



PADI

SEEK ADVENTURE.
SAVE THE OCEAN.™

Free Beginner's Guide to Scuba Diving

What it feels like, where to start and how
to take your first breaths underwater.

30M+

**PADI CERTIFICATIONS
ISSUED WORLDWIDE**

Contents

Why People Fall in Love With Diving **3**

Your First Breath Underwater **4**

Can Anyone Learn? **5**

How the Open Water Diver Course Works **6**

What You'll Learn **7**

How Long Does It Take? **8**

What Does It Cost? **9**

How To Choose the Right Dive Center for You **10**

Let's Talk About What You're Worried About **11**

Where Can Diving Take You? **12**

Why People Fall in Love With Diving

Scuba diving isn't just another hobby; it completely changes how you experience the world. When you become a diver, you unlock access to:

- The other 70% of our ocean planet
- Incredible marine life encounters
- Epic travel experiences
- A global community of ocean lovers
- Opportunities to protect the ocean through conservation

Many divers say their certification changed their lives, not because they expected it to, but because the underwater world gives you a perspective you can't find anywhere else.

"The ocean has a way of helping you slow down."



Your First Breath Underwater

Let's address the big question:

What does scuba diving actually feel like?

At first? It's a little strange. Then? Completely incredible.

Most new divers feel nervous before their first descent. That's normal. But once you take your first breath underwater, everything changes.

You'll feel:

- Weightless
- Full of wonder
- Disconnected from everyday stress

You'll hear your breathing.

You'll move slowly through the water.

You'll notice fish, coral and marine life in a way you never could from the surface.

For many people, it's the first time they are fully present in the moment.

Not ready to commit yet?

[Try a Discover Scuba® Diving experience first.](#)

"I forgot everything I was nervous about the moment I took my first breath underwater." ~PADI Diver Alex P.



Can Anyone Learn?

Yes – almost everyone can learn to dive!

You do NOT need to be an athlete to become a diver.

You simply need to:

- Be at least 10 years old
- Be comfortable in the water
- Be able to swim 200 yards/meters (or 300 yards/meters using mask, fins and snorkel)
- Be able to float or tread water for 10 minutes

That's it.

What About Medical Conditions?

All student divers complete a basic medical questionnaire before beginning training.

Certain medical conditions may require physician approval, but many people with prior health concerns can still dive safely.

Adaptive Diving Opportunities

People with physical disabilities regularly become certified divers, and adaptive teaching techniques allow more people than ever to experience the underwater world.

If you're unsure, contact a local PADI Dive Center.



How the Open Water Diver Course Works

You can earn your certification in 3 simple steps.

Step 1: Learn the basics online

Complete PADI eLearning™ from your phone or computer.

You'll learn:

- Scuba fundamentals
- Equipment basics
- Safety procedures
- Dive planning essentials

Complete it at your own pace.

Average completion time: **8 hours**

Step 2: Practice in shallow water

Head to a pool or confined water environment with your instructor.

You'll practice:

- Breathing underwater
- Clearing your mask
- Buoyancy control
- Basic safety skills

Average completion time: **2 days**

Step 3: Complete four open water dives

Now for the fun part!

You'll complete four certification dives in:

- The ocean
- A lake
- A quarry
- Or another open water environment

Once complete? You're officially a certified diver!

Average completion time: **2 days**

What You'll Learn

The PADI Open Water Diver course is designed to make you feel confident in the water.

After you earn your scuba certification, you'll know how to:

- Set up scuba equipment
- Descend and ascend safely
- Communicate underwater
- Maintain buoyancy
- Clear water from your mask
- Monitor your air supply
- Dive responsibly around marine life
- Plan safe dives with a buddy

By the end of your course, these skills begin feeling second nature.

“You don't need to be fearless; you just need to be curious enough to try.”

~James Clear



How Long Does It Take?

Faster Than You Think

You can become certified in as little as **4 days...**

...or take up to one year to complete your certification.

It's entirely up to you.

OPTION 1

Do everything close to home.

OPTION 2

Start at home and finish on vacation.

OPTION 3

Complete your full certification while traveling.



What Does It Cost?

Less Than You Think

Learning to dive costs about the same as:

- A full day of surfing lessons
- Three hours of private golf lessons
- One amazing night out

What's typically included:

- Online learning materials
(Can be purchased separately on [padi.com](https://www.padi.com))
- Instructor training
- Four dives
- A PADI eCard™

Additional costs may include:

- Gear rental
- Boat fees
- Personal equipment purchases

Most divers purchase their own:

- Mask
- Fins
- Snorkel

Your local dive shop can help explain exactly what's included.



How To Choose the Right Dive Center for You

What to look for:

- Clear communication
- Safety first
- Instructor presence
- Small group sizes
- Transparent details
- Good organization

Insider Tips

- Dive early in the morning for better conditions
- Choose smaller groups
- Complete your theory before your in-water sessions
- Learn at your own pace
- Choose comfort over popularity
- Relax and enjoy yourself

You can [find a PADI Dive Center here.](#)



Let's Talk About What You're Worried About

"What if I run out of air?"

Your equipment tracks your air supply, and your instructor will teach you exactly how to manage it safely.

"What about sharks?"

Shark incidents are extremely rare. Most shark encounters are peaceful, unforgettable experiences.

"What if my ears hurt?"

Your instructor will teach you simple techniques to equalize pressure.

"What if I feel nervous?"

That's incredibly common. Great instructors help you move at your own pace.

"Am I too old?"

Absolutely not. People learn to dive at all ages.

"Everyone feels nervous before their first dive. That's normal."

~PADI Instructor Chris R.



Where Can Diving Take You?

Your Open Water Diver certification unlocks incredible adventures around the world.

With your PADI cert card, you can dive:

- [Coral reefs](#)
- [Shipwrecks](#)
- [Cenotes](#)
- [Kelp forests](#)
- [Drift dives](#)
- [Sea turtle dives](#)
- [Night dives](#)

You can also continue your education with:

- [Advanced Open Water Diver](#)
- [Rescue Diver](#)
- [Specialty courses](#)
- [Conservation-focused programs](#)

Some divers even turn diving into careers.

[Learn more about going Pro here.](#)



Ready To Breathe Underwater

With 6,600+ PADI Dive Centers in 184 countries
become part of a global community of divers
exploring and protecting our blue planet.

Your adventure starts now.



PADI

SEEK ADVENTURE.
SAVE THE OCEAN.™

