

Diving in Guam



Introduction

Guam's tropical waters are teeming with hundreds of varieties of colorful fish and coral species, a seascape of unimaginable beauty and clarity, with historic wrecks from World War I and World War II.

Guam's open ocean is not only home to diverse coral and marine life, it's one of Micronesia's most affordable places to dive. Home to a variety of dives for all certification levels, the island's waters stay between 82-86°F year-round with visibility up to 150 feet. Dive environments for beginners and more experienced divers are concentrated more heavily in the south, with the exception of a few accessible dive spots in northern Guam.



Guam's diving environment is rated in the top 20 percent in the world, due in large part to more than 300 types of coral, 220 species of benthic marine algae and 950 fish varieties that call the island's warm waters home.

Divers can experience two types of dives on Guam: those within Apra Harbor and those outside near the outer reef. Harbor dives, mostly accessible by boat, take place at WWI and WWII shipwrecks or hard coral reef sites. The outer reef dives range from deep dropoffs to coral head and sandy flats of garden eels. A wide variety of fish, sea anemones, and larger marine life like sea turtles, barracuda and the occasional reef shark can be found at any of Guam's more than 150 sites.

Popular Outer Reef Sites

Guam is home to one of the world's most amazing underwater phenomena, the Blue Hole, a natural 300-foot shaft cut into the reef off Orote Point. A plethora of marine life and coral also inhabit several other outer reef dive sites including the Crevice, Coral Gardens, Shark Pit, Barracuda Rock, Hap's Reef, and the elusive 11-Mile Reef.

• Blue Hole

One of Guam's most unique dive sites, the Blue Hole is located toward the tip of Orote Peninsula on the southern coast. Characterized as a 300-foot shaft cut into reef made of limestone, the site offers excellent visibility that often allows divers to see the top of the hole from the surface.

The shaft actually drops much further than air diving allows, but a large window opens to the outer wall at about 125 feet, allowing divers to exit and ascend after a free fall through the shaft. During the day, visibility usually exceeds 100+ feet and resident moray eels and smaller creatures like nudibranchs can be seen in holes inside the shaft walls.

Eagle rays and whale sharks have been spotted around Blue Hole as well as dolphins and pilot whales. For the technically trained, deeper diving to 180 feet allows divers to experience sea fans and beautiful marine life.





• **The Crevice**

Just south of the Blue Hole, the Crevice is a large fold in the cliff that runs along the island’s coast. Triangular in shape, the site starts at nearly 70 feet. Coral formations like sea fans and whips are found, along with a number of tropical fish and sea turtles who take shelter among the large boulders. Like Blue Hole, it has excellent visibility and offers chance encounters with dolphins, barracuda, tuna and sharks. Ideal conditions are from April to December.



• **Shark Pit**

Another site south of the Blue Hole is Shark Pit, a favorite among junk divers. Once used as a “rubbish dump” by Americans during

WWII, Shark Pit is now home to large tanks, trucks, and trailers covered in coral. A large boulder that sits in 18 to 60 feet of water marks the dive site’s signature starting point. Reef begins at 60 feet and slopes down to 105 feet, extending into the ocean depths. Deep drop-offs allow divers to see some pelagic creatures including sharks and pilot whales.

• **Barracuda Rock**

Barracuda Rock reaches from 30 to 105 feet. Named after a large rock in the middle of the site, it offers numerous swim-throughs for divers. Often treated as a drift dive, it’s an excellent place to see lionfish, sea turtles, and octopus.

• **Hap’s Reef**

Located off Agat Bay, Hap’s Reef hosts an array of tropical fish and coral. At 45 feet, the site is a favorite among beginning divers. Lionfish and squirrelfish, butterfly fish, trumpet fish and soldierfish inhabit this area. Pay attention, and you’ll even see an anemone or clownfish.

• **11-Mile Reef**

Located 11 miles off the southernmost tip of Guam, this site is an elusive spot for some and a favorite

among experienced divers. Strong currents keep the site from being open to beginning and novice divers. Only those with at least 60 dives and an advanced certification are encouraged by most dive shops in the area. Reef hooks are advised. Rising to a depth of 75 to 120 feet, 11-Mile Reef has excellent visibility at more than 150 feet. Reef sharks, barracuda, rays, and turtles can be found here when conditions are ideal.

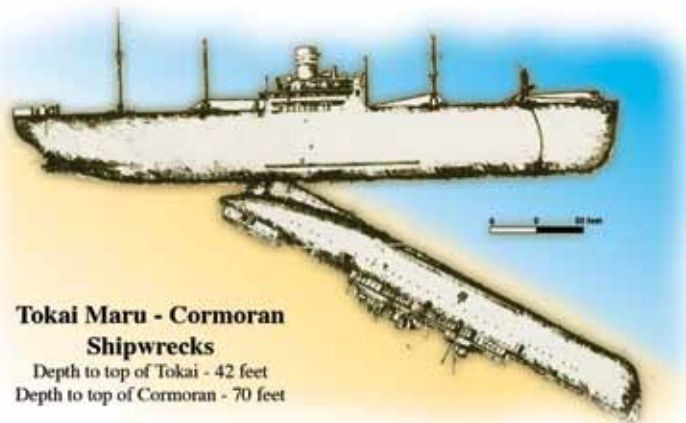
■ **Apra Harbor Favorites**

Sites within Apra Harbor are notably the most popular with divers on Guam. Below the surface lie remnants of WWI and WWII including the SMS Cormoran, Tokai Maru and the Kitsugawa Maru.



• **SMS Cormoran/Tokai Maru**

The Tokai Maru, a Japanese freighter sunk by a submarine torpedo attack during WWII, rests next to the SMS Cormoran, scuttled after WWI. The site marks the only instance in the world where wrecks from two different countries and two different wars are nearly touching. The Tokai Maru, measuring about 500 feet long, is shallow enough to swim from bow to stern at about 42 feet. Inside, an old wash area with tiled floor and sink are visible. Shafts of light coming through doorways and beams have a picturesque radiance for divers. The bow is also covered in brilliant yellow tubastrea corals and surrounded by abundant fish life.



Tokai Maru - Cormoran Shipwrecks
 Depth to top of Tokai - 42 feet
 Depth to top of Cormoran - 70 feet

• **Kitsugawa Maru**

Lying west of the Tokai Maru in deeper water is the Kitsugawa Maru, a site ideal for enriched air diving. Torpedoed and hauled into the harbor to be repaired, it is labeled one of the best wrecks to explore. It sits upright, prompting divers to head straight to the bow, where an intact gun and ammunition can be found. A narrow pathway enables divers to pass along the deck into living quarters and the engine room. The ship's huge mast is covered with coral and anemone.

Other notable wrecks in Apra Harbor include the American Tanker, bulldozers, a small coastal freighter at SeaBee Junkyard, the rarely dived Nichyu Maru, and a sea plane near the Japanese Fuel Piers.

Beginning divers can experience shallow depths at Western Shoals, Finger Reef and Hidden Reef.

• **Gab Gab II**

The main dive site of the Atlantis Submarine, Gab Gab II is a great place to see large schools of trevally. Fish feeders that work daily to entertain submarine guests also give divers up close and personal encounters with large marine life

APRA HARBOR DIVE SITES

- 1- Piti Channel
- 2- Dry Dock Reef
- 3- Western Shoals
- 4- Kitsugawa Maru
- 5- Tokai/Cormoran
- 6- Dogleg Reef
- 7- American Tanker
- 8- SeaBee Junkyard
- 9- Blue & White
- 10- Hidden Reef
- 11- Fingers Reef
- 12- GabGab Reef



among coral encrusted pinnacle and sponge formations. Lower areas of the reef have large blue elephant ear sponges hosting small goby fish, as well as dripping vase and round barrel sponges. Near the feeder buckets, divers can see a massive eel, hawksbill turtles and an occasional nurse shark. Depth ranges from 36 to 70 feet.



Gab Gab II

Diving Safely On Guam

Boat dives are the safest and most common form of diving for visitors. Guam is one of the safest dive destinations in the world, due to regular patrols by the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy. All boats carry oxygen and safety equipment, and certification through the Coast Guard. In the event of an emergency, Guam is home to two decompression chambers used in the treatment of diving accidents.

A number of dive shops on Guam employ 5-Star PADI Instructors (certified by the Professional Association of Dive Instructors, the world's largest and most reputable dive certification organization). Shops across the island offer reasonable prices compared to most other areas in the world. All levels of certification are available - from SNUBA (shallow water diving with surface air sources) to master scuba instructor. Dive gear is available for rent.



Emergency Information

Guam is the regional center of Micronesia for diving-related problems. It has two fully-staffed recompression chambers run by the U.S. Navy and two hospitals - one military and one private. The island also hosts a civilian facility with a recompression chamber with physicians highly trained in diving accidents and medicine.

Emergency Procedure:

Call 911, then proceed to nearest Emergency Medical Services (EMS) facility.



Guam Memorial Hospital Authority
850 Gov. Carlos Camacho Rd.
Tamuning, GU 96911
Tel: 1 (671) 647-2330
Fax: 1 (671) 649-5508

Guam Recompression Chamber
Tel: 1 (671) 339-7143
Guam Diving Doctor (Dr. Frickel):
Tel: 1 (671) 637-1777

DAN
U.S. Tel.: 1 (919) 684-9111
Hotline: 1 (919) 684-4326
www.diversalertnetwork.com

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For more information, contact:

GUAM VISITORS BUREAU
401 Pale San Vitores Road
Tumon, GU 96913
Tel: 1 (671) 646-5278/9
Fax: 1 (671) 646-8861
www.visitguam.org

A Snapshot Of Guam

Guam is home to a tropical climate, with average yearly temperatures of 86°F. Evening temperatures rarely fall below 70°F and daily highs rarely exceed 90°F. Chamorro and English are the primary languages spoken on the island, although many businesses employ multilingual staff.

Guam is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Meridian Time. The local currency is the U.S. dollar and most major credit cards are widely accepted. The electrical current is the same as the U.S. mainland - 120 volts/60 cycles.

Guam has become a state-of-the-art destination with luxuries the rest of the world enjoys. High-speed Internet and mobile service make it easy to stay in touch and brand name hotels line the island's shores.

Diving And Snorkel Centers

Aqua Academy	1 (671) 649-5551 www.aqua-academy.com
Dive Guam	1 (671) 647-0690 www.coraldiver.com
Fish Eye Marine Park	1 (671) 475-7777 www.fisheyeguam.com
Gently Blue	1 (671) 646-0838 www.gentlyblue.com
Guam Tropical Dive Station	1 (671) 648-4837 www.gtds.com
Micronesian Divers Association	1 (671) 472-6321/25 www.mdaguam.com
Ocean Island Club	1 (671) 727-5550 www.oic-guam.com
Paradise Aqua Corporation	1 (671) 472-1087 www.paradiseaqua.com
Rainbow Dolphin & Diving	1 (671) 646-6743 www.guamrainbow.com
Real World Diving Company	1 (671) 646-8903 www.rwdiving.com
Scuba Company Marine Sports	1 (671) 649-3369 www.scubaco.com
Tropical Beach House Guam	1 (671) 647-0954 www.tbhguam.com