

Piramidi

Chimney after chimney, swirling in new environments until finally you arrive in the enchanting Cirri cave.

On the west coast of the island of *Ustica*, near the tower of *Punta Spalmatore*, lies the seamount *Piramidi*. Most of its top surface is located at a depth of 10 m, while its highest pinnacle reaches a depth of 5 m. Like a pyramid, this seamount has several passages carved from its rocks, tunnels that finally lead to its main central chamber; the "*Grotta dei Cirri*" or *Cirri cave*.

The *dive* starts from the surface of the plateau, where swimming around a pinnacle, we arrive at a first passage; a vertical chimney decorated in bright colors by *yellow cluster anemones* and a variety of sponges. Swimming through this chimney we are brought down a few meters and arrive in an environment of boulders and pinnacles, upon which some resting dusky *groupers* can be found. Hidden between these rock formations lies the entry of a second chimney, which leads us to the outermost side of the seamount, facing the great blue vastness of the open sea. As we proceed our *dive*, following the contours of the *Piramidi* reef in a northerly direction, we swim along a splendid *drop-off*; a wall florally decorated by *orange corals*, *yellow gorgonians*, and *tube worms*, while a pair of antennae peeking from one of the crevices reveals the hiding place of a large *lobster*. The *reef* wall leads us directly to the entrance of the last chimney at a depth of about 28 m, where we descend into the enchanting cave of *Cirri*. The cave has a breathtaking panoramic opening on two of its sides, giving the diver the impression of swimming in an emerald-colored 3D 4K Full HD screen. The rocky inner walls of the cave are paved with *unicorn shrimps* and usually one can encounter a large brown *hake* hunting them. Coming out of the cave, we ascend towards the platform at the top of the seamount, where we have time to visit a group of elegant *meagre*.

Characteristics of the dive Piramidi

Type: Cave / Reef wall

Certification Requirement: Deep Diver

Recommended Certification: Tec 40 Diver

Difficulty Level: High

Depth range: 38-40m

Duration: 40-60 min

Typical encounters: Grouper, lobster, unicorn shrimp, hake, meagre

Notes: Good visibility, possible weak current