

REAL
Gap Experience

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Fiji Scuba Diving Courses

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Fiji Scuba Diving Courses **Trip Code:** FISC **Duration:**

Trip Highlights

- Relaxing into laid-back Fiji time
- Spotting corals, sharks, turtles, clown fish and more during your dives
- Experiencing island life-swim, snorkel, dive, sunbathe and party!



Overview

Scuba diving in Fiji is an unmatched tropical paradise, with opportunities equally unique. We have different scuba course options for you to choose from, depending upon your current diving experience and how far you wish to progress. Hundreds of species of fish cluster around colourful coral formations, making your adventures here under the sea only paralleled by the beauty of the beaches next to it.

So whether you plan to use Fiji as a stop on a round the world trip or are travelling to austrlasia specifically to enjoy Fiji's beach lifestyle, a scuba diving course is the best way to appreciate all of Fiji's beauty above and below the sea.

Destination Info

Fiji boasts both beautiful scenery and a warm and diverse culture. Located in the heart of the South Pacific Ocean, Fiji lies between New Zealand and the equator. The capital city is Suva, one of only two cities in Fiji; it is located on the island of Viti Levu. The Fijian archipelago is made up of over 300 islands, of which only one third are inhabited. The many islands are perfect for diving, and coral reefs are plentiful in the clear blue waters.

Itinerary



There are plenty of options for you to choose from, depending on your current diving experience and how far you wish to progress. All of our courses follow the PADI standard, however, if you have trained to the BSAC (British Scuba Aqua Club) equivalent, our programme can ensure you receive all of the correct training to the PADI structure.

Each programme option has been designed to give you some free time before, during or at the end of the course(s); we know that you'll want a couple of extra days to chill out and soak up the sun, sights and sounds of this beautiful country!

Open Water Programme (1 week)

Gain your Open Water qualification to be certified to dive worldwide! With the PADI Open Water, you'll be qualified to dive down to 18 metres and enjoy scuba diving anywhere in the world. This programme is ideal for anyone short on time, with it taking 4 days to complete the course. The remaining days are for your leisure.



This option will take you from a beginner diver to Advanced Open Water qualified. The Advanced course takes 2-3 days to complete (depending upon the electives chosen), with certification allowing you to dive to 30 metres. You need to complete 10 dives, choosing from night dive, deep dive, underwater photography, navigation, naturalist and more.

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Then you take the Rescue Diver qualification, a 4-day course that requires you to complete 5 academic modules, enabling you to be a competent rescue diver. You learn emergency management, how to identify equipment problems, ways of identifying diver stress and panic and how to administer diver first aid.

From complete beginner to Rescue Diver in less than 3 weeks. First of all you complete the Open Water and Advanced Open Water courses.

Please note: To start a PADI Rescue course you will be required to have 20 logged dives. If you are starting from no certification (doing the Open water to Rescue programme), you will have 9 dives after the 2 courses and will require an extra week to ensure that you have the required number of dives. If you are already certified (either Advanced & Rescue programme or straight Rescue course) you may already have enough logged dives.

You will also need a recognised First Aid/CPR qualification to complete your certification. This can be an existing qualification or an Emergency First Response can be done in Fiji (local cost is approximately FJD \$500)



This programme takes you from Advanced Diver to Rescue Diver in less than 2 weeks. First of all you complete the Advanced Open Water courses.

Then you take the Rescue Diver qualification, a 4-day course that requires you to complete 5 academic modules,

enabling you to be a competent rescue diver.

You learn emergency management, how to identify equipment problems, ways of identifying diver stress and panic, and how to administer diver first aid.

You will also need a recognised First Aid/CPR qualification to complete your certification. This can be an existing qualification or an Emergency First Response can be done in Fiji (local cost is approximately FJD \$500).

Please Note: If you're already qualified or you want to gain a different qualification, more options can be put together for you. Contact a Travel Adviser for more information.

Accommodation

All accommodation is included. You will stay in a comfortable flash-packer resort for the duration of your programme. Rooms are dormitory style and located close (if not on) to the beach! The resort has its own swimming pool, bar, volleyball court and more.

Programme Services and Facilities

Telephone

The international telephone access code for Fiji is +679. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK.

It is possible, depending on your location, that you will have mobile phone signal during your stay.

Laundry

Laundry services are available at the resort. Cost is calculated on a per-item basis, depending on the type of garment.

Electricity

Electricity is available at the resort, though it is typical of developing countries for you to experience power cuts. The resort has a back-up power generator, so any interruptions will be short. Make sure your electrical appliances are all fully charged and try to have back-up batteries where possible.

Money

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You will have access to banking facilities in your arrival city, but after this it will vary depending on your location. The nearest ATM to the Mango Bay Resort is approximately a 10-minute drive away. The resort will accept all major credit cards, however, there is a 4% surcharge per transaction.

Meals

Each day you have a continental breakfast included. This normally consists of fruit, juices, cereals and toast. The resort has its own restaurant where you can purchase your other meals and a bar if you wish to enjoy a few drinks at night. You should budget approximately £10 per day for your other meals, though this depends on your individual dietary needs.

What's Included

- Accommodation
- Breakfasts
- Professional instruction
- Airport transfers
- PADI qualification
- All course materials and equipment for the PADI dive course
- Free massage
- Free activities at the resort



What's Not Included

- International flights to Fiji
- Any necessary visas
- Health and travel insurance, which must cover you for scuba training
- DAN (Divers Alert Network) insurance
- AUD\$150 membership fee (Divemaster course only)
- Lunches and dinners



Additional Information

Health Requirements and PADI Indemnity Forms

All students looking to participate on this programme need to ensure that they are reasonably fit and free from any conditions that may prevent or be a danger to you when diving. Before leaving home, it is best to consult your doctor.

In addition to the medical requirements, it is also necessary for you to complete several PADI indemnity forms. This stipulates that you will follow all of the necessary codes of conduct and that you accept the inherent risks of partaking in a scuba diving programme. Failure to complete these forms will prevent you from joining the course.

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

Personal Admin

- Documents including your dive log book or PADI qualification card (if applicable)
- Passport and a colour photocopy
- Driving Licence
- Birth Certificate - if you have a driving licence without a photograph or you don't have a driving licence.
- NHS card or a National Insurance card or proof of entitlement to your National Health Service, or the German Krankenversicherungskarte
- Insurance Policy document or card
- Credit Card, for emergencies and booking internal flights

General

- Sleeping Bag
- Day bag / rucksack (for excursions)
- A torch
- Mobile phone
- Camera & batteries
- Telephone charger with appropriate adaptor plug
- Playing cards for free time
- Diary – you will have so many amazing experiences to remember
- Ipod and speakers (if you wish)
- Pocket-knife
- Towel

Clothing

- Walking shoes / trainers
- Flip Flops
- A hat to protect you from the sun
- Beach wear
- Rain coat
- Clothes. Remember that although you are in a country with a strong beach culture, you still need to dress respectfully in towns and during special local ceremonies.

Medical Kit

- Small medical kit containing plasters, medicine for diarrhoea, head ache tablets, anti-histamine cream and any medication you will need.
- Mosquito repellent
- Contraception including condoms
- Biological soap
- Antibacterial soap gel (does not need water to rinse off)
- Travel wash for clothes

Minimum Age

Minimum age 18, maximum decided on potential participant's health

Flights

Your flight to Fiji should arrive at Nadi International Airport on your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

Please note: If you are flying to Fiji via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD\$14 to register. To register, please visit: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

1. **What visa do I need?**

All British passport holders will receive a 3 month tourist visa on arrival.

2. **Do I need any vaccinations?**

As we are not medically trained we cannot give you medical advice. You must make an appointment to see your GP or travel nurse who will be able to give you the best and most up to date travel health advice and more information about vaccinations.

3. **What if I want to travel around Fiji after the programme?**

We really recommend our Fiji Experience bus passes! These allow you to take your own time travelling around the main island of Viti Levu as well as the Mamanuca and Yasawa islands. From the day you start the pass you have up to 12 months to complete it! If you like a particular place you can stay there as long as you like and then when you are ready to move on you can just book yourself onto the next available bus and move on to the next place. It is the perfect way to visit all the must see places and meet loads of like minded travellers.

4. **What are the group sizes like?**

You can expect to be in a group of around 4-6 people. There will also be lots of travellers staying in the resort as well so there will be plenty of people to meet and socialise with.

5. **Is Fiji safe?**

Absolutely! It is possibly one of the friendliest places that you will ever visit!

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programmes have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimised.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our UK staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist



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you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience and Real Travel are part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Beware: Don't book with an organisation that has no financial protection for their clients. Not only are they breaking the law, you could lose all your money or be stranded overseas.

Our ATOL licence (6527), offers complete financial protection for any flight inclusive trips. To acquire an ATOL licence we have to undergo a very rigorous inspection from the Civil Aviation Authority, so you know that we tick all of the boxes. The ATOL license means that no matter what happens to us, your money will either be returned or if you've already left, your trip will be guaranteed.

We are also a Member of ABTA which means you have the benefit of ABTA's assistance and Code of Conduct. Many of the travel arrangements that we sell are protected in case of the financial failure of the travel company. If you have any questions about the financial protection that applies to your booking then please ask our team and they'll be happy to help.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

In FIJI the currency is the Fijian Dollar (FJD; symbol FJ\$), which is divided into 100 Cents. The coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 Cents and 1 Fijian Dollar. Notes come in denominations of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Fijian Dollars.

The best currencies to carry are Australian, New Zealand or US dollars, which can be exchanged at all banks. Most restaurants, shops and hotels will accept credit cards, especially Visa, Amex and MasterCard, though there will be a small fee. ATMs can be found in larger urban areas and accept most international credit cards but if you're heading further a field then bring traveller's cheques.

Draft beer in local bar \$2

Small bottle of coca cola \$1

Dinner for two public market stall \$F6 – 10

(Prices quoted in Fijian Dollars)

Passports and Visas

You should ensure that you have a full passport that is valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information provided below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of up to 4 months, citizens of most European countries, the USA, Australia and New Zealand are not required to hold a visa and can be issued with a Tourist Visa on arrival. For longer stays or for the most up to date information on passports, visa requirements and the Reciprocity Fee, please contact your nearest embassy.

Cultural Considerations

Clothing

Casual wear is fine but you should try to dress modestly, particularly in the villages. Do not leave the hotel swimming pool or the beach in bathing suits. A 'sulu' (a wrap-around unisex skirt, similar to a sarong) is useful to carry around to cover bathing suits, shorts or halter neck tops.

You should not enter a Fijian village wearing a hat or sunglasses, or with your shoulders uncovered, as these are seen as signs of disrespect.

It is considered ill-mannered to touch a Fijian's head.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your General Practitioner or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

A useful website to visit in the first instance is <http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk>

Zika Virus

Zika virus is transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes and whilst the infection often occurs without symptoms it can cause an illness similar to dengue fever. There has recently been reported a possible link between exposure to Zika virus (ZIKV) in pregnancy and microcephaly and other congenital malformations and investigations are ongoing. We recommend you visit the [FCO website](#) and select your destination country for the latest travel advice prior to booking.

If you are already pregnant it is recommended you seek medical advice from your GP as [The National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) advises you should consider avoiding travel to areas where ZIKV outbreaks are currently reported.

Safety

As in most countries there are people who try to take advantage of tourists. The following advice is intended to help you keep safe:

- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you and in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your bag without your permission.
- Don't carry excess amounts of cash
- Wherever possible, walk around in groups, especially after dark, and avoid taking short cuts
- Do not pick up hitch hikers if you are driving and do not hitch hike yourself
- When you are out do not leave your drinks unattended, as there have been reports of drinks being spiked

There was a military coup in 2006 and the country's political situation is rocky. Though travel to Fiji is safe, you should monitor local situations and avoid all military or political rallies, which could occur in Suva or Nadi.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk

USA: www.travel.state.gov

Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Language Guide

Bula! This is the common Fijian greeting used when meeting friends or welcoming guests. It goes beyond the simple hello, though, to incorporate spirit and literally means “life”.

Fiji has three official languages that are recognised by their constitution:

- English
- Bau Fijian
- Hindustani

English is the main medium of communication. It is the language the government uses and is the main language of education, commerce and the courts. Fijians do, however, have a constitutional right to communicate with the government in any one of the three official languages.

In Fiji, there are many dialects, but the official standard is the speech of Bau.

The Fijian alphabet is made up of all of the English letters, except ‘x’. The letters ‘h’ and ‘z’ are rarely used and are usually found only in borrowed words.

Here are some Fijian words and phrases. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Zero - *saiva*

One - *dua*

Two - *rua*

Three - *tolu*

Four - *va*

Five - *lima*

Six - *ono*

Seven - *vitu*

Eight - *walu*

Nine - *ciwa*

Ten - *tini*

Goodbye - *ni sa moce*

Yes - *io*

No - *sega*

Hello - *bula*

Good morning - *andra vinaka*

How are you? - *o lai vei?*

Please - *kere kere*

Food & Drink

You will find food in Fiji to be quite different to the food at home. Many meals consist of what is most readily available, including fresh fish, root vegetables and rice. However, in larger areas and at resorts, you will be able to purchase Western foods from the tourist menus.

The important thing is to remain open minded and adapt to the fresh fruit and vegetables that will form a large part of your diet in Fiji.

It is really important that you let Real Gap Fiji know before you depart if you are a vegetarian or have any other dietary requirements.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country.

To view a list of the public holidays for Fiji, please see the link below:

www.worldtravelguide.net/fiji/public-holidays

Weather

Fiji's climate is mainly tropical with hot, humid and sometimes showery weather. Summer falls between November and April and is only slightly warmer than the winter months (32°C by day) which fall between May and October, reaching just 27°C; a light sweater will be warm enough!

Weather does vary from island to island, Suva, Savusavu and Taveuni experience a much higher proportion of rainfall than Nadi, which can dry out over the summer. Though a little rainy and balmy the summer months are the time when Fiji is at its best with rainforests, rivers and waterfalls at their fullest and most stunning!

Time

The time in Fiji is 12 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity

In Fiji the electric system is 240 Volts and frequency 60 Hertz. If your device does not accept this voltage you will need an adapter. Outlets in Fiji generally accept 1 type of plug:





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Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of Foreign and Commonwealth Travel Advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Volunteer numbers

Please note: You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us.

Our Details

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