

# Snorkel with Humpback Whales

*Wild Encounters in the Waters of the Silver Bank*

March 10 to 18, 2028



Humpback Whale  
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

## SAFARI OVERVIEW

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Dive into one of the most extraordinary marine wildlife experiences — snorkeling with **North Atlantic humpback whales** on the **Silver Bank**, off the coast of the **Dominican Republic**, one of the Caribbean's most important breeding and calving grounds for these magnificent animals. This exclusive liveaboard voyage takes you into their world, with the chance to observe and **snorkel** alongside nurturing mothers and their curious calves, and resting males in the calm, protected waters of this remarkable sanctuary. Over **five unforgettable days**, you will spend time on the water alongside experienced **marine naturalists**, maximizing opportunities for meaningful humpback whale encounters both above and below the surface. Every outing offers something different — from peaceful **in-water encounters** to boat views of dramatic displays of breaching, tail slapping, and competitive heat runs unfolding nearby. Between excursions, unwind aboard a **premium liveaboard vessel**, which provides a comfortable base from which to take it all in. With exceptional wildlife access, expert guidance, and countless **photographic opportunities**, this journey delivers an extraordinary experience for anyone drawn to marine life and **wild ocean encounters**.

### WHY CHOOSE THIS EXPEDITION?

- **Extended Whale Encounters:** Spend five full days dedicated to whale interactions, longer than most tours.

- **Exceptional Wildlife Access:** Observe a wide range of natural behaviors, from calm social interactions to energetic surface activity.
- **Led by Specialists:** Travel with an experienced team offering insight into whale behavior, ecology, and responsible encounter practices.
- **Photography Guidance:** Capture unforgettable moments with support and tips tailored for wildlife photography in dynamic conditions.
- **Comfortable Liveaboard Cruising:** Relax aboard a spacious, well-equipped liveaboard with top amenities.

**LEADER:** Scott Davis.

**DAYS:** 9, including estimated travel time. 7 nights aboard the *Turks and Caicos Explorer II*.

**GROUP SIZE:** 19.

**SHIP:** The *Turks and Caicos Explorer II*, a 20-passenger ship. See the *Ship* section on page 3.

**COST:** \$7,200 to \$7,700 per person, double occupancy, depending on cabin type and occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

| Date      | Description                                                                                                                                                                            | Accommodation                                    | Meals   |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Mar 10    | <b>Arrive in Puerto Plata.</b> Upon arrival in the Dominican Republic, rest up for your adventure.                                                                                     | Cofresi Hills Residence, Cofresi                 |         |
| Mar 11    | <b>Embarkation Day.</b> Board the <i>Turks and Caicos Explorer II</i> and, settle in. Weather permitting, depart overnight to the Silver Bank.                                         | On board the <i>Turks and Caicos Explorer II</i> | B, D    |
| Mar 12    | <b>Begin Whale Encounters.</b> Begin soft in-water interactions with humpback whales.                                                                                                  |                                                  | B, L, D |
| Mar 13–16 | <b>Four Full Days of Whale Experiences.</b> Witness playful calves, escort battles, and heat runs while exploring whale behavior, anatomy, conservation, and individual personalities. |                                                  |         |
| Mar 17    | <b>Final Whale Interactions &amp; Voyage Back.</b> Enjoy a final morning with the whales then navigate back to the marina.                                                             |                                                  |         |
| Mar 18    | <b>Disembark &amp; Fly Home.</b> After breakfast, disembark and transfer to the airport.                                                                                               |                                                  | B       |

## LEADER

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Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. One leader, assisted by the ship crew and staff, will provide a range of expertise for your trip.



### Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer ([www.scottdavisimages.com](http://www.scottdavisimages.com)) specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments took him to the far corners of the globe. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, and renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders.

## SHIP

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### The Turks and Caicos Explorer II

Our 124-ft ship will be your home during the trip, and with two tenders, it provides the best platform for whale watching on the Silver Bank. You'll anchor on the reef and venture out by tender to share your days with the humpbacks. Our crew of certified Dive Masters is committed to keeping your experience on the ship a trouble-free adventure during your stay. Enjoy your meals in the air-conditioned salon with ocean views. Share happy hours on the sundeck, green-flash sunsets, and starlit nights. Experience the Silver Bank in individually controlled air-conditioned double cabins with private bathrooms and your own gear storage and wet suit rack on the back deck. See *Deck Plan* on page 8.



Our two tenders are the keys to your intimate whale encounters and the best platforms for topside photography available on the Silver Bank. The 25-ft long fiberglass tenders are equipped with twin, fuel-efficient four-stroke engines. These permit us to quietly approach whales for soft in-water encounters with virtually no exhaust fumes and to double our traveling range to reach the best areas on the Silver Bank.

Each tender carries nine guests with plenty of bench space for your comfort, bow storage to protect your camera gear, individual foot storage for your wet gear, Bimini tops to protect you from the sun, heavy duty boarding ladders, first aid kits, VHF radios, GPS navigation, and plenty of snacks and beverages to hydrate and energize you throughout the day.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

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### Mar 10 ~ Arrive in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic

Arrive in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, for an overnight stay near the Ocean World Marina.

**Mar 11 ~ Board the ship**

Arrive at the marina in the early evening to board the *Turks and Caicos Explorer II*. After dinner, you'll navigate to the mooring site while you spend the night in your comfortable cabin.

**Mar 12 ~ Arrive on the Silver Bank**

Wake up on the Silver Bank! After breakfast, you'll be briefed about soft in-water encounters, a profound experience for all, and prepare for a full afternoon on the two tenders.

**Mar 13–16 ~ Enter the whales' world**

The numerous female humpback whales that choose the Silver Bank as their nursery for their newborn calves are usually nestled in the northeast corner of the Silver Bank, a relatively shallow area protected by coral heads. Although coral heads encompass the entire Silver Bank, the northeast corner has extensive coral that breaks the surface during low tides, giving protection to newborn calves (and you!).

You may have some "whale-waiting" time while looking for cooperative humpback whales, but that time is quickly forgotten when you are amid surface activity and soft in-water encounters. Most of the time you will find whale activity nearby. In fact, you will more often ask, "Which whale should we watch?" rather than, "Where are the whales?" The biggest obstacle to success is spending too much time with uncooperative whales, so be prepared to leave one group in search of more cooperative ones; be patient as you may approach many whales before finding an interested group that allows us to join them in their element and on their terms.

**Mar 17 ~ Morning whale encounters, then navigate back to Puerto Plata**

Spend the morning on the tenders for your last encounters, then return to the ship for lunch. Navigate back to Puerto Plata through the banks, watching for whale and dolphin activity from the



Ocean World Marina  
© Steve Thompson



Travelers on Tender  
© Ted Cheeseman



Humpback Whale  
© Christine Steerman

deck while bidding farewell to the world of these docile creatures. You will arrive in Puerto Plata in the late evening for your last night on board.

### **Mar 18 ~ Disembark and fly home**

Disembark in the morning, after breakfast, and transfer to the airport for your flights home.

## **COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)**

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### **Costs and Cabin Options**

| <b>Type</b> | <b>Description (see <i>Deck Plan</i> on page 9)</b>                                                          | <b>Cost per Person</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Lower Deck  | Double occupancy, twin-sized upper and lower beds, porthole window. Cabins 8, 9, and 10.                     | \$7,200                |
| Main Deck   | Double occupancy, two lower twin-sized beds, desk, chair, large windows. Cabins 3 and 4.                     | \$7,400                |
| Main Deck   | Double occupancy, one queen-sized bed or two twin-sized beds, desk, chair, large window. Cabins 5, 6, and 7. | \$7,400                |
| Upper Deck  | Double occupancy, one queen-sized bed, TV, desk, chair, large window. Cabins 1 and 2.                        | \$7,700                |

Costs are per person, depending on cabin type, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we will not charge you a single supplement. If space is available, some cabins can be booked as a single by adding **90%** over the listed cabin cost.

We cannot guarantee a specific cabin number, but if changes occur, we will assign a cabin of equal or greater value.

### **Payment Schedule**

| <b>Payment</b> | <b>Due Date</b>               | <b>Amount per Person</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Deposit        | Due now to reserve your space | \$1,500                  |
| Final          | October 2, 2027               | Remaining Balance        |

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm the reservation of your space.

Refunds are given depending on the time left before departure according to the following table. Through August 1, 2027, the cancellation fee of \$300 per person can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable.

| Dates                          | Forfeited Amount<br>per Person |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| On or before August 1, 2027    | \$300 (see terms above)        |
| August 2 to August 31, 2027    | 10% of trip cost               |
| September 1 to October 1, 2027 | 40% of trip cost               |
| On or after October 2, 2027    | 100% of trip cost              |

### Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, permits, and port and fuel fees, for all activities, unless described as optional.
- Accommodation (double occupancy) for the night of March 10.
- Seven nights on board the *Turks and Caicos Explorer II*.
- Meals from breakfast on March 11 through breakfast on March 18, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- Transfers on March 18 between the Ocean World Marina and the Puerto Plata Airport.
- Snacks, coffee, tea, juices, soda, beer, wine, and spirits aboard the ship.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

### Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Lunch on March 11
- Divergent airport transfers and extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities.
- Wetsuit and snorkeling equipment (mask, snorkel, and snorkeling fins) with limited rental availability.
- [Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature, such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

## SIGN UP

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Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and a completed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: [info@cheesemans.com](mailto:info@cheesemans.com)

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

## OTHER DETAILS

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### Climate

The Silver Bank is typically 75 to 80°F (24 to 27°C) during the day and cool enough in the morning/evenings for a sweatshirt or light fleece. The water temperature is usually 76 to 78°F (24 to 26°C). On a typical day, winds blow from the north to southeast about 15 knots (17mph), ranging from 0 to 25 knots. The coral formations throughout the Silver Bank provide protection from the wind and sea conditions, and February–March is typically the least windy time of the whale season with infrequent rain.

### Fitness Level

The greatest fitness demand of this trip will be swimming, but at a minimum, you must be able to move around the ship and embark/disembark from the tenders comfortably and safely. For safety and to get the most enjoyment out of this experience, you should be comfortable in the water, snorkeling, and getting in and out of the water via the tender ladder. Every in-water interaction is different, and in some encounters, you will float quietly while the whales come to you. More often, however, you must swim to position yourselves and, at times, swim in parallel with a slow-moving, relaxed whale. For these reasons, improving your swimming fitness before the voyage will benefit your experience.

Getting in the water is not required; we've shared this trip with travelers who had wonderful experiences whale watching from the tenders. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging or if you don't have experience snorkeling but would like to join this trip.

### Motion Sickness

Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! Even those who have experienced seasickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to seasickness or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding seasickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our [Coping with Seasickness](#) webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.

### Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

**Please wait to book your flights** until you receive confirmation from your Coordinator that the minimum number of participants has been met to operate the trip. If you choose to book flights before receiving this confirmation, we strongly recommend purchasing flight cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic (POP) by 11:59pm on March 10.
- Depart from Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic (POP) after 8:00am on March 18.

### Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

## Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Cheesemans' Trips are [Carbon Neutral](#).**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

## FAQS

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### What is the Silver Bank?

The Silver Bank is located about 80mi north of the Dominican Republic and 100mi southeast of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and it's one of the most important breeding and calving grounds for humpback whales in the North Atlantic Ocean. At least 5,000 humpbacks use the Silver Bank from January through early April each year. The Silver Bank Sanctuary, established in 1986, is approximately 200 square miles (about the area of San Francisco city and county), and is now part of the larger Sanctuary for the Marine Mammals of the Dominican Republic.

Water visibility on the Silver Bank varies daily, but averages from 40 to 60ft around the mooring area with occasional particles suspended in the water. The wind, swells, and slight current cause run-off from the coral, which determines the amount of visibility. The average water depth is approximately 80 to 90ft. Wind can affect whale watching, so weather plays a key role in the quality and nature of encounters.

### What is a soft in-water encounter?

A soft in-water encounter is a passive, non-aggressive experience — floating at the surface in mask, fins, and snorkel — allowing humpback whales to approach on their own terms. The goal is to identify a cooperative, tolerant, or curious whale and meet it calmly and peacefully, creating a rare and meaningful connection between human and whale. With hundreds of voyages of experience, our guides read humpback behaviors and provide real-time instruction both above and below the surface. Following their guidance is essential to a safe and successful interaction.

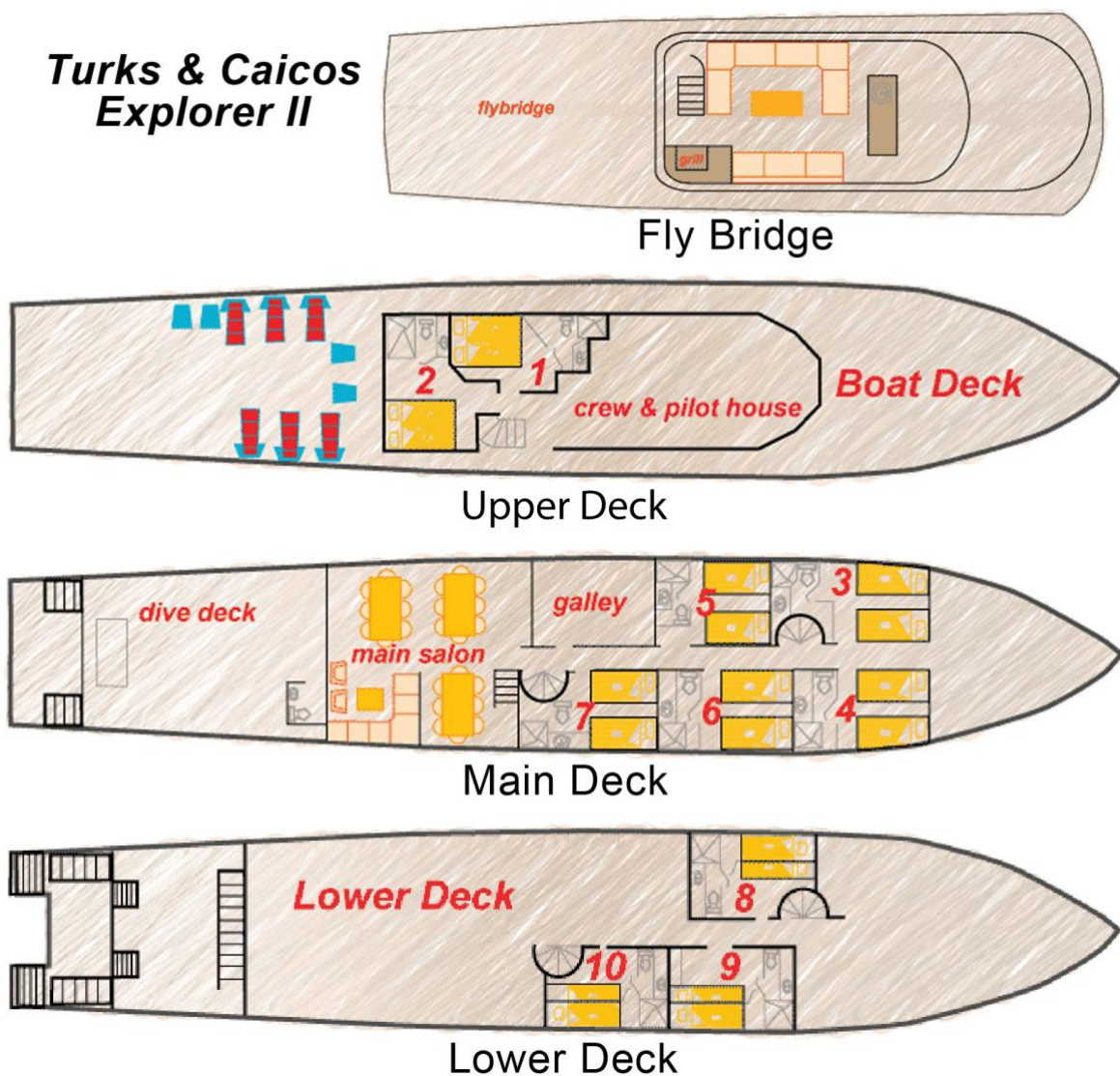
### What is a typical day like on the trip?

Each morning, you depart on two well-stocked tenders for the first outing of a full day of whale observations, both above and below water. Activity on the Silver Bank runs in cycles, so you'll have slack periods that vary from day to day. Typically, you return to the ship for lunch, but if you experience extraordinary activity, expect to return to the main boat later or eat lunch on the tenders. If you return to the ship for lunch, you will go back out for the afternoon action, returning to the ship in time for dinner.

## ***TURKS AND CAICOS EXPLORER II DECK PLAN***

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### ***Turks & Caicos Explorer II***



Deck plan and cabin sizes are not to scale.  
See cabin descriptions under the *Costs* section on page 5.