

# Fiji Marine Conservation & Diving

*Scuba dive in the crystal clear waters of the south Pacific. Live in paradise on a beach camp and carry out important marine conservation work.*

The Fijian archipelago lies scattered lazily in the achingly blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, bathed in the radiant antipodean sunlight. Its towns and villages are veritable melting pots of cultural influences.

Fiji's irresistible shores are fringed with picture-perfect palm trees, and the azure waters that surround the islands are inhabited by an astonishing array of marine creatures; over 1,200 species of fish including clownfish, triggerfish, blue tangs, 12 species of whales, dolphins, anemones, soft coral and much more.

Enjoy fragrant sun drenched days and exotic nights of delectable food cooked in a traditional underground oven. Fiji will enchant you with its infectious, chilled out "Fiji time" lifestyle, its heavenly beaches and surrounding mountains of rainforest– the perfect paradise location for your Frontier adventure!

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Help to preserve Fiji's marine and coastal biodiversity
- PADI scuba diving courses and qualifications available
- Make lifelong friends and return with incredible stories, photos and memories
- Dive at some of the best dive sites in the world and study their health
- Extend your experience in tropical marine and coastal conservation field work

## PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Intermediate level of English

## FAST FACTS

<b>Location</b>	The South Pacific Island of Beqa, Fiji
<b>Activities</b>	Scuba diving Dive and snorkel on beautiful coral reefs Using under water visual census methods, dive and snorkel to study and conserve the various marine life living on coral reefs; including indicator and commercial fish. Study and work to conserve a wide range of invertebrate species Explore mangrove forests, dense sea grass beds & productive intertidal areas Study species that live on the Island of Beqa Dive and snorkel to study the health of the coral reef habitats and relate that information to species conservation Record observations of the feeding habits & behaviour patterns of a range of marine life Take part in critical habitat mapping

	Work with local communities to increase their awareness and appreciation of the marine environment.
<b>Transport</b>	Free airport pickup and transfer to the island is provided for volunteers arriving on the first Monday of each month. For volunteers arriving on different days airport pickup, transfers to the island and hostel accommodation for the first night can be arranged at an additional cost
<b>Accommodation</b>	Communal cast away style camp a few minutes walk from the bay, with timber frame house

## WHAT DOES THE PROJECT DO?

The aim of Frontier-Fiji Marine Conservation Project is to better understand the marine resources of the island of Beqa, and to provide teaching and training to enable local communities to make informed decisions regarding the management of their coastal ecosystems.

To achieve this mission, we conduct scientific baseline data surveys of reef areas. Once a long-term data set is obtained, patterns of resource use can be identified and work with local communities can begin to build awareness of the value and vulnerability of their marine environment.

## WHAT WILL I BE DOING?

The marine research and conservation programme is run in association with the University of the South Pacific. The work aims to provide the local stakeholders, research organisations and government bodies with the information they need to design and implement management plans for the future protection of Beqa island and lagoon marine ecosystem.

To gather the data needed you will be diving to locate and map the extensive coral reefs and study the various communities living on them (if necessary you will learn to dive first). To do this you will deploy a wide range of newly learned research skills and scientific techniques including: underwater visual census of reef and commercial fish such as triggerfish and parrotfish, indicator species (both fish and coral), assessment of algal and coral cover to determine the extent of coral bleaching and damage, and line intercept transects for benthic life and indicator invertebrate species such as nudibranchs. With so much to learn it's worth noting that those joining for only a few weeks will be training most of the time and may not get to do a lot of surveying. You may record observations of the feeding habits and behaviour patterns of a range of marine life. You may even get to study the impact of artisanal fishing on the coral reefs or report the effects of Global Warming on marine communities. The type of fieldwork underway will depend on the time of year and the content of the research program when you join up and how long you are joining for.

Whilst diving, you'll see an extraordinary array of animals from turtles to rays, sea cucumbers to feathery starfish, spiny urchins to octopus and jellyfish. When you motor out each day on the Frontier boat to distant dive sites you may even encounter flying fish, sharks and dolphins. By the end of your project you will be expert at identifying vast numbers of colourful and patterned reef fish as well as being an experienced and competent diver. Although the work is intense and challenging you'll get immense satisfaction from having survived and from having made a valuable contribution to the conservation of this untarnished marine wilderness. You will return home with the new friends you've

made and a wealth of fascinating stories and memories.

You'll find your team to be a fun, dynamic mix of ages and experiences, with members who all share a passion about travelling in developing countries and saving endangered life. Your staff will be young, friendly individuals who are highly experienced in their field and many have volunteered on a Frontier project earlier in their career.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?**

An airport pick-up service is offered to volunteers arriving on the first or third Monday of the month, whose flights land before 2:30pm local time. All other volunteers must make their own way to the project site. We will provide you with easy to follow instructions prior to your departure to enable you to plan your journey. If you are arriving into Fiji on days other than the first or third Monday of the month but wish to travel to the project site with the main deployment group on the first or third Monday of the month, the overland arrival meeting point is at Nadi international airport arrivals hall. Please make sure that your intended arrival/travel plans have been arranged and confirmed with the project field staff a minimum of 1 week before your project start date.

If you are travelling to a marine project on Beqa island, you will only be able to travel to the island on the same day if your flight arrives before 9am on the Monday (due to limited boat timetables). However, you are more than welcome to spend one night with us at our homestay family in Suva, or you can choose to stay in Nadi or Suva for a night, in preparation for your journey to Beqa the next morning.

You will travel from the airport along the Coral Coast of the Island of Viti Levu to the town of Navua. Following this you will take a local boat for the one hour journey to the spectacular and famous south Pacific island of Beqa.

If you are an independent traveller arriving on any other date you are welcome to join the project on any Monday, (please discuss your intended arrival date and duration of stay with our travel advisers, especially if you need to book a dive training course, to confirm availability), and please be aware that you will need to organise your own transfer between Nadi and Suva and first night hostel accommodation in Suva at a cost of US\$42/\$40. We will arrange for you to transfer from Suva to Beqa the following day at your own cost where our field team will be ready to welcome you to the Frontier house and camp. Again, you must confirm your exact arrival time/date with in country staff at least 1 week before arrival.

## **WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?**

During the project you'll live in our simple but comfortable timber frame house on a cast away camp about 5-minutes walking from the Bay on the south Pacific island of Beqa. We aim to provide you with an authentic and memorable living experience. The Beqa house and camp has been constructed by local craftsmen using traditional building techniques and locally sourced building materials. The camp is situated up a short hill from the shore through the rainforest. Camp life is very simple, unsophisticated and fun. You will be staying in communal house near to the local communities. Your "shower" consists of a pipe that runs into an outdoor stall from the local stream and runs 24 hours a day. We have a western style bucket flush toilet and camp-style gas hobs to cook on. Prepare for the basic, cast away, virtually footprint-less lifestyle!

As well as the diving and marine conservation work you may be asked to help with the scientific data entry and will need to help with daily camp maintenance, taking turns to cook, tidy and clean the

camp, rinse dive kit, and help with a wide variety of other important and essential camp duties.

## WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Camp food is simple and consists largely of rice, lentils, split peas, pasta, tinned tomatoes, potatoes, onions, curry, rolled oats, freshly baked bread, and any fruit or vegetable grown on the land (pumpkin, eggplant, papaya, banana, mango, cassava, bele leaves, etc. depending on season). All food is purchased in-country or made on camp in order to help support the local economy. Luxuries such as sweets, biscuits and drinking chocolate have to be brought over to the island from Suva, so make sure you stock up before heading to the camp! Part of your role on camp will be to help with the cooking, so get your cookbooks out now and start practising! Also, with luck you'll be invited to local feasts and festivals – a great way to integrate with the local communities in the nearby villages and absorb the fabulous and welcoming local culture.

Some local dishes to look forward to include taro, taro leaves, breadfruit, sweet potato, cassava, and cassava chips, coconut and fabulous seafood. A delicious Fijian speciality is a lovo feast, which is a meal cooked in a hole in the ground – unusual but very tasty!

## COSTS

1 week	US\$ 1,995
2 weeks	US\$ 2,345
3 weeks	US\$ 2,595
4 weeks	US\$ 2,795
5 weeks	US\$ 3,295
6 weeks	US\$ 3,695
7 weeks	US\$ 3,845
8 weeks	US\$ 4,045
10 weeks	US\$ 4,445
20 weeks	US\$ 7,045
Extra week	US\$ 495
Christmas Week	US\$ 445

PADI Open Water and Advanced Open Water training US\$1,156 PADI Advanced Open Water training US\$561 (At least PADI Advanced Open Water training necessary for marine surveying)

## DEPARTURE DATES

Every Monday of the month.

## DURATION

You can join this project for a minimum of 1 week

## **CHRISTMAS OFFER**

This project is available for the special price of US\$425 per week over the Christmas period. Placements starting on the 23rd or 30th of December 2019 are eligible for this price, subject to availability. Please apply using the orange button below and then tell your volunteer advisor that you wish to take part over Christmas.

## **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

### **Before you go**

- Pre-departure support
- Travel & medical advice & documentation
- Equipment advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier T-shirt
- UK residential briefing weekend including food, accommodation and training (extra cost applies)

### **in country**

- All field camp accommodation & food
- Local orientation & comprehensive project training
- Project equipment & camp diving equipment
- Research materials
- 24 hour in-country support
- International HQ emergency support & back-up
- Airport pick-up for first Monday of the month arrivals (an airport pick up service is available for alternative arrival dates at extra cost)
- Internal ground transfers and first night hostel accommodation for first Monday of the month arrivals
- Boat transfer to the Island of Beqa
- Diving projects: Dive training courses available. PADI Open Water (US\$595), PADI Advanced Open Water (US\$561). Courses available year-round, subject to availability. Course costs include PIC cards, PADI membership & use of Frontier project equipment and dive equipment (tanks, weights, BCDs, REGs etc), personal dive kit, (wet suit, fins, mask, snorkel etc) not included, recreational dives, speciality dives available at extra cost

## **AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Nearest airport(s): Nadi (NAN)

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Call us on 020 7613 2422 (UK) / 1 949 336 8178 (US)

Mail us on [info@frontier.ac.uk](mailto:info@frontier.ac.uk)

Check out our social media here:

*Project details were correct at the time this document was generated. Price, dates and other details are subject to change. Please see our website for current details for this project.*