

# COZUMEL DIVING GUIDE

Cozumel stands as the ultimate scuba diving heaven, offering year-round accessibility to this amazing activity. Thanks to its consistent climate, the water temperature remains almost the same throughout the seasons, allowing us to dive nearly every day of the year. This is the favorite destination of thousands of divers and tourists, and this guide will tell you why. Learn about [Cozumel's best diving beaches](#) and the impressive reefs that are an absolute must-see on your visit.

## A PLACE IN NATURE UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Located in the Riviera Maya, very close to Cancun and Tulum, this island is considered a National Marine Park, as it is mostly surrounded by coral reefs. Here you will find vast biodiversity, including wonderful ecosystems like mangroves, coastlines, and jungles.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why Cozumel is a favorite among many is its natural beauty. Diving enthusiasts will become fans of its marine ecosystem, comprising a remarkable array of over 1100 species, including algae, corals, fish, invertebrates, and sponges. During summer, thousands of turtles arrive on the beaches to lay their eggs—an incredible spectacle for nature lovers.

Did you know...? Cozumel boasts the highest number of protected areas in all of Mexico, with more than 185 000 hectares.

## THE IDEAL PLACE FOR PROFESSIONAL DIVERS AND AMATEURS ALIKE

Is it your first time diving? Worry not! There are exciting adventures for everyone at depths ranging from 10 to 65 feet. Plus, thanks to the water's crystal-like transparency, you'll have excellent visibility—even at depths of more than 98.4 feet! Cozumel has 40 dive areas distributed throughout the island, each with an astonishing scenery of coral formations only the Caribbean Sea can offer.

The diving conditions offer temperate waters all year round—with an average of 77 to 82.4°F in winter and 80.4 to 84.2°F in summer—making Cozumel one of the most attractive diving spots in the world. The island is ideal for drift diving or current dives, ranging from moderate to strong currents.

## WHAT IS THE BEST DIVING SEASON IN COZUMEL?

### SEASONS

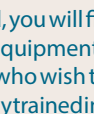
For greater underwater visibility, visit us from May to September.



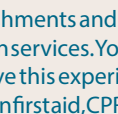
Note that the hurricane months are from June to November.



The driest season is from November to April.



May and June are the months with the highest humidity levels.



## HOW MUCH IS A DIVING EXPERIENCE IN COZUMEL?

Throughout the whole island, you will find a great variety of certified establishments and even hotels with all the necessary equipment, specialized tools, and transportation services. You will even find hotels for children who wish to dive, which is great if you want to live this experience with your family. Finding highly trained instructors and divemasters—trained in first aid, CPR, and decompression treatment—is no problem at all. We recommend you ask your resort concierge if they offer these activities and expeditions.

Plus, if you are an underwater photography enthusiast or simply want to capture your experience forever, you can rent photographic equipment or buy a photo shoot package. (Although we strongly recommend bringing your camera with you if possible.)

## A TRUE NATURAL PARADISE: DISCOVER THE WONDROUS REEFS OF COZUMEL



### WHAT ARE THE BEST DIVE SITES IN COZUMEL?

#### NORTH OF THE ISLAND

What are the dive sites with the clearest waters in Cozumel?

- 1. Barracuda Reef**  
As the sea current goes from north to south, it can reach a speed of two to three knots, which is why this area is mainly reserved for expert divers. Here, you will find rays, turtles, nurse sharks, lobsters, and crabs. Please be aware that diving restrictions may be imposed by the port authorities due to the strong current intensity. Furthermore, the depth plunges to 108 feet.
- 2. San Juan**  
This one stands out for its beauty. Here, you will see large fields of Lobophytum (finger leather coral) and incredible schools of damselfish. All sizes of barrel sponges and thin-leaf lettuce corals can also be found here. It is important to note that, similar to Barracuda Reef, diving restrictions are commonly enforced by the authorities due to the high intensity of the current. Therefore, this area is best suited for experienced divers.
- 3. Bosh Beach, 4. El Mirador, 5. Punta Morena, 6. Punta Chiqueros**  
Dives in the northern part of the island typically offer shallow depths. Sponges and sea fans are rare on the open seaside, but it is much easier to find nurse sharks, green moray eels, and a great variety of coral. The current is moderate, and visibility is high—especially in the early morning.
- 7. Hanan Reef**  
In this reef, the current is moderate, and the maximum depth is approximately 50 feet. Here, you will find an array of sea fans that gracefully sway with the current, making a breathtaking spectacle of marine beauty. During the expedition, you can swim through the naturally formed crevices and discover different species, such as sponges, damselfish, lionfish, snappers, and moray eels.
- 8. Los Atolones, Punta Molas**  
Over the past few years, this captivating lighthouse that offers breathtaking views of the reef and the island's natural allure from its pinnacle. The depths here range from 32.8 to 98.4 feet approximately. The current is very strong, so it is mostly recommended for divers with intermediate to high experience. Plus, the variety of corals and sponges you will find here harbors an impressive amount of butterflyfish, grunts, schools of horse mackerel, spotted snake eels, and turtles.
- 9. Cantarell Reef (Spotted Eagle Ray)**  
A haven for nature enthusiasts, this destination offers a spectacle unlike any other, especially from December to February. During this period, female eagle rays gather here for mating, allowing for breathtaking encounters with these majestic creatures at about 32.8 feet in height. What sets this location apart is its bed adorned with vibrant calcareous algae, resembling a mesmerizing underwater meadow.

#### CENTER-WESTERN PART OF THE ISLAND

Want to unveil the best places to take underwater pictures in Cozumel?

- 10. Villa Blanca (Shallow, Wall)**  
Nestled on the western side of the island, the Villa Blanca reef invites divers of every skill level, presenting a coastal area with a pleasantly moderate current. This site is a photographer's delight, boasting plenty of light, vibrant coral formations, and a diverse array of marine life. Along the reef wall, which descends to depths of 49 feet, one can witness mesmerizing congregations of various fish species, eagle rays, and marine sponges.
- 11. Las Palmas Reef (Shallow, Wall)**  
Much like Villa Blanca, this coastal diving area is perfect for exploration both during day and night. Its shallow depths and gentle currents make it an ideal spot for snorkeling enthusiasts. It's important to stay mindful of the ever-changing current direction—particularly along the wall, where it grows stronger. Prepare to encounter a magnificent array of marine fauna, including crabs, lobsters, eels, wrasse, seahorses, and even turtles.

#### SOUTHWEST, SOUTH, AND SOUTHEAST OF THE ISLAND

The following are spots with moderate current in Cozumel.

**Cozumel's Reefs National Marine Park**  
Whether you're a novice or an experienced diver, this dive site comes highly recommended for its stunning beauty and excellent diving conditions. The current is moderate to strong, the visibility is outstanding, and there are countless species of all kinds: anemones, sponges, fans, coral heads, and shoals of fish.

Located conveniently near the cruise ship entrance dock, this site is one of the most accessible points on the island. After a short boat trip, you'll encounter a stunning sea grass area where an incredible spectacle of marine life awaits. Keep your eyes open for octopuses, large fish, parrotfish, lobsters, crabs, barracudas, spotted moray eels, frogfish, mantarays, and seahorses.

In 1996, the Cozumel's Reefs National Marine Park was declared a protected natural area, as it is the second largest coral reef in the world after the Great Barrier Reef, with a length of 74.5 miles.

#### 12. Chankanaab Reef (Shallow, Bolones, Caves)

Chankanaab is a good option for amateur or intermediate divers: The current is gentle, and the place stands out for its wide sandy area surrounded by some coral heads. Thanks to its calm waters, you can practice both freediving and snorkeling in complete safety.

It has a very colorful barrier reef that shelters different species such as stonefish, scorpionfish, triggerfish, bluetang, among others. As you approach the coral heads, you'll encounter a diverse range of marine creatures: Caribbean spiny lobsters, crabs, spotted moray eels, and many other fascinating species.

The current generally runs from north to south, toward Las Cuevas. In this area, a fascinating phenomenon takes place—a blend of cold water from the caves in the upper layer combines with warmer saltwater in the deeper sections. And, because of this condition, visibility may be reduced.

This specific area was named "Los Bolones" and is distinguished by the significant amount of round coral heads. Here you can find boulders of between 13 and 32.8 feet that serve as shelter for species like moray eels and lobsters. If you come at night, you may even find octopuses.

Chankanaab is home to the sunken warship Felipe Xicoténcatl C-53. Acquired by the National Navy in 1962, it was later transformed into an artificial reef and tourist attraction. Having patrolled the seas in search of weapons and illegal drugs, the ship found its final resting place in 2000, offering divers and visitors a unique underwater experience.

You can capture breathtaking pictures as you witness a diverse array of species. It's important to note, however, that entering the ship it is not recommended due to its deteriorating condition and potential hazards. It is advised that only experienced divers venture to this site, as it is located at a depth of 82 feet and has strong currents.

#### 13. Palancar Reef (Gardens, Caves)

Witness a landscape unlike any other. The entire reef is approximately 3.1 miles long, and its colorful coral formations rest on white sand, making an incredible contrast with the dark blue of the abyss.

At depths reaching 131 feet, you'll encounter a rich variety of marine life, including jack mackerels, groupers, green moray eels, turtles, eagle rays, and even nurse sharks.

Giant corals and other coral formations form towers, ravines, caves, caverns, and tunnels that house abundant marine life, resulting in a wonderful landscape. It is ideal for photography given its calm currents and excellent visibility.

**14. Paso del Cedral Reef**  
Whether you're a seasoned diver or not, this location is perfect for amateur diving. The reef stretches for a mile and features gentle slopes with vibrant brain coral, star coral, and an array of colorful sponges. You can swim through the naturally created cracks and tunnels since the current is usually not as strong as in other sites. The marine life at this site is abundant, showcasing a wide array of fish, including cat sharks, turtles, eels, and majestic eagle rays.

**15. Santa Rosa Reef (Shallow, Wall)**  
This is an excellent spot for first-time divers. Despite the heavy currents, it is ideal for drift diving. The Santa Rosa Reef is a very popular area for diving in Cozumel—weather here and its natural beauty never disappoint!

In this reef, there is a great amount of formations and caves. Starting at around 49 feet in depth, its structure descends to a maximum of 131 feet. From 82 feet down, you will find colorful gorgonians and sponges, as well as tunnels that you can go through and explore in this wonderful marine ecosystem.

**16. Yucab Reef (Shallow, Wall)**  
As one of the longest reefs in Cozumel, it measures approximately 0.6 miles long and 65.6 feet wide. Given its size, it usually takes two or three dives to cross these underwater gardens from head to toe—even the coral structure is about 19.6 feet long. This colorful place groups a wide variety of rays, sponges, crustaceans, nudibranchs, and barracudas. In marine meadows, you may see rays, turtles, seahorses, pufferfish, octopuses, and lobsters, and is ideal for divers of all levels.

**17. San Francisco Reef (Shallow, Wall)**  
Within this reef, a magnificent underwater cliff unfolds, gradually revealing its splendor as you descend. At approximately 65.6 feet, that will find sponges of all colors and a slope that leads to the plains covered with sea grass, where larger fauna such as turtles, nurse sharks, black groupers and moray eels inhabit. Dive down to 131 feet and embrace the deep blue of the Caribbean Sea, a unique experience of its kind.

Explore the allure of Cozumel, a captivating destination that unveils the mesmerizing wonders of the ocean depths. Let this guide be your companion on your next visit, providing valuable insights for your [Cozumel diving adventure](#). Discover why this enchanting island remains a cherished choice for countless diving enthusiasts around the world.

Cozumel is the ultimate best place to learn how to dive. Find moderate to high currents, dive during the day and at night, practice drift diving (best for amateur divers,) and enjoy the most impressive landscapes! This Caribbean paradise is waiting for you. Whether you embark on a couple's retreat, a family getaway, or a solo adventure, immerse yourself in the captivating beauty and exhilarating escapades that await in Mexico's most enchanting island, Cozumel.