

ANGUILLA

Anguilla (almost rhymes with vanilla) is a small, pricey Leeward Island a few minutes' ferry ride from St. Maartin. Its main appeal lies in its beautiful beaches and exclusive ambiance. Good, typical Caribbean reefs are close in, but expect no drama. The fish population is low due to overfishing. It's not an island to visit just for the diving, but if you end up there, by all means get in the water. It's in the hurricane belt. . . .

Anguilla, July 2002, Hank Silver, Dallas, TX. The water is beautiful, temperate and clear, but not for hard core divers. Two tanks dives offered by the island's dive shop though they go back to the shack on the beach to get more filled tanks, rather than have them aboard for the second dive. The reefs were devoid of fish, living coral, sponges or any of the beautiful organisms that inhabit most Caribbean reefs. The hurricane that hit Anguilla in 1996 wiped out the reef life. It will take 20 years to approach 'lush' again. The diving is work too. You must carry your gear to the anchored boat off the beach, there is no camera table, but there is a good ladder. The program is for tourists too, lots of swimming around and little time for photography or study, if there was anything left to study. Go to Anguilla for the beautiful beaches, the good restaurants, and the 'beautiful' people, forget the diving.

Anguillian Divers, December 2001, Daniel Spitzer, Piermont, NY. Vis:

50 ft. water: 80 F. Dives logged: 300. Dive restrictions enforced: reasonable. While Anguilla is not a "dive destination," it is better to dive than not to dive! You can rent Norielle's fine equipment and enjoy relaxed diving. On one of my three dives a large spotted eagle ray kept parading for us! The island is pleasant — with some of the most expensive hotels and restaurants in the Caribbean. The Anguillans are some of the friendliest islanders anywhere. **(Ph: +264 497 4750; axadiver@anguillanet.com; website www.anguilliandivers.com)**

Special "D," Frangipani, May 2002, Dennis A. Jones (scubajone@aol.com) Covington, VA. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 82-84 F. Dives accrued: 380. Dive restrictions enforced: safety — dive within your training. Doug was probably the best dive leader I have met. From the moment you get on the boat you are treated well. Doug never stops finding neat things and pointing out the unusual. He gives 100% on every dive. Doug is skilled, knowledgeable and helpful. Anguilla is a special island with wonderful people and many great restaurants. Be sure to try Straw Hat, Mangos, Frangipani and Hemingway's. **(Ph: 264-497-4567; dcarty@anguillanet.com)**

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Beautiful beaches and scenery, high-dollar hotels, and forgettable diving. If you find yourself here, avoid boats that take divers from the cruise ships, as they do only the close-in, shallow reefs.