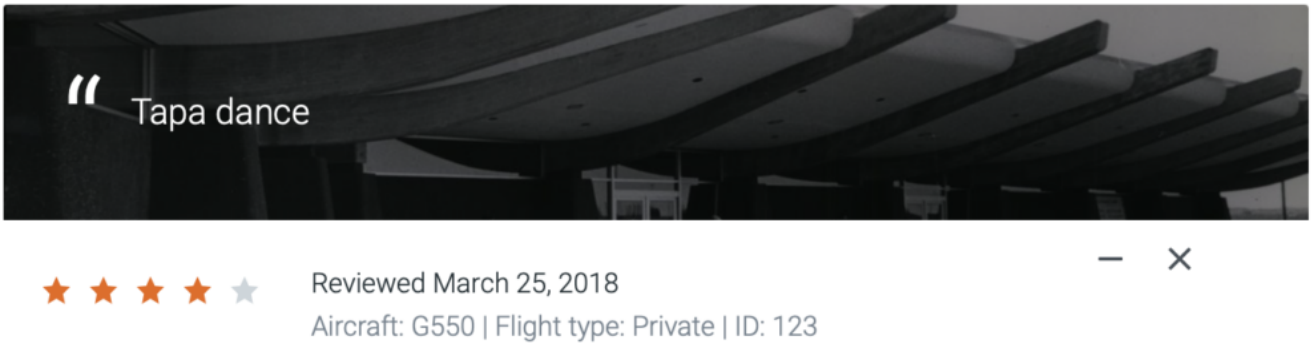
Hours:H24
Runway/Approach Info: 08/26 10400’/3170m ILS 08 / RNAV RFF8 and 10/29 8016’/2443m ILS 10 / RNAV
Contact Info: Airport +1 787-253-2329 info@aerostarairports.com/ FBO: Airport Aviation Services +1 787 791 8500/
Jet Aviation San Juan +1 787 791 7005 hector.vasquez@jetaviation.com
Pazo’s fuel services +1 787-791-7005 fboservices@pazosfbopr.com
Down to Davy Jones’ locker with ye: A good tech stop option. It does have some mountains nearby, and it is in primary Class C airspace.

Also don't get confused by TJIG/Fernando Luis Ribas Dominicci nearby

Where else can I get info?

Opsgroup wise: we have a library of **Airport Lowdowns** that you might find useful. If you're a member you can also head to **Airport Spy** and read a whole load of reviews from other members sharing what they experienced.

For example:



★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ Reviewed March 25, 2018

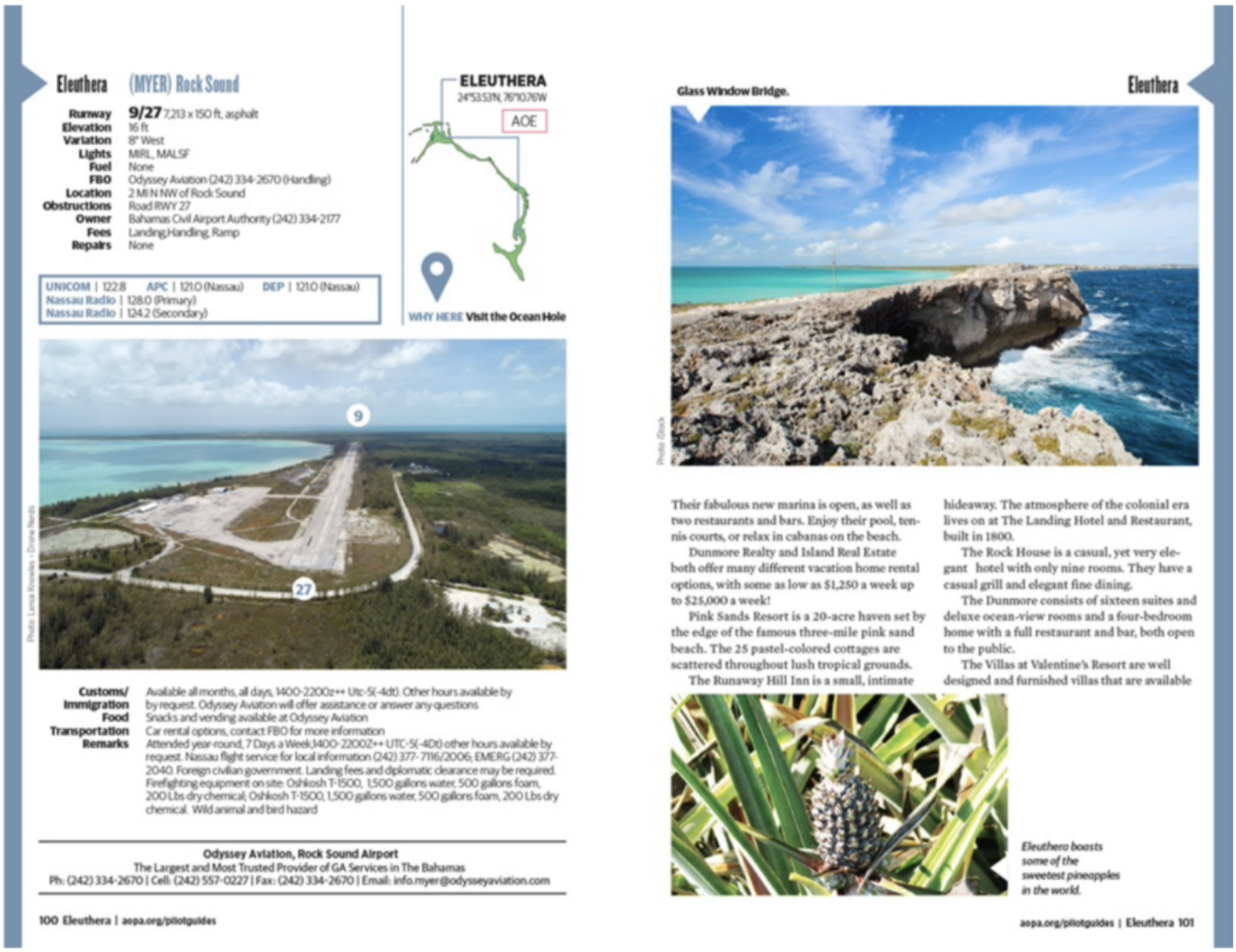
Aircraft: G550 | Flight type: Private | ID: 123

Elopo was last fix on our airway then was direct field on flight plan. We were instructed to cross it at FL190 and contact VC BIRD on 119.1. Checked in they said after Elopo descend maintain FL80 and fly inbound ANU on 320 radial and our approach clearance was in about 20mins. ANU is the Vor just off the field. We requested to fly direct Emali and the RNAV rwy 7. We were given a few descent instructions, direct Emali, enter the hold there at 2500 and contact 118.2(other freq. on chart).Crossed Emali and while out bound were cleared approach. We were told to call Bopar and 1500' and cleared to land. Great runway. Our Fbo was Signature so turned right on Echo.

A handy review for you.

AOPA make some very handy slot guides which you can find here.

They include useful stuff like info on airports, stuff to do while you're there, and photos of pineapples.



Eleuthera (MYER) Rock Sound

Runway	**9/27** 7,213 x 150 ft, asphalt
Elevation	16 ft
Variation	8° West
Lights	MIRL, MALSF
Fuel	None
FBO	Odyssey Aviation (242) 334-2670 (Handling)
Location	2 MI N NW of Rock Sound
Obstructions	Road RWY 27
Owner	Bahamas Civil Airport Authority (242) 334-2177
Fees	Landing,Handling, Ramp
Repairs	None

UNICOM | 122.8 APC | 121.0 (Nassau) DEP | 121.0 (Nassau)
Nassau Radio | 128.0 (Primary)
Nassau Radio | 124.2 (Secondary)

ELEUTHERA
24°53.53'N, 76°10.76'W
AOE

WHY HERE Visit the Ocean Hole

Photo: Lance Knowles - Drone Nerds

Customs/ Immigration	Available all months, all days, 1400-2200z++ Utc-5(-4dt). Other hours available by by request. Odyssey Aviation will offer assistance or answer any questions
Food	Snacks and vending available at Odyssey Aviation
Transportation	Car rental options, contact FBO for more information
Remarks	Attended year-round, 7 Days a Week,1400-2200Z++ UTC-5(-4Dt) other hours available by request. Nassau flight service for local information (242) 377- 7116/2006; EMERG (242) 377-2040. Foreign civilian government. Landing fees and diplomatic clearance may be required. Firefighting equipment on site: Oshkosh T-1500, 1,500 gallons water, 500 gallons foam, 200 Lbs dry chemical; Oshkosh T-1500, 1,500 gallons water, 500 gallons foam, 200 Lbs dry chemical. Wild animal and bird hazard

Odyssey Aviation, Rock Sound Airport
The Largest and Most Trusted Provider of GA Services in The Bahamas
Ph: (242) 334-2670 | Cell: (242) 557-0227 | Fax: (242) 334-2670 | Email: info.myer@odysseyaviation.com

Glass Window Bridge.

Photo: iStock

Their fabulous new marina is open, as well as two restaurants and bars. Enjoy their pool, tennis courts, or relax in cabanas on the beach.

Dunmore Realty and Island Real Estate both offer many different vacation home rental options, with some as low as $1,250 a week up to $25,000 a week!

Pink Sands Resort is a 20-acre haven set by the edge of the famous three-mile pink sand beach. The 25 pastel-colored cottages are scattered throughout lush tropical grounds.

The Runaway Hill Inn is a small, intimate hideaway. The atmosphere of the colonial era lives on at The Landing Hotel and Restaurant, built in 1800.

The Rock House is a casual, yet very elegant hotel with only nine rooms. They have a casual grill and elegant fine dining.

The Dunmore consists of sixteen suites and deluxe ocean-view rooms and a four-bedroom home with a full restaurant and bar, both open to the public.

The Villas at Valentine's Resort are well designed and furnished villas that are available

Eleuthera boasts some of the sweetest pineapples in the world.

A handy guide for all your travelling there questions.

The Caricom e-APIS site is here. You'll need this for advance information sending about passengers.

The FAA guide to the Caribbean en-route stuff can be discovered here. This is a treasure trove of information on en-route stuff, weather stuff, and all things to do with operating in the airspaces.