



Sample Itinerary: Raja Ampat (Dampier Strait, Batanta & Kawe)

11 nights - from: Sorong, to: Sorong

Starting from Sorong in West Papua, we do a nice check dive in the eastern part of the Dampier Strait, after which we set out to Batanta. The beautiful island covered in lush rainforest offers us a nice variety of dive sites. Convergence, for example is a patch reef with a drop off covered in sea fans and the shallows we find a large soft-coral-covered rock, surrounded by a good mix of small and larger fish. We will look for macro at Reflection and if we do a night dive there, hopefully the 'walking shark' (Epaulette Shark) awaits us.

Visiting the Algae Patches we enjoy some muck diving and macro. Here it is not uncommon to see Flamboyant Cuttlefish and Ghost Pipefish, as well as rare crabs and shrimps and unusual Nudibranchs. Further there is a chance find the Mimic Octopus and Rhinopias.

At Dayang, a beautiful small sandy island and home to a population of Coconut Crabs, lying just at the entrance to one of Batanta's many scenic bays, colorful reefs with Wobbegong Sharks, schooling Yellow Snappers and more great macro-life, including Pygmy Seahorses and Nudibranchs, await us. Dayang island also offers a great chance to encounter Manta rays, the gentle giants, at their cleaning stations.

Next, we make our way north to Penemu. Famous Melissa's Garden awaits us with its spectacular, healthy and wide-spread hard coral plateau in the shallows. At Fam Wall we can admire large Gorgonian Seafans and lovely reef tops, and we might also explore Fam Wall and My Reef. A short hike to viewpoint of Penemu offers a spectacular view of the lagoon and its surrounding islands.

After Penemu we move on to Kawe, visiting Eagle Rock among others, named for the majestic eagles circling above the small, rocky islands. Underwater, divers can encounter creatures like Wobbegong Sharks, Sweetlips, Sardines, Barracudas, Tuna, Bumphead Parrotfish and Reef Sharks, even the occasional Manta ray!

Black Rock, where soft corals bloom in a variety of colors from the rocky outcrops, amazes us as Raja Ampat's full abundance comes to life in a most vibrant display. One Tree Island and Weka's Wow make for splendid day dives, too. Our night dive we might enjoy at Aljui Bay, where will be on a critter hunt. It is not unusual to find macro favorites like Frogfish and Ghost Pipefish.

In this area we could take a little detour to visit the pearl farm close by.

Then we head on to Wofu, which has several unique dive sites easily reachable from one mooring point, allowing us to relax in this incredibly scenic area. On one side we will have the backdrop of Wofu and Wofu Kecil, 2 small islands with pristine white coral sand beaches and on the other side we can take in vistas of the forested mountains and valleys of West Waigeo, Raja Ampat's largest island. The dive sites at Wofu are famous for stunning Back Coral forests, where we will look for critters like Ornate Ghost Pipefish, Tozeuma Shrimps and Black Coral Crabs. The walls are interesting with ledges and shallow caverns where it is not uncommon to find Wobbegong sharks. Rope sponges are abundant here and we will be searching for Frogfish perched on these sponges, poised, motionless and ready to gulp small fish. Wofu has some very colorful hard corals in the shallows, where dense schools of Anthias, Chromis



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and Damsels can be found. The night dive on the sandy slope in front of the beach is top draw, common favorite sightings would be Robust Ghost Pipefish and the Indian Walkman.

After a short crossing south to the western tip of Gam island, we head to an island called Yengefo, which protects a sheltered bay. This small area has multiple world class dive sites. Famous ones like Citrus Ridge and Mayhem always amaze divers with their vibrancy and biodiversity. The area here is probably so abundant due to the surrounding mangroves. Beautiful hard and soft corals grow under and among the roots of the trees, so a dive at Mangrove Ridge is truly enjoyable. And our crew will be happy to take you out in the dingy to snorkel in the mangroves in between dives. Sunsets and sunrises are very special at our mooring point at Yengefo: as the sun drops, the surrounding forested hills become alive with flocks of Sulphur Crested Cockatoo's and Blyths Hornbills emerge to return to their roosting places.

The remainder of our adventure we spend diving in the adrenalin-packed Dampier Strait. We can choose from world-class sites like Cape Kri, Chicken Reef, Mikes Point, Sardines Reef, Mios Kon, Five Rocks and Blue Magic. Our guides can take you to places where the current meets the reef head on, where we can witness predatory fish (like for example Black Tip, White Tip and Grey Reef sharks, Giant Trevally, Spanish Mackerel and Dog Tooth Tuna) hunting huge schools of smaller fish like Fusiliers and Big Eye Jacks.

We will also enter Kabui Bay with its emerald green waters sprouting mushroom islands, to make our way to the truly unique dive site the Passage – a narrow waterway separating Gam and Waigo island, each side punctuated with rising limestone cliffs that make this a place excessively beautiful. In the river-like channel the nutrient rich waters that are drawn through at a rapid rate by the tides support a vast wealth of marine biodiversity. The current can be quite like a roller coaster, and along the ride we may encounter Giant Trevally, Bumphead Parrotfish, maybe a Turtle or Shark. At the edges mangrove-lined cliffs create yet another micro-ecology of sponges, critters, Archer Fish and more.

Our last day will offer 2 more action-packed dives in the Dampier Strait and we can arrange for a bird watching trip on the last morning to see the enigmatic and endemic Red Bird of Paradise. Eventually we make our way back to Sorong for hearty goodbyes.

For booking inquiries please contact us at info@coralia-liveaboard.com.