

Pacific Islands

Adventures like no place on earth



Vanuatu

Diving on the wreck of the SS President Coolidge, Luganville, Espiritu Santo

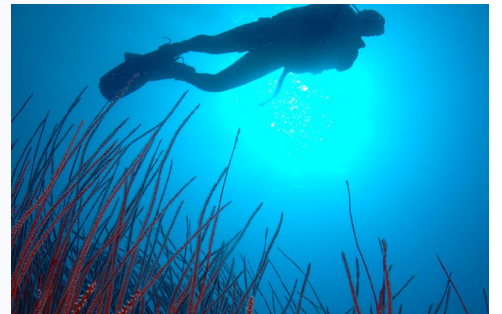
Imagining beforehand what you're going to encounter in and around the wreck of the SS President Coolidge doesn't nearly do justice to what you actually do encounter. As you slip under the surface, the pristine clarity of the water will – momentarily – take your breath away (unless you come during the wet season, when the water is more murky and mysterious). And that's before you really get to grips with the 200m-long ship lying on its side – it's both imposing and inviting.

Make no mistake, this is justifiably one of the best wreck-diving experiences in the world. Sunk by a friendly mine almost 70 years ago, the former ocean liner turned troop carrier is an exquisite snapshot of wartime industry. With relatively minimal marine life on the wreck itself you can clearly recognise human artefacts, which makes the whole experience even more memorable.

Getting up close and personal with the military ordnance lying about is heart-palpitatingly exciting: entombed jeeps, medium-calibre shells, honey-combed boxes of bullets reflecting in the torchlight and large-calibre shells sitting menacingly like alien egg sacs. There are even unopened bottles of medicine, as well as a porcelain statue of a woman (known as 'The Lady') and a horse.

But once your time on the wreck is up, the fun doesn't end: the decompression stops in the coral garden are the perfect excuse to hang out with the marine life, including friendly clown fish. Take plenty of pictures to send to your friends as soon as you get topside – it's an experience too good not to share.

Images courtesy of the Vanuatu Tourism Office.



Contact Details

Allan Power Dive Tours
Phone +678 36822
www.allan-power-santo.com

Aquamarine
Phone: +678 36 196
PO Box 395
Luganville
Vanuatu

Pacific Islands

Adventures like no place on earth



Vanuatu

Accommodation

Beachfront Divers Lodge
Phone +678 36881
www.thebeachfrontresort.com
dm with fan/air-con from
2500/3000Vt

Hotel Santo
Phone +678 36250
hotelsanto@vanuatu.com.vt
s/d 6000/7800 Vt, upstairs s/d/tr
from 12,000/13,200/14,500Vt

Bokissa Eco Island Resort
Phone +678 30030
www.bokissa.com
d from 34,000 Vt

Other Attractions

Champagne Beach and Blue Hole
Phone +678 37365
www.wreckstorainforest.com

Santo Safari Tours
Phone + 678 7742178
erickwilliams54@yahoo.com

Aquamarine
Phone +67836196
www.aquamarinesanto.com

Shopping

Luganville Market
Main St

Transport

Air Vanuatu
Phone +678 23848
www.airvanuatu.com
Flies to Port Vila a few times each week
from Brisbane and Sydney. There are
also twice-weekly flights direct to Espiritu
Santo from these cities, as well as a
weekly one from Melbourne to Port Vila.

Pacific Blue
(07) 3295 2284
www.flypacificblue.com
Has direct flights to Port Vila twice a week
from Brisbane and Sydney.

Flights come into Vanuatu's international
airport, just north of Port Vila on Efate.
Air Vanuatu has twice daily flights from
Port Vila to Pekoa airport just outside
Luganville on Santo. From Pekoa airport
there are minibus connections to take
you into Luganville.

Tours

There are many tour options, including
treks to the rainforest, scuba diving
and snorkelling. There are also tours
to Champagne Beach, Matevulu Blue
Hole, Millennium Cave and the Riri Riri
River. Ask around for details.

Drinking and Dining

Natangora Café
Phone +678 36811
meals from 450Vt

Deco Stop Restaurant
Phone +678 36175
mains from 1500Vt

Le Nemo Restaurant
Phone +678 37991
mains 800-3500Vt

Coral Quays Restaurant
Phone +678 36257
mains 1700-2700Vt

Club de Sanma
Phone +678 36039
clubdesanma@vanuatu.com.vt

Nabouru Kava Bar
Kava strip
Phone + 678 37401

Moyyan House by the Sea
+678 30026
moyyan@moyyan.com