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# 10 Nights, Manta Trust Expedition Indonesia - Komodo National Park

## About the Manta Trust

Formed in 2011, The Manta Trust is a UK registered charity whose mission is to advance the worldwide conservation of manta rays and their habitat by providing expert advice to drive the policies and practices through robust research, raising awareness and providing education, influence and action.

The team consists of a diverse group of researchers, scientists, conservationists, educators and media experts who work together to share and promote knowledge and expertise; Their vision is a sustainable future for the oceans, where manta rays and their relatives thrive in healthy, diverse marine ecosystems.

The Manta Trust takes a unique, multifaceted approach to mobulid conservation that revolves around three fundamental pillars: Research, Education and Collaboration, setting them apart from others in the field.

**Data Collection:** The Manta Trust has several research projects worldwide, incorporating population data, research on manta movements, and genetic analyses - to name a few - with the goal of a better understanding of the general ecology of manta and mobula rays.

Collectively the Manta Trust and Manta Expeditions teams possess over two decades of experience globally, studying its manta population and marine life and have assembled a vast amount of knowledge and expertise which they are waiting to share with Master Liveboards' guests on this special collaboration.

## What to Expect

During this 10 night expedition aboard Indo Master, guests will have the opportunity to experience and participate in cutting-edge conservation research to protect one of the ocean's most majestic animals. A core focus of this Komodo National Park expedition is not only to provide close encounters with manta rays but to enthuse and educate divers about marine conservation issues and the environment surrounding them. Through a series of activities and presentations led by the Manta Trust expert on topics covering local marine species and habitats, participants are sure to leave with an increased awareness of the threats facing our oceans and, perhaps more importantly, how they can help.

Manta Trust scientists will be collecting photographic identification images of all mantas encountered throughout the expedition - a task that guests are welcome and encouraged to participate in. All new manta rays will be added to the database and guests will be invited to name them.

Through active participation and the knowledge of the Manta Trust scientists, we hope guests will gain a new perspective on diving and the underwater world; by understanding what you see, you can achieve greater awareness and love of the subaquatic environment and its creatures. Ultimately though, this is an opportunity to give something back to the ocean in appreciation of the many wonders it offers us as scuba divers.

## Itinerary Overview

The diversity of terrestrial and marine ecosystems in Komodo National Park is so unique that the park became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. The combination of marine and land wildlife, reef-dwelling and pelagic creatures, vertebrates and invertebrates, shallow coral reefs, isolated pinnacles, drop-offs and exhilarating drift dives produces exceptional diving, as you would expect of a key location within the Coral Triangle - the epicentre for the planet's marine biodiversity.

With one of the world's largest populations of reef mantas, resident year-round, Komodo National Park is among the best destinations to encounter these magnificent creatures. It also offers the possibility of observing the elegant black morph reef mantas which are typical of this region's population.

During the expedition, we will visit multiple, well-known manta ray sites within the marine park, both in the north and south of Komodo, including the cleaning stations of Karang Makassar and Manta Alley where mantas often congregate in large numbers to socialise and mate during this season.

But Komodo offers so much more than manta ray encounters; With dives at famous sites such as Batu Bolong, Crystal Rock and Shotgun!, you will have the opportunity to experience its kaleidoscopic diversity throughout the expedition. Schools of trevally, white tip reef sharks, gardens of colourful soft corals, barracudas, bizarre nudibranchs, and of course, a visit on-land to encounter the legendary Komodo dragon!

Critter life is also extremely abundant and not to be missed and you will have the chance to experience it all through dives at sites such as Pink Beach, Wainilu and Tiga Dara; frogfish, Robust and Ornate ghost pipefish, Pygmy, Flamboyant and Broadclub cuttlefish, Wunderpus, Blue-ringed, Starry night and Mimic octopus, macro commensal crustaceans and weird and wonderful sand dwellers are just some of the many non-pelagic delights of Komodo.

## Diving Information

Conditions in some areas around Komodo can be challenging, even for experienced divers due to ***strong currents*** and reduced visibility at certain locations. Therefore, this itinerary is unsuitable for entry-level divers, or those who have not dived in similar conditions before.

## Mandatory Minimum dive certification and experience

Divers joining a Komodo National Park itinerary on Indo Master are **required** to 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 strong 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.*

*It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have diving-specific insurance (e.g. [DiveAssure](#), DAN, etc.) which covers all scuba diving activities, emergency evacuation and recompression chamber and hospital treatment costs. However, 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.*

## Diving Emergencies

The nearest hyperbaric chamber to Komodo National Park is at Siloam Hospital in Labuan Bajo. In the event of a diving accident, depending on the boat's location at the time, transfer from Indo Master to the chamber is likely to require a private emergency speedboat. If the chamber in Labuan Bajo is unavailable, others are located in Bali, Jakarta and Manado and will require air evacuation.

*It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all costs that may be incurred in the event of a diving-related accident.*

## Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

The water temperatures around Komodo National Park vary noticeably from north to south:

- To the north, the **Flores Sea** water temperatures hardly vary, keeping to a pleasant **26-28°C (79-83°F)**.
- The **Savu Sea** to the south has an average temperature of **24°C (75°F)** but *can drop as low as 21°C (70°F)*.

For the majority of divers, a 3mm shorty or full-length wetsuit will suffice for the warmer water dives around the northern areas of Komodo. Additional thermal layers or a 5-7mm, full-length wetsuit are recommended for the cooler waters in the south, and for those prone to getting cold easily, especially after prolonged or multiple dives.

## Flights

- **Domestic Arrival airport:** Komodo International Airport (LBJ)
- **Domestic Departure airport:** Komodo International Airport (LBJ)

Flights to and from Labuan Bajo are not included in the liveaboard price.

## International Arrival & Departure

For the easiest domestic connections we recommend booking your international flights to and from Bali, Denpasar International Airport (DPS) although there are also direct flights between Jakarta and Labuan Bajo.

We advise spending at least one night in Bali\* (or Jakarta) on either side of your liveboard dates to ensure you are on time for your flight connections and to allow for any possible changes to flight schedules.

\*Please be aware that all travellers arriving in Bali are required to pay the Bali Tourism Levy. Additional information can be found here: [https://lovebali.baliprov.go.id/gov\\_notice](https://lovebali.baliprov.go.id/gov_notice)

Our reservations team can help arrange hotel accommodations and domestic flight connections between your international arrival and departure.

## Domestic flights

As domestic flight schedule changes, delays and cancellations are common occurrences in Indonesia, ***we strongly recommend*** booking flights to ***arrive in Labuan Bajo the day before embarkation*** and arranging a hotel for the night.

We are unable to delay the liveboard'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 liveboard has departed, *you may be charged the cost of arranging a speed boat transfer, or for additional fuel consumption* related to Indo Master having to return to port.

Should you choose to arrive in Labuan Bajo on the day of embarkation you should *book a flight that arrives no later than 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 liveboard.

## Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions).

## Komodo National Park Regulations

We respectfully ask all guests to observe and adhere to the National Park Rules and Regulations for the entire duration of their time in Komodo, both on land and underwater. Details can be downloaded under the Indonesia - Useful Trip Information section on the Master Liveboards download page: [masterliveboards.com/downloads](http://masterliveboards.com/downloads)

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The use of gloves and reef hooks is NOT permitted in Komodo National Park.*

## Embarkation, Disembarkation & Transfers

- **Embarkation:** Labuan Bajo Harbour between 12:30 and 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** Labuan Bajo Harbour at 10:00

Transfer between the airport or nearby hotels and the harbour on the day of embarkation and disembarkation is included in the liveboard price.

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

Transfer between Labuan Bajo Airport and the harbour takes approximately 15 minutes.

### Marine Park & Port Fees:

- 230 USD per person (to be paid on board)

***Marine park 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.

### Included land tours

We will organise a guided hike in the National Park where, apart from the famous Komodo dragons, you can visit some of the stunning hilltop viewpoints within the park and see buffalo, deer and monkeys.

We also usually include a sunset visit to Pink Beach on Komodo Island, so-called for its pink-coloured sand. A visit to Horseshoe Bay on the south side of Rinca Island may also be included where we go into the bay in the tenders to see more Komodo dragons on the beach and in the water; However, it is not permitted to go onto the island as it is a restricted area.

### Number of scheduled dives: up to 34

While we endeavour to ensure the number of scheduled dives is fulfilled various factors, including weather and sea conditions, can affect the vessel's ability to reach or remain at specific areas and may impact the number of dives possible.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

***All 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.***

**Day 1:** Embarkation is between 12:30 and 13:00. When all guests are on board, introductions, boat and safety briefings will be conducted after which guests can set up their equipment or relax before dinner is served. If time allows, an afternoon check dive may be carried out but is not guaranteed.

**Day 2:** Breakfast followed by a check dive, and up to 3 subsequent dives, as outlined below.

**Days 3-9:** Your Cruise Manager will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and either a sunset or a night dive, typically scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Sunset or Night dive
- Dinner

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

**Day 11:** After breakfast on board, disembarkation is between 08:00 and 10:00.

\*We kindly request guests check their flight times to ensure they leave 24 hours between their final dive and domestic flight departure.

**PLEASE NOTE:** As the primary focus of this special expedition is locating, observing and diving with manta rays, some of the dive sites we visit will be determined by their presence. The following is an overview of the areas covered and dive sites that are normally included on Komodo National Park itineraries. However, this is intended as an example only and the inclusion of some of the specifically named sites is not guaranteed on this expedition.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, there are many considerations which determine the exact route Indo Master takes, and which dive sites we visit. Weather, tides, currents, marine life activity and how many other boats are in a particular area all play a part in the Cruise Manager's decision on which sites are selected for diving each day.

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 any of the sites listed below. Some locations may be excluded for any number of reasons, not least of which can be restrictions implemented at short notice by the National Park Authorities.

## Gili Lawalaut

### Castle Rock

Currents sweep by this offshore pinnacle in Gili Lawa Laut where white-tip reef sharks and trevally can be seen corralling large numbers of neon fusiliers. Schools of surgeonfish swarm over the corals and large barrel sponges, while huge Napoleon wrasses may take an inquisitive look at the divers.

### Crystal Rock

In the bay next to Castle Rock, this site comprises 2 pinnacles, both offering superb shark action. Eagle rays are frequent visitors and dolphins have been known to make an appearance. White-tip reef sharks are often found resting under table corals and common octopus put on superb displays allowing the cautious diver to approach. Currents are to be expected.

### Shotgun!

Typically a fast-paced drift dive, we spend time in the coral garden with soft corals and sponges before reaching a deep ravine in the reef where schools of snapper are often found moving in ever tighter formations. From there, descend into the fish bowl where manta rays like to hang out, then enjoy the ride as the "shotgun" currents push you over the reef and through the channel to the waiting dinghies.

## Komodo Island

Guests will have the opportunity to venture ashore on Komodo Island to take a guided walk with the rangers through "[Komodo Dragon Territory](#)".

### [Manta Alley](#)

Channels form in the rocky reef wall where we can watch graceful manta rays gliding in the current and being cleaned. They make it look so easy, however strong currents can persist at this site. Surgeonfish, triggerfish and schools of jacks can all be seen here too. Certainly, the mantas steal the show when they are in town, with up to 30 being seen, although groups of 5 or 6 are more common.

### **Pink Beach**

A shallow sheltered reef that is perfect for a night dive with superb macro sightings from flamboyant cuttlefish, hairy frogfish, octopus and bobtail squid to the barely there skeleton shrimp, Pegasus sea moths, crocodile fish and snake eels.

## Current City

### **Takat Makassar / Manta Point (Karang Makassar)**

The longest reef in Komodo National Park, Takat Makassar is one of the best locations for Manta Ray encounters. Strong currents bring plankton-rich water to the area which attracts large numbers of mantas that come to feed and visit the cleaning stations along the shallow, sandy-bottomed reef. Other marine life regularly seen here include turtles, sharks, eagle rays, giant trevallies, giant sweetlips, unicorn fish, huge clams, and cuttlefish.

### **Batu Bolong**

This little pinnacle to the east of Manta Point attracts an amazing amount of reef fish, but larger pelagic fish often stop by too. The corals are colourful and varied with hard coral formations and plenty of soft corals. Expect to see batfish, trevallies, green turtles and sweetlips.

### **Tattawa Besar**

Boasting one of the healthiest, most stunning coral gardens in the Komodo archipelago, currents can sometimes be very strong making for an exhilarating, relatively shallow drift dive. The colourful reef, covered in hard and soft corals, stretches hundreds of metres and attracts a multitude of large and small creatures, including reef sharks, turtles, Napoleon wrasse and vast numbers of schooling fish.

## Rinca Island

### **Wainilu**

Considered one of the best 'muck diving' sites in the area, Wainilu is a sandy slope which plateaus at around 25 metres. First impressions may suggest that there is nothing to see but,

For the eagle-eyed and patient, an abundance of macro delights are waiting to be discovered. Mantis shrimps, frogfish, seahorses, pipefish, blue-ring and mimic octopus, a wide variety of nudibranchs and sea slugs, dragonets and even the elusive mandarin fish are just some of the wondrous creatures that are regularly found here.

## Padar Bay

### Tiga Dara / Three Sisters

This site is formed of 3 pinnacles very close to one another. Covered with soft corals, each pinnacle is a haven for macro creatures including frogfish and nudibranchs. The shallowest point is at 3m and is ideal for resting during safety stops.

### Secret Garden

This sloping reef is a great spot for a relaxed sunset or night dive with plenty of crustaceans, molluscs and benthic fish.

## Sangeang Island

### [Hot Rocks!](#)

A mix of sloping sand and coral formations. At depth, we find gorgonian fans with pygmy seahorses and black coral bushes. There is also a small cave where lobsters can be found. In the shallows brightly coloured neon anemones “pop” against the dark sand and provide a superb subject for underwater photographers. Bubbles coming from these and in the shallow waters provide a distraction during safety stops.

### The Estuary

Pygmy seahorses can be found clinging to the polyps of sea fans along the reef slope and a stunning hard coral garden is great for finding scorpion fish and leaf fish, whilst the sandy patches in between the reefs are a fantastic place to spot sawblade shrimp and a wide variety of nudibranchs.

### Techno Reef

The dark volcanic sand is dotted with green, orange and yellow “black” coral bushes and enormous red barrel sponges, home to ghost pipefish, long-nose hawkfish and pink squat lobsters.

## Gilli Banta

### Roller Coaster & Swiss Dream

Manta rays, dog tooth tuna, blue-fin trevallies and rainbow runners can all be seen at this stunning reef wall. Roller Coaster is so named because of the fierce currents which can be unpredictable and challenging. Therefore, we offer an alternative dive at the coral garden of Swiss Dream which is fabulous to explore for molluscs, crustaceans and turtles.



K2

A shallow reef slope with bommies and a picturesque coral garden. Manta rays are occasional visitors whilst ribbons eels, plakobranthus, cuttlefish and banded sea snakes are among the common sightings.

### The Circus (Small World)

A superb site for night diving and observing all manner of weird and wonderful creatures; stargazers, blue-ringed octopus, giant moray eels and crocodile fish can all be seen buried in or cruising over the sand.

Should you have any questions about the diving on this itinerary, or whether it is suitable for your experience level, please contact our team at [dive@masterliveboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com)