SeaTrek With Corals, Cultures & Dragons (Bitung-Komodo)

Cruising North Sulawesi to Flores

16 Days/15 Nights
Your Time With Us

Bitung To Komodo
Ports of Call

CRUISE HIGHLIGHTS

This 16-day voyage of discovery is an epic journey covering nearly over 1,000 miles (1,800km) as we make our way from Sulawesi in the north all the way to Komodo in the south in the company of a maximum of 12 passengers, giving you an intimate opportunity to explore the wilds of Indonesia. Designed for the true adventure traveller, this cruise will give guests the chance to do a shipborne equator crossing, swim with whale sharks, visit with the Bajau people renown for living in communities built on the water, swim in a lake filled with stingless jellyfish, see rare and endangered birds and fish species and giant clams, visit an island where pinisi boats are under construction, before finishing up in the Komodo National park where you will walk with the legendary dragons, and enjoy endless amounts of snorkelling each day as we wind our way across the mighty seas of the East Indies.

** Leaving from north Sulawesi, this trip offers the perfect opportunity to do a pre-cruise add on land

tour to visit the Tangkoko National Park to see tarsiers, black-crested macaques, and all manner of birds living wild in the rainforest. Contact us for more information.

SNORKELLING WITH SEATREK

Whether it's swimming with whale sharks & mantas rays, or leisurely gliding along a stunning tropical reef surrounded by myriad fish and corals, snorkelling lies at the very heart of what we do at SeaTrek. We do it well and we do it often - usually twice a day for an hour or more at a time. No matter if you are a novice or a seasoned pro, our tour leaders will ensure that you have everything you need to have some of the best underwater experiences of your life.

WANT TO ADD ON A WILDLIFE OR CULTURAL EXCURSION TO YOUR TRIP?

Our four-day orangutan programme that features in our Orangutans & Dragons itinerary can be worked into any
of our SeaTrek cruises throughout the year, regardless of length or location, so just let us know if this is
something you would like to do when visiting Indonesia and we will happily arrange it for you.

For textile enthusiasts, we also have two five-day land tours across Flores Island in June each year that form our
Ancient Villages, Textiles, Dragons, and Vibrant Coral Reefs tour, which will visit many traditional weaving
villages and take you deep inside these unique cultures.

We are also a wealth of information on other great destinations and wildlife and cultural excursions in Indonesia
that can be added on to your SeaTrek cruise.

The possibilities are endless so all you have to do is ask.

BE PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE

Our mission is to provide the best experience possible for our guests given the current conditions and when unexpected opportunities for adventure may present themselves along our cruise routes. Sometimes weather conditions, tides or other local factors dictate that we need to vary from the published route, and at times there are special opportunities to explore and discover new locations, events and activities. These explorations will always be a definite enhancement to the published itinerary and will be undertaken after discussion and agreement among guests. Ultimately, the boat captains and your tour leader will make decisions to maximize trip safety and your overall enjoyment, so please come prepared to be flexible!

THE MORE YOU KNOW THE MORE YOU SEE

Our tour leaders are a wealth of information on the regions we visit and will prepare you for each activity with on board talks and presentations to give you a greater understanding of the different experiences you will have each day. They will also act as your cross cultural bridges to all the people we meet along the way, so feel free to ask them to translate when talking to local Indonesian people on your travels.

ITINERARY

DAY 1

- Today is a day of firsts as we welcome you aboard the boat, meet the crew and our fellow passengers, settle into our seaborne home for the next two weeks and set sail on our adventure.

- Our first stop will be the Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue Centre, about a one-hour cruise to the south. We will go ashore by tender and have a guided tour of the centre, where we will learn of their conservation efforts and meet some of the wildlife that reside here including monkeys, hornbills, cockatoos, and sun bears.

- In the afternoon we will spend the time relaxing on deck while we set sail on our journey south.

DAY 2

- In the morning we will wake up at Punten Island, where after breakfast we will go for our first snorkel on a beautiful reef with a wide variety of fish, corals and other creatures.

- In the afternoon, we will snorkel again off the uninhabited island of Ratatotok, again with some great coral reefs.

- In the late afternoon, we will set a southerly course for an overnight trip to our next destination.

DAY 3

- Today we will visit a local village and meet with the local people and see how they live. We will visit a school and take a tour through the clove plantations that support the local economy.

- Back on the boat, we will make a five-hour cruise to the small seaside town of Botuborani, where an absolute highlight might await – the chance to swim with whale sharks.

- We will set off late afternoon south towards the Togean Islands

DAY 4

- Some great wildlife experiences await us today both in the water and the air, with birds, fish and invertebrates as the main features.

- We will enjoy a fantastic snorkel on the reefs near the island of Malenge, before taking our snorkels and masks to experience a rare opportunity to swim with stingless jellyfish in nearby Lake Mariona, one of only 20 lakes in the world that are home to these amazing creatures.

- We will visit a local village and meet the people, and enjoy a late afternoon walk in the local forest before being witness to a most amazing show of nature as flocks of hornbills come flying in to roost in the trees – a once in a lifetime sight only accessible with SeaTrek.

DAY 5

- Today will be your first encounter with the Bajau sea gypsies of Southeast Asia, a people with a very unique way of living with the sea. About 2500 people live in Kabalutan village, and we will be welcomed into their world to meet and talk with them about their lives.

- We will head to the southernmost tip of the park and have a long snorkel near the before setting sail to the southeast for a most unique wildlife encounter the following morning.

DAY 6

- A very unique experience awaits you today, one you will very likely have never had before - an encounter with a Maleo bird.

- One of Sulawesi's most interesting birds, the Maleo is a flightless fowl with some very unusual characteristics and behaviours, and also the symbol of the province within which it lives.

- We visit a conservation project on the mainland where scores of Maleo live and breed. Entering in twos, we can watch them at their sandy nesting sites from a camouflagued hide as they go about their business.

- Later that morning we will cruise south and snorkel in the afternoon on a beautifully rich reef in front of Pulau Dua, or 'two islands' in the Indonesian language.

DAY 7

- A trio of unique experiences await us today involving culture, conservation and wildlife.

- We will visit the bustling Indonesian island port town of Banggaii, a place filled with activity and commerce. Here on Banggai Island we will visit the local market, explore the neighbourhoods, the sultan's palace and the maleo bird egg 'museum', and all from our fleet of brightly-coloured motor rickshaws, which will be on the dock awaiting our arrival.

- We will pay a hands-on visit to LINI, an NGO doing great work with coral restoration on the surrounding reefs, in addition to working with local fishermen in finding sustainable solutions for supplying fish for overseas markets and the live aquarium fishing trade.

- The last of the day's highlights will be a snorkel on a local reef where we will see the most elegant, but very threatened, Banggai Cardinal Fish – a darling of saltwater aquarium lovers worldwide.

DAY 8

- We will pay a visit to another Bajau 'sea gypsy' community awaits us today, as we get to once again meet and experience one of Southeast Asia's famous nomadic cultures.

- After our visit with the sea gypsies on Padai Kecil Island, we will snorkel on one of the local reefs, and then set sail later in the afternoon, heading south to the wonderful Wakatobi National Park.

- We also have the rare privilege to swim once again in another stingless jellyfish lake, the exotically named Danau Piasu Botangan.

DAY 9

- This is day one of two in the Wakatobi National Park, a very hard to reach archipelago filled with fascinating culture and also one of Indonesia's best national parks, with outstanding underwater life natural beauty.

- As well as snorkelling in the morning and afternoon, you will enjoy a personalised tour of the island of Wangi Wangi, with highlights that include a seaweed farm, meeting with a traditional weaving community, and the ruins of a centuries' old Dutch fort, a relic of the ancient Spice Trade.

DAY 10

- More fascinating culture and snorkelling awaits us today, as we visit a famous local blacksmith and do a drift snorkel on the Wakatobi Resort's magnificent house reef.

- Snorkelling comes first in the morning, and then during lunch we will cruise to nearby Binongko Island, where the local craftsmen use hand-operated bellows on the furnace in the blacksmith shop to produce machetes and knives for that are highly sought-after right across Indonesia.

DAY 11

- When you awake today the sky will be filled with the sight of Brown- and Red-Footed Boobies and Lesser Frigate birds, many of which will be circling the boat and trying to land on the stays and masts.

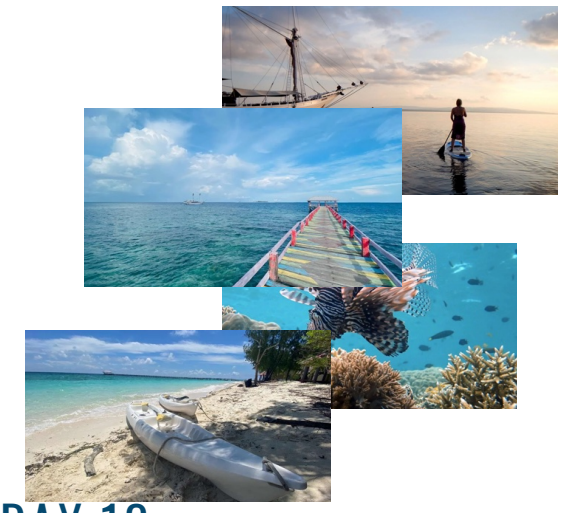
- The island where we will be is Kakabia, an uninhabited sea mount in the middle of the Flores Sea, rich in upwelling nutrients and a perfect habitat for fishing and raising their young.

- We will spend the day here snorkelling and exploring and we will make an attempt to go ashore (tide depending) for an afternoon of swimming, kayaking, paddling and fun.

DAY 12

- Today will be another relaxing day on Tinabo Island, where we will enjoy swimming, snorkelling , paddleboarding, kayaking, birdwatching and exploring.

- In the evening, the crew will set up for a beach BBQ and party on the sand under a tropical night sky filled with stars.



DAY 13

- Today we will walk amongst the hulls and hulks of a huge unlaunched flotilla of pinisi ships being built on a remote island archipelago. We will meet the shipwrights and discover their age-old traditions of shipbuilding that they have practiced for centuries in this forgotten corner of the world, using basic plans, wood, and a collection of simple tools and age-old techniques.

- Bonerate is rarely visited by tourists outside of SeaTrek, and seeing this open-air boatyard is an experience to be savoured. As we walk through the village and along the beaches and meet the locals, you will gain a new appreciation for island life and for the kind of boat you have been cruising with for the past twelve days.

DAY 14

- Giants will loom large in your day today: Komodo dragons, flying foxes and manta rays, three of the biggest and most impressive animals in Indonesia.

- Rising early in the Komodo National Park, we will take you for a privately arranged, ranger-led walk around the island of Rinca, where we will see not only Komodo dragons, but also their preferred menu of prey – monkeys, deer, pigs and buffaloes.

- After lunch on board we will go in search of manta rays as they glide by

search of manta rays as they glide by as they feed in the current at their local cleaning stations.

- This evening, as the sun starts to set, we will gather on the deck and be witness to a most spectacular event as thousands of flying foxes leave their mangrove forest homes en masse on their nightly fruit-foraging missions.

DAY 15

- We will go ashore in the early morning on Komodo Island for another walk through the savanna and forests of Komodo island in search of dragons and other wildlife.

- We will then set course northwards in search of manta rays at a popular cleaning station, followed by a snorkel with sea turtles.

- At dusk, you will have the chance to climb to a viewing point on Gili Lawa Darat Island, which offers magnificent views of the sunset and the Komodo National Park

DAY 16

- Our final day will be one of snorkelling and culture. After an optional morning swim and snorkel, we will take you on a private tour to a local village high up on a mountain plateau where we will be welcomed in by the elders and offered betel nut and arak, a potent local alcoholic brew.

- We will be witness to the traditional ‘caci' whip dance, and the 'bamboo' dance, performed by the villagers for generations.

- After a final Indonesian lunch on the boat we will say farewell to our crew, who have looked after us so well for the past two weeks, and transfer to Komodo airport for our flight back to Bali and our onward journey.