

Dive Deep in San Juan: Underwater Gardens of the Caribbean

San Juan is the capital city of Puerto Rico, a partially self-governing, unincorporated territory of the United States. The Puerto Rico archipelago consists of several islands including the main island (called Puerto Rico) the island of Greater Antilles, and a number of smaller islands and keys such as Mona, Vieques and Culebra.

With a tropical climate, hundreds of beaches and continental shelf surrounding it on three sides, Puerto Rico has no shortage of coral reefs, caves, sea wall and trenches which means it's a scuba-diving hot spot and attracts divers of all experience levels.

If you're looking for an easy and accessible dive spot, then Metropolitan San Juan, a beach dive in the Condado district is the most convenient place to get submerged. Though not as impressive as other dive sites in Puerto Rico, it's easy to get to, and the louvered reefs, caverns, tunnels and overhangs provide an ideal habitat for schools of grunts, copper sweepers and snapper as well as jacks, bluehead wrasse, butterfly fish, coral shrimp, octopus and batfish.

Those looking for a more spectacular dive should visit the Humacao Region, which offers some 24 dive sites with an array of overhangs, caves, and tunnels where divers can see dolphins, goby cleaning stations and lobsters. With excellent visibility (often exceeding 30m) this area offers excellent views of the coral, around which divers can observe nurse sharks and angelfish that make these reefs their home.

For somewhere a little more special try Mona Island in western Puerto Rico which was deemed by Frommer's travel magazine as a "Caribbean version of the Galapagos Islands". The Mona waters hold over 270 different species of fish, including 60 reef dwellers in addition to larger marine animals such as whales, dolphins, marlin and sea turtles. Deep vertical walls encircle the islands in addition to underwater caverns and steep drops. The remote nature of Mono Island, which takes 5 hours by boat and can be a rough crossing, ensures that visitor numbers are kept to a minimum, and means that though you may not appreciate getting sea sick, at least when you arrive, you'll have the place pretty much to yourself.

During the American vacations such as Spring Break, [hotels in San Juan](#) are packed full of mainland US tourists; indeed the unusual political status of Puerto Rico means that citizens of the USA don't need a passport to enter the country, which ensures that it is a very popular holiday destination with American tourists, as well as Mexicans, Dominicans, Venezuelans, Spanish, French and Asian tourists.

So if you want to dive deep in San Juan, ensure you book your trip in advance.

About the Author

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