

Cocos Island

Cocos is the largest uninhabited island in the world, it's remote, wild & excellent for diving. Located 300 miles west of Costa Rica, accessible only by boat with no hotels & no accomodation & currently only 3 dive boat charters go there. Cocos is for the determined, experienced diver but the rewards are spectaclar with hordes of Hammerhead sharks, dense populations of pelagic & reef fish. It is a destination that will thrill the adventurer & keen skilled diver – this has led to Cocos Island becoming one of the most sought after dive destinations in the world. It is an imposing island, only 4 miles long by 2 miles wide & is rarely seen withot cloud cover & it receives 18 –24 feet of rain annally. The driest season is Janary to April, the wettest is June to Dec (the sharks are deeper in the dry season as less plankton in the water so less sightings ?) the water temperature is 23 to 30 degrees – we had a pleasant wet suit temperature of 27 degrees in October.

Beginning of October & wet season – we flew with Iberia via Madrid to Costa Rica (they're not the best but probably better than the alternative via USA where all pony bottles were confiscated !) We joined a 10 day cruise aboard the Sea Hnter (see website www.underseahunter.com) it takes 36 hrs sea crossing to get to Cocos & its a bit bumpy a crossing !! but worth it. Everyday we had Hammerhead encounters sometimes as many as 200 & unlike other parts of the world when they pass through seasonally at Cocos they are there all year round. Also we saw Whitetips, silky, oceanic & a whale shark along with Manta Rays, eagle & devil rays. We also had the experience of diving underneath dolphins when they were chasing & feeding on fish, and even had a rarer sighting of a Humpback whale with baby as it swam by our boat on its route from South to North America – wow. One of the most memorable dives had to be the night dive to watch the Whitetip sharks feeding – armed only with a torch & camera with strict instrctons to keep your bouyancy 4 feet above them lest they mistake legs for supper !!There were 60-100 sharks frantically chasing & fighting over a fish whilst you try to stay a few feet above them in semi darkness - it was scary but incredibly exciting. Above water – the boat was luxurious & the food superb & far too much, the crew couldn't do enough to help you enjoy your stay, & the dive gides were great fun.

I can highly recommend this for one of the best diving experiences ever, the only down point is the cost of the trip – but it will stay in my mind as a trip of a lifetime.