

Dive Cayman

An underwater fantasy just off our shores

Diving here in the Cayman Islands is like discovering an uncharted world for divers of every level and interest.



From tiny still-unnamed invertebrates hidden in coral heads to mysteries of a marine world seen only by trained technical divers, the Cayman Islands spells out ADVENTURE. And for divers of every level and interest, Cayman has it all.

Cayman is world famous for breathtaking walls covered with dazzling sponge life, beginning as shallow as 18 ft. in Little Cayman and plummeting thousands of feet straight out of sight into indigo Caribbean.

But there's much more! Every kind of Caribbean marine creature, from green sea turtles to tarpon, patrol our coasts. Acres of healthy coral reefs and lush gorgonians thrive in our Marine Parks. Wrecks, old and new, offer underwater photographers great opportunities.

Our three islands surprise even "been there, done that" divers with exciting discoveries and bragging-rights log book entries year round. And things you never thought you'd see here: cartoonish blennies and orange sea horses; yellow frogfish and sandy plains of garden eels; flying gurnards — and Stingray City's squadron of Southern Atlantic Stingrays that flock around divers like curious birds after tidbits of squid.

Underwater photographers become snap-happy discovering Cayman's variety of approachable marine creatures - and ideal conditions. Visibility averages 80-150 feet in our warm, clear, generally current-free waters whose temperature ranges between 78°F in winter and 86°F in summer and fall.

Each island's personality is unique but they share one great attraction: these unlimited diving adventures are easy to reach and suitable for all diving skills.

These include 257 moored boat dive sites and great shore diving just minutes away from anywhere you're staying.

GRAND CAYMAN

Grand Cayman's sophisticated polish and plentiful comforts and services offer every dive vacation lifestyle possible. Walls plummet along all four distinct sides of this island, which means there is always a leeward side offering a calm day of diving. Regardless of weather, diving is practically guaranteed 365 days a year. And if you think you've seen it all on Grand Cayman, head out to East End's wild and exciting wilderness. With only 159 dive sites marked off these coasts - there's still miles of adventures awaiting discovery.

LITTLE CAYMAN


Peaceful Little Cayman boasts 57 dive sites and one of the world's most dramatic sheer walls, beginning at only 18 ft. at Bloody Bay and Jackson Point. Legendary visibility, lush coral and sponge life and a constantly surprising "What's That!" of marine life have made repeat visitors of some of the most famous underwater photographers in the world.

CAYMAN BRAC

Rugged, seafaring and friendly Cayman Brac has been a cherished diver's mecca for over 25 years, and some of its original scuba trail blazers are still diving out here.

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But their secret is out and divers are heading east from Grand Cayman to this still pristine frontier in growing numbers. The newest among the 41 moored dive sites is the dramatic M/V Capt. Keith Tibbetts, a 330 ft. Russian-built frigate sunk off the northwest coast in September 1996.

Columbus may have discovered the Cayman Islands in 1503, but it was Bob Soto's equally important discovery in these waters 450 years later that opened a truly New World. With homemade diving equipment that would appall divers today, Mr. Soto began exploring the magic and mystery of Cayman's underwater kingdom. In 1957, he was called a madman when he decided to expose visitors to this dramatic marine scene and launched Bob Soto's Diving Ltd., the Caribbean's first dive operation, on Grand Cayman.

DIVE OPERATIONS

During the past four decades, this tranquil Western Caribbean island trio has developed into one of the world's top dive destinations. Its location and unusual geology accounts for part of that appeal. There are now more than 30 dive operations on Grand Cayman, six on Little Cayman and three on Cayman Brac. In addition, two liveboards, the Cayman Aggressor IV and Little Cayman Diver II offer week-long inclusive dive packages.

The three tiny islands are not volcanic, but actually peaks of an undersea mountain known as the Cayman Ridge, which rises more than six miles from the ocean floor. To the south is the deepest part of the Caribbean Sea: the Cayman Trench, which plunges to a depth of 24,759 ft.

What lures both novice and experienced divers to these islands is a combination of attractions: at the top of the list is the famous Cayman Wall, which divers know actually refers to the dramatic drop-offs surrounding all three islands. Within a quarter mile from shore, beginning as shallow as 20 - 35 ft., the ocean floor falls away as either a sloping or sheer vertical cliff, plummeting 6,000 ft. into unfathomable blue abyss.

Today, the Cayman Islands offers more extraordinary diving adventures than ever for divers of all skill levels, from absolute beginner through Master Scuba Instructor.

Dive shops and training facilities throughout the three islands offer every possible diving-related service from IANTD Nitrox certification; Tri-mix instruction and other opportunities for technical diving.

MARINE CONSERVATION

The Cayman Islands has carefully protected its marine environment through strict legislation dating back to the original marine conservation Act of 1976. The Marine Parks laws introduced in April 1986 greatly expanded Cayman's protection of the marine environment.

By safeguarding its varied critical marine habitats, Cayman has insured the existence of varied and abundant population of marine life on its reefs and drop-offs. There are now 257 single and double-pin permanent moorings off the coasts of our three islands, including 159 on Grand Cayman, 41 on Cayman Brac and 57 on Little Cayman.

The Department of Environment has four staff members (two Marine Parks Officers and two Marine Technicians) specifically responsible for maintenance and repairs to this extensive system of structures, as well as for research and identification of new mooring sites which could relieve stress on heavily dived areas.

Now almost 50 years after Bob Soto first said "let's go diving", off Grand Cayman's west coast, the mystery and pristine quality of more than 75% of these sites remains unknown to most divers. There are still miles of virgin diving off Cayman's coasts awaiting discovery by divers today.

Here, beneath the calm tourmaline and lapis surface of the Caribbean divers find virtually unlimited diving adventures and startling encounters with marine life.

The Cayman Islands remains surrounded by a New World awaiting discovery.