



A DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF CORAL

02

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE OUR CORAL REEF SYSTEMS HOW YOU CAN HELP THEM THRIVE WHILST DIVING

CORAL REEFS are found all over the world. But sadly, many are at risk of destruction due to a number of easily avoidable issues. We give you some easy steps to follow when you are diving, exploring and experiencing these wonderful habitats to ensure our **CORAL REEFS** can continue to thrive.

1. BOOK YOUR DIVE WITH AN ACCREDITED AGENCY (SUCH AS GREEN FINS)

It's important to plan ahead and book a dive or snorkel trip with a reputable organisation. All members of the Green Fins initiative (which is coordinated internationally in partnership with the UN Environment Program) adhere to the Green Fins Code of Conduct which has 15 stated environmental practices designed to protect corals and marine life.

2. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE PACKING LIST

Ahead of your trip, think about what you can pack that will avoid damaging **CORAL REEFS** with harsh chemicals, such as reef-safe shampoos, soaps and sunscreens. You can also reduce the need for single-use plastic items by packing your own reusable water bottle and cutlery.

3. DO NOT STEP ON CORAL REEFS

It may seem obvious, but it's incredibly important not to step on, or touch the **CORAL REEFS**. It's crucial to remember that corals are animals, and human interaction can damage or even kill them.

4. NEVER LITTER

Litter is one of the biggest polluters of the ocean and is harmful to all marine species, both big and small. If your dive operator does not have a bin on board, make sure to take all litter home with you so it doesn't accidentally end up being blown into the ocean where it might harm **CORAL REEFS** or be digested by fish.

5. DO NOT STIR THE SEDIMENT

Stirring the sediment can smother corals, and this means that they are unable to photosynthesise. This can cause disease. Be mindful of your fins, and avoid disrupting the sand.

6. MAKE A DONATION

Get involved and make a donation to an organisation dedicated to getting more and more dive and snorkel operators accredited. Increasing knowledge and the capacity of operators to help prevent **CORAL REEF** damage is vital.

7. DO NOT FEED THE FISH

Feeding fish disrupts the natural ecosystem. Fed fish are more vulnerable to predators, and more likely to leave their nests empty. Admire fish from afar and leave them to feed from their natural food sources.

8. NEVER BUY CORAL SOUVENIRS

Coral and other marine life souvenirs have been taken from their natural habitat and this has disrupted the environment. Even empty shells play an important part in the ecosystem, so please don't take anything from the ocean or **CORAL REEFS** (whether dead or alive). Support local tourism and purchase sustainable gifts instead.

9. LEAVE A POSITIVE REVIEW

If your dive operator was environmentally conscious, leave a review of your experience online or tip your guide. Your review will help others find out about your positive experience, and make them more likely to also book with an operator who is mindful of the impact of its operations on marine life and **CORAL REEFS**.

10. ALWAYS REMEMBER TO 'TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES AND LEAVE NOTHING BUT BUBBLES'

Scuba diving is an unforgettable experience. Enjoy your time under water, and leave behind an environment that others can enjoy too.

Information sourced from content at <https://reef-world.org/blog/surprising-coral-facts>