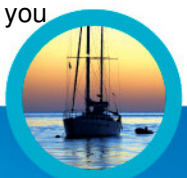




# Islands of the Great Barrier Reef

## Diving

1. **Get up close and personal with fish bigger than you at the world-famous Cod Hole** on Ribbon Reef, home to hundreds of giant potato cod. Growing up to 3 metres in length, and weighing in at a whopping 150 kilograms, the cods have become accustomed to divers over the past 30 years, so a close (and friendly) encounter with these ocean marvels is assured. [www.lizardisland.com.au](http://www.lizardisland.com.au); [www.divingcairns.com.au](http://www.divingcairns.com.au)
2. **When it comes to coral, Orpheus Island has it all, or almost all.** Some 340 of the 350 known species of reef coral are found in the clear waters surrounding the island, as well as 1,100 species of fish. A picnic and snorkel cruise can be organised, including an interpretive snorkel adventure with the resident marine naturalist. Divers can enjoy a private charter outer reef excursion, or enjoy a half or full-day of island reef diving. [www.orpheus.com.au](http://www.orpheus.com.au)
3. **Discover why many scuba divers rank Lady Musgrave Island as their favourite dive site in the world.** A tranquil, turquoise lagoon is the focus of the island's dive activities and here, beneath the surface, you'll discover a pristine reef that is home to more than 200 different species of soft and hard coral and some 1,200 species of tropical fish, as well as manta rays, turtles, dolphins and, in season (July to October), majestic humpback whales. [www.lmcruises.com.au](http://www.lmcruises.com.au)
4. **Experience the pleasure of diving in crystal-clear waters** teeming with life, and home to the finest collection of live coral on the Great Barrier Reef. Lady Elliot Island offers a great diversity of uncrowded, easily accessible dive locations (some right off the beach), as well as the clearest waters (visibility is over 25 metres year round) and some of the coolest sights (a resident population of 40 Manta Rays call these waters home). [www.ladyelliot.com.au](http://www.ladyelliot.com.au)
5. **Avoid daytrippers on beautiful Heron Island**, where the reef experience is kept exclusively for guests. Because you are already staying on the reef you can easily enjoy up to three full dives a day – and see something new every time. Heron offers over 20 different dive sites, more than half of which are just 15 minutes from the beach. [www.heronisland.com](http://www.heronisland.com)
6. **Travel to the outer regions of the Great Barrier Reef** at Hayman Island's own private mooring located at sensational Bait Reef. This superb dive site offers coral wall dives, lagoons, fantastic coral mountains and incredible fish life, making it the pick of diving areas in the Whitsunday region. [www.hayman.com.au](http://www.hayman.com.au)
7. **Knuckle Reef Lagoon is the perfect place to experience the magic of your first ever Scuba dive.** From South Molle, Hayman, Daydream and Hamilton islands, you





can jump on board Cruise Whitsundays' vessel, *Seaflight*, a 37-metre wave piercer, which will take you out to the amazing pontoon at Knuckle Reef. The protected reef has its own ecosystem with magnificent corals and a diversity of marine life not found in more open water areas. [www.cruisewhitsundays.com](http://www.cruisewhitsundays.com)

8. **Experience the unique peace and tranquillity of a night on the reef.** Fantasea Cruise's Reefsleeper package offers divers the opportunity to spend two days and a night at remote Reefworld, a purpose-built pontoon anchored at Hardy Reef, in the Whitsundays. Once the day-trippers have departed, you'll have the reef all to yourself – apart from a few million fish! Then sit back with a glass of champagne and watch the sun set – and the stars rise – from the open deck. [www.fantasea.com.au/Reefworld](http://www.fantasea.com.au/Reefworld)
9. **Always wanted to try a wreck dive? Now's your chance.** The Great Barrier Reef contains some of the world's best, and most accessible, wreck dives. Two of the most popular are the *Lady Bowen* and *S.S. Yongala* wrecks – both of them steam ships that sank on the reef a century ago. The two ships lie in different sections of reef in about 30 metres of water and both are now reefs in themselves, hosting magnificent coral formations and stellar marine life. The *Lady Bowen* is reached from Dunk Island ([www.calypsodive.com](http://www.calypsodive.com)) and *S.S Yongala* from Magnetic Island ([www.magnetic-island.com.au](http://www.magnetic-island.com.au)).
10. **Witness one of the natural world's most spectacular and unique events.** Coral spawning happens on the reef just once a year at very specific evenings in November and December and for those divers lucky enough to see the event, it's an experience never forgotten. Described by divers as something like an underwater snowstorm, spawning occurs when living coral release billions of cells into the warm waters to aid reproduction. Undersea Explorer cruises ([www.undersea.com.au](http://www.undersea.com.au)) offers divers the chance to join marine biologists on a six-day expedition to Ribbon Reef to watch this exciting spectacle.





ISLANDS  
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