

The changing face of dive travel

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Diveplanit Travel

Who is Diveplanit?

- Diveplanit came into being because two people with a passion for diving and marine conservation met.
- And we started going on diving holidays.



Creating ocean advocates

- We had the idea that if we could make it easier for people to dive...
- ...logically more people would do it.
- And the more people we can get underwater, surely the more ocean advocates we would create.
- Makes sense, right?

What is Diveplanit Travel?

- So we started a blog
- Which became an online dive travel guide
- And an iPhone app
- Eventually grew into dive travel agency
- Dive travel marketing consultancy
- Underlying all of this – we are ocean advocates

How has dive travel changed?

- Diving wasn't always linked to travel.
- It wasn't even about marine life.

“fish was something that went with chips”

- It started as an adventure activity
- It was male dominated

As we become more urbanised, our desire for nature-based experiences increases.



- Divers are always looking for the next amazing underwater experience.



We're looking for marine life.



Pristine underwater landscapes.



But mostly – an abundance of life



Of all shapes and
sizes.



Our amazing underwater world

- Once we see these incredible pristine reefs, majestic creatures – tiny creatures, we want to look after it.
- We want it to last forever.
- But it won't. It hasn't.



Sometimes we love it too much





Our plastic addiction destroys it.



Or it's simply fished to extinction



Where to next?

- More and more remote locations.
- The dive cruise industry is booming
- But mainly...
- Divers go to places they know are looked after:
- Destinations with Marine Protected Areas.
- Dive Resorts that operate sustainably.
- And they want an intimate experience.





Case Study: Sipadan, Malaysia



"Now we have found an untouched piece of art" Jacques Cousteau, 1989



Fast forward 15 years...

- Loved almost to death.
- It was almost completely destroyed by tourism. More resort than island, reef all but destroyed, turtle nesting grounds built over.
- The government stepped in, removed the resort and slapped restrictions on dive operators. 100 divers per day are issued a permit.

The story in 2018

- Sipadan is now reborn as an eco-tourism success story.
- Dive holidays have to be booked months in advance to secure Sipadan permits.
- Occupancy is higher than most other diving destinations.

A model for the future

Scuba Junkies: the definition of sustainable, responsible tourism.

- Conservation programs to protect turtles and sharks.
- Support local communities – don't sell snack foods or soft drinks.
- Educate local communities about conservation.
- Manage village waste to prevent it entering the sea.
- Campaign to increase the size of the marine reserve.

A model for the future

- Most importantly:
- They don't serve seafood – because seafood is not yet sustainable in Borneo.
- And divers FLOCK here.
- Just like they flock to other marine protected areas.



Palau

World's first shark reserve – now
80% of waters a marine reserve

Banned sunscreen

Introduced Pledge for visitors

Maldives – no nets allowed



“I have been diving 51 years & in most places the wildlife & corals have decreased. However, the Marine Protected areas of the Philippines are thriving!”



© Lynn Turkin



Fiji – Shark Reef marine reserve

A large school of fish, possibly mackerels, is swimming in a deep blue ocean. They are positioned above a vibrant coral reef that features various types of coral, including prominent red and orange branching corals. The fish are silvery with a hint of blue, and their movement creates a sense of dynamic energy. The background is a deep, dark blue, suggesting the depth of the water.

Thailand – strict fishing laws,
marine park permits and
island closures

*With the new regulations in place we are on fast track to restoring the dive sites of Andaman Sea. Divers can already see more marine life, more pelagic fish and less frequented beaches.”
Holger Schwab, Sea Bees Diving.*



Marine Protected Areas & Ocean Guardians

- Only 3.5% of oceans are protected
- All marine protected areas are diving MECCAS.
- If you want to attract more *better quality* dive tourists, protect your part of the ocean.
- And communicate that to your guests.
- Dive operators need to be seen as Ocean Guardians.
- Eco Tourism needs to become the norm for Tourism.



Credit: Waitt Foundation / Waitt Institute #Protect30by3030