

Dive the Great Barrier Reef in Australia
Spirit of Freedom Live-aboard
November 6th to ? 2009



Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Sea are one of the top dive destinations in the world and the Spirit of Freedom is one of the top live-aboards in the world. Plus, Australia not only offers incredible diving on the Great Barrier Reef but the opportunity to enjoy additional touring and exploring other areas of Australia while you are there.

These packages includes - Diving, Transfers, International & Australian Domestic Airfares, Visa application services, Additional Accommodation, Additional Touring.

Option 1: \$5619pp*

11 Days/9 Nights – Great Barrier Reef Live-aboard Diving Experience

Option 2: \$6049pp*

14 Days/12 Nights – Great Barrier Reef Live-aboard Diving Experience & Sydney

Option 3: \$7289pp*

16 Days/14 Nights – Great Barrier Reef Live-aboard Diving Experience, the Outback & Sydney



Deposit Required \$500.00. Final payment is required by September 30th.

* Notes: Pricing based on a Double/Twin cabin on the Spirit of Freedom (other cabin types are available) and "Twinshare" Accommodation for land content & Economy Air (unless specified). All prices are based on International Flights ex Los Angeles. USA Domestic Flights are not included. This quote is based on Special Flights and is subject to availability. Seats were available when quote was prepared. All prices expressed in USD/person. Tax & Fuel levies are included. Electronic Travel Authority (VISA's) are an additional \$15 per person. We also recommend Travel Insurance. For your convenience we will also provide insurance quotes based on your preferences once the itinerary is finalized.

For additional Trip details contact: Michael Eversmier at Aqua Ventures, Inc. or Paul Watkins – Native Aussie 210-299 1077 / www.aboutaustraliadiving.com

To view our complete dive and travel packages: Go to - http://www.travelpackageservice.com/?org=aqua_ventures

Have Fun - Life Is Too Short!

Aqua Ventures, Inc.

9731 York Rd. Cockeysville, MD 21030 / 410-66-OCEAN / www.AquaVenturesOnline.com

Australia Trip Info

Australia 's north eastern town of tropical Cairns is the gateway for two of the world's greatest diving icons, the Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Sea .The Great Barrier Reef is a broad chain of 2,900 individual reefs and is the Earth's largest structure built by living organisms, being clearly visible from space. It is an ecosystem of unsurpassed marine diversity and presents the diver with a vision of exquisite natural beauty. Beyond the continental shelf that harbours the Great Barrier Reef, lie the isolated reef systems and crystal clear waters of Australia 's Coral Sea . This is home territory for huge schools of pelagic fish and sharks in an undersea world of mountains, pinnacles and sheer walls laced with gorgonian fans and rising from thousands of feet below.

It is to these destinations that the live aboard "Spirit of Freedom" will take you to discover what diving dreams are made of. With 3, 4 and 7 days itineraries, you can enjoy some of the worlds best diving almost from your arrival at Cairns International airport.

At 120 feet, the Spirit of Freedom is one of Australia 's largest live-aboard dive vessel. She features three decks of spacious comfort including sun deck, lounge and bar, dining saloon, and huge dive deck. Equipped with electronic stabilisers, silent generators, and fully air-conditioned throughout, the Spirit offers smooth and comfortable cruising. Be prepared for an amazing range of diving experiences on Spirit of Freedom's 7 day/ 7 night Cod Hole, Ribbon Reefs and Coral Sea adventure.

The first part of your dive expedition will be on The 'Ribbon Reefs' - a string of 10 coral reefs stretching over 100 miles to the north of Cairns . Awaiting you are picturesque coral gardens and isolated 'bommies' crowned in delicate corals, anemones, and colourful reef fish. The Cod Hole lies at the top of the Ribbon Reefs, and is home to a family of resident Potato Cod (Groper). These diver friendly fish will amaze you with their sheer size and seeming eagerness to pose for camera. You will also venture out 120 miles offshore to Osprey Reef in the oceanic wilderness of Australia's Coral Sea. Here 3,000 ft walls emerge from the ocean depths and the water is so astoundingly clear that divers appear suspended in air. You will see massive red and yellow soft corals, reef sharks, whaler sharks, schooling hammerheads, mantas, plus schools of barracuda, big eye trevally, and mackerel.

While the diving may be out of this world, the facilities and service on board Spirit will complete your ultimate liveaboard experience. Spacious double or twin share cabins, all with private en-suite, make a comfortable retreat at the end of your day's scuba diving. Delicious chef prepared meals can be enjoyed throughout the day and complimentary Australian wines are offered with dinner. The sun deck is always a popular spot in between dives, and a great location to watch the sunset on our BBQ nights. There is a comprehensive marine library,DVD movies, wide screen, and a fully stocked bar for relaxation after diving. Nitrox fills, camera hire, and CD downloading are also available on board.

A multi-talented and professional crew will look after your in and out of water needs on board Spirit of Freedom. The dive team are experienced locals who are only too happy to share their extensive reef knowledge as well as a little 'Aussie' good humour.

QUERIES ABOUT THE BOAT AND TRIP

Where do you depart from?

We depart from Trinity Wharf, Cairns at 12 noon on Mondays and 8.30am from Hinterland at the General Aviation Airport on Thursdays. Please reconfirm with us at 24 hours prior to boarding.

Are transfers included?

Yes, we provide complimentary transfers from hotels in the Cairns city area. Please note that we do not offer transfers from the airport, the beaches to the north of Cairns, or Port Douglas. A taxi from the airport to the wharf will cost around AU\$15.

What essential items should I bring on board?

Personal items and toiletries, swimwear, hat, sunscreen, casual clothing, and sweatshirt in the winter (May – Sept)

Will I need a power adaptor?

Australian domestic power standard is 240V @ 50hz, with 3 pronged power sockets. You may need to bring your own international power adaptor to use your electrical appliances or battery chargers.

What food and beverages are provided?

Lunch and dinner are provided on the day of departure, with 4 meals a day on ensuing days, and breakfast on the day of return to Cairns. The 4 meals include continental breakfast followed by a cooked breakfast after the first dive of the day. Special dietary requirements can be catered to with prior notice. Tea, coffee and fountain water are always available for self service. Australian wines and soft drinks are served complimentary with the evening meal. Outside of this time we operate a ships bar with beer, mixed drinks, wine selection. Drinks can be placed on a tab for payment at the end of your trip.

How can people reach me in an emergency?

The Spirit of Freedom carries CDMA phones and satellite communications. Should an EMERGENCY arise and you need to be contacted on board, please our office phone is + 61 7 4047 9150 or email info@spiritoffreedom.com.au to have a message relayed to you.

Do you accommodate for mobility impaired passengers?

Due to lack of accommodation on the main deck, steep stairwells, and hatch combings, the Spirit of Freedom is not a suitable vessel for people with mobility impairments.

We are two large people, what is the best cabin for us?

The Stateroom is the only cabin on board with a queen size bed. The Ocean View cabins have double bed only configuration. Many of the Double/Twin cabins have a double bed under with single bed over, if you wish to take your own beds.

We are bringing our teenage child with us. Is there an option for three of us to share a cabin?

Many of the Double/Twin cabins have a double bed under with single bed over, and although we usually only allocate two people to this cabin type, we can place three of you in on your request. The third person in the cabin will be charged at quad share rate.

I have my own digital camera. Do you have an option to download on board?

Yes, for a small charge. We have an EMAC computer with CD burner on board and card readers for most digital camera types. Alternatively bring your own USB connection

QUERIES ABOUT THE DIVING

Do I need to bring my certification card?

Yes, you will need to present your certification card upon boarding, so don't forget it!

Do I need a dive medical?

As a certified diver, generally a dive medical is not required. However, if you have a history of a medical condition contraindicative to diving (eg asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart or lung disorders) you are required to provide a diving medical certificate, stating that you are fit to scuba dive.

If you are participating in the Advanced or Nitrox course, you need to be medically fit to dive as indicated by completing the PADI Australia medical questionnaire. In some cases this may result in a medical being required. Please contact us if you require a copy of the medical questionnaire.

What equipment is provided?

Tanks and weight belts

What rental scuba gear is available?

By piece or by full equipment package the following scuba gear is available for rental: BCD, regulator with dive computer, wrist mount dive computer, wetsuits, torch and cylume sticks, and mask snorkel fins.

Is it required that I use a dive computer? Yes , all divers must dive with their own dive computers., however you are welcome to also use your dive tables.

What is the recommended weight wetsuit?

Lycra skin to 3mm in the summer (Oct – Mar) and 5mm in the winter (Apr – Sept). Vests and hoods are recommended to bring for extra warmth if you are not sure. On board the rental suits are 5mm shorties, and 3mm steamers with short arms.

What size are the tanks?

10.5 litre and 12 litre (75 and 88 cubic feet) aluminium tanks .

What is the standard tank fitting?

US style K valve. DIN Valves are not available, and adaptors will be required.

How is the diving conducted?

The majority of our divers appreciate freedom and independence rather than being restrained in a larger group. As a guest on board Spirit of Freedom you may dive with your buddy to your pace and interests with no set limits on time, depth or style of diving outside of normal safe diving practices. An orientation dive is offered on the first dive, and a safety instructor will be in the water on most dives. Guided dives will be offered on one or two dives each day.

I'm a Nitrox diver, can I get fills on board?

Yes, nitrox fills are set at 32% at \$10 per fill or package price for all dives on nitrox. Nitrox certification cards must be produced upon boarding and regulators need to be O2 approved by the manufacturer.

What is involved in the Nitrox course?

This course is comprised of Video, instructional theory, and 2 dives on nitrox. The theory element generally takes 3 to 4 hours over two days.

My Partner is a non-diver, will they enjoy the trip?

The size and facilities of the Spirit of Freedom certainly offer the same level of comfort as a mini cruise ship. Non-divers can enjoy DVD movies, games, the resource library, and relaxing on sun lounges on the top deck. We recommend the Cod Hole and Ribbon Reefs itinerary for those who like to snorkel. There are many shallow coral gardens offering fantastic snorkelling.

Can I rent an underwater camera on the boat?

Yes, Olympus 720 SW 7.1 megapixel including camera housing and CD burn are available on board .

GENERAL QUERIES

What will the weather be like?

Australian seasons are the reverse of the Northern hemisphere. Our summer is DEC – FEB and winter is JUN – AUG. However as Cairns is close to the equator and in a tropical zone, we experience relatively warm winters and high humidity in the summer months. Rain is not uncommon from January to April, but while this rain can fall on Cairns due to the surrounding mountains, it is often clear out to sea. Check out our "weather" (LINK) page for details.

When is the best time of year for diving in Cairns ?

May to August being our winter and colder water can offer great visibility and beautiful clear days, but sometimes stronger winds. September thru December sees the water warm up a

little, generally clear conditions and light winds, with many coral reef species breeding at this time. January through April is considered our wetter season with amazing feeding and marine action following the breeding season. Check out our 'weather' page for details.

I suffer seasickness, do you have any suggestions.

Spirit of Freedom weighs 250 tonnes and is equipped with electronic stabilisers, however there is no such thing as a boat that doesn't move! Our first recommendation would be to take a cabin that is on the lower deck mid ships, and avoid the Ocean View cabins on the top deck where you will experience the most motion. We have natural ginger tablets on board, but if you require something stronger we recommend that you consult your pharmacist. Take your medication just prior to boarding; don't wait until you feel ill. It's also a good idea to try your tablets or patches before your trip to ensure you are not affected by side effects. Please note all motion sickness medication will cause dehydration and we recommend that you drink extra water. The good news is generally most people gain their sea legs after a day or two.

What happens if I am sick and can't make the trip?

We strongly recommend travel insurance to cover you against this eventuality, as our policies do not allow for refunds on late cancellations.

Do I need dive insurance?

When joining Spirit of Freedom we strongly recommend all passengers (divers and snorkellers) have evacuation and medical cover. Please be aware that Scuba Diving and in-water activities are not covered by all Travel Insurance Companies. NOTE: In a Medical Emergency any evacuation, vessel relocation or medical expenses are the financial responsibility of that diver.

Divers Alert Network (DAN) and Dive Assure offer comprehensive insurance packages specifically for Scuba Divers

[DAN Travel Assist](#)

[Dive Assure \(US Residents\)](#)

[Dive Assure \(non US Residents\)](#)

What are your recommendations for flying after diving?

Spirit of Freedom recommends a minimum wait of 24 hours before flying after multiple dives. The last dive of the trip will generally be around 5:00pm the day before we return to Cairns. 24 hours is a guideline only and for maximum safety give yourself as long as possible. Please be aware that skydiving or a trip to Kuranda or the Atherton tablelands will include going to altitude.

Please Note - Individual airlines have their own policies (48 hour minimum), check with your air carrier.

Where is the nearest chamber?

The nearest recompression chamber is in Townsville, 450km to the south of Cairns. Spirit of Freedom requires all passengers to carry insurance to cover for a medivac from the reef. DAN Travel Assist will cover emergency evacuations and time in the chamber.

What about tipping?

Tipping is not mandatory in Australia, although becoming a more common practise. It is not governed by any percentage, and any cash tip for good service received, is always appreciated by Australian dive crews. Our practice is to divide tips received amongst all crew on board your trip.