

SAMAMBAIA

Full Banda Sea

Ambon to Ambon | Nusa Laut, the Banda Islands and the Snake Islands

Volcanic islands rise from the deep sea in the famous Spice Islands, so the chances of sightings of large pelagics are very good, and schooling hammerheads have often been met here.

One reef was destroyed by a lava flow and has grown back into one of the most pristine hard coral reefs you will ever see.

Remote atolls with steep walls have schooling sharks, barracuda, hunting jacks and large tuna passing by out in the blue.

Both Snake Islands bring dozens of sea snakes in one single dive, with silvertip sharks, and Ambon adds muck diving.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	HIGHLIGHTS
12 days / 11 nights	Ambon	Ambon	Snake Islands, Nil Desperandum







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

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

STOP 2

Ambon

After an initial general dive briefing, we will do our check dive with you at an easy and protected dive site.
Check dive in the sense of you checking your gear and weights, making sure the camera housings are proper sealed and our guides checking your buoyancy.
No skill demonstrations are required.
We will thereafter offer two more dives in the bay of Ambon.
One in the afternoon and one for sunset.
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.

STOP 3

Nusa Laut

In the early morning we will arrive at the island of Nusa Laut, which is a great example for how active conservation by the local community can not only preserve the reefs but actually make them even better.
We see here for many years a proper growth in biomass.
We have four spectacular dive sites here, either wall or slope diving.
Great variety of reef fish as well as large schools of jacks.
Bumphead Parrotfish like to pass by here also.
A lot of macro life can be found in the wall as well.

STOP 4

Banda Islands (days 4 and 5)

The famous Spice Islands, the island group around Banda Neira, which is also historically very interesting.
Wars were fought over these islands by colonial powers as these islands used to be the only islands in the world were nutmeg grew.
A historical walk through the town of Banda Neira with it's museum and two forts is a must.
An interesting option for ambitious challenge seekers is to climb the vulcano Gunung Api, which raises 'only' 600 m above sea level.
Which in the tropics however turns into a strenuous climb.
The diving here is very diverse and spectacular.
As these volcanic islands raise up to the surface surrounded by deep sea water, the chances for sightings of large pelagics are very good.
In the past we've often encountered schooling hammerheads here.
A dive site called 'Lava Flow' is one of the most pristine hard coral reefs you will ever see.
After the last eruption of Gunung Api in 1988 a flow of lava made it's way down into the ocean and destroyed the whole reef.
What has grown back ever since will boggle your mind.
In the harbour of Banda Neira we've got a beautiful Mandarin Fish dive waiting for you.
Other highlights include: 'The Cathedral', 'Batu Kapal' and 'Karang Hatta'.

STOP 6

Gili Manuk

This place is also known by the name ‘Snake Island’.
If you’ve got a phobia of snakes you should definitely go diving here to face your fear and thereby cure it.
You may encounter dozens of sea snakes in one single dive.
These graceful creatures, though highly venomous, are very peaceful, sometimes even curious.
Despite these reptiles there is plenty of reef fish but also pelagics around.
On top of all thousands and thousands of seabirds are nesting here.
A very unique and spectacular place.
Our favourite dive site is called: ‘Smoking Hot’.

STOP 7

Karang Nil Desperandum

An atoll with steep walls rising from the deep.
Weather conditions permitting we will spend a whole day here.
Mainly steep walls all around and some sloping parts.
Very nice growth of sea fans and sponges.
But we are in for the big pelagic stuff.
Schooling sharks have been often seen here in the past.

STOP 8

Pulau Nila & Karang Duisborgh

Five miles from the small island of Nila we find another atoll and even prettier coral growth along the walls.
Again the focus lies here on large pelagic fish passing by out in the blue.
The close by island of Nila offers us protection for the night’s anchorage and gives us the possibility for a night dive.

STOP 9

Terbang Utara & Terbang Selatan

Very remote and untouched by commercial fishing the reefs of these islands are in pristine conditions.
Schooling Barracudas, Jacks on the hunt and large Tunas passing by whilst well disguised critters are blending into the reefs.
Our skilled dive guides will find and show them to you.

STOP 10

Gunung Api

There are two snake islands in the Banda Sea and on this special itinerary you will get to see both of them.
Besides snakes we have seen Silvertip Sharks and Hammerheads here.

STOP 10

Gunung Api (continued)

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 11

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.
For those who are flying out the next day, we offer two dives in the morning and some relaxing time on a perfect beach in the afternoon.
If you have planned a land based extension in Ambon after the cruise, our dive guides will happily go diving again with you in the afternoon.

STOP 12

Ambon, Disembarkation

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 combination of Macro Life and action packed current dives combined with a cultural experience make this itinerary very unique.

THE TRIP

How a Samambaia cruise works

This is a sample itinerary for a eleven night cruise from Ambon 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

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

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.





