

*Brief guide to some of the most exiting diving sites in our area, there are more than 14 sites to choose from.*

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All dives have an **easy shore entry** and exit, as well as access by boat. The fringing reefs starts **very close to the shore**, which is also ideal for snorkellers. The dive sites are made up of walls, canyons or gardens. Everyone can find something beautiful or special, whether they are **experienced or novice** divers.

The coral reef is in an **excellent condition** and home to wide range of fish like groupers, parrotfish, angelfish, butterfly fish, moray eels, lionfish and, close to the sea anemones, the clownfish and turtles regularly visit the reefs.

### **First Bay**

Situated south of the Marine Science Station. This is a fringing reef about 700 m long, with very prolific coral and fish life. The reef starts from 2 m and extends down to 40 m and attracts shoaling fish. Sea bass, fusilier, squid and octopus are common, as well as puffer fish, lionfish and groupers, making this an excellent site for photographers.

### **Black Rock**

This site has very easy access and is ideal for snorkelling and anyone who is new to coral gardens. It starts just below the surface and extends outwards for approximately 30 m, then it

drops away. Sea life includes emperor, snapper, lyre tail, small triggerfish, wrasse, parrotfish, lionfish and scorpion fish, box fish, many butterfly fish and is a popular spot to see turtles.

### **Cedar Pride**

This is the wreck of a Lebanese freighter, sunk in 1985 at the wish of King Abdullah as an attraction for divers. She is 80 m long & 20 m wide and lies on her port side, across two reefs, in a depth of 12-28 m. It is possible to swim under the hull at around 25 m. Soft and hard corals have rapidly colonised the wreck, which is home to several large sea bass. Grouts can be seen and a shoal of barracuda patrols her. Martin Edge called this one of the world's best wreck sites (article in "Diver").

### **Japanese Garden**

Between the wreck and the shore, just off the starboard bow, lies a reef, which slopes down from 10 m to 24 m with a drop off on one side. Here can be found a wide range of coral, fish life and large pelagic species, which approach the reef to feed.

### **Gorgonian I**

This is a relatively shallow site, generally 10 m. It is named after a large Gorgonian fan coral, which is at 15 m. This site has splendid examples of massive coral formations, including a lettuce coral the size of a small house. There are also lots of rock pinnacles smothered in fish life and both hard and soft corals. One of these pinnacles is covered in lionfish, which gather in large numbers.

### **Eel Canyon**

This site provides a dramatic dive with lots of different invertebrate life and lots of large coral outcrops offering a variation in depth and contour. The canyon splits the reef to a valley with a sandy bottom and a big table coral. The reef is flat, sloping and descends to 40 m. Needless to say, there are eel morays as well as scorpion fish, lionfish, and many butterfly fish.

### **Aquarium**

Located in front of RDC, to the north of the jetty. The maximum depth is 35 m and offers a variety of patchy, soft & hard corals with a lot of puffer fish, wrasse, snappers and damsels, as well as stingrays in the sandy bottom.

### **The Gardens**

Located in front of RDC, to the south of the jetty. Abounds with healthy, huge table corals and pinnacles covered with soft coral. Lots of reef fish, but if you look closely you will also find sea horses, sand gobies and eel morays.

### **Saudi Border**

Otherwise known as 'The Drop Off,' so called because it is just that! The top of the reef starts at 5 m with patch reef and the reef top itself extends approx. 30-40 m seaward. At this point a wall of living coral drops down from 12 m to 45 m, and beyond. There are small caverns at 30 m where plate corals abound. At around 40 m a large grouper is to be found hiding behind a rock pinnacle. Here it is common to see turtles and the sand is home to some large rays and deep water shoaling fish such as jacks.

### **Power Station**

Here the reef slopes from the surface to 12 m, before dropping at 20 m, to a sheer wall. Swimming along the edge of the wall offers spectacular views. This is the hunting ground of large pelagic species. Soft corals abound as nutrient rich waters gently flow along the wall. This dive requires good buoyancy control and offers some magnificent, coral outcrops with huge numbers of fish. This can also be a shallow water dive between 12 m and 5 m with an abundance of varied hard corals