SAMAMBAIA

Banda Sea and Raja Ampat South

Ambon to Sorong | The Banda Islands, Misool and Raja Ampat

Muck diving in Ambon Bay is critter hunting at its best, with rhinopias, frogfish and harlequin shrimps.

In the Banda Islands, volcanic islands rise from deep sea water, so the chances of large pelagics are very good.

On Koon, a fish soup of fusiliers and surgeonfish is cut by hunting giant trevally, enormous giant groupers and a school of hundreds of batfish.

Misool has blacktip, whitetip and grey reef sharks, wobbegongs and mantas coming in to be cleaned.

The Dampier Strait ends it with manta rays and the reef where a record 374 fish species were counted in a single dive.

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







Your itinerary

DAY 1

Embarkation

Arrival with plane to Ambon.
You will be picked up by crew members at the airport.
Embarkation in the port of Ambon.
A general orientation follows.

DAY 2

Ambon

After an initial general dive briefing, we will do our check dive with you at an easy and protected dive site.
Check dive in the sense of you checking your gear and weights, making sure the camera housings are proper sealed and our guides checking your buoyancy.
No skill demonstrations are required.
We will thereafter offer two more dives in the bay of Ambon.
One in the afternoon and one for sunset.
All of these days will be muck dives.
World class critter hunting.
That's what Ambon is famous for.
Rhinopias, Frogfish, Ghostpipefish, Harlequin Shrimps and if you are really lucky: the Psychedelic Frogfish that has been very recently found here again.

DAY 3

Nusa Laut

In the early morning we will arrive at the island of Nusa Laut, which is a great example for how active conservation by the local community can not only preserve the reefs but actually make them even better.
We see here for many years a proper growth in biomass.
We have four spectacular dive sites here, either wall or slope diving.
Great variety of reef fish as well as large schools of jacks.
Bumphead Parrotfish like to pass by here also.
A lot of macro life can be found in the wall as well.

DAY 4

Banda Islands (days 4 and 5)

The famous Spice Islands, the island group around Banda Neira, which is also historically very interesting.
Wars were fought over these islands by colonial powers as these islands used to be the only islands in the world were nutmeg grew.
A historical walk through the town of Banda Neira with it's museum and two forts is a must.
An interesting option for ambitious challenge seekers is to climb the vulcano Gunung Api, which raises 'only' 600 m above sea level.
Which in the tropics however turns into a strenuous climb.
The diving here is very diverse and spectacular.
As these volcanic islands raise up to the surface surrounded by deep sea water, the chances for sightings of large pelagics are very good.
In the past we've often encountered schooling hammerheads here.
A dive site called 'Lava Flow' is one of the most pristine hard coral reefs you will ever see.
After the last eruption of Gunung Api in 1988 a flow of lava made it's way down into the ocean and destroyed the whole reef.
What has grown back ever since will boggle your mind.
In the harbour of Banda Neira we've got a beautiful Mandarin Fish dive waiting for you.
Other highlights include: 'The Cathedral', 'Batu Kapal' and 'Karang Hatta'.

DAY 6

Koon & Madorang

At the south-eastern tip of Seram there is a little island named Koon.
It's basically three dive sites in one, performing best always at one spot, depending on the current.
The name of the site says it all: 'Too Many Fish'.
You will have a hard time to focus on what to look at.
A fish soup of Fusiliers and Surgeonfish is divided by hunting Giant Trevallys and Jacks, enormous Giant Groupers are all of a sudden looking at you whilst a school of hundreds of Batfish is passing by.
Mobula and Manta rays might fly by.
Leopard Sharks like to relax in overhangs of the wall on the north side.
Macro life is plenty as well.
Hairy Shrimp, Pygmie Seahorses, Tiny Frogfish, Robust Ghostpipefish.
This dive site literally has it all.
After two dives in before lunch we will head north towards Raja Ampat whilst on the way we will do a wall dive along the pretty walls of Madorang.

DAY 7

Misool

Coming into Raja Ampat from the south, we start our diving here around the islands of SE Misool.
The first dive site we reach is called ‘Magic Mountain’.
Yes.
It is magic.
Situated in a ‘No-Take-Zone’, which was ten years ago established by our friends of the Misool Eco Resort, the amount of biomass is just off the scale.
Blacktip, Whitetip and Grey Reef Sharks.
Napoleon Wrasses.
Stonefish.
Wobbegong Sharks.
Barracudas.
Not to forget about the Mantas who come in to get cleaned.
You will have a hard time focussing on a particular scene on this reef.
It’s happening everywhere.
Magic.
We will offer two more day dives around the eastern part of the island of Boo.
One of the signature dive sites of this area is ‘Boo Windows’, a spectacular swim through gave the dive site it’s fame, the marine life surrounding it will keep us busy watching during the whole dive.
Another great dive site in this area is ‘Hidung Boo’ where you might sea the biggest sea fans you’ve ever seen in your life.

DAY 8

Misool, Fiabatjet

Right in the heart of the No-Take-Zone. ‘Tank Rock’, ‘Nudi Rock’ & ‘Whale Rock’ are the famous and commonly dived sites here.
There is five more dive sites in the very proximity which are as good, if not even better.
We prefer to go a bit off the beaten track here.
The reefs are covered in soft coral in all colours you can imagine.
Surrounded by most colourful reef fish.
More Fusiliers than one could possibly count.
Jacks, Trevallys, Barracudas, Sharks.
And if you happen to dive here on a day with bad visibility.
Just face the reef.
It’s packed with macro life.
Several species of Pygmy Seahorses, Nudibranchs, tiny Crustaceans, every niche in these reefs is filled with life.

DAY 9

Misool, Farondi

This is a very exciting part of SE Misool.
A lot of life and colours.
Combined with a very special topography.
Caverns, caves, swim thru's.
And if you happen to hit this area at the right time (which changes every season) you will find yourself amidst a bloom of small silvery fish, Silversides, and the hunters are just nearby: Mobula Rays.
In the dozens.
There's four popular dive sites here.
We've got another six spots that are hardly ever dived.
A nice big variety to pick and choose from.

DAY 10

Dampier Strait

The dive- and snorkel sites in the Dampier Strait stand for action packed dives in our favourite kind of fish soup, the one that is still alive and surrounds us in the water.
Encounters with Manta Rays are very common here.
The reef of the island of Kri is the current world record holder with the highest number of fish species ever counted by a scientist in a single dive, Dr.
Gerry Allen came up with 374 different fish species counted.
Again: in one single dive.
Dive sites here are exposed to current so it's all about the right timing to get the most out of it.
And we know how to time it here.
Popular dive sites here: 'Kap Kri', 'Chicken', 'Sardine', 'Mike's Point' and 'Blu Majik'.

DAY 11

Dampier

Towards the end of the week and the end of the cruise for some other liveaboards it can get a bit busy here.
We don't like that and therefore move away to some sites less dived yet very attractive.
A WW 2 plane wreck. 'Larry's Promise'.
Wruzwarez Slope.
There is many possibilities.
And to conclude our in-water activities we aim to snorkel with feeding Mantas.
On our way back our crew will keep an eye out onto the ocean for you and alert you in time for whale and dolphin encounters.
Which are quite common here.

DAY 12

Disembarkation in Sorong

Depending on your flight schedule, our crew will check your luggage in for you in advance so you can rest on board and let us shuttle you to the airport when your plane is ready to leave.

THE TRIP

On every cruise

Diving

Three day dives of at least one hour each, and one sunset or night dive unless the boat has many miles to cover overnight.

Tender rides

Scenic rides through lagoons and coves in the tenders.

Treks

Trekking to breathtaking viewpoints.

Beaches and villages

Visits to secluded beaches and excursions to traditional villages.

Whale watching

Whale watching on every cruise.

Water action

Water action such as wake boarding and water skiing.

Check in

The boat leaves before 1 pm on the first day, with transfers between the airport and the harbour.

Check out

On the last night the boat returns to the end harbour, so guests can catch early domestic flights.

INCLUDED

What your trip covers

INCLUDED IN THE TRIP PRICE	NOT INCLUDED
Nitrox	Flights and hotels
Weights and weight belts	Wine and spirits
12 litre tanks	Massages
Inflatable kayak	Laundry
Beer, soft drinks, juices, Italian coffee, premium tea and snacks	
Transfers between the airport and the harbour in both directions	
Guided diving with the Cruise Director and dive masters	







WORTH KNOWING

Key notes

Good to know

The itinerary is decided by the Cruise Director as the boat cruises, based on the weather, the dive conditions, guests' requests and the schedules of other liveaboards.

Good to know

Four dive masters go with guests on the dives, usually one guide to every four divers, and solo diving is not allowed.

Good to know

Every diver carries a GPS marine rescue device for the whole trip, the dive staff are trained in Emergency First Response and oxygen is on board.