

# Diving Los Jardines de la Reina (Gardens of the Queen) Cuba's Premiere Dive Destination August 11-18, 2018



THE OCEAN FOUNDATION

Designed for Scuba Diplomacy dive club members and friends by the Cuba Marine Research and Conservation Program (CubaMar), The Ocean Foundation, and Intercultural Outreach Initiative (IOI). For those interested, contact Eddie Gonzalez (PADI Divemaster #259986) at [gonzalez.eddie@gmail.com](mailto:gonzalez.eddie@gmail.com).

**SHARKS!! TURTLES!! MANGROVES!! CORAL REEFS!!**

## ABOUT

Join Cubamar, IOI, and Scuba Diplomacy for a unique scuba exploration of Gardens of the Queen, Cuba's premiere dive destination. Gardens of the Queen is the largest marine reserve in the Caribbean. The park has a protected string of untouched islands and shallow waters off the southeast Cuban coast. The intact connectivity of extensive seagrass beds, mangroves, and coral reefs provides a historical and ecological "baseline" of a nearly pristine tropical marine ecosystem.

We will visit sites that include deep and shallow coral reefs, seagrasses, lagoons, mangroves, and barrier islands.

Depending on scientist availability, educational presentations may cover: Tropical Lagoon and Mangrove Ecosystems, Seagrass and Coral Reef Ecology, Oceanographic Process, Fisheries and Coastal Ecosystems, or Marine Protected Areas Management. Experience Cuba by meeting marine scientists and local fishers, bird watching, snorkeling, and SCUBA diving.

Diving and lodging is provided by Avalon Cuban Diving Centers. The trip is covered under a person-to-person educational visa and meets all current US State Department rules for travel to Cuba. SCUBA certification is required if diving.

## COST

**Total Cost = \$4850 per participant in DBL accommodation (assumes 12 participants). With \$1500 non-refundable deposit.**

## Included:

- Shared, double-occupancy cabin with en suite bathroom with shower;
- ALL meals starting with Saturday dinner on Day 1;
- Up to 3 SCUBA dives per day, inclusive of rental dive gear (optional night dive for an extra fee);
- Roundtrip transfer from Camaguey airport to port;
- Meet and greet at the airport;
- Travel Visa;
- Tips for boat crew;
- 24-hr assistance in Cuba; and
- 6 beverages/day (water/soda/local beer).

## Not Included:

- Roundtrip airfare to Camaguey;
- Bar tabs (including any water beyond the daily allowance);
- Luggage fees;
- Souvenirs/personal items; and
- Emergency evacuation insurance, DAN insurance, & trip insurance.



**DEADLINES**  
**\$1500 Deposit: May 15, 2018**  
**Balance Due: July 1, 2018**



### Avalon Dive Centers and The Tortuga

Scuba diving and lodging in Los Jardines de la Reina are provided by Avalon Dive Centers. Accommodations are provided on the 110-foot double deck houseboat, the Tortuga. The Tortuga is a floating hotel anchored in a protected channel, so it never moves. It is extremely stable.

There are 7 cabins on the upper deck and one on the main deck; all featuring their own bathrooms with sink, toilet and a good shower with hot water. Each cabin has its own easily adjustable air-conditioning system. On the lower level (main deck), there is a large air-conditioned dining room along with a foredeck and afterdeck, with chairs and tables, perfect for relaxing and taking the sun after a diving day.

The foredeck is a very nice place to enjoy our pizza appetizer and drink cocktails or smoke Cuban cigars before dinner. Electricity on board is supplied by generators located nearby and it is available twenty-four hours a day. There are many outlets on board that provide both 110 and 220V. The houseboat provides satellite Internet service with Wi-Fi, making communications with the outside world easy and free for guests.

Dining on board combines Continental Italian cuisine with delicious seafood and traditional Cuban favorites like rice and beans, black bean soup and fried bananas. Beverages available on board are: bottled mineral water sparkling and tonic water, various soft drinks, juices, beers, rums, whisky, and excellent wines. 6 beverages/day are included in the package.

The day starts with a hearty breakfast. Lunch and dinners are primarily fresh fish. Lobster is our specialty and is served in a variety of ways. For those who like something different, chicken, pork and beef are also available. Salads and different fruits are served in every meal. Desserts feature our famous Cuban caramel custard, rum-flavored cakes, cookies, puddings, pies and many others. Vegetarian and kosher meals are served on request with many different choices available.

Divers booked on Tortuga will make the two-and-a-half-hour transfer to Jardines on M/Y Sol or M/Y Mares, boarding at the port of Júcaro.

### Daily Routine

Diving schedule is usually at the discretion of the customers following the instructor's suggestions with 3 daily dives. The day begins with a wakeup call at 7:00 am, coffee/tea ready, breakfast at 7:15 am. Divemasters are ready to go diving from 8:00 am. Fast diving boats are used to reach diving spots having the opportunity to explore different sites each day and enjoy the view of mangrove channels, virgin beaches, birds and other exuberant fauna during the trips. Divemasters and crew are available at all times.

Avalon Dive Centers guarantees all the equipment required to ensure safety (First Aid kits with O2 on every boat, excellent communications with mother boats and mainland, life jackets, etc.). The first morning, divers will go through a check-out dive to get acquainted with the equipment and calibrate your buoyancy.

During dive briefings, experienced divemasters explain every detail of the dive, from what will be seen in a particular spot to the correct behavior while diving with sharks or highlights of the area and special characteristics of the marine life present. After the first dive of the day, the group spends the surface interval in one of the beautiful area beaches. After the second dive, boats will return to the Tortuga around noon for lunch.

Afternoons can be arranged for an additional dive or an excursion through the lagoon and mangrove channels. You'll enjoy a frozen "mojito" and afternoon pizza at the end of diving. Dinner is served round 8:00 pm at a communal table. A normal week can include up to 18 dives.

Credit cards are not accepted while in Cuba. Scuba Diplomacy will go over all trip preparations through planning conference calls.

Join us on the back deck.

