



Georgia Aquarium Whale Shark Expedition August 2010

Join Georgia Aquarium on its second whale shark eco-tour to the beautiful waters of the Gulf of Mexico! This summer, the Aquarium will take an intimate group of individuals on a relaxing trip to Mexico for an exclusive opportunity to see Georgia Aquarium researchers at work and enjoy special animal encounters. The expedition will be guided by the Aquarium's Lead Researcher, Dr. Al Dove and VP of Development and Membership, Kristie Cobb Hacke.



Since 2004, a team of Georgia Aquarium researchers have been working off the coast of Mexico to study whale sharks as part of Project Domino, a collaboration of Georgia Aquarium staff and scientists, Mote Marine Laboratory scientists and Mexican researchers. This work and funding of the Georgia Aquarium in Mexico is just one of many ways the Aquarium is working to protect and expand the scientific understanding of aquatic animals in their native habitats. Now, five years since the project began, the Aquarium invites you to join us on our annual shark expedition.

Our experience will begin in Atlanta, where we will get up close and personal with the Aquarium's own whale sharks. As the only facility outside of Asia to house whale sharks, Georgia Aquarium will allow you to take part in our Journey with Giants program, where you can swim in the largest exhibit at Georgia Aquarium. While at the Aquarium, you will receive a special Behind the Scenes Tour detailing how we care for our whale sharks, what we have learned since they arrived at the Aquarium and how we strive to provide them the best care in the world. That evening you can rest and prepare for the adventure ahead.

The next morning, we will depart for Cancun, Mexico. Upon arrival, we will transfer to Chiquila, a very small Mayan town located on the northeast coastline of the Yucatan peninsula. From the pier we will be transported by boat to Isla Holbox. With only 1,600 inhabitants, Isla Holbox keeps its typical fishermen village charm with sand roads, small houses under palm trees and some of

the most beautiful beaches around. As a small, almost unspoiled island, Isla Holbox is a beautifully preserved place with tons of shells on the beach, friendly people and a simple lifestyle. The descendants of the original eight families still live on the island.

While on Isla Holbox, our accommodations will be at Villas Paraiso del Mar. This ideal refuge offers crystal-clear waters, warmed by the heat of the sun, where you can go on relaxing walks along a beach that stretches for almost 20 miles. Relax amongst unspoiled nature and local fauna such as dolphins, flamingos, pelicans and turtles.

Located right on the beach in Holbox Island, an ecological destination in the north of the Yucatan Peninsula, Villas Paraiso del Mar offers guests a clear view of sand, surf and sunset. This enchanting hotel features a harmonious blend of rustic and traditional elements of Caribbean and native architecture that fits the modern concepts of comfort, organized in accordance with the energy-flow principles of Feng Shui.

Villas Paraiso del Mar offers a total of 38 Suites located in one and two-story bungalows. The property features a tropical swimming pool and a pool-side bar. Standard guestroom amenities include private bath with shower and hairdryer, air conditioning, direct-dial telephone, color TV via satellite, mini-bar, safe deposit box and balcony or terrace. That evening, we will meet the team that is conducting field work and learn about their findings from the last several years.



You will be able to ask questions about their research, the animal's habitats and the goal of their work. The team will include a variety of specialized researchers including nutritionists, shark specialists, and local partners from the National Commission for Natural Protected Areas in Mexico (CONANP).



Early the next morning, we will depart by boat for the highlight of the trip to tour the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, where scientists have found the world's largest aggregation of whale sharks. The tour starts with an early morning coffee reception where we will review the regulations associated with our activities in protected waters. Along the ride to the whale shark feeding area

we will be on the lookout for manta rays and other Caribbean animals in their natural environment. This five to six hour tour includes a boat guide, soft drinks, snorkeling gear and snacks. You can use the afternoon to relax or explore the natural beauties of this idyllic Caribbean island with white sand beaches. This evening you will have the opportunity to experience Holbox on your own for dinner. We recommend the Edelnys restaurant to savor a fresh lobster pizza and then get a good night's rest. Dinner may end up being a group or individual activity, the mood of the day and the whims of the group will determine the schedule.



On our third day, you will receive another opportunity to observe both the whale sharks and our researchers in the field.

On our fourth day in Mexico, you will have a second opportunity to swim with the whale sharks and other natural beauties for our final whale shark activity. That afternoon we will depart to Cancun at approximately 1:30 p.m. It is a few hours by private bus to the pier in the Cancun marina. From the pier a private boat will take us directly to the Hotel Villa Rolandi at Isla Mujeres. This evening we will enjoy dinner as a group at the hotel's restaurant, the Casa Rolandi, which is synonymous with gourmet tradition in Cancun and Isla Mujeres.

Our accommodations will be at the Hotel Villa Rolandi, which is located on the beach of Isla Mujeres. The hotel overlooks the impressive Caribbean Sea and has a breathtaking view of Cancun, especially at night with the mainland lights. The Hotel Villa Rolandi is a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World and features oceanfront Junior Suites with private marbled bathrooms, plus private balconies featuring outdoor Jacuzzis.



The five-star amenities include a pool, tour desk, medical services, currency exchange, bar and full service restaurant.



The next morning we will experience a “Dolphin Royal Swim” encounter where we will learn about dolphins’ great intelligence and friendliness while in the natural paradise of Isla Mujeres. We will share many activities with our new dolphin friends, who will greet you with a handshake and a kiss in the pristine and calm ocean waters surrounding Isla Mujeres. Activities may also include a manatee and sea lion encounter, the head veterinarian will offer his expertise and the day’s activities will result in fun for all.

Isla Mujeres is a tiny island just miles away from Cancun but worlds apart. The island has kept its typical Caribbean look and has not been affected by the growth of Cancun. Isla Mujeres, which means Isle of Women, has a wonderful shopping district offering handmade gifts and souvenirs. You can use the afternoon to explore the island by bike or tour the downtown area.

On our sixth morning in Mexico we will transfer to the Cancun International Airport for departure.



Georgia Aquarium Whale Shark Experience Itinerary – August 2010

Day Itinerary

8/19 Georgia Aquarium Experience

Afternoon meeting at Georgia Aquarium, Journey with Giants swim experience and special research tour. Guests depart for their own home - accommodations available upon request.

8/20 Depart Atlanta – Arrive in Cancun – Transfer to Holbox

Departure from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport with check-in assistance. Accommodations at the Villas Paraiso del Mar. Dinner with research team included.

8/21 Swim with Whale Sharks and Boat Tour

Early morning boat tour departure into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to observe the great whale shark. Tour will last 5-6 hours and includes: boat, guide, soft drinks, snorkeling gear and snacks. Dinner and afternoon on your own.

8/22 Swim with Whale Sharks and Boat Tour

Early morning tour boat departure into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to observe the great whale shark. Tour will last 5-6 hours and includes: boat, guide, soft drinks, snorkeling gear and snacks. Dinner and afternoon on your own.

8/23 Swim with Whale Sharks and Boat Tour – Afternoon transfer to Cancun

Early morning tour boat departure into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to observe the great whale shark. Tour will last 5-6 hours and includes: boat, guide, soft drinks, snorkeling gear and snacks. Afternoon transfer to Isla Mujeres and accommodations at the Villa Rolandi. Group dinner at the Casa Rolandi included.

8/24 Isla Mujeres Dolphin Discovery

Morning dolphin encounter. Afternoon on your own to explore Isla Mujeres. Dinner on your own.

8/25 Isla Mujeres – transfer to Cancun Airport, depart Cancun

Transfer to Cancun's International Airport. Check-in assistance.

Prices and Lodging

Price per person includes airfare on AirTran Airways and all items listed below in the "Price Includes" section

Single Occupancy	\$5,195
Double Occupancy	\$4,125
Triple Occupancy	\$4,000

Lodging by Location

Isla Mujeres	Villa Rolandi	Category 5 Property
Holbox	Villas Paraiso del Mar	Category 5 Property

Lodging subject to modification within the same hotel class

Price Includes:

- Journey with Gentle Giants swim program at Georgia Aquarium, private behind the scenes tour, lunch and pre-trip program;
- Roundtrip group airfare from Atlanta to Cancun on AirTran Airways;
- Lodging as indicated above ;
- All on ground transportation in Mexico for scheduled excursions;
- Water available in the vehicle during travel;
- Three 5-hour boat tours with whale shark snorkeling hosted by English-speaking guide and Aquarium staffer, and light lunch with drinks will be served on the boat;
- Dolphin encounter with English-speaking guide and Dolphin Discovery animal experience
- Five breakfasts (daily);
- Two main dinners; dinner with the whale shark researchers on the first evening in Holbox and dinner one evening in Isla Mujeres; and
- Local and federal taxes.

Price does not include:

- Any personal expenses;
- Any drink or beverage except for those detailed above and included in the dinner in Holbox;
- Any excursion or visit not mentioned above; and
- Anything not mentioned in the price includes paragraph.

Program Deposits and Payments

- A deposit of \$500 per person is required within 7 business days of your reservation.
- The full payment for the trip is due by June 4th 2010.
- The deposit is non-refundable. The payment for the trip is non-refundable unless a replacement is located.

To reserve your spot or if you have questions please contact Kristie Cobb Hacke at (404) 581-4130 or kcobb@georgiaaquarium.org.

For complete details about the Georgia Aquarium Whale Shark Conservation efforts visit <http://www.georgiaaquarium.org/conservation/whalesharkprogram.aspx>.

* Proceeds benefit Georgia Aquarium's whale shark conservation initiatives. A portion of the price is tax-deductible. The Aquarium will provide a tax letter for your records. Please consult your tax advisor for details. Prices are valid for the specified dates and for a minimum of 8 guests and a maximum of 12.



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