MERMAID I

Biodiversity Super Special: Raja Ampat, Banda Sea, Forgotten Islands and Ambon

Sorong to Ambon | Raja Ampat, the Forgotten Islands, the Banda Sea and Ambon



Out in the Banda Sea, a reef in the middle of nowhere is probably one of the best spots to see schooling hammerheads, alongside barracuda, trevallies, snappers and dogtooth tuna.

Manuk has huge aggregations of sea snakes, Chinese sea snakes and banded sea kraits, with volcanic ridges covered in gorgonians and zillions of fusiliers.

Around Pulau Koon are walls of soft corals and schools of barracuda, bigeye trevally, batfish, giant groupers, mobula rays and sharks.

Raja Ampat has giant mantas in the Dampier Strait and the prettiest soft coral reefs in the world at Misool.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
15 nights	Sorong	Ambon	Certified divers







Your itinerary

DAY 1

Sorong

Check in

Check-in on board Mermaid I.
As our guest arrivals take place all through the day depending on flights, you are welcome to board when you arrive and spend some time unpacking and setting up your equipment, etc.
Once all guests are on board we will proceed with boat and safety briefing.
Mermaid I will cruise for 5 to 6 hours to the Dampier Strait, 40 nautical miles.

DAY 2-4

Dampier Strait

Dives + viewpoint excursion

The next three days will be spent around the Dampier Strait, the strait between the island of Waigeo, the Bird's Head Peninsula and the northern side of Batanta Island.
The Dampier Strait is known for a huge variety of diving, from giant mantas to mangroves, beautiful reefs, many pinnacles and sea mounts covered in schooling fish, aggregations of sweetlips, schooling barracudas, bumphead parrotfish, fusiliers and lots of wobbegong sharks.
It is also a great location for critters and macro subjects, with several species of pygmy seahorses and a large variety of nudibranchs.
There will be an excursion to Pyanemu Viewpoint.
Cruise overnight to Misool, 90 nautical miles.

DAY 5-7

Misool

Dives + tender excursions

The next three days will be spent around the island of Misool, where there are literally hundreds of dive sites.
Misool is heaven for wide angle photographers.
The prettiest soft coral reefs in the world are located in Misool.
In addition, there are multiple pinnacles surrounded by masses of schooling fish, barracudas, jacks and snappers.
There will be some excursions with the tenders through some amazing inner lagoons, with fantastic scenery and wildlife sightings.
There are also some great night dives, where you can see Raja epaulette sharks, frogfish and crocodile fish.
Cruise overnight to Pulau Koon, 100 nautical miles.

DAY 8

Pulau Koon

Dives

Pulau Koon is a small island on the southeast of Ceram.
Here you will find walls covered in soft corals and sandy slopes with hard coral bommies.
But the most interesting feature of this island is the amount of schooling fish including barracudas, bigeye trevallies, red snappers, pompanos, batfish and pelagics giant groupers, mobula rays and sharks.
Cruise overnight to Manuk, 108 nautical miles.

DAY 9

Manuk

Dives

Manuk, is one of two places in Indonesia where there are huge aggregations of sea snakes: Chinese sea snakes and banded sea kraits.
It is an incredible experience to dive surrounded on all sides by sea snakes.
The island is surrounded by black sandy slopes with hard coral reefs and volcanic ridges covered in gorgonians with zillions of fusiliers and pelagic fishes such as Spanish mackerels, dogtooth tunas and hammerhead sharks passing through.
Cruise overnight to Nil Desperandum, 85 nautical miles.

DAY 10

Nil Desperandum

Full diving day

Today we will spend all day diving at a reef called Nil Desperandum, which is 20 nm north of Nila Island and 25nm south of Serua Island.
This reef in the middle of nowhere, and together with Serua Island, is probably one the best spots in the Banda Sea to see schooling hammerheads.
Besides searching for hammerheads, it is also a great place to look for schooling barracudas, trevallies, snappers, and also pelagic such as dogtooth tunas and giant trevallies.
Cruise overnight to Serua, 25 nautical miles.

DAY 11

Serua

Dives

Serua Island is probably one of the most emblematic spots in the Banda Sea to see schooling hammerhead sharks.
Also, an amazing side to see schooling fish such as big eye trevallies, pinjalo snappers and others.
Cruise to Banda Islands, 97 nautical miles.

DAY 12-14

Banda Islands

Dives + cultural visit

The next three days will be spent in the Banda Islands, formerly known as the Spice Islands.
Many of the dive sites around the Banda islands are wall dives.
The walls are covered in massive gorgonians, soft corals, barrel sponges and have some very interesting swim throughs.
But there are other attractive dive sites such as pinnacles with enormous groups of schooling pyramid butterflyfish, triggerfish and pelagic fishes such as hammerhead sharks, tunas and mackerels passing through, spectacular hard coral reefs next to the volcano, and great muck dives with lots of mandarin fish at the local jetty.
The Banda Islands are much more than diving.
It is also a cultural and historical experience.
You will spend one morning walking around the village of Banda Neira the main island, with a local guide, visiting the local museum, the old Dutch fort, the old colonial governor's house, the local fish market and a nutmeg plantation, where you will have breakfast.
Cruise overnight to Nusa Laut (77 nautical miles) or to Ambon (110 nautical miles).

DAY 15

Ambon

Last diving day

The last diving day of the trip will in Ambon Bay where there are several options such as a wreck, or some really interesting muck dives looking for many critters such as Rhinopias, frogfish and nudibranchs, sea horses, harlequin shrimps, etc.

DAY 16

Disembark in Ambon

After breakfast there is a transfer to the airport or your hotel.
Disembark is at 8 am.







GOOD TO KNOW

On land and on the way

Manuk

Aggregations of sea snakes.

Nil Desperandum and Serua

Schooling hammerhead sharks.

Banda Neira

Fort, museum and a nutmeg plantation.

Ambon

Muck diving with rare critters.

Check in

Check in on board is on the day of departure. Guests arrive at different times depending on flights, so you can board when you arrive, unpack and set up your equipment. A transfer from Sorong airport to the boat is included.

Check out

Disembark after breakfast at 8 am, with a transfer to the airport or your hotel.

Last dive

Divers should wait at least 24 hours after their last dive before flying, so please keep to the no-flying rule when you book your flight home.

INCLUDED

What your trip covers

INCLUDED IN THE TRIP PRICE

- Transfers to and from the boat: anywhere in southern Bali on Komodo trips, and Sorong airport on Raja Ampat trips
- All meals and snacks, fruit, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, soft drinks and drinking water
- All dives, with tanks, weights and weight belts
- Diving with experienced divemasters and instructors
- Land visits to villages, beaches, viewpoints and wildlife where the plan includes them
- 3 GB of Starlink internet on board

NOT INCLUDED

- Flights, including any domestic flight
- Nitrox fills
- Rental equipment and on board courses
- Alcoholic drinks
- Marine park fees, port and national park fees (subject to change with government regulation)
- Dive and travel insurance

BEFORE YOU GO

What to bring

ESSENTIALS

- Dive certification card and logbook
- Completed diver medical questionnaire
- Details of your dive and travel insurance
- Dive computer and surface marker buoy
- Torch for night dives

AND ALSO

- Reef-safe sunscreen
- Swimwear, hat and sunglasses
- Light clothing and sandals
- Personal medication and toiletries
- Passport

WORTH KNOWING

Key notes

Good to know

Itineraries are a sample and can be changed because of the weather, tides, currents, season and other events beyond our control

Good to know

This itinerary runs from Sorong to Ambon