MASTER
LIVEABOARDS

Coron to Puerto Princesa, Philippines

10 Nights Itinerary

- **Arrival airport:** Francisco B. Reyes Airport, Busuanga (USU)
- **Departure airport:** Puerto Princesa International (PPS)

- **Embarkation:** Coron, Busuanga at 13:00
- **Disembarkation:** Baywalk Pier, Puerto Princesa at 10:00

Flights and Transfers

Domestic flights to Busuanga and from Puerto Princesa are not included in the liveaboard price.

Transfer between Busuanga Airport or hotels in Coron town and Tubbataha Master on embarkation day is included in the liveaboard price. The drive from the airport to Coron Port takes around 35-45 minutes. Your exact boarding point will be confirmed before departure.

Transfer from Baywalk Pier to Puerto Princesa Airport or hotels within the Puerto Princesa city boundaries is included on disembarkation day. Transfers to hotels and resorts outside of the Puerto Princesa area can be arranged for an additional charge.

Flight Advice

International flights can be booked into and out of Manila or Cebu. Cebu offers more options for flights to Busuanga, whereas Manila offers more domestic flight choices from Puerto Princesa at the end of your trip.

We recommend that you plan to arrive in Coron at least 1 day before the liveaboard departure date to allow for possible flight disruptions or schedule changes and to ensure you start your holiday well-rested.

IMPORTANT: Guests who are planning to arrive in Busuanga on the day of embarkation are kindly requested to book a flight which arrives no later than 11:00.

If travelling via Manila with international and domestic connections on the same day, please allow plenty of time for transfer between domestic and international terminals and check-in.

Disembarkation at Baywalk Pier involves a transfer from Tubbataha Master to the jetty by tender. Guests intending to fly from Puerto Princesa on the day of disembarkation should avoid early departures, and should allow at least 3 hours between disembarkation and their flight.

Diving Information

This route starts on the WWII wrecks of Coron Bay, then moves on to quieter reefs around Culion and Linapacan and the limestone islands of El Nido. Some wrecks go deep and current can be strong around them. Penetration is at the dive guides' discretion and only for divers with appropriate training, experience and equipment.

Gloves and reef hooks are prohibited at some of the locations we visit on this itinerary.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers wishing to join this itinerary must have **Advanced Open Water** certification, or equivalent, with a ***mandatory minimum of 50 logged dives*** and experience in currents.

Any guests who do not meet the minimum requirements, or who our crew feel have insufficient experience or skills to dive safely in certain conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveaboard.

All divers must have insurance which covers scuba diving and all costs which may be incurred as a result of a diving-related incident. We strongly recommend purchasing diving-specific insurance (e.g. DiveAssure, DAN, etc.) before your trip departure.

Diving Emergencies

There is a hyperbaric chamber at Ospital ng Palawan in Puerto Princesa City, and one at Sea Dive Resort in Coron, although availability cannot be guaranteed. Should these be unavailable to deal with a diving emergency, private emergency air evacuation may be needed to access facilities in Manila or Cebu. In such an event, *you will be liable for all evacuation costs.*

It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs in addition to recompression chamber and/or hospital treatment.

Diving-specific insurance should be purchased before your trip departure and must cover all costs which may be incurred as a result of a diving-related incident.

Itinerary Details

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

Marine Park & Port Fees: 100 USD per person* (payable on board only)

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

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 30

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel and, while we endeavour to ensure the maximum number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative and not guaranteed. Weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific area in good time and may impact the number of dives that are possible.

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

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

Day 1: Embarkation at 13:00 followed by lunch, briefings, relaxation and dinner. There is ***no diving on embarkation day.***

Day 2-9: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive. A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light breakfast
- Briefing and dive 1
- Full Breakfast and relaxation
- Briefing and dive 2
- Lunch and relaxation
- Briefing and dive 3
- Snacks and relaxation
- Briefing for sunset or night dive, where possible
- Dinner

Day 10: Usually 2 morning* dives before Tubbataha Master continues to Puerto Princesa.

Day 11: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation between 09:30 and 10:00.

*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and the departure of their flight.

Guests intending to depart from Puerto Princesa on the day of disembarkation should ***avoid booking early morning flight departures***.

The following is a sample of some of the dive sites we usually visit on the Coron to Puerto Princesa itinerary. 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.

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 Tubbataha Master is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.

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. Additionally, there may be dives at sites that are not listed below.

Coron Bay Wrecks

On 24th September 1944, aircraft from US Task Force 38 attacked a Japanese supply fleet sheltering in Coron Bay. Around ten wrecks lie in the bay today at depths between roughly 14m and 46m (46ft and 151ft), most of them heavily encrusted in coral and home to plenty of fish. Inside, holds, engine rooms and corridors still hold cargo and equipment.

Okikawa Maru

A 160m (525ft) tanker sitting upright with the seabed at 26m (85ft) and her deck between 10m and 16m (33ft and 52ft). The bow took the brunt of the attack and is twisted upwards, and the hull is covered in coral from end to end. Trained divers can follow routes through the holds and along the prop shaft, where there is a fair amount of ambient light. Current can be strong, especially around the stern.

Kogyo Maru

A Japanese freighter lying on her starboard side, with the deepest point at around 34m (112ft). She was carrying construction materials for an airstrip when she sank, and the holds still contain stacked cement bags, a small bulldozer and other machinery. Schools of barracuda often hang over the wreck.

Akitsushima

The only Japanese warship sunk in Coron Bay, this 118m (387ft) seaplane tender lies on her port side between 17m and 38m (56ft and 125ft). A direct hit near the stern almost tore her in two. The huge crane that once lifted Kawanishi flying boats on and off the deck now rests on the sand, with anti-aircraft gun mounts nearby. Coral cover is lighter than on the other wrecks, but batfish, groupers, snapper and barracuda are regulars.

Olympia Maru

A 122m (400ft) cargo ship near Tangat Island with most of the wreck between 16m and 26m (52ft and 85ft) and the seabed at around 30m (98ft). Open holds and wide swim-throughs make her one of the easier wrecks to explore inside. Black coral bushes on the superstructure shelter lionfish and scorpionfish, while batfish and big pufferfish gather around the bow gun.

East Tangat Gunboat

A small submarine chaser lying on a reef slope between 3m and 19m (10ft and 62ft). The wreck itself has been stripped by salvagers, but the reef around it is busy with lionfish, crocodilefish and batfish, and mandarinfish live in the rubble.

Lusong Gunboat

A small vessel lying off Lusong Island in no more than 11m (36ft) of water, with her stern breaking the surface at low tide. Hard and soft corals cover the hull.

Coron Reefs

The reefs around Coron give a change of pace from the wrecks and some good macro life.

Twin Peaks

Two coral-covered seamounts with slopes dropping to around 25m (82ft). With a moderate current, reef sharks and barracuda patrol the drop-offs, while anthias, sweetlips and fusiliers crowd the peaks. The shallows are worth a slow look for ghost pipefish, pygmy seahorses and nudibranchs.

Siete Pecados

A marine sanctuary of seven small islands close to Coron town, with a reef sloping to around 24m (79ft). Large table corals, staghorn thickets, sea fans and giant clams make up the reef, and turtles, cuttlefish and Napoleon wrasse are regular sightings.

Coron Island

Coron Island is a wall of jagged limestone and the ancestral domain of the Tagbanua people, who manage access to its lakes.

Barracuda Lake

Reaching the water involves a short but steep climb over limestone steps in your dive gear, which is part of the experience. The lake is fed by both fresh and salt water, and that layering makes for an unusual dive. Near the surface the water is around 28°C (82°F); at roughly 14-15m (46-49ft) you pass through a visible boundary where it climbs to around 38°C (100°F), before cooling again near the bottom. The underwater limestone formations are striking, and a solitary barracuda is sometimes seen. Fish life is sparse; the geology is the reason to come.

Culion

Across the bay from the main wreck area, Culion was once the Philippines' leprosy colony, and its old church, fort and former sanitarium are still there for those who join the optional town visit.

Dynamite Reef

Despite the name, this reef between Tangat Island and Culion town has plenty to look at, with a wide range of nudibranchs, anemones and reef fish, and tunicates that are rarely seen elsewhere.

Linapacan Islands

Linapacan is a group of around 52 mostly quiet islands and islets between Coron and El Nido, and known for some of the clearest water in the Philippines. Few divers get here, as it is too far from either town for day boats, so there is an exploratory feel to the diving. Your Cruise

Director and dive guides will choose sites on the day according to conditions, among fringing reefs and walls where turtles and reef fish are likely company.

El Nido & Bacuit Bay

At the northern tip of mainland Palawan, 45 limestone islands rise from Bacuit Bay, a managed protected area with coral gardens beneath the cliffs and caverns cut into the rock. Currents are generally mild, turtles are regular companions and macro subjects are everywhere.

Gloves are prohibited throughout the protected area and reef hooks are not permitted at most Bacuit Bay dive sites.

South Miniloc

The best-known site in the bay, sloping and then walling from 5m to around 35m (16ft to 115ft) between Miniloc and its smaller neighbour. Hawksbill and green turtles rest among the cabbage coral, schools of yellow snapper swirl overhead and tuna work the deeper water.

Entalula Wall

A vertical wall below one of the bay's most photogenic cliffs, dropping from hard coral terraces at 5-12m (16-39ft) through soft coral gardens to around 35m (115ft). Up to eight species of anemonefish live here, marble rays rest on the sandy patches, and whitetip reef sharks sometimes appear in the deeper sections.

Dilumacad Tunnel

Dilumacad, also known as Helicopter Island, has a limestone tunnel of around 35-40m (115-131ft) running through the base of the island, entered at 12-15m (39-49ft). Glassfish fill the passage and sponges and soft corals line its walls, with nurse sharks sheltering in crevices on the reef outside. It is an overhead environment, needs good buoyancy, and is only dived when conditions allow by suitably experienced divers.

Twin Rocks

Two rocky outcrops joined by a sandy channel between 13m and 21m (43ft and 69ft), making for easy navigation. Hard corals, sea whips and barrel sponges cover the rock, with blue-spotted stingrays on the sand and pipefish to search for.

Paglugaban

Rock formations beneath the limestone cliffs create a network of swim-throughs between 8m and 25m (26ft and 82ft). A sheltered site and a favourite for macro, with nudibranchs, flatworms, shrimps and crabs on the sponge-covered walls. Turtles use the passages, and eagle rays are sometimes seen.

Nat Nat

Shallow coral terraces lead down to sandy lanes at up to 28m (92ft), where jawfish hover over their burrows and octopus are often found. Green turtles and blue-spotted stingrays are regulars, and when the current picks up it becomes an easy drift.

Tres Marias

Three shallow reefs between two tiny islets off Miniloc, with lettuce corals, soft corals and plenty of reef fish between 12m and 21m (39ft and 69ft).

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The final diving of this itinerary may take place along either the west or east coast of Palawan, depending on conditions. Port Barton and Honda Bay below are examples of what each coast offers.

Port Barton

On Palawan's west coast, Port Barton sees few divers. Its reefs lie around the offshore islands and seamounts, with sites chosen according to the day's sea state.

Middle Rocks

Between mainland Palawan and Cagnipa Island, this reef reaches a maximum of 31m (102ft) and combines walls and sandy patches with hard coral and soft coral gardens. Turtles, blue-spotted stingrays, nudibranchs, groupers and small barracuda are regularly seen.

Royalist Shoal

A deeper site reaching around 40m (131ft), with the best of the coral at around 12m (39ft) and rich marine life throughout.

Albaguen Sanctuary

A protected area with healthy corals and abundant fish life, where turtles are often seen.

Honda Bay

On Palawan's eastern shore near Puerto Princesa, Honda Bay is scattered with small islands and shallow reefs.

Helen's Garden

A small, shallow reef with a good variety of hard and soft corals. Juvenile blacktip sharks are often seen, along with sergeant majors, snapper, wrasse and trevally.

Henry's Reef

A shallow dive to around 10m (33ft), with lionfish, cardinalfish, snapper, sweetlips and nudibranchs.

Pandan Island

A small island with good reefs around it, where manta rays are occasionally encountered.

Should you have any questions regarding the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveaboards.com