



STEM Study Tours

North Carolina, USA - www.STEMstudytours.com



Tour: **STEM Ocean: Learn to Scuba Dive**
Destination: Cozumel, Mexico
Specialization: Physics, Math, Technology, Biology & Culture
Itinerary: 8-days / 7-nights

STEM Ocean: Learn to Scuba Dive				
Day		Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	Sun	Travel by air to Cozumel Mexico; check into hotel, Welcome, Safety & Orientation Meeting; Dinner		
2	Mon	Scuba Registration & Forms	Classroom / Pool / Open Water Sessions	Dinner & Resort Activities
3	Tues	Dive Day - Classroom / Pool / Open Water Sessions		Dinner & Resort Activities
4	Wed	Full-day Mayan History Exploration excursion on Mainland		Local Cozumel Shopping Dinner at Senior Frogs (pay on own)
5	Thur	Dive Day - Classroom / Pool / Open Water Sessions		Dinner & Resort Activities
6	Fri	Dive Day - Pool / Open Water Sessions / Written Exam & Open Water Testing		Dinner & Resort Activities
7	Sat	Dive Day - Open Water Sessions	Lunch & Free Time at Chankanaab National Park + Royal Dolphin Swim + Snorkeling + Sea Lion Presentation	Dinner & Resort Activities
8	Sun	Awards Presentation	Transfer to Airport; Depart for Home	

As with all sample itineraries, please be advised that this is an 'example' of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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A Hammock Expeditions Company
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E: info@STEMstudytours.com
W: www.STEMstudytours.com

OVERVIEW: In this event, students will learn how to Scuba dive and explore the brilliant creations under the ocean's surface. Each person attending will have an opportunity to earn their **Open Water Diver** certification. It's hard work to undertake but one of the most rewarding accomplishments you can achieve.

- ✚ If your students or staff are already certified, they may opt to earn their **Advanced Open Water Diver** certification or participate in diving without any specialized instruction program.
- ✚ If your group is already certified, we can also offer a specialty science week with a focus on Coral Reef Conservation, Fish Identification and Research Compilation, or even Marine Biology with our resident biologist. Please ask us about specialty programs.

SKILLS REQUIRED: Water / swimming appreciation & enthusiasm, problem solving, communication, adaption to unexpected problems, the drive to be successful, and most important, the ability to have fun through STEM study!

LIMITATIONS: Earning your Open Water Certification requires a lot of hard work! It also requires a lot of reading and studying which will take up most of your time in the evening hours. Those that are not committed to earning this goal may not earn their certification. For those that try diving and determine that it is not for them, or for those that are unable to achieve success in the academic portion of the week, they are welcome to drop down to a Skin Dive (snorkel) platform.

“A Divers Paradise....”

- Jacques Cousteau

Continually named in the top 5 dive locations in the world, Cozumel is Mexico's largest island, nestled just 12 miles off the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula and Playa del Carmen. Before becoming famous for diving, the island was a small community of mainly fishermen until 1961 when Jacques Cousteau told the world he had found one of the most beautiful diving areas in his travels. Cozumel measures 28 miles long and 10 miles wide and is world renowned for its dazzling white sandy beaches and the remarkable clarity of the multi-hued azure Caribbean ocean in which it rests. The climate is subtropical & the people native to Cozumel are of Mayan descent.



Cozumel itself was a sleepy little fishing community until 1961 when a Frenchman by the name of **Jacques Cousteau** declared the island **one of the most beautiful scuba diving areas in the world**. Since that time, Cozumel has become an underwater marine park to protect the delicate balance of its dazzling coral reefs and abundant variety of tropical fish. The underwater wildlife is stunning, and you don't have to be a diver to enjoy it. Simply put on a mask and snorkel and jump in! You'll feel like you've been dropped into a tropical fish tank.



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What makes diving in Cozumel amazing is the clarity of the Caribbean Sea, with up to 200 feet visibility. Many famous oceanographers have praised these reefs for their beauty and abundant marine life. Due to this, Cozumel's National Marine Park was established in 1996 by federal decree, with the aim to protect and monitor the area. The park is simply a diving dream come true and a paradise for scuba diving. Cozumel's National Marine Park starts its chain of outstanding dive sites south of downtown, with the aptly named Paradise Reef, and stretches out all the way to the southern end of the island, Punta Sur. This marine park is the protected home to one of the most incredible coral reefs and marine inhabitants on the planet.



The park covers about 29,600 acres of safeguarded ocean and coastline estimated to be the home of **262 species of fish** swimming between **105 different types of coral**. These reefs are literally teeming with sea life. Drift diving is very common in Cozumel; allowing you to float effortlessly from one turtle to the next and glide along deep walls. The very same current that carries you also ensures great diving visibility. The coral reefs here are punctured by swim-throughs and tunnels which lead onto the giant sponges and coral banks of Colombia Reef. The reefs of the National Marine Park have something to offer for every diver at any level, from advanced deeper dives to intro-dives for those first learning.



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The Mesoamerican Reef....

The Mesoamerican Reef region lies within the Caribbean Sea and touches the coasts of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. It contains the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere, stretching nearly 700 miles from the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula down through the Honduran Bay Islands. Dazzling arrays of different types of coral form this underwater wilderness and provides homes and food to hundreds of fish species, marine turtles, and sharks. Along the shores, mangroves provide habitat for fish and shorebirds as well as protect coastal areas from the damage associated with hurricanes and strong storms.



Current threats? The scenic beauty of the region's coastal areas makes it a prime tourist destination, which can put pressure on fragile reef environments. Further inland, rich soils attract large-scale agriculture, whose run-off can severely impact reefs. Increasing sea levels and water temperatures from climate change threaten corals and other marine animals such as turtles as well as the communities that depend on the reef for their livelihoods and food security.

For more information about the Mesoamerican Reef, please visit:

www.worldwildlife.org/places/mesoamerican-reef



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SKINDIVE / SNORKEL COURSE OPTION

Students do not have to participate in scuba diving to participate in STEM Ocean. Those who desire to simply snorkel their way through the amazing waters of Cozumel are welcome to do so. With the abundance of activities available in the resort plus additional excursion options, snorkelers will enjoy an amazing time. Fins, mask and snorkel provided along with guided instruction.

For those individuals that initially start in a SCUBA course and decide they would prefer to switch to Snorkel, they are welcome to do so at any time.

PADI SCUBA (STANDARD COURSE) INCLUSIONS

STEM Ocean includes:

- ✓ All training materials for '**Open Water Diver**' certification including downloadable study manual & Dive Log book for every participant. (Students should bring a smart phone or tablet to download necessary training materials.)
- ✓ All rental gear including wetsuit, BCD, regulator, fins, mask and snorkel for every participant
- ✓ Multilevel Recreational Dive Planner (Calculator) for all participants obtaining their initial Open Water Certification
- ✓ Ocean-based Instruction in classes of 1 instructor for every 6 pupils for participants that are not yet certified as an Open Water Diver; Classroom/Pool-based instruction in classes of 1 instructor for every 10 students
- ✓ Participants that have previously earned their Open Water Certification are in groups of 1 guide to 8 participants
- ✓ Instruction/Certification for divers who have already achieved their Open Water Diver certification and wish to obtain their **Advanced Open Water Diver Certification**
- ✓ Nitrox dives for those who are Nitrox certified
- ✓ All 'ocean dives' noted in the itinerary will be 'boat dives.' Each participant will have 2 tanks for each of these boat trips.

Note: If anyone is a certified diver but has not dived within the last 12-calendar months, they will be required to take a Refresher Course to ensure their skills are sharp before heading for ocean dives. The fee for this extra course is generally \$50 per person if required.

It's important to note that there is a lot of reading and homework involved in earning your dive certification. Participants will need to devote adequate time during the week for this. Part of the certification process is personal review of all studies. If your instructor doesn't feel you are prepared, you may be asked to sit out and review the training before re-engaging in diving or classroom sessions. You will not earn your certification if you are unable to pass the written part of your examination.

PADI / Project AWARE Downloads

[Project AWARE's 10 Tips for Divers to Protect the Ocean Planet](#)
[10 Tips for Divers Poster](#)



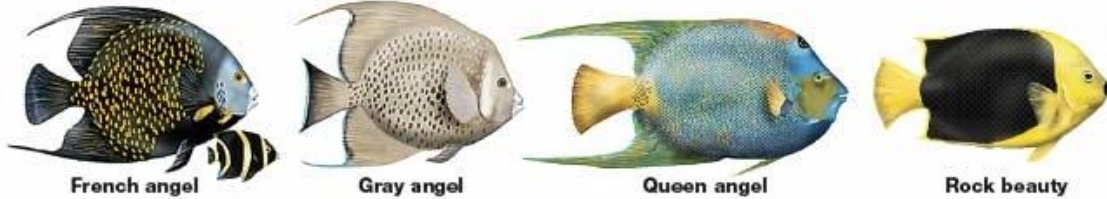
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Fish commonly seen in Cozumel's snorkeling areas

Almost every time we get into the water we see angelfish, parrot fish, sergeant majors, blue tangs, ocean surgeons, blue runners, and grunts. The other fish shown here are more uncommon to see, and some, like the shark family, are rarely seen. You'll have to watch closely for some of these fish; they like to hide among the coral.

Angelfish. You'll commonly see these members of the Angelfish family at almost every reef in Cozumel. Their main body is about the size of a dinner plate, with graceful fins and tail adding to their size.



Parrot fish. This species is named for the beautiful colors that often resemble a parrot and the sharp parrot-like beak used to break off small pieces of coral. Parrot fish are difficult to identify because several varieties change color (and sex) at various stages of their life (called phases).



Small fish. You'll find this colorful group swimming around coral heads where they can find protection from predator fish. We have seen all of these living among the elkhorn coral at the spot we call The Twins (B6).



Our Partner



Pro Dive International - Pro Dive is a watersports service provider with multiple **PADI 5 STAR Dive Centers**. All centers have been awarded the prestigious **National Geographic Green Star Award**. Whether your visit to this magical place includes your very first scuba diving experience, scuba refresher course or snorkel excursions, the trained staff of Pro Dive is ready to provide you with professional service and a most memorable experience.



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Our Accommodation

Allegro Cozumel - Located on the beautiful island of Cozumel overlooking the Mexican Caribbean Sea is Allegro Cozumel. This youth friendly all-inclusive resort is about 20 minutes from the international airport and a 45-minute ferry ride from Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Guests will enjoy the nearby Palancar Reef which is considered one of the top 5 dive destinations in the world. Guests staying at Allegro Cozumel will also enjoy one of the very best beaches the island has to offer.

The hotel boasts 261 tropical theme rooms in two-story Polynesian style bungalows. Room amenities include rooms with 2 double beds to sleep **TWO PARTICIPANTS PER ROOM – all in individual beds**, air-conditioning, ceiling fan, cable television, telephone, bathtub and shower, balcony or terrace, coffee maker, hairdryer, hammocks, iron & ironing board and in-room safety deposit boxes.



Resort amenities and activities that are included with your package are:

- ✓ Unlimited meals, snacks & beverages in four restaurants
- ✓ Full open bar for adult-age participants in five bars
- ✓ Multiple swimming pools plus kids' water park with slides & splash fountain
- ✓ Supervised activities for children (4-12 yrs) and Teens Club with activities for children (8-17 yrs)
- ✓ Jacuzzi, Sauna & Fitness center room
- ✓ Three tennis courts plus one multipurpose court for Basketball
- ✓ Beach Volleyball & Beach Soccer
- ✓ Ping-pong, Darts & Giant Chess Board
- ✓ Kayaking, Snorkeling & Sailing (instruction & equipment)
- ✓ Daily activities by the pool and beach areas (cooking class, Spanish class, water aerobics, etc)
- ✓ Nightly shows & entertainment
- ✓ Chaise lounges & towel service at the pool & beach areas
- ✓ Includes all resort gratuities



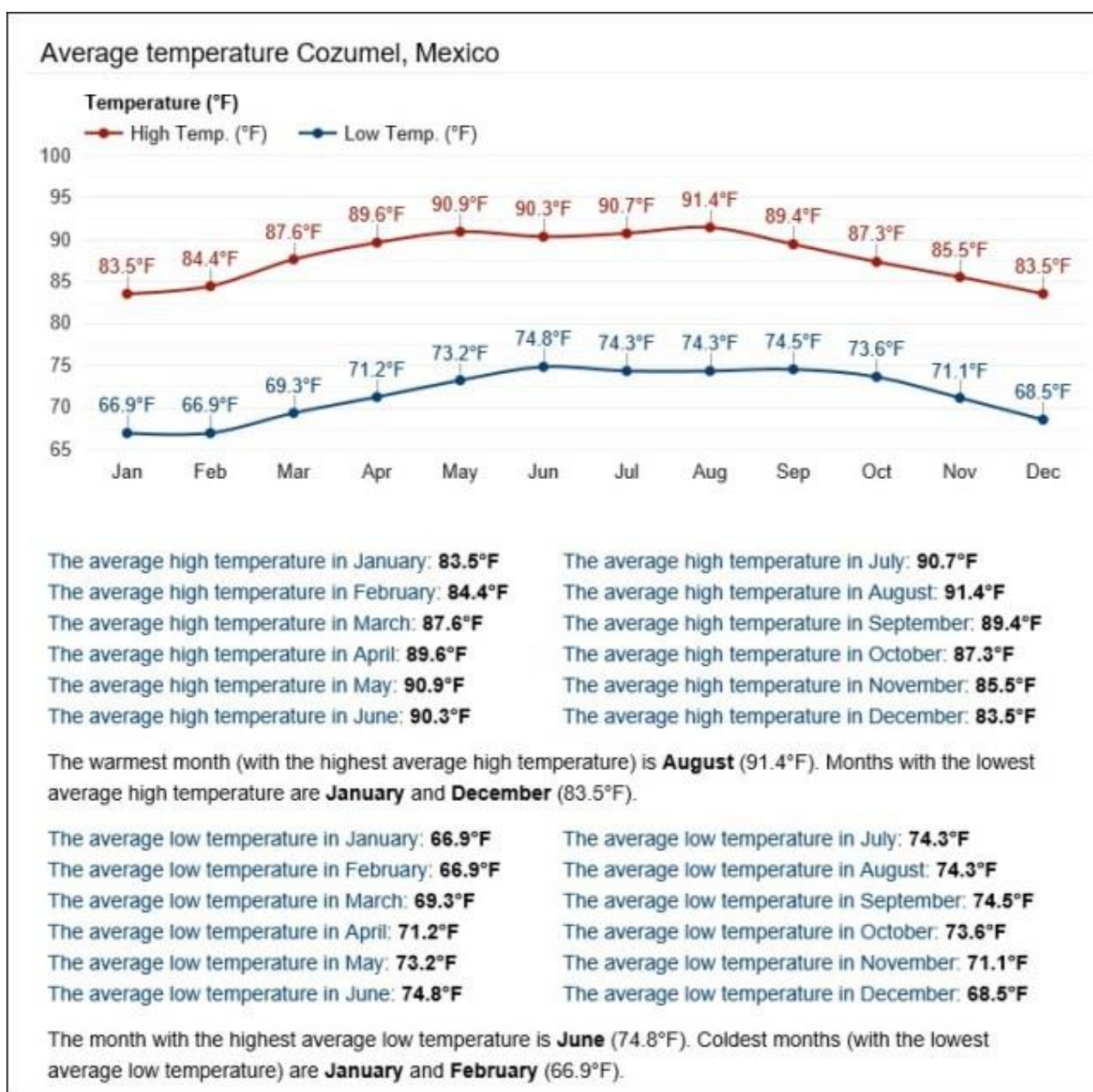
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Other activities available that require additional cost include:

- ✓ Spa facilities
- ✓ Gift Shop
- ✓ Car rental
- ✓ Guest Laundry
- ✓ Currency Exchange
- ✓ 24-hour medical services (on call)
- ✓ Internet access

Weather, Currency & Language



Currency - The Mexican peso (MXN) is this country's official currency. However, most all vendors accept American dollars.

Official language - The official language of Mexico is Spanish and is spoken by nearly all Mexicans. Nonetheless, there are also more than 60 native languages, including Nahuatl and Mayan.

Cozumel Reefs



Located in the Mexican Caribbean coastal zone, Cozumel is fringed by a complex coral reef ecosystem. Mangroves cluster along large parts of the shoreline in the extreme southern and northern parts of the island, providing habitat and protection for juveniles starting their life cycles. Shallow lagoons filled with turtle grass complete the rear zone of the reef creating a buffer leading up to a shallow reef forming an integral part of the breaker zone. Moving onto the deeper portions of the island shelf, divers will find themselves in the spur and groove zone, which is an interface between the massive coral structures lining the drop-off into the abyss, completing the transition between the land and fabulous dive sites.

The coral formations creating Cozumel's systems are not continuous, but a series of isolated formations and integrated structures characteristic of reefs found along island shelves. Covering a total area of 17 square kilometers, two distinct types of formations are dominant in the Marine Park; they are Platform and Edge Reefs.


Platform Reefs are less developed from a structural point of view, with their foundations or bases rarely exceeding a depth of 30 – 50 feet (10 – 15m). The age of these structures varies between 1,000 to 10,000 years old depending on the species to be found there, and the quality of the substrate upon which it is based. Perfect examples of platform reefs in Cozumel are Colombia Shallows, Paradise and Yucab.

Edge Reefs are characterized by continuous structures rising into coral peaks high above the edge of the drop off and extending to as much as 180 feet (55m) below the surface. These formations are mainly found in the south of the island, with perfect examples seen at Palancar, Colombia, Punta Sur and Maracaibo.

Cozumel is famous for its **drift diving**. Currents are usually mild (1 – 2 knots) allowing divers to glide effortlessly along the reefs. The Gulf Stream runs along the entire coast of Quintana Roo, flowing from the south to the north, with its intensity dependent upon weather conditions, seasons and the moon.

Mayan Culture Excursion

Groups will have the opportunity to participate in a Mayan excursion day to learn about the history and culture of the Maya people. This day requires a very early start, departing the hotel at 6:15 AM to take the island ferry over to the mainland.

 **Maya Jungle Tour** - Explore the impressive **Tulum** archaeological site in a Riviera Maya excursion with stunning views of the Caribbean Sea. Enter into the amazing Sac-Actun system, snorkel surrounded by awesome rock formations, ride through the jungle on all-terrain Mercedes Benz Unimogs, rappel down into a cenote (underground cave) and swim in a unique natural pool. Enjoy nature flying over the jungle's foliage on exciting zip-lines and participate in a traditional Maya purification ceremony.

After the excursion is completed in the late afternoon, many schools opt to eat dinner in town once back in Cozumel (Senior Frogs is always a winner!), before heading back to the hotel. If you prefer to do this, please let us know so we may ensure an extra transfer is included in your pricing. Schools will be responsible for paying for dinner on their own if off-site.

Important Notes

Required documents for those who are not presently certified as Open Water Divers:

- ✓ Student record file & waiver (always write out NO or YES completely to any/all medical questions)
- ✓ If participant clicked yes to any medical questions on the Student Diving Waiver a Medical statement is required

Required documents for all Certified Open Water Divers:

- ✓ Diver's registration (shaded areas only)
- ✓ Liability release
- ✓ Medical statement (always write out NO or YES completely)
- ✓ Standard Safe Diving Practices

All required forms will be gathered by teaching staff prior to departure (approx. 3 months in advance) and sent into our Operations offices in bulk. Our staff will then submit these directly to Pro Dive in advance of our arrival so they may schedule required instruction staff. This allows school staff to ensure that all participants have obtained all required forms.

If for any reason a participant has not brought along his/her required forms, they may fill these out once in resort. A teacher may sign as a Legal Guardian provided they have the full legal authority to do so.

If for any reason a participant requires a medical release from a physician in Cozumel, please be advised that although we will be happy to set this up, the participant will be personally responsible for payments required for medical care and transportation.

Waiver & Medical Release – A detailed waiver (above – Student Record File / Liability Release / Medical Statement) will be required to participate in this tour. A parent or legal guardian must sign if the participant is under the age of 18. As part of the Waiver, a medical questionnaire is included. Please ensure that each participant has fully written out each answer with either a YES or a NO; no abbreviations are accepted. Please be advised that if any member checks YES to any element, they will be required to provide a physician's letter



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stating that they are allowed to dive prior to embarking on the event. The Physician's note must be dated within 3 months prior to travel. Physicians are also available on the island if needed. Please do understand that if any element is ticked as positive, the person will not be able to participate in SCUBA diving without a physician's release. This does not affect Skin Dive (snorkel) participants.

SST Waiver – A waiver noting release of liability is required for all passengers. All documents must be signed by a parent or legal guardian if under the age of 18. If a document is not produced for any participant, unfortunately they will not be able to dive/snorkel under the course contents. All documents are required to be sent in via mail or email, in bulk, approximately 3 months prior to travel.

Additional Dives – Divers that are certified as Open Water Divers may feel free to upgrade to add additional dives, night dives or other special certifications. These upgrades are at extra cost and may be booked in advance of travel or directly through the Dive Center upon arrival. No diving is allowed starting in the afternoon of the day prior to departure.

Equipment – If divers opt to bring their own equipment, please understand that because all elements of the tour are bundled, there will be no reduction in the 'package plan' and refunds will not be available. Please know you will also be responsible for any excess luggage fees charged by the airlines.

Log Book – Log books are supplied for new divers only. If you are already certified as an Open Water Diver, please remember to bring your log book to record your dives.

Dive Insurance - If you are a certified diver, do not forget to bring documentation of your Dive Insurance plan if you carry one. Cozumel has two treatment centers located on the island if needed.

Instructor / Boat Crew Gratuities - **Tips are not included for dive instructors, skin dive guides, boat captains and deckhands and are at your personal discretion.** Tips for good service are generally estimated at \$10 USD per tank (generally x2 as 2 tanks per session/day) and are split amongst your instructor/guide and your boat captain and deckhand. Additionally, tips for your Instructor if earning your OWD may range from an additional \$20 - \$50 dependent upon the service you received, to cover classroom services.

Change of Sport - If any participant originally signs up as a diver and during the course of the tour drops to a snorkeler, please understand that no refunds are available.

Itinerary Scheduling - Diving schedules may vary as to morning or afternoon dives. Specific schedules will be distributed upon arrival.

Towel Cards - Upon arrival at the resort each person will be issued with a Towel Card. The towel card may be exchanged at the pool for a fresh towel as many times as you desire, every day. The Towel Card **MUST** be turned in prior to leaving the resort as you will not be allowed to check-out until it is accounted for. To discourage theft, the resort charges \$50 per towel card (or towel) that is not turned in. If a participant loses their towel or card, they will be responsible for paying this fee. If you wish for Towel Cards not to be distributed to your students, please inform us.

Sunscreen / Sun Cream – As a protected environment, please ensure that group participants bring **bio-degradable** sunscreen if available.

Pool & Beach Lifeguards - Lifeguards are on duty at various resort locations. Please direct your students as to appropriate use.



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SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- We recommend you bring your own personal snorkel gear to include fins (and booties if required), mask and snorkel. This allows you to use your gear for snorkeling off of the beach and also at the Chankanaab National Park. It also allows the best comfort level when using personal gear.
- Hat / Head Covering
- Sunglasses
- 2 Swimsuits
- 2 pairs of shorts
- 2 or 3 t-shirts or other shirts
- Males: 1 pair of closed-toe shoes for special restaurant evenings
- Females: 1 sundress for special restaurant evenings
- Beach bag for personal gear
- Sandals / Flip-flops / Beach Shoes
- Athletic Shoes / Trainers
- Personal Toiletries
- Pen & Highlighter for Study Guides
- Waterproof Biodegradable Sunscreen / Sun Cream
- After Sun Spray / Gel / Lotion
- Mosquito Repellent
- Camera (disposable suggested) / Underwater Camera
- Cash / Credit card for meals on travel days
- Cash for Dive Instructor / Boat Team / Ambassador gratuities (\$100 per person is suggested for combined gratuities)



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Minimum Booking Numbers:

10 students

What's Included:

Roundtrip international flights to Cancun or Cozumel
Airport transfers to/from Mexico airport to hotel
7-nights' accommodation in Cozumel at the Allegro Resort Hotel
All meals, snacks & beverages while at resort hotel
SCUBA or **SKINDIVE** course as chosen per pupil
[OPEN WATER SCUBA CERTIFICATION OPTION](#): 3 half-day (6-tank total) ocean dives + classroom & pool training
[ADVANCED DIVER CERTIFICATION OPTION](#): 3 half-day (6-tank total) ocean dives + classroom & pool training
[PRE-CERTIFIED OPTION](#): 4 half-day (8-tank total) ocean dives if no training or certification is taken
[SKIN/SNORKEL](#): 3 half-day ocean snorkels with boat/guide
Daily use of non-motorized water sports equipment
Daily and evening activities
Personal Event Ambassador
Fund-a-Forest: A tree is planted in the name of each guest
Dollar\$ For Scholars: \$2 donation in the name of each guest
24-hour emergency cover

What's Not Included:

\$50 refresher course, if required
Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
Transfers to/from home airport
Transportation for activities not shown in the itinerary
Cost of visas, full or collective passports
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
Meals not taken at resort property
Sightseeing options not shown in Itinerary
Hotel incidental deposits & bills – internet, etc
Any gratuities – drivers, ambassador, dive team + boat crews

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming.
If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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