

a dive school like all the other operations if this is your focus, but if you just want to relax and dive, the resort is separate. At the resort, no training briefs and students, all diving. Resort is not in the town so it has greater security. With 10 total private rooms with A/C, you are recognized as a person and your needs and desires are heard and respected. Nitrox available by dive or by week. Wonderful owners and staff. Provide snacks on boat, 1-hour surface intervals. Good corals, smaller fish, etc., limited larger fish/deep pelagics on this trip. Awesome experience to swim with a whale shark, then go back to the resort for tuna sashimi from the tuna boil over the whale shark.

JAMAICA

Sandals Royal Caribbean Resort, March 2007, Larry Sensenig (LPSensenig@msn.com), Sioux City, IA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 50 to 75 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, calm. Charming self-contained all-inclusive resort. There are five restaurants serving good food and multiple pools (some with swim-up bars) on the manicured property. Trips to other island attractions are an additional fee. There was evening entertainment ranging from good to fair. Reading previous Travelin' Diver's Chapbooks gave an accurate picture of the diving experience. If you have not been diving in the past six months, you will have to take a pool refresher course. Diving took place off a beautiful 46-foot dive boat. Some trips had over 20 people on the boat, but dives took place with groups of four divers. The divemasters were competent, but not particularly helpful. Dive profiles were conservative, often surfacing with 1000 psi left in the tank. There was no shore

diving at the resort. Over five days of diving, no large schools of fish were seen. Individual sightings included two turtles, several sea cucumbers, flounder, star fish, puffer fish, French grunts, and a small sting ray. A wall dive and an old DC-3 airplane added some diving interest. The Sandals Royal Caribbean provides a nice vacation destination, but experienced divers will become a bit bored with the diving.

MEXICO

Cozumel and Yucatan peninsula diving took a big hit by Hurricane Wilma in September 2005 and diving is still seriously affected, as Chapbook reporters testify. Many operators cater to experienced, savvy divers — but some load boats with all comers. Much of Cozumel's diving is deep or drift dives. Carry surface-signaling devices (strobe, safety sausage, etc.). The best diving is in spring and summer. It can be rainy during the winter. Accommodations range from small, inexpensive downtown hotels to diver hangouts to high dollar hotels. There's a lot of partying, thanks to an overload of cruise ship passengers. Many divers take day trips to the mainland to dive the freshwater cenotes. Along the coast, there are dive operations from Cancun south, but the diving is mainly patch reef diving. Isla Mujeres, off Cancun, has some decent reef diving and a drift or two. Whale sharks spend several summer weeks northwest of Cancun, near the island of Holbox, where one can just about be guaranteed to snorkel with scores of the behemoths. See Undercurrent, October 2004, for a review of this new discovery.