

SEVEN SEAS

Forgotten Islands and Banda Sea

Saumlaki to Tual | The Forgotten Islands and The Banda Sea

The Banda Islands were once the most coveted destination on earth, and today the seas around them hold some of the world's richest reefs, with unspoiled corals and large pelagic fish.

Steep drop-offs and fast currents bring giant tuna, Napoleon wrasse, rays, sharks and giant lobsters, and night dives at the tiny atolls of Lucipara find the rare flashlight fish.

Beyond lie the Forgotten Islands, far off any beaten path, where gin-clear water and unbelievable drop-offs have shown divers tornadoes of big-eye trevally, hammerhead sharks and a whale shark.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
15 days / 14 nights	Saumlaki	Tual	Certified divers







Your route

STOP 1

The Forgotten Islands

Off any beaten path.
Indonesia’s Forgotten Islands, also known as the Southeast Moluccas, are not a single destination but a 1,000 km long chain of archipelagos stretching from Timor to West Papua.

STOP 2

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.

OFF ANY BEATEN PATH

The Forgotten Islands

The terrain varies from the forested mountainous peaks of the Inner Banda Arc (Wetar, Roma, Damar and Nila), with peaks as high as 868 m on Damar, to the essentially flat islands of the easternmost Aru and Kei groups, dominated by savannah, mangroves and broadleaf forests. The Inner Arc islands are volcanic, while the Outer Banda Arc (Leti, Luang, Sermata, Babar and Tanimbar) is mostly uplifted coralline limestone, often terraced by periodic uplift. Together the islands make up the eastern end of the biogeographic province of Wallacea.







ABOVE THE WATER

Most of the Austronesian peoples of the islands share similar languages, myths and traditional beliefs. They are known for powerful woodcarvings and sculptures depicting ancestral figures, distinctive hand-woven ikat fabrics, and plaited bamboo and palm baskets.

THE DIVING

The Forgotten Islands offer some of the best diving in Indonesian waters, with gin-clear waters, patch reefs and coral bommies, spectacular wall dives and unbelievable drop-offs. On the inaugural trips in 2010, guests saw schools of massive bumphead parrotfish, tornadoes of big-eye trevally, giant trevally, Spanish mackerel, schooling barracuda, hammerhead sharks and a whale shark.

Since 2012 the Seven Seas has offered three expeditions to the Forgotten Islands each year between late October and early December. Detailed itineraries vary according to weather, diving conditions and other factors.

CLIMATE AND CONDITIONS

- Northwest monsoon: Late December to April, with rain storms from December to March
- Southeast trade winds: May to October
- Calm cruising: November to the first half of December in recent years
- Air temperature: 27 to 32°C
- Water temperature: 27 to 32°C

Dive conditions vary with the tides, so it is important to dive according to the tide tables to hit each site at the optimal

time. Wind and sea conditions may still vary unpredictably, forcing itinerary changes.

DIVE THE FAMOUS SPICE ISLANDS

The Banda Sea

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. Now the seas around these tropical paradise islands are coveted for their spectacular diving and snorkelling on some of the world's richest reefs, unspoiled corals and large pelagic fish.

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.