

# Raja Ampat, Halmahera & Lembeh

## 12 Nights Itinerary

Please refer to your booking confirmation details or the schedules on our website for the embarkation and disembarkation locations for your trip dates.

### Sorong to Bitung

- **Embarkation:** Sorong Harbour, West Papua at 12:00-12:30
- **Disembarkation:** Bitung Harbour, North Sulawesi at 10:00

### Bitung to Sorong

- **Embarkation:** Bitung Harbour, North Sulawesi at 12:00\*
- **Disembarkation:** Sorong Harbour, West Papua at 10:00

*\*For embarkation in Bitung, we strongly recommend arriving the day before and arranging a hotel for the night. (see [domestic flight information](#))*

### Flights & Transfers

Domestic flights to and from embarkation/disembarkation locations are not included in the liveboard price.

### Domestic Airports

- **Sorong:** Domine Eduard Osok (Sorong) Airport (SOQ)
- **Bitung:** Sam Ratulangi International Airport, Manado (MDC)

Transfers between the domestic arrival and departure airports or local hotels and the harbour are provided free of charge on the day of embarkation and disembarkation only.

- Transfer between Manado Airport and Bitung Harbour takes approximately 1hr 45 minutes.
- Transfer between Sorong Airport and Sorong Harbour takes approximately 20-30 minutes.

Check-in time for domestic flights in Indonesia is usually 2 hours before departure. Please bear this and transfer times in mind when booking disembarkation day flights.

## International Arrival & Departure

We suggest booking your international flights into and out of Jakarta International Airport (CGK) for the easiest domestic connections to/from Sorong and Manado. We advise spending at least one day in Jakarta on either side of your 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

**IMPORTANT:** *Domestic flights in Indonesia are often subject to delays, schedule changes and cancellations, resulting in missed connections and arriving after the designated embarkation time, or day.*

If your delayed arrival is after the vessel has departed, you may be charged for the cost of arranging a speedboat transfer or for additional fuel required for Indo Master to return to port. With this in mind, we *recommend booking flights to arrive the day before embarkation.*

### Sorong flights

There are several direct flight options per day between Jakarta and Sorong; Travelling between Bali and Sorong usually requires a flight change in either Makassar or Jakarta.

NOTE: There is one direct flight possibility between Bali and Sorong which only operates on Thursday, Friday and Sunday, departing from Bali around 02:00 a.m.

**Sorong Embarkation:** Guests intending to fly into Sorong on embarkation day are respectfully asked to arrange flights to *arrive before 12:00 (midday).*

You will be met at Sorong Airport by Master Liveboards staff who will assist with your luggage and onward transfer to the marina. For guests arriving before 12.00, there is a restaurant at the marina where you can relax before embarkation, or take a short walk into town to explore the shopping facilities.

**Sorong Disembarkation:** We respectfully ask guests not to book flights departing earlier than 08:30 a.m. from Sorong as disembarkation needs to be 2 and a half hours before the flight departure time.

If your flight out of Sorong departs later than 10.30 a.m., we will transfer you to a cosy local restaurant near the airport where you can wait for your flight.

### Manado flights

There are several direct flights per day operating between Jakarta and Manado. However, *some flights arrive at Manado between 01:00 and 04:30 in the morning; guests arriving on one of these flights will not be met at the airport when they arrive and need to book a hotel for the night.*

There is only one direct flight per week between Bali and Manado, which is operated by Garuda Indonesia every Wednesday; All other flight options from and to Bali involve at least one flight change.

**Bitung Embarkation:** If you choose to fly into Manado on embarkation day, please do not book an afternoon arrival; you should book a flight scheduled to *arrive no later than 11:00 a.m.*

Reminder: *if your flight arrives between 01:00 and 04:30 in the morning, you will need to book a hotel for the night; you will be picked up from the hotel for transfer to Bitung around 11:30 a.m.*

**Bitung Disembarkation:** As the transfer from Bitung Harbour to Manado Airport takes approximately 1hr 45 minutes, disembarkation will be approximately 4 hours before your flight departure time. Therefore, flights that depart earlier than midday are not viable options so you should ***book an afternoon flight departure from Manado.***

## Diving Information

*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 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.***

Some of the diving on this itinerary is not suitable for inexperienced divers due to depths and *strong currents*. Your Cruise Director will be able to advise you whilst on board and may recommend that guests with insufficient experience sit out certain dives.

### Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers joining this itinerary must have **PADI Advanced Open Water certification**, or equivalent, with 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 recommended minimum requirements, or who the crew feel have insufficient experience in certain conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveaboard.***

## Diving Emergencies

There is a hyperbaric chamber in Waisai but it is not permanently staffed and can not be relied upon to be available. The nearest permanently manned recompression chamber is in Manado (Sulawesi); others are located in Bali, Makassar and Jakarta. In the event of a suspected DCI incident, depending on the boat's location, transfer from Indo Master to whichever chamber is available is likely to require a private speedboat, emergency air evacuation or both.

*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 Temperatures & Exposure Suits

We dive on both sides of the Equator and cross two seas on this itinerary; The Halmahera Sea and the Molucca Sea. There is very little variation in water temperatures in both areas, which are generally between 26°C and 29°C (79°F - 84°F).

For most divers, a 3mm wetsuit will suffice while others are comfortable diving in 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.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions).

**Marine Park & Port Fees:** 215 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.

Marine park and port fees for this itinerary cover the cost of Raja Ampat permits\* and other local fees and taxes for the areas visited during the liveaboard itinerary.

*\*Raja Ampat entry cards are valid for 1 year (12 months) from the date of purchase.* If you already have a card that will be valid for the entire duration of your itinerary, please send us a photocopy of it no less than 4 days before the start of your liveaboard to avoid being charged for an additional one. You will also need to bring the card with you for verification on board.

**Number of scheduled dives:** *Up to 36*

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel and, while we will endeavour to fulfil the number of scheduled dives, this number is indicative only and not guaranteed; bad weather and sea conditions can hinder the boat's ability to reach or remain at a specific area and may impact the number of possible dives.

## Included land tours

Due to the distances covered between Raja Ampat and Lembah, land visits depend on cruising times and logistics, as noted above. Generally, there will be 2 land visits offered on each itinerary, one of which is Raja Ampat's iconic Penemu Viewpoint which is always popular. The second land tour will usually be Tangkoko Batu Angus Nature Reserve in North Sulawesi, where Tarsiers, Macaques and Cuscus can be observed in their natural habitats.

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

*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 followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings, and dinner. The vessel will usually leave port in the evening to be ready to dive first thing on day 2.

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

**Days 3-11:** Your Cruise Director will plan 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 and Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing and Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing and Dive 3
- Snacks and relaxation
- Briefing for Sunset or Night dive (where possible)
- Dinner

**Day 12:** For your last full day on board, we usually schedule 2 morning dives\* before the boat cruises to port, where it will remain at anchor overnight.

**Day 13:** Breakfast on board, followed by disembarkation between 8:00 and 10:00.

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

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 Director'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 across the Halmahera and Molucca Seas. *The safety and comfort of our guests are 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 factors noted above. Additionally, there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

## The Dampier Strait

Fast drift dives and big fish schools characterise the sites in the Dampier Strait. Numerous dive sites are clustered together providing a variety of "Big Fish" dives with currents and more relaxed dives where smaller creatures can be found and photographed. Your dive team will check currents and choose sites based on the optimum conditions.

## Manta Sandy

In the middle of a sandy channel at just 18 metres, two large bommies are a world-renowned cleaning station which attracts a variety of reef and oceanic manta rays, including all-black mantas that are distinctive to Raja Ampat. Divers can simply rest on the bottom and watch the show. The reef itself has numerous smaller creatures with dragonets and various pipefishes as well as Bumphead parrotfish and black-tip reef sharks. Therefore, if the mantas are not performing, there is still plenty to look at and discover.

## Cape Kri

One of the best-known sites in the Dampier Strait, the variety of reef fish is astounding. A world record setter with 374 species of fish seen during one dive, Scribbled filefish, Harlequin sweetlips, Bumphead parrotfish, Pinnate batfish, hawkfish and Napoleon wrasse are all commonly seen. In the blue, myriad Bignose unicornfish and Bluestreak fusiliers are closely watched by giant trevallies and dogtooth tuna, whilst black-tip reef sharks, pickhandle barracuda, turtles and pipefish are all regularly spotted as well.

## Blue Magic

A long finger-shaped reef sloping down at the points from 8 metres to 30 metres (26ft - 98ft) with hard and soft corals, sea fans and black coral bushes, where schools of jacks and barracuda hover close to the reef while grey reef sharks cruise in the blue and mantas sweep through the cleaning stations. For the keen-eyed, wobbegong sharks and pontohi pygmy seahorses add to the appeal and wonders of this magical dive site.

## Sardine Reef

Swarms of fusiliers, snappers and sweetlips, schools of bumphead parrotfish and banner fish, barracuda and trevally that come to feast on the nutrients in the surrounding water make this a very fishy dive site. Rock-mover wrasse, dragonets and jaw fish are amongst the smaller fish species seen here whilst white-tip and black-tip reef sharks can also be spotted.

## Mike's Point

Eagles can usually be spotted resting on the treetops as we approach the tiny limestone island known as Mike's Points. Currents can be unpredictable and challenging so we only dive here when the conditions are right. It is a superb site comprising varied topography with one side full of overhangs and crevices whilst the other has "steps" dropping down to the deep with a field of whip corals adorning the slope. When there is no current, it can be circumnavigated in one dive seeing sweetlips, batfish, jacks, Spanish mackerel, grey reef sharks and wobbegongs

## Yangeffo and Penemu Islands

Located west of Gam these mushroom islands are surrounded by turquoise seas full of pristine coral. These islands provide a range of dive sites for us to choose from, including:

### Melissa's Garden

This site is home to some of the best hard coral gardens in Raja Ampat. Featuring a shallow flat reef with beautiful blue-tipped staghorn corals inhabited by myriads of damselfish, trevally, black tip reef sharks and wobbegong sharks, along with orangutan crabs and spiny lobsters are common sightings here.

### Mayhem

This dive spot is notorious for its strong currents, making for an exhilarating dive with lots of action. It is great for larger fish sightings including Barracuda, Mackerel, Blue-fin trevally, Tuna, Napoleon wrasse and Bumphead parrotfish, as well as eagle rays and wobbegong sharks.

## Citrus Ridge

A stunning reef named after the carpet-like orange, pink, yellow and green soft corals that cover the entire area. Gorgonian fans shelter pygmy seahorses, jawfish bob out of their ground holes, wobbegong sharks rest lazily amongst table corals and harlequin sweetlips can be found tucked into the many bommies that are dotted over the reef. The up-current side offers sensational pelagic encounters such as roaming grey and blacktip reef sharks, schooling jacks and a vortex of blackfin barracuda.

## Pisang Island

Pisang Island is an oasis in the middle of the Halmahera Sea, surrounded by deep blue water. We will stop at Bantu Anyer, Besar and Kecil, a steep rocky slope blanketed in giant barrel sponges. Here you can make an exhilarating drift dive provided the current is right. Out in the blue, schooling jacks, blackfin barracuda and rainbow runners can be seen, while back in the shallows there is a hard coral plateau.

## Bacan Island

This is one of the northern Molucca Islands in the Molucca Sea, located just southwest of the large island of Halmahera. There are two special dive spots to explore in this area:

### Akiko's Never-neverland

This is a truly unique dive site, riddled with diverse topography. It adorns a wall plunging to 40 metres, where spiny lobsters hide in the numerous cracks. The shallow plateau is densely covered with leather corals and Hawksbill turtles are frequently sighted; Schooling jacks and blacktip reef sharks can also usually be seen cruising along the wall.

### Tanjung Maragarando

This is an exciting dive for pelagic and schooling fish. With the right current, this site attracts large schools of jacks, blackfin barracuda, golden batfish, and fusiliers. From 30 metres, the slope is densely covered with bright yellow soft corals.

## Patanti Strait

Located between Batjan & Halmahera Islands, strong currents nurture the dense soft corals and Gorgonian fan gardens. Numerous protected bays offer interesting night dives and opportunities to look for critters such as bobtail squid and epaulette sharks. Two of the sites we may visit are:

### Proco

Sitting in the middle of the channel, this pinnacle extends to a plateau of around 25 metres. The area is densely covered with pastel, yellow, and orange soft corals, a wonderful array of colours contrasted by the schools of fusiliers and surgeonfish.

## Batu Jabu

A massive submerged reef where you can drift along rocky slopes covered with hard and soft corals. Aggregations of unicorn fish, fusiliers, snappers, and surgeonfish abound. The shallows feature dense staghorn coral fields packed with shining anthias.

## Guraici and Tamo-Tamo Islands

These islands will generally mark the point in the cruise where we cross the equator, transitioning between the southern and northern hemispheres. Guraici and Tamo-Tamo are nestled 31 miles west of Halmahera Island and 43 miles south of Ternate and Tidore.

## Renne's Rock

A colossal pinnacle, surrounded by extensive plateaus and large bommies. This is a great site to look for patrolling grey, whitetip and blacktip reef sharks and bumphead parrotfish grazing in the shallows.

## Akejojaru

A wide shallow plateau decorated with a large spread of bommies. The reef drops 60 metres down a steep slope and a dramatic wall to a white sandy bottom which reflects light onto the vibrant soft corals. This is another great place to spot blacktip reef sharks, Napoleon wrasse, and bumphead parrotfish.

## Tamo-Tamo Pinnacle

Here an explosion of marine life can be observed along a wall of colourful soft corals. Ribboned sweetlips can be seen hanging around the deeper parts of the wall where grey reef sharks patrol; Dense shoals of fusiliers, surgeonfish and giant trevallies are also common residents of this reef.

## Makian Island

Makian Island is a 10 km wide volcano with a 1.5 km wide summit crater. Located off the west coast of Halmahera, this is one of Indonesia's most destructive volcanoes. We usually spend a full day muck diving around this fantastic location where encrusting sponges completely cover underwater pillars hiding frogfish, Honshu pipefish and various nudibranchs. The shallow grey volcanic sand plateau is a haven for a variety of critters including ghost pipefishes, dragonets, colourful flatworms and diverse cephalopods, such as long-arm octopus and bobtail squid.

## Tifure Island

Rising midway between Halmahera and Sulawesi, in the very deep open Molucca Sea, the dive sites around Tifore are mostly plateaus with sheer walls, steep slopes and great visibility in clear blue water.

## Sago Sago

A massive site where we usually do three dives following the best entry points determined by the currents. Adorned by a beautiful variety of corals, sponges and topographies, don't forget to look into the blue for big schools of barracuda, jacks, and other surprises.



## Bangka Island

Located just off the northernmost tip of North Sulawesi, this small island offers stunningly beautiful pinnacles, sloping reefs and drop-offs. Whichever sites are selected for diving will be a sensory overload of colours and activity. Our favourites and most often dived sites are:

### Batu Gosoh

Batu Gosoh, which translates as 'Grinding Stone', comprises a series of dramatic rocky pinnacles covered in soft corals and a shallow rocky plateau with large boulders, providing two potential dive areas. Above the surface, beautiful volcanic rock peaks match the dramatic scenery below. The nature of the dive here is dictated by the currents which can be strong at some points, but bring added vitality to the area.

Pinnacles rising to the surface from the sandy seabed at 40m, create a stunning underwater vista with cracks, caverns and swim-throughs to explore and shelter from the current for a while. Almost entirely covered with a kaleidoscope of soft corals that house a smorgasbord of macro delights, a multitude of reef fish add to the colour explosion.

### Batu Sahuang

Sloping continuously downwards along a sandy bottom from just below the surface to around 35 metres, the site features two rocky pinnacles with boulders and ridges forming steps covered in green cup corals and giant soft coral bushes in shades of pink, yellow, orange and mauve. Large leather corals, elephant ear sponges, sea fans and table corals add further beauty to the site which hosts a multitude of colourful fish including surgeonfish, fusiliers, yellow stripe, midnight and blue-striped snappers, red-tooth triggerfish, bannerfish, trevallies and many more. If your eyes need a rest from the swarms of reef fish, take a look amongst the corals, sponges and sandy patches for frogfish, nudibranchs, orangutan crabs, mantis shrimps and other less conspicuous creatures.

## Lembeh Strait

Welcome to the macro mecca of Lembeh, which is well known for its volcanic black sand and home to many weird and wonderful critters. This is where "muck diving" all began. Enjoy the variety of rare critters; the good, the bad and the ugly, all playing hide and seek in their homes of the man-made debris along the seabed.

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)