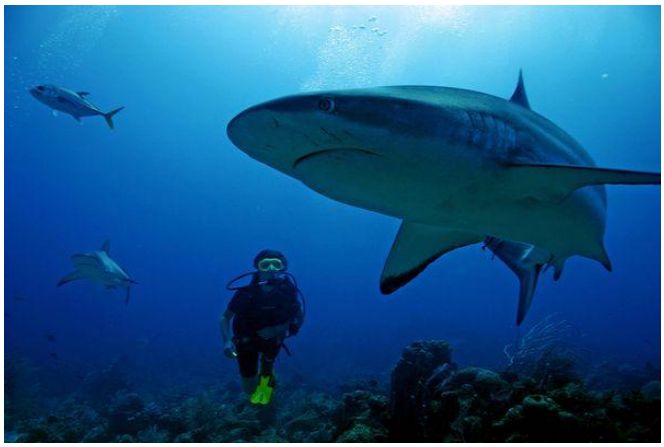
National Geographic - 10 Best Trips of Summer 2011

Looking for an out-of-the-ordinary destination for your summer vacation? Check out these **10 top trips**, hand-picked by *National Geographic Traveler* editors as the best of summer 2011. Where do you want to go this summer? Share your travel plans—real or ideal.

9. Roatan, Honduras

Photograph by Ivan Pisarenko, Archivolatino/Redux



Located about 30 miles north of the Honduran mainland, this divers' dream destination is encircled by a living coral reef, extending directly from the shore. The shallow-water, reef eco-system is teeming with tropical marine life, making the underwater pageantry easily accessible to snorkelers and novice divers. No longer a best-kept Caribbean secret, the largest of Honduras' Bay Islands is working—through the grassroots Roatan Marine Park—to promote sustainable growth by fostering a sense of environmental responsibility among locals and visitors. At the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences, located on the grounds of the all-inclusive Anthony's Key Resort, guests can participate in government-sanctioned recreational and educational dolphin programs. Options include snorkeling with more than a dozen bottlenose dolphins; unstructured, small-group dolphin dives 60 feet below the surface; and a six-day Dolphin Scuba Camp for kids ages 5-14. For the ultimate Roatan retreat, book an over-the-water, thatched-roof cabana at the secluded Mango Creek Lodge in Port Royal harbor on the island's less-traveled East End. Spend the morning fishing on the saltwater flats or kayaking through the mangrove canals, then float back to your cabana's private deck for some afternoon hammock time.

Pictured here: A diver swims with Caribbean reef sharks in the waters off Roatan Island.