



Clients looking to dive or snorkel in an untouched corner of the Caribbean?

**Laura French** charts the region's best lesser-known sites

**W**hen it comes to underwater exploration, few regions in the world can lay claim to quite so many riches as the Caribbean, with more than 7,000 islands – spread across a million square miles of ocean – luring snorkellers and divers from across the planet.

But it's not just about the quantity. The sheer variety of undersea attractions here really stands out, with shipwrecks, drop-off walls, cave systems, coral gardens, underwater sculpture parks and

plenty more in the mix.

And whether it's shore diving in Bonaire or shark diving in the Bahamas, snorkelling with hawksbills in Honduras or exploring the vibrant reefs of Belize, the forever-changing landscape means there's always something to warrant a second, third or even fourth trip.

So where should you suggest when a client comes asking for exactly that? Here's our guide to some of the best lesser-known options for every level and ability, from total novice to fully accomplished Divemaster. ➤



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## GRENADA

From shipwreck dives to dramatic drop-off walls, Grenada is something of a magnet for anyone into their underwater life. The island's highlight, though, is the Underwater Sculpture Park, where impressive creations – ranging from a string of life-sized faces to a man cycling along the side of the reef on a salvaged bicycle – act as artificial reefs in a sprawling Marine Protected Area.

## CARRIACOU

**WHERE:** For something a little quieter, look to Grenada's sister island, Carriacou. Measuring just seven miles long, this pint-sized isle is a haven for snorkellers as well as divers, with clear, shallow waters and vibrant coral formations that have earned it the name 'Land of Reefs'.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** "The island's iconic Two Sisters dive is packed with marine life," says Phil North, brand manager for Dive Worldwide. "Large barracuda, nurse sharks and even tarpon can all be found here, darting among colourful soft corals." Elsewhere there's Sandy Island, a horseshoe-shaped islet that offers diving straight off the shore, and Whirlpool, so named for the volcanic bubbles that can be seen rising to the surface. A handful of shipwreck dives adds to the allure.

**BOOK IT:** Dive Worldwide offers a twin-centre itinerary to Grenada and Carriacou from £2,875, including 14 nights' B&B accommodation, a 10-day dive package, transfers and flights.

[diveworldwide.com](http://diveworldwide.com)

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## THE BAHAMAS

With more than 700 islands and cays, there's no shortage of underwater entertainment in the Bahamas. For the intrepid, there's shark diving – including at the aptly named Shark Wall – alongside a host of other sites, not least in Nassau, where you can dive around a twin-engine Cessna sunk for the *Jaws* 4 film.

## CANOUAN

**WHERE:** If clients have already been there and done that, suggest St Vincent and the Grenadines instead – specifically Canouan, says Rebecca Bryson, head of sales at Caribtours. "This small island is protected by one of the world's largest coral reefs," she says. "Travellers can marvel at the colourful coral formations, exotic marine life and giant boulders situated tens of feet below sea level."

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Key spots include Windward Bay, a calm lagoon protected by a barrier reef; and Gibraltar, a giant stone about 10m in depth that attracts a whole universe of striking fish. But for some of the most extraordinary sights suggest Tobago Cays, a cluster of five islets known for its green sea turtles, accessible by catamaran from the island. "It's a paradise for snorkellers with its fluorescent waters and a medley of colourful tropical fish," says Bryson.

**BOOK IT:** Caribtours offers seven nights at Mandarin Oriental, Canouan, from £5,199 per person based on two sharing a One Bedroom Oceanview Suite, including breakfast, flights and transfers.  
[caribtours.co.uk](http://caribtours.co.uk)

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## GRAND CAYMAN

Iconic sites such as Stingray City, Devil's Grotto and Eden Rock have put Grand Cayman on the map among snorkellers and divers the world over. Add in drop-off walls, caverns, tunnels and shipwrecks, and there's rather a lot to see beneath the surface of this well-heeled island.

## LITTLE CAYMAN

**WHERE:** But for clients who have already seen beneath the bigger sibling's shores, up it a notch with a small-plane flight across to Little Cayman. This sister island may be home to only a handful of dive resorts, and an even smaller handful of fishermen, but serious divers flock here from across the world to experience its renowned undersea treasures.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** At its heart is Bloody Bay Marine Park, a submerged mountain range featuring a wall that plunges a staggering 2,000 metres. Groupers, barracudas, triggerfish and a whole lot more can all be seen here, with a plethora of sites to explore, from Donna's Delight and Randy's Gazebo to Lea Lea's Lookout and Barracuda Bite. For peaceful accommodation right on the beach, suggest Southern Cross Club, where it's all about the diving.

**BOOK IT:** A five-night stay at Southern Cross Club starts at \$1,713, based on two sharing in summer, and includes airport pickup, oceanfront bungalow, use of club kayaks and all meals. A two-night, two-tank dive package starts at \$110.  
[southerncrossclub.com](http://southerncrossclub.com)

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