Bahamas

The Bahamas are an archipelagic state in the Atlantic Ocean. It consists of more than 700 islands, islets and cays. Only between 30 and 40 islands are inhabited. The Bimini District is the closest one to Florida, USA. The Gulf Stream runs between these two coasts and a great reef, the Florida Barrier Reef is formed.   
The biggest islands are New Providence, with the capital Nassau, Exuma, Eulethra, Grand Bahama, Abacos, Andros and San Salvador. The most people live on New Providence and Grand Bahama Island.

There are two ways to dive the Bahamas. You can choose an island and day dive from a resort, or you go on a liveaboard and dive the best of all. Island hopping is possible too. Every island has a public or private airstrip. Ferries run between the bigger islands and the more adventurous traveller can take the mail boat.

Since 2011, the Bahamas became a shark sanctuary. Commercial fishing of sharks is strictly forbidden so the 40+ species of sharks can breathe more easily now. The most common sharks are the Caribbean Reef Shark, Blacktip Reef Shark, Bull Shark, Tiger Shark, Lemon Shark, Hammerhead, Silky Shark, Nurse Shark and the Oceanic Whitetip.  
You can take a special Shark Dive trip when being on the Bahamas. All divers go and sit on the sand while a shark feeder chums the surrounding sharks. The animals can come -very- close. Bull sharks and Tiger sharks are apex predators. They are not always the friendliest creatures in the sea. Although there hasn’t been that many attacks in the Bahamas, some people still got killed. Shark chumming is potentially dangerous when you are not in a cage. So be aware and be careful.

Liveaboards will do shark dives during their trips. For day divers, there will be a shark spot around your chosen island. Shark Buoy at New Providence, Shark Rodeo at Walker's Cay, Abacos or Tiger Beach at Grand Bahama are just some examples.  
Oceanic Whitetips are found around Cat Island from April till end of May. Bimini has its Great Hammerheads from October till April with peak time in January and February.

The Bahamas also have some fun wrecks to dive on. Around New Providence, you can pretend to be James Bond and dive a tug boat and a Vulcan Bomber that have been used as props in the movies ‘Never Say Never’ and ‘Thunderball’.  
For Photographers, the Sapona (Bimini), the Hesperus and Sugar Wreck (Grand Bahama) are jewels. They are so shallow, you have an immense bottom time and great light interaction. Deeper wrecks are Theo’s Wreck (Grand Bahama), Comberbach (Long Island). At shipyard, Paradise Island, you can find 3 ships at once.

In a bay, west of Clarence Town on Long Island, Bahamas, you can find Dean’s Blue Hole. It is the second deepest blue hole in the world, going 202m/663ft down. Andros, on the other hand, has a biggest collection of blue holes all around the world. 178 sinkholes are inland, at 50 are in the ocean. They don’t go that deep but they are still spectacular.

You can dive the Bahamas the whole year round. June through October is hurricane season. Although the Bahamas are more northern, they can still be affected. Water temperature goes from 26C/79F in winter till 30C/86F in summer. Visibility is good the whole year round. It may be affected after a passing tropical storm though.