

## Sample Itinerary: Raja Ampat (Dampier Strait, Batanta & Kawe)

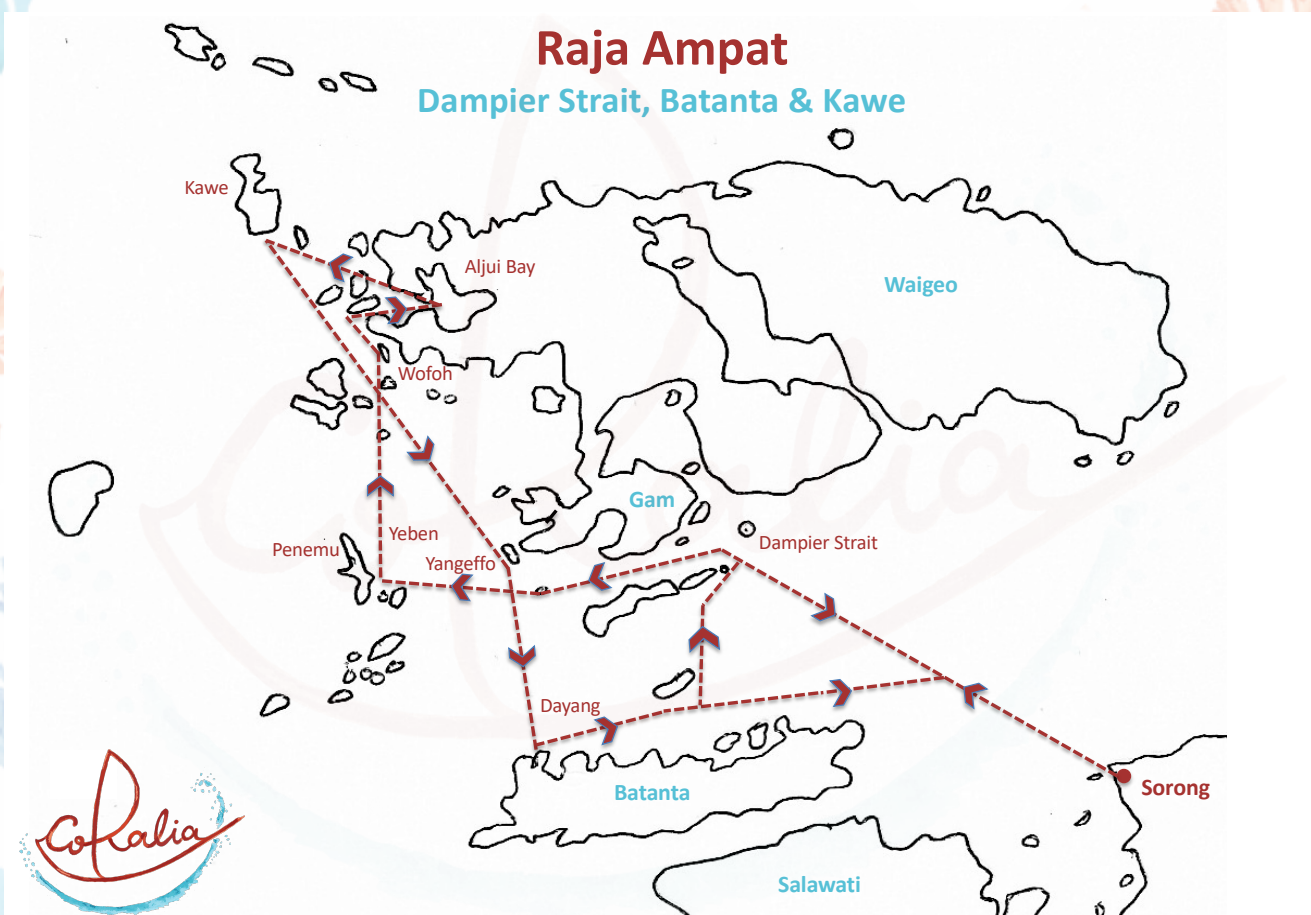
from: Sorong, to: Sorong

7 nights: approximately 19-21 dives

9 nights: approximately 27-29 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.

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.



### Sorong – Dampier Strait

Our crew will welcome you at Sorong airport. You will then proceed to Sorong harbour, where our tenders will take you to Coralia. 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.



Depending on the trip length, 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.

Moving east to west in the Dampier Strait, we may visit dive sites around the islands of Kri, Mansuar and Arborek, where 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. For those interested, there might be an opportunity to walk around the village at Sawandarek or Arborek.

## **Fam Islands**

The next day will be spent in Penemu area, where we offer three dives. 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. To cool off, we'll do a late afternoon dive at Batu Rufus, followed by a relaxed evening drinking cocktails and watching the sunset on deck.

## **Wofoh, Aljui Bay & Kawe**

Next, we make our way to Wofoh, an incredibly scenic area with unique dive sites. On one side, we will have the backdrop of Wofoh and Taman Wofoh, two small islands with pristine white-sand beaches, and on the other side we can take in vistas of the forested mountains and valleys of West Waigeo. The dive sites at Wofoh are famous for stunning black coral forests, where schooling fish are on the constant run from larger predatory fish. The walls are interesting with ledges and shallow caverns, where it is not uncommon to find wobbegong sharks.

We will then head into beautiful Aljui Bay, which is famous for its outstanding macro diving and plentiful purple soft corals. There may also be an opportunity to take a little tour to visit the pearl farm and learn all about how pearls are grown. During the night dive, it is not unusual to find macro favourites like special octopus and cuttlefish species, colourful nudibranchs and epaulette walking sharks.



The next day, we will do two to three dives close to the island of Kawe. Eagle Rock is our first stop and is named after the majestic eagles circling above the small, rocky islands. Underwater, divers can encounter creatures like wobbegong sharks, bamboo sharks, batfish, schooling fusiliers and, if we get lucky, even the occasional manta ray! At Black Rock, soft corals bloom in a variety of colours from the rocky outcrops, amazing us as Raja Ampat's full abundance comes to life in a most vibrant display. Schooling surgeon fish await us together with sweetlips, whitetip reef sharks and dogtooth tunas on the hunt. After these spectacular dives in Kawe, we head back down to Aljui or Wofoh for a night dive.

## **Yeben & Yangeffo**

Next, we will head to Yeben area. Expect beautiful coral bommies dotted around a white-sand bottom, which creates a unique scenery. These healthy, shallow reefs attract an enormous amount of reef fish and give shelter to cuttlefish blending in, with blacktip reef sharks patrolling around.

Yangeffo Island is situated on the western tip of Gam Island and creates a sheltered bay. This small area has multiple top-notch dive sites. Famous ones like Citrus Ridge and Mayhem always amaze divers with their vibrancy and biodiversity. The area here is probably so abundant due to the surrounding mangroves. Beautiful hard and soft corals grow under and among the roots of the trees. They create a distinctive environment and are home for species like archer fish, cardinal fish and different types of juvenile reef fish. If the tides are right, we may visit this fragile ecosystem, which provides special photo opportunities. Our crew will be happy to take you out in the tender to snorkel in the mangroves in between dives.

## **Batanta – Sorong**

Next, we head to Dayang on the northwest of Batanta. Dayang is at the entrance to one of Batanta's many scenic bays, where we might come across more wobbegong sharks and get to see great macro life, including ribbon eels, ghost pipefish and unusual nudibranchs. Dayang Island also offers a great chance to encounter manta rays, the gentle giants, at their cleaning stations.

Moving east along the northern coast of Batanta, there are some fantastic drift and pinnacle dives with schooling fish, lots of fusiliers, napoleon wrasse, turtles and reef sharks. On longer trips, we may head inside a bay to a very special anchor spot for the night. As the sun drops, the surrounding forested hills become alive, and Blyth's Hornbills emerge to return to their roosting places. After witnessing this spectacle, we will do another great macro night dive on a sandy slope looking for critters.

Our last diving day will offer two more action-packed dives on Batanta or in the Dampier Strait, before we start travelling back to Sorong harbour, where we will spend the last evening and enjoy a special farewell dinner. The next morning, our tenders will take you back ashore to catch your flights.