

# Snorkelling

## An underwater fantasy just off our shores

Our waters are clear and warm throughout the year and because we have no rivers or run-offs, the Cayman Islands offer unparalleled snorkelling.



Snorkelling is Cayman's greatest, easiest adventure and an activity everyone can enjoy. If you've only fantasized about peeking beneath the sea, there is no safer, gentler and more exciting place to learn this sport than in Cayman's calm, clear, current-free waters. Thanks to Cayman's strict Marine Parks laws, our protected healthy coral reefs and abundant marine life remain our greatest natural attraction.

You've never tried snorkelling? No problem. Cayman's watersports operators understand this and are happy to assist first-time snorkellers in mastering basic skills safely to insure they enjoy the sport on their first try. Many dive operations offer special "learn to snorkel" boat trips offering instruction, equipment and several snorkelling stops for about US \$35 per person. The entire family can go along and learn together.

Begin with the basics: properly fitting equipment. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Nothing is more important than finding a mask which is comfortable and fits well - this is your window on the underwater world - and fins which don't cramp your feet. You can rent a complete set of equipment for about US \$10 per day - or invest in a set of your own and you're free to explore whenever the urge strikes. For safety sake: consider wearing a snorkelling vest and please tow a dive float if you plan to snorkel any distance from shore or beyond protected snorkelling areas.

Before you splash into the unknown - buy a guide to Caribbean marine life. It can be as simple as a laminated plastic card to carry with you. Understanding what you're seeing and being able to identify the strange and unusual creatures you see will greatly increase your snorkelling enjoyment.

Remember, almost everything you see beneath the sea's surface is a living creature, regardless of what it looks like. Because most snorkelling is in shallow waters, snorkellers must take special care to protect fragile coral and other marine life. Be careful not to stand on coral or sea fans and watch your fins! Careless action by dive fins is the greatest cause of damage to marine life.

We ask that everyone enjoying our waters follow a "look but don't touch" policy and not disturb, damage or take any marine life from the sea. For further information pick up a copy of the Department of Environment guidelines (345) 949-8469. *continued over*

### CAYMAN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

TELEPHONE:  
**(345) 949-0623**

FAX:  
**(345) 949-4053**

### CAYMAN ISLANDS WATERSPORTS OPERATORS' ASSOCIATION (C.I.W.O.A.)

TELEPHONE:  
**(345) 949-8522**

FAX:  
**(345) 949-0220**

### CAYMAN NATIONAL WATERSPORTS ASSOCIATION (C.N.W.A.)

TELEPHONE:  
**(345) 949-3200 OR  
(345) 949-0400**

FAX:  
**(345) 949-0391**



**GOOD SNORKELLING SITES:** Stingray City and the nearby Sand Bar in North Sound are Grand Cayman's most popular snorkelling sites, visited by hundreds of snorkellers each week.

The North Sound Lunch/Snorkelling trips provide visitors with a delightful, truly Caymanian experience. They are offered by a variety of Caymanian captains and boat operators. This activity remains one of our tourism industry's best values and most memorable soft ecotourism adventures. For about US \$50 per person, Caymanian captains and crew take visitors on a full day adventure (9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.) where they enjoy two or three snorkelling stops at Stingray City and the shallower Sandbar area, where rays swim freely with humans in only three feet of water, and then on to Coral Gardens for fish watching on shallow coral heads.

Great snorkelling can be found close to shore on all three islands. Boat trips will allow you to enjoy more dramatic views of deeper wrecks, reefs and the Cayman wall while floating on the surface.

Divers don't have the exclusive on seeing exotic marine life in Cayman waters! You can see huge neon blue Midnight Parrot fish; stingrays, tarpon, schools of yellowtail and blue tangs - and our treasured green turtles, probably raised at the Cayman Turtle Farm!

More than a dozen watersports operations offer snorkelling trips, including deluxe excursions with lunch on board. On Grand Cayman's west coast, you can cruise on the Nautilus semi-submersible and many other vessels, including luxury 60' Catamarans, and see a variety of sites.

Popular west coast sites which are easy to reach from shore on Grand Cayman include these locations just south of George Town: Coconut Harbour, Sunset House, Seaview Hotel, Parrot's Landing Watersports Park; Eden Rock Dive Centre and the shallows reefs directly off Paradise Reef bar.

**GRAND CAYMAN:** On Grand Cayman's west coast just north of George Town: Don Foster's dive shop on North Church St. and Calico Jack's - both are the best entry points to see the wreck of the Cali.

Other good locations include just off Bob Soto's Scuba Centre at the Lobster Pot restaurant. Treasure Island Resort has good snorkelling off its beach.

Other popular locations further north include Cemetery Reef in West Bay and Turtle Reef, just north of the Turtle Farm at Northwest Point. The shallows off Morritt's Tortuga Club and Resort's lovely beach offer a surprising variety of fish and other marine life.

**CAYMAN BRAC:** Off Cayman Brac, the easy entry at the Buccaneer's Beach on the north coast is a popular snorkelling site with healthy small coral formations and plentiful fish but the entire north coast offers shallow underwater scenery which is primarily pristine and seldom explored.

For a real thrill, join a dive boat headed for the wreck of the M/V Capt. Keith Tibbetts, a 330-ft. Russian built frigate sunk in 50-100 ft. off Cayman Brac's northwest coast. The view from above will stun you!

**LITTLE CAYMAN:** Little Cayman's South Hole Sound Lagoon and Point of Sand (watch currents!) are other delightful snorkelling sites - their white sand beaches are as breathtaking as any in the Caribbean. You might glimpse a feisty bonefish or permit in these waters, as well as Queen conch, parrot fish and dozens of kinds of reef fish.

Jackson Point offers snorkellers easy shore entry. Explore fabulous coral reefs and marine life within several feet of water. Snorkel out to a mini-wall or venture a few feet further to a truly dramatic drop-off.

For an unforgettable experience take a boat trip to Bloody Bay, where the wall begins at only 18 ft. - an unforgettable sight as lush coral gardens meet sheer vertical coral wall!