

Sample Itinerary: Raja Ampat, Banda Islands & Ambon

from: Sorong, to: Ambon

11 nights: approximately 29-31 dives

12 nights: approximately 33-35 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.





Sorong – Dampier Strait (Raja Ampat)

Our crew will welcome you at Sorong airport. You will then proceed to Sorong harbour, where our tenders will take you to Coralialia. Once all guests are on board, we will make the final arrangements with the port authorities and head out towards Waigeo, Raja Ampat. We may spend our first night on board around Mioskon, where we can watch the thousands of bats leaving the island at sunset.

Raja Ampat is right in the heart of the Coral Triangle and has over 1,500 islands. Many scientists believe Raja Ampat has the most coral and fish diversity in the world! Raja means King and Ampat means Four – Four Kings. The four kings are the main islands in Raja Ampat – Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati and Misool.

We will spend the first day or couple of days exploring the famous Dampier Strait. This area offers a vast selection of world-class and adrenaline-packed dive sites, such as Cape Kri, Chicken Reef, Sardine Reef, Mioskon and Blue Magic, of which we will select the best options according to the current and weather conditions. Our guides can take you to places where the current meets the reef head on, where you can witness predatory fish like blacktip, whitetip and grey reef sharks, giant trevally, Spanish mackerel and dogtooth tuna hunting huge schools of smaller fish like fusiliers and bigeye jacks. On top of the abundant fish life, Central Raja Ampat offers fantastic macro dives, with chances to spot different species of pygmy seahorses, common seahorses, cuttlefish and octopuses.

On dive sites around the islands of Kri, Mansuar and Arborek we hope to encounter schools of sweetlips, napoleon wrasse, bumphead parrotfish and the endemic tasselled wobbegong shark. Sawandarek village lies on Mansuar Island and offers a spectacular reef and jetty dive. Here we can witness Papua Explorers' successful coral restoration project and visit the resident turtles. Arborek is a well-known jetty and night dive and boasts impressive marine life such as giant clams, schooling batfish and crocodile fish. The well-known manta aggregation sites of Manta Sandy and Manta Ridge are also in this area.

Fam Islands (Raja Ampat)

The next day will start in Penemu area. Famous Melissa's Garden awaits us with its spectacular, healthy, and wide-spread hard coral plateau, completely covered in colourful anthias and damsel fish. At Keruo Wall, we can admire large gorgonian sea fans and lovely reef tops. A short hike to Penemu viewpoint offers a spectacular view of the lagoons and its surrounding islands. We offer two dives on that day, and after visiting the viewpoint, we start cruising down south to Misool.

Misool (Raja Ampat)

Misool's small surrounding islands are a soft-coral paradise and a famous part of Raja Ampat. With its abundance of stunning dive sites and the natural beauty of karst limestone and jungle-clad islands, this area invites us to linger for a couple, or depending on the trip length, even several days.



Misool can be divided into many areas, where we can spend the whole day at a selection of amazing dive sites. Daram is in the very east of these islands and has inviting names such as Candy Store, An-diamo and Warna Berwarna (meaning Colourful Colour!). The sea fan forests here have to be seen to be believed!

In the iconic areas of Boo, Fiabecet and Yuliet, we may look through the iconic Boo Windows, with tonnes of fish surrounding us. We might explore fabulous dive sites like Shadow Reef (aka Magic Mountain), Nudibranch Rock, Batu Kecil, Whale Rock, Boo West Corner and Yuliet Kecil. And if we are lucky, we see the majestic giant and/or reef manta rays around here. Admire large coral heads covered in soft corals, maybe spotting the famous Santa Claus pygmy seahorse, while schools of barracudas and batfish might pass by. Our eagle-eyed dive masters will look for the endemic walking shark (epaulette shark) on a night dive at Romeo or Yuliet Besar.

The areas of Sagof, Wagnab and Farondi offer us stunning underwater walls, overhangs and cave structures, plus amazing macro life, such as nudibranchs, flatworms, anemone crabs and all kinds of shrimps. In this area, we might visit the wonderful lagoons. These amazing geological structures come in iconic bee-hive-shaped karst limestone formations and hard-coral colonies at their base. If the tide is high enough, our crew will take you to the secret bay right at the back!

There are also lagoons at Wayilbatan, one of them is the Love Lagoon. If we visit this lagoon, we will do three dives on that day. The hike up the steep stairs is well worth the view – a blue heart shape. A drift dive through a channel covered in sea fans at Neptune Fan Sea is the perfect place to cool off after the hot walk. Wedding Cake and Barracuda Rock are other stunning dive sites in this area.

Misool – Pulau Koon – Banda Islands

It is a long crossing to Pulau Koon, off the eastern tip of Seram Island. So on the last day of diving in Misool, we will do two dives before heading south.

The dive site at Pulau Koon is called Too Many Fish, which is all the explanation you need! Large groupers hang out on the deep walls, and there are large schools of jacks and snappers. Reef sharks and big schools of batfish have been seen here. We will do two dives before we start the long cruise to the Banda Islands.

At 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.

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 dives on the remote island of Suanggi, where we will try our luck to spot some of these amazing sharks.

Banda Islands – Nusa Laut – Ambon

After the dives along the reef of Suanggi Island, we start our crossing through the Banda Sea towards Nusa Laut.

Nusa Laut is a small island close to Ambon, and the village here protects the fantastic dive site of Amet Reef. Eagle rays, a huge school of jacks, hammerhead sharks and even a Dugong have all been seen here. The reef is very healthy, and it is common to see bumphead parrotfish feeding in the shallows. The afternoon and night dive will be around the neighbouring island of Mamala.

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 more 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.