

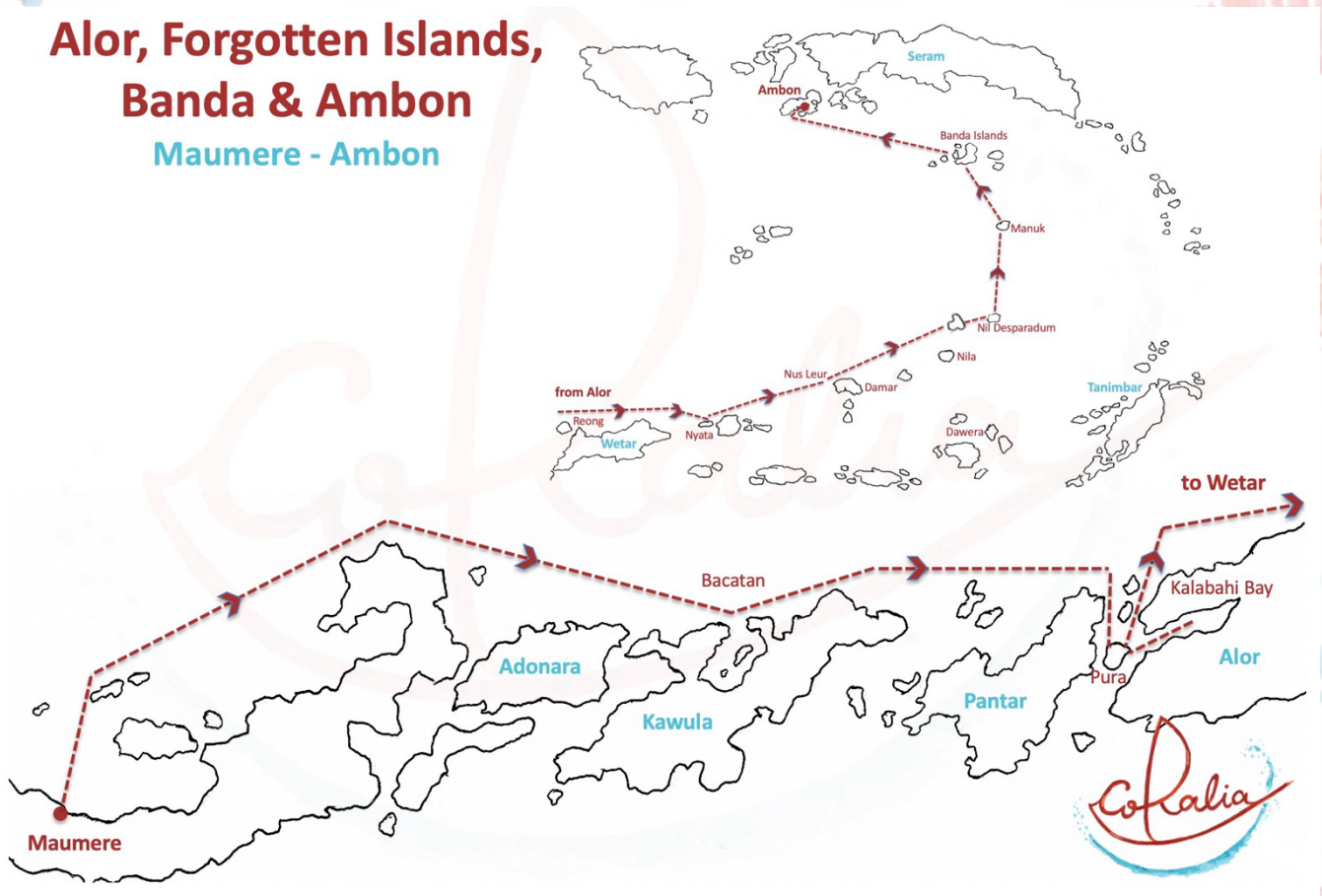
Sample Itinerary: Alor, Forgotten Islands, Banda, Ambon

from: Maumere, to: Ambon

12 nights: approximately 34-36 dives

Please note: this is a sample itinerary that might change without further notice. Our Cruise Directors may adapt the itinerary to guarantee the best possible experience according to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances.

Alor, Forgotten Islands, Banda & Ambon Maumere - Ambon



Maumere – Kawula

Starting from Maumere on the island of Flores, we will head straight to our first stop with an overnight crossing to Bacatan, which is encompassed in the large area known as Alor. At the entrance to the big bay is a dive site called Tanjung Bacatan. A drift dive will take you past a wall full of sea fans and sponges with a chance to see schooling jacks and pelagics such as eagle rays, tunas and sharks. Inside the big bay of Kawula Island are the sea mount of Takat Prau and the reef and sand of Padang Pasir. Takat Prau used to have a small wooden fishing boat on one side of the pinnacle. Now there are only a couple of wooden planks covered in sponges and corals left. Up in the shallows we have good chances to find some resident scorpion leaf fish. During the day, the reef at Padang Pasir holds delights such as pyjama cardinal fish, juvenile barramundi cod and stonefish, and at night star gazers, crocodile fish and demon stingers emerge from the sand.



Coralialia Liveaboard



Alor

We'll move on to the Pantar Strait, which is formed between the islands of Alor and Pantar. Alor is home to several species of rhinopias. Something about the conditions here make this area one of the top places in the world to see this rare fish. There are several dive sites where there is a good chance to find them.

The island of Pura lies right in the middle of the channel in the Pantar Strait. Drift dives here are a lot of fun. We will look out for passing sharks, wobbegong sharks hiding in the big coral heads and maybe even get lucky and see a mola. In Yan Village you will be greeted by ladies selling ikats, the traditional weaving of this area. The children on Pura make goggles out of wood and bottle tops and they love to greet divers on the surface and underwater – playing with the children is worth a single dive just in itself! We can also dive the sandy slopes in front of the village to look for rhinopias, enjoy the coral-covered wall and look for mandarin fish in the shallow hard coral reefs.

Kalabahi Bay is on the island of Alor. This bay is where you will experience the fantastic muck diving of Alor. Alongside rhinopias we will look for all types of octopus, frogfish, ghost pipefish, squid, cuttlefish, weird and wonderful shrimps and nudibranchs galore! Mucky Mosque, Rocky Church, Tanjung Pancoran and the Pertamina Jetty are some of the dive sites inside Kalabahi.

Alor is also a fascinating place above water – it is home to an ancient tribe called the Abui. During any cruise to Alor, Coralialia will take a half day off from diving to visit a traditional village to watch and take part in dances and ceremonies of these friendly people. This is an absolute highlight of any tour to Alor. There's a chance to buy some locally made souvenirs too. To cool off after this land tour, we'll do a last dive in the Pantar Strait area before heading towards the Forgotten Islands.

Forgotten Islands

Our first stop here will be the island of Wetar. The Forgotten Islands are an arc of islands that are part of a very remote archipelago in the east of the Banda Sea. These islands are accessible only by liveaboard and offer a truly exciting adventure! The Banda Sea is famous for its deep walls, healthy reefs, giant sponges, all in crystal clear blue water. This area is also now known for the chance to see schooling hammerhead sharks! However, these trips are not just about the 'big stuff'. If you want to look for macro critters, we can find things like leaf fish, moray eels, lots of different nudibranchs, ribbon eels, mantis shrimps as well the very special dragon and leopard shrimps.

Nyata is our next stop. Here the reefs are very healthy, especially the hard-coral formations in the shallows. Incredible fish action is attracted to the dive site here. We then move on to Nus Leur, which is a small atoll that has a steep sloping reef with a good chance to see Napoleon wrasse. The shallow coral garden is a very beautiful spot to do your safety stop. Damar is close by and has a great hard coral garden, perfect for an afternoon and night dive.

Close to the island of Nila is the sea mount of Nil Desperandum. It is surrounded by very deep water, so there is a chance to see large pelagics. Here we will look out for the now famous Banda Sea schooling hammerhead sharks. Absolutely massive barrel sponges and expanses of hard corals make these reefs very impressive. We will do three dives around Nila before crossing to Gili Manuk.



Manuk is the most easterly volcano in Indonesia and is home to lots of sea snakes. They are very curious, and divers will be approached by many snakes during the dives. But don't worry, they won't bite, they just take a look and keep on swimming! The dramatic rocky dive sites here can be very fishy and there is a chance to spot hammerhead sharks. Above the water frigate birds and brown boobies soar over the volcano. After three dives on Manuk, we head towards Banda.

Banda Islands

On the Banda Islands, also known as the Spice Islands, the land excursion is fascinating. Visit the museum, an old Dutch fort and a nutmeg plantation to learn about the incredible history of these remote islands. On the day we do this tour, we will offer three dives.

The diving here includes the typical deep walls of the Banda Sea, as well as sea mounts and drift dives along fish-packed reefs. At Batu Kapal, the entire pinnacle is covered with schools of pyramid butterfly fish and red-tooth triggerfish, intermingling with countless fusiliers, forming a vibrant spectacle of colours. Lava Flow is the name of the dive site at the foot of the iconic volcano of the Banda Islands. The pristine hard coral garden has been growing since the last eruption in 1988. Directly in front of the village Banda Neira, we will look for the spectacular mandarin fish on a sunset dive. There are also lots of beautiful critters to see, like colourful nudibranchs, different kinds of scorpionfish, and there might even be a frogfish around. Around the islands of Hatta and Ai are many dive sites with beautiful hard coral gardens, turtles, napoleon wrasses and bumphead parrotfish.

Because of the very deep water around these islands, you have good chances to see some bigger pelagics like dogtooth tuna, grey reef shark and maybe even a hammerhead shark. On the last day in the Banda Islands, we do two to three dives on the remote island of Suanggi, where we will try our luck to spot some of these amazing sharks. Afterwards, we start the long crossing through the Banda Sea towards Ambon Bay.

Ambon

The remainder of our adventure will be spent diving in Ambon Bay. Ambon is a world class muck diving destination. Inside the bay, there are numerous dive sites full of critters galore! The holy grail of fish, rhinopias, can be seen here along with frogfish, ghost pipefish, nudibranchs, leaf fish, zebra crabs, cuttlefish, all sorts of pipefish, mandarin fish, ribbon eels, other sorts of eels and cute juveniles like the barramundi cod, batfish and harlequin sweetlips. Our dive guides will be looking out for different types of shrimps such as bumblebee, harlequin, tiger and coleman shrimps. In the octopus family, we might see the very special wunderpus or mimic octopus. At night, coconut, starry night, white-V and long arm octopus come out to hunt. An excellent way to finish a trip!

Our last diving day will offer two action-packed dives in Ambon. We will spend the last evening in Ambon Bay and enjoy a special farewell dinner. The next morning, our tenders will take you back ashore to catch your flights.

For booking inquiries, please contact us at info@coralia-liveaboard.com.