

Tour: **Florida Keys Diving & Marine Sciences**
Destination: Key Largo & Homestead, Florida
Itinerary: 7-days / 6-nights in Florida
Dates: Year-round

Florida Keys - Diving & Marine Sciences			
Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	Travel to Miami, Florida, transfer to hotel in Homestead/Key Largo area, check-in and get settled	Welcome, Safety & Orientation	Welcome Dinner
2	PADI Dive Instruction Day - Classroom / Confined Water / Ocean		Dinner & Free Time
3	PADI Dive Instruction Day - Classroom / Confined Water / Ocean		Dinner & Free Time
4	PADI Dive Instruction Day - Classroom / Confined Water / Ocean		Dinner & Free Time
5	2 Morning Ocean Dives	Turtle Hospital Master Class Tour, Marathon Key	Dinner & Free Time
6	Coral Reef Restoration Foundation Master Class	Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center & Master Class	Everglades Alligator Farm Airboat Ride, Show & Tour
7	Robert is Here - Tropical Fruit	Depart the Florida Keys 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.

OVERVIEW: In this tour, 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 enjoy the time on standard dive opportunities with a total of up to 12 dives offered at select times.



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 science!

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 snorkel activities.

Day 1

Dinner included

Travel to South Florida arriving at in the late afternoon or early evening. Groups will either lodge in Homestead and transfer to Key Largo daily, or may lodge directly in Key Largo. Pricing is dependent upon lodging options requested. After check-in, we'll have our **Welcome, Safety & Orientation meeting** and get settled in. Later, we'll have time to rest and relax or if you arrive early enough and would like to plan an activity, we're happy to make the arrangements. Dinner will be served later in the evening.

Sample Hotel: Holiday Inn Key Largo – Ideally situated next to Key Largo Resorts Marina, this hotel places you in the perfect position to experience the endless Florida Keys fun soaking up the tropic. Complete with every perk from on-site dining and a poolside Tiki Bar to two heated, outdoor pools and a 24-hour Fitness Center, the hotel is an island paradise from the moment you arrive. Room amenities include free wireless Internet, flat-screen TVs with HBO, hair dryers, and mini-refrigerators, coffee makers and more. Students generally sleep 4 to a room sharing 2 queen beds; staff sleep 2 to a room.



Sample Hotel: Hampton Inn & Suites, Homestead – Right off Highway 1 and 15 minutes from charming Biscayne Bay, this hotel is close to attractions like the Homestead-Miami Speedway and the Coral Castle Museum. Enjoy the fitness center, outdoor pool, business center, hot breakfasts and complimentary Wi-fi. Room amenities include a 32-inch LCD TV, hair dryer, coffee maker, and weekday newspapers.



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Days 2 - 4

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

Rise and shine Florida! Today is the day we learn to scuba dive! For those of you already certified, your days will be filled with amazing diving. 😊

The Florida Reefs - The third largest barrier reef in the world is found off the Atlantic coast of the Florida Keys—and that makes for world-class diving all along the 100-mile stretch that runs between Key Largo to the north and the southernmost tip in Key West. Florida is home to the only coral reefs in the nation and some of the best are off Key Largo. Molasses Reef and French Reef are two of the most popular and are great for all levels of divers as the reefs are shallow.

Divers can find plenty of sea life on both reefs. Snapper, spadefish, porcupine, and a variety of colorful tropical fishes, plus nurse, reef, and the occasional hammerhead sharks, rays, and plenty of sea turtles call the reefs home. Look for little critters too! Flamingo tongue and nudibranchs can be found on sea fans, and eel gardens often sprout in the sandy patches

The coral reefs off Key Largo are both patch reef and a primarily spur-and-groove configuration of bank reef. Most of the patch reefs are three to four miles offshore and offer wonderful snorkel opportunities owing to their shallow depth and profusion of both juvenile and adult marine life. However, most of the scuba activity occurs along the offshore bank reef at depths of 20 to 35 feet. It is along this extensive reef line that the greatest concentrations of coral are found, along with the clearest water and most impressive fish populations. Visibility typically ranges from 25 to 100 feet, with an average water clarity of 50 feet, and a temperature range from 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to a balmy 85 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer.



PADI SCUBA (STANDARD COURSE) INCLUSIONS

- ✓ All training materials for '**Open Water Diver**' certification including downloadable study manual & Dive Logbook for every participant.
- ✓ All rental gear including wetsuit, BCD, regulator for every participant (Group members should bring their personal snorkel, mask and fins).



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- ✓ 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

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](#)

Sample Training Schedule

- ✚ Earning an Open Water Diver Certification:
 - *Day 2 – Classroom Training*
 - *Day 3- Confined Water SCUBA in morning; ocean dives in afternoon*
 - *Day 4 – Confined Water SCUBA in morning; ocean dives in afternoon*
 - *Day 5 – 2-tanks as a certified diver in morning*
- ✚ Pre-Certified Divers with no instruction:
 - *Day 2 – 2-tank dives (either morning or afternoon)*
 - *Day 3 – 2-tanks in the morning + 2-tanks in the afternoon*
 - *Day 4 – 2-tanks in the morning + 2-tanks in the afternoon*
 - *Day 5 – 2-tank dives in morning*

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.

Day 5

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

Good morning Florida! This morning we'll take our last two dives and celebrate our newly certified divers! After, we'll head south to Marathon Key to visit an amazing place... The Turtle Hospital.



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Turtle Hospital Tour – Rescue, Rehab & Release. The Turtle Hospital is located on Marathon Key and is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of endangered sea turtles. Groups will be able to sit through a short video presentation and then take a guided tour of the hospital facilities and the sea turtle rehabilitation area. This educational experience lasts approximately 90-minutes and provides a presentation on sea turtles as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the hospital facilities and rehabilitation area. At the end of each program, guests are invited to feed the permanent residents.

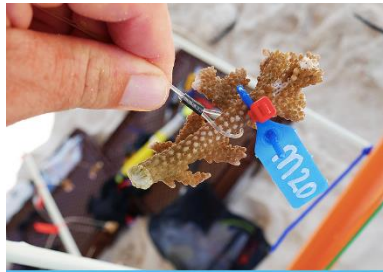
After learning everything about turtles and the challenges they face, we'll head back to our hotel for some rest and relaxation and dinner.

Day 6

Breakfast & dinner included; lunch on own

Rise and shine Florida Keys! Today is a day for a bit of exploring and fun while we can enjoy the Florida sunshine! First stop, we're going to take an in-depth look at Coral Reefs and the restoration efforts currently happening.

Coral Reef Restoration Foundation – The Coral Reef Restoration Foundation takes an upbeat look at a downbeat topic - coral reefs. Home to 25% of all marine species, coral reefs protect the coastlines of more than 100 countries, are the backbone of life in the oceans and a critical part of the web of life on our planet. Coral reefs have been around for more than 50 million years, yet they could all be gone by the end of this century. Since the 1970s, the Florida Reef Tract has lost almost 97% of its once-dominant staghorn and elkhorn coral. These species are now critically endangered, taking a huge hit from climate change, ocean acidification, and other pressures. At the Coral Reef Foundation, ground-breaking work is being done with accelerating coral growth in the lab, creating nurseries in the ocean, and replanting back to the reefs.



Coral Restoration Foundation is the world's largest non-profit marine-conservation organization dedicated to restoring coral reefs to a healthy state, in Florida and globally. Their core mission is to restore coral reefs, to educate others on the importance of our oceans, and to use science to further coral research and coral reef monitoring techniques. *"We work to support the reefs' natural recovery processes through the large-scale cultivation, out-planting, and monitoring of genetically diverse, reef-building corals. We engage and empower others in the mission to save our planet's coral reef with education, scientific collaborations, and outreach."*



We grow corals in offshore Coral Tree Nurseries, and then outplant them out onto carefully selected sites. Since 2012, we have now planted more than 74,000 critically endangered staghorn



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- ✓ and elkhorn corals back onto the Florida Reef Tract. Many of these corals have now grown into thriving colonies with the ability to spawn, kick-starting the reefs' natural process of recovery.
- ✓ We work with 303 coral genotypes across 11 species, to ensure that we are restoring the reefs' genetic diversity and resilience.
- ✓ We rigorously monitor our outplanted corals and use data to inform our strategic development.
- ✓ We work with government agencies including NOAA, universities, NGOs, and others.

Later, we'll learn about Florida's Wild Birds!

Florida Keys Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center Master Class - Working to increase awareness of native and migratory bird species as well as their needs, biology, and care, the team hopes that participants develop a greater biological understanding of birds, creating a deeper personal connection with nature. It's no secret that the Florida Keys are known for rare and unique species of birds year-round. This center is situated on the Florida Bay, very close to the Everglades National Park, where almost 400 native and migratory species can be found each year. Facilitated by resident wildlife biologists, students tour the Laura Quinn Wild Bird Sanctuary where they visit the exhibits on the wetlands property.



Finally, our trip to Florida wouldn't be complete without learning about the south's greatest reptile – the American Alligator!



Everglades Alligator Farm – Discover the Everglades at South Florida's oldest alligator farm. Near the entrance of Everglades National Park, the farm contains more than 2,000 alligators. A trip includes an airboat tour, alligator show, snake show, and an alligator feeding demonstration. On the airboat ride you can step out of our boats, and into the everglades. Airboats travel at high speeds, doing 360-degree spins through the Everglades sawgrass prairies.

This evening, we'll have our farewell dinner on the water in Key Largo before heading back to our hotel for our final night. Certificates will be awarded.

Day 7

Breakfast included

Good morning Florida! It's time to travel home! Before we head for home, we'll make one last stop to discover some amazing Tropical Fruit!

Robert is Here: Exotic Tropical Fruits - Bring your wallet because once you test out a few of these, you'll be sure to want to buy some for the road! Beautiful, luscious tropical fruits that you have probably never seen or experienced before. It is not your ordinary fruit stand! Over 500 unique types of seasonal, tropical fruits; a true



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fruit paradise! Our host will explain a little about some of the fruits and we'll get to taste too! A fruit milkshake is also included.



Afterwards, it's off to the airport or coach-ride home. We're hoping that you are inspired and taking home wonderful memories that will last a lifetime! If you would like to add in any last-minute stops, simply enquire with your Ambassador who will make sure you are set up for success.



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Important Notes

Required documents for all 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

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 our Dive Shop 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.

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 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. 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.

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 travel with the group. 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.



IMPORTANT – Each guest must bring their own mask, snorkel and fins. If you do not have equipment, you will not be able to participate in the activities. These can be purchased from any sporting goods store, dive shop or online; you can buy them individually, or as part of a set. For beginners, we suggest you purchase a set from an outfitter like Dick's Sporting Goods, Academy Sports, Bass Pro or Cabela's. If you are an advanced water sports enthusiast, you may want to purchase upgraded equipment from a local dive shop. If you have forgotten to bring this equipment, please alert your Guide immediately upon arrival. In this instance, we will try to set up transportation (taxi) for a student/teacher to travel to buy needed equipment. Additionally, some guests also like to bring a light wetsuit or rash guard to keep warm in the water

and protect from coral brushes. This is not mandated and is dependent upon the student's preferences. Finally, dependent on the type of fins you purchase, **you may also need to purchase booties** if the fins you purchase are not 'full-foot' fins with an enclosed heel.



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Scuba Equipment –If certified divers opt to bring their own scuba 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.

Instructor / Boat Crew Gratuities - **Tips are not included for dive instructors, snorkel 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 per person, 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.

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

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- Bring your own personal snorkel gear to include fins (and booties if required), mask and snorkel.
- Hat / Head Covering
- Sunglasses
- 2 Swimsuits
- 2 pairs of shorts
- 2 or 3 t-shirts or other shirts
- 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
- 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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Florida Keys: Diving & Marine Sciences

Minimum Booking Numbers:

20 students

What's Included:

Round-trip flights or motorcoach transfers
6-nights' accommodation in Homestead or Key Largo areas
Breakfasts & dinners daily starting with dinner on arrival and ending with breakfast on departure
Transportation for programmed activities & airport transfers
4-day Open Water Diver Certification plan **OR** 4-days of standard diving for certified divers
Turtle Hospital – Master Class Tour
Coral Reef Restoration Foundation & Master Class
Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center & Master Class
Everglades Alligator Farm & Airboat Ride, Show & Tour
Robert is Here – Tropical Fruit Sampling & Milkshake
Personal Tour 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:

Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
Transfers to/from home airport
Transportation for activities not shown in the itinerary
Lunches and other meals/snacks not shown in itinerary
Cost of visas, full or collective passports
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
Sightseeing / Entertainment Options not shown in Itinerary
Hotel incidental deposits & bills – meals, mini-bar items, recreation charges, purchases billed to room, etc.
Any gratuities – drivers, hotel services, dive instructors, boat captain and hand tips, ambassador

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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