



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Branch Associations

# Branch Associations Turks & Caicos Islands



**Capital – Cockburn Town, Grand Turk**

## Geography

The Turks & Caicos Islands lie to the south east of the Bahamas in the north of the Caribbean. They are two groups of about 40 islands with a total land area of 430km<sup>2</sup>. There are 8 major inhabited islands. They are all flat, sandy, barren “cays”. The Turks Island passage (a deep water channel) separated the two island groups.



## Climate

Constant south east trade winds freshen the otherwise tropical climate. Annual rainfall is variable; about 52cm on Grand Turk, and usually more on the Caicos Islands. Hurricanes are a danger and were particularly severe in 1945 and 1960.

## History

The islands were part of the UK's Jamaican colony until 1962, when they assumed the status of a separate crown colony upon Jamaica's independence. The Governor of The Bahamas oversaw affairs from 1965 to 1973. With Bahamian independence, the islands received a separate governor in 1973. Independence was agreed upon for 1982, but the policy was reversed and the islands are presently a British overseas territory.



## Transport / Travel Information

GMT minus 5 hours. The main sea ports are Grand Turk, Salt Cay, Providenciales, and Cockburn Harbour. The country has an international airport, on Grand Turk. North Caicos, South Caicos and Providenciales, and many domestic airstrips. Local driving licence may be purchased by holders of national or international driving licences.

## Economy

The US dollar is the unit of currency. The economy is based on tourism, fishing, and offshore financial services. Most capital goods and food are imported. They have over 200,000 tourists annually. The US is the leading source of tourists accounting for three quarters of the visitors. Major sources of government revenue include fees from offshore financial activities and customs receipts.

## How Guiding Started

The first mention of guiding in Turks & Caicos is of a Guide Company being started on Salt Cay by Miss Jenny Morgan, a native of the island. It is not recorded how long the Company was open. The official start of guiding was in 1954, soon after Scouting came to the islands. As elsewhere in the world, the girls wanted their own organisation, so four local women travelled to Jamaica for training. When they returned they started the 2<sup>nd</sup> Turks & Caicos Guide Company.



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| <b>1928</b> | First Guide Company formed in Salt Cay.   |
| <b>1954</b> | First Guide Company registered in Grand Turk as part of Jamaica Guide Association (then a Branch Association of the UK).  |
| <b>1962</b> | As Jamaica became politically independent of the UK it ceased to be a Branch Association. Turks & Caicos Islands came under the direct political rule of the Colonial Office in London and the Association became a Branch Association of the UK. |
| <b>1979</b> | 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official start of guiding in the islands. New Units were opened in several areas.   |
| <b>1985</b> | Guiding started in Providencials.   |
| <b>1989</b> | Special stamp issued to commemorate the 35 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of guiding in the islands.  |
| <b>1995</b> | Two girls travelled to Scotland to join an international camp.  |
| <b>2010</b> | A patrol of guides from North Caicos came over with their Leaders to join in with the Centenary Camp and then onwards to "Branch Out" at Waddow for a special Centenary Branch Association gathering for Branch members.                          |

## Government / Legal

There is a Governor, and Executive Council and a Legislative Assembly. English common law is the basis of the legal system.



## Guiding Today

The girls follow the same programme as that used in the UK, adapting just a few things appropriate to their environment. Uniform tends to be T-shirts with their unit names. Some of the School based Brownies still wear short sleeved brown dresses.

They enjoy camping and an annual hike. Occasionally, girls and their Guiders are able to attend camps in other parts of the Caribbean or even overseas.

Units join the Queen's Birthday Parade and the Armistice Day Parade. There is a "Caribbean Knowledge" interest badge for both Brownies and Guides, which encourages the girls to find out about local wildlife, society and culture.