

# Diving in Costa Rica



## BEST TIME TO DIVE IN COSTA RICA

Scuba diving Costa Rica can be done all year round. Depending on what you are looking for in diving, some times during the year can be better than others, but they all have their advantages.

*December to April is the dry season, and up to March, is the coolest part of the year. The cooler water temperatures are ideal for spotting some of the big guys such as humpback whales, pilot whales, giant manta rays, whale sharks, and more.*

*May to November is the rainy season when you can expect a couple of hours of rain each day. The turbulent weather is great for causing nutrient swells which is when the bull sharks are attracted to the Bat Islands and hammerheads to Cocos Islands.*

*June to September brings about perhaps the best visibility. August to December is considered by many to be the best time to dive because the wind is milder and the sea is at its calmest.*



## WATER TEMPERATURES

Ocean temperature with warm waters range from 23C/73F to 29C/84F on average. Costa Rica experiences an influx of cooler water Dec to April, with averages from 20 C / 68F to 25C/76F at depth. From mid-May to mid-December, water temperatures are generally in the range of 24-30°C (75-87°F).

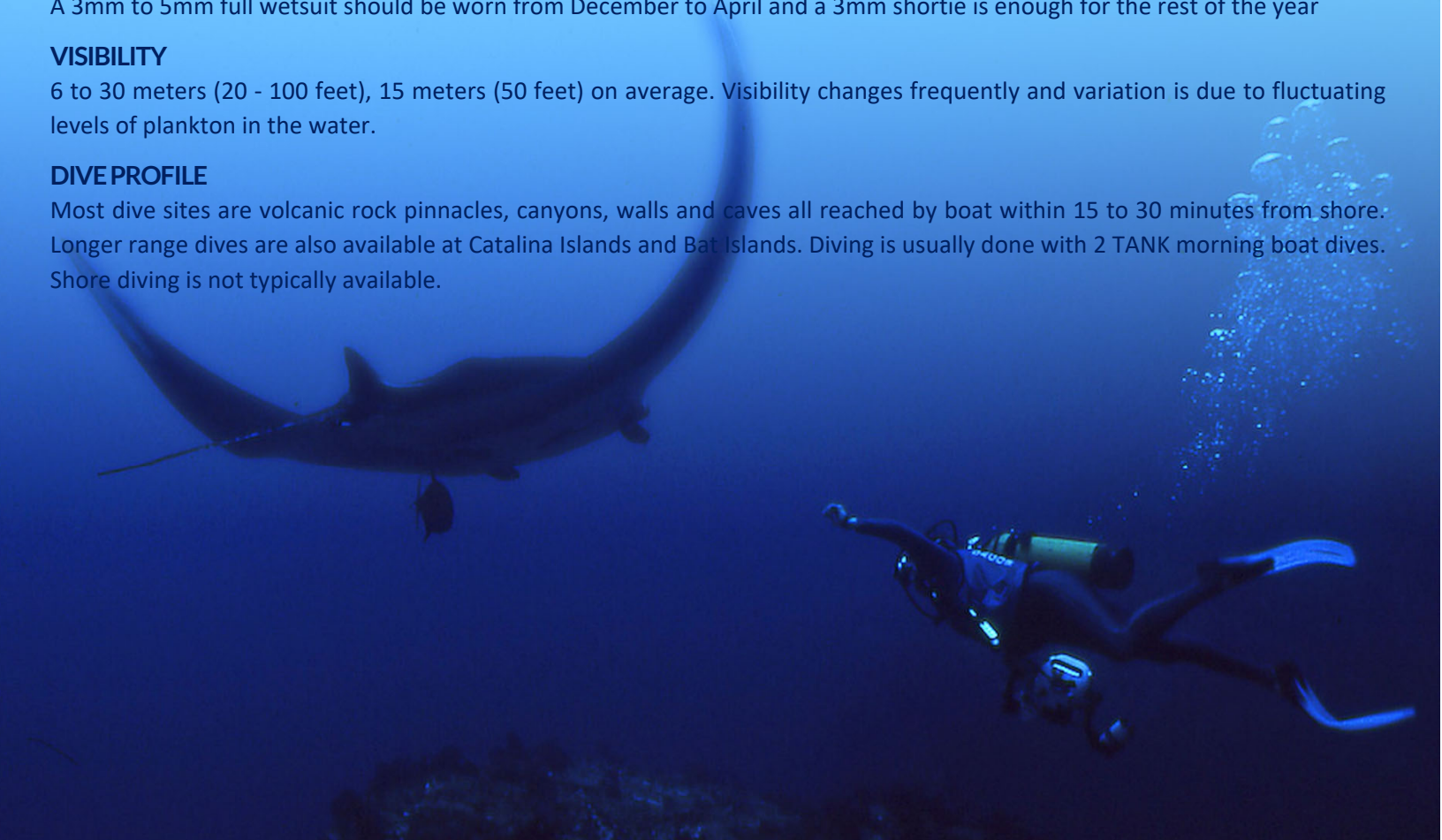
A 3mm to 5mm full wetsuit should be worn from December to April and a 3mm shortie is enough for the rest of the year

## VISIBILITY

6 to 30 meters (20 - 100 feet), 15 meters (50 feet) on average. Visibility changes frequently and variation is due to fluctuating levels of plankton in the water.

## DIVE PROFILE

Most dive sites are volcanic rock pinnacles, canyons, walls and caves all reached by boat within 15 to 30 minutes from shore. Longer range dives are also available at Catalina Islands and Bat Islands. Diving is usually done with 2 TANK morning boat dives. Shore diving is not typically available.



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## EXPERIENCE LEVEL, CURRENTS, SURGE:

We have dive sites suitable for all levels of diver from Beginner to the most Advanced. Dive depths average 60-80 ft maximum for first dive, and 40-60 ft maximum depth for second dive of the day, so you can get in plenty of bottom time.

There are more advanced dives in Guanacaste to the Bat Islands. For the Bats you will need to be an advanced diver or show proof of 50 dives. Most of the shops require that you dive local waters to adjust weight and buoyancy before diving Bat Islands.

## WHAT WILL YOU SEE? MARINE LIFE

**For most mainland diving**, sharks, eagle rays, octopus manta rays, stingrays, eels, barracuda, cow nose rays, large schools of jacks, grunts, turtles, moray eels, snapper, Blennies, pufferfish, angelfish, nudibranchs and so on. There are also occasional sightings of whale sharks. There are two humpback whale migrations in August and January. The Bat Islands in Guanacaste are most famous for the encounters that you can have with the very large bull sharks. The Catalina islands are a fair distance off shore and are the home of the Pacific Giant Mantas among other marine life.

For most travelers to **Cocos Island**, the pelagic ocean life is the main draw of the area hosting some of the largest schools of hammerheads. Cocos Island is a cleaning station circled by rocky pinnacles that attract white tip reef sharks, jacks, and rays, tuna, giant manta rays, sailfish, and a home to thousands of vibrantly colored fish. King angelfish, butterflyfish hang around to help clean the hammerheads. Large scale schools of big-eyed jacks, barracuda, snappers and grunts are frequent during most dives. Regular shark species also include the whitetip reef sharks, Galapagos, silky, tiger, blacktip, and guitar sharks. Large schools of mobula, marble, manta and eagle rays are often seen.

## BEST PLACES TO DIVE

Below are our recommended top diving locations.

- Playa de Coco, Hermosa, Ocotal and Panamá
- Playa Flamingo, Conchal
- Tamarindo Beach
- Drake Bay
- Manuel Antonio / Uvita / Herradura
- Isla de Coco – Liveaboard packages only

