

## Sample Itinerary: Forgotten Islands, Banda, Ambon

from: Maumere, to: Ambon

**Please note:** this is a sample itinerary. Itineraries may change without further notice due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances.



Starting from Maumere on the island of Flores, we will head straight to our first stop with an overnight crossing to Bacatan which is encompassed in the large area known as Alor. At the entrance to this big bay, on the island of Kawula, is a dive site called Bacatan Ledges. A drift dive will take you past a wall full of sea fans and sponges with a chance to see schooling jacks and pelagics such as eagle rays, tunas and sharks. Inside the bay is the sea mount of Takat Prau and the reef and sand of Padang Pasir. Takat Prau has a small wooden fishing boat on one side of the pinnacle and in the shallows, are resident leaf fish. During the day, the reef at Padang Pasir holds delights such as pyjama cardinal fish, juvenile barramundi cod and stonefish, and at night star gazers, crocodile flatfish and demon stingers emerge from the sand.

On to the Pantar Strait which is formed between the islands of Alor and Pantar. Here is the island of Pura, right in the middle of the channel. Anemone City is one of the highlights of this area, the reef is entirely covered in anemones, a rare phenomenon.



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Yan Village is where you will be greeted by ladies selling ikats, the traditional weaving of this area. The children on Pura make goggles out of wood and bottle tops and they love to greet divers on the surface and underwater.

Alor is also home to the holy grail of fish, Rhinopias. Something about the conditions here make this area one of the top places in the world to see this rare fish. There are several dive sites where there is a good chance to find them. Kalabahi Bay is one such place. This bay is where you will experience the fantastic muck diving of Alor. Alongside Rhinopias we will look for all types of octopus, frogfish, ghost pipefish, squid, cuttlefish, weird and wonderful shrimps and nudibranchs galore! Mucky Mosque, Rocky Church and Pertamina Jetty are the dive sites inside Kalabahi.

Alor is home to an ancient tribe called the Abui. During any cruise to Alor, Coralia will visit a traditional village to watch and take part in dances and ceremonies of these friendly people. An absolute highlight of any tour to Alor and a very unique experience.

After two days in the Pantar Strait we will head to the first of the Forgotten Islands, Wetar. The Forgotten Islands are an arc of islands that are part of a very remote archipelago in the east of the Banda Sea. These islands are accessible only by liveaboard and offer a truly exciting adventure! The Banda Sea is famous for its deep walls, healthy reefs, giant sponges all in crystal clear blue water. This area is also now known for the chance to see schooling Hammerhead Sharks!

Nyata is the next stop. Here the reefs are very healthy, especially the hard-coral formations in the shallows. Incredible fish action is attracted to the dive site here. Then on to Nus Leur which is a small atoll that has a steep sloping reef with a good chance to see Napoleon Wrasse. The shallow coral garden is a very beautiful spot to do your safety stop. Damar is close by and has a great hard coral garden perfect for an afternoon and night dive.

Close to the island of Nila is the sea mount of Nil Desparandum. It is surrounded by very deep water so there is a chance to see large pelagics. Here we will look out for the now famous Banda Sea schooling hammerhead sharks. Absolutely massive barrel sponges and expanses of hard corals make these reefs very impressive.

Next we will visit Manuk. This is the most easterly volcano in Indonesia and is home to lots of sea snakes. They are very curious, and divers will be approached by many snakes during the dives. But don't worry they won't bite, they just take a look and keep on swimming! The dramatic rocky dive sites here can be very fishy and there is a chance to spot hammerhead sharks. Above the water frigate birds and brown boobies soar over the volcano.

This cruise will also include two days in the Banda Islands. Also known as the Spice Islands, the land excursion here is fascinating. Visit the museum, an old Dutch fort and a nutmeg plantation to learn about the incredible history of these remote islands. The diving here includes the typical deep walls of the Banda Sea, as well as sea mounts and drift dive along fish packed reefs. At Batu Kapal the whole pinnacle is covered in schooling Pyramid Butterfly Fish and Red-tooth Triggerfish which mix in with hundreds of fusiliers, creating a myriad of colour. Hammerhead sharks have been known to visit some of the reefs here, as well as turtles, bumphead parrotfish, eagle rays and napoleon wrasse.



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Forgotten Island trips are not just about the 'big stuff'. If you want to look for macro critters we can find things like Leaf Fish, Moray Eels, lots of different Nudibranchs, Ribbon Eels, Mantis Shrimps, as well the very special Dragon Shrimps and Leopard Shrimps.

On the last full day on board, we will do two dives in Ambon Bay and enjoy our goodbye dinner inside the harbour.

Ambon is a world class muck diving destination. Inside the bay there are numerous dive sites full of critters galore! The holy grail of fish Rhinopias can be seen here along with Frogfish, Ghost Pipefish, Nudibranchs, Leaf Fish, Zebra crabs, cuttlefish, all sorts of Pipefish, Mandarin Fish, Ribbon Eels, all sort of Eels and cute juveniles like the Barramundi Cod, Batfish and Harlequin Sweetlips. Our eagle-eyed dive guides will be looking out for different types of shrimps such as Bumblebee Shrimp, Harlequin Shrimp, Tiger Shrimp and Coleman shrimps. In the octopus family, we might see the very special Wunderpus or Mimic and at night the Coconut, Starry Night, White-V and Long Arm Octopus come out to hunt. An excellent way to finish a trip!

**For booking inquiries please contact us at [info@coralia-liveaboard.com](mailto:info@coralia-liveaboard.com).**