

Diving Zanzibar

The dive sites off the coast of Zanzibar are many, varied and suitable for all levels of experience. The most famous is Mnemba Atoll Marine Park, a reserve where net fishing is banned to help stop the destruction of the reef and increase fish stock levels. Marine park fees are paid for each guest that enters and the money goes back into the local communities of the fisherman who would normally fish the waters and now fish elsewhere. This scheme is extremely effective, the reef is teeming with shoals of fish and the coral is re-growing at an impressive pace. One of the reefs is home to a green turtle cleaning station – the current record of turtles seen on one dive sits at twenty one!

Leven Banks is an example of a more advanced site, situated in the Pemba channel, this huge dive site with some strong currents comes up from the deep to within around fourteen metres from the surface and is where you are most likely to see big fish. Schooling barracudas, big sting rays and the occasional shark can often be seen passing in the blue. Even if the big guys don't appear this is still an excellent site with large fan corals, schools of snapper and Moorish idols floating motionless as you are pushed along by the currents. A very good dive for advanced divers.

The local reefs closer to the dive centre are also well worth a visit. Ranging from ten to forty five minutes away they can easily be reached in a morning or afternoon and still give you plenty of time to relax on a beach afterwards and work on your sun tan. These reefs are stunning, with a large array of coral to be found and lots of smaller creatures such as nudibranches and mantis shrimp hiding in all the nooks and crannies.