

# Indonesian Explorer Cruise Itinerary

[Link: Indonesian Explorer Cruise](#)

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## Tour Overview

Discover paradise on an authentic expedition through Indonesia's remote and little known tropical islands. Swim with the Whale Sharks in Kwatisore Bay, visit Komodo National Park, home to the famed Komodo Dragon, discover Jacques Cousteau's "underwater nirvana" Wakatobi National Park and explore the turquoise waters and rainbow corals of Raja Ampat as we traverse powdery white sand beaches and untamed jungles. During our voyage from Bali to Madang, including post cruise flight to Cairns, we have the opportunity to see Birds-of-paradise and many more endemic species, World War II relics and visit remote tribes and villages.

A true expedition voyage in every sense, our journey will explore Indonesia's rarely visited and little known biodiverse-rich jungle-capped islands scattered across pristine pellucid waters well beyond traditional tourist routes. Join us and discover a true paradise where untouched dense jungles home to some of the rarest flora and fauna on the planet meet crystalline tropical waters teeming with exotic marine life and some of the world's best coral reefs all wrapped in a land steeped in history and rich in culture and tradition.

Comprised of some 18,000 islands, this Southeast Asian archipelago's fascinating human history dates back almost 2 million years. European arrival saw Portuguese spice traders chasing the fragrant bounty of nutmeg and cloves in the 16th Century, this was followed by Dutch colonisation then Japanese occupation during World War II before Indonesia regained its independence in 1949.

While still a heavy hitter on the spice trading scene, Indonesia is now attracting attention for having one of the richest concentrations of flora and fauna on the planet. One of the world's 17 mega diverse countries, Indonesia is home to 2 of the planet's 25 biodiversity hotspots, 18 of the World Wildlife Fund's Global 200 ecoregions and 24 of BirdLife International's Endemic Bird Areas. Its dense forests, jungles, oceans and waterways we will be exploring boast more than 25,000 species of flowering plants (40 per cent of which are endemic), 1,592 bird species (430 of which are endemic and 114 considered extremely threatened), 1,051 reptile and amphibian species, 515 species of mammal and half of the world's fish species. There will be opportunities to see some of these species on this expedition.

For botanists, birders and nature lovers alike, this expedition offers numerous opportunities to spot once-in-a-lifetime species and experience rare wildlife encounters on remote and unknown islands. 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.

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# Itinerary

## Day 1: Bali, Indonesia

For centuries Bali has captivated the imagination of artists, writers, and travellers with its landscapes of emerald terraced rice fields back-dropped by the sacred volcano of Mount Agung. Make your way to the 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: Denpasar



Enjoy breakfast followed by time to explore the cultural and historical delights of Bali's capital. This afternoon transfer to Heritage Adventurer where your Captain and Expedition Team will welcome you aboard as we set sail for Sumbawa Island.

## Day 3: Sumbawa Island



East of its more famous sibling Lombok, mountainous Sumbawa Island blends laid back island life with spectacular volcanic ridges, terraced rice fields, tangled jungles and beautiful sandy beaches replete with stunning coral reefs and remote bays awaiting exploration. Historically divided between east (Bimanese speakers) and west (Sumbawanese speakers) this isolated island that time almost forgot juxtaposes luxurious mansions alongside old wooden huts, remote wilderness and traditional Adat law and lore. Today we will experience a number of time-honoured traditions and cultural encounters including meeting the creators of the famed intricate hand-woven ikat fabric and observing ancient tribal rites for a truly authentic immersion in the local culture.

## Day 4: Komodo National Park



A sanctuary for the giant monitor lizard, the Komodo Dragon, walk along a forested pathway to a viewing area for a closer look at these prehistoric reptiles which can grow up to 10 feet in length and weigh up to 300 pounds. The surrounding forest is home to Timor Deer, the favourite prey of the dragons, as well as elegant Yellow-crested Cockatoos. Enjoy snorkelling off splendid Pink Beach, a world-class experience often described as "swimming in an aquarium".

## Day 5: Wakatobi National Park



Famously described by legendary underwater explorer and conservationist Jacques Cousteau as an “underwater nirvana”, Wakatobi is home to breathtaking coral walls. Today’s snorkel excursions reveal an incredible array of marine reef inhabitants; underwater photographers will appreciate a bizarre macro world among the corals. Highlights include colourful Frogfish, octopus, Marbled Snake Eels, Cockatoo Waspfish, Flying Gurnards, multitudes of crab species and dazzling anemones.

## Day 6: 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 that occur 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 hike in the forests in search of wildlife and many of the endemic species and enjoy the hospitality of local communities during village visits.

## Days 7, 8 & 9: Raja Ampat



Lapped by stunning turquoise waters, Raja Ampat’s collection of 1,500 tiny, jungle-cloaked islands are among Indonesia’s most beautiful. We plan to spend 3 days exploring the bounty of rainbow corals, shoals of multi-coloured fish, intriguing ocean-carved limestone formations and jungles of this tropical paradise of forgotten islands. Believed to contain the most biodiverse marine habitat on the planet, the waters surrounding Raja Ampat are home to 600 species of hard coral and 1,200 types of reef fish and make for exceptional snorkelling and Zodiac cruising. On land, spotting the brilliant Wilson’s Bird-of-paradise and Red Bird-of-paradise will be high on our agenda here, with early morning visits planned ensuring the very best opportunity for all to see these remarkable birds in their natural habitat and, hopefully, witness their rarely-seen mating dance around their ‘lekking’ trees. Other activities could include beachcombing, visiting villages and engaging in cultural exchanges with locals and forest walks.

## Day 10: Misool Island



Part of the Sultanate of Tidore during the spice trade wars, Misool Island is the second largest island in the aquatic wonderland that is Raja Ampat (aka Four Kings Islands, named after its four main islands). Rich in heritage, it was colonised by the Dutch, however still maintains its cultural essence and traditional ways of life with indigenous constructions, folk dance and respect for nature prevailing. On land, discover caves hidden among verdant forests featuring rock art dating back more than 5,000 years, while under its protected waters, Bumphead Parrotfish, Clownfish, Manta Rays, Ghost Pipefish, Harlequin Shrimp, Pygmy Seahorse and more can be found among spectacular coral gardens and sea-cave cemeteries. Over the course of the day we aim to explore the labyrinth of caves and passages, and hike up to the viewing platforms to enjoy the spectacular vistas.

## Day 11: Bomberai Peninsula



Today we have a full day of exploration planned at the seldom visited Bomberai Peninsula, which is also often referred to as the Bird's Beak Peninsula for its location to the south of Bird's Head Peninsula. A lush tropical forest blankets the hills which rise to the remote Kumafa Mountains. The turquoise waters sculpting the karst limestone coast are renowned for the abundance and diversity of tropical fish species. Join your expedition team ashore discovering the unique plants and wildlife of the region before snorkelling among enormous colourful soft corals and a thousands strong cast from Finding Nemo attracted by the rich food source delivered via underwater channels and currents.

## Day 12: Triton Bay



Enjoy the unforgettable experience of swimming with the iconic Whale Sharks of Triton Bay. One of the best places in the world to snorkel with these gentle giants, we aim to visit the local fishermen's Bagans (handmade floating platforms) where these mega-fish (known to grow more than 12-metres in length), hopeful of catching some of the smaller fish escaping fishermen's nets, are known to congregate. This afternoon Heritage Adventurer drops anchor off Aiduma Island, one of the most remote islands in Indonesia and world-renowned underwater wonderland and dive site. Discover dazzling soft coral forests teeming colorful reef fish including dinner plate-sized Blue-ring and Six-bar Angelfish, and impressive red and white striped Lionfish, among others, on a snorkelling highlight.

## Day 13: Etna Bay

This morning we embark on an exploration of the seldom visited Etna Bay. Indenting the coastline of the Kaimana Regency and described by those who have visited as a "tropical fiord beneath mountains that rise abruptly from the sea", an authentic expedition adventure awaits. Local mythology claims that Indonesia's legendary Garuda bird and national emblem lives in these mountains. Join your expedition team as we explore this unknown terrain together.

## Day 14 & 15: Asmat Villages



Ten thousand square miles of mangrove forest, bamboo, and sago palms have long sheltered the Asmat region from outsiders. At high tide, our ship enters the shallow channel of the Flamingo River to anchor near the village of Agats, the regional capital of the Asmat. A remote riverine world is revealed as Zodiacs carry you along narrow waterways lined with the entwined branches of thick mangrove forests, home to Torresian Imperial Pigeons, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, and bright red lorikeets. As you make your way upstream, villagers – whooping and chanting in elaborate warrior gear and paint – paddle vigorously toward you in intricately carved canoes to escort you ashore where an enthusiastic welcome awaits. A walk along elevated wooden boardwalks leads to a cathedral with superb carvings, and museum with displays of ancestor poles, drums, body masks, shields, daggers, and skulls; a reminder that cannibalism and head-hunting was practiced by the ancestors of some villagers. Asmat woodcarvings are known for their powerful lines and coarse, expressive motifs, and are widely considered by collectors and scholars to be among the world’s finest carvings and can be purchased directly from the village artisans.

## Day 16 & 17: At Sea

Relax on board after our adventures, join a lecture, update your photos/journal or watch the world go by from the Bridge with the Captain, in the Observation Lounge or from the poolside. Day 16 will see us farewelling Indonesia as we make our way to Papua New Guinea, while on Day 17 we will be navigating the maze of reefs and islands of the Torres Strait which links the Coral and Arafura Seas with the Gulf of Carpentaria with prime spots being the Observation Deck, Lounge and the Bridge.

## Day 18: Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea to Cairns, Australia



Arrive in Port Moresby, bustling gateway and capital of Papua New Guinea where village and urban life exist side-by-side. After breakfast, board your flight to Cairns, OR continue the adventure with us on Discover the Secrets of Melanesia. Note: During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed. This tour offers a variety of activities and excursions. Your personal interests will determine which of these you wish to join. Please note that some activities and excursions will run at similar times, and it will not be possible to participate in both. Accordingly, refunds for excursions and missed landings are not available. Voyages are planned and scheduled pending final regulatory approval.

## 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. This is a general natural history expedition rather than a dedicated birding tour. Travellers can look forward to a mix of wildlife viewing and time to appreciate the region's incredible scenery.

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. For this tour we have a combined focus and most days offers a choice between wildlife adventures or arts and culture experiences, plus opportunities to enjoy local cuisine. Shore excursions range from low-exertion walks to more demanding outings that may involve steep, uneven, or muddy trails. All landings are wet Zodiac landings, meaning you will step into shallow water before reaching shore and change footwear on dry land. A reasonable level of mobility is required to navigate the gangway and to get in and out of Zodiacs (with assistance).

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.

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. Please note that the hikes to see the Birds of Paradise are difficult with steep, muddy trails.

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## 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
- Post cruise transfer to airport & flight from Madang to Cairns

### **Tour Price Does Not Include**

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

