

Solomon Is. Diving



DIVE GUIDE 2024/2025 EDITION

visitsolomons.com.sb

Welcome



Solomon Islands is happy to welcome you to its underwater world. Our islands are surrounded by ocean expanses and blue lagoons that consists of some of the richest and most diverse marine life in the world.

Each of our provinces offers unique and fascinating dives that will surprise you; from the WWII wrecks at Mbonege, near Honiara, to the lava tubes at Twin Tunnels in the Florida Islands or the shark life at Marovo and the coral gardens in Munda and Gizo, there is something for everyone. You will discover world class diving spots with rich historic remains from World War II, long stretches of colorful coral gardens and varied sea life. Snorkelling and Freediving are reputable to be amongst the best in the World.

Solomon Islands is located within the Coral Triangle region which is recognized as the global centre of biodiversity and a global priority for conservation. In Gizo alone, the northwestern tip is the merge point for oceanic currents, this site is popular for having over 270 species of fish identified by a single diver on a single dive, the fourth highest such count in the world!

Accommodations are available with options from resorts, beach bungalows, lodges and traditional homestays. Solomon Islands is committed to providing a positive, one and only experience to swim with dolphins, dive with sharks, explore World War II wrecks and feast your eyes on colourful beds of corals and countless colourful fishes. The crystal-clear waters makes them a real haven for photographers.

Source: www.conservationgateway.org/Documents/SolomonIslandsMarine-AssessmentReport-Full.pdf

It takes only three hours from Brisbane to reach either Honiara or Munda by Solomon Airlines Airbus A 320 with complete onboard service. Also, Solomon Airlines domestic flights are frequent to the provinces making it easy to access dive destinations within the Solomon Islands.

Prepare your next diving holiday, come and discover Solomons underwater.

Welkam frens!



Fiona Teama

Head of Sales & Marketing, Tourism Solomons.



Disclaimer: extra care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is as accurate and reliable as possible. However, Tourism Solomons or other contributors to this guide booklet cannot guarantee that any information in this guide booklet, including but not limited to, contacts, website addresses, telephone numbers, facts and figures or any services will remain unchanged. Operators can change or close and new operators may be established at any time. For verification of any information in this guide, please contact:

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Contents

WELCOME	2
MAP	6
GETTING HERE	8
DIVING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS	12
WHEN & WHERE TO DIVE	13
GUADALCANAL	13
ISABEL	18
LIVEBOARDS	22
GIZO	28
MAROVO LAGOON	34
MUNDA	40



Image Credit – Ross Long



SOLOMON SEA



Dive Operator Locations



Getting There

Airport

There are two internationally serviced airports in the Solomon Islands – one in Honiara, Guadalcanal and the second in Munda, Western Province.

Honiara International Airport (HIR) is your gateway into the Solomon Islands. It used to be named Henderson Airport after a World War II US Marine pilot. The airport is 12 kms from the Honiara city centre. The Major Hotels in Honiara will provide a shuttle bus service (for a fee) if requested in advance. The domestic terminal is located a few hundred meters from the International Terminal.

Munda International Airport (MUA) is considered the tourist hub to the Western Province of Solomon Islands. There are direct weekly flights from Brisbane along with twice daily flights connecting to Honiara.

AIRLINE SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

Honiara International Airport is currently served by 4 international airlines flying direct from Australia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji.

Solomon Airlines - www.flysolomons.com - The national carrier flies to Honiara from Australia (Brisbane), Vanuatu (Port Vila) Fiji (Nadi) and Kiribati (Tarawa) with connections from New Zealand, Europe, Asia & North America. Direct flights between Australia (Brisbane) and Munda are also available. Flights are often code shared with Qantas Airlines, Fiji Airways and Air Niugini.

Air Niugini - www.airniugini.com.pg - Fly into Honiara from PNG (Port Moresby) with direct connections from Singapore and other Asian ports.

Fiji Airways - www.fijiairways.com - Fly into Honiara from Fiji (Nadi) where flights connect with services from North America and other Pacific Islands.

AIRLINE SERVICES DOMESTIC

Solomon Airlines website www.flysolomons.com is now a great platform for handling international and domestic bookings at the same time. This is a great service for the divers to use.

SOLOMON AIRLINES SALES OFFICE LOCATIONS:

Solomon Islands

Call (Solomon Islands wide): 177 (177 is still used for reservation booking but it's no longer a toll free number) or

T: (677) 20031

E: 177@flysolomons.com.sb

www.flysolomons.com

Point Cruz sales office, International sales office and Domestic Terminal Agents located at all ports served.

OVERSEAS OFFICES:

Australia - Brisbane

L1 5a Grevillea Place,

Brisbane Airport, QLD 4008.

T: (AUS Wide) 1300 894 311 **T:** (outside AUS) +617 3860 5883

F: 617 3860 4351 **E:** reservations@flysolomons.com

www.flysolomons.com

Fiji - Nadi, International Terminal Arrivals Concourse

T: (679) 672 2831 **F:** 679 6722140

E: solomon@connect.com.fj

www.flysolomons.com

Papua New Guinea - Port Moresby

T: (675) 76492401 **E:** png.ops@flysolomons.com

www.flysolomons.com

New Zealand

Toll free call to Australia office: (0800) 424 980

GENERAL SALES AGENTS (GSA):

UK & Europe

London - Flight Directors, Flight House, Fernhill Road,
Horley, Surrey RH6 9SY, United Kingdom

T: 44 (0) 8717 440336 **F:** 44 (870) 240 2208

www.solomonairlines.co.uk

United States

Solomon Airlines USA c/o AirlinePros,
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 385-360

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The Association of Dive Operators Solomon Islands (DOSI)

Dive Operators of Solomon Islands (DOSI)

As embodied in the formal objectives of DOSI our mission is to **actively and responsibly promote all aspects of the diving industry** including

- ◆ conserving the reef environment
- ◆ protecting historical wrecks
- ◆ adding value to the national and village economies
- ◆ improving diving amenities and services

The dive sites, their descriptions and associated images contained within this guide have been provided by members of DOSI.

<https://www.solomonislandsdiving.com>



Image Credit – Aaron Wong



Image Credit – Aaron Wong



Image Credit – Tracey Jennings

Solomon Is. Diving

DIVING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

There are over 400 identified and mapped dive sites in the Solomon Islands with more sites being discovered all the time. Many of the sites are centered in the Western Province (Marovo Lagoon, Vella Lavella, Munda and Gizo), Guadalcanal (Honiara) and the Central Province (Florida and Russell Islands). For those who don't mind travelling to more remote destinations, new sites have recently been identified in Choiseul and the Shortland Islands.

Snorkelling is abundant along the coast of the islands and freediving is gaining popularity. Diving in the Solomons is diverse so no matter your skill level or interest you are certain to find a dive site in the Solomons that is suitable for you.

Solomons is known for its amazing bio-diversity and healthy reef structure, particularly its hard corals. Structurally, the diving is stunning with immense walls, huge bommies, cuts and caverns and caves. Combine this with a rich history and many World War II wrecks, planes and supply bases - the diving here is extraordinary.

Diving in the Solomons is diverse so no matter what your skill or interest you are certain to find many dive sites that are suitable for you.

A good place to start is by checking out the dive operators in each of the regions of the Solomons. The map of the dive destinations will give you an overview of the major dive locales.

When & Where To Dive

You can dive in the Solomons at any time of the year as dive sites are chosen depending on daily tidal movements and prevailing weather. The islands enjoy a tropical climate all year round as we are located only a few degrees below the equator.

The Solomon Islands has a tropical climate and has two annual seasons; Komburu, which is the wet season, is usually from November to April, and Ara, the dry season which normally occurs from May to October. However, being a tropical island destination, the occasional squall does blow through.

Temperature: The South East Trade winds from June to August mean the air temperature and humidity are a bit lower than normal. Average air temperature is 27C and the average water temperature is 29C-30C.

Exposure gear for diving is always a personal choice, however most visitors find it comfortable to dive in a 2mm wet suit or a combination lycra and short suit. If you will be doing a 4-5 dives a day, additional thermal protection is recommended even though the water and air seem warm.

Guadalcanal

Guadalcanal/Honiara

Tulagi Dive

Point Cruz, Honiara, Solomon Islands

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www.tulagidive.com

Tulagi Dive can service the Central Province sites on request but minimum numbers/conditions may apply.

Troy runs the full-service dive centre Tulagi Dive from his Shop next door to the Point Cruz Yacht Club on Honiara's waterfront. Tulagi Dive offers shore diving on the various wrecks along the shoreline of Guadalcanal, and trips across Iron Bottom Sound to various sites on the Florida Islands.

Troy is a PADI, SDI/TDI and SSI/SSI XR instructor and he is an experienced Commercial Diver. Tulagi Dive can offer courses from Open Water, right up to Technical diving courses including Advance Trimix. Troy is also an Advanced Gas Blending Instructor and can provide Nitrox and Trimix.

Honiara Hyperbaric Chamber

In the event of an emergency such as hyperbaric injury while diving, there is a recompression chamber in Honiara. The chamber is fully operational, available 24/7 and is operated by trained competent personnel.

It is strongly recommended that all divers have valid and appropriate dive insurance prior to arrival in the Solomon Islands.

Honiara Wreck Dives

I-1 Submarine

The I-1 was salvaged during the 1960s and 70s and with a lot of non-ferrous metal onboard a lot of destruction took place. It is still a good dive and the stern of the wreck easily defines what she was.

The I-1 lies in 3-28 metres and is often dived from shore - this requires a 200m swim from shore to the site. The drive from Honiara takes about 45 minutes.

USS Atlanta

The deepest and most challenging wreck that is dived in the Solomons and is the only diveable wreck sunk from the naval engagement know as "The Barroom Brawl". This is a highly technical dive as she sits at 130m.

USS Serpens

The Serpens lies in 40m of water inshore from the John Penn and even though the destruction of the ship was complete, there are large sections and much of her cargo remaining on the bottom. Due to the relative shallow depth there is plenty of time to explore.

USS John Penn

The Penn lies on her starboard side, 35m to the upper hull and 58m on the bottom. Current is often present at this site which attracts lots of pelagics (Barracuda, Tuna, Kingfish, Trevally and Sharks). It is due to the fish attracted to the wreck that makes it very popular with the local fishermen, resulting in it being festooned in fishing line - keep your line cutter close at hand.

Sasako Maru

Close to shore, but this site is best dived from a boat. She lies on her port side in 58m of water with the gunnels on the bottom in 85m. The Sasako is visually very spectacular on a clear day but due to its depth divers must be confident with deep air or must use Trimix.

Azumasan Maru

Lies about 150m from shore but is best

dived from a boat. Lots of colour and soft corals and good photo opportunities (check the bow looking back to the wreck from the sand). Kawasaki motorbikes and sidecars can be found in the second hold at a depth of 62m, another can be found adjacent to the back mooring at a depth of 74m.

Kyusyu Maru

The Kyusyu lies in 7-47 meters of water. Her superstructure was used as target practice by the USN, USMCAF and USAAF, then she was salvaged in the 60s and 70s and storms and earthquakes did the rest of the damage. Though the architecture of the ship is largely destroyed, it is still a great dive, with penetrations in the rear hold areas, and there are even some boxes of shells still visible that the salvagers missed.



Image Credit – Mark Hatter



Image Credit – Adam Beard

Kinugawa Maru

Also known as the Bonegi 2, this wreck still has significant features clearly visible like the engine block. The site is covered in soft coral and anemones - it is a very pretty dive and will satisfy both wreck divers and nonwreck divers alike.

Hirokawa Maru

Also known locally as the Bonegi 1, lies in 3-56m water. Engine is still easily visible along with the crank shaft and gear box at bilge level. The shallows now form a magnificent coral garden, so safety stops or deco is a pleasure, with more than blue water to look at.

Central Province Reef Dives:

Twin Tunnels

A coral bommie located close to Tulagi which is approximately 120m in diameter. The top of the reef is spectacular in its own right and there is no need to go down the

cave. Currents pass over this reef and attract many pelagic fish including Dog Tooth Tuna, Blue Fin Trevally, Spanish Mackerel and Barracuda. A variety of Sharks, including Grey Reef, White Tip and Black Tips are often sighted.

Tanavula Drift

Take the plunge and drift the beautiful sloping reef and wall dive that is Tanavula. Enormous Gregorian fan corals in abundance, soft and hard corals of all descriptions and colors will compete for your attention as you drift lazily along in the current.

Devil's Highway

The best place in the Solomons to dive with manta rays. A channel between two islands funnels water to form a strong currents and an adrenaline filled dive. Drift along the reef top, duck under the reef wall and watch as up to a dozen mantas swim close by in



Image Credit – Adam Beard

formation to feed. They are often joined by sweetlips, jacks and bumphead parrotfish.

Baby Cakes Reef

A mound reef located in the Maravagi Passage which is always subject to current. Of course where there is current there is action and some days you need to shoo away the fish so you can observe the fish! This reef always surprises as there is always something special to be seen there.

Leru Cut (Russell Islands)

A channel back into Leru Island forms a breathtakingly beautiful reef formation which when dived at the right time of day has amazing beams of light and fantastic photo opportunities. Surface at the end and see the vine covered cliffs and jungle before descending and exiting onto a sheer wall of fans and soft coral.

Karumolun Point (Russell Islands)

The chief of Karumolun Island has banned all fishing and collecting on this dive site for five years creating a local marine protected area. This point has great soft coral, a big school of jacks, barracudas and lots of sharks, often eagle rays are seen here too. The macro side of this dive site is fantastic as well with disco clams (electric file shells), nudis, cuttlefish, crocodile fish and ghost pipefish among the things seen.

Central Province Wreck Dives:

USS Aaron Ward

The USS Aaron Ward was sunk on the 7th April 1943. She was called in to provide coverage for LST449 (Landing Ship Tank)

from an incoming Japanese air raid. The "Ward" is one of the world's great wreck sites and very large on the wow factor - visibility on average is 20-30m. The wreck sits in approximately 60 to 70m making this a technical dive.

USS Kanawha

USS Kanawha, like the USS Aaron Ward, was also sunk on the 7th April 1943. The Kanawha at 476' long, was also a supply vessel for the US Marines. Though it lies in 60m it is only 40m to the forward deck and 55m to the stern deck making this an excellent advanced dive with lots to explore.

Kawanishi Sea Planes

Before the landing of the Marines on the 7th August 1942, an air strike was conducted by the US Navy to eliminate the flying boats of the Imperial Japanese Army. As a result, several Kawanishi 4 engine reconnaissance / VIP transport seaplanes were sunk. The two main sites lie in 30m and the wrecks are big enough to keep you occupied for an entire non-decompression dive and more.

RNZN Moa

The 7th April 1943 was a big day at Tulagi. The first ship to be lost was the RNZN Moa. The RNZN Moa lies in 36- 42m water. Vis can be low but it is well worth the visit and is the only diveable New Zealand Warship lost as an act of war (the others are too deep). Be sure to check out the depth charge racks at the stern and the 4" gun at the bow. The depth of this wreck allows lots of time to explore.

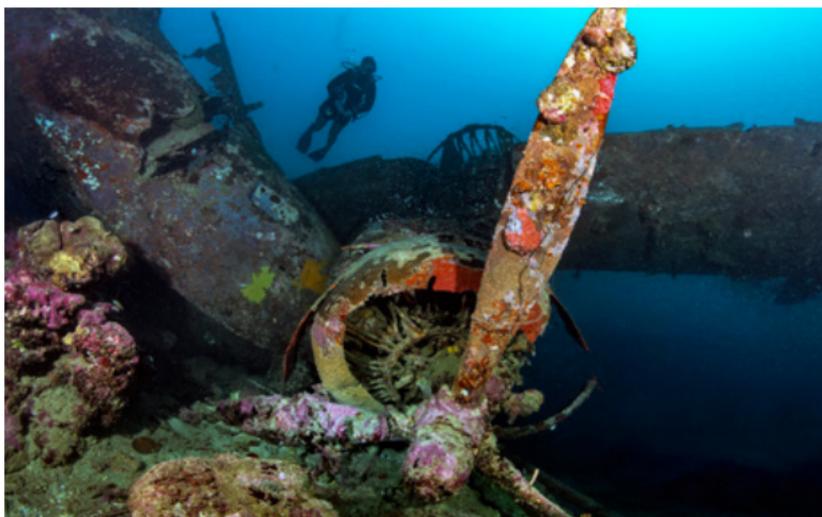


Image Credit – Mark Hatter

PBY Catalina

Less than a kilometer from Raiders Dive Lodge lies this wonderful seaplane. Lying on the side of a reef at 26m – 32m, she is fully intact with an open flight deck to explore and machine guns still in the mounts.

Gavutu F4F Wildcat

Thought to be the aircraft flown by Medal Of Honor recipient and Air Ace Lieutenant James Swett this wildcat sits upright at 42m on the sandy bottom outside of Gavutu Island in the Tulagi Harbour.

Raiders F4F Wildcat

Discovered in 2015 she too lies at 42m on a sandy bottom just 200m from the Raiders

Dive Lodge bar/dining area. The search for identifying numbers or plates on this aircraft continues with each dive.

Maravagi F4F Wildcat

Discovered in 2018 by Friends of the Solomons, Ewan Stephenson and Matt Wray of Sealark Maritime Exploration (NZ) Ltd. This aircraft is covered in corals and fish life with her tyres still inflated and propeller still attached, fully intact she rests inverted on the sandy sea floor at 38m. Finish the dive by ascending slowly up the nearby reef exploring mother nature's wonders and understanding why we describe our reefs as pristine.



Image Credit – Mark Hatter

Isabel

Papatura

Papatura Island Retreat

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<https://www.facebook.com/Papatura.Island.Retreat/>

Dolphin Wall

Located 5 min from the retreat and is one of our wow dives. Be amazed at this 30 metre wall with the elevator shaft in the middle. Tawny nurse sharks often sleep on what is known as "the footpath." Depth 10-32 meters.

Dolphin Garden 1 and 2

One of the prettiest dives in the area and a massive diversity of hard and soft coral. Keep an eye out for eagle rays, turtles and massive Humphead Wasse Depth 12-17 metres.

Dolphins Outer Wall

Another amazing wall dive just 5 minutes from the Papatura, home to a huge school of bump heads, many painted cray and reef sharks.

Rolly's Reef

This wall boasts a huge array of marine life from Moray eels, colourful passionfruit trout, big GTs and Blue spotted trevally. Black tip reef sharks, Spanish mackerel and barracuda keep an eye on you as you enjoy this dive. depth 10 - 35 meters.

Douglas SBD Dauntless WW2 Plane

believed to have been down on 17 Oct 1942 where it now lies encased in coral and inhabited by Solomon Sealife- depth 28 meters.



Image Credit – Ross Long

Blanche's Coral Garden

A beautiful coral garden, home to a massive grouper fish amongst many others. Up to 25 metres.

Top End Drift Dive

Check schools of trevalley, barracuda, sharks, rays and turtles.

Grand Canyon

Also up the top up and boasts many coral, crown fish in large canyon like swim throughs. Up to 30 metres.



Image Credit – Ross Long

Papatura Include Scuba Diving on In-house Offering

Papatura Island Retreat in Isabel Province offers some of the best fishing in the Solomons, uncrowded world class surfing along with amazing diving, snorkel and village trips, tropical rainforest hikes and round island kayaking. The retreat also offers excursions to the world's largest Hawksbill Turtle Rookery in the Arnavaon Islands, and Cultural and WWII historical activities.

Located on a private island just 6 mins from the airstrip, Papatura has 7 beachfront bungalow and the rainforest lodge and is now to include scuba diving in its activity offerings. The in-house dive shop is SSI accredited and offers dive courses, guiding and equipment hire.

Isabel's first ever dive operation offers dive sites that range from coral reefs, pristine walls to WWII wrecks. With diving being such a new offering, Papatura gives you the opportunity to discover new exciting dive sites that have never been dived on before.

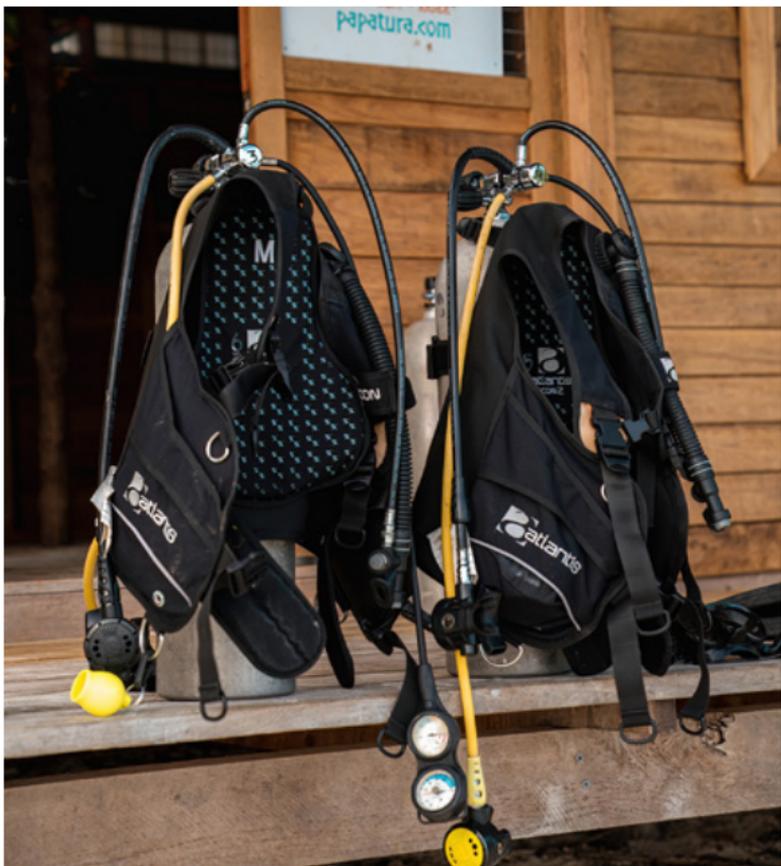


Image Credit – Ross Long





Liveaboards



Image Credit – Matt Smith

With over 992 islands spread over almost 30,000km², many of the most iconic dive sites within the Solomons are impossible to explore except by liveaboard. With trips ranging from 7 to 14 nights, our liveaboard operators will ensure you can dive a number of regions in one trip as well as explore some of the more remote regions such as the Russell Islands and Mary Island, that are not accessible by day boat.



Image Credit – Jo O'Shea

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Bilikiki Cruises has been operating dive trips through the beautiful and diverse Solomon Islands for over 25 years and has a well-deserved reputation for comfort, safety and service. Trips are from 7 to 14 nights and visit the best dive sites in the Florida and Russell Islands, Marovo Lagoon and Mary Island, areas famed for their untouched, breath taking diving. We offer 4 dives and a night dive a day all with an effortless tender service (we call them tinnies) so there are no long surface swims, handy when bottom times are unlimited.

Bilikiki is completely set up for cameras and has charging stations (both 110V and 240V), camera tables in the saloon and on the dive deck, separate rinse tanks for cameras and a crew very familiar with handling guests' cameras.

During every trip we also visit villages to see traditional singing and dancing and, on trips 10 nights or longer, to see the exquisite wood carvings in Marovo Lagoon. Bilikiki is happy to operate in a way that benefits people in local communities by both paying to dive on the ancestrally owned reefs and by buying local produce from islanders. For years Bilikiki has been providing seeds to villagers who then sell excess produce back to us, providing them income and us fresh fruit and vegetables the whole trip, it is a win/win for everyone. There is accommodation for up to 20



Photo courtesy of Solomons Master

guests in 10 twin share, air conditioned cabins all with their own ensuite. There is a large sun deck, lounge and dive deck to enjoy. The food onboard is great, fresh and we can cater to dietary requirements. All of our trips start and finish in Honiara, the capital of the Solomons and home of the international airport. We offer free transfers from the airport or your hotel so getting to us could not be easier.

Solomons Master

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The Solomons Master, is the newest liveboard in the Solomon Islands and offers five unique itineraries in Solomons allowing you to explore some of the most remote and least toured locations within the country. Explore the WWII wrecks in Tulagi or enjoy a unique one way fly & dive itinerary from Honiara to Munda. We have something for everyone.

The Solomons Master offers accommodation for a maximum of 16 guests in a combination of 8 twin share cabins each with individual air conditioning and ensuite bathrooms. In addition to our spacious indoor lounge and dining area, we have a large outdoor shaded seating area (great for an evening BBQ) and a huge observation deck where you can hang out



Photo courtesy of Solomons Master



Photo courtesy of Solomons Master

in the hammocks and catch the afternoon sun. Individual stations on the dive deck mean lots of personal space for you and your kit.

In addition to our comfortable camera facilities, we are fully equipped for rebreathers and sidemount divers and offer a full array of technical services and support. We have a photo-pro on board as well as a marine-life expert who will help you make the most of your diving. Diving is done either directly from the mothership or from our tenders which means we can select the best dive platform for each individual site.

The Solomons has a unique culture and we work closely with the local communities to ensure we respect their kastom traditions. In addition, we partner with Pack for a Purpose and ask that all of our guests bring contributions of school supplies to support our literacy project within the Solomon Islands. Guests enjoy traditional sing-sings and dances along with the opportunity to purchase local handmade crafts on all of our trips.

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Photo courtesy of Solomons Master

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Photo courtesy of Solomons Master



Photo courtesy of Solomons Master



Gizo, Western Province



Image Credit – Peter Pinnock

Dive Gizo & Adventure Sports

Gizo, Solomon Islands

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Gizo is located in the Western Province, serves as the Provincial centre and is the third largest town in the Solomon Islands. Diving in Gizo highlights are World War II wrecks, coral gardens and unlimited drift dives for the more experienced divers.

Dive Gizo promises to give you the most exciting dive experience as it offers some of the best dives in the world. As exciting as it is above water, there is a whole new fascinating world underwater waiting to surprise you.

Gizo Wreck Dives:

Toa Maru

A twenty minute boat ride from Gizo. One of South Pacific's most popular diveable WWII shipwrecks. A Japanese transport ship of some 140m (450') in length lying on its starboard side. Interesting artifacts adorn this vessel. For the more experienced divers a guided tour inside the wreck to many rooms still easily accessible, including the workshop, crew quarters, the dining area. The wreck receives visits from turtles and rays and has an extensive coral garden waiting to be explored.

American Hellcat Fighter Plane

Completely intact and lying in ten meters of water. A comprehensive history of the plane is available and the dive is high on the list for underwater photographers. The most photogenic area. Both snorkelers and divers will be delighted by a visit here.

American Corsair Fighter Plane

The attraction is not only the wreck but the

fantastic marine life on or around it. The reef slope back to the boat is interesting and has its own attraction in a bommie called clown fish city at the safety stop level.

Japanese Zero

Although not originally found in Gizo Harbour, the plane still makes an interesting dive with resident lion fish. On a clear day this can easily be seen from the boat laying in only 9 M of water.

Petaj

Originally commissioned as the coastal patrol boat ML 805 during WWII. She was purchased and sunk in front of our dive shop as a 'house reef' for the purpose of training dives and easy access to night dives from the shore. Home to lion fish, schools of batfish, puffer and surrounded by anemones on the sandy bottom.

Tokyo Maru II

Sunk in 1988 after hitting a reef entering the Vona Vona Lagoon. This 100' Japanese tuna fishing vessel is still completely intact with propeller and all equipment on board. The dive site is more advanced at 140', positioned mid lagoon away from any reefs.

Gizo Reef Dives:

Joe's Wall

Named after its self-proclaimed builder, Joe Bruno who claimed to have built this reef prior to starting work with Dive Gizo in 1985. A spectacular wall dive starting in the sandy shallows. The wall starts in just 1m of water and continues running around the island with depths over 60m. Joe's wall is known for having large numbers of nudibranch some reaching sizes of over 12cm. This is definitely a Macro dive.

Grand Central Station

If it's underwater action you looking for



Image Credit – Danny Kennedy

then this is the place. The most western tip of the Gizo islands is the merge point for oceanic currents and it's here where the fish life, big and small, is at its best. A relatively easy dive for all levels of experience and there is no need to go deep to see all the activity. This site is known for having the fourth highest (The other three being in Raja Ampat, Indonesia) fish count in the world, with over 279 different species of fish identified in a single tank dive!

Secret Spot

Divers head out over this and can catch a glimpse of large sharks, rays, and other fish swimming up from the ocean's depths. Continue on a nice drift dive along a reef covered with sea whips, fans, and nudibranchs. Divers here always have a good chance of seeing some spotted eagle rays who swim along the passage here.

Plum Pudding Island

Or Kennedy Island as it is known as, was named after the late US President who captained the PT109 during the Pacific War. This dive site offers shallow coral reefs for novice divers, and a drift dive on the opposite side. Open Water Diver training is conducted off the beach here, leading into a wonderful coral reef with lots to find both snorkelling and diving.

The Manta Dive

An Adventure Sports Gizo exclusive, this site is visited on request and if the time is right then it's one show you wouldn't want to miss. With two different sites that are frequently visited by Mantas generally between November and April. Groups of up to twelve Mantas can be seen at once, and they are never too shy to come and check out a new dive group.

The Beach Dive

For the devoted drift divers this can clock up to 1.2 kilometres. Start at the beach and watch the reef glide by on an armchair

ride to a coral reef delight. This dive starts by dropping over a ledge at 30 M, passing by large fan corals, and keeping an eye on the blue water for passing manta and eagle rays.

The Gap

The ultimate drift dive. Drop down on the outside of Naru Wall and drift through the schools of fish that welcome you into the Gizo lagoon. Well known for its fish action! Commonly seen here are large schools of barracuda, big eyed trevally, reef sharks, and large schools of fish all together to feed in the currents.

One Tree

This dive site would have to be one of the most beautiful reefs in the Gizo area. Multitudes of hard and soft corals, large gorgonian sea fans and multitudes of reef fish. What you might not have seen at the Gap may be waiting for you inside Gizo Lagoon here at One Tree.

Hot Spot

This small pinnacle, one of our discoveries in 1995, comes up to 5m from the oceans depths of 300-400m. On the swing of the tide, pelagic's come into feed on the shoals of bait fish that congregate in and around this off-shore dive site.

Yellow Corner

The yellow corner is an extension of Naru Wall. As you drift to the south along the wall, a large knoll extends out into the deeper water. This knoll is covered with small yellow soft corals. Out of all the dive sites we dive, this is the only one that features these iridescent yellow corals. This dive provides a good contrast to the other reefs, with large groups of staghorn corals, and various other species growing here, as this reef is part of the barrier reef to Gizo.



Photo courtesy of Solomons Master





Images supplied by
Uepi Island Resort



Marovo Lagoon

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Youtube: Uepi Island Resort

Youtube: *The Island Life of Us*

Uepi Island is a raised barrier reef island located in central Marovo Lagoon, the longest saltwater lagoon in the world. The island is about 2.5 kms long, with lagoon on the southern side whilst the northern side drops 2000m into "The Slot".

The resort is sited on the eastern end of the island, immediately adjacent to one of the relatively few deep water passages to extend into Marovo Lagoon. The deep passage generates ideal tidal currents for filter feeding corals and invertebrates, prolific fish life and a variety of intense marine habitats.

The rest of the island is covered with primary rainforest and the nearest village is kilometres away. Being uniquely located and orientated along the central barrier reef means that Uepi Island receives protection from heavy swell and rough seas from any direction, and despite some seasonal winds and local squalls, there is always a lee side for diving. Beginner or expert you can dive and snorkel every day of the year at Uepi.

The Solomon Islands are within the Coral Triangle and enjoys a huge diversity of corals

and fish. That fish diversity is highlighted by a diver identifying over 300 species of fish on a single dive commencing at Uepi Point and there have been several other counts just under that figure. Over 600 species of fish have been identified in the immediate vicinity.

All dives have a dive leader and to add to divers enjoyment we try to have small groups of compatible divers. With the remoteness of Uepi Island dive evacuation insurance is required.

Snorkelling:

The snorkelling at Uepi is exceptional and begins almost at your accommodation. The passage itself offers all levels of snorkelling and manner of experiences. Boat trips of up to 20 minutes take you further afield to extensive snorkelling sites providing an astonishing array of hard and soft corals, fish, rays, dolphins, sharks, invertebrates and above and below water scenery. Easy access to pre-breakfast snorkelling with Manta Rays can be a fantastic start to the day.

Uepi Dives within Uepi Passage:

The Uepi passage is one continuous, very diverse, dive site offering all manner of habitats, marine life and diving opportunities. A two minute walk from your accommodation and you are at the Dive Shop where world class diving begins. Or a one-minute boat ride takes you to other sites within the passage. There are nine named sites within the passage but each has various profiles and displays of marine



Image Credit – Grant Kelly

life. Due to its protected status there are large breeding aggregations of many fish species along the channel. Great for night dives.

Uepi Point is the reef corner where the passage meets The Slot. It is bounteously covered in gorgonian fans, hard corals, colourful spikey soft corals and whip corals. A deeper point at 30m projects into the blue and attracts schools of fish, Grey Reef sharks and Eagle rays. Sightings of Dogtooth Tuna, Hammerhead Sharks, Silvertips, Giant Grouper can add to the excitement. Deeper points descend further into the clear depths. Bigeye and Blue Trevally, Snapper, Fusiliers and Barracuda school in large numbers along the wall and the reef edge. Spanish Mackerel, Giant Trevally, Mangrove Jack and Red Bass are amongst the predators attacking these schools. On the reef top healthy coral gardens and sand patches have an abundance of Garden and Moray Eels, Whitetip sharks, Clams, Anemones, clouds of Anthias and other invertebrates. Spend your dive at Uepi Point or anywhere along the passage where

you can encounter Octopus, Cuttlefish, brilliant Anemone Fish, Pygmy Seahorses and Pipefish, flashing File Shells, Starfish, Crabs, Shrimp, schools of Scad and Perch and enjoy close encounters with Blacktip and Grey Reef Sharks, Tawny Nurse sharks, Green and Hawksbill turtles.

The point on the far side of the channel is renowned for fish and shark action. It is the starting point for an advanced dive Point to Point which offers blue water encounters and panoramic underwater views.

Uepi Dives outside of Uepi Passage:

The diving outside of Uepi Passage is exhilarating drop-off diving interspersed with extensive and complex coral gardens. Caves, swim-throughs, sheer plunging walls and protruding points all host prolific life. Over fifteen dive sites are conveniently within ten to twenty-five minutes of the Diveshop. Travel times may be short but Bottom Times are typically long.



Image Credit – Grant Kelly







Image Credit – Grant Kelly

UEPI DAY TRIPS

Our action packed daytrip takes you away from the classic lagoon beauty of Uepi Island to a more exposed and stunning 'weather coast' scenery. The four dives feature a uniquely vertical shipwreck, an offshore reef pinnacle, an exciting cave dive and two very good WWII aircraft wrecks. Exceptional scenery, a beautiful beach picnic location and an exciting backwater boat passage make for an unforgettably 'diverse' day of diving.

Wreck diving on Japanese WWII freighters at Wickham Harbour may be available on request but is subject to weather and at times other constraints.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

With over 40 years of resort and diving operations in Marovo Lagoon, Uepi Island Resort is an integral part of the local community, socially, strategically and economically. Community interaction and support is a daily routine. Our associated registered charity 'Solutions pa Marovo' has major inputs and impacts on health and education in Marovo.

As part of its commitment to 'Marovo' a major redevelopment commenced in early 2020 has replaced all guest accommodation with high quality Beach-houses specifically designed, carefully constructed and individually sited to take full advantage of the special environment, amenity and peaceful privacy that is Uepi Island and Marovo Lagoon.

Solomon Islands Dive Specialists

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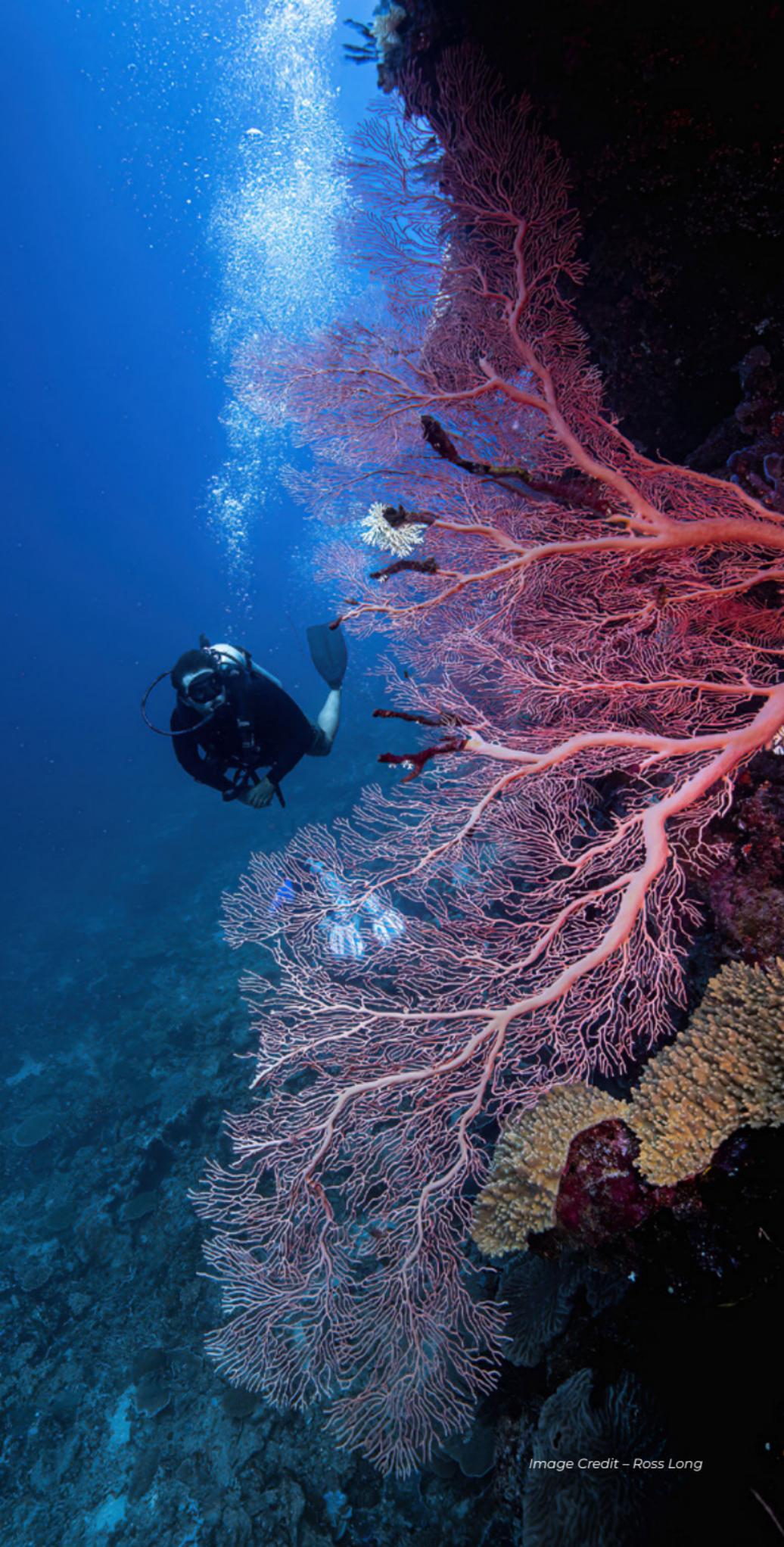


Image Credit – Ross Long

Munda, Western Province

Kashi Maru

This Japanese coastal freighter was caught at anchor by USAF bombers on July 2, 1943. She now lies at 17m, her artefact-filled hold easily accessible to all levels of diver and her engine room penetrable.

Please note that this is a 'kastom' site and access is unfortunately not always possible, due to 'ownership' issues.

The Aircobra

Discovered only in April 2011, little is known about this American P-39 fighter, but we believe it is one of two aircraft lost by the USAAF 68th Fighter Squadron during a raid on Shortland on September 6th 1943.

The Cave of Kastom Shark

Forty minutes boat ride from Munda. Accessed via a short walk onto the island through the mangroves. There is a guideline throughout to help with navigation when diving through this two large chambers linked by a tunnel. We have a policy of taking only experienced divers to the cave. This does unfortunately mean that we can't

always take customers to the Cave if they are doing a single day's diving or have fewer than at least fifty logged dives.

Mushroom Island

Dropping vertically for over 500 meters into the waters of Blanche Channel. The point attracts big schools of fish and passing pelagics. Naturally, the residents' sharks (Blacktips, Whitetips, Greys and – deeper down- silvertips) patrol to keep out their 'larder'.

Shark Point

Fifteen minute boat ride from Munda. Shark Point can be dived from any depth from 10m to 60m. Shallower dives offer pristine reef, large schools of fish, reef sharks and turtles. More experienced divers can venture deeper on the point itself.

Haip Reef

Huge areas of pristine hard corals. Along the reef tops play host to swarms of colorful small fish and provide a feeding ground for big schools of bump head parrot fish.

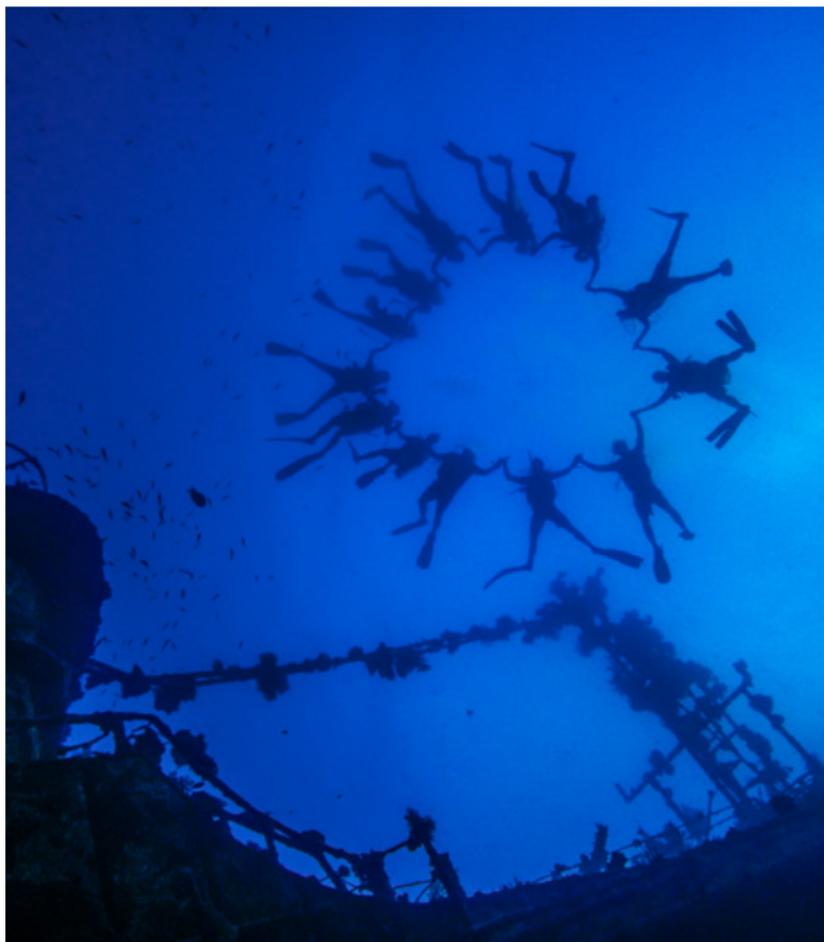


Image Credit – Grant Kelly

Slightly deeper, you will find soft corals, fans and whip corals. Encounter Grey Reef shark, silvertip or hammerheads sharks.

F4F-4 Wildcat

Close by the Kashi Maru, this US fighter plane rests in 14m on a spectacular coral reef named Alice in Wonderland. The plane lies upside down and bears the marks of shrapnel and AA gunfire prior to being shot down.

The Dauntless

This Douglas SBD-4 Dauntless dive bomber was hit by AA fire during a raid on Munda, on July 23 1943. Pilot Jim Dougherty put his plane down in Rendova Harbour, where she still rests at 13m. There is an amazing story of the pilot coming back on the 50th anniversary, at a ripe old age diving his actual plane with Dive Munda.

The Koviki Corsair

This F4U-1 Corsair rests on pristine white sand at 51 meters. It is fully intact with minimal coral growth due to the depth of the water. Forty to fifty meter visibility is common, making this a phenomenal photographic subject. Please note the Corsair is an advanced and deep dive site, deeper than recreational dive dept limits and will only be offered to experienced and suitably qualified divers with documented certifications and deep dive and deco-dive speciality logged dives.

Barry's Breakfast

A ten minute boat ride from the dive shop, Barry's Breakfast is a relaxed dive starting at 25m following along a wall where reef fish, Moray Eels and turtles feed. Pelagics and sharks are often seen out in the blue. We

work our way to Susu Hite island, along a shallower reef fringing the island, featuring several varieties of Anemone fish, Crocodile fish, Spiny Lobster and Trumpet fish. Finish the dive in the sandy shallows where hundreds of Garden Eels thrive.

Aussie Point

This point drops off hundreds of meters deep and is renown for the frequent Hammerhead sightings. 40 minutes boat ride from Munda, the reef is in excellent health and is the home to schools of Bumphead Wrasse, Blacktip and Whitetip Reef Sharks and giant Maori Wrasse are also seen. A sheer drop down into the blue with a sharp point to the reef similar to the bow of a ship, makes for dramatic underwater scenery.

Mbiggo Mbiggo

So good they named it twice! - About 40 minutes boat ride from the dive shop is this spectacular reef off Parara Island features gullies and canyons among the coral. Equally interesting for snorkelers as the reef formations in the first 10m are out of this world. Divers drop down to 25-30m and follow the wall for plenty of pelagic action.

Marlon's Crack

Discovered by the well known Melbourne based freediver Marlon Quinn from Watermaaraq, this sloping coral wall is abundant with hard corals and reef fish. Crevices and caves run deep into the wall providing spectacular swim throughs for free divers and snorkelers. Scuba divers can explore the deeper reef, keeping an eye out for schools of Giant Trevally, Greater Barracuda and reef sharks.



Image Credit – Ross Long





An underwater photograph featuring a diver on the right side, wearing a black wetsuit, mask, and regulator. The diver is holding a camera. To the left of the diver is a large, branching coral structure with a reddish-brown hue. The background is a deep blue, clear water environment. The overall scene is vibrant and captures the beauty of a coral reef.

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