

RAJA AMPAT & THE BANDA SEA

SORONG – AMBON (11 NIGHTS)

Day 1 Sorong

After the airport or hotel pick-up and transfer to Adelaar, the first day is dedicated to getting to know the crew, settling in, and enjoying the first day on the boat while we are sailing toward Raja Ampat. Depending on boarding time, we may already do a check dive.

Day 2 Dampier Strait

This strait between Batanta and Waigeo is the heart of Raja's central section. During the dives on its seamounts, headlands, and village piers you are likely to meet dense schools of fish, turtles, various kinds of sharks, including the iconic Wobbegongs. You may also cross paths with the first manta ray of your cruise. With a bit of luck, you may even spot one of the many whale species that inhabit this area. *3-day dives*

Day 3 Misool – Wagmab

It is difficult not to be too overwhelmed by the kaleidoscope of colours created by the dense soft and black coral growth around Wagmab to notice the equally colourful critters hiding within, such as nudibranchs, frogfish, boxer crabs, blue ringed octopi and others. They are also amongst the best sites to find Raja's endemic walking shark on night dives. There are several lagoon and cavern systems waiting to be explored by speedboat, and snorkellers can immerse themselves in marine lakes inhabited by stingless jellyfish. *3-day dives, 1-night dive*

Day 4 Misool - Fiabacet

The healthy reef systems beneath the karst islands of Fiabacet have often been described as the world's most complex and richest. A place where it is possible to see a bit of 'everything' from small to large. Several sites are reliable for sightings of mantas at cleaning stations. From time to time the stunning reefs are completely invaded by huge bait-balls of silversides, tiny fish that in turn attract squadrons of mobula rays, as well as hunting trevallies and barracudas. *3-day dives, 1 night dive*

Day 5 Misool – Wayilbatan

Wayilbatan's seamounts and limestone outcroppings count amongst Raja's finest and most diverse dive sites. Already spectacular from both a topographical as well as coral coverage point of view, they are also rich in fish life as well as smaller critters. Larger pelagic animals are attracted to its more oceanic sites. *3-day dives*

Day 6 Koon

Do you like diving with a lot of fish? In that case Koon is the place for you. Apart from having too many fish to list, there is also a spectacular land – or rather surface – activity nearby. Depending on the tide we can enter a hidden system of marine lakes and canals for a snorkel and swim trek unlike any other! Typically, at the end of the trail you will be greeted by enthusiastic local village children. *3-day dives*

Day 7 Watubela

The sites around the Watubela archipelago are as remote as it gets. However, this is not the only charm of these remote islands located at the border between the Banda and Seram Sea. Spectacular white sandy beaches offer perfect locations for those postcard sunset drinks after a day's diving surrounded by schooling fish. *3-day dives*

Day 8 Manuk

Manuk is an old, lonely volcano rising from the depths of the Banda Sea. It attracts a huge colony of resident seabirds above the waves, while beneath the surface we will find schools of jacks, surgeonfish, tunas, barracudas and other pelagic fish species, as well as an abundance of sea snakes. These reptiles, venomous but absolutely unaggressive, can be encountered on every dive around Manuk, often in vast numbers, making these dives absolutely unique. *4-day dives*

DAY 9 Banda & Sjahrir

On the menu today is a dive on a spectacular submerged pinnacle covered in dense schools of fish, followed by 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 will dive at dusk to try to catch a glimpse of the ever-romantic mandarin fish. Then it is off to the town of Banda Neira for dinner in the tropical gardens of a beautiful house from the colonial period. *3-day dives, 1-dusk dive*

DAY 10 Banda Neira & Manukang

We spend the morning on a guided tour through the historic town of Banda Neira, taking in the fort, the museum as well as spice plantations. We take time to enjoy a traditional Bandanes breakfast before strolling back to port, passing through the bustling market of this lovely town. Then it is off to dive on a new reef that has been growing naturally on the spur of the lava from Gunung Api's 1988 eruption – it is a fantastic example of nature's ability to recover from natural disaster. The other two dives today will be along a volcanic outcrop off Manukang, 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. Schooling hammerhead sharks swim along the underwater ridges that are covered in huge barrel sponges. *3-day dives*

Day 11 Nusa Laut

Nusa Laut is the smallest and easternmost of the Lease Islands east of Ambon. This historically fascinating little island will host the final dives of the trip. The local villages here are proud of the way they were able to conserve their beautiful coral reefs off their famous white beaches. Nusa Laut's stunning coral gardens are a worthy final chapter of the underwater part of the trip. After the dives we will hoist the sails to start heading toward Ambon, passing the islands of Sarapua and Haruku. *2-day dives*

Day 12 Ambon

After breakfast, it is time to say goodbye and disembark – until the next time.

(Itinerary may vary depending on weather and sea conditions)

BOOKING INQUIRIES

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