

Reefs

Praia da Rocha

This is probably the furthest reef to the north that we dive. Distance to Travel: 16km from Paindane Beach. Approximately a 40 minute boat ride. Depth: 10 meters to 15 meters. Bottom time: 50 minutes. Topography: This reef is made up of lots of huge boulders, all cut away on the bottom to form a maze of gullies and swim-throughs to the point where it resembles a grotto. A vast variety of soft coral can also be found on this reef. All the usual small Tropical Fish can be seen. This is an offshore reef and is therefore not generally affected by currents but can be affected by surge as the shore side of the reef is a rock face (as the name suggests "Beach of the Rocks"). It is therefore not dived with a large swell running. Degree of Difficulty: This is an easy dive and is suitable for all levels of experience. Especially suitable for those looking for a long, slow, gentle and interesting dive. Will also be of particular interest to the underwater photographer. Visibility: Ranges from 10m to 30m. General: This is a really slow and relaxing dive with lots and lots to see.

Manta Reef

Manta Reef named after the deep manta cleaning stations, is frequented by large mantas. Manta reef offers two distinct dive sites aptly named Manta Pinnacles, northern tip and Manta Canyons, southern tip of the reef. Sand sharks, the odd ragged tooth shark and rays lurk around the sandy fringes. Distance to travel about 14km and time of travel approximately 30 minutes. Visibility ranges from 10 to 30m. General: A gentle drift dive from North to South.

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Manta Pinnacles: Depth: 18 to 24 meters. Max: 24 meters. Bottom time: 32 minutes. Your dive begins with a negative entry to 18m on top of the reef and then a further drop-off to 24m into the middle of a small amphitheatre teeming with life, schools of Snappers and Goldies and up to three Spanish dancers have been located on a single dive.Â The dive progresses through a series of pinnacles before the first cleaning station is reached, a shallower (21m) sandy area called fishbowl.

Manta Canyon: Depth: 24 to 32 meters. Max 32 meters(close to the reef).Â Bottom time: 20 minutes. The dive begins with a negative entry to 24m on top of the reef and then a further drop-off to 32m into the canyon between the main reef and smaller elongated pinnacles with a gap between the two ofÂ about 1 to 1.5 meters. Beware the unwary diver as Scorpion fish here often position themselves against the sides of the canyon. The magnificent Triton shell can be found here as well.

At the cleaning stations Mantas circle overhead to be cleaned by Sergeant majors, Cleaner Wrasse and Butterfly fish. In good visibility the dives are amazing with upwards of ten Mantas circling overhead. Even in poor viz the sight of Mantas appearing from the haze above you is haunting and a moment to be cherished. At the end of the dive your ascent is

often accompanied by groups of inquisitive Red fang Triggerfish and Devil Rays wheeling about your safety stop. This dive is a must do when at Paindane. Because of the depth this is only suitable for advanced divers but is a favorite for people completing their advanced course or deep adventure dive. Ask about nitrox.

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Â Kingfisher

A much larger, deeper reef, broken up with large sand patches in between, approximately 8km from the launch site. Spectacular sites being Green Tree (25-40m), Ecstasy (25-30m) and Ougwest (19m to 24m). Giant morays hide in the caves and crevasses. Hundreds of snappers and triggerfish cover the reef like a shower of confetti and rise up from the reef to meet you! An unusual creature frequently found here is the Sea Apple, a large purple and yellow nudibranch-like animal with retractable gills. This is an excellent dive site for advanced divers. A perfectly planned dive profile will reward you with amazing sightings of mantas, marlin, sailfish and devil rays while drifting at your safety stop.

Jangamo Reef (Guinjata Bay)

Jangamo Bay Local Reef is located approximately 3km from the Paindane launch site and has 8 to 9 dive sites providing a variety of diving options at depths between 9 and 24m. A large reef about 600m to 800m long offering caves, gullies and drop-offs with several dive sites.

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Pao Rock, (16-21m) and Pinnacles are a macro photographer's dream with brightly coloured Nudibranchs, well camouflaged leaf fish and a variety of shrimp and a myriad of reef fishes. Caves, (9-12m) is an amphitheatre with swim-through cave that features a resident dragon moray, puffer fish, miniature Tobies as well as murex and conch shells. Devil's Peak, (12-18m) is an almost free standing rock with a swim-through and is home to Potato Bass, banded cleaner shrimp and frogfish. Characteristic of this reef, is the eerie sound coming from the nearby rocks, a distinct 'doeh, doeh, doeh, doeh' sound that is not just heard but also felt against the chest. Nemo's, Lobsterpot, Hardrock, Batfish Point and Tombstones to mention but a few. The place to see Nudibranchs, small fry, cuttle-fish, mantis shrimp, pipe fish, cleaner shrimp, sea moths, crocodile fish, scorpion fish, stone fish, turtles, white-tip reef sharks and a multitude of reef fish plus cowries and cone shells. Don't rush these dive sites, the smaller creatures are hard to find!

Paindane Reefs

Coral Gardens (inside edge) is a site perfect for snorkeling as well as beginner scuba diving. Depth ranges between 2-5m. Don't let the shallow depth fool you. Competent scuba divers have unreal dives here. Soft corals, fish and crustaceans abound. Nudibranchs that don't appear in any books, Durban dancer, banded coral and the not so often seen Marbled shrimps are all found here. This is the spot for the scientist and beginner alike.

All our pool scuba training is conducted in this tidal pool, safely in real conditions. The odd whale shark enters the protection of the inside edge to feed, to the delight of snorkellers and scuba divers alike. Even the majestic mantas come in here to give birth.

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Coral Gardens(outer edge) is a short swim away from the tip of the reef(towards the west) and takes you to the outer edge, starting at 6 m and dropping to 13m. A perfect amphitheatre provides sea-life out of this world. The soft corals are quite beautiful offering unbelievably good photographic opportunities. Blue spotted Rays and Guitar sharks are in abundance and lots of juvenile fish of all varieties darting about. Further out, approximately 100m beyond the tip of the reef, Sponges, is a reef aptly named for all the various types and colourful array of sponges found on this reef, starting at 13m and gradually dropping down to 19m as a broad flat reef, where it forms a drop-off to 24m. This wall is a photographers dream and is the beginning of Paindane Ledge which continues undisturbed for approximately 300m. To complete the ledge requires a second to third dive. It's important to dive this spot at the turn of the tide. Honeycomb and Geometric morays in abundance, Harlequin shrimp hiding in coral heads and Devil fire fish by the tens. Masses of fish live here as well as a good chance of finding the latest fishing lure and boat anchor that were fouled and had to be cut loose.

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The reef situated directly behind Paindane reef starts off at 16m and drops to 24m on the sand with lots of large boulders strewn about creating canyons and overhangs with lots of fish life abound. Conditions need to be good and is dived mainly at high tide to avoid the surges of shallower water. Zambezi and Black tip reef sharks have been found here with an unbelievable array of smaller creatures hiding behind the reefs out of the current. Swimming seawards we run down Angler's Alley.

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Obviously a favourite spot with the fishermen, hence its name. It's important to dive this spot as the tide begins to rise, letting the current do the work for you. Masses of fish live here as well as a good chance of finding the latest fishing lure. Swimming across this reef further seawards, brings you to Paindane Boulders which forms a drop-off from 22m to approximately 28m and further down to 35m to 40m in the same geometric layout as the visible reef.

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Home to Potato bass and game fish with the good chance of diving with Whale shark and Mantas. In the humpback whale season, June to October, there is a good chance of spotting the whales on a dive and it has happened where the whales circled a group of divers doing their deep and safety stops, a truly remarkable experience.

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Paindane Express is not for the fainthearted. Around the point and into the current we go - nautical mile in 30 minutes, no problem! This is game fish paradise with an unbelievable array of smaller creatures hiding behind the reefs out of the current. Potato bass the size of a small car patrol up and down. Sharks love it here, especially in the deeper areas " Zambezi, Tiger, Dusky and Black tip. Other unusual sightings, such as seahorses hanging onto the sea grass (if you can spot them). Harlequin shrimp hiding in coral heads and lion fish by the tens. It's not uncommon to see over 50 at a time. You need to be a competent diver to get value out of this dive. Buoyancy and control need to be spot on, the DM in sight at all times. You have been warned!

Island Rock

South of Paindane we have Island rock. This is a vastly different reef to anything else we have. Conditions need to be perfectly calm and normally dived at high tide. Depth: 12 to 15 meters. Max: 15 meters. Bottom time: 50 minutes.

Distance to travel about 7km and time of travel approximately 10 minutes. Visibility ranges from 10 to 30m. General: A gentle surge during the dive which becomes worse as conditions deteriorate. The shallow reef has been carved up into an amphitheatre with huge chunks of rocks offering amazing alleyways and swim-throughs. Whale sharks, Mantas and schools of Barracuda and Kingfish often glide up and down the reef. This is a perfect reef for juvenile nurseries and the magnificent Triton shell.

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The Crater (Ralph's Canyon)

A much deeper dive and favourite Blue and Black marlin fishing spot, approximately 18km south from the launch site. This is mainly a dive for the Deep speciality and Technical dive fraternity. Depths up to 49 metres have been explored with sheer cliff faces starting at 30metres on the sandy bottom and dropping straight down to 49 and some places to 61metres(unexplored). Green coral trees and whip coral exceeding 3 metres in length grow on the cliffs with game and bottom fish in abundance. The odd Zambezi shark, about 3 meters in length investigates divers to this area and Potato bass the size of a small car guarding their territory. Visibility ranges from 15m to 20m. Everything here is big! Unfortunately no Coelacanths were seen yet, but could well be around the next turn. This is a Tech diver's dream. Enquire about Nitrox and Trimix.