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**CULTURE**

**SURF, SEA AND SAND: SPECTACULAR DIVING LOCATIONS TO VISIT THIS SUMMER**

**CELEBRATE WORLD REEF DAY 2019 IN STYLE**

BY **LAURA POWERS** ON 5/31/19 AT 6:00 AM EDT



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**W**orld Reef Day calls attention to the threats that face the beautiful coral reefs of the world. Fortunately, many resorts are heeding that call, and are working to enact sustainable practices and repopulate dying coral reefs to protect the main attraction of breathtaking resorts. This summer, celebrate World Reef Day, by pulling on your flippers, grabbing a mask and diving into the coral reefs at resorts that not only provide one of a kind viewing experiences but also work to protect these atolls for future generations.

COURTESY OF ST. REGIS MALVIDES VOMMULI RESORT

### **St. Regis Vommuli Resort, Maldives**

Nestled on a private island accessible by seaplane, St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort is ideal for scuba diving. The variety of courses offered allows guests to individualize the trip based on experience and interests. Get certified on the island and take advantage of experiences like the Night Diver course to explore the surrounding wildlife by moonlight. Starting in June 2019, the resort is offering the Adopt-a-Coral program where guests can help repopulate the coral reefs surrounding the Dhaalu Atoll. After the stay is over, guests will continue to receive updates on their coral's progress and when it is transplanted onto the reef.

VITALYEDUSH/ GETTY IMAGES

### **Banyan Bay Suites, Belize**

The Belize Barrier Reef is the second largest barrier reef in the world, only surpassed by the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Through restoration efforts, the reef was recently removed from the UNESCO endangered list, so the thriving wildlife is ripe for exploration. At Banyan Bay Suites, guests can explore the biodiversity of the reef at the onsite Belize Pro Dive Center, which offers expeditions for both snorkelers and divers. Swim with sharks, barracudas and moray eels, or explore the world's largest underwater sinkhole, the Great Blue Hole.

COURTESY OF CASA MARINA, A WALDORF ASTORIA RESORT

### Casa Marina, a Waldorf Astoria Resort, Key West, Florida

Key West is home to the only living coral reef in America, so leave the passport at home while exploring a coral reef in a Caribbean setting. Casa Marina, a Waldorf Astoria Resort is home to the largest private beach in Key West, and guests can start their excursions right from the beach. For those without scuba certification, go snorkeling with dolphins. If certified, scuba diving is the ideal way to explore the Florida Keys national marine sanctuary, which is home to not only coral and colorful fish, but also a number of shipwrecks.

COURTESY OF HILTON LOS CABOS BEACH AND GOLF RESORT

### Hilton Los Cabos Beach and Golf Resort, Mexico

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Yes

No

I don't know

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Los Cabos is a surfer's dream and has areas suited for all experience levels. Stay at the Hilton Los Cabos Beach and Golf Resort to be close to the action. The resort is great for surfers but also has scuba diving and snorkeling to see angelfish, parrotfish and lobsters among others. During turtle season, staff members patrol the beaches to make sure that turtles can safely lay and hatch their eggs, which you are able to watch from a distance.

COURTESY OF KOKOMO PRIVATE ISLAND, FIJI

## **Kokomo Private Island, Fiji**

A private island in Fiji is one of the best ways to experience the sea, surf, and snorkeling off the South Pacific. The Great Astrolabe Reef surrounds Kokomo Private Island which is full of tuna, sharks, turtles and manta rays. Seasonally, humpback whales pass by the island during their migration. Scuba diving excursions allow you to explore caves and caverns, and you are able to get your certification on site. The resort has also recently partnered with Dock to Dish to create a Fiji chapter that aims to sustainably source wild seafood for the local restaurants.

MAKINGSAUCE/ GETTY IMAGES

## **Quasar Expeditions, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador**

The Galapagos Islands are famous for hosting a number of species found nowhere else in the world. You can't stay on the protected islands, so the best way to see the wildlife is a boat cruise, like Quasar Expeditions. Many of them offer diving as part of the excursion. There you will see sea lions, sting and manta rays, white-tipped reef sharks, and the famous green sea turtles. This is an ideal location for experienced open water divers, as some of the areas are challenging, but the rewards are great.

ADAM BRUZZONE/ CONRAD BORA BORA NUI RESORT

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**Hotels that are Sustainable and Breathtaking**

## **Conrad Bora Bora Nui Resort, French Polynesia**

Combining luxury and sustainability is on the rise in the tourism industry and Conrad Bora Bora Nui has set its sights on local coral reefs. Using the "Biorock" technique, the resort has developed 17 underwater coral structures for coral repopulation. Guests can be a part of the process with an immersive coral reef experience to participate and learn more about coral restoration. Or just book a complimentary snorkeling trip to the lagoon of Motu Tapu.

CHRIS MCLENNAN PHOTOGRAPHY/ NANUKU AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION

## **Nanuku Auberge Resorts Collection, Fiji**

The coral reefs in Beqa Lagoon in Fiji are full of things to see and explore. At Nanuku Auberge Resorts the protection of coral reefs is a hands-on experience. Start by snorkeling through soft coral reefs with turtles, manta rays and tropical fish, or dive with sharks (without the cage). Once you gain a greater appreciation for the local beauty, take workshops about coral

propagation and help plant coral or mangroves to protect the barrier reef.

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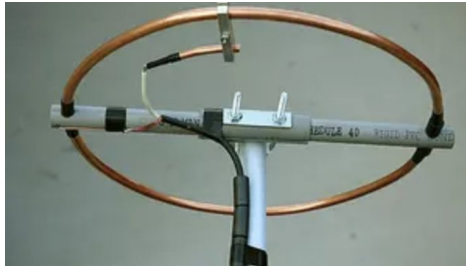
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