

Guanaja's Clark's Cay Is Redefining What Adaptive Diving Looks Like

By Julie Smith, Diveheart. Julie Smith traveled to Clark Cay as a representative of Diveheart, a nonprofit dedicated to providing opportunities for people with disabilities to experience the therapeutic benefits of scuba diving.

Many dive destinations claim to be "accessible." Most mean a ramp at the front desk and good intentions. Clark's Cay, on its own private island off Guanaja in Honduras's Bay Islands, is something different — and after spending time there this year on behalf of Diveheart, I can say it's everything they say it is, and then some.

Built for It, Not Bolted On

In 2026, Clark's Cay committed real resources to becoming a premier destination for adaptive divers, and it shows. Four new Deluxe ADA-Compliant Family Cabañas were completed this July — not retrofitted rooms with a grab bar added as an afterthought, but purpose-built spaces with wide entryways, full turning space, accessible-height switches and kitchenette counters, and roll-in showers with grab bars and low-mount sinks.

The accessibility doesn't stop at the cabaña door. The resort repaved and connected its key common areas — gift shop, restaurant and bar, wellness center — with proper ramp access. There's a lift to get into the lazy river and a low-arch paved bridge to the infinity pool. And critically for divers, Clark's Cay engineered ramps for the two transfer points that matter most: from the ferry dock onto the Clark's Cay boat, and on and off the dive boats themselves.

The safety infrastructure backing all of this is equally serious: Guanaja has its own hyperbaric chamber with on-demand physician support.

The Diving Holds Up

None of this would matter much if the diving weren't good, and it is. Guanaja's fringing reef is a protected marine reserve, and with only a handful of operators on the island, Clark's Cay divers get first pick of more than 50 sites — pinnacles, vertical walls, lava tunnels, and the wreck, the Jado Trader — without the crowds you'd find on Roatán or Utila. Visibility

runs around 100 feet, currents are mostly mild, and the reef itself is some of the healthiest I've seen in the region.

Clark's Cay runs a true concierge dive operation: staff set up gear, carry it to and from the boats, swap tanks between dives, and rinse and store everything at day's end. For any diver, that's a nice touch. For an adaptive diver managing transfers, wheelchairs, or assistive equipment, it removes a real barrier — one less thing to coordinate, one more reason the day can just be about the dive.

Hospitality That Goes Beyond the Checklist

What stood out most wasn't any single feature — it was the attitude behind all of it. The team at Clark's Cay, under owner Kirk Lany, treats accessibility as a genuine hospitality standard, not a compliance box. They started with strong standards and are actively listening for ways to improve, often putting suggestions into practice within days rather than filing them away for a future season. The entire staff embraces guests like family, anticipating needs before being asked and staying flexible for a wide range of ability levels.

More Than a Dive Trip

Adaptive dive travel is rarely just about the divers — it's also about the companions and family members who come along, many of whom don't dive themselves. Clark's Cay has that covered too: the pool, lazy river, paddleboards, and excursions on Guanaja give non-diving guests plenty to do, which removes a real barrier to group travel that some other destinations haven't solved.

What This Means for Adaptive Divers

For Diveheart and organizations like it, a destination like Clark's Cay is rare: a private-island resort with serious, well-designed infrastructure, exceptional diving, and a staff culture that understands what adaptive travel requires. It's still a young program — the ADA cabañas just opened this July — but the foundation is solid, and the resort has shown real willingness to keep refining it based on feedback from the adaptive diving community. That growing interest from multiple adaptive diving organizations is itself a strong signal of where Clark's Cay is headed.

If you're an adaptive dive group looking for a destination that treats accessibility as a starting point rather than accommodation, Clark's Cay deserves a serious look.

For more information: reservations@clarkscay.com | 800-353-8953 | clarkscay.com/accessible-resort-features | diveheart.org

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About Diveheart

Diveheart is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, founded in 2001, dedicated to building confidence, independence, and self-esteem in children, adults, and veterans with disabilities through scuba therapy, adaptive dive training, and open-water experiences. With the organization's guiding philosophy, "Imagine the Possibilities," Diveheart trains adaptive divers, dive buddies, and instructors. This year, Diveheart marks its 25th anniversary, and evaluating destinations like Clark's Cay is part of how the organization continues to expand where — and how — adaptive divers can safely experience the water.











