The C-130 Hercules wreck, Aqaba: a 30-metre military cargo plane scuttled at 16 m for divers

In 2017, the Royal Jordanian Air Force scuttled a decommissioned C-130 Hercules transport plane in Aqaba's Underwater Military Museum. Now sits intact at 16-20 m, with full superstructure and tail. The most photographed dive in Jordan.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

In July 2017, the Royal Jordanian Air Force flew a decommissioned C-130 Hercules transport plane to Aqaba and scuttled it 250 metres offshore as part of an artificial-reef programme called the Aqaba Underwater Military Museum. The plane is 30 metres long, 12 metres wingspan, and sits upright on the sandy bottom at 16-20 m depth, with the full fuselage, tail, propellers, and cockpit windows intact. Within a few years, anthias clouds and soft corals had moved in. It's now the most-photographed dive site in Jordan, and the only place in the world you can swim through a C-130 cargo bay underwater.

The Underwater Military Museum has additional vehicles — tanks, troop carriers, an anti-aircraft gun — but the Hercules is the centrepiece.

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1Why dive the C-130

Wreck divers visit shipwrecks; the C-130 is something rarer — an aircraft wreck large enough to be properly dive-able, in tropical-clear water, at recreational depths. The cargo bay is open enough to swim through (with care), the cockpit

is recognisable, and the propeller blades are still attached. The combination of accessibility and visual drama makes this the dive most travellers post photographs of.

2The Underwater Military Museum

The Aqaba Underwater Military Museum was inaugurated in 2019 and contains roughly two dozen scuttled military vehicles, all on the sandy bottom inside the Marine Reserve:

- **The C-130 Hercules.** The flagship, scuttled 2017.
- **An M42 Duster anti-aircraft gun.** Sitting upright.
- **Several armoured personnel carriers.** AML-90, M113.
- **An ambulance, a helicopter, and a Cobra attack helicopter.** Each in its own dive route.
- **A small army battle tank.** Likely the most-photographed after the C-130.

The museum is laid out as a 200-metre dive route — most operators run it as a single dive at 16-20 m depth.

> A 30-metre cargo plane on the sandy bottom of the Red Sea, with anthias clouds in the cockpit.

3Dive plan

- **Boat entry.** 5-minute RIB from any South Beach dive shop.
- **Descent.** Direct to the bottom; 16-20 m depth depending on the route.
- **The Hercules first.** Approach from the south, run along the starboard side, into the cargo bay (only with proper buoyancy training and a guide), out the port side.
- **Other vehicles.** Continue along the museum route — tank, helicopter, anti-aircraft gun.
- **Ascent.** Direct ascent + safety stop on the mooring line.
- **Bottom time.** 30-40 minutes at depth.

> **For solo travellers**
>
> Open Water divers can do the museum dive — the depth is within OW limits if you're recently certified. Dive shops pair you with another diver.

4Practical tips

- **Certification.** Open Water (recently certified) is the minimum; Advanced makes the experience more relaxed.
- **Best season.** Year-round; summer for warmer water, winter for clearer visibility.
- **Underwater camera.** The C-130 photographs spectacularly. Wide-angle lens (10mm or wider in 35mm equivalent) is essential.
- **Combine with.** Japanese Garden + Cedar Pride for a 3-tank day across reef + wreck + plane.
- **Hyperbaric chamber.** Princess Haya Aqaba (15 min by car).

References

1. Wikipedia — Aqaba (Marine Reserve)

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by a PADI Aqaba dive instructor before final publication. Drafted from reader-diver experience and the Aqaba dive community.