

DAY**ITINERARY WITH MV MERMAID I BIODIVERSITY SUPER SPECIAL
– RAJA AMPAT – BANDA SEA – ALOR – MAUMERE****DIVES****DAY 1**

Check-in on board MV Mermaid I. As our guest arrivals take place all through the day depending on flights, you are welcome to board when you arrive and spend some time unpacking and setting up your equipment, etc. Following the boat and safety briefing, Mermaid I will cruise for 4 to 6 hours to the Dampier Strait area.

dives

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DAY 2-3

Dampier Strait – Raja Ampat

The first two diving days of the trip will be spent around the Dampier Strait, the strait between the island of Waigeo, the Bird's Head peninsula and the northern side of Batanta Island. The Dampier Strait is known for a huge variety of diving, from giant mantas to mangroves, beautiful reefs, many pinnacles and sea mounts covered in schooling fish, aggregations of sweetlips, schooling barracudas, schools of bumphead parrotfish, massive schools of fusiliers and lots of wobbegongs sharks. It is also a great location for critters and macro subjects, with several species of pygmy seahorses and a large variety of nudibranchs.

There are also several jetties to do some great night dives, where you can see Raja epaulette sharks, toadfish, frogfish and crocodile fish.

In the afternoon between dives, you can visit several traditional Papuan villages, meet the locals and walk on white sandy beaches.

Cruise overnight to Misool.

dives

8

DAY 4-5

Misool – Raja Ampat

The next two days will be spent around the island of Misool, where there are literally hundreds of dive sites. Misool is heaven for wide angle photographers. The prettiest soft corals reefs in the world are located in Misool. In addition, there are multiple pinnacles surrounded by masses of schooling fish, barracudas, jacks and snappers.

There will be some excursions with the tenders through some amazing inner lagoons, with fantastic scenery and wildlife sightings.

Cruise overnight to Pulau Koon, Ceram.

dives

8

DAY 6

Pulau Koon – Ceram

dives

Pulau Koon is a small island on the southeast of Ceram, half way between Raja Ampat and the Banda Islands. Here you will find walls covered in soft corals and sandy slopes with hard coral bommies. But the most interesting feature of this island is the amount of schooling fish and pelagics, including barracudas, bigeye trevallies, aggregations of red snappers, pompanos, batfish and giant groupers.

3

Cruise overnight to the Banda Islands.

DAY 7-8

Banda Islands

dives

The next two days will be spent in the Banda Islands, formerly known as the Spice Islands. Many of the dive sites around the Bandas are wall dives. The walls are covered in massive gorgonians, soft corals, barrel sponges and have some very interesting swim throughs. But there are other attractive dive sites such as pinnacles with enormous groups of schooling pyramid butterflyfish, triggerfish and pelagic fishes such as tunas passing through, spectacular hard coral reefs next to the volcano, and great muck dives with lots of mandarin fish at the local jetty.

7

The Banda Islands are much more than diving. It is also a cultural and historical experience. You will spend one morning walking around the village of Banda Neira with a local guide, visiting the local museum, the old Dutch fort, the old colonial governor's house, the local fish market and a nutmeg plantation, where you will have breakfast.

Cruise overnight to Manuk.

DAY 9

Manuk – Banda Sea

dives

Manuk, an extinct volcano about 65 nautical miles south of the Banda Islands, is one of two places in Indonesia where there are huge aggregations of sea snakes: Chinese sea snakes and banded sea kraits. It is an incredible experience to dive surrounded on all sides by sea snakes. The island is surrounded by black sandy slopes with hard coral reefs and volcanic ridges covered in gorgonians with zillions of fusiliers and pelagic fishes such as Spanish mackerels and dogtooth tunas passing through.

4

Cruise overnight to Pulau Nila.

DAY 10

Pulau Nila – Banda Sea

dives

Approximately 26 nautical miles northeast of the island of Nila in the Banda Sea, there is a submerged reef called Nil Desperandum. It is comprised mainly of walls and steep slopes going several thousand meters deep, with beautiful hard corals at the reef top. The reef is several miles long and it can be dived all the around. Napoleons wrasses, turtles and reef sharks are usual sightings at this reef.

4

5 nautical miles east of Nila lies an atoll called Dusborgh, with similar topography to Nil Desperandum. With crystal clear water, it is another great place to see pelagic fish including tunas, mackerels, jacks, rainbow runners and more passing by.

Cruise overnight to Pulau Damar.

DAY 11

Pulau Damar – Banda Sea

dives

Today will be spent diving around the three small islands surrounding the island of Damar: Neus Leur, Terbang Utara, and Terbang Selatan. With white sandy beaches and completely covered by tropical forests, these islands have some of the prettiest and healthiest reefs in the Banda Sea. Walls covered with massive barrel sponges and gorgonian sea fans. Reef tops full of soft corals and small tropical reef fishes. And visibility up to 50 metres.

4

Cruise overnight to Gunung Api.

DAY 12

Gunung Api – Banda Sea

dives

Weather depending, you will dive Gunung Api, a small volcano in the middle of the Banda Sea. Gunung Api is one of those very rare and special places where not many divers get to dive. Here, you will find underwater ridges, steep slopes with black sand and walls covered in soft corals. But the most amazing feature of this small volcano is the amount of sea snakes that can be found surrounding the island.

4

Spend the time between dives observing the hundreds of frigates that live on the island.

Cruise overnight to Wetar.

DAY 13	<p>Wetar</p> <p>After cruising every night for one week, Mermaid I will have finally crossed the Banda Sea and arrived at the island of Wetar.</p> <p>At Wetar, you will do three dives at the small island of Reong and at Cape Nunukae. Pulau Reong is a small island on the northwest coast of Wetar and is separated by a small channel only 700 metres wide. More walls, like many of the dive sites in the Banda Sea, covered in small soft corals but of a great variety of colours and zillions of triggerfish of every species.</p> <p>Cape Nunukae, about 6 nautical miles southwest of Pulau Reong, is a large ridge with slopes on both sides, covered with a hard coral reef on the shallow area of the ridge and soft corals on the slopes in the deeper areas. Strong currents can be had at the end of the ridge, where large aggregations of schooling fish can be found.</p> <p>Cruise overnight to Alor.</p>	<p>dives</p> <p>4</p>
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DAY 14	<p>Alor</p> <p>Alor is one of the old time favourite dive spots for divers coming to Indonesia year after year due to its variety of dive sites. Healthy reefs, pinnacles, walls, great muck dives, cold water, warm water, strong currents and protected areas. Alor has it all.</p> <p>Cruise overnight to Lewaling, Kawula Island.</p>	<p>dives</p> <p>4</p>
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DAY 15	<p>Lewaling Bay – Kawula Island</p> <p>The last day of diving will be done at Lewaling Bay at the island of Kawula. With the background of a volcano rising from the western shores of Lewaling Bay, the last two dives of the trip will be done at two different capes, Cape Bacatan and Cape Sirumerang. Both dive sites have a mix of ridges, walls with overhangs, white sandy slopes and very shallow reef tops.</p> <p>Cruise overnight to Maumere, Flores.</p>	<p>dives</p> <p>2</p>
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DAY 16	<p>Disembark in Maumere.</p> <p>This is a sample itinerary and is subject to changes beyond the operator’s control. The exact itinerary for your cruise may be adapted to best suit the weather conditions, tides and currents, season and other prevailing events.</p>	<p>dives</p> <p>-</p>
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TOTAL DIVES : 52