

Indonesia Sailing: Whale Sharks & Birds-of-Paradise Itinerary

[Link: Indonesia Sailing: Whale Sharks & Birds-of-Paradise](#)

Tour Overview

Cruising Raja Ampat must rate as one of life's most beautiful experiences in the world. This exciting expert-led cruise follows in the footsteps of British naturalist and explorer, Alfred Russel Wallace. Wallace's observations of the marked zoological differences across a narrow strait between the islands of Bali and Lombok, and Borneo and Sulawesi, led to his proposing the zoo-geographical boundary now known as The Wallace line. In 1858, Wallace conceived the theory of natural selection independently of Charles Darwin. It was published, along with a description of Darwin's own theory, in the same year. We will explore some of the areas that Wallace found so fascinating: remote mountainous islands with forested coastlines, idyllic white sand beaches and jungle waterfalls. We will go bird watching, snorkel through Raja Ampat's marine wonderland, swim through a mysterious cave, and cruise through a maze of karst islets. Hopefully, we will experience the magic of seeing the birds of paradise performing their extraordinary courtship dances within their natural habitat. If we get really lucky - and there are no promises - we may even have the opportunity to snorkel with whale sharks in Triton Bay.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival/ Sorong

You will be met at the airport or your hotel and transferred to the harbour where the Ombak Putih will be waiting at anchor. Once settled into your cabin, your cruise director will familiarize you with the vessel's facilities and safety procedures. Ready to start our adventure, we will weigh anchor, leave the harbour behind, and enter the marine protected area of Raja Ampat, home to unique birdlife and the most biodiverse coral reefs in the world. We will have lunch as we are under way and stop for your first snorkel and swim amongst the coral gardens in the afternoon. After sunset drinks we will sit down together for dinner and then meet the crew. It's an early start the next day, so an early night is recommended.

Day 2: Sapokren

Before dawn we will be ferried to a local village, where local guides will take us on a trek through the jungle in the hope of finding the beautiful Wilson's Bird of Paradise perform its mating dance ritual upon the forest floor. The male is red and black with a yellow mantle on his neck, light green mouth, rich blue feet and two violet tail feathers. The featherless crown is turquoise, ornamented with double black crosses. If we are lucky, we may be able to observe the male dancing from a distance of just five metres. Before the dance, he will clear the ground from any leaves or other obstacles that may disrupt his performance. On our way back to the boat, accompanied by the sounds of the jungle coming to life, we will be sure to spot a number of bird species along the way. We will spend the remainder of the day resting from the morning's activities and snorkelling, swimming and exploring the reefs and islands of the local area by kayak and paddle board.

Day 3: Sapokren/Dampier Strait/Pulau Arborek

Today is our second and final early morning wake up as we head off to see the Red Bird of Paradise, this time high in the canopy of the rainforest. Extremely extroverted show offs, these birds dance and squawk their way around the trees trying to impress the female of the species, making for an incredible show. After returning to the ship and breakfast it will be time for some snorkeling on some of Raja Ampat's most spectacular reefs in the Dampier Strait. If the tides are in our favour we might get to see some of the area's larger species of marine life, which are attracted by the currents in these nutrient rich waters. We will end the day at a local inhabited island, where the village kids will show us around their beautiful village and then perform some local folk dances for us. We will weigh anchor before dinner, enjoying sunset cocktails on the back deck as we cruise south.

Day 4: Missol

Today we wake up in southern Raja Ampat at the island of Misool, a picturesque archipelago of forest-covered limestone islets just teeming with coral reefs that has adventures aplenty on offer. We will swim through a massive and ancient sea cave, adorned with giant stalagmites and stalactites. We will then journey to a small, secret lake inhabited by thousands of stingless jellyfish, where we will snorkel among them. After lunch we will explore the area by ship's tenders, going in and out of the many bays and inlets looking for birds, and also stopping to see some prehistoric cave paintings said to be between 3,000 and 5,000 years old.

Day 5: Misool

Today we will have a relaxing day in Misool. We will spend the day maximising everything that this fascinating area has to offer by marvelling at both the marine wonderland under the water and the magnificent landscape above the surface. We can test out our paddling skills in the sea kayaks, watch for birds perched on the rocks, or just sit back and take in the glorious scenery. After a full day of island hopping, the Ombak Putih will begin her overnight journey.

Day 6: Pisang to Sipitnanam

We will wake up off a small group of picture-perfect islands, where we will spend the morning exploring the beaches and crystal clear waters and vibrant reefs with our snorkels. We will then cruise in the direction of the mainland of Papua, where we will visit a local village and meet the residents, who will welcome us into their village, sharing with us their way of life which consists of fishing and growing nutmeg. Back on the boat we will continue southeast overnight, enjoying dinner and sunset drinks along the way.

Day 7: Papua

We wake up off the coast of Papua to a most serene and primal scene of a jungle waterfall where a roaring river surrounded by virgin rainforest pours into the sea. Here we will swim and play in the waterfall and the sea as we take in this most tranquil tropical scenery. We will also have the chance to snorkel through the corals on a nearby reef. Later in the day we will continue our journey east, stopping off late afternoon for another swim and snorkel on our way to see the whale sharks of Triton Bay.

Day 8: Triton Bay

Triton Bay is a place of unsurpassed natural splendour, where time and tides have sliced the limestone landscape into tall cliffs and numerous islands separated by lagoons and narrow channels. It is also home to fishermen who collect baitfish and keep them in nets attached to specially built platforms, also known as 'bagans'. It is these and their fish that attract whale sharks. We will head out in the tenders to see if the sharks are around, and if we are lucky, we will spend a couple of hours in the water with these magnificent creatures. After lunch we will explore the bays and limestone outcrops by tender, kayak, and paddle board as well as swim and snorkel from the beautiful white-sand beaches. This evening we will have a beach BBQ with the crew, with singing and dancing late into the night.

Day 9: Triton Bay and Namatote Passage

We will spend the morning cruising through the undisturbed coves, caves, and lagoons before heading north through the Namatote Passage, where there is an impressive collection of ancient cave paintings high up on the cliffs. The afternoon will be filled with more snorkelling, swimming, kayaking and paddling as we relax amidst the beauty of the surrounding jungle covered islands. We will spend our final evening on the ship resting at anchor and enjoying a farewell dinner with our captain and crew.

Day 10: Departure - Kaimana

In the morning, we will find ourselves at anchor in the harbour of Kaimana, and after an early breakfast our tenders will take you ashore for your transfer to the airport for your onward travel.

What to Expect

On Board

Life on board our ships is one of pure enjoyment, with good food, top class service and fine company mixed with just the right balance of exploration and relaxation. Whilst on board, guests are immersed in a world of barefoot fun and adventure, with air-conditioned private en-suite cabins, indoor and outdoor social hubs and dining areas, sun decks, a wide selection of Indonesian, Western and Asian cuisine, a full bar, and highly attentive service from our crew, whose smiles and friendly personalities offer an even greater insight into the Indonesian way of life. Each cruise is led by professional, multilingual tour leaders who will escort guests in all activities both on land and at sea, answer any questions, provide in-depth daily briefings, and ultimately ensure the smooth running of every aspect of the cruise.

Our galleys are staffed with talented individuals who pride themselves on being able to conjure up all manner of dishes and delicacies from across the world, using only the best quality meat, seafood and fresh produce available – with the latter often sourced from local markets and the fishermen we meet along the way. Vegetarian dishes and kids' meals are a specialty, and most special dietary requirements can be accommodated with minimal fuss. Our pursers are on hand all day to serve meals and make sure you have all you need; from cold towels and fresh juices to a full plate of food and an iced drink whenever you need it. Each boat has a full bar stocked with local and imported wines, imported spirits and domestic beer, which are charged at pretty much cost price, while all non-alcoholic drinks are inclusive.

Off Ship

Each day on our voyages, we offer plenty of optional off-boat activities to keep our guests occupied. We place a significant emphasis on snorkelling, and aim to get in the water at least once a day to explore the colourful coral gardens that we encounter along the way, especially in the national parks. In addition to this, we always make plenty of opportunities for island visits, during which we stroll through local towns and villages and delve into their cultures. We embark on quests to find Komodo dragons and birds of paradise, trek to hilltops to be rewarded with spectacular views, explore hidden caves and remote islets, go on specialized birding adventures, trek through jungles and savannah, swim with manta rays or whale sharks, kayak and paddle in pristine bays, and laze contentedly under shady coconut palms on white sand beaches.

This is a general natural history and cultural expedition rather than a dedicated birding tour. Travellers can look forward to a mix of wildlife viewing, cultural experiences, and time to appreciate the region's incredible scenery — with opportunities for birding included along the way.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- Full board including all meals and soft drinks, tea, coffee, snacks. Starting and ending with lunch on first and last days.
- All-Indonesian tour leaders.
- All park fees, cultural performances, local guides, and off boat activities.
- Welcome drink and cold towel upon boarding the boat on the first day, as well as each time guests return from all off-boat excursions.
- Daily room cleaning
- Two pieces of laundry each day
- Towels and linens.
- Complimentary cotton backpack, luggage tag, fan, stainless steel water bottle, which guests are encouraged to take home and keep
- First aid kit containing all major medicines
- Sunscreen lotion
- Soaps, shampoo and conditioner
- Beach BBQ
- Free wine, beer and selected cocktails at beach BBQ
- Selected wines with special farewell dinner
- All port fees
- Use of on-board TV and multimedia facilities – (laptop).
- Library of books, kids' games and TV documentaries
- - Use of all facilities on board including snorkelling gear, paddle boards, kayaks, board games
- Use of sleeping bags for sleeping on deck
- All transfers to and from the boats

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to/from start of tour
- Transit hotels
- Alcoholic drinks outside of special dinners and beach BBQ.
- Crew and tour leader tips
- Incidental expenses on land (souvenirs, private purchases).
- Medical / evacuation insurance
- Additional expenses in the event of delays and/or itinerary changes
- Visas or inoculations, if required
- \$400 fuel surcharge

