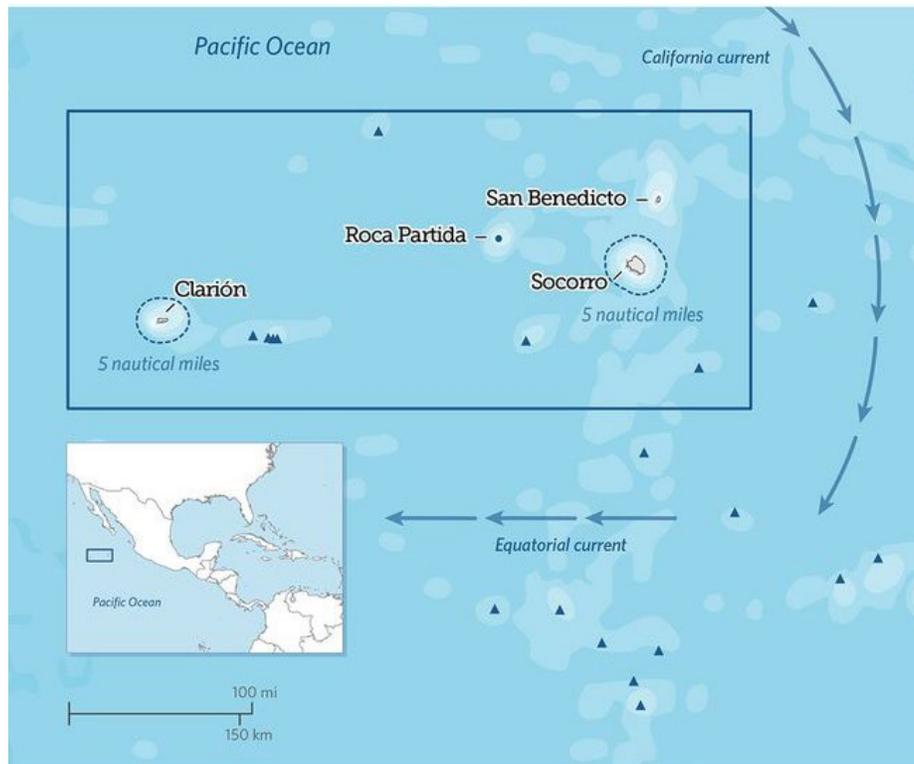


The Revillagigedo Islands are a group of four volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean, known for their unique ecosystem. They lie approximately 390 kilometres (240 mi) southwest of Cabo San Lucas, the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula, and 720 to 970 kilometres (450 to 600 mi) west of Manzanillo.



Conditions:

Depth: 33 - 100ft (10 - 30m)

Visibility: 50 - 115ft (15 - 35m)

Currents: Moderate but can be strong

Surface conditions: Can be choppy

Water temperature: 70 - 79°F (21 - 26°C)

Experience level: Intermediate - advanced

Number of dive sites: 12 in the whole area

Distance: 280 miles (450 km) west from Cabo San Lucas, Baja California

Recommended length of stay: 8 - 9 days

There are often quite sheltered mooring spots around the islands but the seas can be choppy during crossings.



San Benedicto - This is the third largest in the Revillagigedos group and is often the first place to be visited on liveaboard diving trips to the Socorro area. San Benedicto is known throughout the world for the quality of manta ray encounters which divers experience here. This is not just a quick glance at a passing manta ray or two but a series of prolonged and intimate interactions with several giant Pacific manta rays. These majestic creatures come to this area to be cleaned by Clarion angelfish.

Mantas take center stage alongside a glittering support cast including: schools of hammerhead sharks, dusky sharks, silky sharks and dolphins. The most highly rated dive site at San Benedicto can be located at the surface by sighting the swell and surf that looks like the sea is boiling. When you see this you know you have arrived at The Boiler.

The Boiler features a beautiful pinnacle which rises from a base of around 165ft (50m) to within 20ft (6 or 7m) from the ocean surface. Most of the beauty at this site is within 100ft (30m) depth so there is no need to dive very deep. Certainly you do not need to go too deep to experience some unforgettable encounters with giant Pacific manta rays.

Since this is a cleaning station where Clarion angelfish nibble parasites of the grateful mantas' bodies, you can see many of them gathered here. They seem to almost welcome the presence of scuba divers, and might swim very close to come eyeball to eyeball with you. They also clearly revel in the sensation of divers' bubbles rippling up against their bodies. If they came for the equivalent of a spa scrub from the Clarion angelfish then you are providing a gentle bubble massage.

Other marine creatures are also drawn to this cleaning station. You might also see tiger sharks and whale sharks and maybe even humpback whales, if you are particularly lucky. Even if you don't see one, the whale song can provide an auditory backdrop to your whole dive at The Boiler.

Located on the south side of San Benedicto is The Canyon, which is likely to provide you with more unforgettable experiences with marine mega-fauna. Mantas are often seen here too although the encounters tend not to be as awesome as at The Boiler, although they can still be pretty awesome.

Sharks are more the order of the day at The Canyon with healthy numbers of silky sharks, Galapagos sharks and hammerhead sharks being the most frequently sighted. While the silkies and Galapagos sharks may travel solo or in small groups, the hammerheads can be present in vast schools. There are also swirling clouds of reef fish cascading up and down the slope, and always a chance of a passing pod of dolphins, making it a great site for photography.

This dive site is less subject to challenging conditions than The Boiler and is often dived when it is decided that there is too much boiling going on.



Socorro Island - Indicated on the surface by a thin finger of rock stretching out from the east coast of the island, Cabo Pearce is a reef that extends out into the prevailing current.

There is often a lot of dolphin activity here and a pod may greet your liveaboard dive tender and entertain you before you even hit the water. Few places in the world offer experiences with dolphins like here, which are far from fleeting. Here they may hang around to see you entering the water and dropping down and could stay in the area for your whole dive, their playful clicks and squeaks dancing through your ears, when they are not directly in sight.

One way to dive this Socorro site is to descend and nestle among the rocks, protected from the strongest of the current. Here you await the majestic sight of a huge school of scalloped hammerheads, weaving their way into view. Silky sharks are also not uncommon here, particularly later in the day.

You have a strong chance to be entertained by several playful manta rays at Cabo Pearce, and if you are in the right time and right place a humpback whale might even ease its mighty bulk into your field of vision.

There is a plateau at 33 to 39ft (10 to 12m) where you can spot smaller creatures including lobsters and various little schools of reef fish. The plateau gives way to an interesting cavern which is one of Socorro's few photogenic topographical features. There is a good chance of encounters with other species such as Galapagos sharks, gray reef sharks and silky sharks.

Located on the west coast of Socorro Island is Punta Tosca, another site where the chance of long and intimate encounters with dolphins is strong. Tiger sharks, although not the most common species in this water, are regularly seen and Punta Tosca is one of the best places for them. Other sharks often spotted here include Galapagos sharks, silky sharks and silvertips, as well as turtles and lobsters. This is one Socorro dive site where anything can happen, and when something does it is usually unforgettable.



Roca Partida - meaning 'split rock', is a small pinnacle that rockets up from the sea floor from below 164ft (50m) depth, approximately 64 miles (40 km) from Socorro. The 2 points of the split pinnacle rise above the surface and have met with the unfortunate fate of being a dumping ground for gulls and boobies that leave deposits all over the rock. To be on a dive tender downwind of this site is a sensory experience not to be forgotten.

The topside scenery and scent, combined with the incredible underwater action, have led many to compare the scuba diving here to Wolf and Darwin islands in the Galapagos. For some, Roca Partida represents the best spot in the Revillagigedos Islands and is an essential part of the Socorro diving experience. It is a magnet for pelagics like wahoo, marlin, Giant Pacific manta rays, tuna and mackerel. Whitetip reef, scalloped hammerheads, silvertip sharks, Galapagos sharks and whale sharks are among the shark species seen here. Dolphins and humpback whales are also sighted some times.

There are vertical walls dropping down to 130+ft (40+m) and often current is present. However, it does not represent too much of a challenge to the experienced diver. The pinnacle itself is quite small and can be circumnavigated more than once if that is how you choose to dive it. Alternatively you can swim away from the walls to take get closer to the passing pelagic action and improve your chances of seeing the schooling hammerheads.

Few places in the world are quite as prolific for big marine life as Roca Partida and most divers relish the chance to drop in again and again into this incredible site. One dive could see you hanging in the blue or holding to the wall while checking out a school of hammerheads or thousands of yellowfin tuna.

Another dive could see you hugging the walls and swimming around the pinnacle from a deep starting point. This way you can keep an eye out for all the various shark species in the area. You can explore some small caves where whitetip sharks rest and lobsters lurk. In the shallows there are sometimes clouds of creolefish and jacks completely encircling the disorientated, enchanted divers. Being near the surface, you can watch the dramatic scenes overhead as waves and swell crash up against the rocks as you count down your safety stop.

Isla Clarion – About 240 miles west of Socorro lies another body of land, the second largest in the Revillagigedo Islands. Formerly named Santa Rosa, it was renamed Clarion Island after the American brig “Clarión” in the early 1800s. The Clarion Angelfish is named after Clarion Island but is seen all around Revillagigedos. As a juvenile it has bright blue bands that fade away as the fish matures. It is generally considered to be an endemic species to the Revillagigedos archipelago. Adults are commonly seen cleaning parasites from the giant manta rays.

Clarion is also home to silvertip and Galapagos shark nurseries and turtle nesting beaches. As such, it is no uncommon to see tiger sharks in the área.

Isla Clarion is little over five miles long and two miles wide. With three volcanic peaks, rolling landscape and rocky, perpendicular cliffs, it looks much like Socorro Island. There is a bay called Sulphur Bay on the south side of the island.



ITINERARY AND DIVE SITES

DAY 1: BOARD SHARKWATER AND DEPART SAN JOSE DEL CABO AROUND 1:00PM

DAY 2 & 3:

SAN BENEDICTO ISLAND

Coordinates: 19.309354, -110.809160

- Average depth: 25m
- Maximum depth: 30m

El Fondeadero is often dove first. It is generally pretty calm and not too deep so its where we will do our checkout dive. There are three large pinnacles full of lobster, fish, eels and occasionally shark.

THE BOILER

A large pinnacle rises to about 20 feet (6m) from the surface, so you can't see it from topside. The surf and swell running across the top sometimes making the water look like its boiling. The pinnacle is small enough to swim around during one dive and its very majestic looking from all angles. The bottom is at around 160' (50m) so getting your weights right and not being too heavy is very important. This area is a popular cleaning station for the giant Pacific manta. They gather here to be cleaned by the Clarion Angelfish.

It is usually just a matter of a few minutes in the water before the mantas started to show up. As they approach, they look you right in the eye, and you feel like you are communicating with them. In March, we may be fortunate enough to see a humpback whale underwater here, and maybe even a tiger shark.

THE CANYON

"El Canyon" is on the south end of the island. It was here that we may see many mantas, dolphins, Galapagos sharks, silky sharks, tiger sharks, and schools of hammerheads off the point.

DAY 4 & 5:

SOCORRO ISLAND

Coordinates: 18.8166634,-112.76666360000002

- Average depth: 25m
- Maximum depth: 40m

CABO PEARCE

Cabo Pearce is located on the east side of Socorro Island. You can expect to see dolphins, humpback whales and mantas.

PUNTA TOSCA

Punta Tosca is another site on Socorro Island. There are often playful, sociable dolphins here, and sometimes Silky sharks.

THE AQUARIUM

Usually in the afternoon dives, will be on the other side of the island at a spot called "The Aquarium". We may see whales just offshore while at this site.

DAY 6:

ROCA PARTIDA

Coordinates: 19.010361, -112.066033

- Average depth: 20m
- Maximum depth: 40m

Roca Partida is a pinnacle about 85 miles from San Benedicto Island. About 100' high and as long as 300 feet, the pinnacle is in the middle of nowhere and is a magnet to pelagics. This is where you can see many sharks, mantas, huge schools of fish, and whale sharks. Schools of hammerheads and silky sharks have been seen here, and many whitetip reef sharks resting on the ledges of the pinnacle. Humpback whale also hang out around Roca.

DAY 7:

CLARION ISLAND

Coordinates: 18.358938, -114.717845

- Average depth: 25
- Maximum depth: 40

Clarion Island is the second largest island in the Revillagigedo Archipelago. Located some 240 km west of Socorro Island, has three volcanic peaks with high cliffs. Diving in this island is similar to Socorro Island, with great presence of manta rays, dolphins, hammerhead sharks and many whitetip sharks resting on the ledges.

One of the unique features of this place is the constant presence of the clarion angelfish, named for being endemic to these islands. It is a beautiful fish that has bright blue stripes when young, that fade as the fish matures. It is very common to see adults specimens cleaning the manta rays visiting this island.



Land visit is possible at Clarion.

DAY 8:

ROCA PARTIDA

DAY 9:

SAN BENEDICTO

DAY 10: ARRIVE BACK INTO SAN JOSE DEL CABO

The above is subject to change depending on the conditions and group desires. If we decide to not go to Clarion, we will add another day at Socorro.