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Scuba Emporium

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1988 Why I did Cenote Diver Specialty?

Diving was growing at a fast pace in the 80's and people were just starting to really get out and explore. We were doing a lot of Instructor training in the Yucatan and specialties were taking off. More and more instructors wanted to teach in the cenote near Akumal (south of Cancun), but I could see training was needed. I was cave-certified and had been in cases all over Florida, so I felt the need to write up a cenote program. It should follow the safety procedures of cave and cavern diving, yet apply to the local needs of the Mexican Cenote. After diving these great sites for a few years, I understood the immediate problems and set out to define a course that worked. The cave systems in Florida are mostly lime stone and are not as full of sediment as the Cenote, so I knew I needed to introduce a lot more on buoyancy than one might have expected. Some of the cenotes have four and five feet of fine sediment and one little kick darkens the cave system for days.

Cenotes are little ponds one finds in the jungle. When you got into these ponds you can find a cave system, some leading to the ocean. Back in those systems are strange looking shrimp and fish with no eyes. They swim up to you because they are attracted to the heat of the dive light. In one of the cenotes we found a fire pit. Now think about that, for that to happen it had to be dry and above water millions of years ago. But the pit was just there, cool. With these systems you find stalactites and stalagmites, they add to the beauty of the dive and are assume to swim around. Remember these were created by water dripping from the roof, again millions of years old. Today they are well protected, in some way guarded, but this is a good thing. These date back millions of years and we need to respect them and preserve them. So I am fine with the tight control, it also keeps the novice person from getting injured.

The course is focused on buoyancy, line use, and preservation of these delicate aqua systems. IF you ever have a chance to dive a cenote-do so. They are spectacular!

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