

## ON YOUR NEXT VACATION, HELP SAVE OUR REEFS!

By Todd Barber, President & CEO,  
Reef Ball Development Group, Ltd.

Now you can take the ultimate eco-tourism adventure - one that lets you enjoy the spectacular beauty of crystal Caribbean waters even as you help restore the coral reefs vital to marine health.

Reef-restoration excursions by the ReefBall Coalition combine the fun of visiting an exotic tropical destination with hands-on training about tropical coral reefs and the satisfaction of tangibly making the ocean a better place. The program can accommodate both individuals and groups.

"We hate to call it a vacation, but it really is like one," said Joyce Moore, the project manager for the ReefBall Coalition. "People have a lot of fun making and deploying the ReefBalls and in between there is plenty of time to enjoy the other activities the islands have to offer.

"We think it is an ideal option not only for vacationers who enjoy eco-tourism, but for diving clubs, marine biology classes, corporate team-building trips and associations that sponsor travel for their members."

The ReefBall Coalition is a private organization promoting volunteer efforts to rebuild the world's disappearing coral reefs. The coalition has set up reef-restoration projects on two Caribbean islands, with more to come. Eventually, it hopes to expand to other parts of the world.

The coalition takes its name from ReefBalls, which are the building blocks of the artificial reefs built by volunteers.



ReefBalls look like hollow domes of Swiss cheese. They're made by pouring concrete in fiberglass molds. Additives strengthen the concrete and make it suitable for marine growth, enabling coral and other aquatic plants to colonize the surface within three months after ReefBalls are set in place.

The design was invented and patented by Reef Ball Development Group Ltd., which has deployed more than 40,000 reefballs around the world for governments and private

entities from the Middle East to the Pacific to the United States.

Coral reefs are home to a quarter of all marine life and play a vital role in the health of our oceans and fisheries. But they are rapidly disappearing because of pollution, destructive fishing practices, coral mining and other factors. Marine scientists estimate that 10 percent of the world's coral reefs have been destroyed and that 70 percent could be gone within 40 years.



Standard ReefBall workshops last six days, not including travel. During the workshop, participants build and deploy two sets of ReefBalls, with two days free for other activities, such as snorkeling, diving, fishing and exploring tropical rainforests. Workshops for the two current projects cost \$1,099 and include seven nights of lodging, many meals, and a complete training program. Air fare is not included. Participants receive two ReefBall T-shirts - one to work in and one to take home.

Groups can request customized workshops of shorter duration.

The ReefBall Coalition is currently offering field workshops for projects on Dominica in the Lesser Antilles and on Providenciales in the Turks & Caicos Islands. Future projects are planned for Cancun, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

"The thing that has struck me most about our projects so far is the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that people uniformly report as they get ready to go home," Moore said. "They get so excited when their reef balls are deployed. It makes them feel good to know they are helping make the oceans a better place."

For more information, call the coalition at 800-831-5731 or e-mail at reefballcoalition@innova.net

Source: Reef Watch: News from the Reefball Coalition.

The Reef Ball website can be accessed at:

[www.reefball.com](http://www.reefball.com)

The Reef Ball Coalition address is:

[www.reefballcoalition.org](http://www.reefballcoalition.org)