



QUALITY SELECTS
DRESSEL DIVERS



Bikini Atoll Itinerary

The following is a sample itinerary of dive sites and wrecks we may visit during your liveboard safari with Master Liveboards in Bikini Atoll. We wish to show you the very best diving possible but a number of factors can determine where we visit. Weather, tides, currents and other factors play a part in the Cruise Director's decision of which route the yacht takes. Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time. The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best in offering diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

As most wrecks at Bikini Atoll are beyond recreational depth limits, this itinerary is recommended **only for technical divers** with previous wreck experience.

Your Cruise Director will schedule 2 dives per day. The diving day has a typical schedule as follows:

Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1

Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2

Snack, relaxation,

Dinner

Explosive history

In 1946, following the end of World War II, the United States gathered together a "mock" naval fleet in order to test the effects of atomic bomb blasts on a large naval fleet. They named it Operation Crossroads and designated Bikini Atoll to be one of the sites for the explosive tests, with the local inhabitants displaced to another atoll. More Operations followed suit; from land, on the reef, on the sea, from the air and underwater. Between 1946 and 1958, the United States tested a grand total of 67 nuclear weapons on the Marshall Islands, of which 'Castle Bravo' on Bikini Lagoon in 1954 is the best-known. This 15-megaton TNT hydrogen atomic bomb was a thousand times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It left a crater in the lagoon of 2 kilometres wide and 76 metres deep. Bikini Atoll was opened for diving in 1996, allowing divers to experience some of the most historic and unparalleled wreck diving in the world.

The unique shipwrecks of Bikini Atoll

After the Second World War, the USA collected a 'mock' naval fleet for the purpose of testing the impact of different atomic bombs on a large fleet. These nuclear bomb tests were performed in several remote locations in the South Pacific Ocean, known as the Pacific Proving Grounds. Bikini Atoll was appointed one of the designated testing areas within the Marshall Islands, where a grand total of 67 nuclear bombs have been detonated within the framework of Operation Crossroads and several other Operations.

Between 1946 and 1958, not less than 23 atomic bombs were tested at Bikini Atoll only, which resulted in a unique selection of shipwrecks consisting of war battleships, cruisers, and an aircraft carrier. In March 1954, the notorious dry fuel hydrogen bomb 'Castle Bravo' was detonated in Bikini. This bomb was the US' most powerful nuclear device ever; 1000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It left a crater of 2km wide and 76m deep in the lagoon of Bikini.

More than 60 years later, the shipwrecks remain equally as impressive while they have become home to many kinds of corals and fish species.

USS Saratoga

The signature dive of Bikini Lagoon: the USS Saratoga CV-3. This 270 metres (888ft) long and 29 metres (95ft) wide American aircraft carrier weighs 39,000 tons and rests in Bikini Lagoon at a depth of 52 meters. Her bridge is easily accessible at 18 metres depth, her flight deck at 28 metres, and the hanger for the Helldivers at 32 metres. These Helldivers and bombs are still on display complete with all dials and controls. Remarkable detail: the Japanese reported her sunk 7 times during World War II. The Saratoga did, however, suffer damage on multiple occasions during the war and was therefore chosen to be used as a testing target in Bikini

Nagato

This battleship was built for the Imperial Japanese Navy as the first super-dreadnought to mount 16-inch (406 mm) guns. With a cruising speed of 26.5 knots, this made her the Imperial Navy's flagship as well as one of the most powerful and versatile warships in the world at that time. She measures 221 metres (725ft) in length and 29 metres (95ft) wide and her crew used to comprise of 1734 men. After the Japanese surrender, the Nagato was seized, used for testing and sank during Operation Crossroads in July of 1946.

USS Arkansas

An American dreadnought, measuring 171 metres (562 ft) long and armed with twelve 12-inch guns and capable of a top speed of 20.5 knots. The USS Arkansas served in both World War I and World War II; escorting convoys in the Atlantic and bombarding shore targets during the invasions of Normandy, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. She was moored only 500 ft. away from the intended atomic bomb detonation in 1946 and was supposedly lifted up vertically within the blast column. She sank completely only 19 minutes after the blast, ending almost completely upside down on the sandy bottom at 55 metres depth.

USS Pilotfish

An American Balao-class submarine; she measures 95 metres (311 ft) in length and 8.3 metres (27 ft) wide and was previously used to perform lifeguard and offensive patrolling duty all over the Pacific. In 1946, the Baker underwater atomic bomb test compressed her hull and forced all the ledges and valves to open and made her sink completely.

USS Lamson

The American Mahan-class Destroyer ship appears almost like a pirate ship underwater. With her length of 104 metres, she might not be the biggest of the Bikini wrecks but nevertheless very interesting to explore as she features several guns, torpedoes, bombs and generally provides good access to divers in water with great visibility.

Prinz Eugen – Kwajalein Atoll

Being a war prize awarded to the USA by Britain after WW II resulted in the atomic fate for this German heavy cruiser. She survived the blasts of Operation Crossroads, even though she was already damaged, and she was towed to Kwajalein where she ultimately capsized and sank to her final resting place in December 1946. Nowadays, a part of the ship is still visible above water.

USS Anderson

The Sims-class destroyer of 106 metres (348ft.) long by 11 metres (36ft) wide was built in 1939. She served at different locations in World War II; she participated in fighting battles in the Atlantic and the Pacific using her machine guns, anti-aircraft missiles and torpedoes, taking down many enemy aircraft. USS Anderson also helped in anti-submarine warfare.

USS Apogon

A second submarine of the Balao-class that headed straight for Hawaii and the Marshall Islands after her launch in 1943. Patrolling designated areas in the South Pacific and attacking enemy (i.e. Japanese) ships were her duties. The Apogon lies

completely intact at a depth of 48 meters with an average depth of 43 metres. Explore the conning tower, viewing binoculars on the bridge, and propellers covered by red sponges.

USS Carlisle

A Gilliam-class attack support boat, 130 metres (426 ft) long and 18 metres (58 ft) wide that served as merchant vessel transporter within the US Navy in the Second World War. Finished and acquired by the Navy in 1944, she arrived late into the war and was assigned to transport operations; of which she only performed 3. Hence, she never participated in any combat situations. She sank in 1946 during the Operation Crossroads, resting upright in the sand at 51 metres depth and her deck at 40 metres.

Sakawa

The Japanese Agano-class light cruiser (162 metres, 532 ft long by 15 metres, 49 ft wide) was armed with 'second hand' guns previously fitted on other war ships. She was the only survivor of her class after the war and was surrendered to the United States in 1945 who used her for repatriation duties. She was heavily damaged by the atomic tests Able and Baker in 1946; everything after the bridge was squashed flat as if stepped on by a giant foot. She was positively re-identified after the atomic bomb blasts only in 1992.