

Preview your Mobile Site for FREE | Your Business Depends on it. | Show Me Now

Travel Home | Slideshows | In 5 Guides

# 5 best diving spots to warm your bones

By Lyn Mettler | Published February 07, 2014 | FoxNews.com



Print | Email | Share | 2 Comments | Like (1.3k) | Tweet (214) | Share (1)

With all the snow and bitter cold we've had this winter, it's hard to imagine jumping into a large body of water. But not far away, there are plenty of warm places where you can not only splash and swim, but dive deep below the ocean's surface to discover a wonder of underwater treasures.

Here are our top picks for "hot" places to scuba dive and snorkel this winter.

## 1 Snorkel the Philippines



On the other side of the world, there are some amazing hidden destinations in the Pacific Ocean that offer spectacular scuba diving and snorkeling. The Coral Triangle, recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and described as the underwater equivalent of the Amazon, includes the waters of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

You can snorkel over vast corals and World War II shipwrecks, and you can scuba dive into the sunken vessels for an underwater history lesson. The Tubutaha Reef offers hundreds of feet of visibility, as well as sharks swimming nearby.

Wilderness Travel offers guided snorkeling adventures to the Philippines in the company of a marine biologist on their Philippines Snorkeling Expedition. The trip heads to the Central Visayas archipelago of islands for swimming with whale sharks, dolphin watching and night snorkels to find creatures like octopus not usually seen during the day.

The excursion departs February through May.

MORE LISTS | Top Philanthropic Entrepreneurs of 2013 | Meet the 5 Most Generous Americans in 2013 | America's best chocolate shops | Winter wonders: 5 recent classics you don't have to put away until summer | America's 10 best cowboy vacations

## 2 "Buddy" up in Bonaire

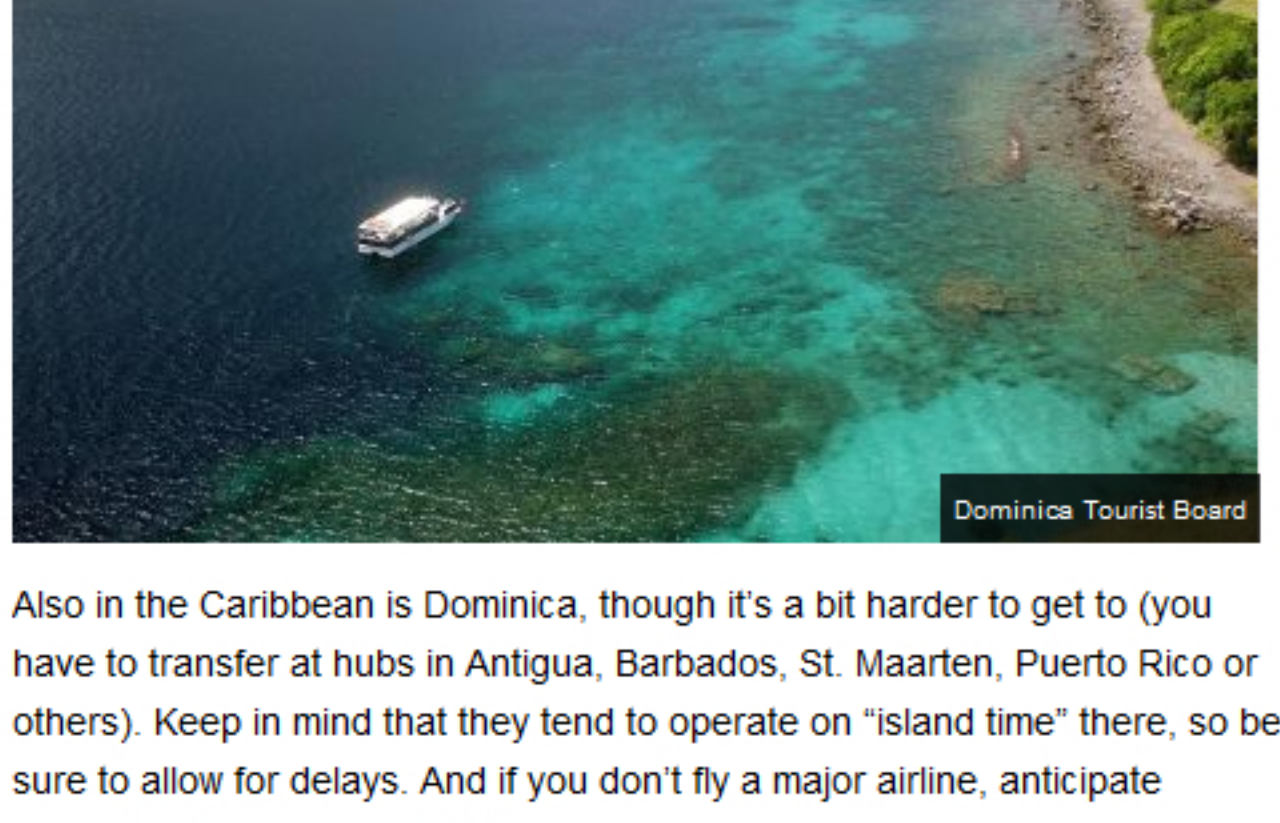


Often referred to as a diver's paradise, Bonaire, part of the Dutch Antilles in the Caribbean, 50 miles north of Venezuela, has an average forecast of 82 degrees and sunny year-round. Did we mention they also have 12 hours of daylight, because they are so close to the equator?

Bonaire is known for "shore diving," which means you literally put on your scuba gear, walk into the water and off you go. There are more than 50 easily accessible dive sites in Bonaire, mostly along the west coast, and each marked by a yellow stone, with natural reefs full of more than 400 colorful species of fish, eagle rays, sea turtles and coral, as well as several shipwrecks.

Buddy Dive is one of the most popular scuba dive resorts in Bonaire, offering two pools, 11 buildings with apartments, a restaurant, their famous drive-through air and Nitrox refill station and more. They are currently offering a Drive & Dive package that includes a 7-night stay, 7-day truck rental for driving to dive sites, 6 days of unlimited oxygen tank refills, daily breakfast buffet and airport transfers.

## 3 Dive the Depths of Dominica



Also in the Caribbean is Dominica, though it's a bit harder to get to (you have to transfer at hubs in Antigua, Barbados, St. Maarten, Puerto Rico or others). Keep in mind that they tend to operate on "island time" there, so be sure to allow for delays.

But once you get there, Dominica is a scuba diver's dream, offering amazingly clear and fairly calm water. Here you'll "boat dive," meaning you'll head to your dive site by boat and jump right in. Beneath the surface you'll find canyons and cliffs, just like you see above, as well as steep walls, volcanic craters, huge stands of coral, species rarely found in other Caribbean diving spots.

Close to the capital city of Roseau, the waterfront Fort Young Hotel is the location of a 300-year-old fort, is a good home base for divers on Dominica. It offers air-conditioned rooms with terraces or balconies, a swimming pool and Jacuzzi, a fully equipped gym, bars and restaurants and a private jetty with boats for divers.

## 4 Plunge the Depths of Palau

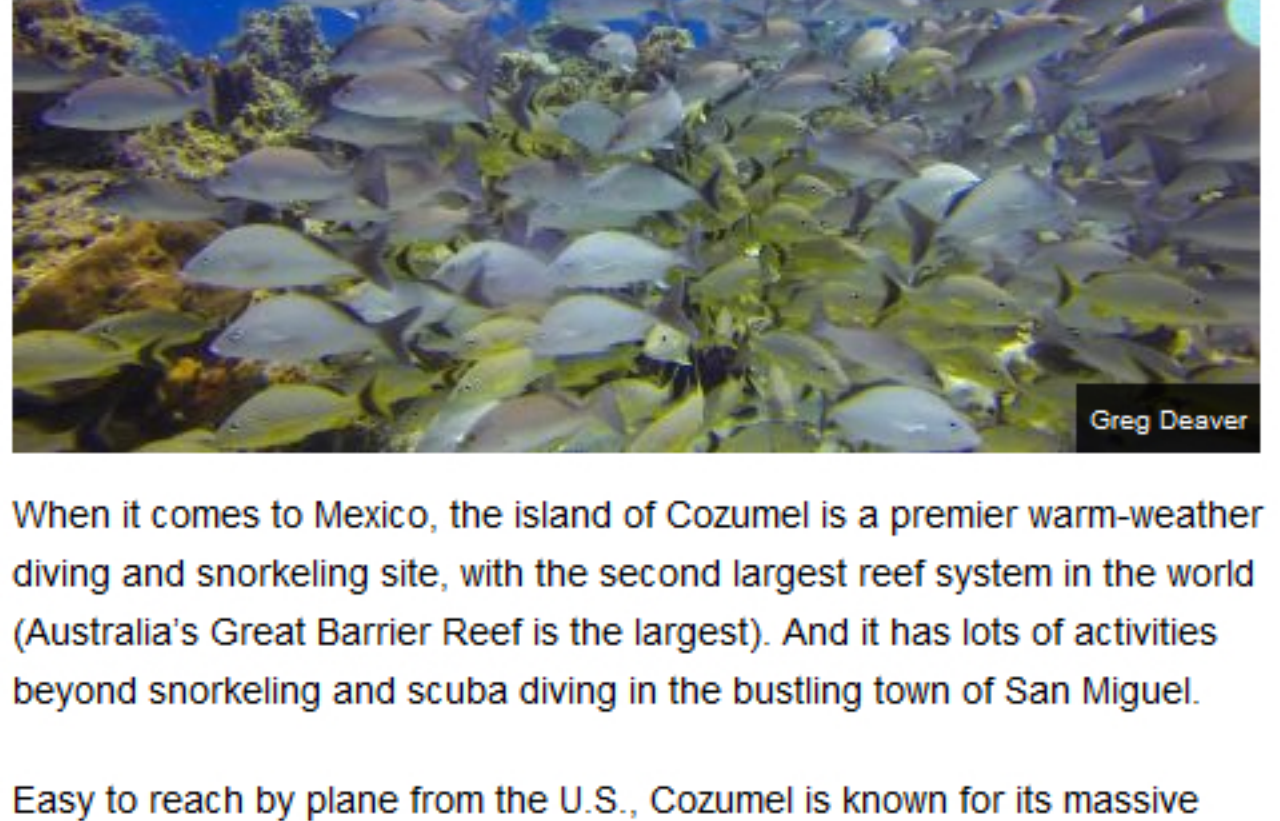


Also in the Western Pacific is the remote island of Palau, part of the Rock Islands and nicknamed "Rainbow's End" because it's so far away. It is not easy to get to, as you have to fly from Asia, but Palau is very much worth the hassle. Like Bonaire, its average temperature year round is 82 degrees, and it's been named one of the underwater wonders of the world, as well as one of the world's last Edens, by National Geographic.

In Palau, divers and snorkelers will find drop-offs, shallow reefs and channels beneath the sea. Reef walls in Palau team with marine life, schools of fish, old growth coral gardens and hidden marine lakes. Don't miss snorkeling in Jellyfish Lake, an enclosed body of water filled with jellyfish that have lost their sting.

If navigating this far-off land sounds a bit overwhelming, consider traveling with a tour operator like Wilderness Travel, which offers a snorkeling and kayaking trip to Palau. On the 11-day trip, stay at luxury resorts on white sand beaches as well as several nights at a full-service campsite with fresh cooked meals and opportunities for stargazing.

## 5 Drift in Cozumel



When it comes to Mexico, the island of Cozumel is a premier warm-weather diving and snorkeling site, with the second largest reef system in the world (Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the largest). And it has lots of activities beyond snorkeling and scuba diving in the bustling town of San Miguel.

Easy to reach by plane from the U.S., Cozumel is known for its massive underwater walls and "drift diving," where you drift along the water and the boat moves to you wherever you come afloat. In Cozumel, you'll find a vast number of fish, corals, sponges, moray eels, nurse sharks, big stingrays, hawksbill turtles and lots of macro life within its clear blue and very warm waters.

Try the Hotel Cozumel & Resort, which is walking distance or a short cab ride away from the downtown area with many restaurants and bars, and just across from the water for easy access to diving boats. They offer 4- or 7-night diving packages that include accommodations and morning or afternoon dives, as well as all-inclusive meal plans.

The hotel also has a beach club with beach access, several restaurants and bars, a gym, a large swimming pool, Jacuzzi and Kids Club.

Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer based in Indianapolis, Ind.

### ALSO ON THE WEB

- The Travel Tipping Quiz | Singles Scene - Los Cabos: Mexican Cabovers | If You Have Gmail, You Need This | The World's 6 Most Beautiful Lakes | Amazing Boeing 747 Crash Captured On Dashcam | Singles Scene Los Angeles - Chateau Marmont

### MORE FROM FOX NEWS

- America's 10 best cowboy vacations | Fan tries to charge Kate Upton's bathroom door at party | Big stars from tiny towns | Source: Philip Seymour Hoffman's death being treated as an accident | Moscow district hopes to lure tourists with Hobbit village | Giraffe wanders into a South African restaurant, tourists remain calm

### SHARE THIS ARTICLE

Like (1.3k) | Tweet (214) | +1 (10) | Submit

### FOX NEWS VIDEO

Drinks on the slopes | Inside the best museum you've never seen

Offers and articles from around the web: Hotel Price Hacks, Partner of Your Dreams, Cheapest Cellular Plans, Land a Job Today, Ashton Kutcher on Sexy, I Bet You'll Cry Watching, Racial Change IS Possible, Cheap Plane Ticket Secret

### ALSO ON THE WEB

oyster.com | BudgetTravel | TRAVELER | minitrip | Sunset | Traveler

SECTIONS | SHOWS | TOOLS | ABOUT | FOLLOW