

Dr Jays Fiji – For SigaSiga Sands Visitors

Snorkel Pristine Coral Reef in Beautiful Natewa Bay



Visit a gorgeous reef with incredible coral diversity. This place is very special. We have numerous repeat visitors, and no one has yet been other than extremely impressed.. The area is quite remote and other boats and people are rarely encountered.

It really is a snorkelling paradise with generally mild currents, no deep, intimidating drop-off into the unseen, and the respite of an exposed sandbank to take a break after the swim over the coral reef. And the bay itself, the longest in the Fiji, is very picturesque.

Many have commented that this was the highlight of their stay in Fiji, and for some, the best adventure they have *ever* had, period.

COSTS – FJD

\$350 –Sandbank reef, covers up to 5 adult passengers maximum, and a couple of extra small children are always welcome – guests will need to organise their own transport (directions below)

\$400 - This includes return transport for **maximum for 4 passengers** from SigaSiga Sands.

Safety

For those with experience and moderate fitness, we drop off near the reef point where some currents can be encountered but comfortably handled. There are quiet-water drop off points for the less confident. We can also provide a guide who swims with a flotation device allowing inexperienced snorkelers to have a rest whenever they need it, and snorkelling with a provided **life- jacket** is a great option for those who want to safely swim over the top of the coral reef, and rest up or wash out the mask again, whenever they feel like it.

Those who want to **free dive** do so at their own risk; it is always best to **dive in pairs** regardless.

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We travel out in a stable 6.5m aluminium boat, taking an hour or less to arrive under calm weather conditions. Snorkelers are given three hours or more to swim over and around the reef, rest up on the sandbank or boat, and have lunch on one or the other. It usually takes a little longer to return home because while guests are having some refreshments and talking about their day, we might try to see if the Spanish mackerel (*walu*) are biting. Visiting a second site is always an option.

We provide chilled water and some nibbles, and an Esky with ice so you can **bring your own drinks & eats** and keep them cool.

What to bring

Your **own snorkelling gear generally fits best**, but if you do not have these we can supply masks and snorkels and will generally be able to find suitable flippers. It is difficult to do the area justice without flippers. The water is usually 26-28°C. Not many use wet suits, but a thin version can help with buoyancy and keep swimmers comfortable, especially in winter; these are not provided.

Caring for the coral gardens

We take care not to damage the reef: thin plate corals can be 4 or more metres across and are **quite fragile** as are large fluted corals, for example. Care is required by those with extended free diving flippers. It is generally best **not to touch** corals either; some polyps are sensitive to oils on our fingers.

Visitor numbers are low. Nevertheless, it is preferable to have sunproof wet tops and leggings to **reduce use of suntan lotions** – prolonged exposure is toxic to the filter feeding corals. But sun burn is not much fun, so use lotion if you have to. And think about buying a **wet-top** for future adventures. There are coral-safe lotions which we will provide (whenever we can source them).

In the shallower water and near the surface there are numerous flat stony outcrops left as the coral grows outward, providing a coral-free, rocky platform. **These can be stood on for a rest** but it is preferable to avoid standing anywhere until you reach the sand of the Sandbank.

For anyone to visit a reef of this beauty and condition is a privilege, and we need to tread softly on it. Over fifty percent of coral reefs worldwide have been lost to ocean warming and pollution in the last few decades.

We sometimes find and show visitors live shells, but we do not take any. Those shells washed up on the sand bank are yours!

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Directions from SigaSiga Sands

(about 30mins to departure point)

1. Turn right at the main road from SigaSiga Sands, travel for about 15km until you reach Salt Lake Bridge (which is 26km out from Savusavu, in case you are coming from town)
2. Continue on the main road, and turn **left** at Matakunia Rd, a further ~4.5km. It is the **first** sign-posted road past Salt Lake Bridge
3. Drive along Matakunia Rd, a gravel road, for ~ 3.5km until the stony creek crossing. You are there: our departure site is just a few metres past this creek.

