

Diving in Fiji

Fiji is known as 'The Soft Coral Capital of the World.' Here you'll find some of the most colorful reef ecosystems on Earth. In turn, the outer reefs boast some of the best pelagic and shark dives in the world.

Quick facts

Fiji has a number of labels, from 'The Soft Coral Capital of the World' to 'The Best Shark Diving Location in the World.' With such titles, it's easy to call Fiji a world-class dive destination that caters to all ages and qualifications. But diving in Fiji has more to offer including wall dives, swim-throughs, caverns, canyons, and incredible blue water encounters.

The strong currents of the outer reefs bring nutrient-rich waters from thousands of miles around, and in turn, lure in some of the most diverse life in the ocean, including everything from macro life to pelagic spectacles that defy the eye. With more than 390 coral species, around 1200 fish species, and five of the world's seven marine turtle species, it's an underwater naturalist's dream.

Whether you choose to be located on the islands or based on a liveaboard, there is plenty to see throughout the year. While the liveaboard experience will allow you to witness more unique and undiscovered dive sites, the land-based experience is not to be discouraged.

Recommended dive sites include the the world-renowned 'Beqa Lagoon,' 'Shark Reef', and 'Viti Levu Coral Coast.' For beginner and experienced divers alike, exploring the 'Rakiraki' dive site is highly enjoyable. Here you can see gardens of sea fans and vibrant coral as well as pelagic giants like barracuda, wahoo and the occasional manta or whale shark.;

Recommended training

The AWARE – Coral Reef Conservation, AWARE- Fish Identification and PADI Digital Underwater Photographer courses will help you appreciate the diversity of life on the reefs. The PADI Enriched Air Diver and PADI Drift Diver courses are a good idea for getting the most out of diving in this amazing location.

When to go

The dive season in Fiji is year-round. Between July and December, the water is at its clearest (approx. 70-130 feet/20-40 meters), however, this period is when the water is coolest, averaging around 74°F (23°C). The winter months between April and October represent the main season for diving due to the annual holidays. However the months of November, April, and May are considered the most ideal months to visit due to the warmer water, 82 - 86°F (28 - 30°C), and the rainy season that attracts manta rays and whale sharks.

Best dive sites in Fiji

The Great Astrolabe Reef, Kadavu - This is the world's 3rd largest barrier reef and the largest living organism in the South Pacific. Hosting many dive sites, Manta Ray encounters here are common and numerous channels and passages can be explored while viewing pristine coral formations teeming with tropical fish. Kadavu is also one of the least commercialized areas in Fiji.

Somosomo Strait, Taveuni – The Rainbow Reef is located in the narrow passage between Vanua Levu and Taveuni and includes the famous Great White Wall. You can swim through tunnels and along walls covered in brilliant displays of white, purple and yellow soft corals with colorful sea whips, gorgonian fans, sponges and crinoids. Look for pelagics off the wall and lion fish, octopus and morays in the shallows.

Suncoast Fiji – Between Fiji's two main islands, including the Vatu-I-Ra Passage, lies some spectacular and exciting diving. The funneling of massive amounts of water brings in nutrients to support a huge array of marine life, from tiny fish to large predators. Beautiful soft and hard corals are plentiful.

Shark Reef Marine Reserve, Pacific Harbour – Regarded by some as the best shark dive location in the world. An educational dive where you can see more than eight shark species – bull sharks, tawny nurse sharks, white-tip, black-tip and grey reef sharks, sicklefin lemon sharks, silvertips and the occasional tiger shark. Wrasse, grouper, rays and over 400 species of fish also call the shark reef marine reserve home.

Mamanuca Islands – This famous region is made up of a chain of 20 beautiful tropical islands west of Nadi. There is excellent boat and shore diving from the islands with colorful fish and marine life that surround the hard and soft corals.

Yasawa Islands – The Yasawa Island Group are located north west of Nadi and are rich in beauty both above and below the water. Unique underwater topography, healthy hard corals, an abundance of fish life and only a boat ride away from Nadi. The Yasawa islands offer a more remote tropical island feel. Manta ray and shark encounters are also possible in the region.

Coral Coast – The Coral Coast region is approximately 80 kilometers / 50 miles of pristine beaches and bays situated on mid-southern coast near the town of Sigatoka. This area offers a wide range of diving including great boat dives with stunning hard and soft corals. Turtle encounters are also common on many of the popular dive sites.

Beqa Lagoon – Situated off Pacific Harbour, this large lagoon has numerous dive sites catering to divers of all levels. Dive sites here are full of

colorful reefs alive with tropical fish and multihued soft coral covered pinnacles. The water is generally calm, clear and warm.

Namena Marine Protected Reserve, Savusavu – This magnificent barrier reef is a protected marine reserve populated by brilliant soft corals, invertebrates and hard corals. It hosts several dive sites with bommies and pinnacles. Along with some sharks and other pelagics, you may spy pigmy sea horses if your eyes are good enough. Venture out from Savusavu to dive with the nearby resident school of scalloped hammerheads.

What to see

Fiji is known as the crossroads of the Pacific. Therefore it boasts an abundance of marine species. There are 390 species of coral, and 1,200 varieties of fish. That includes a number of endemic marine creatures, such as the 'twilight fangblenny.'

Furthermore, Fiji is home to an area where species such as the 'bumphead parrotfish' come to spawn. And there are 7 resident species of turtle and 12 species of whales, including the humpback and blue whales that migrate through these waters annually.

The pristine reefs hold many unique treasures from blue-ribbon eels to leaf scorpionfish. The gorgeous soft corals play host to Maori wrasse, lionfish, sweetlips, fusiliers, and nudibranchs. It is the vivid color of the fish that makes Fiji so special, as well as its stunning visibility.

Dive sites like the 'Beqa Lagoon' for some of the world's best shark diving. This area boasts 9 species of shark, including bull, tiger, lemon, and whitetip sharks that circle around you as you look up from the bottom. Trevally, grouper, and jack dart through the blue.

Country

Topside, Fiji has some of the most friendly and welcoming people on Earth. With more than 300 islands, some large and mountainous, and others just sandy atolls, you'll find exotic tropical adventures both above and below the surface.

Fiji is located in the Pacific Ocean, 1,100 miles from the north coast of New Zealand. Of the 332 islands, only 110 are inhabited. Also, the largest island is 'Viti Levu', where the capital 'Suva' is located. Way back when, the islands were formed through volcanic activity, and even now there are still signs of geological activity.

Due to the island's abundant mineral, fish and tourism industries, Fiji is one of the most affluent islands in the Pacific.

The islands were proclaimed as a sovereignty of Britain in 1874 before gaining independence in 1970. The population of Fiji is made up of indigenous Fijians, Indians, Europeans, and Chinese. The primary languages of the country are Fijian and Hindi. However, the majority of the population speaks English.

Other attractions

Fiji is home to one of the world's most hospitable cultures, so immerse yourself in their way of life. Watch a local Rugby game, kayak between the islands, or just relax on the pristine white sand beaches with Fiji's national drink, 'kava,' in your hand. There is plenty to see inland. Take a guided hike to the summit of an island peak or explore the limestone caves scattered around the country. Indulge in one of the many action-packed activities – white water rafting, kayaking, skydiving, zip-lining, jungle treks, river safaris, etc. And be sure to take in cultural events, such as traditional feasts and handicraft displays.

Getting there

Getting to Fiji is easier than expected. Several airlines have regular flights from international destinations such as Los Angeles, Sydney, and Hong Kong. Once you arrive at Nadi International Airport, there are domestic flights to other airports around the islands.