

WALL DIVING BONANZA

Few destinations in the world, not to mention the Caribbean, can offer the near limitless virgin wall diving of Belize. With its multiple offshore atolls, Belize boasts the largest barrier reef in the Caribbean Basin. A possible geologic explanation regarding the existence of such dramatically sheer undercut walls may be explained by a series of slip strike faults which run nearly parallel to Ambergris Cay, Belize's most prominent and most visited barrier island, with each landmass or block slipping seaward. Today's modern charts clearly depict the first of these being Ambergris Cay, the second Turneffe Atoll and the third Glovers and Lighthouse Reef Atolls.

Through geologic time these atolls have remained above water solely due to the corals, which adorn their surfaces growth ability. As the landmass along the fault line slips downward, the coral atop the structure must grow at a near equal rate upward for the atoll to remain a living reef system. This phenomena has lead to the common deep drop offs along all the atolls, with many of these fault escarpments or walls plunging past 10,000 feet.

The invertebrate marine life along these walls is second to none. Exquisitely colored sponges, corals and massive gorgonians stipple these breathtaking vertical seascapes. It is also common to encounter large snapper and grouper, as well as lobsters up to 14 pounds. So, if wall diving is your thing - Belize is your destination.



BELIZE

Photos by Dale Sanders