

SEVEN SEAS

Banda Sea, Flores and Komodo National Park

Ambon to Labuan Bajo | The Banda Sea and Komodo National Park

Komodo sits where the Indian and Pacific oceans meet, and powerful tidal currents draw nutrient-rich water into a stunning diversity of habitats.

Dives range from high-adrenaline seamounts swirling with sharks and pelagic species to underwater canyons with feeding mantas and cave swim throughs, with dugong sometimes cruising the shallows.

The Banda Sea adds steep drop-offs and fast currents, with schools of jacks, giant tuna and swarms of banded kraits.

On a moonless night at Komodo, miles from any large city, the full crescent of the Milky Way can be seen.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
15 days / 14 nights	Ambon	Labuan Bajo	Certified divers







Your route

STOP 1

The Banda Sea

Dive the famous Spice Islands.
Once sought by Columbus and Marco Polo, the Banda Islands were the original Spice Islands and the most coveted destination on earth, particularly by the Dutch and Portuguese who colonised the islands and exported the indigenous nutmeg and cloves.

STOP 2

Komodo National Park

Jurassic Park revisited.
Komodo National Park is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its stunning diversity of natural beauty, and is without a doubt one of the best places on earth to explore on a liveaboard boat trip.

DIVE THE FAMOUS SPICE ISLANDS

The Banda Sea

The Banda Sea is surrounded by islands from the large islands of Buru, Halmahera, Ambon and Seram in the north, towards Gorom, Kei and Aru in the east, the islands of Tanimbar, Wetar and Reong, and a series of smaller islands such as Babar and Moa, touching East Timor in the south.







ABOVE THE WATER

Gunung Api is an isolated volcanic peak rising from the heart of the Banda Sea. This uninhabited island is home to thousands of nesting seabirds, and exudes sulphur above and below the landmark. The 5 tiny atolls of Lucipara in the middle of the Banda Sea are the tops of undersea mountains rising more than a mile from the ocean floor, with uninhabited beaches that are ideal green turtle nesting sites.

THE DIVING

Steep drop-offs, impressive hard coral and some fast currents make the area breathtaking. Schools of jacks are a familiar sight, as are giant tuna, turtles, Napoleon wrasse, groupers, rays, sharks and giant lobsters. Excellent visibility is a blessing here, and there are also some special critter sites. Ambon Bay is host to some of Indonesia's best critter diving, and the nearby island of Halmahera is still largely unexplored and has recently produced some stunning sites.

At Gunung Api the water is home to extraordinary numbers of banded kraits (sea snakes), which have become a special attraction for divers; swarms of these non-aggressive snakes are not unusual. At Lucipara the reef drops off to ocean waters, ideal for diving and snorkelling, with a highlight of night diving with the rare flashlight fish.

CLIMATE AND CONDITIONS

- Dry season: May to November
- Rainy season: December to April, with high rainfall in January and February
- Air temperature: 27 to 32°C
- Water temperature: 27 to 30°C
- Best time to dive: October to December and March to April

Most of the climate is determined by monsoon winds. The northern area is more predictable than the south, with

refreshing breezes onboard throughout most of the season.

JURASSIC PARK REVISITED

Komodo National Park

Komodo National Park is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its stunning diversity of natural beauty, and is without a doubt one of the best places on earth to explore on a liveaboard boat trip.

From trekking the savannah for an up-close encounter with the legendary dragons to exploring an unbelievable variety of dive sites, Komodo offers an unforgettable experience for every guest aboard the Seven Seas. Komodo was the first destination of the Seven Seas.

Komodo National Park was created in 1980 to protect the dragons and other rare and unusual wildlife here, was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991, and was named one of the World's Top Ten Destinations by National Geographic Magazine in July 2017. The park includes a trio of large islands (Komodo, Rinca and Padar), interspersed with an archipelago of smaller islands and seamounts.

Located at the boundary between the Indian and Pacific oceans, Komodo is driven by the confluence of two completely different marine environments. Powerful tidal currents draw nutrient-rich Indian Ocean seawater to the northern reaches of the park, producing a stunning diversity of habitats and species in a relatively small area, with minimal travel time between dives.







ABOVE THE WATER

Padar Island, one of the park's most iconic landscapes, is a spectacular afternoon or early morning hike, with panoramic views of craggy mountains towering above a crescent of white sand beach. On most nights guests venture ashore to a secluded beach for drinks and hors d'oeuvres, often accompanied by acoustic guitar music from the crew.

Beyond the diving there are secluded beaches and shallow coral gardens to explore by sea kayak or stand up paddleboard, and the famed Pink Sand Beach, one of only seven such beaches known anywhere on earth. Komodo is miles from any large city, so the full crescent of the Milky Way can be seen on a moonless night.

THE DIVING

Home to more than 1,000 species of fish and 260 species of coral, and with the chance to glimpse rare marine mammals such as the dugong and sperm whale, Komodo is a trip of a lifetime for divers of all experience levels. Dive sites range from high-adrenaline seamounts swirling with sharks and pelagic species, to underwater canyons with feeding mantas, classic walls, gently sloping coral gardens and cave swim-throughs.

Komodo icons include Manta Alley, Manta Point, Tatawa Besar, Batu Bolong (Hollowed Rock), Castle Rock and Crystal Rock, along with favourites discovered over the years such as the Seven Seas Secret Spot, where dugong have sometimes been spotted cruising the shallows.

Underwater photographers and naturalists can look for pygmy seahorses, nudibranchs, blue-ringed octopus, false pipefish and frogfish, while wide-angle and blue-water enthusiasts can catch a glimpse of mantas, three species of sea turtle, reef and blue-water sharks, dolphins and several varieties of whale. Seldom-seen species such as ocean sunfish (mola mola), eagle rays, whale sharks and mako sharks have also been spotted.

Most dive sites depend on the tide, moon and other conditions, so your cruise director and dive masters work to have you diving the right place at the right time.

THE WILDLIFE

Komodo is best known as the home of its dragons, the world's largest lizard species, reaching three metres or more in length and weighing more than 70 kilograms. The park is believed to be home to more than 5,000 of them. Other mammals include local varieties of water buffalo, wild boar and crab-eating macaque, and twelve species of snake live in the park.

Guests can join an early morning hike across the golden savannah as the sun rises, the perfect time for spotting wildlife. The ranger station on Komodo Island offers several treks with a near-guaranteed view of the Komodo dragon. At twilight, enormous groups of fruit bats careen across the darkening sky.

CLIMATE AND CONDITIONS

- Southeast monsoon: May to October
- Northwest monsoon: December to March
- Change-over months: April and November
- Air temperature: 27 to 32°C
- Water temperature: Generally 24 to 30°C, warmest in the north and coolest in the south during the southeast monsoon
- Best time to dive: Year round, with the best diving in the north during the southeast monsoon and in the south during the northwest monsoon

Dive conditions vary with the tides throughout the day, so it is important to dive with the tide tables. Northern waters generally provide better visibility year round, with higher water temperatures. Southern waters generally provide better visibility from December through April.

