CUBA

The Republic of Cuba is the largest of all Caribbean islands. It is located there where the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean meet. It consists of mainland Cuba, Isla de la Juventud and some minor archipelagos.  
Cuba is still a socialist country. Because of its political views, not everybody is allowed to go. The USA has put up his embargo again, so Americans cannot visit. Really sad, Cuba is a great country with incredible people!

Because of all the little islands around the mainland, there are lots of places where you can go diving. They just aren’t all good. I dived around Trinidad and the Bay of Pigs. Don’t go there, there is nothing to see, the reef was dead and the dive centers rogue. Avoid Varadero too. That is just all-inclusive hotel diving.

A better place to go, is Maria La Gorda, on the most western point of Cuba. Apart from diving, there is nothing else to do there. Good the diving is really nice. The shallows don’t stretch far out into the sea. They immediately go down in steep walls and drop-offs. The bottom can go up to 1km/0.62mi underneath you. In the walls, you can find holes, tunnels and caves surrounded by beautiful gorgonians and an abundance of black coral!

Cayo Largo is a resort island, east of Isla de la Juventud. There are no Cubans living there, the whole island is made for tourists but mass-tourism is still far away. Around Cayo Largo, there are 32 dive spots over coral gardens, wrecks, next to walls and in some caves.

Cayo Largo is part of the Canarreos Archipelago, together with Isla de la Juventud, another good dive area. The only diving hotel on the island is El Colony. All dives leave from there. One of the old names for the island is “Island of Treasures”. Pirates used to roam around and lots of ships sank. Maybe you can still dig up a golden dubloon on one of the 56 dive sites around.

The best dive area of Cuba is the Jardines de la Reina. This archipelago is in the southwest part of Cuba, in the Camaguey province. Since the islands became a marine reserve, strict rules must be followed. There is only a certain number of divers allowed every year. The dive sites are still very virgin and are home to a big diversity in marine life. Different kinds of sharks, snappers and groupers are everywhere. There are canyons and caves, mangroves and big black coral gardens. From July till November, you can maybe dive with whale sharks… At this point, the diving is only possible from on the Avalon liveaboards. They are not cheap but you’ll get great quality diving. Save some money, and book your trip.

You can dive Cuba the whole year round, although some tropical storms can pass from August till October. Water temperature is fine, between 25C/77F in winter and 30C/86F. Visibility is always good.