

Banda Sea - 'Ring of Fire', Indonesia

6, 7 or 10 Nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Laha Harbour, Ambon at 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** Laha Harbour, Ambon at 10:00

- **Domestic Arrival & Departure Airport:** Pattimura International Airport Ambon (AMQ)

Flights and transfers information

Domestic flights to and from Ambon are not included in the liveboard price.

Transfers between local hotels* (or the domestic airport) and the harbour are provided free of charge on the day of embarkation and disembarkation only.

We strongly recommend arriving in Ambon the day before embarkation and arranging a hotel for the night. (Please refer to [domestic flight information](#) below).

*Please note that the complimentary shared transfer is from hotels along the route between Ambon Airport and Swiss-Belhotel. Charges apply for pick-ups from hotels outside of this area.

Pick-up time from local hotels is usually around 11:30-12:00 and will be confirmed by the local operations team the night before embarkation.

Transfer between Ambon Airport and the harbour takes approximately 10 minutes.

International Arrival & Departure

We recommend **booking international flights into and out of Jakarta** International Airport (CGK) for the easiest domestic connections to and from Ambon. We also strongly advise spending at least one day in Jakarta on either side of your domestic flights and liveboard dates to allow for possible changes to flight schedules and to ensure you are on time for your connections.

Our reservations team can help to arrange hotel accommodations, airport transfers and domestic flight connections between your international arrival and departure and the liveboard embarkation and disembarkation points.

Domestic flights

Check-in time for domestic flights in Indonesia is usually 2 hours before departure. Please bear this in mind when booking your outbound flights.

IMPORTANT: As domestic flight schedule changes, delays and cancellations which can result in missed connections are common occurrences in Indonesia, we strongly recommend making allowances for this when arranging domestic flights.

Inbound to Ambon

A limited number of direct flights operate from Jakarta to Ambon, which varies depending on the day of the week.

All flight options from Bali to Ambon involve a connection at either Jakarta or Makassar.

We strongly recommend arranging flights to ***arrive in Ambon the day before embarkation*** and booking a hotel for the night.

This not only ensures that you are well-rested before the start of your liveaboard itinerary but will also allow time to make alternative flight arrangements should there be any changes to the ones you have booked.

We are unable to delay the liveaboard's departure for individual late arrivals as this disrupts other guests and impacts the itinerary schedule and diving possibilities. Please be advised that, if your delayed arrival is after the liveaboard has departed, you may be charged the cost of arranging a speed boat transfer, or additional fuel consumption related to Indo Master having to return to port.

Should you choose to arrive in Ambon on the day of embarkation you should ***book a flight that arrives before 12:00 (midday)***. An Indo Master representative will meet you near the baggage claim area (or near the exit) to assist with your luggage and arrange transfer to the harbour and liveaboard.

Outbound from Ambon

There are several direct, daily flight options from Ambon to Jakarta; Ambon to Bali requires a flight change in either Makassar (UPG), Surabaya (SUB) or Jakarta.

Diving Information

Due to the location and exposed nature of many of the sites covered on this itinerary, most of the diving is ***unsuitable for inexperienced divers*** due to depths and strong currents.

All divers must have diving-specific insurance (e.g. [DiveAssure](#), [DAN](#), etc.) which covers all scuba diving activities, emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs. Diving insurance will only cover accidents within the depth limit dictated by your certification level so you are required to remain well within those at all times.

The use of a dive computer, a 6 minute safety stop and an ascent rate of no more than 9 metres (30 ft) per minute are mandatory on all dives.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers joining a Banda Sea itinerary on Indo Master must have **PADI Advanced Open Water**, or equivalent certification, and a **minimum of 50 logged dives**. It is also strongly recommended that divers have *previous experience and are comfortable diving in currents*.

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements, or who our crew feel have insufficient skills for certain conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives.

Diving Emergencies

The route on this itinerary covers many remote and isolated diving locations. In the event of a diving accident or suspected DCI incident, transfer from Indo Master to a hospital or recompression chamber is likely to require a private speedboat, emergency air evacuation or both. Recompression chambers are located in Manado (North Sulawesi), Labuan Bajo (Komodo), Bali, Makassar and Jakarta.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs as well as recompression chamber and hospital treatment.

Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

We will be diving in The Banda Sea on this itinerary where water temperatures range from 26°C to 29°C (79°F - 84°F) across the area covered.

For most divers, a 3mm wetsuit will suffice while others are comfortable diving with just swimwear and a hooded vest or rashguard. However, those prone to feeling cold after prolonged or multiple dives may prefer a 5mm wetsuit, or to use additional thermal layers.

Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions.

Marine Park & Port Fees: 200 USD per person (to be paid on board).

PLEASE NOTE: *Marine park and port fees are subject to change without notice.* The applicable amount at the time of departure will be added to your onboard extras to be paid before disembarkation.

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel, including several overnight cruising periods and, while we endeavour to ensure the number of scheduled dives is fulfilled, bad weather and sea conditions can hinder the vessel's ability to reach or remain at specific dive sites and may impact the number of dives possible.

Number of scheduled dives:

- 10 nights: Up to 30
- 7 nights: Up to 21
- 6 nights: Up to 18

Included land visits

Due to the distances covered on the Banda Sea itinerary, land visit(s) will only be offered when the vessel is in the Banda Islands. Here you will have the opportunity to visit the nutmeg plantations and see the influence of colonialism from the days of the Dutch settlers and traders.

Your Cruise Manager will schedule up to 3 or 4 dives per day, depending on cruising distances; Typically this will comprise 3 day dives and, depending on the boat's location, either a sunset or a night dive, scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing and Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing and Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing and Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Sunset or Night dive (where possible)
- Dinner

Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or fully understand English, please let us know in advance.

The following is a day-to-day example of the 10-night itinerary. Please be aware that this is intended as a general indication of the areas the itinerary covers and that the time spent at each location depends on various factors, including the itinerary duration, and may vary from one trip to the next.

Day 1: Embarkation is followed by introductions and boat and safety briefings. After this, you can assemble your equipment with help from the friendly crew and settle into your cabin before a *late afternoon check dive* followed by dinner. Overnight cruise to Suanggi.

Day 2: Pulau Suanggi

Days 3-5: Manuk and Serua

Days 6-8: Banda Islands

Day 9: Nusa Laut / Ambon

Day 10: For your last full day on board, we usually schedule 2 morning dives at sites around Ambon before the boat cruises to the harbour, where it will remain at anchor overnight.

Day 11: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation between 08:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

*We kindly request that guests check their flight times to ensure 24 hours between their final dive and departure from Ambon.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, various factors determine the exact route the yacht follows, and the dive sites we visit. ***Weather, tides, currents, and sea conditions are just some of the considerations that play a part in the Cruise Manager's decision of where Indo Master is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.***

The following is a sample of dive sites we may visit as Indo Master cruises through the Banda Sea's Ring of Fire. *The safety of our guests is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternative locations should we be unable to visit or remain at any of the locations listed below.*

Disclaimer: This information is only a general overview of the key areas this itinerary usually covers and some of the dive sites at each location; *The inclusion of specifically named dive sites is not guaranteed* and the amount of time spent in each area will be determined by the itinerary duration and other factors, as noted above. Additionally, there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

Pulau Suanggi

Suanggi, also known as Pulau Manukan, is a small uninhabited island about 12 nautical miles (22 kilometres) northwest of Banda Neira, the capital of the Banda Islands. This tiny island, surrounded by open ocean, has an incredibly rich micro-ecosystem with pristine reefs brimming with copious numbers and varieties of fish. Schools of rainbow runners, red-tooth triggerfish, bannerfish and fusiliers are just some of the inhabitants crowding this oceanic oasis. Napoleon wrasse, green & hawksbill turtles, tuna and huge schools of barracuda are also resident but, the biggest attraction is the schools of endangered scalloped hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*) that frequent the area during their migratory period from late September to early November each year.

The Banda Islands

The Banda group of islands, sometimes referred to as the Spice Islands, boasts fantastic diving with visibility usually ranging from 40-50 metres. On land, from the top of Fort Belgica built by the Dutch in 1611 and located in the historical town of Banda Neira, enjoy the view of Gunung Api, a 640-metre-high active volcano. Clove, nutmeg, mace and cinnamon for which the islands originally became known, are still the main spices grown here.

Dive sites in the Banda Islands drop down thousands of metres, offering spectacular walls and stunning reef tops. A sunset dive at the pier in front of an old colonial hotel, which is only 5 metres deep, provides the opportunity to observe mandarin fish mating. Currents can be strong around these small islands so the dive sites will be chosen based on the best daily conditions from the following options:

Pohon Miring

Stunningly covered with colourful soft corals and gorgonian fans, a swim-through will take you through a sheer wall covered in Leather corals. Numerous big Napoleon wrasses inhabit the reef and dogtooth tuna patrol the blue waters.

Lava Flow

In 1998 the volcano on Naira Island erupted and the lava flow destroyed the jungle and reefs in its wake. While only a few trees have grown on the basaltic rock, underwater it's a different story; from 3 metres to 40 metres, an extensive hard coral garden completely blankets the solidified lava flow hosting millions of colourful reef fish.

Banda Jetty

Famed for the mandarin fish that can be observed at sunset, which can be seen just by looking from the jetty. In many places, these fishes are elusive, small and shy; Here, it's the opposite. When they have done with their mating rituals, a wide array of critters await discovery on the black sand, including colourful nudibranchs, octopus, cockatoo waspfish and frogfish.

Batu Kapal

Named for its boat-like shape, this island is an exhilarating dive where curtains of red-tooth triggerfish, pyramid butterflyfish, fusiliers and surgeonfish merge into a multicolour fish soup. The submerged walls of Batu Kapal are decorated with vibrant yellow soft corals and, on the rocky and sandy bottom, you can often spot large groups of long-nose emperor fish hunting alongside bluefin trevallies and opportunistic Napoleon wrasses. Grey reef sharks patrol the surrounding blue while blackfin barracudas hover above the reef.

Karang Hatta

Just South of Hatta Island, this is a spectacular submerged reef with steep slopes surrounded by deep waters. Also known as Sekaru, meaning shallow area, an extensive 500-metre-wide hard coral plateau slopes gradually to around 40 metres transitioning to a breathtaking drop-off to the abyssal depths. Southerly currents on the southeastern side attract a kaleidoscope of fish, so dense that it is often difficult to see through and past them to observe the pelagic action in the surrounding blue.

Masses of red-tooth triggerfish alongside pyramid butterflyfish, white-margin surgeonfish, yellow snappers, blue, yellow and neon fusiliers and many more populate this long reef in vast numbers. In the blue, you may be lucky enough to spot dogtooth tuna, great barracudas, eagle rays, or even a mobula ray or scalloped hammerhead shark during your dive. Keep your fingers crossed, and your eyes wide open as you splash into this wonderful dive site.

Goa Hatta, a.k.a. 'Hole in the Wall'

Along the Northern shoreline of Hatta Island, a 5-metre wide sinkhole has created an opening on top of the reef which extends down roughly 4 metres through the reef forming a stunning archway where it exits on the seaward wall. This photogenic swim-through is densely covered with vibrant Gorgonian fans; around the exit, the eagle-eyed can find orangutan crabs living their symbiotic lives inside bubble corals. The wall, which reaches depths well beyond recreational limits, is adorned with massive barrel sponges, giant sea fans, leather corals and Tubastrea with the shallow reef top being a sensory delight of fish activity and colours.

Pulau Ai

West of Banda Neira and Gunggung Api, **Ai Island** is an isolated, low-lying island featuring steep limestone walls, surrounded by deep water. Currents can be strong but these attract large pelagic species; Large numbers of barracuda, trevally and tuna all school here.

On the south side of Ai Island **Batu Udang**, also known as Shrimp Rock, the reef slopes gently to 13 metres then becomes a very steep decline to a depth of around 55 metres. Red-toothed and black triggerfish swarm across the entire reef while Hawksbill Turtles rest on the ledges and feed on sponges. Longfin Batfish, Black and White Snapper and Napoleon Wrasse are just some of the larger fish that reside here.

Along the north-western shore, **Batu Payung**, which translates as Umbrella Rock, features a steep wall with lots of cracks and overhangs down to around 60 metres; The shallow parts of the reef are covered in barrel and vase sponges, gorgonians and a variety of corals which are awash with a vast array of colourful fish.

Pulau Run

Due west of Banda Besar, **Run Island** offers exceptional dives on deep walls decorated with huge Gorgonian sea fans and unspoilt reefs rich with fish life. Measuring just 3 km in length, and less than 1 km wide, Run Island is one of the smallest of the Banda Islands and has an interesting history including being the first British overseas colony.

A gently sloping reef transitions into a dramatic wall which features several overhangs. Covered in beautiful corals and resplendent with colourful reef fish; schools of snapper, fusiliers, sweetlips, blue-spotted stingrays, and eagle rays are just a few examples of marine life that can be seen here. Like Pulau Ai, currents around the island can be strong.

Pulau Manuk

This tiny volcanic island offers stunning underwater topography blanketed with an amazing amount of soft and hard coral. This remote active volcano in the middle of the Banda Sea, 55 nautical miles (102 km) south of the Banda Islands, is famed for being home to multitudinous Chinese sea snakes and banded sea kraits. The island is surrounded by black sandy slopes with hard coral reefs and volcanic ridges covered in gorgonians with a bevy of fusiliers and pelagic fish such as Spanish mackerels and dogtooth tuna passing by. Hammerheads, mobula rays and eagle rays are often seen around this beautiful location too.

Nil Desperandum & Serua (7 & 10 night itineraries only)

Upwelling and currents around these islands bring nutrient-rich waters and with them an abundance of marine life. Serua Island is considered one of the most exemplary locations in the Banda Sea to encounter schooling hammerhead sharks although, being migratory and elusive creatures, sightings are not guaranteed.

We also see many larger fish species in these little visited waters; Tunas, Napoleon wrasse and groupers are among the most common sightings with schools of Pinjalo snappers, Big-eye trevallies, surgeonfish, bannerfish and barracuda giving divers a spectacular display.

Nusa Laut

Famous for its dugong population, Nusa Laut epitomises the benefits of proactive community conservation. Protected by the local villagers following customary laws known as *Sasi*, the reefs are pristine and teeming with biodiversity. The island boasts stunning seascapes comprising multifarious hard corals and sponges the size of which will make your jaw drop.

Diving along the walls or sloping reef you will surely encounter a huge variety of reef fish with white-tip and grey-tip reef sharks often seen patrolling the blue in the deeper areas. The sandy areas within the lagoon on the island's east side are perfect locations to find resting leopard sharks and stingrays.

Ambon

In the heart of the Moluccas, the famous dive sites of Ambon offer world-class muck diving, diverse marine ecosystems and dramatic seascapes. Sites we might dive at around Ambon include:

Pintu Kota

This area boasts incredible underwater architecture, with a massive archway decorated with colourful soft corals hanging from its walls to ceilings. Many white and red polyp sea fans are dotted along the bottom, whilst shoals of fusiliers, bannerfish, and surgeonfish feed along the steep walls covered with huge barrel sponges.

Hukurila

Located in the Hukurila Coast region on the eastern side of Ambon Island, this underwater cave is a treasure trove of aquatic delights. Featuring a chimney, several canyons and caverns and other interesting geographical formations, marine life includes colourful corals, sponges, giant gorgonians and plenty of critters waiting to be discovered in their hidey-holes.

Twilight Zone

This renowned muck diving spot Laha Harbour is great to explore at night or during the day. Amongst the detritus, countless species of nudibranchs, shrimps, crabs and bottom-dwelling fish wait to be discovered, including the endemic psychedelic frogfish (*Histiophryne psychedelica*). Other delights you may encounter include flamboyant cuttlefish, ornate ghost pipefish, Donald Duck shrimps, tiger shrimps and starry octopuses.

Rhino City

So named for the number and variety of Rhinopias found here, Rhino City lies southwest of Twilight Zone and is an extension of the same sandy slope. Across the site, carpet, bulb-tip and long tentacle anemones play host to Clarke's anemonefish and a plethora of commensal shrimps, porcelain crabs and hairy crabs. Ribbon eels and jawfish can be spotted in their sandy burrows, while short-snout and ornate ghost pipefish hide amidst the seagrass.

SS Duke of Sparta

The SS Duke of Sparta was a huge cargo ship built in West Hartlepool, England in 1940. In 1951 she was sold to the Italian Grimaldi Brothers and renamed SS Aquilo. In May 1958, while anchored near Ambon City, she was bombed by an unmarked Douglas B-26 Invader aircraft during a clandestine CIA operation conducted as part of the US initiative to quash perceived communist threats in Indonesia. The Aquilo eventually sank one month later, coming to rest almost completely intact on the seabed with her stern approximately 13 metres below the surface and her bow at 35-40 metres. She remains in great condition with her deck and masts covered with colourful soft corals and sponges. Across and around the whole wreck there is plenty of fish life, and her cargo holds offer some easy penetration possibilities.

Should you have any questions about the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveboards.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.