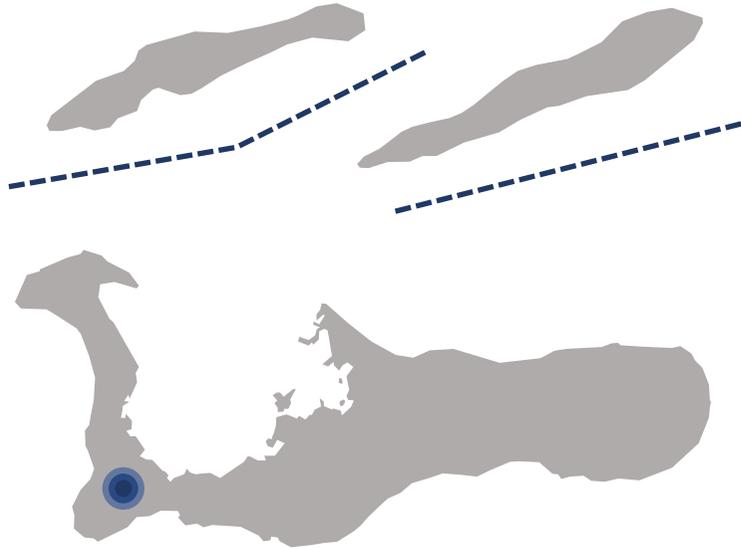




**RISK ASSESSMENT  
CAYMAN ISLANDS  
MARCH 2020**

# CAYMAN ISLANDS



## Key Travel Advice

While the risk level in country is low, employing common sense precautions and remaining aware of ones surrounding is advisable in all locations.

Key pieces of advice include:

- Remain aware when out, especially at night. While crime rates are low, incidents do occur.
- Employ caution when swimming. The seas may appear calm and clear; however, strong undercurrents can occur, never swim alone and always remain within shouting distance of shore.
- Avoid swimming in adverse conditions, be prepared for short, but heavy, periods of rainfall and expect localised inundations in some areas.
- Be aware that while unlikely, aftershocks following the earthquakes on 28 January are possible and may result in damage to buildings.
- Be aware that there are extremely harsh laws against the possession of drugs or any sort of weapons in the Caymans.

## Executive Risk Summary

The risk level in the Cayman Islands is low. The main threat that the travellers will face whilst on the islands is petty criminality. While the risk of such crime occurring is low, it is still advised for visitors to employ the same level of caution that they would at home. Violent crime is extremely rare, with the islands being considered among the safest in the Caribbean.

The islands do face a yearly threat of hurricanes; however, the hurricane season runs from June to November and is not a threat this time of year, though thunderstorms are possible and can result in flooding and disruption. The islands are also located in an active seismic zone, with magnitude 6+ earthquakes possible, as evidenced by the recent quakes on 28 January; however, further earthquakes remain unlikely, but possible.

Elsewhere, demonstrating a level of awareness when in the sea, watching out for currents, and remaining within shouting distance of shore is highly advised. Rip currents can often take people by surprise, remaining calm and swimming diagonal or parallel to the shore will allow for those caught to break out of the current.

The islands rarely suffer from protests and there is no history of prolonged periods of civil unrest. Terrorism is a negligible risk.

## US State Department Information

The US State Department Travel Advisory Level for The Cayman Islands is level 1 (Exercise normal precautions).

**Passport validity:** Must be valid at the time of entry and exit

**Blank Passport Pages:** One page required for entry stamp

**Tourist Visa requirement:** None required

**Currency restrictions for entry:** None

**Currency restrictions for exit:** None

**Vaccination requirements:** None

## Key Events to Look Out for During Travel Dates

There are currently no specific events or medical risks to look out for during the event dates.

## RISK RATINGS:



**Cayman Islands:** LOW RISK



**George Town:** LOW RISK

## RISK TYPE



**Crime** LOW RISK



**Civil Unrest** LOW RISK



**Environmental** MODERATE RISK



**Terrorism** NEGLIGIBLE RISK



**Transport** MODERATE RISK



## Important information

Royal Cayman Islands Police number: 911

Hospital Cayman Island Ambulance: 555

Currency: KYD - Cayman Islands dollar



## Embassy Emergency Information

**US Consulate Agency:**

202B Smith Road Center

150 Smith Road

George Town, Cayman Islands

Telephone: +(345) 945-8173

Email: [caymanacs@state.gov](mailto:caymanacs@state.gov)



## Crime Risk

The Cayman Islands are regarded as a safe destination for travellers. Crime rates are low even by Western standards and compare favourably to other Caribbean nations.

Opportunistic crime, such as pickpocketing and bag-snatching do, however, still occur and are the principal concern for travellers visiting the islands. As such, travellers are advised to exercise sensible precautions, including limiting overt displays of wealth as well as not leaving valuable items unattended, particularly in hotel rooms or on the beach.

Violent crime is rare; the territory had a murder rate of around eight per 100,000 population in 2019, which when compared to Jamaica (57) and Saint Lucia (29), can be considered low.

The islands have heavy penalties for the possession of narcotics or firearms, possession is strictly forbidden. Despite this, the Cayman Islands is used as a transshipment destination by criminal gangs involved in drug-trafficking. Narcotic groups tend to be armed and gang-related incidents have occurred in the past, though these have not impacted travellers.

It is important to be aware that, while the rates remain low, sexual assault is one of the most reported crimes and incidents have often involved the use of 'date rape' drugs, such as Rohypnol. As a precaution, female and lone travellers should avoid accepting food or drinks from people they are unacquainted with.

There are no specific locations to actively avoid on the islands, though refraining from visiting local George Town bars on a Friday night is advisable. However, the risk in these areas remains limited.

## Civil Unrest

The threat posed by civil unrest is low. Protests and demonstrations do occur from time to time, though such events usually pass-by peacefully, posing a negligible-to-low risk to travellers. The principal concern from demonstrations remains localised travel disruption.

There have been a number of notable protests in the past 12 months. In September 2019, a group of student activists were able to mobilise several hundred people for a protest demanding greater action on climate change and a halt to plans for the construction of cruise ship piers in George Town Harbour.

In March 2019, Cayman Islands Chief Justice Anthony Smellie ordered the government to redefine marriage as the union between two people, rather than between a man and a woman, effectively legalising same-sex marriage. The ruling triggered protests in the capital, George Town, and the definition was subsequently overturned by the government.

## Environmental

The Cayman Islands enjoy a tropical, hot and humid climate year-round. The country is currently in a cooler period, which should continue until mid-April.

While the islands can be impacted by tropical storms, these almost exclusively occur during the Atlantic Hurricane period, which runs from June to November. It is unlikely for tropical storms to form outside of these dates; however, thunderstorms can occur and result in strong winds and heavy rainfall. These storms can see localised flooding and it is advised that travellers refrain from swimming during such weather.



The islands are also located in an active seismic zone and frequently experience light tremors. The most recent earthquakes struck on 28 January, when an initial magnitude 7.7 quake struck to the east of the islands before being closely followed by a magnitude 6.1 quake 69km south-east of the islands, both at a depth of 10km. No casualties resulted from the quakes; however, there were some reports of sinkholes and light damage. An initial tsunami warning was issued; however, no significant waves occurred. Earthquakes and tsunamis in the Caribbean basin remain highly unlikely.

Despite being considered very safe, the Caribbean Sea does possess strong currents and large waves, even on clear days, with the potential for conditions to change with little or no notice. Always employ caution if swimming in the sea or taking part in water sport activities. Never swim alone.

## ! Rip Currents

A rip current refers to a strong, jet stream-like return flow that results from waves continuously circulating along the shore. If the waves are higher without much break in between them (often associated with a strong wind onshore), the rip current becomes extremely strong and pulls back out to sea.

The speed of rip currents can range from between 1 and 2 mph to as fast as 5 or 6 mph (just under 10 kph), which is around 2 meters a second – faster than an Olympic swimmer. They are generally a maximum of 25 meters (80 feet) wide and can extend out around 30 metres (100 feet) to 600 metres (2000 feet) plus before dissipating.

Advice if caught in a rip current:

- Avoid them where possible.
- Call for help and alert others.
- Preserve energy. If you can stand, stand instead of swimming, if not, float.
- Swim parallel to the beach, most rip currents are between 10 and 100 metres wide, once you break free, the current reverses, aiding you, swim diagonally (away from the rip current) back to the beach.

## Transport

There is a variety of transportation options on the islands, which include car rental services, taxis and public buses. Vehicles drive on the left-hand side of the road. Road conditions and the enforcement of traffic laws are of a good standard. There are several reputable car rental companies; a temporary driver's licence is required prior to hiring a vehicle.

The public bus system is of a good standard. There are eleven bus routes, which all run to and from the bus terminal on Edward Street, close to the Public Library, in central George Town. Even though there are several bus stops across the Island, the best way to get on a bus is to wave one down from the side of main roads.

Taxis are very popular yet expensive. They are found everywhere on the island, notably at the airport and in front of the ship dock. New initiatives were launched last year to standardise prices for routes. Whilst the majority of taxi drivers use consistent prices, though it is advised to confirm fares with the driver before a ride.

## Medical

The Medical facilities in the Cayman Islands are modern, well equipped and provide for all medical situations. There are three fully equipped hospitals: Cayman Islands Hospital, CTMH Doctors Hospital and Health City Cayman Islands. Most doctors and nurses are trained in the UK. The ambulance service on the island is also considered reliable and can be reached on 555.

Cayman Islands Hospital is the primary medical facility in the country, and it offers A&E services as well as other specialist services that include dermatology, cardiology, dentistry and mental health support. The Doctors Hospital and Health City Cayman Islands also offer a broad range of services. These are located on Grand Cayman. The Faith Hospital serves both Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. There are also numerous health clinics, district health centres and pharmacies across George Town, West Bay, Bodden Town, East End, North Side and Little Cayman.

Travellers are advised to make sure to have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment. While the standard of facilities is good, more complex medical requirements may need evacuation to the United States.

Some vaccines are recommended or required. The following are advised by the WHO: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza. Travellers going to the Caribbean at risk of viral infections transmitted by insects such as Zika, chikungunya and dengue. Travellers are advised to take meticulous measures to prevent mosquito bites. Government sources indicate that there

has been no local transmission of Malaria for the past decade.

## Coronavirus

At the time of writing, the Cayman Islands has not seen any cases from the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The country is taking a proactive approach to ensuring that cases remain at a minimum. For example, the country blocked the docking of a cruise vessel when it was reported that a crew member was ill onboard. The person was later reported to have Type A influenza and not the new COVID-19.

It is likely that further vessels with similar cases onboard will be turned away. Otherwise, the island's restrictions fall largely in line with that of the UK, with travellers from China and other locations with a high number of cases being required to self-isolate at this time. Increased screening should be expected at airports and the cancellation of large events is also possible.

## Hospitals

### Cayman Islands Hospital

95 Hospital Road, George Town

+1 345-949-8600

Email: [info@hsa.ky](mailto:info@hsa.ky)

### CTMH Doctors Hospital

16 Middle Rd, George Town KY1-1104

+1 345-949-6066

### Health City Cayman Islands

High Rock, 1283 Sea View Rd, Cayman Islands

+1 345-640-4040

## Other

On 24 January, a large fire broke out at a landfill on the islands. The blaze has since been extinguished, on 26 January. The fire did result in disruption in the immediate area, with schools closing early.