



TEEN PROGRAM IN MEXICO MARINE CONSERVATION EXPEDITION



OVERVIEW

Join other teens between the ages of 15 and 17 from around the world to get a taste of what life might be like if you choose to pursue a career in marine conservation while experiencing the natural beauty of Mexico's Riviera Maya, home to the resort destination, Cancun. Earn a professional diving certificate, a key requirement for all marine biologists, while learning to dive in the warm waters of the Caribbean among the vibrant tropical marine life. Our team has successfully been operating ethical and responsible programs for under 18s since 2012. Since then, it has treated health and safety as a number one priority and takes extra measures for its under 18 programs. As such, it is also a British Standards 8848 compliant provider.

On this program teens will work with real marine conservationists learning about their ongoing projects. The specific projects teens observe, learn about, and participate in change over time, as the needs of the environment and the communities change, and as projects naturally change to accommodate the findings from new research.

Some of the projects teens might get involved include Coral Watch, a coral monitoring program set up by the University of Queensland. It allows recreational divers to monitor the health of corals and submit the data to an online platform thereby assisting researchers with monitoring the effects of environmental events including climate change on reefs around the world. They might also visit a laboratory where coral fragments are grown and then transplanted onto the reef to assist with reef recovery. Other projects include contributing to endangered sea turtle research by patrolling the beach recording the number of mother sea turtle tracks, nests created, and eggs laid and participating in plastic pollution research by collecting debris from local beaches and submitting a record of debris collected to the Ocean Conservancy, a US-based nonprofit that helps governments make decisions about environmental policies.

Visits to Mexico's famously magical cenotes and colossal Mayan ruins are also included. Throughout their stay, teens will be dining on Mexican cuisine and have a chance to practice their conversational Spanish. Teens with less time on their hands can also choose to book onto the program for one week. This allows them to complete volunteering projects included in the two-week program, but not the adventure activities. Although all teen participants are greeted by our staff at their arrival destination, flight chaperoning services are also available upon request. Chaperones provide on-flight accompaniment and in-airport assistance. To book this service please contact one of our enrollment managers.

Highlights

- Find out if marine biology is a career you might like to pursue.
- Get PADI Open Water Diver certified.
- Successfully complete this program and get a professional reference from your program manager. You'll also have the option of earning a certificate endorsed by the University of Richmond if you choose to complete our included online leadership course, which is valued at £295.
- Contribute to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, #14, Life Below Water.
- Experience the technicolour underwater landscapes of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef first-hand.
- Marvel at Mayan ruins and sample authentic Mexican flavours.
- Make new friends with teens from all four corners of the globe.

LIFE ON BASE

Live on the beach at our base which is situated just 80 metres from the Puerto Morelos Reef National Park and a 15-minute drive from downtown Puerto Morelos. One of the best-kept secrets in the Yucatán, the small town of Puerto Morelos is incredibly safe and has a laid-back vibe with a friendly and welcoming local community. There are no big resorts or casinos here.

Mexico, while culturally diverse, is also one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.

From mariachi bands to Mayan temples, Mexico is best known for being the birthplace of the iconic taco. Puerto Morelos is the oldest port community in the Mexican Caribbean. Home to the northernmost tip of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (the second

largest barrier reef in the world), Puerto Morelos is a spectacular diving location. You'll spot sea turtles and various rays – from the famous Caribbean stingray to the spotted eagle ray. If mammals are more your thing, west Indian Manatees have been seen and a pod of bottlenose dolphins are frequent visitors. The mangroves offer the chance to see a variety of animals and waterbirds, including protected species like the American crocodile.

Your typical day includes diving, lab work, training on base, beach cleanups, and community work. Rounded off with evening debriefs followed by dinner and time to relax – taking in a beautiful sunset, and sharing stories with your fellow team members.

ACCOMMODATION

You will live in shared dorm-style accommodation, with four beds per room, giving you the perfect opportunity to connect. The accommodation features shared facilities such as a communal kitchen, work area, and living space. There is bottled water available for cooking and drinking. We aim to leave as small a footprint as possible on the environment, which means we keep facilities basic. The team loves to play volleyball on the beach. If you ever feel the need for a change of scenery, you can quickly get to the other side of town on foot.

Miguel, the Program Manager, has three dogs that occasionally join him when he visits the base. If you're lucky, you may even get to spot the curious coati. Similar to a raccoon, this adorable animal is the unofficial base mascot and organic waste composter.

Your team shares base duties, including cooking, cleaning, gear and equipment maintenance, and other chores. Curfew is at 11 pm every day.

MEALS

You'll get the opportunity to prepare breakfast in groups from our choice of cereals, pancakes, eggs, and porridge. Lunch and dinner will be prepared for you during workdays. On weekends, you'll cook your own meals.

This is an excellent opportunity to experience the diverse and authentic Mexican cuisine while learning more about the culture of the local people. Your meals will be influenced by the local cuisine and traditional Mexican ingredients. It primarily consists of a vegetarian diet, with meat available about once a week. Lunch usually consists of beans, vegetables and pasta, and a typical evening meal includes lentils, pasta, beans, rice and vegetables.

Visiting local restaurants is also an option, at your own cost, during weekends. Restaurants and supermarkets are conveniently located within walking distance of the base.

COMMUNICATION

There's limited access to long-distance communication when you're on base, so make sure your friends and family know how often they can expect to hear from you. There is Wi-Fi available for you to use for your projects and work. Mobile phone reception is available on base, although it can be poor at times. It's possible to buy a Mexican SIM card and phone credit using your unlocked cellphone at the airport. Internet connection is available at the base. Alternatively, you can purchase a pocket WiFi device which can be topped up with mobile internet. For peace of mind, there is a 24-hour emergency desk that loved ones can use to contact you in case of emergency.

CLIMATE

Puerto Morelos is on the Riviera Maya, known for its tropical climate. The ocean is rather warm, which makes it perfect for swimming, paddle boarding, snorkeling, and diving. The temperature remains fairly constant throughout the year, roughly 26°C or 80°F.

TRANSPORTATION

Puerto Morelos is on the Riviera Maya, which is known for its tropical climate. The temperature remains relatively constant throughout the year – roughly 26°C (80°F). This means that it's hot all year round, even during the muggy, rainy season between May and October. Between November and April, the dry season is more pleasant as temperatures drop slightly in the evenings.

It's relatively windy, and the weather can be pretty unpredictable. Be aware that hurricane season is between July to November. The ocean is relatively warm, perfect for swimming, paddleboarding, diving and snorkelling. Diving is weather-dependent, and sometimes, unfortunately, the boats can't go out. There are, however, other land activities to keep you entertained.



ITINERARY

Day 1

Say hola! to the Mexican Caribbean and your fellow teen explorers! Settle in at our base and enjoy delicious traditional Mexican cuisine together.

Day 2

Let the dive training begin! Kick things off by completing the knowledge review part of your PADI Open Water Diver or Advanced Open Water course.

Day 3

Finish off the last bit of dive theory, and meet your awesome dive instructors! Do some exercises together to prepare you for tomorrow's pool sesh.

Day 4

Suit up in your diving gear to practice skills like buoyancy and underwater breathing in the pool, before experiencing the real deal tomorrow.

Day 5

Ready for an epic day of diving? Explore the majestic underwater world of the famous Mesoamerican Barrier Reef – the second largest in the world!