

Discover Scuba Diving

By Maxine

Going back seven years, I didn't even know how to snorkel and if someone would have suggested that a few years later I would be a PADI Advanced Open Water diver with over 100 dives, I would have thought it impossible. My advice to anyone would be to 'Never, say never' and if you are very nervous about Scuba Diving the way I was, take heart as if I can do it anyone can!

[Snorkeling](#) does help, being comfortable in water and confident of your own ability in the open water is also a key ingredient - a PADI Discover Scuba Diving course is the natural progression from snorkeling. Many people don't realize that you can do this perfect introduction to Scuba Diving in only one day and think that you have to do a four day PADI Open Water Certification course, not always possible on holiday, especially if your partner prefers to surf shopping malls rather than the ocean waves.

On the morning of my [PADI Discover Scuba Diving Course](#), I felt a mixture of excitement and apprehension. I was surprised that I was the only student but not too concerned as you can't knock personal tuition. My PADI Scuba Diving Instructor, Derek, geared me up and I clumsily walked, donning my heavy equipment, from the white sandy beach in to a shallow area of clear turquoise water. I remember learning a couple of simple skills, clearing my ears, recovering my regulator and clearing my mask of water – not the nicest experience but one I eventually got used to. Derek then asked if I was ready to begin the dive and then gently took my hand.....

My first thought was ' Yes, I can still breath', the second thought was how loud my breathing was....then I got distracted as Derek pointed out a small colourful bug like creature that I later learned was a nudibranch. We finned along until we came to a wall and I remember seeing schools of brightly coloured neon fish, sergeant majors, lion fish, oriental sweetlips, parrot fish, moray eels, trigger fish and napoleon wrasse, many things that I was familiar with during my years of snorkeling, only this time I was right up close and personal with them. I was still nervous at this stage though but at the same time really pleased with myself that I had finally taken the plunge.

We were now only in a few meters of water and nearing the end of the dive; Derek was busy writing fish names on his slate for me when he looked up and excitedly pointed to the surface. I followed the direction of his finger and gasped as a huge black ray with flaps on its front swam overhead with the sun shining directly above him – my first ever Manta Ray –not bad for a Discover Scuba Diver!

We surfaced a few minutes later and Derek mentioned that it was rare to get a Manta on the house reef and how lucky I was, the perfect thing to say to any new student after their first ever dive. Back at the Scuba Diving lodge he got all the fish books out and carefully pointed out all the things I'd seen on my dive so that I could record them in my new log book; this is something I still enjoy now, it's just part of my diving day and I never miss a detail.

Back at the hotel, my friend, a Rescue Diver with fifteen years diving experience, was eagerly waiting on the balcony for my return and keen to know how my first ever dive experience had been. 'It was good' I said, "I saw a Manta Ray'. He stared at me agitated and said 'You're' kidding me right! You saw a Manta Ray?' How was I supposed to know that in fifteen years of diving he'd never seen one!