

INDONESIAN EXPLORER

DISCOVER PARADISE AMONG
INDONESIA'S LOST ISLANDS

EXPEDITION DOSSIER
28 SEPTEMBER – 11 OCTOBER 2020

PNG
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Discover paradise on an authentic expedition through Indonesia's remote and little known tropical islands. Swim with the Whale Sharks in Kwatisore Bay and explore the turquoise waters and rainbow corals of Raja Ampat as we traverse powdery white sand beaches, untamed jungles home to Red, Wilsons and Lesser Bird-of-paradise and World War II relics, visiting lost tribes on our voyage from Sorong to Madang.

A true expedition voyage in every sense, our journey will explore Indonesia's rarely visited and little known biodiverse-rich jungle-capped volcanic 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 South East Asian archipelago's fascinating human history dates back almost 2 million years to the fossilised remains of Homo erectus/'Java Man' discovered in the early 1890s, while

ancient rock art waits in hidden caves on renowned Misool Island. 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 (excluding the Dutch territory of West New Guinea).

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. 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.

Indonesia's extraordinary diversity also extends to its population where more than 300 ethnic groups, many with their own set of customs, cultures and languages, live scattered throughout the archipelago. Our expedition embraces some of these cultures with visits planned to some of these villages. Sublime wildlife, incredible underwater encounters, exceptional birding and thrilling cultural exchanges await on 'Indonesian Explorer'.



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ITINERARY

Day 1: Sorong, Indonesia

One of the fastest growing locations in Indonesia, Sorong is the starting point of our expedition. Meet your fellow travellers at a central city location and transfer to the ship. Settle into your cabin and meet your expedition team and captain for a welcome on board.

Day 2: 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) and our introduction to this stunning marine environment. 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 Dugong, 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 here we

aim to explore the labyrinth of caves and passages including the famed water-filled dome-topped network of Tomolol Caves adorned with impressive stalactites and enjoy the extraordinary experience of swimming among thousands of stingless jellyfish.

Day 3: Kofiau Island

Kofiau (or 'Wallo' to the locals) Island is an ancient slice of isolated continental crust covered in lush rainforest, the least visited among the major islands in Raja Ampat and ours to explore. Comprised mostly of raised coral limestone remote island with its lush rainforest offers exceptional birding alongside breathtaking views. Activities on offer during the day include snorkelling among the coral gardens and exploring the island where we will be on the lookout for the endemic birds Kofiau Paradise-kingfisher and Kofiau Monarch, as well as the lime-green Kofiau Green-tree Python.

Days 4 to 6: Raja Ampat

Lapped by stunning turquoise waters, Raja Ampat's collection of 1,500 tiny, jungle-cloaked islands are the least developed and easternmost islands of Indonesia. Forming part of the Coral Triangle, 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 two 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. If we are lucky we may also spot the Lesser Bird-of-paradise during our visits to the bird blinds. Other activities could include beachcombing, visiting villages and engaging in cultural exchanges with locals and forest walks.

Day 7: Amsterdam Island

Part of the Su Islands (Mios Su) or the Soe Island Group, a cluster of small islands off the northern coast of Western New Guinea, our visit to little-known and explored Amsterdam Island channels the true expedition nature of our voyage providing an opportunity to explore this pristine environment where very few have been before.



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Day 8: Manokwari and Arfak Mountains

Located at the top of the Bird's Head Peninsula and surrounded by lush rolling hills and impressive spine of the Arfak Mountains, Manokwari is the capital of West Papua. Here we plan to travel into the Arfak Mountains to the Pegunungan Arfak Nature Reserve and enjoy the rare opportunity of exploring the higher elevations and misty tropical montane rainforests with their exceptional suite of endemic plants, animals and birds. During our journey we will be on the lookout for the Western Parotia, Vogelkop Bowerbird and Magnificent Bird-of-paradise among the region's 320 bird species. There is a chance we will also spot New Guinea Tree Kangaroo, forest wallabies and bandicoot in the dense forest.

Day 9: Cenderawasih Marine Park

Enjoy an unforgettable day swimming with the iconic Whale Sharks of Kwatisore Bay in Cenderawasih Marine Park. 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 spectacular 15,000-square-kilometre marine park is also home to some of the finest coral reef examples in the world and 18 tropical islands where 209 species of fish, 4 species of turtle, dolphin and Blue Whale can be seen.

Day 10: Biak and Supiori Islands

Exploring the seldom-visited remote coasts, white sand beaches and crystalline waters of twin islands Biak and Supiori in the Schouten Islands archipelago of Cenderawasih Bay is our plan for today. Separated by a narrow mangrove-lined channel, the islands boast the highest endemic diversity in Papua including 17 endemic birds. Among the species we may encounter are the Long-tailed Honey-buzzard, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Yellow-bibbed Fruit-dove, Geelvink Imperial-pigeon, Biak Black Flycatcher and Numfor Paradise-kingfisher and Leaf Warbler. We also plan to enjoy a snorkel excursion exploring the abundant marine life and pristine reefs.

Day 11: Mamberamo River

Flanked by tropical rainforest and at around 800-kilometres long, the biologically-rich Mamberamo River is considered the Amazon of Papua and is Indonesia's longest river. Dubbed 'Big River' by the Dani tribe, it snakes through dense, unexplored and unspoiled terrain and sustains a plethora of wildlife including wallabies, tree shrews, crocodiles, frogs, butterflies, endemic birds and hundreds of species of plants, as well as a number of traditional tribes who are largely cut off from the outside world. We plan to Zodiac cruise the river's mouth, one of the most remote and untouched sections of coast in this part of the world, searching for wildlife and visit local tribal people.

Day 12: Jayapura

The peaceful paradise of Lake Sentani, the glittering freshwater lake reflecting the steep, verdant mountains in the Cyclops Strict Nature Reserve of Papua's capital Jayapura, is renowned for its famous artifacts, traditional motifs, pottery, woodworking and bark paintings, and is our destination following an early morning arrival. Taking local buses, we will journey to the seldom visited lake's edge before enlisting traditional longboats, passing stilt houses,

as we navigate its many islands. Experience local culture in the form of dance and artists at work making bark paintings and bride money, visit the small church built at the beginning of the 20th Century and World War II monument to General Douglas MacArthur on Gunung Ifar for breathtaking lake views before returning to *Spirit of Enderby* for lunch and sailing towards Vanimo and Papua New Guinea.

Day 13: Murik Lakes/Sepik River, Papua New Guinea

Undoubtedly a highlight on our voyage, we plan to explore by Zodiac the intricate network of lagoons and mangroves surrounding this cluster of salt and freshwater lakes sustaining a myriad of wildlife where the Sepik River (the longest in Papua New Guinea) joins the Bismarck Sea. The area's history includes being used as a staging location for barge traffic by the Japanese during World War II, and the location of at least four Allied aircraft that were lost or abandoned between 1943 and 1944. Home to more than 100 villages and inspiring the region's renowned Sepik art, we expect to enjoy their hospitality and handiwork first hand.

Day 14: Madang

The self appointed 'Prettiest Town in the South Pacific', Madang is bound by lush rainforest, calm blue waters studded with volcanic islands, 34-sunken ship dive sites, Tupira's supreme surf break, flourishing coral gardens and rich history.

For those disembarking, a transfer to a central hotel, or the airport, will conclude your voyage, OR continue the adventure with us on 'Melanesian Discoverer'.

Note: During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and/or opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed.

ABOUT OUR DISCOVERY FUND

Each area we visit has rich cultural experiences and wild treasures to offer. As guests, we have made a point to source and support local projects in the areas through which we travel. A contribution from each passenger represents a portion of the money we donate to ensure the longevity and success of educational, environmental and cultural initiatives in these regions.



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DATES

Voyage #2054
28 September – 11 October 2020

PRICES

Heritage Suite \$12,100 pp*
Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

Mini Suite \$11,300 pp*
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

Superior Plus \$10,300 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Superior \$ 9,595 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Main Deck \$ 8,595 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

Main Deck Triple \$ 7,595 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

* The price listed includes the additional discovery fund local payment of \$600 which is payable in US\$ cash on board the ship. (All prices are per person in US\$).

PRICE INCLUDES

Discovery fund (payable on board), pre/post cruise transfers, all on board ship accommodation with meals and all shore excursions and activities. Programme of lectures by noted naturalists.

PRICE EXCLUDES

All items of a personal nature, laundry, drinks, gratuities. International/ domestic flights, visas, extensions and travel insurance.

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