

THE BANDA SEA

AMBON – AMBON (10 NIGHTS)

DAY 1 AMBON

After boarding Adelaar in Ambon, you will enjoy your first day on board whilst cruising straight into the heart of the blue Banda Sea.

DAY 2 AI & GUNUNG API

Our first day of diving is along the steep walls surrounding the whole island of Ai. From a plateau with pretty hard coral gardens, these walls, beautifully decorated in yellow soft corals, plunge deep into the dark blue clear Banda Sea. With a bit of luck, we might already meet the first hammerhead shark of the trip. In the late afternoon everybody will be on deck to witness the goose bump moment of arriving into one of the most spectacular and beautiful natural harbours in the world between the islands of Banda Neira, Gunung Api and Lonthor (Banda Besar). (3 day dives, 1 night dive)

DAY 3 BANDA NEIRA

After a guided visit to the historic town of Banda Neira, the fort, museum and spice plantations, we have traditional Bandanese breakfast before strolling back to port through the bustling market of this lovely town. One of today's dives is on a new reef that has been growing naturally on the spur of the lava from Gunung Apis 1988 eruption – it is a fantastic example of nature's ability to recover from natural disaster. In the evening we will dive at dusk to try and spot some romantic mandarin fish. (2 day dives, 1 dusk dive)

DAY 4 BANDA BESAR & SJAHRIR

On today's menu is a spectacular submerged pinnacle covered in dense schools of fish and a couple of drift dives. The unique location of the Banda archipelago enhances chances of close encounters with pelagics such as big tunas, Spanish mackerels, giant jacks or even thresher sharks. In the evening we have a farewell dinner from Banda Neira in the tropical garden of a beautiful house from the colonial period. (3 day dives)

DAY 5 HATTA

The diving off Hatta, the easternmost Island of the Banda archipelago, named after Indonesia's first vice-president, is our first day of diving dedicated to seeing schooling hammerhead sharks. The sight of groups ranging from a handful to literally hundreds of those majestic animals is an unforgettable experience – and one of the main reasons diving in the Banda Sea is so special. (4 day dives)

DAY 6 MANUK

Manuk - meaning 'bird' in Javanese - is an old, lonely volcano that arises from the depth of the Banda sea. It attracts a huge colony of resident seabirds above the waves, while under water the island is home to schools of jacks, surgeonfish, tunas, barracudas and other pelagic fish species – as well as a lot of sea snakes. These venomous but absolutely unaggressive reptiles can be encountered on each dive around Manuk, sometimes in great numbers, which makes these dives absolutely unique. (4 day dives)

DAY 7 SARUA

There are no words that can do justice to the sheer awesomeness of the hammerhead site of Sarua. So we do not even try. (4 day dives)

DAY 8 SARUA

One day would simply not be enough. (3 day dives)

DAY 9 RUN & NAILAKKA

Back in the Banda archipelago we dive around Run, an island that used to be the most desirable piece of real estate in the whole world. So desirable that it was reluctantly and under a lot of pressure traded by the English to the Dutch against an undesirable piece of land on the other side of the world called Manhattan. Apart from its history, Run is beautiful – on the surface covered in nutmeg trees and under the water the steep slopes are studded with huge gorgonian sea fans. It is yet another place that attracts schooling hammerhead sharks and other pelagics. We finish the day with a few drinks on the beach of Nailakka, the beautiful, but tiny island that was home to the English for several years after they lost Run to the Dutch. (3 day dives)

DAY 10 MANUKANG

On the way between Run and Ambon we stop for a couple of dives on a volcanic outcrop that is according to Moluccan lore known to be haunted – this we cannot judge, but what we do know, is that it attracts its fair share of pelagic visitors that swim along its underwater ridges that are covered in huge barrel sponges. After the last dive we set sails and start our trip back to reality. (2 day dives)

DAY 11 AMBON

After a last delicious breakfast it is time to say goodbye and disembark - until the next time.

(Itinerary may vary depending on weather and sea conditions)

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