



East Flores - Alors

East Indonesian culture newly discovered!

The archipelago of Alor includes 6 islands with Pantar and Alor being the biggest ones. There are more than 60 impressive and mostly untouched dive sites around Alor. Most of these lie in the nutrient rich Pantar Straits between Alor and Pantar.

Pindito has been diving this area for a few years now. The more we dive in this area the more incredible and diverse dive sites are being discovered. During your dives along this exciting new route you can expect to see incredible underwater biodiversity. In addition, nutrient rich upwelling waters bring in pelagics: Sunfish (mola-mola), thresher sharks, hammerhead sharks, humpback whales, and even marlin and sailfish. Further, the many protected pristine reefs provide a perfect home for smaller colourful creatures and up to 1,000 species of coral reef fishes and 500 species of corals. Walls, bommies, caves and patch reef formations make for dramatic 3D underwater topography while black sand areas provide perfect habitat for muck diving and cryptic critters.

Itinerary

Pindito puts great importance to plan the best possible tour for their guests. When planning the route, many factors play an important role. The most important factor is the weather. Since there can be storms in the tropics at any time, Pindito might change routes and itineraries at short notice.

Our guests will board the ship in Maumere on the big island of Flores in Eastern Indonesia. Most likely the Pindito will sail directly overnight towards Alor to dive the area around the islands of Kumba, Ternate and Pura (which all lie in the Pantar Strait). In the following days, the cruise continues on to the islands of Marisa, Kawula, Solar and Adonara before heading back to Maumere.

Alor & Kumba

On the island of Kumba there is a spectacular volcano that contributes to some of the most gorgeous sunsets and sea vistas in this exotic destination. The surrounding waters harbor food-rich currents and cool waters (70-75 degrees), fantastic conditions for encounters with larger marine animals. White-tip and grey reef sharks, giant groupers, mantas, mola-mola, and whale sharks can be spotted around Kumba Island. Due to the volcanic activity you can also see streams of bubbles dramatically rising from the sand and surrounding reef.

In Alor you can see young goggle-fishermen as they free-dive bare-footed, peering through homemade goggles to check their bamboo fish traps (sustainable small-scale fishing). Giant barrel sponges, fragile finger corals, huge boulder corals, flowing schools of glassfish, sweetlips, emperor angelfish, countless cleaning stations, and more, paint the underwater landscape of Alor as you swim along her pristine reefs.

Above water keep your eyes open for whales. In the past we have encountered blue whales and orcas!

On Alor you will have a opportunity to visit a local village. Here there are still local rituals that are practiced regularly. Visit the local market, where people sell everything from fresh exotic fruits, seafood, spices, handicrafts and clothing. The locals are very friendly and their smiling faces welcome visitors coming to their islands.

Buaya, Ternate & Pura

These small islands are situated in the Pantar Strait between Alor and Pantar. The water here at some dive spots like "The Bullet" or "Sharks Gallore" can get really cool (70-72F). We highly recommended that our divers use a 5-7mm wetsuit here and for some, a hood provides welcome warmth. But with the cool waters comes the opportunity of pelagics and riotous marine-life richness.

There are also a couple of beautiful critter spots with mating mandarin fish, cryptic crawling Ambon scorpion fish, pensive Pegasus sea moths, secretive seahorses and unusual crustaceans. One of the highlights of these dives are the bamboo shark sightings, a species found very few other places in the world. Above water you can see whales and dolphins and with a little luck you can spot pilot whales and whale sharks.

Pantar & Marisa

Around these small islands you should keep your eyes open for octopus. Along the seabed move "close and slow" as you scan for mimic octopus, wonderpus, and the blue-ringed octopus. Also look for various scorpionfish species including Rhinopias. Next watch out for flying gurnards sneaking around the black sand landscape. Nestled in small sea fans, hydroids or crinoids, you can spot ghost pipefish, skeleton shrimps, decorator crabs, commensal shrimps and angling frogfish. The black sand provides welcome contrast for the vivid colours of the otherwise cryptic critters and it guarantees images that "pop"!

Kawula

Kawula offers the perfect habitat for muck critters. The visibility may be limited to 25ft, but these sites are meccas for frogfish, seahorses, rare scorpionfish, pipefish, and commensal crustaceans.

In Solor you may get the chance to visit the small village "Lamalera", which is located in a little bay close to an old volcano. It is the extremely unique and

traditional way of sustenance hunting that brings us to this village.

Lamalera may be the only place in the world where the locals go whale hunting using traditional methods. The methods are ancient and are passed on from generation to generation. The villagers sail out to the sea in their wooden dug-outs and hunt for sperm whales with simple bamboo spears. Occasionally they are successful, and when this rare event occurs the meat is shared throughout the village providing the rare necessity of protein for these people.

We would like to advise our guests, that the visit of the village depends on the villagers. Should the visit not be possible, an alternative program will be offered. The whale hunting is part of the local tradition and has nothing to do with commercial fishing. The visit is optional, and every guest has the choice to do an alternative program.

This area also has some amazing diving. We have spent some time exploring new places and have discovered pristine beautiful reefs, that are super fishy, lots of reef sharks and with occasional big stuff passing by.

Adonara

Many colorful species of corals and textured sponges adorn these lovely reefs. The 3-D structure forms rich habitat for a diverse fauna of coral reef species. Adonara sites are also notable places to see and film pygmy seahorses clinging to the gorgonian sea fans whose polyps and coloration the pygmies have evolved to match perfectly. You will also see schools of snappers, sweet lips and giant trevallies along the drop-offs. Keep an eye out for sea turtles, manta rays, reef sharks and other pelagics as you approach reef points and buttress edges.

Maumere

We may finish this cruise with dives in "Muck Central"... Maumere (on the island of Flores). Pindito is the original pioneer of this sleepy Indonesian fishing port that teems with cryptic odd-balls including frogfishes, Ambon Scorpionfishes, leaf-fishes, mercurial schools of venomous cat fish, mandarin fish, seahorses, giant pen shells in black coral hedges under the town pier, bunches of purple tunicates, harlequin shrimps and so on. This is an awesome place for you to film cool critters. And here you can fill up the final bits of digital memory in your reserve and you can create memories that will fuel your imagination for years to come.