

SAMAMBAIA

East Flores and Banda Sea

Maumere to Ambon | Flores, Alor and the Banda Sea

Dozens of sea snakes in a single dive, on one of the two Snake Islands in the Banda Sea, with silvertip sharks and hammerheads in gin clear water.

The chances of close encounters with blue whales, sperm whales and pilot whales are very good while crossing the Banda Sea.

Alor brings action packed current drifts with oceanic sunfish, big dogtooth tuna and thresher sharks, and Lucipara has steep walls and a healthy population of sea turtles.

Ambon closes with muck diving, from frogfish and ghost pipefish to harlequin shrimps.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	HIGHLIGHTS
12 days / 11 nights	Maumere	Ambon	Rhinopias, Gunung Api, Lucipara







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Arrival with plane to Maumere.
You will be picked up by crew members at the airport.
Embarkation in the port of Maumere.
A general orientation follows.

STOP 2

Serbete & Adonara

After an initial general dive briefing, check dive in the morning at a pretty, easygoing and protected dive site.
A wall south of the tiny island of Serbete.
We will offer two more macro focussed dives this day, at two of our secret spots south of the island of Adonara.

STOP 3

Lembata's Critters

Sandy critter diving par excellence.
One spot is at a pier, the other ones a bit further to the east.
Critter hunting at it's best: Seahorses, different species of Rhinopias, sometimes even side by side, frogfish, all sorts of cephalopods.
Truly a world class dive spot.

STOP 4

Lembata / Komba

We will do three dives in daytime at a spot we call 'The Shark Wall' (the name says it all) and two other fantastic wall dives.
In the afternoon we will head north towards the active vulcano of Komba, which erupts every 15 to 20 minutes.
A spectacular display of nature's power and free fireworks for us.

STOP 5

Alor / Pura

Time for some action packed current drift dives with potential for big stuff.
All our dives are going to be either slope or wall dives.
We have spotted here in the past: Oceanic Sunfish, Big Dogtooth Tuna and Thresher Sharks.
Popular dive sites here: School's Out, Anemone City, The Great Wall of Pantar

STOP 6

Beangabang

A protected bay which is said to have a better macro life than the famous Lembeh Strait.
Be prepared for some cold water upwellings which will not stop you from having extended bottom times if you are a critter lover.
No time limit here on the night dive.

STOP 7

Alor

We are back for three more day dives around Alor, with many great spots to pick from.
Depending on the preferences of our guests, we're able to choose here between action packed, current fused diving, or calm and protected critter hunting.
We conclude the day with an afternoon dive at a pretty wall, that has a few rare secrets to it

STOP 8

Reong

Our last stop before heading out into the Banda Sea will be Reong, a small island just off the coast of Wetar.
Very fishy wall diving with small caverns and overhangs in which nurse sharks like to chill out during the day.
In the shallows we find a hard coral heaven that will delight every snorkeler.

STOP 9

Gunung Api

Also referred to as one of the two Snake Islands in the Banda Sea.
Be prepared to meet dozens of sea snakes.
In a single dive.
Besides snakes we have seen Silvertip Sharks and Hammerheads here.
Usually the waters around here are gin clear so make sure you look out into the blue not to miss something big passing by.

STOP 10

Lucipara

A group of seven paradise islands in the middle of the Banda Sea.
All dives are steep wall dives.
The Dutch seafarers named this island group the Schildpad Islands as we have not only find nesting grounds but also a healthy population of sea turtles here.

STOP 11

Ambon

All of these days will be muck dives.
World class critter hunting.
That's what Ambon is famous for.
Rhinopias, Frogfish, Ghostpipefish, Harlequin Shrimps and if you are really lucky: the Psychedelic Frogfish that has been very recently found here again.
Two more dives here before lunch.
If you have planned a land based extension in Ambon after the cruise and are not flying out straight away the next day, our dive guides will happily go diving again with you in the afternoon.

STOP 12

Disembarkation in Ambon

Depending on your flight schedule, our crew will check your luggage in for you in advance so you can rest on board and let us shuttle you to the airport when your plane is ready to leave.
The chances to have close encounters with whales (Blue Whales, Sperm Whales, Pilot Whales and others) are very good whilst cruising the Banda Sea.

THE TRIP

How a Samambaia cruise works

This is a sample itinerary for a eleven night cruise from Maumere to Ambon. It is just to give you a general idea and is subject to change with the weather and other conditions. Popular dive sites are named, and the crew has secret spots as well, which you learn about during the cruise.

The decision on the itinerary is made by the Cruise Director as the boat cruises, and is based on the weather, the dive conditions, the requests of guests and the schedules of other liveaboards, which the boat tries to stay away from. There are some constants on every cruise:

- Three day dives of at least one hour each
- One sunset or night dive, unless the boat has a serious number of miles to cover overnight
- Scenic rides through lagoons and coves in the tenders
- Trekking to breathtaking viewpoints
- Visits to secluded beaches
- Excursions to traditional villages
- Whale watching
- Water action such as wake boarding and water skiing

This sample runs from Maumere to Ambon. The same waters are also cruised in the opposite direction, from Ambon to Maumere.

THE DIVING

Diving and snorkelling

HOW THE DIVING WORKS

The Cruise Director leads the diving programme and four dive masters go with guests on the dives, usually with one guide to every four divers. All dives are no decompression dives within your certification level, and solo diving is not allowed. Nitrox is included.

Every diver carries a GPS marine rescue device for the whole trip, the dive staff are trained in Emergency First Response and oxygen is on board. Two tenders take the divers to the sites and the crew looks after the transfer of dive gear by speedboat.

THE AREA AND THE CONDITIONS

Alor and Solor are a group of 18 volcanic islands and one of the best diving destinations in Asia. Tourism is little developed and few divers have explored the waters. Whales and dolphins pass through the channels between Flores and Alor, and whales can be seen from the boat by their spouts in the season.

Strong currents run through the narrow straits between Pantar and Alor and between Lembata and Pantar, and every

tide brings strong upwellings. The coral reefs are mostly on the northern coast of the Solor and Alor group, while the southern coast, especially around Lembata, is mostly rocky with little coral. The area has many muck diving sites with unusual creatures such as pegasus sea moths and devilfish, and cruises can visit the traditional whaling villages of Lamalera and Lamakera.

The Banda Sea route passes volcanic islands and limestone pinnacles formed from ancient coral reefs, along migratory routes used by whales and dolphins. Some areas of the Banda Sea are cooler, with water at 20 to 25 C.

At Lucipara the visibility is over 120 feet, about 36 metres, with very mild currents, vertical walls and barrel sponges big enough for a diver to fit inside. At Gunung Api the banded and olive sea snakes gather around warm volcanic vents and are curious but docile, and on the west coast of Wetar there are drop-offs, colourful reefs and a good chance of pelagics.

Banda Neira was the only source of nutmeg and mace for centuries, and the old fort, the governor's house, the church and the nutmeg plantations are still there. At Lava Flow, the hard coral garden that has grown back since the Gunung Api eruption has very large table corals and extensive staghorn coral. The dive under the Banda Neira pier is known for mandarin fish, cockatoo waspfish, flying gurnards and frogfish.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Water temperature across Indonesia is typically 26 to 30 C all year. During the monsoon, from December to February, it is about 27 to 29 C. A 3 or 5 mm wetsuit is usually enough, and a hood helps to avoid ear problems.

SNORKELLING

Indonesia's warm waters suit snorkelling, and the day by day notes point out the places where snorkelling is a good option.







ON BOARD

Food, service and the team

CUISINE

Meals blend continental, Indonesian and Italian dishes, cooked with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Expect Indonesian favourites such as nasi goreng, satay and rendang alongside Italian pasta, pizza and tiramisu. The chef cooks for dietary needs, including vegan and gluten-free.

SERVICE AND THE TEAM

The Cruise Director and the instructors guide the diving, and the crew is made up of the captain, four dive masters, a chef engineer and a cook. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the boat, although the mobile signal depends on the itinerary. An inflatable kayak is included, and there is one free wakeboard trial.

DECK PLAN

The upper deck has the sun deck and the speedboat. On the main deck are the restaurant, the dive deck, the camera room and the wheelhouse.

INCLUDED

What is included

- Nitrox
- Weights and weight belts
- 12 litre tanks
- Inflatable kayak
- Beer, soft drinks, juices, Italian coffee, premium tea and snacks
- Transfers between the airport and the harbour in both directions
- Guided diving with the Cruise Director and dive masters

Not included are flights and hotels, wine and spirits, massages and laundry. The boat leaves before 1 pm on the first day, and on the last night it returns to the end harbour so guests can catch early domestic flights.





