



*Dewi Nusantara*

CRUISING ITINERARY 12

**AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS**

MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA  
(AMBON TO AMBON)



MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

DEWI NUSANTARA ITINERARIES

# AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

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PHILIPPINES

MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

# The Indonesian Archipelago

PACIFIC OCEAN

SINGAPORE

KALIMANTAN

MANADO

TERNATE  
HALMAHERA

SORONG

MANOKWARI

SUMATRA

SULAWESI



AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU  
& THE BANDA ISLANDS

KAIMANA

WEST PAPUA

BALI SEA

MAKASSAR

TUAL

ARU

JAKARTA

JAVA

FLORES SEA

SAUMLAKI

INDIAN OCEAN

BALI

DENPASAR

SUMBAWA

LABUAN BAJO

FLORES

MAUMERE

KALABAHI

EAST TIMOR

SUMBA

WEST TIMOR

KUPANG

SAVU SEA

ARAFURA SEA

*Dewi Nusantara*

AUSTRALIA



M O L A N A - R U N - M A N U K - H A T T A - B A N D A N E I R A - N U S A L A U T - A M B E L A U - B O A N O - L A H A

## Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

Dewi Nusantara presents a brand new itinerary that combines some exciting new areas for our guests on the Goddess of the Archipelago to discover. It covers the seascape to the south and east of Buru Island, the Lease Islands of Ambon, Haruku, and Saparua, the famous Banda Islands, and will also include some of the well-known destinations at the eastern end of the intriguingly named Forgotten Islands chain.

The scuba diving highlights along the route take in the whole spectrum of Indonesia's world-famous underwater world.

### The Lease Islands (Central Maluku)

In addition to having a rich history of the spice trade, the islands of Ambon, Haruku, and Saparua are also home to some of Indonesia's best diving. Their southern shores, as well as the smaller islands of Nusa Laut and Molana, offer a wide range of wonderful sites.

### The Banda Islands

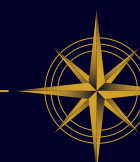
Now firmly on any tropical diver's wish list, the remote Banda Islands are a sparkling oasis that rises out of the deep blue Banda Sea. Aside from a remarkable topside history, this region boasts some of the world's finest diving, ranging from critter havens in the harbour to the magnificent walls and reefs of the outer islands of the group.

### Manuk Volcano

The programme also features a visit to Manuk Island. This is located at the end of the dynamic Damar Ridge, the marine mountain range that is home to the majority of the intriguingly named Forgotten Islands. Here, our guests can witness vibrant coral reefs and walls plunging into the



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pristine depths, and they also have the opportunity to spot some of the larger inhabitants of the Banda Sea. Manuk Island is also home to a surprisingly large population of sea snakes (kraits).

### The Manipa Strait

The wide channel that separates the islands of Buru and Ambon features four smaller islands along its path. Known as the Manipa Strait, the islands in the stream - Boano, Kelang, Manipa, and Ambelau - offer relatively new dive sites, with plenty more to be discovered.

### Laha (Ambon)

Laha's sublime critter diving is a well-known hotspot for underwater image makers. The sand and gravel slopes, piers, and coral heads of Laha are home to some of the planet's most sought-after photographic subjects. On these sites, the weird and wonderful psychedelic frog fish was discovered. Who knows what other cryptic wonders these sites might hide?

### Get On-Board with Dewi Nusantara

For a limited number of cruises during the cruising season, Dewi Nusantara will depart on these exciting new Central Maluku itineraries. Begin your next scuba adventure on board the Indonesian archipelago's premier liveaboard and experience the best that Indonesia has to offer, along with Dewi Nusantara's outstanding service, exceptional facilities, and her highly experienced crew.

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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

## Destinations: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

Cruise Route ➡

Molana & Saparua ➡

Run & Suanggi (Outer Banda Islands) ➡

Manuk Volcano ➡

The Historic Banda Islands ➡

Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef (Outer Banda Islands) ➡

Banda Neira ➡

Nusa Laut ➡

Ambelau ➡

Boano ➡

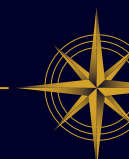
Laha (Ambon) ➡

Cruise Notes ➡

Key: ➡= To destination. ⬅= Back to this page



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

THE  
CERAM SEA

BURU

BOANO

CERAM

THE  
CERAM SEA

THE  
BOMBERAI  
PENINSULA

AMBON

MOLANA & SAPARUA

NUSA LAUT

LAHA

AMBELAU

SUANGGI

BANDA NEIRA

PULAU RUN

PULAU HATTA

THE  
BANDA  
SEA

LUCIPARA  
ATOLL

MANUK

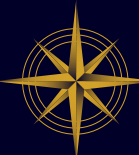
THE KEI  
ISLANDS

Cruise Route: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

*Dewi Nusantara*

THE TANIMBAR  
ISLANDS



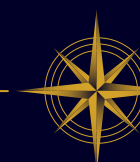
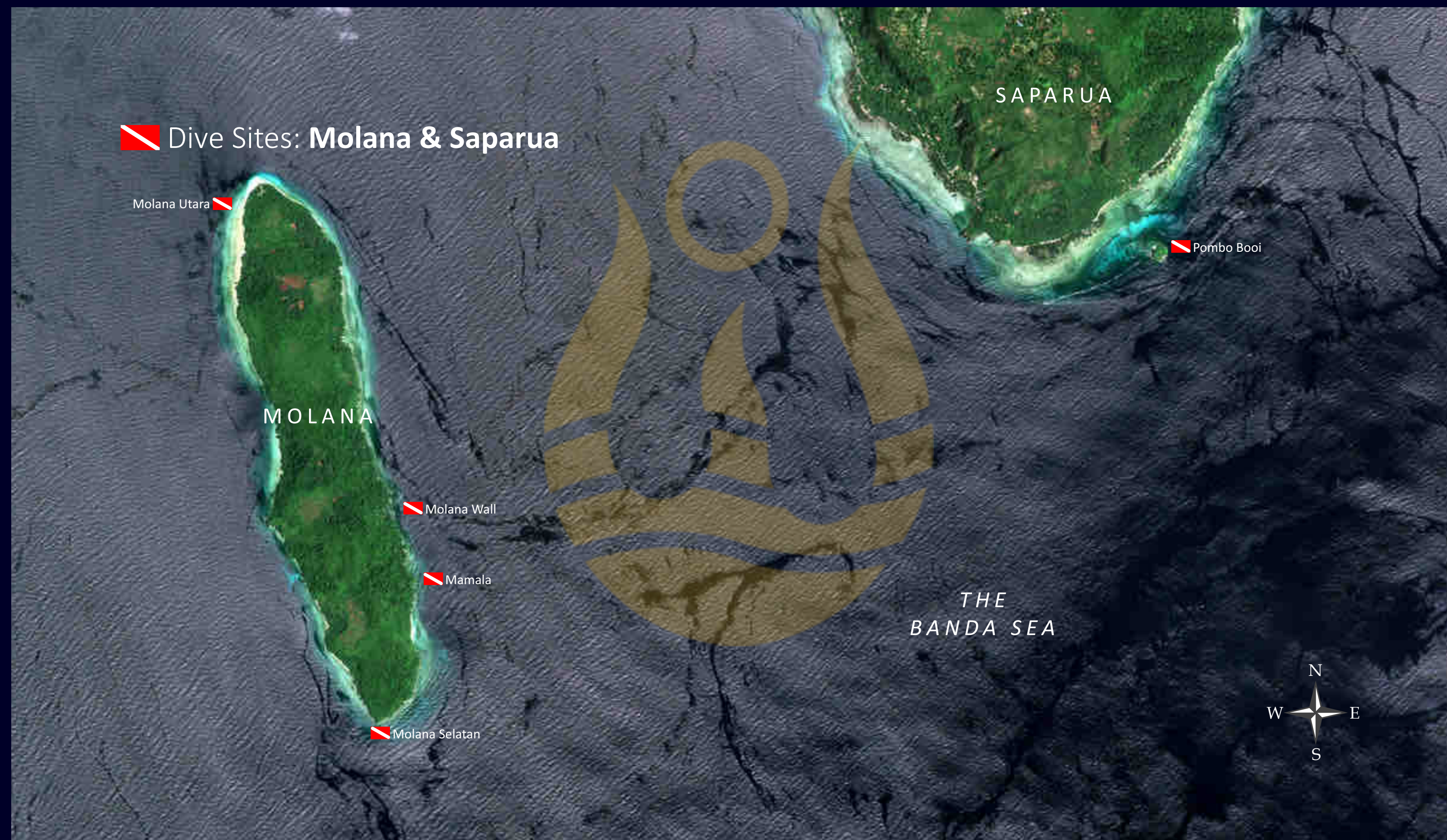


M O L A N A - R U N - M A N U K - H A T T A - B A N D A N E I R A - N U S A L A U T - A M B E L A U - B O A N O - L A H A

## Molana & Saparua

Molana and the larger island of Saparua are two islands in the Lease Island group. Lying in the northern reaches of the Banda Sea, these islands are renowned for their vibrant coral reefs, diverse marine life, and pristine waters. Molana is particularly famous for its stunning coral gardens and abundant marine biodiversity. Divers can explore a kaleidoscope of corals, sponges, and sea fans, accompanied by a myriad of colourful reef fish, as well as some larger species. The island's underwater terrain includes gentle slopes, drop-offs, and underwater caves, providing varied dive experiences from shallow reef dives to more challenging deep-water explorations.

Saparua's underwater landscape features walls, slopes, and pinnacles, offering divers a chance to experience different underwater topographies. The island's historical significance, with remnants of Dutch colonial forts and artefacts, adds an extra layer of intrigue for divers who are also history enthusiasts.





MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

## Run & Suanggi

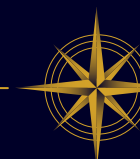
Diving around the breathtaking island of Run and its smaller, remote neighbour, Suanggi, offers an extraordinary underwater adventure that seamlessly blends history, natural beauty, and exhilarating marine encounters.

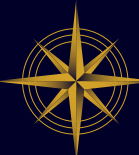
Located in the northern reaches of the Banda Sea over 100 nautical miles south-east of Ambon, Suanggi is a rugged, rocky outpost that stands as a gateway to the Banda Islands. Despite its small size and isolated position, this hidden gem is rapidly making a name for itself as one of the Indonesian archipelago's top diving destinations. It is one of the few places where divers have the thrilling opportunity to witness the awe-inspiring spectacle of schooling hammerhead sharks - a bucket-list experience for any underwater enthusiast.

Meanwhile, the dive sites surrounding Run Island boast an astonishing variety of marine life and topographical wonders. Vibrant coral gardens flourish alongside sheer, dramatic drop-offs, creating an awe-inspiring seascape teeming with



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

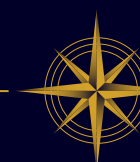


biodiversity. Schools of brilliantly coloured reef fish dart through the reefs, while graceful pelagic species glide effortlessly through the crystal-clear waters. And, just like Suanggi, Run offers divers the exhilarating chance to encounter the elusive hammerhead sharks in their natural habitat.

With visibility often exceeding 40 metres, the waters surrounding Run and Suanggi provide an exceptional environment for underwater photography, allowing divers to capture the rich marine life in stunning detail. Adding to the allure of this extraordinary diving destination is Run Island's fascinating history. Once a crucial hub in the global spice trade, the island's past is intertwined with tales of explorers, merchants, and colonial powers, lending an intriguing cultural dimension to every dive.

Whether you are a seasoned diver seeking new thrills or a beginner eager to explore an untouched marine paradise, the waters of Run and Suanggi promise an unforgettable experience - one where history, adventure, and the wonders of the deep come together in perfect harmony.

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## Manuk Volcano

The BBC wildlife documentary “*Island of the Snakes*” brought global attention to Manuk’s mysterious volcanic island, a place as captivating as it is remote. As dawn breaks and a yacht approaches its rugged shores, the air grows thick with the unmistakable scent of sulphur, a tell-tale sign of the island’s ongoing geothermal activity. Though modest in height - rising just under 300 meters - Manuk plays host to an extraordinary array of seabirds. Frigates and boobies dominate the skies, creating a breathtaking spectacle of avian life.

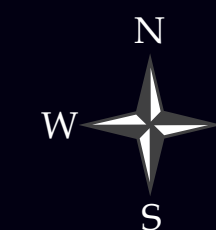
Encircled by a jagged, rocky coastline devoid of beaches, Manuk presents a strikingly raw and untamed landscape. The sparse vegetation struggles to cling to life above the short tree line, leaving much of the terrain exposed in its stark volcanic glory. Scattered across the island, sulphur-encrusted fumaroles vent wisps of steam, adding an ethereal quality to the scenery. For those with an adventurous spirit, a handful of

### Dive Sites: **Manuk Volcano**

THE  
BANDA SEA

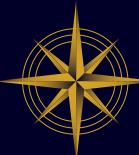


THE  
BANDA SEA



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA



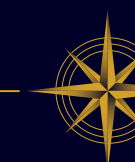
rugged entry points may offer the chance to step ashore for an exploratory trek, though the island remains largely untouched and inhospitable.

Beneath the waves, Manuk offers one of the most unique diving experiences in the region. Its geothermal activity is believed to attract a thriving population of sea snakes, with the olive sea snake being the most prevalent. Divers exploring the island's waters are often treated to close encounters with these sleek, enigmatic creatures.

Manuk Ridge, the island's signature dive site on the south-eastern corner, is a favourite among underwater explorers - and, on occasion, schooling hammerhead sharks. Meanwhile, the island's western side features gently sloping reefs adorned with vibrant coral gardens, creating a haven for marine life. Here, sea snakes gather in such remarkable numbers that even the most seasoned divers may find the experience both exhilarating and somewhat unnerving.

From its dramatic volcanic landscapes to its teeming underwater world, Manuk is a destination that few will ever visit - but those who do will never forget.

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## The Historic Banda Islands: *A Timeless Treasure*

Far out in the remote, shimmering expanse of the Banda Sea - nestled to the south of the great island of Ceram - lies a small but remarkable cluster of islands: the Banda Islands. Scattered like emeralds across the deep blue waters, this archipelago once stood at the very heart of the global spice trade, fiercely contested by empires for its precious nutmeg and mace. Today, the Banda Islands resonate with echoes of their extraordinary past, where crumbling colonial fortresses and ancient plantations reveal stories of ambition, exploration, and cultural exchange. Set against a dramatic backdrop of a soaring volcanic peak, vibrant coral reefs, and lush tropical forests, the Banda Islands offer a rare and captivating blend of history and breathtaking natural beauty - a destination as unforgettable as it is remote.

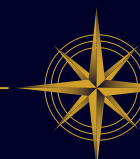
### A Window into a Distant Past

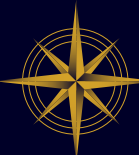
The principal island, Banda Neira, transports visitors back in time to an era when these islands were among the most significant in the world. European remnants of this bygone age still grace the streets - quaint churches, a charming post

### The Banda Islands



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA



office, a rustic museum, and street lamps (though no longer in operation) stand as echoes of colonial influence. Towering above it all is Fort Belgica, an imposing 17th-century stronghold that offers panoramic views and a fascinating glimpse into the region's tumultuous history. Wandering through Banda Neira's narrow streets and alleyways is nothing short of spellbinding.

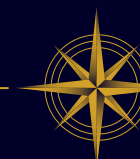
## A Land of Contrasts

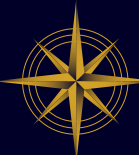
Just across from Banda Neira's bustling harbour, the striking 600-metre-high volcano island, Banda Api, looms over the seascape. Though its last eruption was in May 1988, the rugged terrain continues to captivate adventurers who take on the demanding trek to its summit, guided by seasoned locals. For those seeking a more leisurely experience, a tranquil stroll through the fragrant nutmeg groves of Lontar Island offers a peaceful alternative.

## Adventures on Land and Sea

While the inner islands boast pleasant snorkelling spots, the real thrill for visiting yachts comes in the form of a friendly yet fierce rowing competition between islanders and crew members. Racing in traditional kora-kora longboats, the islanders almost always claim victory, leaving visitors with an unforgettable experience and their rowing crews exhausted.

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Beneath the waves, the Banda Sea reveals its true magic. These islands, the peaks of an immense underwater mountain range, are surrounded by deep, pristine blue waters teeming with marine life. From vibrant coral walls to rare critter dives, the Banda Islands offer some of the most exhilarating scuba diving experiences in the world, making them a dream destination for underwater explorers.

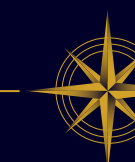
### Safe Haven in a Remote Paradise

For visiting yachts, the most favoured anchorage lies in the sheltered waterway between Banda Neira harbour and the towering Banda Api volcano. Here, amidst the serene beauty of the islands, sailors find a perfect haven to rest, explore, and immerse themselves in the extraordinary blend of history, adventure, and natural splendour that defines the Banda Islands.

Whether you're a history enthusiast, an adventurer, or a diver seeking untouched underwater realms, the Banda Islands promise an experience unlike any other - an enchanting journey through time and nature in one of the world's most remote and captivating destinations.



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## Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef

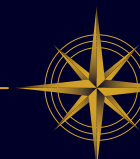
Located just over 10 nautical miles south-east of the central harbour of the Banda Islands at Banda Neira, Hatta Island offers scuba divers an unparalleled underwater adventure. With its crystal-clear waters and an abundance of marine life, the island is a haven for divers seeking both beauty and biodiversity beneath the surface.

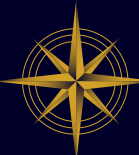
From dramatic drop-offs and thriving coral gardens to arches and mysterious underwater caves, Hatta Island's seascape is as diverse as it is stunning. The vibrant ecosystem teems with colourful tropical fish, graceful turtles, reef sharks, and even occasional encounters with majestic manta rays and playful dolphins. For those seeking a truly exhilarating experience, the deeper waters around the island are known to attract schools of hammerhead sharks, offering an unforgettable and rare diving spectacle.

Just two nautical miles south, the awe-inspiring Skaru Reef (Karang Hatta) awaits. This towering marine mountain, that barely breaks the ocean's



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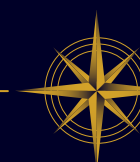
MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA



surface at low tide, features a network of shimmering shallows that plunge into the deep, creating thrilling big fish dive sites. The reef's unique topography and nutrient-rich waters attract pelagic species, making it a must-visit for those hoping to encounter sharks, barracudas, and other ocean giants in their natural habitat.

Whether you're an adventurous diver chasing adrenaline-fuelled drift dives or a nature enthusiast eager to witness marine life in its pristine habitat, Hatta Island promises an extraordinary diving experience like no other.

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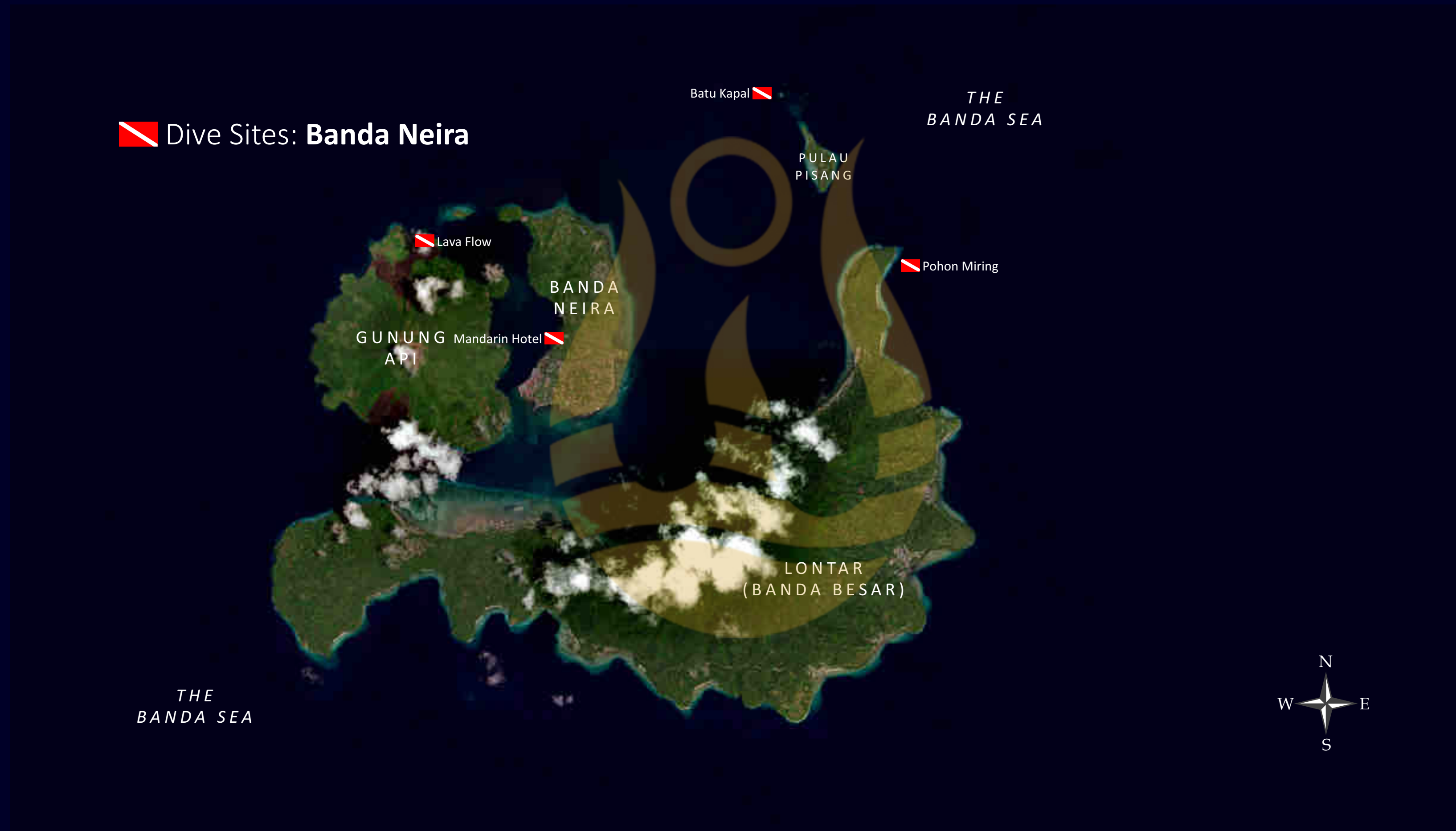
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## Banda Neira

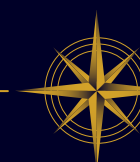
During our time in the Banda Islands, Dewi Nusantara has explored the outer island of Hatta and the magnificent reef plateau of Skaru. Now, it's time to venture into the heart of this stunning archipelago. A variety of diverse dive sites await, beginning with the remarkable critter dive at Mandarin Hotel.

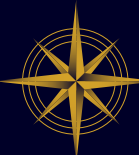
At first glance, this stretch of rocks and sand - nestled along the border of the colonial Molana Hotel's picturesque gardens - may seem unassuming. However, beneath the surface, it reveals an extraordinary spectacle. In the shallow waters, a vibrant population of mandarin fish, some impressively large, engage in their intricate mating displays at dusk. Unlike in coral-rich environments, these mesmerising creatures must perform their ritual in the open, making them exceptionally photogenic for underwater photographers.

Towering 600 meters above the surrounding waters, the volcanic Gunung Api dominates



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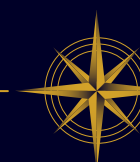
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the skyline of Banda Neira, the principal island. Its most recent eruption in 1988 sent a dramatic lava flow cascading into the sea on the mountain's northeast side. In the years since, this once-barren expanse has transformed into a thriving coral garden, a breathtaking testament to nature's resilience and the rapid regrowth of marine ecosystems. This dive site is a must-visit, offering a rare opportunity to witness the astonishing speed at which coral reefs can recover after a volcanic eruption.

Beyond the protective embrace of Banda's natural harbour, even more exhilarating dive sites beckon. One standout is Batu Kapal, an offshore seamount teeming with marine life. Here, honeycomb moray eels weave through the reef, while immense schools of fish move in perfect synchronicity - a truly unforgettable underwater experience.

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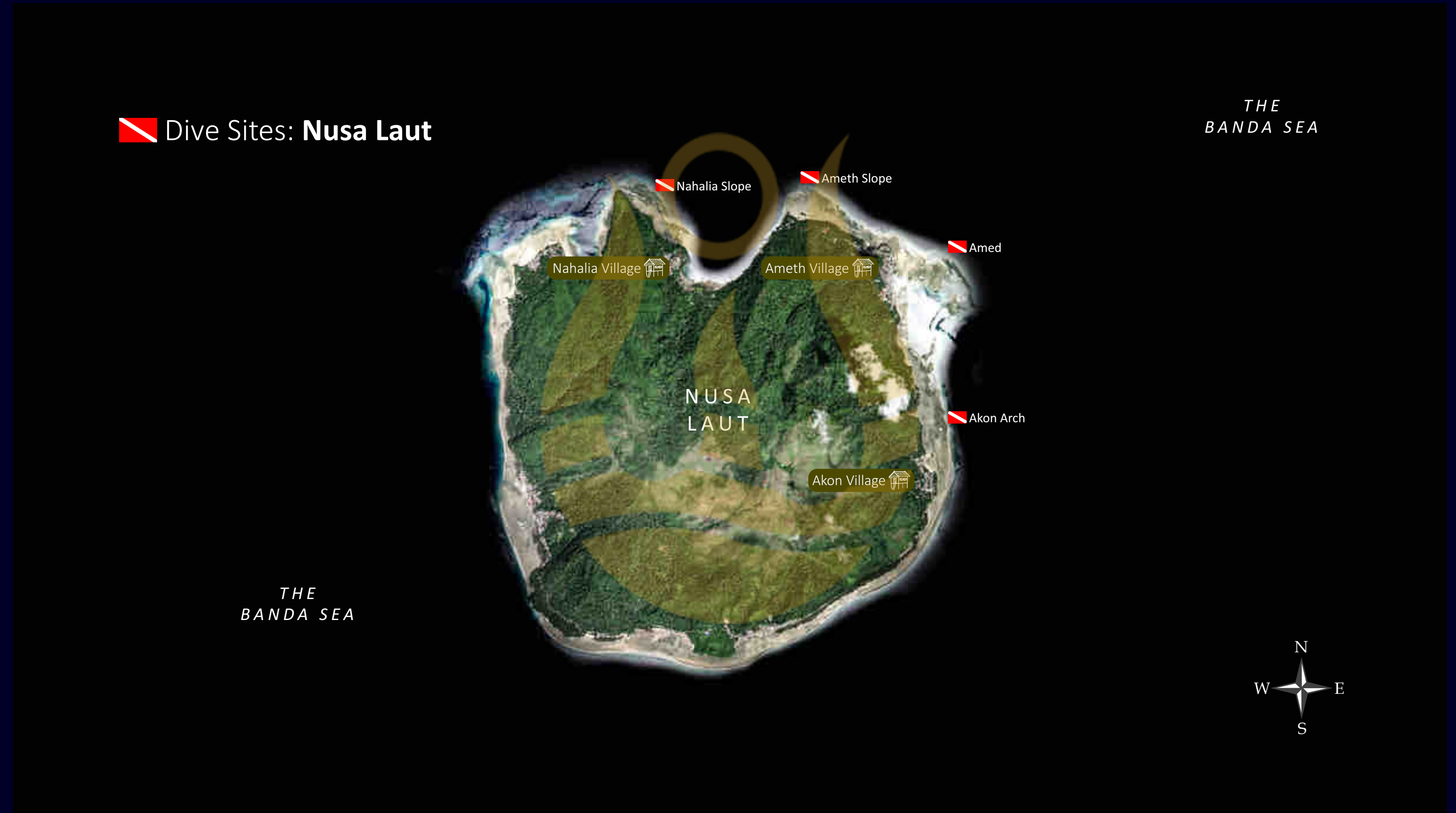
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## Nusa Laut

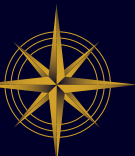
Nusa Laut, the easternmost jewel in the Lease Islands archipelago - which also includes Saparua, Haruku, and Ambon - offers an unspoiled paradise both above and below the sea's surface. The island's landscape is lush with a high-rising interior, fringed by picturesque bays and dotted with small fishing villages that exude charm and tranquillity. The northern bays, in particular, provide a sanctuary for dugongs - the elusive Southeast Asian relatives of the manatee - adding to the island's natural allure.

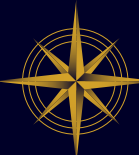
A testament to the power of community-led conservation, the villages of Ameth and Akon on Nusa Laut's northeast coast stand as shining examples of grassroots environmental stewardship. Captains of visiting yachts are required to report to the village head in Ameth, a minor formality in exchange for experiencing one of the region's most well-protected marine environments. The vigilant efforts of the local community in safeguarding their coastline from

### Dive Sites: **Nusa Laut**



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

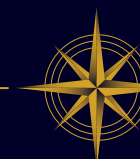


illegal fishing have resulted in thriving fish populations and pristine coral reefs, making the waters of Nusa Laut a paradise for visiting divers.

Beneath the surface, the island boasts spectacular wall and reef dives, but the true highlight lies in the vibrant reef on its north-western coast. Here, stunning coral formations and abundant marine life create a mesmerising underwater landscape. Adding to the thrill, divers sometimes encounter schools of majestic hammerhead sharks in the deep blue beyond the reef - an unforgettable sight for any underwater explorer. For those seeking even more adventure, a breathtaking underwater arch at Akon on the island's eastern side awaits, just beneath the surface, offering a glimpse into the raw beauty of Nusa Laut's marine wonders.

With its thriving ecosystems, dedicated local guardians, and world-class diving opportunities, Nusa Laut is a hidden treasure in the heart of Indonesia's Maluku region, inviting travellers to experience nature at its most pristine.

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M O L A N A - R U N - M A N U K - H A T T A - B A N D A N E I R A - N U S A L A U T - A M B E L A U - B O A N O - L A H A

## Ambelau

Diving at Ambelau Island is a brand-new Dewi Nusantara experience that offers a glimpse into the rich underwater ecosystems of Indonesia's Maluku province. Ambelau, located off the south-east coastline of Buru Island, boasts beautiful, clear waters and vibrant coral reefs.

Early in 2024, we began to pioneer this relatively unknown destination. On our first visit, the locals were surprised to even see a dive yacht, the first they had ever seen there. Our keen-eyed dive guides quickly identified several excellent dive sites, which we have now incorporated into our expanding list.

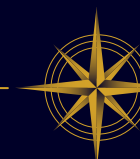
Our guests were treated to a spectacular array of marine life, including schools of tropical fish and the occasional reef shark. The underwater terrain features an intriguing mix of steep drop-offs, colourful coral gardens, and fascinating ledges and caverns, providing diverse habitats that cater to both macro and wide-angle photography enthusiasts.

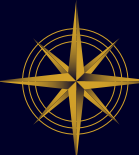
With its relatively untouched and less frequented dive sites and the absence of other divers, Ambelau Island offers a serene and pristine environment, perfect for those seeking a unique and immersive diving adventure.

### Dive Sites: **Ambelau**



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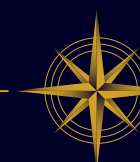
## Boano

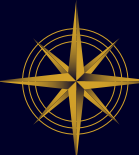
Diving at Boano offers a captivating underwater experience characterised by its vibrant marine life and stunning coral formations. The island, located offshore from the north-west corner of Ceram, is a hidden gem for divers looking for pristine dive sites away from the crowded tourist spots. Boano's dive sites are teeming with a diverse array of marine species and macrophotographic environments. Visibility often exceeds 30 metres, allowing divers to fully appreciate the intricate beauty of the coral reefs, which are among the healthiest in the region. The underwater landscape features dramatic drop-offs, walls, and coral gardens, providing a range of dive sites for visitors to explore.

Boano Island's tranquil and relatively untouched nature enhances the diving experience, in addition to its rich biodiversity. Because of its remoteness, there are fewer divers and boats, providing a more intimate and serene underwater experience. The island's dive sites are suitable for both novice and experienced divers, with gentle currents in some areas and more challenging conditions in others. With its combination of stunning underwater scenery, abundant marine life, and peaceful setting, Boano stands out as a new must-visit destination for Dewi Nusantara's guests.



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## Laha (Ambon)

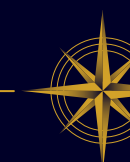
Not far from Ambon airport, along the northern shore of the Ambon Inlet, the village of Laha is renowned for hosting some of the most extraordinary muck diving sites in the world. Most of the dive points are clustered fairly close together, with names such as Middle Point, Mandarin City, Rhino City, and the one that started it all, the aptly named Twilight Zone. This legendary dive site, located close to as well as underneath the fishing boat piers, is a haven for macro photographers and critter enthusiasts seeking rare and unusual marine life.

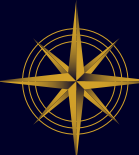
What makes The Twilight Zone so exceptional is the unique interplay of natural and human elements. Over time, local fishing activities have contributed organic debris to the sandy, silty, and gravel-strewn seabed, inadvertently creating an ideal microhabitat for an astonishing variety of marine species. Divers venturing into these waters are rewarded with encounters with some of the ocean's most bizarre and captivating creatures,



 Dive Sites: **Laha**

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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

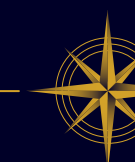


making every expedition a true treasure hunt for the weird and wonderful.

In recent years, the discovery of additional dive sites a little further afield along this thriving stretch of shoreline has further cemented Ambon's reputation as a world-class muck diving destination. Notably, it was here that the psychedelic frogfish, one of the rarest and most visually striking marine species, was first documented - an extraordinary testament to the area's biodiversity. With ongoing exploration, there is no doubt that more ground breaking discoveries await.

For those seeking a contrasting yet equally thrilling dive experience, the Duke of Sparta shipwreck offers an entirely different underwater adventure. Resting in deeper waters further into the bay, closer to the city, this massive and remarkably intact wreck invites divers to explore its hauntingly beautiful remains - a striking juxtaposition to the critter-filled world of The Twilight Zone.

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## Cruise Notes

- **Flexible Itineraries:** Our cruise routes are intentionally adaptable. Throughout the journey, the captain and cruise director continuously assess sea conditions, weather, and tides to ensure the best possible experience. Guest preferences for specific dive sites are always considered whenever feasible.
- **More Than Is Listed:** The locations featured in these itineraries represent only a portion of what's possible. Numerous additional anchorages and activity options are available along the way, making each voyage truly unique.
- **Simplified for Clarity:** The destinations shown in our presentations are not necessarily listed in the order they will be visited. They are organized for clarity and to help guests visualize the overall routing.
- **Extended Stays:** If a particular anchorage offers exceptional experiences, guests may opt to linger a bit longer. The captain and cruise director have the flexibility to accommodate such preferences, provided they align with the overall cruise schedule.
- **Overnight Passages:** To maximize daylight hours at our most spectacular destinations, longer transits between anchorages are typically conducted overnight.
- **Escape the Crowds:** With the exception of embarkation and disembarkation points, our itineraries are carefully crafted to avoid congested areas and busy commercial ports, allowing for a more tranquil and immersive experience.
- **Beyond the Dive:** Many of our anchorages offer more than just diving and snorkelling. Guests can enjoy kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and occasional visits to local villages and cultural sites — adding even more richness to the journey.



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