

We were advanced open water certified while there and the price and training facilities were great! All the dive staff was friendly, outgoing and helpful. Accommodating for underwater video and helped us find good subject matter for filming.

JAMAICA

A lovely island with plenty of hotel amenities (and lots of swinging-singles and couples-only all-inclusives), but the impoverished population (22 percent of whom are unemployed) eats anything a fisherman can scoop up, and you can hardly blame them. . . . Experienced divers will become bored on the first dive, but the diving's okay for beginners (although the local divemaster may be poorly trained. . . . Jamaica lies in the hurricane belt. . . .

**Seaworld at Jack Tar Hotel/
Wyndham Rose Hall, Montego Bay,
December 2001, Paul Farago
(farago54@juno.com) Lakewood,
OH.** Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 60
to 80 Feet. Water: 77 to 79 F, choppy.
Due to water conditions near the hotel
we were not able to use the dive
service at the Wyndham. The
Wyndham made arrangements at
another facility at the Jack Tar Hotel.
The shuttle sent from the Jack Tar was
an old four door Datsun that could go
over 20 mph! It showed up an hour
late! The dive shop was very unorga-
nized and the rental equipment looked
like it was run over by a tractor. The
dive boats were very small and
cluttered. There were double the

passengers it should have carried.
There was no room to store anything
besides your BC and regulator. There
were snorkelers, student divers,
passengers just along for the ride. The
dive master told three of us (who were
the only divers not on our 1st dive) to
wait for him below the boat. He didn't
show up for 15 minutes. We spent the
next fifteen minutes swimming around
the reef and then had to surface
because a new diver was having
problems with equipment before
which he never used. The boat was
gone. It took the snorkelers to a more
shallow area. We had to wait at the
choppy surface for sometime before
the dive boat found us. A lot of trouble
for a few minutes of diving. The water
was clear and the reef was in good
shape. It was obvious this was just a
cattle boat operation trying to make all
the money they can. They returned to
shoWyndre before the second dive. I
decided it would be more fun to sit by
the pool and drink rum punch.
(Wyndham Rose Hall: Ph: 800-441-
0418 or 876-953-2650; e-mail wr-
resmanaager@wyndham.com;
website [http://www.wyndham-
jamaica.com](http://www.wyndham-jamaica.com))

**Breezes, Run Away Bay, August
2002, Frank Longo, Carrollton, TX.**
Although they advertise diving, it is at
the bottom of the list when it comes to
priorities. Breezes claims to have two
PADI instructors and a couple of dive
masters. The qualifications are at best
questionable. On a night dive to fifty
plus feet for forty minutes we were
told by the dive guide (PADI instruc-
tor) to make a direct ascent with no

safety stop and no lights. Being a PADI instructor myself my wife and I chose to make a three minute safety stop. No fish and the reefs looked extremely unhealthy. Diving at Run Away Bay at best is boring for the beginners and a total waste of time for anybody with experience diving.

MEXICO

Once Cozumel was visited mainly by divers, but now cruise ships daily disgorge great packs of shoppers who descend on the night clubs, restaurants and bars galore, and sidewalk hustlers hawking condos, serapes that are questionable bargains, and little plaster statues of guys wearing big hats leaning on saguaro cactuses. . . . Spectacular dives do exist, but many operators are reluctant to visit these sites, especially if the divers aboard have mixed experience levels, and rightfully so, because much of Cozumel's diving is advanced sites with deep or fast-current drift dives. Beginning divers should select other destinations. . . . Carry surface-signaling devices for both day and night (strobe, safety sausage, etc.) and stay with your dive guide or group. . . . Dive operators vary widely in quality and safety. . . . The best diving is in spring and summer; it can be rainy during the fall (hurricane season) and winter. . . . Cozumel is one of the biggest travel bargains, with accommodations ranging from the inexpensive downtown hotels to

diver hangouts to high dollar hotels . . . While there are dive operations up and down the Yucatan Coast, only Maya Ha is able to reach the only recently dived — though heavily fished — Chinchorro Banks. With a variety of activities and adventure tour offerings in addition to diving, the Southern Yucatan is an excellent choice for divers and nondivers alike looking for a unique vacation. . . .

Cancun

Solo Buceo, Royal Sands, November 2001, Peter Dillon, Westminster, MD. Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 70 to 75 F, choppy currents. We were fitted with our rental equipment at the hotel and they provided transportation to the dive center. On our first dive, we saw 30 large spotted eagle rays at a Mexican navy wreck C-58. The current was very strong and we were required to stick to our dive master. My assigned buddy sucked his tank empty in less than 30 minutes so I had to ascend with 1200 psi left in my tank. A videographer from the dive center filmed our underwater experience: \$45. Later I was offered a rate of \$35. Our second dive was a drift along a small wall. The dive masters fed a nurse shark and she followed us the whole way. The boat crew was most helpful. They did everything from setting up our gear to pulling us out of the water. The theme park at Xel-Ha is a good place to introduce someone to snorkeling and maybe diving because the inlet is protected so the water is very calm plus there are lots of fish. **(Solo Buceo: Ph: 9-848-7070; e-mail**