

MV AMBAI

Forgotten Islands - Ring Of Fire - Raja Ampat

Saumlaki to Sorong | Banda Sea, Ring of Fire and Raja Ampat

Schooling hammerhead sharks roam the Banda Sea, and the drop offs around its tiny islands are where they show up.

Tunas, Spanish mackerel, giant trevallies and schools of barracudas are part of the show, over steep walls of hard corals and huge sponges.

Around the volcanic island of Manuk sea snakes are everywhere, and sulphur traces of volcanic activity can be seen underwater.

At the Banda Islands a dive along the lava flow of the fire mountain shows how corals and sponges have grown back since its last eruption in 1988.

The trip ends in Misool, with forests of gorgonians, soft corals and intense fish life.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
13 days / 12 nights	Saumlaki	Sorong	Advanced Open Water, 30 dives







Your route

STOP 1

Saumlaki to Banda

Starting from Saumlaki on the Tanimbar island, we will reach first the island of Dai.
This granite island, part of the Babar island group, offers fantastic dive sites with great fish life.
Going North we will reach Serua which consists in two small islands lost in the middle of the Banda Sea.

STOP 1

Saumlaki to Banda (continued)

We will spend two fabulous diving days around those islands where the schooling hammerheads often show up on the drop offs.
In order to maximise the chances of encounter, we dive very early in the morning and a bit late in the afternoon.
The depth is about 35 meters max.
At the West of Serua lays a big reef without any land, with the attractive name of “Nil desperandum”.
This is another spot for hammerheads and a fantastic drop off.

STOP 2

Manuk

North is Manuk island, a small volcanic island where a lot of sea birds come for nesting.
Underwater the sulphur traces of volcanic activity can be seen.
The diving signature is the abundance of sea snakes, both Aipysurus sp and Laticauda.
Hammerheads are also roaming around, but generally in small groups only.
Our next step are the Banda islands, where the diving is very rewarding.
One of the highlight is a dive along the lava flow of the “Gunung Api” (the fire mountain); the last eruption was in 1988 and we can see how the corals and huge sponges did grow back since then.
We will stop in Banda Neira, for a land visit.
The island of Suanggi, about 20 NM from Banda, is another hot spot for hammerheads schools.



STOP 3

Banda to Sorong

From Banda to Sorong We’ll then head for the East tip of Seram islands, where is the famous dive site named “too many fish”.
This long drop off is well known for its fish life: schools of barracudas, trevallies, large tunas passing by, and eventually schooling hammerheads.
The shallower part, a sandy slope with bommies, is home to many huge groupers and schools of batfish.

STOP 4

Misool

We then reach the island of Misool at the Southern part of Raja Ampat.
We spend the last 2 days of the trip there and dive all the best spots.
Gorgonian forests, lot of soft corals, and an intense fish life are the signature of this fantastic area.

ROUTE MAP

Route map



THE DIVING

Diving and snorkelling

The Banda Sea is one of the best Indonesian dive destinations. It offers a great variety of dive sites among beautiful tiny islands and large reefs. Many of the dive sites are steep drop off with impressive hard corals, huge sponges of all kinds, pastel black corals bushes and an intense fish life. Tunas, Spanish mackerel, giant trevallies, schools of barracudas and other pelagic fish are part of the show, together with the occurrence of the hammerheads, either in small groups or in big shoals. Some other dives sites inside bays or on fringing reefs are more critters oriented.

Misool is among the hottest spot of Indonesian diving. The abundance of sea life, both fixed fauna such as corals and gorgonians along the lush reef, as well as the stunning quantity and diversity of fish swimming above is just astonishing. The dive sites underwater topographies are also varied and interesting, filled with dramatic pinnacles, long ridges, walls, hidden caves, rock formations, azure lagoons and much more.

The fauna ranges from the tiny Pygmy Seahorse to the oceanic manta ray. Raja Ampat's signature are the huge schools of fish: clouds of fusiliers and balls of baitfish that attract predators like tunas, trevallies and barracudas; schools of the

inquisitive spadefish, schools of sweetlips, groups of bumphead parrotfish, napoleon wrasses, etc. Reef sharks are very much present on the reefs; the carpet shark or Wobegon is ubiquitous, laying on a coral or under a rock behind a cloud of glassfish. The walking shark (Epaulette shark) can often be seen during night dives. Mantas are often seen on three different dive sites.

A minimum of 36 dives (3 dives per day) is offered during the trip, including at least 7 night dives. The last dive is the Penultimate day at 8 am.

SNORKELLING

Our trips are open to snorkelers. Most of the dive sites offer great snorkeling opportunities with a lot to see in shallow waters, and we offer specific guidance for snorkelers.





ACTIVITIES

Activities

Banda islands were at the centre of the spices trades during the XVI century. They were the original Spice Islands and the most coveted destination on earth, particularly by the Dutch and Portuguese who colonized the islands and exported the indigenous nutmeg and cloves. We will stop on the island of Banda Neira and visit the village, the fort and the museum for a glimpse of the Banda history.

In Misool, we will visit the ranger's station and snorkel in front of their beach in a natural shark nursery where small black tips are swimming around in one meter of crystal clear water. A short trek to the view point of the "love lagoon" (a lagoon in shape of a heart!) will be offered. We may also visit a cave near Farondi.

You can also ask a boatman to bring you ashore at any time, as long as the schedule allows it. Our four complementary kayaks and paddles are also available to go on shore or in the lagoons whenever the boat is anchored.

All these activities are subject to weather conditions as well as the planned daily schedule and itinerary.





CONDITIONS

Weather, visibility, temperature and currents

Weather

End September marks the end of the South east monsoon, but we may experience some remaining SE winds. As we are very close to the equator, a few showers are always probable.

Visibility

Misool: Average to good Banda Sea: Average to good

Temperature

The sea temperature will be 27° to 29°C (80 to 84°F) in the Band Sea, and should be closer to 29°C /84°F in Misool

Currents

On this itinerary the currents are generally moderate on most of the dive sites, but yes there will be some consistent currents in some occasions. the crew has a long experience diving these dive sites and always pays attention to dive in the right places at the right time to avoid difficult or dangerous currents. Before each dive, our guides conduct current checks so that our briefings will always inform you about the up-to -the-minute diving conditions.



DIVE ORGANISATION

How the diving is organised on Ambai

- Due to the large number of dives performed during the trip and the remoteness of the location, we urge divers to stay within no-deco limits, to not exceed a maximum depth of 35 meters, and to perform a safety stop at the end of every dive.
- Depending on the guests' dive experience, interests (photography, macro, etc), and use of Nitrox (free for certified divers), the Cruise Director will arrange the diving groups. These groups are made of up to four divers maximum and a dive guide. The dive guides are rotating on a daily basis. Each diver is given a dive tank (DIN & INT available, no need for adapters) and their own dive station for the duration of the cruise.
- A briefing will be conducted by the Cruise Director or one of the guides before each dive. It will describe the site topography, depths, currents, and potential hazards, as well as the marine life we expect to encounter.
- The staff carries your tank between the MV Ambai and the dinghies. Onboard the dinghies, the tanks are placed into slots and the guide will help you to gear up just before you back-roll into the water.
- Identification books of flora and local fauna are available on board, and the dive guides will always help you identify the animals you have seen during the dives.

- Some dive equipment are available for rent on board. However, all sizes are not necessarily available, so please book it prior to the cruise.
- Our cruises are open to divers with a Padi Advanced Open Water or equivalent with at least 30 logged dives. Less experienced divers can also participate with special supervision that needs to be arranged before the cruise.
- Insurance covering medical evacuation and diving accidents is highly recommended. Divers will be filling out a statement of medical fitness for dive activities onboard.

ON BOARD

Service and cuisine

SERVICE

Behind the MV Ambai's success, there is a professional, discreet, smiling, and very friendly crew. Our team will treat you with special attention, assist you with whatever you need, and of course carry your tank & gear. Most of our crew have been working with us for many years.

THE CUISINE

Mixing eastern and western specialties, our cuisine is a "fusion" of the best of both that will never let you go hungry.

Should you have specific requests, or a particular dietary need, (vegetarian or allergy, for example), our chefs will adapt the meals for your greatest pleasure.

THE TEAM AT YOUR SERVICE

- 1 cruise director / diving instructor
- 17 crew members including 4 dive guides

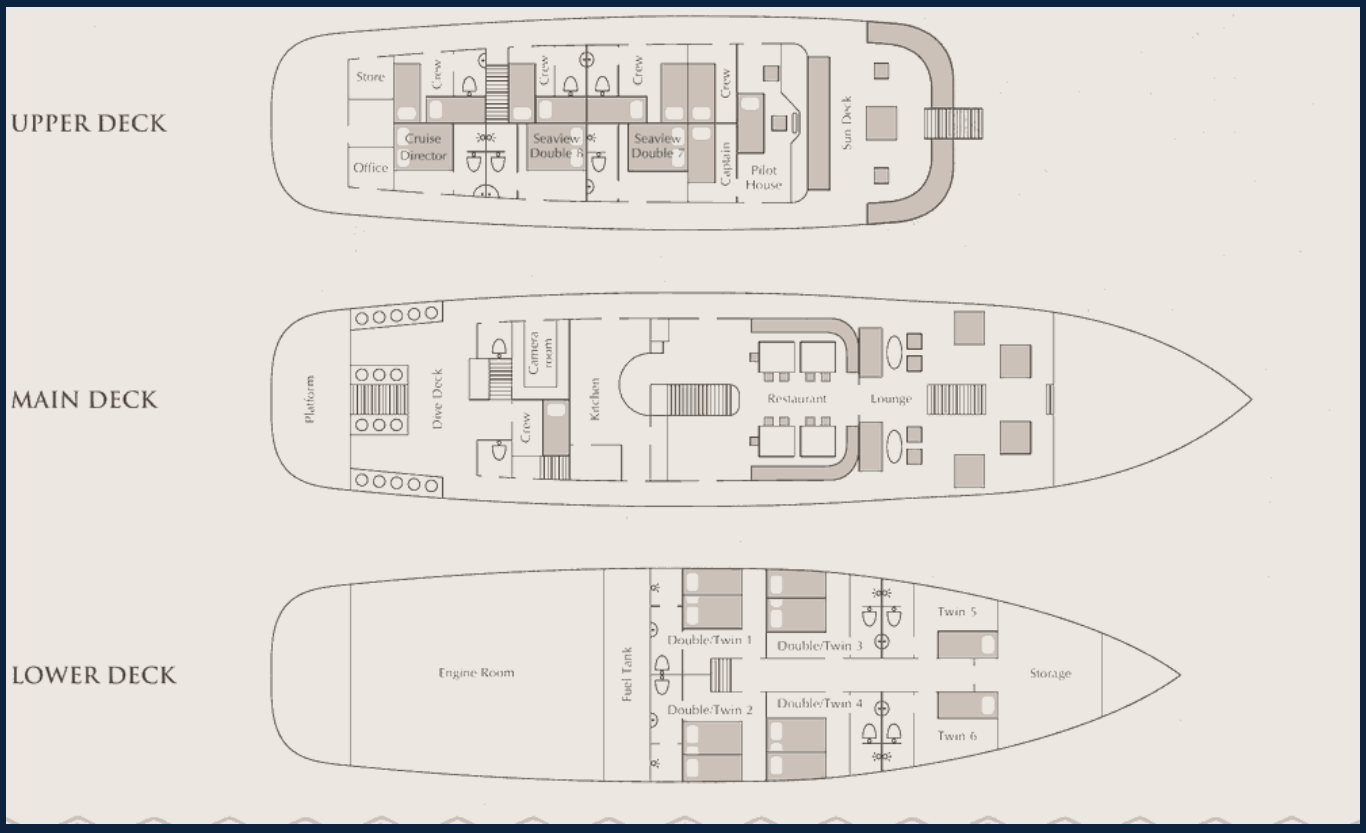






DECK PLANS

Deck plans



PAYMENTS

Payments on board

All payments on board are made in cash, as credit cards cannot be accepted. All major currencies are accepted (EUR, USD, AUD, CHF and IDR), and prepayment by wire transfer can be arranged.

The park and port fees and the fuel surcharge are mandatory and are paid on board.

Tips: tipping should reflect your level of satisfaction with the service on board. The usual amount in the industry is 10% or more of the cruise rate.

INCLUDED

What your trip covers

INCLUDED IN THE TRIP PRICE

- Transfers between the boat and the closest airport
- Accommodation in a shared twin or double bed cabin
- All meals & snacks, drinking water, soft drinks and hot drinks
- All guided dives (1 guide /4 divers maximum)
- Aluminium tank (12 liters), weights, and belts
- Free Nitrox

NOT INCLUDED

- Park & port fees, fuel surcharge
- International and domestic flights
- Alcoholic beverages (you can bring your own)
- Diving equipment rental, 100 cf (15 L) tank
- Crew gratuities
- Massages
- Laundry