

RAJA AMPAT WEST PAPUA



RAJA AMPAT CASTS A SPELL ON ALL WHO VISIT SCIENTIST, PHOTOGRAPHERS, NOVICE DIVERS AND MORE EXPERIENCED ALIKE. ITS GROUPS OF MAJESTIC ISLANDS, LOCATED IN THE NORTHWESTERN TIP OF INDONESIA'S PAPUAN "BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE" LIES IN THE HEART OF THE CORAL TRIANGLE, THE MOST BIO-DIVERSE MARINE REGION ON EARTH.

As stunningly beautiful above water as below, Raja Ampat -which literally translates as "Four Kings"-, is a startling diversity of habitats to explore. Each of these -from the stark wave-, pounded slopes that drop away beneath the karst cliff of Wayag and Uranie, to the deep nutrient-rich bays of Mayalibit, Kabui and Aljui, to the "blue water mangrove" channels of Kofiau and Gam, to the plankton rich upwelling area of Misool and the Dampier Straits are home to unique assemblages of species that, when taken together, add to produce the most impressive species list ever compiled for a coral reef system of this size.

Astride the equator, this remote group sits just west of the Indonesia -claimed portion of the immense island of New Guinea, our planet's second largest island-. This area and the neighboring country of Papua New Guinea harbor some of the most remote and untamed territory left on earth. Equally in their natural habitat are the indigenous people here, many of whom still pursue an aboriginal existence in the primeval forest as practiced for many generations. As a result, much of the jungle, and the extensive fringing reef system, are still to be found in a relatively pure and unspoiled condition.

Marine tourism as a sustainable alternative to overfishing, mining and logging has the potential to play a key role in the conservation of Raja Ampat spectacular underwater realm, while also creating realm benefit for the local communities.

DIVING IN RAJA AMPAT


Divers generally enter this region via the airport at Sorong on the Indonesian province of West Papua. The first dive sites will often be around the island of Wai, only a two-hour boat run from Sorong, the quality of dives range from good to wonderful. Some dives were planned for slack tide, while occasionally the current could be challenging. Fortunately, the stronger currents also generally made for better visibility, blooming corals and greater fish activity.

Best time to dive Raja Ampat is from October to April. Topside conditions at this time of year proved to be excellent. You could enjoy cruising in virtually flat calm seas, with only some rain showers punctuating warm, sunny days. As it is generally acknowledged, Raja Ampat has two rainy seasons each year, in November/December and again in July/August. But it is possible diving Raja Ampat all year round, because due sea condition it remains diveable throughout the year seasons.

TRIP HIGHLIGHT

Wayag and Misool have a labyrinthine maze of channels with hundreds of small islets and limestone karsts and there is the opportunity of dinghy boat tours to explore them. The water looks more like a river than a sea. There are large cave and tunnel structures very impressive, with huge limestone stalactites, of a very dramatic and stunningly beautiful!



REEF BASICS 	
Diving season	October to April. But is possible to dive Raja Ampat all year around. Mid July to mid September sees some small surface swells, but not usually serious enough to interfere with your diving.
Rainy season	May to September is light rainy season.
Water temperature	27-30°C
Visibility	Can be as low with averages about 5m with a maximum of 10-30m due the incredibly nutrient-rich water.
Depth	5 -> 40m.
Currents	Can be strong.
Surface conditions	Calm.
Experience level	Intermediate – advanced.
Dive sites	Unknown. At the present >200.
Length of stay	Recommended 10-16 days on liveaboard cruise.

TRIP ADVISOR →

Airport

Sorong. International flight to Manado and then domestic flight to Sorong.

Weather

27-32°C. Indonesia has two seasons: wet and dry. In most of Indonesia the wet season is from October to April and the dry from May to September. West Papua dry season October to April, wet season is from May to September.

RAJA AMPAT DIVE SITES

MISOOL The beauty of the Misool Island Group will carry you away. This entire region is one enormous ancient limestone basin and even has limestone as the seafloor. Those who have travelled to Palau can picture these little tropical islands covered of palms, with steep sided walls where wind and sea have worn the rock away.

The islands, or islets, are uncountable. The larger ones, like Misool itself, have canyons and lagoons speckled with white sandy beaches ideal for tender boat rides. One can spend hours exploring and never see the same bay. It really is a place of great beauty both above and below the water. It's rightly being considered by the Indonesian government for national park status and by the United Nations as a world heritage site.

Misool is one of the places on earth where you will find the most various species of fish, hard and soft corals, sponges, worms, nudibranchs, shrimps and crabs and all kind of non-vertebrates, like cuttlefish and octopus. You will as well come across Wobbegong shark and Epaulette shark, which you will only find in the region of "Raja Ampat". Giant clams as well as fantastic tiny shells. Photographers as well as videographers will have the dives of their lifetime.

WAI ISLAND Central do this dive site is a WWII vintage airplane wreck. Lying upside down in about 80 feet of water, a U.S. fighter plane is now host to a sizable agglomeration of soft corals and marine life. The surrounding reef is also quite nice, in most areas a lush reef comes to within a foot of the surface. Photo pro, James Watt, found this a fine location place to produce some of his celebrated split image shots.

KRI ISLAND When conditions are right, the nearby dive sites are nothing short of excellent. On dive sites like Sardine Reef, Cape Kri, and the aptly named Koteka, you will enjoy some of the very finest wide-angle photo opportunities you've ever seen. Beautiful hard coral bommies were host to dazzling soft corals and rainbow-colored crinoids with a foreground of oriental sweet lips or coral trout, a swirl of glassfish and anthias, and a background of schooling surgeon fish, jacks and the occasional tuna. When the visibility is right, this can be an underwater photographer's heaven.

WAIGEO ISLAND Home to a commercial Pearl Farm, Waigeo dive sites included Yellow Wall, Tunicate Wall, and Magic Log. Yellow Wall was a memorably brisk drift along a sharp vertical drop-off. Again the fish population was both diverse and plentiful. North of Waigeo, three atolls Asia, Ayu and Bud are only waiting to be explored. Great walls literally covered in hard and soft corals are waiting you.

KAWE ISLAND Kawe straddles the equator, our ship rode at anchor in the Southern hemisphere, while you dive is conducted just north of the Equator. Prominent dive site features were a towering seamount covered in reef fish and macro subjects and an inshore site with a sizable cavern.

WAYAG ISLAND Wayag offered up the ultimate topside photo settings. Clambering up a steep spine like slope, you are rewarded with a 360 degree view of jungle covered rock outcroppings floating in waters of every imaginable shade of blue, a quintessential "Island Dream." Underwater, some strong currents here, and the visibility is not always tops. But there are some more very beautiful soft coral set up, with big Napoleon wrasse for good measure.

MANSUAR ISLAND Enjoy one of the most exhilarating dives of your underwater career. Immersed in a swirling profusion of marine life, the sensation is that of experiencing the coral reef as it existed in the timeless ages prior to human contact. Framed by colorful soft corals and crinoid encrusted sea fans, large coral heads swarmed with thousands of glassy sweepers, anthias and smaller fry. Above circles of large schools of Jack, rainbow runners and fusiliers, with the occasional kingfish or big tuna zooming through this fish soup on a feeding run. The effect is electrifying, and something so unique as to certainly made the trip worthwhile. Mansuar is also the best place in Raja Ampat to see big mantas, often in group of dozen at a time.

SALAWATI The stop here in hopes of a topside glimpse of hornbills and the beautiful and exotic bird of paradise in a birding trek through the verdant jungle. Dives just offshore provided some of the best critter diving of the trip, offering up a Wobbegong sharks, excellent nudibranchs, periclimenes shrimp in carpet anemone, and fun photographing a variety of interesting and personable blennies.

**Contact us:**info@cruisingindonesia.comWWW.CRUISEINDONESIA.COM✉ *Mail us for a tailor-made diving cruise*

OTHERS ACTIVITIES 五

Wreck Diving:	WW II wrecks in Manokwari.
Kayaking:	In the shallow bays, especially in the mangrove forests.
Hiking:	Into the forest to experience the diversity of birds and animals.
Tour:	Visiting Baliem Valley highland of Irian Jaya, inhabited by the Dani Tribes and other sub tribes of Yali and Lani with their complex and primitive cultures, which looks more like "stone age" cultures.

-PLEASE INQUIRY FOR DETAILS IF INTERESTED- ☒



GO TO THE HOME PAGE OF:

WWW.CRUISEINDONESIA.COM

TO SEE ANOTHER INDONESIA DIVE SITES

Contact us:

info@cruisingindonesia.com

WWW.CRUISEINDONESIA.COM

☒ Mail us for a tailor-made diving cruise