

RAJA AMPAT – BANDA SEA – AMBON

Raja Ampat has been documented as one of the last frontiers of unspoilt diving. The archipelago's pristine reefs are not only rich, but the region also proves to have the greatest coral reef biodiversity for its size in the world. The Bird's Head Seascape holds: 2,500 islands and reefs, 1,320 fish species, 550 coral species and all that is yet to be discovered.

Raja Ampat is the seascape's crown jewel. Fittingly, the name means "four kings." The four main islands or "Kings" of the archipelago: Waigeo in the north, Salawati west of Sorong, Batanta north of Salawati, and Misool in the south.

Visit Waigeo and dive the famous Dampier Strait, some of Raja Ampat's most action-packed dive sites. Exhilarating current dives and reliable manta cleaning stations where you can experience these majestic giant pelagics dance for hours along with many other treasures such as the tasselled wobbegong shark.

Dive the beautiful and unique mangrove areas of Yanggefo and Gam islands where the tips of healthy acropora corals contrast with the lush green of the mangroves making excellent split images, while just beneath the surface schools of archerfish hunt among the forest of mangrove roots. Batanta Island, known for its excellent muck diving and amazing variety of nudibranchs including the endemic Thecacera sp. Black sand slopes full of wonderful critters and frequent sightings of the rare mimic octopus. Misool area in southern Raja Ampat is a must for those who enjoy radiant coloured soft corals. There are stunning walls, pinnacles and reefs with masses of huge gorgonian fans and sea fans hosting an array of the famous pygmy seahorses. The vast area and variety of dive sites makes it the ideal location to be discovered via liveaboard.

Dive the famous Banda islands and visit the main port in Banda Neira where there is so much to see, learn and explore. Finish this fantastic trip in the second capital of muck diving Ambon Bay.



RAJA AMPAT – BANDA SEA – AMBON WITH



MV MERMAID I

⌚ 12 days / 11 nights
🤿 32 Dives



MV MERMAID II

⌚ 12 days / 11 nights
🤿 32 Dives

DAY	ITINERARY WITH MV MERMAID II RAJA AMPAT – BANDA SEA – AMBON	DIVES
DAY 1	Check-in on board Mermaid II. As guest arrivals take place all through the day depending on flights, you are welcome to board when you arrive and spend some time unpacking and setting up your equipment, etc. Following the boat and safety briefing, Mermaid II will cruise for 5 to 6 hours to the Dampier Strait area, 40 nautical miles.	Dives —
DAY 2-3	The next two days will be spent around the Dampier Strait, the strait between the island of Waigeo, the Bird's Head Peninsula and the northern side of Batanta Island. The Dampier Strait is known for a huge variety of diving, from giant mantas to mangroves, beautiful reefs, many pinnacles and sea mounts covered in schooling fish, aggregations of sweetlips, schooling barracudas, bumphead parrotfish, fusiliers and lots of wobbegong sharks. It is also a great location for critters and macro subjects, with several species of pygmy seahorses and a large variety of nudibranchs. There are also several jetties to do some great night dives, where you can see Raja epaulette sharks, toadfish, frogfish and crocodile fish. Cruise overnight to Misool, 90 nautical miles.	Dives 7
DAY 4-6	The next three days will be spent around the island of Misool, where there are literally hundreds of dive sites. Misool is heaven for wide angle photographers. The prettiest soft coral reefs in the world are located in Misool. In addition, there are multiple pinnacles surrounded by masses of schooling fish, barracudas, jacks and snappers. There will be some excursions with the tenders through some amazing inner lagoons, with fantastic scenery and wildlife sightings. Cruise overnight to Pulau Koon, 100 nautical miles.	Dives 11
DAY 7	Pulau Koon is a small island on the southeast of Ceram, half way between Raja Ampat and the Banda Islands. Here you will find walls covered in soft corals and sandy slopes with hard coral bommies. But the most interesting feature of this island is the amount of schooling fish and pelagics, including barracudas, bigeye trevallies, aggregations of red snappers, pompanos, batfish and giant groupers. Cruise overnight to Manuk, 108 nautical miles.	Dives 3
DAY 8	Manuk, an active volcano about 55 nautical miles south of the Banda Islands, is one of two places in Indonesia where there are huge aggregations of sea snakes: Chinese sea snakes and banded sea kraits. It is an incredible experience to dive surrounded on all sides by sea snakes. The island is surrounded by black sandy slopes with hard coral reefs and volcanic ridges covered in gorgonians with zillions of fusiliers and pelagic fishes such as Spanish mackerels and dogtooth tunas passing through. Cruise overnight to the Banda Islands, 55 nautical miles.	Dives 3
DAY 9-10	The next two days will be spent in the Banda Islands, formerly known as the Spice Islands. Many of the dive sites around the Banda islands are wall dives. The walls are covered in massive gorgonians, soft corals, barrel sponges and have some very interesting swim throughs. But there are other attractive dive sites such as pinnacles with enormous groups of schooling pyramid butterflyfish, triggerfish and pelagic fishes such as tunas passing through, spectacular hard coral reefs next to the volcano, and great muck dives with lots of mandarin fish at the local jetty. The Banda Islands are much more than diving. It is also a cultural and historical experience. You will spend one morning walking around the village of Banda Neira the main island, with a local guide, visiting the local museum, the old Dutch fort, the old colonial governor's house, the local fish market and a nutmeg plantation, where you will have breakfast. Cruise overnight to Nusa Laut (77 nautical miles) or to Ambon (110 nautical miles).	Dives 6
DAY 11	The last diving day of the trip will be around either the island of Nusa Laut or in Ambon Bay. Nusa Laut is a small island, next to the island of Saparua, which has some beautiful hard coral fringing reefs as well as walls similar to those of the Banda Islands. Or, you will spend the day around Ambon, where there are several options such as wrecks, caves or some really interesting muck dives looking for Rhinopias, frogfish (including the psychedelic frogfish), harlequin shrimps and many other critters.	Dives 2
DAY 12	Disembark at 8 am after breakfast. Mermaid II staff will transfer you to the airport or local hotel in Ambon. This is a sample itinerary and is subject to changes beyond the operator's control. The exact itinerary for your cruise may be adapted to best suit the weather conditions, tides and currents, season and other prevailing events.	Dives —
TOTAL DIVES: 32		