MASTER
LIVEABOARDS

Coron & Apo Reef, Philippines

7 Nights Itinerary

- Arrival airport: Busuanga, Francisco B. Reyes Airport (USU)
- Departure airport: Busuanga, Francisco B. Reyes Airport (USU)

- Embarkation: Coron Port, Coron, Busuanga at 13:00
- Disembarkation: Coron Port, Coron, Busuanga at 10:00

Flights and Transfers

Domestic flights are not included in the liveaboard price.

Flight Advice

International flights can be booked into and out of Cebu or Manila, with domestic connections to Busuanga Airport (USU); Cebu offers more options for flights to and from Busuanga.

We recommend you plan to arrive in Cebu, Manila, or Busuanga at least one day before embarkation to allow for flight delays or schedule changes and to make sure you start your trip 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 you are flying from Busuanga on the day of disembarkation, we suggest allowing at least 3 hours between disembarkation and your flight.

Please allow plenty of time (at least 3 hours) between domestic and international flight times for luggage reclamation, transfer between terminals, check-in and immigration clearance.

Transfer information

Shared transfers between Busuanga Airport or a hotel in Coron Town and Coron Port on embarkation and disembarkation days are included in the liveaboard price.

Transfer between Busuanga Airport and Coron Port takes around 35-45 minutes.

Diving Information

This itinerary combines wreck and reef diving. The Coron wrecks lie between around 3m and 38m (10ft and 125ft), and the exposed outer walls of Apo Reef are susceptible to strong currents. Penetration of the wrecks is at the dive guides' discretion and only for divers with appropriate training, experience and equipment.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers must have PADI **Advanced Open Water** certification, or equivalent, with **a minimum of 50 logged dives** and be comfortable 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.

Recompression Chambers

There is a recompression chamber at Sea Dive Resort in Coron, although availability cannot be guaranteed. The nearest reliable facilities are located in Metro Manila.

In the unlikely event of an accident, *private emergency air evacuation may be needed* to access these facilities, depending on where we are in the itinerary. 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.

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: 110 USD (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 19

This itinerary involves some long-distance travel, some of which will be overnight. While we endeavour to ensure the number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative and not guaranteed. Numerous factors can affect the boat's ability to reach or remain at a specific area 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.*

Days 2-6: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day, depending on location, cruising logistics and land visits. A typical full 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 7: One morning dive and a visit to Barracuda Lake* before cruising to Coron Harbour in the afternoon.

Day 8: 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.

Diving Areas & Dive Sites

The following is a sample of dive sites we may visit on this 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.*

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 there may be dives at sites that are not 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 the vessel is heading, and which sites are chosen to dive.*

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 fish life is good: batfish, groupers, snapper and barracuda are regulars. Divers with wreck training can reach the engine room, where all four engines remain in place.

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, and a good introduction to Coron. Black coral bushes on the superstructure shelter lionfish and scorpionfish, while batfish and big pufferfish gather around the bow gun.

East Tangat & Lusong Gunboats

The East Tangat Gunboat is a small submarine chaser lying on a reef slope between 3m and 19m (10ft and 62ft) off Tangat Island. Also known as the Teru Kaze Maru, 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.

The Lusong Gunboat is a small vessel resting on its side at a depth of around 12 metres (39 ft) with her stern breaking the surface at low tide. The hull is covered with hard and soft corals and hosts an abundance of reef fish and macro life.

Coron Reefs

The reefs around Coron offer a change of pace from the wrecks, with healthy coral and 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. Visibility is usually best before high tide.

Apo Reef

Around 28km (17 miles) west of Mindoro, Apo Reef Natural Park covers about 34km² (13 square miles) and is the largest coral reef system in the Philippines. It has been protected since 1980, with fishing banned since 2007, and the difference shows in the size and number of fish. A ranger base and lighthouse stand on Apo Island, the largest of its three small islands.

Shark Ridge

On the eastern side of the reef, a slope dropping to around 25m (82ft) where blacktip and whitetip reef sharks are commonly seen. Mantas pass through from time to time.

Binangaan Drop Off

A deep wall below the rocky island of Apo Menor, dressed in gorgonian fans. Groupers, schooling snapper and bumphead parrotfish are typical, with tuna hunting just off the wall.

Apo Island walls

West of the main reef, the walls around Apo Island are steep and well covered in coral. Turtles are common and several shark species patrol the drop-offs.

Hunter's Rock & Apo 29

Two submerged structures for experienced divers. Hunter's Rock starts around 10m (33ft) and is known for banded sea kraits, which gather in large numbers to breed in June and July. Apo 29 is a seamount where currents bring in bigger fish. Both are exposed, so we only dive them when conditions allow.

Northern Busuanga

Dugong snorkelling, Calauit

The seagrass beds off Calauit Island are home to a population of dugongs, and this excursion is run with local Tagbanua guides. We wait quietly for an animal to surface, then slip into the water with mask and snorkel. Chasing or crowding the dugongs is not allowed, and while sightings here are frequent they cannot be guaranteed. Turtles often share the seagrass.

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 lake involves a short but steep climb over limestone steps with your dive gear, which is part of the experience. The lake itself is fed by both fresh and salt water which creates distinct layers between the surface and the bottom. Near the surface the water is around 28°C (82°F); at roughly 14m to 15m (45ft to 50ft) you pass through a visible, shimmering boundary where the temperature climbs to around 38°C (100°F), before cooling again near the bottom. Fish life is sparse, but the underwater limestone formations are striking, and a solitary barracuda is sometimes seen.

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