

Experience 4 different scuba diving profiles at the Frederiksted Pier.

end of the island, the 1,526-foot pier jets out into the warm Caribbean waters, creating a spectacular easy shore dive for new and experienced scuba divers alike. At an average depth of 25 feet, the pier allows for longer bottom times and offers something for everyone, but it's important to note scuba divers cannot dive the pier when a cruise ship or other large vessels are in port. Visibility is typically crystal clear, but there are rare days where the water can be a little cloudy, particularly near shore. Surface and bottom currents are generally weak to nonexistent.

The pier is supported by numerous rows of concrete pilings that are covered in a wide variety of sponges, soft and stony corals, tiny crabs, brittle stars, the occasional seahorse, and so much more. The pier overhead creates a shadow underneath and allows the sunlight to dance around the edges. Barracuda are often spotted a few feet below the surface hiding in the shadows, while large schools of reef fish move as one in the midwater column. Batfish and scorpionfish can often be found walking along the sandy bottom.

Hawksbill and green sea turtles both call the Frederiksted Pier home, and are frequently spotted grabbing a breath of air at the surface and gliding down to the seafloor.

Southern stingrays are another common sight and are easily spotted by the sand cloud they leave in their wake while hunting for prey buried in the sand. A single bar jack, that has turned a darker color, can often be spotted shadow-feeding above and behind a southern stingray, taking advantage of an easy meal the stingray has stirred up. The diversity of sea life at the pier is almost endless. Each and every dive is different and unique. Night dives at the pier are some of the best. Octopus and lobster frequently come out at night and can be found cruising along the sandy bottom in search of a meal. Schools of tarpon are often seen in the mid-water column at night, while spotted and green moray eels hunt reef fish in the rocks such as an isolated sergeant major.

The Frederiksted Pier is really four great dives in one location. The nearshore section, mid-pier, the three amigos, and the dolphins. There are also numerous dive shops along the block behind the pier that know the area well. Make sure to get local knowledge when diving a new area and stop by St. Croix Ultimate Blue Water Adventures to schedule a guided dive. The Sweet Bottom Dive Center at Cane Bay also frequently dives the Frederiksted Pier and can provide guided dives.

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Diving the Nearshore Section

The nearshore section is where the pier is connected and closest to shore. The typical entry is to perform a stride jump off the long 3-foot-high platform on the north side of the pier near the parking lot into roughly 15 feet of water. Concrete benches are available, so dive gear can be easily assembled and donned. Once in the water, surface kick to where the

pilings begin and descend. Taking an almost due west heading directly under the pier ensures easy navigation. Almost everything the pier has to offer can be spotted on this dive. This dive profile is out and back again, and the typical approach is to turn around with a little over half a tank of air remaining. On the way back explore the southern edge of the pier. At the rock jetty turn south and follow the large boulders around back east into shallow water and surface. Along the shore is a small rocky beach south of the pier parking lot in front of Strand Street. This area makes a great exit. Take caution while exiting the water as some of the rocks can be slippery. Once back on land, walk towards the wall that runs along the waterfront, and climb up a few cinderblock steps to the sidewalk.



Kick out and dive the Mid-Pier

Beginning a dive at the middle of the pier is a great way to explore more pilings and discover the additional sea life in water roughly 30 feet deep.

This dive profile begins with the same entry as the

Almost everything the pier has to offer can be spotted on this dive. This dive profile is out and back again, and the typical approach is to turn around with a little over half a tank of air remaining. Enter on the north side of the pier and exit at the rocky beach on the south side.

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📍 Grunts and Squirrelfish



📍 Mooring Dolphin



📍 Sergeant Majors and Grunts



📍 Green Sea Turtle



nearshore section. Enter the water by performing a stride jump off from the 3-foot-high platform on the north side of the pier near the parking lot. Once in the water, surface swim along the north side of the pier to about the halfway point of the pier and descend.

Weave in and around the pilings while following the pier to the west. Turn around with three-quarters of a tank remaining, and follow along the south side of the pier.

Keep an eye out in the sand for shards of broken pottery known locally as chaney. These pieces of pottery can often be found with intricate floral designs or beautiful patterns.

Getting out is the same as the nearshore section. Follow the rock jetty to the south and around to the east making an exit at the rocky beach south of the parking lot.

Descend down the Three Amigos

The Three Amigos are a trio of large pilings at the extreme end of the pier. Atlantic spadefish and the occasional permit can be found swimming in the blue water surrounding the pilings.

This dive profile is more intermediate to advanced and begins again with a stride jump at the 3-foot-high platform at the north side of the pier near the parking lot. It's only recommended for strong swimmers as a 500-yard surface swim is required to get out to the Three Amigos. The surface kick out pays off when you begin to descend along the three large pilings. Keep an eye out for pelagic fish on the way down to the bottom at roughly 90 feet.

Follow the pier almost due east as a reference. The bottom rises at a steady rate, and octopi are often seen in the rocks, coral, and debris scattered around the area. Although the dive starts deep, the average depth is around 30 feet. Explore all the pilings and keep a sharp eye out for seahorse clinging to the sponges and soft corals growing on the pilings.

Keep along the south side of the pier. After diving the entire length of the pier, follow the rock jetty to the south and around to the east and exit at the rocky beach south of the parking lot.




Explore the Dolphins

The Dolphins are a pair of free-standing concrete mooring dolphins south of the pier used by ships to tie off on.

They make for an excellent dive by themselves or as a quick stop at the end of a dive along the pier.

The Dolphins are home to all kinds of reef fish including porcupinefish, juvenile french

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📍 The Three Amigos



Atlantic Spadefish at The Three Amigos

angelfish, and queen angelfish. At night both spotted and spiny lobster can be found freely walking around the additional concrete rubble that lies around the dolphins.



Reef Fish



Octopus

Getting a glimpse of one of the dolphins is a nice way to top off any

dive at the pier. One of the two dolphins is close enough to the rocky jetty that it can typically be explored for a few minutes before heading towards the rocky beach to exit. To add it into a dive, simply look to the northwest while following the rock jetty to the south. The dolphin is right before the turn to the east toward the rocky beach.

Another great way to explore a dolphin at the end of a pier dive is to take a southeasterly heading before arriving at the rock jetty. The dolphin and some of the concrete debris around it can be found on this course after swimming along the sandy bottom roughly 50 yards.

Lastly, the dolphins can be both be a great dive by themselves. The best way to explore the dolphins is to enter the water at the rocky beach, surface swim out to the first dolphin, take a compass heading on the second dolphin, and descend. The second dolphin is in a southwest direction from the first. Concrete rubble along with a chess board lay in between them.

The Frederiksted Pier is an amazing dive site, is home to a wide diversity of sea life, and can be enjoyed by new divers and experts alike. There is something for everyone on this dive, but remember to always dive within the limits of your training and experience.