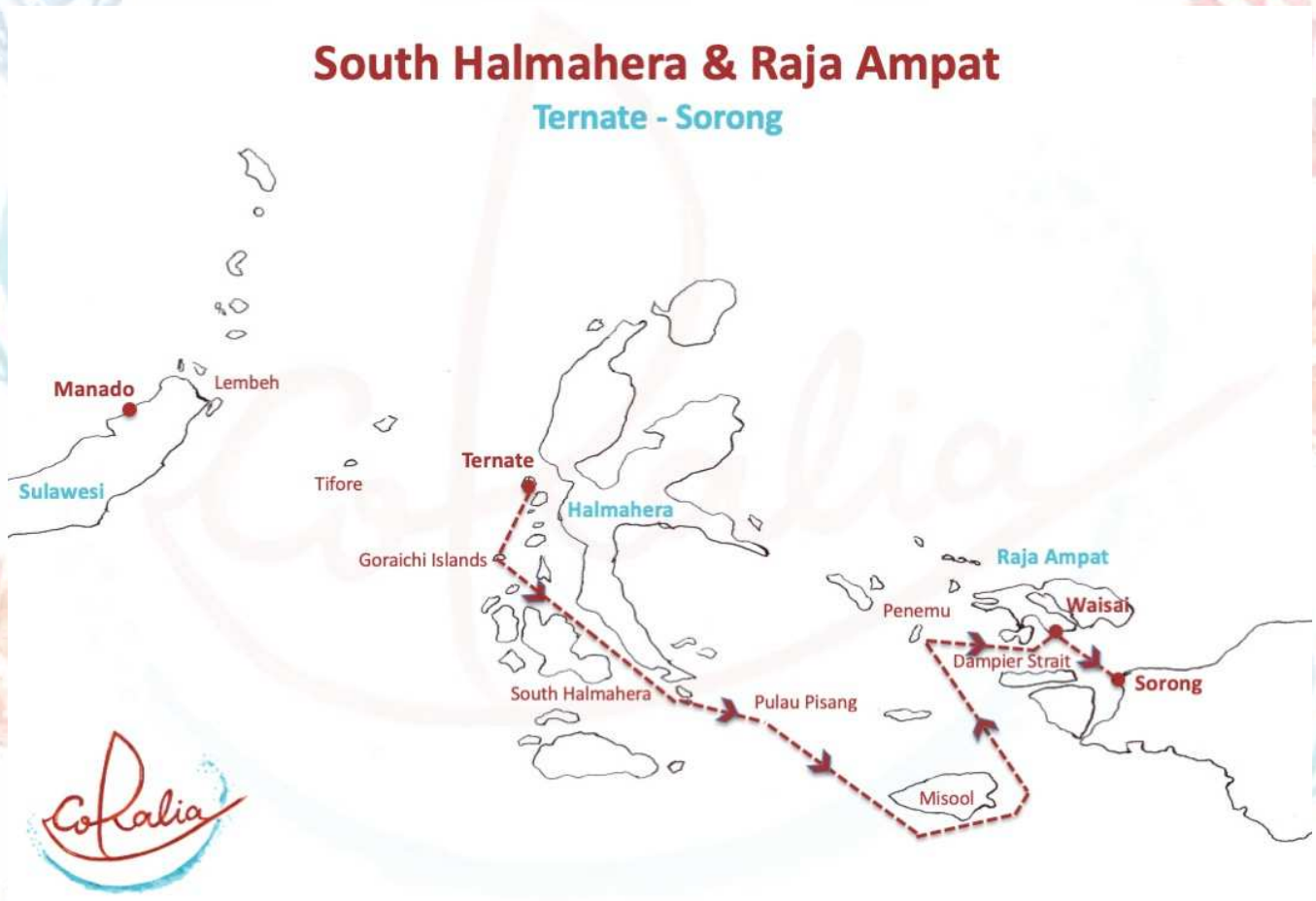


## Sample Itinerary: South Halmahera & Raja Ampat

from: Ternate, to: Sorong

**Please note:** this is a sample itinerary. Itineraries may change without further notice due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances.



The first five days of the trip will be spent around South Halmahera. There are pinnacles, walls and coral gardens to enjoy. The pinnacles are full of schooling fish, the walls covered in stunning soft corals and sea fans and reef sharks swim around the coral gardens. Napoleon wrasse, bumphead parrotfish, turtles, blacktips, whitetips, schools of jacks and barracuda all populate the reefs here. There are black sandy slopes providing excellent critter filled muck diving, especially for the night dives.

We will start out diving in Ternate. There are a few wrecks in front of the mosque at a good dive depth, perfect for a check out dive. Nudibranch, crocodile fish, ghost pipefish have all been spotted here.

The Goraici Islands with white sandy beaches are our next stop. The people here have been actively protecting their reefs here, keeping them healthy and in good condition. The reefs are packed with fish and there are pristine hard coral gardens. At another dive site there is a wall covered in corals where black tip reef sharks cruise around.



Pantini Strait is a channel between Halmahera and Bacan Island. The islands in the Pantini Strait are rarely visited. There are healthy reefs covered in orange soft corals and large coral heads. Large numbers of anthias add colour to the reefs. Currents can bring in reef sharks including grey reef sharks, plus tuna and barracuda. There is a great drift dive through a channel. Walking sharks can be seen on the night dive.

On Bacan we can offer a land excursion organised by the Tourism Department of South Halmahera. There is an old Portuguese fort, traditional dancing and a local market. Southwest Bacan is where we will concentrate our diving for the next day and a half. Stunning walls and canyons are open to the ocean so we can expect some currents on some dive sites. Sea fans, soft corals and large coral heads decorate the coral gardens where you can see reef sharks, napoleons, bumphead parrotfish and large schools of barracuda and jacks. There is a good muck night dive here too.

Between South Halmahera and Misool in Raja Ampat, there are two small rocks and two islands. This area is called Pisang Island. Here we will do two dives before traveling overnight to South Halmahera. If the current is running this area can be very fishy. They are large coral heads in the shallows and pretty soft corals in the deep. A school of bumphead parrotfish live here and we might see some passing pelagics like tuna or mackerel.

Next stop is Misool in Raja Ampat where we will do six dives over one and a half days. 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.

Misool's small surrounding islands are soft coral paradise and another area of Raja Ampat. With its abundance of stunning dive sites and the natural beauty of karst limestone, jungle clad islands, this area invites us to linger for 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, Andiamo and Warna Berwarna (meaning Colourful Colour!) The sea fans forests here have to be seen to be believed!

In the iconic areas of Boo, Fiabecet and Yuliet we look through the iconic Boo Windows, with tonnes of fish surrounding us. We 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 Reef Manta rays around here. Admire large coral heads covered in soft corals, maybe spotting the famous Santa Clause Pygmy Seahorse, while schools of Barracudas and Batfish might pass by. Our eagle-eyed dive masters will look for a 'Walking Shark' (Epaulette Shark) on a night dive at Romeo.

Sagof, Wagmab, Farondi offer us stunning underwater walls, overhangs and cave structures plus amazing macro, such as Nudibranchs, Flatworms, Anemone Crabs and all kinds of shrimps. In this area, we have the opportunity to visit the wonderful Lagoons, a must-see place, with its iconic bee-hive-shaped karst limestone formations and hard coral colonies at the bases of these amazing geological structures. If the tide is high enough our crew will take you to the secret bay right at the back!



# Coralia Liveaboard



There are also lagoons at Wayilbatan, including the Love Lagoon. The hike up the steep stairs is well worth the view. 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.

Next we travel to Penemu. Famous Melissa's Garden awaits us with its spectacular, healthy and wide-spread hard coral plateau in the shallows. At Keruo Wall we can admire large gorgonian sea fans and lovely reef tops, and we might also explore My Reef and Batu Rufus. A short hike to the viewpoint of Penemu offers a spectacular view of the lagoons and its surrounding islands.

The remainder of our adventure will be spent diving in the famous Dampier Strait. We will select the best dives sites for the experience of the divers and according to the current and weather conditions. Here you can expect to dive at some world class, adrenalin-packed dive sites such as Cape Kri, Chicken Reef, Sleeping Barracuda, Sardine Reef, Mioskon and Blue Magic. Our guides can take you to places where the current meets the reef head on, where you can witness predatory fish like for black tip, white tip and grey reef sharks, giant trevally, Spanish mackerel and dog tooth tuna hunting huge schools of smaller fish like fusiliers and big eye jacks. Sea mounts and long reefs offer this hunting action as well as sightings of bumphead parrotfish, napoleon wrasse, turtles and manta rays.

At the other end of the Dampier Strait is Lalosi, a drift dive completely full of fusiliers and with a chance to see wobbegong sharks. The well-known manta aggregation sites of Manta Sandy and Manta Ridge are also in this area. Sawandarek is on the island of Mansuar and the dive on the reef and jetty in from of the village is a fantastic dive. You can also visit Papua Explorer's coral restoration project here. For those interested we can take a walk around the village at Sawandarek.

Our last day will offer two more action-packed dives in the Dampier Strait. After lunch, we make our way back to Sorong for hearty goodbyes.