

Asian Island Odyssey Cruise Itinerary

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Tour Overview

Join the ultimate tropical island-hopping cruise from Taipei, Taiwan, through the Philippines and Indonesia to Darwin, Australia, as we sail well off the traditional tourist route aboard our luxurious 140-guest expedition ship *Heritage Adventurer*.

Crossing both the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator, our adventure begins in Taiwan's bustling capital Taipei, before we weave our way through hard-to-reach and rarely-visited tropical islands. Discover islands where impossibly blue waters gently lap white sand beaches and pristine coral gardens and walls abound with neon-lit fish, fascinating rare birds and wildlife dwell in primeval jungles, intriguing time-forget cultures and traditions await discovery. In addition to being among some of the most biodiverse regions on the planet and home to rare and endangered wildlife, these remote tropical outposts boast incredible history, heritage and ancient cultures. Escaping the tourist boom due to their hard-to-reach locations makes them perfect for exploration by expedition ship.

Highlights include Taiwan's Yehliu Geopark and 19-kilometre-long canyon Taroko National Park and Marble Gorge with its 300 feet high marble walls, swimming with Whale Sharks and discovering the 'eighth wonder of the world' on Bohol Island. At Banda Neira we plan to delve into the fascinating history of the Spice Islands and explore the iconic five-sided Fort Belgica built in 1611 and pending World Heritage Site status. Observe thousands of stingless jellyfish at Tojoman Lagoon, look for the critically endangered Crested Black Macaque, known for their distinctive pink rumps and jet-black mohawks and the world's smallest primate the saucer-eyed Tarsier at Bitung.

Discover Indonesia's secret paradise Kei Kecil Island and postcard perfection of Ngurbloat Beach which are largely undiscovered by modern travellers, snorkel pristine coral reefs, sample local delicacies and experience thrilling cultural exchanges at villages where traditional life continues unchanged on this unforgettable adventure. This expedition includes the option to join a sea kayaking excursion with an expert guide. Kayakers are rewarded with tranquil, tropical settings and are a source of fascination to the locals who often paddle their canoes out to join them, and invite them back to their villages.

Itinerary

Day 1: Taipei, Taiwan



Arrive at Taipei, Taiwan's capital which is surrounded by mountains and proudly presided over by Taipei 101 - the 1,600-foot-high skyscraper and former Taipei World Financial Center styled on a bamboo stalk, and transfer to your hotel where our group will spend the first night of the expedition. This evening meet your fellow voyagers and expedition guides over dinner at the hotel.

Day 2: Keelung



Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before we head out to explore this exciting city. Rightly famous for its prevalent street food, be sure to sample its variety of xiaochi (little snacks) while exploring top attractions including the Chinese-influenced Martyrs' Shrine; Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall, commemorating Taiwan's former president; and the National Palace Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Chinese art. For those looking for a nature fix, head to Yehliu Geopark with its world-famous surreal landscape of honeycomb and mushroom eroded rock formations and the Japanese-era mining complex turned tourist attraction Gold Ecological Park where hillside walkways connect 1930s offices, workshops and dormitories for an insight into early mining history. This afternoon board Heritage Adventurer, moored in Keelung, settle into your accommodation and familiarise yourself with the ship, then join the expedition team in the Bridge, Observation Lounge or on the Observation Deck as we set sail for Hualien.

Day 3: Hualien



Taiwan's second-largest city Hualien, located on its mountainous east coast, is our gateway to the world-famous 19-kilometre-long canyon Taroko National Park and its namesake Marble Gorge. The spectacular marble walls here soar to more than 300 feet high and are surrounded by verdant green bamboo forests promising an unforgettable experience. Comprising some 227,000 acres and varying altitudes, from near sea level at the mouth of the Liwu River to towering more than 12,000 feet high at Mt Nanhu, the park's dramatic landscape provides a diverse array of vegetation and habitats which boast a third of Taiwan's vascular plants, half of its mammal species, the rare Nanhu Salamander and more than 140 resident bird species.

Day 4: Calayan Island, Philippines



One of the most remote, and hardest to reach islands in the Philippines, Calayan Island is a pristine paradise awaiting discovery. Part of Babuyan Islands and nestled between Batane's province and mainland Luzon, Calayan Island's unrestrained, rugged beauty offers unforgettable adventures both above and below the water with stunning white sand beaches, iconic lookouts from Nagudungan and Bangaan Hills, sprawling coral gardens, majestic waterfalls and plenty of rarely-visited coves and caves making it an ideal destination for expedition cruising. On land look for the endemic Calayan Rail, at sea share waters frequented by whales and dolphins on this authentic expedition day.

Day 5: Divilacan Bay



Widely considered among the Philippines most beautiful destinations, Divilacan Bay in the province of Isabela (recently dubbed the Queen Province of the North) combines lush forests and incredible snorkelling opportunities with the locally-famous heart-shaped Honeymoon Island and conservation initiatives working to save the critically endangered endemic Philippine Crocodile. Opportunities here could include exploring forests for wildlife, snorkelling the offshore reefs and Zodiac cruising mangroves to observe the results of the Mabuwaya Foundation's crocodile programme in action.

Day 6: Polillo Island



We expect to make history today as the first expedition ship to visit this remote tropical outpost. Snorkelling, waterfalls and wildlife are all good options today as we explore the largest of the Polillo Island group's 24 islands and islets. Rebounding following large scale logging operations lowland forests are now protected in two reserves, reflecting their importance for some significant wildlife including the Philippine Cockatoo and endemic Philippine Brown Deer, Warty Pig and Large Rufous Horseshoe Bat. The island is also home to the Gray's Monitor/Butaan Lizard - a tree-dwelling relative of the Komodo Dragon, while Dugong are known to frequent its waters.

Day 7: Caramoan Peninsula National Park



This coveted tropical dream destination, made relatively famous by television's Survivor, Caramoan Peninsula National Park will be one of the highlights of our voyage. With jungle-capped towering limestone karst formations, white sand beaches, impossibly clear blue waters offering some of the best snorkelling, deep gorges, snaking rivers, forest trails, an islet lake and underground river are all waiting to be explored - we will be spoilt for choice during our time here.

Day 8: Samar Island



Largely unknown and unexplored, there's a good reason why Samar Island Natural Park is considered the ultimate frontier. Combining all the remote paradise trappings of stunning cave formations, powder-fine sand beaches and crystal-clear waters with the Philippines largest tract of lowland rainforest and connecting karst formation, the park is home to a staggering 38 species of mammals, 215 bird species including the Philippine Eagle, 51 species of reptiles and more than 1,000 species of plants, of which more than half are endemic. Samar Island promises an extraordinary expedition day.

Day 9: Bohol Island



An early rise with cameras at the ready is recommended this morning as the sun rises over Bohol Island's famed Chocolate Hills. Often dubbed the 'Eighth Wonder of the World,' during the dry season the grass covering the more than 1,200 conical karst hills scattered across an area of 50 square kilometres turns a chocolatey brown creating this incredible phenomena best enjoyed from a viewing station some 200 steps up, but absolutely worth the effort. During our time here we may explore the lush countryside and famed cacao farms. Other highlights include a visit to a Tarsier Sanctuary to see the world's second smallest primate the tiny Philippine Tarsier, the threatened species are protected in the Philippines but their numbers are declining due to logging, mining and the illegal pet trade, the coral stone Baclayon Church and National Cultural Treasure, and sampling The Pastry Capital of Bohol's Fingers. This afternoon unwind on the pristine white sand beaches of Balicasag Island. Ringed by a reef and marine sanctuary enjoy an incredible underwater experience snorkelling impressive coral gardens and underwater cliffs teeming with colourful marine life including, if we are lucky, sea turtles.

Day 10: Bucas Grande Island



Emerging from the shadow of its popular neighbour surfing hot spot Siargao Island, Bucas Grande Island combines stunning white sand beaches, with waterfalls, emerald green waters, mangroves, expansive limestone cave systems, iron wood forests, inland lakes, elaborate coral gardens, exotic wildlife and rightly famous 60-kilometre Sohoton Cove and National Park. Look for Rufous Hornbill as we explore this pristine tropical island paradise Zodiac cruising the coastline where quiet coves and beaches await discovery. Highlights here include Tojoman Lagoon/Sohoton Jellyfish Sanctuary where thousands of stingless jellyfish thrive, the iconic Blue Lagoon with its labyrinthine waterways comprised of numerous limestone islets and incredible snorkelling and swimming opportunities. At nearby Cinnamon Island, named after its abundance of cinnamon trees, a cup of the local delicacy, cinnamon tea, has become the traditional welcome.

Day 11: At Sea

Relax on board after our recent adventures, join a lecture or our naturalists on deck, update your photos/journal or watch the world go by in the Observation Lounge.

Day 12: Bitung, Indonesia



Berthing at the busy, cosmopolitan harbour of Bitung, Manado city, we head for the nearby wildlife-filled jungles of Tangkoko Nature Reserve one of Indonesia's oldest reserves. Spanning some 8,800 hectares from beaches to the peak of Tangkoko Mountain the reserve is a haven for endemic flora and fauna. Exploring the lowland tropical rainforest with local guides, we'll be looking for the critically endangered Crested Black Macaque, known for their distinctive pink rumps and jet-black mohawks, symbol of Bitung and smallest primate in the world the saucer-eyed Tarsier and Sulawesi Bear Cuscus. For birders there's the Knobbed Hornbills, Kingfishers, Sulawesi Myna, Lorikeets and Maleo birds, other flying highlights include the brightly-coloured Forester Moth and the Draco Flying Lizard or Sulawesi Lined Gliding Lizard.

Day 13: Gorontalo



Sitting on the Equator, Sulawesi's culture capital and hidden paradise, Gorontalo combines rich history, the mountainous landscape is dotted with 500-year old Portuguese forts, with pristine white sand beaches, is a diving hot spot and has a reputation for being one of Indonesia's best places to swim with Whale Sharks. At Botubarani, a small seaside village, we plan to enjoy the unforgettable experience of swimming and snorkelling with these gentle giants which are known to grow more than 12-metres in length. Joining local boats and guides we will venture into Gorontalo Bay where plankton and small fish attract the world's largest fish. This afternoon has been left free for exploration.

Day 14: Seho & Taliabu Islands



This morning we plan to explore the unspoiled paradise of remote and rarely visited Seho Island where beautiful sandy beaches and stunning coral reefs meet forested, wildlife filled hills and jungles. Explore the island with options for jungle hikes searching for birds and wildlife, beachcombing and snorkelling among an amazing carpet of multicoloured soft corals. This afternoon visit the township of Bobong on Taliabu Island before making our way to the local markets, spice plantations and experiencing the rich culture of this tropical outpost.

Day 15: Buru Island



Fascinating and seldom visited, Buru Island is located at the boundary between the biogeographic zones of Australia and Asia. A high proportion of the species of birds and mammals here are found nowhere else with 10 endemic bird species and 4 endemic mammals as well as a number of near-endemic species. This morning we will explore these remote shores together with our expert naturalists and guides. Enjoy opportunities to explore the forests in search of wildlife and experience the heart-warming hospitality of local communities during village visits.

Day 16: Banda Neira



Under consideration as a World Heritage Site due to its fascinating history as the centre of the Spice Islands trade and incredible biodiversity, Banda Neira is the main island in the archipelago of 10 tiny volcanic Banda Islands. Once the world's sole source of nutmeg due to the islands' native *Myristica* trees, the principal town of Banda Neira offers a glimpse into bygone days with its charming 17th Century European relics including the five-sided Fort Belgica overlooking the harbour. Built in 1611 by the first Governor General of the Dutch East Indies and refurbished in the 90s it was designed to guard against sea threats and to protect the colonialists from any uprising locals. Across a narrow strait lies the 640-metre cone of active volcano Gunung Banda Api which sits on its own island and is home to a variety of wildlife and bird species. Below the sparkling sapphire water the islands' location near the centre of the Coral Triangle is evident with sprawling coral fields where myriad fish species including Scorpion, Ghost Pipefish, Napoleon Wrasse, Mandarin Fish, Hammerhead Sharks and more can be observed. Village visits and cultural immersion rounds out our time here including observing Banda's famous Kora Kora canoes in action.

Day 17: Kei Kecil Island



Today we explore Indonesia's secret paradise - Kei Kecil Island, the crowning tropical jewel in the Kei Archipelago in the southeastern chain of the Maluku Islands. Located on the edge of the Coral Triangle' Kei Kecil is home to some of Indonesia's finest beaches where powdery white sands meet gin-clear turquoise waters, stunning coral reefs and palm-fringed tropical jungles. Most famous is Ngurbloat Beach, known locally as 'Pasir Panjang' the insta-worthy combination of flour-soft white sand luxuriously stretches some 5-kilometres flanked between thousands of coconut trees and glassy calm ocean. Located among some of the world's most biologically rich waters snorkelling the extensive fringing and barrier reefs is exceptional and rewards with numerous colourful reef fish, Nudibranchs, cephalopods, Dogtooth Tuna, Eagle and Manta Rays make up the mesmerising marine life.

Day 18: At Sea

Take the time to relax and reflect on an amazing experience as we recap the highlights and enjoy a farewell dinner this evening.

Day 19: Darwin, Australia



This morning we arrive in Darwin, Australia's 'northern gateway' famous for its glittering harbour, World War II history and enviable tropical outdoor lifestyle. After breakfast there will be a complimentary coach to a central hotel or to Darwin International Airport. To allow time for disembarkation procedures and travel from Darwin, we do not recommend booking flights departing before 1300 hours.

What to Expect

The focus and emphasis of every expedition is getting you ashore as often as possible for as long as possible with maximum safety and comfort. Our Expeditions are accompanied by some of the most experienced naturalists and guides, who have devoted a lifetime to field research in the areas that we visit.

Every day we offer a combination of interesting shore excursions and fun shipboard activities. The number of participants per group may vary as there are a variety of daily activities to choose from, but you can generally expect a group size of maximum 30. Our excursions onshore will involve a relatively low level of exertion, but you will need a reasonable level of mobility to get up and down the gangway and climb into and out of Zodiacs (with assistance).

While we don't have a specific birding extension in 2026, we have naturalists on board to help those with a keen interest. We will have an optional birding extension in 2027. You must register for this at the time of booking as space is limited. Clients on the birding programmes will be in small groups of 10 guests with a dedicated birding guide. The birding groups will have the opportunity to disembark the ship early in the mornings for excursions, have birding focussed options on shore landings, evening meetings, and a dedicated birding list. Space is very limited, so sign up early.

When the ship is underway, it is a wonderful time to join a naturalist on deck, take photos of the stunning scenery, or get caught up on some reading in the library. In addition, our resource staff will give informative talks at various times throughout the voyage.

Meals in the ship's dining room are a great opportunity to meet new friends and recount the day's adventures. Special diets can be accommodated with advance notice. Safety is also a top priority with Eagle-Eye Tours - our team has extensive experience in the field, and all of our Voyages are run in conjunction with operators with the highest safety standards. The Heritage Adventurer is equipped with a well-stocked hospital and medical doctor on voyages.

We know that everyone travels for different reasons. Over the years, however, we have found one common element among the guest who choose to travel with us - a thirst of knowledge and authentic experience. Knowing this drives us to ensure the highest quality learning experience on

our trips, by taking time to carefully design each trip we offer.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- Discovery fund
- One night hotel accommodation in a twin share room (including dinner/breakfast)
- Transfer to ship
- All on board ship accommodation
- All on board meals including house beer, wine and soft drinks with lunch and dinner
- All shore excursions and activities
- Programme of lectures by noted naturalists

Tour Price Does Not Include

- International flights to start/end
 - Visas
 - Extensions
 - Travel Insurance
 - All items of a personal nature
 - Laundry
 - Drinks
 - Kayaking
 - Optional birding extension \$500 (2027)
 - Gratuities
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