

MV AMBAI

Halmahera - Misool - Banda Sea

Ternate to Ambon | Halmahera, Misool and the Banda Sea

Three of Indonesia's best dive regions in one trip: Halmahera, Misool in Raja Ampat and the Banda Sea.

In Halmahera, bommies covered with colourful soft corals are patrolled by blacktip sharks and tunas, and strait currents bring intense life to some of the most beautiful dive sites in Indonesia.

Misool is astonishing for its gorgonian forests and quantity of fish, from the tiny pygmy seahorse to the oceanic manta ray.

In the Banda Sea, steep drop offs of hard corals and huge sponges hold schooling hammerhead sharks, in small groups or big shoals.

The last day brings fantastic muck diving in the bay of Ambon.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
15 days / 14 nights	Ternate	Ambon	Advanced Open Water, 30 dives







Your route

STOP 1

Ternate to Misool

Starting from Ternate, we first reach the group of Goraici islands where many seamounts offer gorgeous dive sites: bommies covered with colorful soft corals, blacktip sharks, tunas and other pelagics.

STOP 1

Ternate to Misool (continued)

Going more South came another group of islands (Kusu isl, Sale isl.), at the very North of Patientie strait.
The strait currents forced around the islands brings an intense life to those dive sites which are definitely among the most beautiful of Indonesia.
The next stop is at Pisang islands, an isolated island with a few satellite rocks, home to intense underwater life: millions of trigger fish, schools of surgeonfish, bump head parrotfish, Spanish mackerels and tunas passing by.

STOP 2

Misool

We then reach Misool in Raja Ampat for three days to see gorgonian forests, lot of soft corals, intense fish life.



STOP 3

Misool to Ambon

Then we head to Koon, at the eastern tip of Seram islands.
The dive site there have been named “too many fish”.
A drop off with schools of trevallies, surgeonfish, barracudas, and hopefully hammerhead sharks.
On the upper part there is a sandy slope with coral bommies, some huge groupers and schools of spadefish.

STOP 4

Banda Islands

Next step are the Banda islands.
The diving there 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 do a land visit to Banda Neira, visiting the village, the museum and the fort.

STOP 5

Serua

If the weather forecast and sea conditions are good enough the trip will go down south until Serua island, the best place for encounters with schooling hammerheads.
Two days of fabulous diving around this tiny island lost in the middle of the Banda Sea.
From Serua we will be back to Suanggi island, a few miles away from the Banda islands it is also a great spot for hammerhead sharks and other pelagics.
Our last day of diving is on the island of Nusa Laut or in the bay of Ambon for some muck diving.

ROUTE MAP

Route map



THE DIVING

Diving and snorkelling

Halmahera is one of the best Indonesian dive destinations. It offers a great variety of dive sites among beautiful islands still largely covered with tropical forests. Many of the dive sites are sea mounts with a rocky substrate and plenty of large soft coral covered bommies in all different colors. The fish life is intense: as an Halmahera signature, black tip sharks are seen patrolling around on most of the dives. Tunas, Spanish mackerel, giant trevallies and other pelagic fish are part of the show. Napoleon wrasses, bumphead parrotfish, groupers, schools of surgeon and spadefish are also well represented. Other type of dive site includes great critters dives and beautiful fringing reefs.

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 glass-fish. The walking shark (Epaulette shark) can often be seen during night dives. Mantas are often seen on three different dive sites.

The Banda Sea offers a great variety of dive sites among beautiful tiny islands and large reefs. You will dive on 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 trevallies and barracudas as well as other pelagic fish, together with the occurrence of the hammerhead sharks, either in small groups or in big shoals. Other type of dive site includes great critters dives and beautiful fringing reefs. End of September marks the end of the South East Monsoon, and the upwellings have driven a lot of nutrients and it is the best time for encounters with the schools of hammerhead sharks and a great fish life. The bay of Ambon at the very end of the trip will be an unique opportunity for fantastic critter diving.

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

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. 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.

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 South East winds. As we are very close to the equator, a few showers are always probable.

Visibility

Halmahera: Good to excellent Misool: Average Banda Sea: Average to good

Temperature

The sea temperature will be 26° to 28°C (80 to 84°F).

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

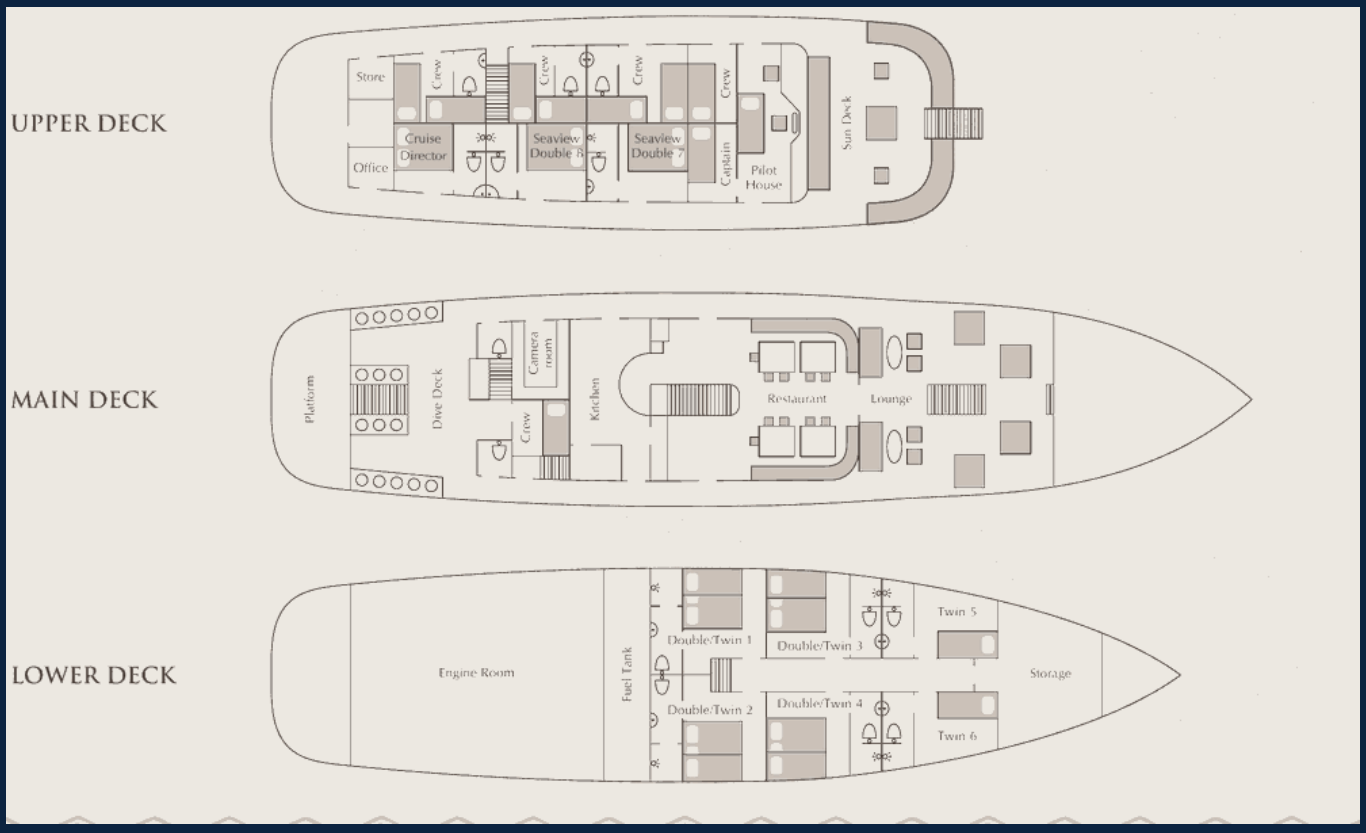






DECK PLANS

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