



BANDA SEA

AMBON - SORONG

12 DAYS / 11 NIGHTS

- Itinerary -

DAY 1. Ambon

Pick up at your hotel or at Ambon airport by our crew for a short transfer to Teluhu Bay where Mantamae awaits you. Once on board, welcome drink in hand, you will be introduced to the rest of the crew, shown around and immediately start to feel at home. We'll have a check muck dive at Teluhu Bay. The Intensity of marine life here is unrivalled; critters benefit from the nutrient-rich currents pushing into this bay but are still protected by sheltered waters in the many small coves. This unique combination creates conditions that nourish an incredible eco system, making it one of the richest and most interesting places to dive.

In the late afternoon we'll set sail for the Banda Islands.

Day 2. Nusa Laut – Pulau Molana

Early morning, we arrive at the beautiful **Ahmet Reef** in Nusa Laut. Here, the locals have introduced sustainable methods to protect their reef and their efforts have produced great results. We'll dive at **Nildesperandum** and at **Karang Duisburg** where white tips and reef sharks patrol the depths, playful turtles can be spotted and, i October and November, it's not unusuaal to dive with Hammerhead sharks. We might also choose to visit the fort and the waterfall here, or sail to **Pulau Molana** for one more wall dive. The shallow

wall breaks in places and in the sandy slopes, ribbon eels, small pipefish and moray eels can be found. Above the reef, turtles are seen feeding in the beautiful coral garden.

Day 3. Pulau Run

Early morning we'll sail to Pulau Run to dive at **Tanjung Noret, Tanjun Lokon** and **Pulau Nailaka**, all great locations with white sandy slopes interspaced with large coral heads and healthy reefs. This region is full of unexplored dive sites and the Banda Sea is the perfect location for the discovery of new underwater treasures.

This tiny island has a fascinating history too; in 1667, the English traded Run for New Amsterdam (now Manhattan), giving the Dutch full control of the Banda archipelago and the nutmeg trade.

Day 4. Pulau Ai

Very few divers witness the true nature of Pulau Ai's unspoilt reef – a secret in the middle of the Banda Sea reached by live-aboard only. This area acts as an oasis for pelagics that cruise by these pristine hard coral reefs cloaked in clouds of fish – Napoleon wrasse, green and hawksbill turtle, tuna, rainbow runner, huge schools of barracuda mixing with schools of bannerfish, redtooth triggers and fusiliers.

Batu Payung, Umbrella Rock, is named for the many overhangs along the island walls, which divers can drift along and enjoy the view of thousands of tiny reef fish darting in and out of the cracks and crevices. We'll also have a night dive at Mandarin City. **Day 5. Banda Islands**

The Banda area offers a good variety of dive sites. Volcanic rocks at **Pulau Pisang** create a deep swim-through which you can drift through and view the sponge-covered wall on the other side, perhaps spotting Moray eels at the top of the wall as well as schools of bumphead parrotfish. We'll also dive at the black sand of **Batu Kapal** in Banda's harbour, a submerged pinnacle, breaking the surface of the water in the shape of a boat which offers muck diving with flying gurnards spreading their electric blue wings, sea moth,

nudibranchs and mandarin fish. Various types of fish are present here in vast numbers, along with huge gorgonian fans and some truly monumental

sponges.

In Banda Neira you will have the chance to explore the historic and cultural legacies of the fabled islands, center of the former lucrative spice trade.

Wandering through the town you'll observe the Dutch colonial architecture which remains to this day, as well as Fort Belgica with its incredible views overlooking the bay.

Day 6. Pulau Hatta

Once known as Rozengain, Pulau Hatta is a stunning flying-saucer-shaped island of jungle-swathed limestone, trimmed with white sand. It offers some of the finest underwater panoramas, and is considered one of the best snorkeling in the world.

Long white beaches edged with swaying palms, unspoiled reefs, and superb diving at **the Hatta Arch, Takat Hatta Reef and Tj Buton**, make Hatta everyone's favorite destination. **Day 7. Koon Island**

Koon is a small island located at the east-south bound of Seram Island, north of the Banda Sea. It is also called 'Too Many Fish' because for the unbelievable number of fishes that hang out in the current at the reef corner. (According to a WWF survey, Koon is projected to be the biggest coral fish breeding spot in eastern Indonesia.)

After diving we might pay a visit to one of the traditional villages, then following a leisurely dinner we'll set sail for Misool.

Day 8 – 11 Misool a diving Paradise

After sailing for about 15 hours we'll arrive at Misool. Here, we'll decide where to dive day by day depending on the weather and sea conditions and, of course, following your personal wishes.

The island of Misool has some of the best diving in Raja Ampat, with several reefs that can be considered the best in the world! A labyrinth of thousands of small mushroom-shaped islands form tiny dots of lagoons with sparkling white sand surrounded by extensive formations that make the Misool one of the most wonderful places on Earth. The land scenery will take your breath away as will the underwater scenery that holds some of the richest wildlife in the world.

There are three main areas of interest for diving in Misool – the Sagof-Daram, the Southern Archipelagos in the south-east corner of Misool and the Blue Water Mangroves near the western tip of the main island.

In **Daram** we'll dive at **Andiamo** which is a large, stunning reef with a submerged pinnacle covered in sea fans surrounded by schools of fusiliers and bat fish, black tip reef sharks and napoleon wrasse. The **Candy Store** dive site is covered with huge sponges, beautiful soft corals, sea fans and, in the valleys, schools of fusiliers, butterfly fish and barracuda, while at **Andy's Ultimate** there is a valley which boils with fish when the current is running. In the **Warakaratet** area at **Magic Mountain** there are two cleaning manta stations on the same dive site, one at 25 meters and one right at the top at seven meters. This is one of the only places in the world where you can see oceanic mantas as well as reef mantas interacting. Magic Mountain is also a nursery for White Tip Reef Sharks and a love nest for Napoleon Wrasse. **Boo Rock** is known for the "windows" on the end of the largest rock that completely pierces the reef from the surface down to five meters deep. Here you can see an incredible variety of fishes, gorgonians, Barrel sponges, Commensal shrimps, a wide variety of Nudibranchs, Octopus and Green Turtles, patrolling sharks as well as Wobbegong Shark. **Nudi Rock** is a small island in the Fiabacet chain, crowded with larger pelagics like Barracuda, Big Eyed Travelly, and Grey Reef Shark, with a wide range of flamboyant nudibranchs lurking among the abundant soft corals and sea fans well populated by pygmy seahorses and cowries.

In the **Wayilbatan** area at the **Neptune** dive site, schools of batfish, trevallies, barracuda and pygmy seahorses congregate amongst the most spectacular hidden lagoons in the region. This site has sheer walls paved with very colorful sea fans, some of which host tiny seahorses, Hippocampus Barbiganti. The **Four Kings** dive site is made up of four underwater pinnacles covered in soft coral and colorful tunicates, with many turtles. Close to Four Kings we can dive at **Orange Peel**, a fantastic orange wall with a coral garden. **Dunia Kecil** is a superb dive site for spotting pygmy seahorses and 'lady bugs'. Hawksbill turtles, crocodile fish, barramundi cod and juvenile cuttlefish are amongst the other marine creatures that can all be found here. **Kaleidoscope** is one of the best dive sites in the world, loping down from the limestone island of Jef Pele. On one side you will find an amazingly beautiful coral covered wall with tons of fish, and on the other side is a picture-perfect slope. Between the two there is a great dividing lip, where

large pelagic species feast in front of you as you hang on to your reef hook through the prevailing currents. Another great dive site of this area is **Turbine**.

The **Farondi** area – a unique and distinctive landscape: tunnels, caverns, and colorful walls – offers three famous dive spots, **Goa Besar**, **Razonback Rock** and **Three Sisters**. **Goa Besar** comprises shallow shelved gardens of yellow-colored soft corals, wall tops blanketed with plate corals, leather corals, yellow and purple sea squirts, and rounded hollows filled with coral shrubberies, sponges and red ornamental ghost pipefish. **Three Sisters** provides three great dive sites paved with life, as do the channels between them. **Wolbolol** offers multiple dive sites, **Portion Nine**, **No Contest** and **The Plateau** where you'll see schools of barracuda and jacks, snappers and bump head parrotfish all over around the pinnacles.

Day 12. Sorong – departure day

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Day 1. Sorong

You will be met at Sorong airport by a member of the Manta Mae crew who will accompany you on the short transfer to the pier and onto Manta Mae. Once on board, welcome drink in hand, you will be introduced to the rest of the crew and shown around with time to settle in while the boat sails to Misool, one of the best dive sites on the planet. On the ten-hour sail to Misool we'll stop at Pulau Matan for a check dive.

Day 2 – 5 Misool – a diving Paradise

Once at Misool, we'll decide where to dive day by day depending on the weather and sea conditions and, of course, following your personal wishes. The island of Misool has some of the best diving in Raja Ampat, with several reefs that can be considered the best in the world! A labyrinth of thousands

of small mushroom- shaped islands form tiny dots of lagoons with sparking white sand surrounded by extensive formations that make the Misool one of the most wonderful places on Earth. The land scenery will take your breath away as will the underwater scenery that holds some of the richest wildlife in the world.

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Day 12. Ambon departure day

We'll transfer you to your accommodation or to the Airport to catch your next flight.



