



Jardines Aggressor Trip Information

The Yacht

Port: Jucaro, Cuba

Located south of Ciego de Avila and 60 miles north of Gardens of the Queen.

Built and maintained to SOLAS shipping standards.

- Length: 110 ft.
- Beam: 22
- Passengers: 20
- Crew: 6
- Boarding: Saturday noon
- Disembark: Saturday 5 - 6 a.m.

Cuba Travel Program

The Cuba Travel Program will include 10 days/9 nights arriving in Havana, Cuba on Thursday and departing Havana, Cuba on Saturday.

During our program, travelers will spend 2 hotel nights at the Iberostar Parque Central Hotel in Havana, and will visit with Cuban scientists and marine experts about ocean conservation and cultural exchanges. One of these will include a presentation by world renowned expert, Dr. Julio A. Baisre. Interactive exchanges will discuss how Cuba has maintained one of the healthiest marine ecosystems in the Caribbean. Travelers will visit the town of Cojimar and Habana Vieja before spending a week on the Jardines Aggressor liveaboard. Seven days of the program will be spent on the Jardines Aggressor liveaboard exploring the spectacular Gardens of the Queen (Jardines de la Reina) National Park, located 60 miles off the southern coast. During the week, biologists and Cuban specialists will host discussions and presentations on the marine environment, conservation, and the importance of this magnificent ecosystem.

Presenter During Program

Dr. Julio A. Baisre

The Cuba Travel Program will include a presentation by Dr. Julio Baisre, world renowned expert in the study of spiny lobster. Dr. Baisre graduated in 1968 from the University of Havana as a marine biologist. He completed his Ph.D. in Fisheries, "Fisheries Resources of the Cuban Archipelago: Ecological

Background and Strategies for Management.” He was awarded the Carlos J. Finlay Order, Cuba’s highest scientific recognition, served as President of the Cuban Aquaculture Society and headed the multidisciplinary group which drafted the new Fisheries Law which was formally approved by the Cuban Council of State. He has been instrumental in the development, introduction and enforcement of many regulations in the Cuban fisheries sector including aquaculture development, species introduction and licensing systems.

Cuba Travel Program Includes:

- Transfers to/from Havana José Martí International Airport; located 9 miles from Havana on start/end day of program.
- 2 nights hotel accommodations at the Iberostar Parque Central Hotel in Havana, all meals, dinner at Ivans Restaurant.
- Full day Friday; Meeting with Cuban scientists and biologists speaking on ocean conservation and research, visit to Fortress of El Morro or Hemingway House, town of Cojimar, Habana Vieja, lunch in Bodeguita del Medio and dinner at Cafe de Oriente or Moraleja.
- Saturday transfer from Havana to Jucaro for boarding of the Jardines Aggressor liveaboard
- Sunday to Friday Gardens of the Queen scuba diving and meeting with Cuban biologists
- Saturday disembarkation transfer to Havana José Martí International Airport
- All meals are included in the Cuba Travel Program

Getting There - Flight Information

There are many daily international flights available.

Passport & Visa Documentation

A passport must be valid for 6 months beyond your return date for your international flight. Some countries will require a Visa. As a traveler, you are required to obtain all necessary documents for entry requirements to your destination. Your Passport details must be current and exactly the same as the **Letter of Authorization** at the time of travel. Please contact the Consulate of the country you are visiting to verify document requirements. The following website offers all Passport/VISA requirements for all nationalities. Visas may also be obtained directly from the Consulates. Travelers are on a People-To-People Program.

<http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu/sicw/EN/Mission/ConsularSectioninWashington.aspx>

Hotel Accommodations - Parque Central Hotel, Havana

Travelers will enjoy staying at the elegant 5-star Iberostar Parque Central Hotel located in central Havana, Cuba Thursday and Friday nights. Known for its Spanish colonial-style architecture, which pulls in the rich culture of the streets,

the IBEROSTAR Parque Central Hotel is an excellent starting point for the Cuba Travel Program which is nestled in the heart of Havana. Travelers will admire beautiful city views from the charming French windows and doors of the hotel.

The restaurant has some of the best international cuisine in Havana, but above all, the most impressive Cuban fare. The hotel is conveniently close to the José Martí International Airport and only 20 minutes away.

Boarding Jardines Aggressor

Travelers will depart Havana Saturday morning as a group at 8 am for a 4 - 5 hour drive (lunch included) to Jucaro to board the Jardines Aggressor. After all travelers are onboard, the boat will depart for the Gardens of the Queen. Throughout the week, scuba diving will be offered from Sunday until Friday around noon. The Jardines Aggressor will depart after lunch back to Jucaro where travelers will stay onboard for dinner then depart Saturday morning as a group back to the José Martí Airport for their flight home.

Disembarking Jardines Aggressor

Saturday between 6 - 7 am, travelers will depart the Jardines Aggressor to the José Martí International Airport where the Cuba Travel Program will end. Travelers will stop for lunch on the way to the airport. Arrival at the airport will be at approximately 1 pm - 2 pm.

Cuba Airport Departure Tax

There is a required departure tax of \$25CUC (Cuban Peso) per person that has to be paid in CUC if it is not included in the price of your airline ticket. Some airlines will include the departure tax, please verify with the airline carrier.

Cuba Travel Program Prices & Policies

* All prices quoted are per person in USD.

* The 9 nights/10 day program (Thursday to Saturday) program pricing is below.

* A single supplement is charged 65% of the Jardines Aggressor rate for a private room while onboard. Traveler will be guaranteed a private room.

Traveler will choose:

- 1) Type of accommodation (master or deluxe) on the Jardines Aggressor.
- 2) Land Package with Iberostar Parque Central Hotel accommodation (single or double)
- 3) Optional Nitrox \$100
- 4) Mandatory Subscription Fee of \$110

The land package with hotel includes:

- 1) Thursday airport arrival transfer from Havana José Martí International Airport to Iberostar Parque Central Hotel.
- 2) 2 nights accommodation at Iberostar Parque Central Hotel in Havana Thursday and Friday night.

- 3) All meals starting with dinner Thursday evening.
- 4) Full day in Havana on Friday with a cultural exchange with scientists and marine experts.
- 5) Saturday transfer from Havana to Jucaro for boarding on Jardines Aggressor.
- 6) Disembarkation transfer Saturday morning back to the to Havana José Martí International Airport.(lunch included)

The Jardines Aggressor includes accommodations aboard the yacht, diving, compressed air tanks, weights & weight belts, all meals and snacks, non alcoholic beverages, local beer/wine and a conservation program.

The Cuba Travel Program does not include airfare, visa requirements or insurance.

Jardines Aggressor	Deluxe	Master
April 28, 2016 – December 31, 2016	\$3,999	\$4,299
December 31, 2016 – December 30, 2017	\$3,999	\$4,299
Non Diver Discount \$250		

Land Package with Iberostar Hotel Parque Central, Havana	Double pp	Single
April 28, 2016 – December 31, 2016	\$885	\$985
2017 & 2018 (to be accounted at a later date)		

Age Limit

The minimum age limit is 10 years of age. Children ages 10 to 17 must be accompanied by an adult. The age limit (by Cuban law) for scuba diving is 15 years of age.

Frequently Asked Questions

What travel documents will be provided and are required for travel to Cuba?

Oceans For Youth will provide you with an authorization letter that we issue under our license from the OFAC office of the US Treasury Department. It is each traveler's responsibility to ensure their passport information matches the authorization letter.

How does the People-to-People program work and do I have to apply to the US government for a permit?

If you are traveling under the Oceans For Youth OFAC license, you are required to strictly follow the program outlined that is detailed in the authorization letter.

Who owns the Jardines Aggressor?

The Jardines Aggressor is owned by a Panamanian company that has a license

to operate a LiveAboard from the Cuban government. They have been operating liveaboards in Cuba since 1993. They are very excited about offering the same amenities as the Aggressor Fleet & Dancer Fleet.

I thought Americans were not able to spend US dollars in Cuba? Will I be spending any US dollars while in Cuba? Can I buy souvenirs? Visitors can bring back \$400 USD worth of goods from Cuba, including up to \$100 of cigars and alcohol combined.

Can I use my American Express, Visa or MasterCard when I go to Cuba?

Yes, US travelers in Cuba can now use American credit cards as long as your credit card company has set up the facilities for this.

What is the Cuban Money?

Cuba has two official currencies. The Peso or CUP, sometimes called the 'national peso' and the Convertible Peso or CUC, sometimes referred to as the 'dollar'. Most travelers will only ever deal in CUC.

What is the exchange rate?

The exchange rate for the CUC is 1 to 1.

How do you exchange money in Cuba?

The best rate will be at banks. The next best exchange rate is at any Cadeca. A Cadeca (Casa de Cambio which means House of Exchange) is a government exchange facility. They're located at airports, many resorts and hotels and at locations all over the Island. They are easily recognizable white containers on major roads and near major hotels, with a CADECA sign on top. You can also exchange at hotels or resorts but the rate is not regulated.

How do I make my travel arrangements?

Contact your travel agent.

Can we use US money for tips?

Absolutely! The Jardines Aggressor will accept USD and CUC for gratuities.

How do we answer US Customs questions when returning to the USA?

If you are asked by a US immigration or customs officer about your travel, please have your authorization letter on you to show them if necessary.

Is there internet in Cuba and will the hotel and boat have it?

There will be internet available to you at the hotel but not onboard the Jardines Aggressor.

What if I need medical care in Cuba?

There are hospitals and clinics that treat tourists. Your program guide will be able to direct you to the nearest facility. Travelers are required to have proof of medical insurance while in Cuba if asked.

Does Cuba have a recompression chamber with qualified personnel to operate it?

Yes, there are several recompression chambers in Cuba with qualified personnel manning them should you have an issue.

Does Divers Alert Network and Diveassure cover dive accident insurance while in Cuba? Travelers will need to contact them direct as both companies tell us that by the time the Jardines Aggressor is operating in May, 2016 they expect to offer full coverage.

Do we need additional shots or vaccinations?

No, there are no required vaccinations for US citizens before traveling to Cuba.

Do we need to know how to speak Spanish?

No, most Cubans speak enough English to help you.

Will you be able to handle dietary restrictions?

Specialty food items are very limited and depending on your dietary restrictions, it may not be possible during your trip.

Will our travel insurance program work in Cuba, including our dive insurance policies?

Please check with your insurance company to ensure they have added Cuba to their program after the rule was lifted January 16, 2015.

What is the minimum age limit for the Cuba Travel Program?

The minimum age limit of the Cuba Travel Program is 10 years of age and older. The age limit to scuba dive by Cuban law is 15 years of age.

Am I able to write off any portion of my trip on my taxes for the charitable work I will be doing?

Travelers may download the tax letter after final payment has been made which will provide documentation of your charitable work on behalf of Oceans For Youth Foundation (501C3), and our Cuba Marine Conservation Program.

Dive Sites at the Gardens of the Queen National Park

Cabezo de la Cubera

The depth ranges from 18 to 63 ft. "Cabezo" is a Cuban marine term for an isolated coral formation on a sandy bottom. This place has a "cabezo" with a circular shape, around 600 ft in diameter which is extremely impressive with big schools of dog snapper and cuberas in the water column above the coral; mutton, yellowtail snapper schools between the coral patches, Caribbean reef sharks, different species of groupers, sting rays, turtles. After going around the

coral formation divers get to a shallow wall with clouds of purple blue tangs and massive schools of tarpon crossing by.

Black Coral I

Depth ranges between 72 and 96 ft. Coral bands that grow higher near the edge of the platform (drop-off) are more than 30 ft high over the sand patches in the bottom between them, abundant colonies of black coral, a resident population of more than 20 Caribbean reef sharks, huge black groupers come close to the divers all the time, schools of jacks rubbing their bodies against the sharks to clean parasites away, parrot fish schools, clouds of school masters and yellowtail snappers, also rainbow runners and oceanic triggerfish.

Black Coral II

Depth ranges between 60 and 90 ft., impressive coral mountains near the edge of the platform, resident population of more than 25 reef sharks (*Carcharinus Perezi*) patrolling the coral mountains. Big colonies of black corals, large sponges, depth gorgonians, midnight parrotfish schools, king mackerel, black groupers, moray eels, hawksbill, and a friendly nurse shark comes very close to the divers. In the blue passing schools of oceanic triggerfish and lonely eagle rays.

Five Seas

Depth ranges between 21 and 66 ft. under the wall there are overhangs with impressive resident schools of tarpon, black corals, and colorful sponges, divers go under and tarpons get as close as two inches from the mask to turn away with a shining silver flash. Resident population of more than 15 Caribbean reef sharks, snappers, black groupers, Goliath grouper (*Epinephelus Itajara*) comes very close. There is a wreck 15 meters long, it was a boat of Júcaro harbor that was used as a pilot boat and its name was Five Seas, was sunk intentionally, the remaining parts of the boat are full of corals, sponges, schools of jacks and black corals, also green moray eels.

Octopus Cave

Depth ranges between 15 and 54 ft. there is a wall full of sponges and gorgonians, tarpon schools, Caribbean reef sharks and Goliath grouper over 200 pounds, impressive schools of grunts, porgies and mullet around big pillar corals in the edge of the wall, also big clouds of school masters. Pillar corals are over 6 feet high and are cleaning stations for large and small reef fish. There is a cave at 18 feet with a horizontal development of its gallery of over 230 ft., but it is restricted and you can only explore the entrance, the cave is inhabited by "brotulas", a blind fish, they can only be seen at night. There are also iridescent sponges with decorated crabs.

Cabezo de la Raya

Depth between 15 and 63 ft. Circular coral formation more than 900 ft. in diameter, forming bands of coral in the sand, many sting rays in the sandy areas,

nurse sharks, Caribbean reef sharks, goliath grouper, black and Nassau groupers, hawksbills, king mackerel, at the end the dive finishes at 15 ft. in a shallow wall full of reef fish, grunts, schoolmasters, parrots, barracudas, angelfish, blue tangs, mullet, nudibranchs etc.

Los Mogotes

Amazing visibility, "Mogotes" is the name Cuban fishermen give to coral formations in a white sandy bottom, as they see these from the boat as darker areas in the sand.

Depth ranges between 21 and 63 ft. there is a wall, with some overhangs full of black coral, small caves with tarpon schools especially in May, June, July, constantly patrolled by Caribbean reef sharks, big black groupers, jacks, crabs, and many reef fish in the shallow zone.

Pipin

Drop-off wall dive, between 45 and 105 ft. deep, with many coral canyons, resident school of Silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) swimming near the boat all the time and Caribbean reef sharks in the deep. Black corals, huge spotted eagle rays, tarpon, jacks, snappers, turtles. Big colonies of black corals.

El Farallon

Coral formation between 45 and 160 ft. crossed by some ruptures where the corals are 30ft. high over the sand and 6 ft. wide, some of this impressive tunnels barely open in the top allowing the rays of light to enter forming an spectacular view, divers go across two tunnels and then go to the drop-off full of black corals and hanging sponges, black groupers, goliath grouper, snapper, Caribbean reef sharks and silky sharks.

Russian Mountain

Drop-off, perpendicular wall, the dive goes between 66 and 105 ft. With large coral canyons, big schools of jacks, Black corals, huge sponges, Silky and Caribbean reef sharks, occasionally a giant lonely great hammerhead (*Sphirna mokarran*) emerges from the depth to take a quick view of the divers. Turtles, snappers, and groupers.

Vicente

Large cylindrical coral formations at the edge of the wall as pinnacles that rise 72 ft. from a deep sandy bottom, the dive goes between 114 and 60 ft. from top to top of these intricately decorated coral mountains, with all species of sponges, corals, gorgonians, very colorful drop-off, also large groupers, Caribbean and Silky sharks, and occasionally a huge great hammerhead comes up curious. Spotted eagle rays flying parallel to the wall.

Avalon

Frontal edge of the reef wall, between 72 and 110 ft. full of big black coral colonies, and depth gorgonians, groupers, silky and Caribbean reef sharks,

massive iridescent sponges, is a very colorful wall, eagle rays are seen here very often, also goliath groupers, hammerhead occasionally. Some impressive canyons in the deeper areas of the wall.