

DIVING & SNORKELING AT AZURA QUILALEA



The protected reefs in the Quirimbas Archipelago offer some of the most spectacular scuba diving in the World. These undisturbed, untouched dive sites are abundant with a variety of fish and corals, and offer a range of depths and reef topography to suit beginner and experienced divers alike. With a location as remote as ours, these dive sites offer a rare opportunity to discover an underwater world that is visited by just a few lucky divers each year.

Our stunning house reef offers quick and easy access straight from the main beach. This is perfect for a refresher or first time dive and a unique location for a night dive for qualified divers. In addition to our house reef, there are another 17 dive sites that we can visit inside and outside of the Quilalea Marine Sanctuary, including some fantastic drop offs and coral gardens. We have green and hawksbill turtles, humpback whales (seasonal), reef sharks, stingrays, devil rays, moray eels, dolphin, grouper, as well as a variety of reef fish such as surgeons, puffers, moorish idols, parrot fish, clown fish, trigger fish and chocolate dip fish. Hard and soft corals are in abundance, with nudibranchs for those who like to spot the smaller stuff!

Azura has a full range of high quality dive equipment. Our training pool on the bar deck is perfect for refreshing your diving skills or taking the plunge for the first time, and for training dives the house reef is ideal being just a few metres out from the beach. If you are interested in learning to dive and would like to try it out contact our dive instructor. A PADI Discover Scuba course, which includes your first reef diving experience, can be completed in just a few hours. Children are welcome to learn to dive from the age of 10 upwards. We highly recommend that you complete the theory portion of your course at home, before your holiday. That way, you're ready to start diving as soon as you arrive and will get to spend more time exploring the waters around the island.



DIVING AND SNORKELING INFORMATION

Azura Quilalea Private Island is a registered Five Star accredited PADI Resort, which ensures the highest standard of training safety, equipment maintenance and breathing air. The dive centre makes use of the internationally known Mares brand of equipment.

SCUBA COURSES

Courses range from those designed for children and beginners through to full certification up to Divemaster level of training.

BUBBLEMAKER

This is a fun course for children aged eight years and older. The children breathe SCUBA in shallow water and play games and perform tricks underwater.

DISCOVER SCUBA

This is the first stage to becoming a diver. Participants must be over ten years of age. A DVD on safety, skills and the environment is viewed. This is combined with instructor tuition. The pool session includes instructor led basic skill mastery, ensuring safety on the optional dive.

DISCOVER SCUBA DIVING

Participants who have completed the Discover Scuba Portion may elect to go on an open water dive. This dive is controlled by the instructor and conducted in shallow water.

SCUBA DIVER

This is the first of the certification courses. Divers with limited time may elect to complete this course. Divers will be certified and receive a PADI card indicating that they may dive worldwide. Certain restrictions apply.

OPEN WATER DIVER

Divers with a SCUBA DIVER certification may complete training and dives to become an Open Water Diver. Alternatively, the course may be taken as a standalone course. This qualification allows divers that are qualified to conduct dives independently. Time for this course is approximately five days.

ADVANCED OPERWATER DIVER

A series of five dives, called Adventure Dives, are required to qualify as an Advanced Diver. Theory on each specific dive is evaluated and the dive is then conducted under instructor supervision. Each individual dive is logged and dives may be completed over a period of time and in different locations.

DIVE SITES

Lagosta Alley (Lobster Alley)

The southern part of the House Reef a few meters off the main beach, a wall drops from 5 to around 20 meters. The reef is a favourite hangout for the few resident Green turtles as well as Potato Groupers, Napoleon Wrasse, Lionfish, huge varieties of reef fish and, of course, Spiny Rock Lobsters. This is an excellent dive site for getting back into diving after a period of non-diving as well as for night dives.

Cabeças (The Heads)

The northern part of the House Reef, starting just a few meters off the main beach of Quilálea, a wall drops to around 20 meters. The site also has huge free standing coral heads rising up out of the sandy ocean floor, and bustling with life. Weaving through this underwater obstacle course, it is easy to spot the school of resident Blue-Spotted Stingrays, Ribbon Eel and huge schools of various reef fish, including Red-Lined Sweetlips. This site is a must for the micro enthusiast with more than fifteen different species of nudibranch and various types of shrimp spotted. This is the favourite location for all levels of divers, a photographer's paradise and an excellent night dive site and is accessible from the island's main beach.

Canyon or Estadio da Luz (The Stadium of Light)

The shape of this 500-meter long wall, spectacular when the light pours through the crystal clear water, gave this site its name. Immense Gorgonian Fans and Green Tree Corals, this site is home to a couple of two to three meter long Giant Groupers and Napoleon Wrasse, as well as huge schools of game-fish coming up from the deep with the rising tide. Occasionally, Gray Reef Sharks are spotted here. With depths of 20 to 40 meters, as well as very strong currents, a very exciting site but only for advanced divers. Distance by boat is 10 minutes.

Casino Royal

A resident school of hundreds of enormous circular-shaped batfish look like massive silver coins enveloping you in a giant slot machine. Welcome to Casino Royal - where diving dreams come true, almost on a daily basis. Massive Green and Loggerhead Turtles, Giant Morays, huge Flowery Groupers and Yellowtail Barracuda are common. White-spotted Eagle Rays can top off a truly spectacular dive. From July to December, the playful chorus of nearby Humpback Whales provides the perfect background music to this jackpot reef dive. A deep dive, so Advanced divers only (or qualify by doing a PADI-sanctioned deep dive course with us beforehand). Travel time by boat 20 minutes.



Banco de Salaama (Salaama Bank)

Although a shallower dive site (6 to 18 meters), suitable for all levels of divers, there is nothing tame about the life to be found at Salaama Bank. Teeming with reef fish and corals of every colour, size and shape, diving here really gives you the idea of what it must be like to swim in a marine aquarium. Until an inquisitive Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin comes to investigate! Travel time by boat 15 minutes.

Napoleon Channel

This dive site is between Quilálea and Sencar Islands, with coral heads rising from the sandy bottom. The coral heads teem with all type of marine life, from nudibranch and lionfish to groupers and batfish. Huge Napoleon Wrasse are often spotted here. Travel time by boat 10 minutes.

Sencar Shamba (Sencar Gardens)

This dive site is in front of Sencar Island and is suitable for all levels of divers. The dive site has a gentle sloping bottom, reaching a maximum depth of around 20 meters. Green Turtles, Napoleon Wrasse and huge schools of batfish and other reef fish are common here. Bottlenose and Humpback dolphins are often spotted on the way to the dive site. Distance by boat 20 minutes.

Messunju Rock

A gentle sloping wall site, dropping from 12 meters to 25 meters. The wall and bottom are covered in healthy coral, various species of rays, Giant Groupers, Napoleon Wrasse and Green Turtles are spotted here. Huge schools of reef fish, pufferfish and moray eels are also common sightings. This dive site is suitable for all levels of divers. Travel time by boat on high tide is 15 minutes and on low tide 30 – 35 minutes.

Quirimbas Wall

A recently discovered dive site, it features a sloping wall, dropping to 25 meters. The site is remarkable for the huge variety of healthy hard and soft coral and coral heads. This site is suitable for all levels of divers.

The following dive sites are outside the marine sanctuary but still no more than a 30 minute boat ride away:

Quisiva Wall

A dramatic wall site which slopes from 12 meters down to 30 meters. Visibility can be so clear here that the wall can be spotted from the surface. The wall runs for well over 1 000 meters and has huge overhangs and caves, inhabited by turtles, groupers and other reef fish. The site has a huge variety and quantity of hard and soft coral. A real adventure dive! Distance by boat 30 minutes.

Mefunvo Wall

A spectacular, steep wall dropping from 12 meters to 30 meters, lots of Whip and Gorgonian coral cover the wall. The wall is home to Giant Moray Eels and Giant Groupers while schools of barracuda circle above the lucky divers. The uncommon Longnose Hawkfish can be spotted here. The top of the wall is covered in a huge variety of hard and soft coral, which are home to a large variety of different kinds of reef fish. This dive site is suitable for advanced divers. Travel time by boat 20 – 25 minutes.

Mefunvo Ridge

A beautiful dive site with a gentle sloping bottom, ranging from 10 meters to 18 meters, covered in a huge variety of hard and soft corals and several coral heads. Huge schools of reef fish, including snappers, fusiliers, sweetlips, triggerfish and Unicornfish, and green turtles are in abundance here. The sharp-eyed diver will spot several Paperfish here as well. This dive site is suitable for all levels of divers. Distance by boat approx. 20 – 25 minutes.

DIVING SITES INFORMATION

1. Azura Quilalea House reef

One of the few house reefs in Mozambique with an easy shore entry, possibly the only one in the Quirimbas Archipelago. This dive site is usually only dived by guests of Azura Quilalea.

Entry: Shore entry from Azura Quilalea's main beach.

Diver level required: Discover Scuba Diver friendly, Open Water

Average depth: Sandy bottom average depth 14m

Maximum depth: Maximum depth 18m

Highlights/Nature of dive: Predominantly hard corals with sandy bottom at 14m starting in the shallows at 2m. A long narrow reef with copious ribbon eels, hideouts for moray eels, cleaner shrimps, nudibranchs, lion fish, bat fish, moorish idols, fusiliers, salad fish, groupers, blue spotted stingrays, and many various schooling fish hunted by blue fin king fish. Green turtles are often seen sleeping on the reef with the added possibility of a sighting of 'Chips' a friendly resident hawks bill turtle who allows divers very close. To the north, the cleaner shrimp at a small cleaning station are often willing to give divers a delightful 'manicure'. For being so close to shore, an exceptionally productive dive site.

2. The Canyon

An action packed current dive accessed by boat.

Entry: Boat Dive

Diver level required:

Shallow Canyon: Open Water

Deeper Canyon: Advanced

Average depth: 18-22m

Maximum depth: 50m

Highlights/Nature of dive: Characterised by overhangs with colourful corals - the deeper side of the Canyon features Whip Corals interspersed with colourful soft corals camouflaging nudibranchs and a host of other macro delights. Three Spot Angelfish are common, with Fire goby and uncommon Scissortail goby sightings possible. Large Honeycomb morays, both green and hawks bill turtles are commonly seen. This site is prone to strong currents through the main area called the 'runway' attracting many fish, and divers can find a shelter on the edge at 14m hoping to see large brindle bass, schools of big eye kingfish, schools of barracuda, schools of snappers, unicorn fish, giant trevally, Napoleon Wrasse and grey reef shark. On the safety stop, the top side is covered in hard and soft corals with a tendency to be very fishy. Visibility is variable, affected by the current.



3. Ponta Wall

A good 30 minutes to reach, furthest dive site from Azura Quilalea.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water / Advanced4.

Average depth: 15-20m

Maximum depth: 30m

Highlights/Nature of dive: Visibility tends to be good with the 30m bottom often visible from the boat. The top of the wall starts at 12m with a sheer drop down to 30m.

Current can vary from none to very strong. Characterised by overhangs with caverns covered in glass fish, and typical at this site are large schools of Russel snappers, sightings of Napoleon Wrasse, schools of rubber lips and bat fish. White tip reef sharks are usually seen on the rocky bottom of the wall. Towards the end of the dive, current permitting, a highlight is a leisurely swim through with an entrance at 25m which emerges at the top of the reef at 12m in a coral garden. There is also an 'amphitheatre' formation which attracts large schools of yellow snappers and surgeon fish. Visibility is typically good throughout the year.

S 12° 35.804' E 040° 38.171'

4. Mefumvo Wall

The deepest wall dive in the area.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Advanced

Average depth: 15-20m

Maximum depth: 35m

Highlights/Nature of dive: The deepest of all the wall dives in the area, with 35m bottom in some areas. Overhangs featuring caverns which extend in a few meters with resident groupers and stingrays and large schools of red snappers. Occasionally white tip reef sharks can be seen resting in the sand in deeper water.

S 12° 34' 246' E 040 37' 224'



5. Quissiva Wall

Combination wall and coral gardens.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water / Advanced

Average depth: 15-20m

Maximum depth: 22m

Highlights/Nature of dive: A combination dive, with a variety of vertical wall at 16m and coral bommie formations in reef gardens which slope to 22m, with occasional sightings of Napoleon Wrasse.

S 12 35" 029' E 040 037" 475'

6. Sencar Wall - Sencar Shamba

Large expanse of sandy patch coral gardens along a ridge of reef.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10-15m

Maximum depth: 19m

Highlights/Nature of dive: On the open ocean side of Sencar Island best dived on the high tide, this ridge of reef is an expansive reef garden, characterised by coral bommies and sand patches, with turtles and Napoleon Wrasse often sighted. Clown and Red Fanged Triggerfish are often seen as well as Schools of surgeon fish which hover overhead with the possibility of occasional pelagics passing by. On the odd occasion, bottlenose dolphins have stopped in to take a closer look at the divers.

S 12 27" 664' E 040 38" 560'

7. Sencar Wall – Mesundju Rocks

Large expanse of rocky coral gardens along a ridge of reef.

Entry: Boat dive

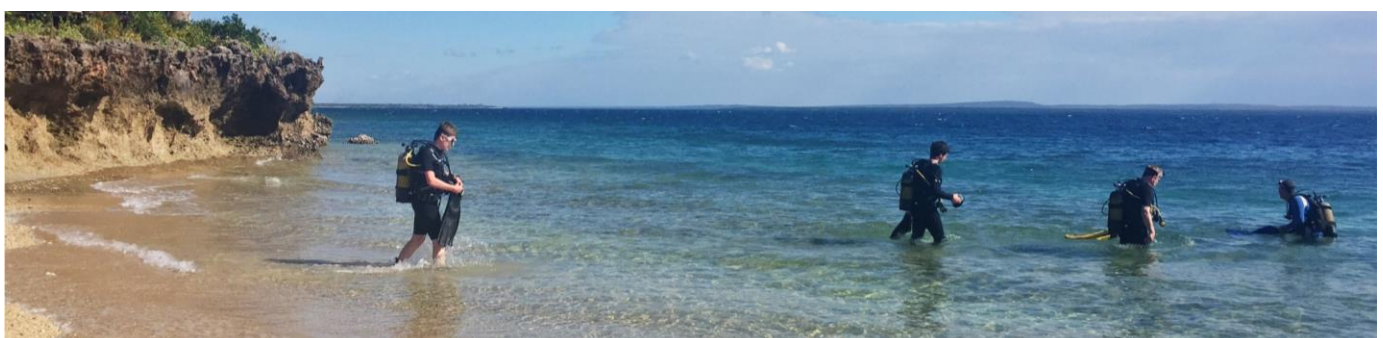
Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10-15m

Maximum depth: 18m

Highlights/Nature of dive: North of Sencar Shamba a very similar ridge of reef, characterised by with predominantly more rocky substrate than sandy bottom. Reef fish and schools of fish overhead, much like Sencar Shamba.

S 12"26.315' E040" 38.509'



8. Fusi Spot

Sloping reef gardens with optional wall.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10- 20m

Maximum depth: 18-25m

Highlights/Nature of dive: A slightly sloping reef with coral gardens that extend from 7m of water and gradually slope down to 18m on the western point with a 25m wall on the eastern side. This is a favourite play spot for Dolphins, if divers are lucky the Dolphins come approach for a closer look.

S 12'' 30.358' E040'' 38.150'

9. Salama Banks

Shallow reef dive.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10m

Maximum depth: 14m

Highlights/Nature of dive: A shallow dive site starting at 14m with a wide range of coral bommies, reef fish and characterised by green turtles from time to time.

S 12'' 30.136' E040'' 37.068'

10. Ridges

Three ridges in the open ocean.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10-15m

Maximum depth: 18m

Highlights/Nature of dive: Three open ocean ridges with the deepest part at 18m, gradually coming up to 13m, running side by side within sight of each other. Large schools of snapper and a wide range of reef fish with the possibility of pelagics passing by overhead.

11. Casino

Rocky ridge dive site.

Entry: Boat dive

Diver level required: Open Water

Average depth: 10-15m

Maximum depth: 20m

Highlights/Nature of dive: With a small ridge at 20m characterised by substrate surrounds, this site is aptly named Casino as it could range from ordinary to amazing, with green turtles, groupers and batfish in concert.

S 12'' 31.252' E040'' 37.194'

SNORKELING

All snorkelling equipment is available and can be obtained at the dive centre. Snorkelling is on your doorstep and is best at low tide from Oyster beach to Lagosta as well as the southern wall at Turtle beach. Numerous reef fish and a variety of soft corals, eels and cowry shells are to be seen. Guided snorkelling will ensure you do not miss anything!

