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Scuba Diving in Cancun



The Undersea World of Cancun.

Mention the name Cancun to divers and a smile automatically appears, as Cancun has long been recognized as a top diving destination. Although we have spent many euphoric hours in exotic undersea locations such as the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, the Blue Hole in Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, throughout the Hawaiian islands, and in Mexico in Los Cabos and Cozumel, and in less exotic places like Massachusetts and Maine, we had never been to Cancun. We decided to remedy that in May 2005, and we were pleased with the prolific sea life that we found there.



As Divemasters we are frequently asked by the non-diving population why we dive and what do we see “down there”. Ever since Peter Benchley’s book *Jaws*, and Steven Spielberg’s film by the same name came out, many people believe that the sea is teeming with Great White sharks just waiting below the surface to bite any unfortunate person who might venture to dip a toe in the water. Although Edward did see a white-tip reef shark in the distance on his first dive in Australia, I missed seeing it, and never saw my first shark until after some 100 dives when I was in Hawaii waiting for a group of divers to come down and join me. Now, with over 300 dives under our weight belts, we do occasionally see a shark, but have never seen a Great White, and are not sure that we would want to!

Why do we dive and what is it like? Scuba diving is like nothing else; it is something that you have to experience for yourself. It is the feeling of total freedom and being weightless, probably what it is like being in space, with its infinity. It is a place where we go to relax, to escape the everyday world where we are free to commune with nature without being interrupted by ringing mobile phones, to explore the unexplored, because each and every dive holds the promise of something new – discovering a new species, finding a lost treasure or just observing the antics of sea creatures. In other words, we became hooked a long time ago, and the passion still remains. The sea is in our blood, and after experiencing Cancun, so is it.

At times, diving in Cancun was much like diving in a very well stocked exotic aquarium. The spectacularly intensely colorful coral reefs in shades of neon blue, canary yellow, and tangerine orange looked like something designed by Disney, and were teeming with life. As we swam over the reefs, we loved waving our hands over the multi-colored Spiral-gilled tube worms, which look like tiny feathery Christmas trees, which will contract when the water around them is disturbed, and then seconds later pop back out again. Another of our favorites was the large Vase Sponge, which are sponges that resemble a vase in that there is an opening in the center of the vertical sponges. They can reach sizes up to 24” (61 cm) wide and 36” (91 cm) high and are reddish to reddish-brown in color. There were large Sea Fans, which can reach sizes up to 36” (91 cm), which sprouted in many areas that we passed, Brain Coral, which is round in shape and resembles a brain, and bright Orange Cup Coral. There were also Magnificent Feather Dusters in a wide array of colors, which undulated in the current like underwater ballet dancers.

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The fish populations appeared to be quite healthy and were quite dense in some areas, with large schools of yellow Angelfish, as well as many Queen Triggerfish, Parrotfish, Puffers, Trumpetfish, as well as Sea Cucumbers, Spiny Lobsters and black Long-spined Urchins, Sea Stars and Brittle Stars, Scorpionfish, Octopus and even a baby green Moray, that were just some of the many creatures that we observed, and no, not a single shark was seen on any of our dives!

We would recommend that if you were interested in diving, that you take classes for certification before your trip, although you can get certified on your trip in Cancun or elsewhere, you would be able to relax and enjoy the diving on your trip.

We would also recommend that both divers and non-divers contact the Dive Shops and ask the following questions, before booking any dive trip, so as not to be disappointed with your diving experience.

- 1) Size of boat: how many passengers does it take?
- 2) Does the boat cater to certified divers, resort divers (making a trial dive) or snorkelers? Make sure that the boat is able to meet your level of experience.
- 3) What is the ratio of Divemasters to the numbers of divers in a group?
- 4) What types of dives does the boat specialize in? Sometimes morning dive sites differ from afternoon dives, which may be shallower.
- 5) What types of facilities are available on board, (snacks, drinks, lavatory, shower)?
- 6) Do they have extra equipment available on-board? If not, you may want to bring a spare mask strap, snorkel, etc.

Remember, you no matter wherever you dive, respect the sea, and enjoy exploring its magnificent underwater beauty.

For additional information on Cancun, please visit the [Cancun Convention & Visitors Bureau](#).

You may also enjoy our other articles on Cancun in the **Destinations**, **Hotels & Resorts**, **Restaurants**, **Spa**, **Chefs' Recipes**, **Liquor Cabinet**, and **Travel News** sections.

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