

SCUBA DIVING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where will we be diving?

Most dives at Garden Island Resort Taveuni are at the world famous Rainbow Reef. This area includes patch reefs in Somosomo Straits and the fringing reef on the southeast corner of Vanua Levu. The distance to the majority of sites from the resort ranges from 10 to 30 minutes by dive boat. On the patch reefs diving is fairly shallow (30 to 70 feet), but there can be challenging tidal currents. At the fringing reef section diving is wall diving with deeper profiles (50 to 100 feet). A typical dive involves mooring, briefing, descent down a line, and a guided tour. Drift dives are done when site and tide conditions are favorable.

What can we expect to see down there?

Rainbow Reef is famous for its multi-hued soft coral. The daily tidal currents in Somosomo Straits produce a constant flow of nutrients that provides ideal conditions for soft coral growth, as well as sustains an incredible diversity and density of tropical fish life. The fringing reef area provides opportunities to experience larger fish and drop-offs.

What determines the day's dive locations?

Two factors determine the dive locations; tides, weather. The dive guides have learned over the years that **certain sites are at their best on certain tides, incoming or outgoing, while some can be dived on either tide.** The Ocean in the Somosomo Straits is generally sheltered from rough seas but can be affected by surge. The fringing reef area is more exposed and sometimes we are unable to dive there due to choppy seas and strong surge. Over a week's period you will probably have experienced a range of dive sites including the better known ones such as the Great White Wall and Blue Ribbon Eel Reef. We cannot guarantee particular sites due to the two reasons above. Please keep in mind that there is no such thing as the "best" dive on the Rainbow Reef, however, there is the best dive that day depending on the conditions. The dive guides will always try to dive the best dive sites available.

What is the water temperature and what exposure protection will I need?

There are two distinct seasons for diving: summer (November - April) and winter (May - October). During the summer months water temperature lies in the 80°F - 82°F range (27°C - 30°C) and a lycra divesuit or a shortie is recommended. During winter the water temperatures are in the 75°F - 78°F range (24°C - 27°C), and a 3 mm or 5 mm wetsuit is recommended.

How much experience do I need to dive the Rainbow Reef?

Sometimes the currents can be challenging in the Somosomo Strait. Depending on the state of the tide there can either be strong incoming or outgoing flows. Also, due to the unique topography of the strait, the current actually flows over as well as around the reef. The upshot is that the stronger currents are in the shallower sections of the reef. To safely accommodate divers in this situation, our dive crew will anchor a descent line down. This enables divers to descend and ascend through even a strong current. Once down on the reef there is considerably less current. The best advice is to listen to the dive crew as they are the experts and know the sites intimately. Current diving is often made easier if you wear a few extra pounds of weight to assist in descent.

What time do the dive trips depart and return to the resort?

The boats (we have two dive boats; catering to a total of 24 divers). We are able to confirm dive groups up to a maximum of 32 divers as we will charter an extra boat to accommodate the extra divers) start loading between 8:45 for a 9.00am departure. After two dives – with a surface interval at a lovely beach -- the boats arrive back at the resort at approximately 1:00 to 1:30 PM for a late lunch and a relaxing afternoon. Guests should meet no later than 8.30am at the Dive Center to prepare for the dives. Towels, tea/coffee, water, fruit and cookies are offered during the surface interval.

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Don't forget to bring your certification card

GARDEN ISLAND RESORT & GARDEN ISLAND DIVE CENTRE

August 2008

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How is our dive equipment organized before and after the dives?

On arrival please take your Dive Gear to the Dive Shop. On your first dive Guests' equipment will be assembled, checked and loaded by the dive staff prior to their arrival in the morning. At the end of the trip all gear will be rinsed, disinfected, dried and stored at the Dive Center. There will be a camera rinse bin ready upon your return and over lunch you may want to leave your camera and video gear rinsing. If you are not bringing your own gear, we have for rent a large selection of BCDs, Regulators, wetsuits, masks and fins at reasonable rates.

What facilities are offered for underwater photographers and videographers?

We do not have a Photo Center, but our sites are truly photogenic and we assist photographers and videographers with their gear.

Can I take my non-diving partner on the dive boat?

If there is room we are able to accommodate non-divers. Most of the dive sites are generally unsuitable for snorkeling due to the depth and current. The resort runs daily snorkeling trips to Korolevu Island which has wonderful beaches and superb snorkeling. The more adventurous can arrange special snorkeling trips to the Rainbow Reef, weather and tide permitting.

Optional third dive?

There will be occasions when we offer a third dive; weather and tide permitting. We will go out for our normal two tank dive and after the second dive we will go to a nearby beach for a packed picnic lunch. On the way back to the Resort we will do a third dive. There is a charge for this third dive which is payable directly to the resort as we cannot pre-book this option. Please check with the dive staff as to whether conditions are suitable.

When are afternoon or night dives scheduled?

Afternoon and night dives are run, weather and tide permitting, when there is a **minimum of four** guests interested. Generally speaking the diving conditions tend to be rougher in the afternoons, and at night we must be careful with tidal currents. Please check with the dive staff as to whether conditions are suitable. There is a charge for both an afternoon or night dive which is payable directly to the resort as we cannot pre-book this option..

Night dives can be extremely memorable due to the soft and hard coral feeding enhanced by the emergence of nocturnal fauna. We have a limited quantity of Dive Lights – so suggest you bring your own to avoid disappointment.

If I'm on a pre-paid dive package and I don't complete the dives can I be refunded or share the dives with others?

Sorry, no. In order to offer very reasonable packages we do not refund unused sections of packages nor allow them to be shared. Before you leave, a good policy is to buy travel insurance in case of airline delay, inclement weather, sickness, or other travel mishap. If we are unable to provide diving services due to mechanical failures or other reasons in our control we will endeavor to make up the dives or will provide appropriate refunds if this is not possible. Afternoon and night dives are not part of packages and cannot be pre-booked or pre-paid.

I would like to learn to dive, do you offer dive courses?

We offer a wide range of Scuba courses. From a 'Discover Scuba' for those wishing to 'give it a try', right up to Dive Master certifications. Full 'Learn To Dive' courses are offered; but you will need at least 4 days in which to complete this course. 'Referrals' are offered if you have already started your Dive Course and wish to complete the Open Water dives with us!

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