



# *Dewi Nusantara*

CRUISING ITINERARIES: AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS  
(AMBON TO AMBON)



AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

DEWI NUSANTARA ITINERARIES

# AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

TWELVE DAYS : AMBON TO AMBON

*Dewi Nusantara*





# AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

## The Indonesian Archipelago



**AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS**

MALAYSIA

PACIFIC OCEAN

SINGAPORE

KALIMANTAN

MANADO

HALMAHERA

SORONG

MANOKWARI

SUMATRA

SULAWESI

KAIMANA

WEST PAPUA

JAKARTA

MAKASSAR

CERAM

AMBON

BANDA SEA

TUAL

ARU

JAVA

**AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS**

INDIAN OCEAN

BALI

DENPASAR

SUMBAWA

FLORES

KALABAHI

ALOR

EAST TIMOR

SAUMLAKI

SUMBA

WEST TIMOR

THE ARAFURA SEA

*Dewi Nusantara*

AUSTRALIA





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

Dewi Nusantara presents a brand new itinerary that combines some exciting new areas for our guests on the Goddess of the Archipelago to discover. It covers the seascape to the south and east of Buru Island, the Lease Islands of Ambon, Haruku, and Saparua, the famous Banda Islands, and will also include some of the well-known destinations at the eastern end of the intriguingly named Forgotten Islands chain.

The scuba diving highlights along the route take in the whole spectrum of Indonesia's world-famous underwater world.

#### The Manipa Strait

The wide channel that separates the islands of Buru and Ambon features four smaller islands along its path. Known as the Manipa Strait, the islands in the stream- Boano, Kelang, Manipa, and Ambelau- offer relatively new dive sites, with plenty more to be discovered.

#### Laha (Ambon)

Laha's sublime critter diving is a well-known hotspot for underwater image makers. The sand and gravel slopes, piers, and coral heads of Laha are home to some of the planet's most sought-after photographic subjects. On these sites, the weird and wonderful psychedelic frog fish was discovered. Who knows what other cryptic wonders these sites might hide?

#### The Lease Islands (Central Maluku)

In addition to having a rich history of the spice trade, the islands of Ambon, Haruku, and Saparua are also home to some of Indonesia's best diving. Their southern shores, as well as the smaller island of Nusa Laut, offer a wide range of wonderful sites.





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS



### The Banda Islands

Now firmly on any tropical diver's wish list, the remote Banda Islands are a sparkling oasis that rises out of the deep blue Banda Sea. Aside from a remarkable topside history, this region boasts some of the world's finest diving, ranging from critter havens in the harbour to the magnificent walls and reefs of the outer islands of the group.

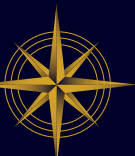
### The East Forgotten Islands

The programme also features Manuk Island. This is located at the end of the dynamic Damar Ridge, the marine mountain range that is home to the majority of the intriguingly named Forgotten Islands. Here, our guests can witness vibrant coral reefs and walls plunging into the pristine depths, and they also have the opportunity to spot some of the larger inhabitants of the Banda Sea. Manuk Island is also home to a surprisingly large population of sea snakes (kraits).

### Get On-Board with Dewi Nusantara

For a limited number of cruises during the cruising season, Dewi Nusantara will depart on these exciting new Central Maluku itineraries. Begin your next scuba adventure on board the Indonesian archipelago's premier liveaboard and experience the best that Indonesia has to offer, along with Dewi Nusantara's outstanding service, exceptional facilities, and her highly experienced crew.

*Dewi Nusantara*





AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

THE CERAM SEA

THE CERAM SEA

THE BOMBERAI PENINSULA



BURU

CERAM

BOANO

AMBON

MOLANA & SAPARUA

NUSA LAUT

LAHA

AMBELAU

SUANGGI

BANDA NEIRA

PULAU RUN

PULAU HATTA

THE BANDA SEA

LUCIPARA ATOLL

THE KEI ISLANDS

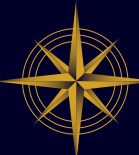
MANUK

Cruise Route: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

*Dewi Nusantara*



THE TANIMBAR ISLANDS



AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

## Destinations: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands

[Cruise Route ↗](#)

[Molana & Saparua ↗](#)

[Run & Suangi ↗](#)

[Manuk Volcano ↗](#)

[Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef ↗](#)

[Banda Neira ↗](#)

[Nusa Laut ↗](#)

[Ambelau ↗](#)

[Boano ↗](#)

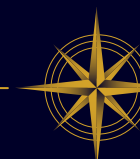
[Laha ↗](#)

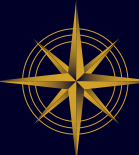
[Cruise Notes ↗](#)

Key: ↗ = To destination. ↶ = Back to this page



*Dewi Nusantara*





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

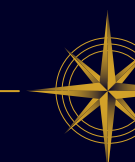
### Laha

Laha, a village on the northern shore of the Ambon Inlet, is home to The Twilight Zone, the area's famous original critter dive site, close to the fishing boat piers. This is muck diving at its finest. The locals and the fishing boats have deposited detritus on the sand, silt, and gravel seabed. This combination of natural and human material provides the perfect habitat and environment for a stellar expedition to seek out the weird and wonderful.

In recent years, numerous additional sites along this prolific stretch of shoreline have been discovered. The first discovery of the freaky psychedelic frogfish occurred here, and future discoveries are sure to follow. For a slightly different dive experience, we could even consider exploring the Duke of Sparta, a massive and nearly intact shipwreck located further into the bay and closer to the city.



 Dive Sites: **Laha**





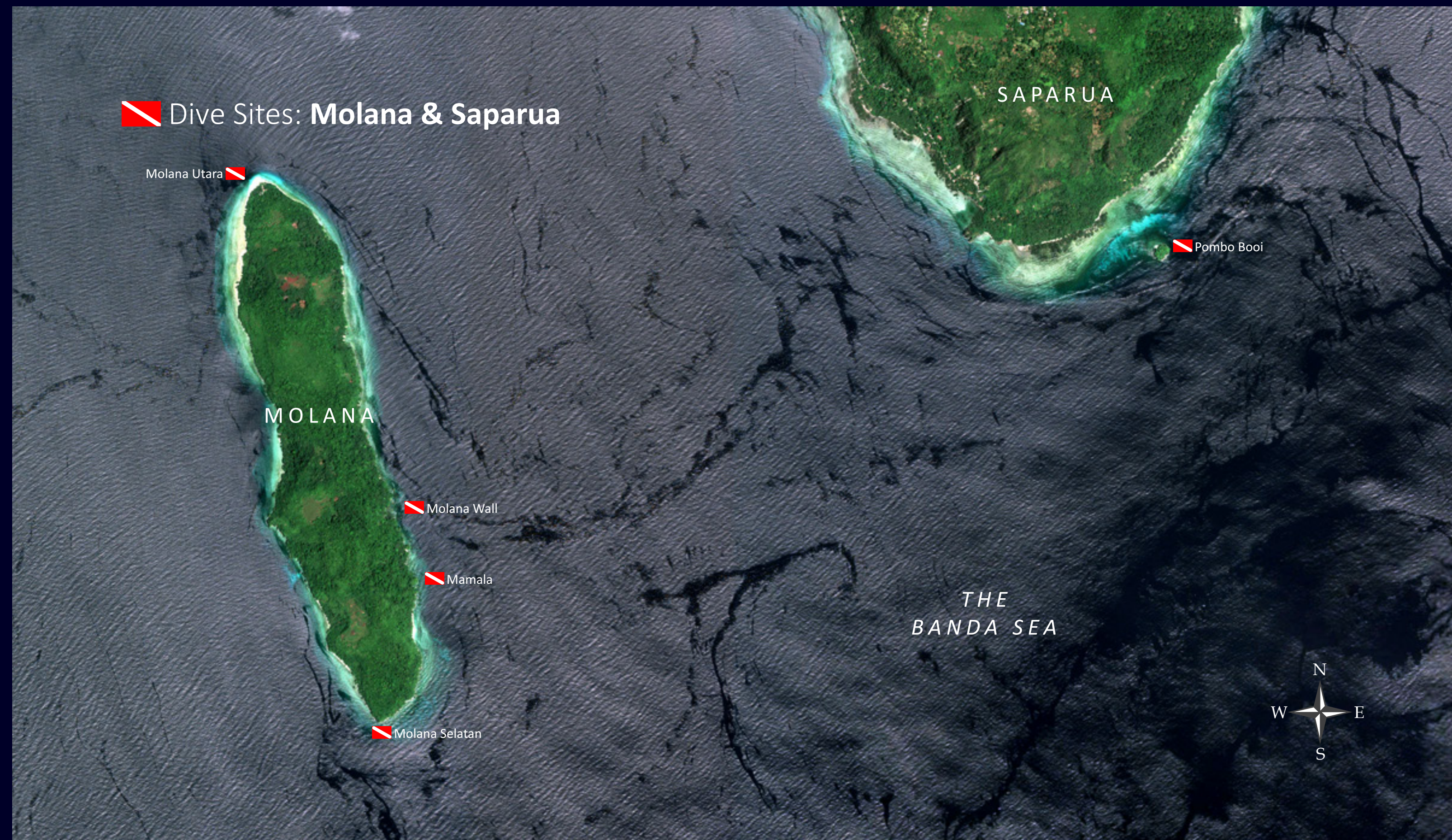


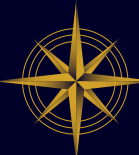
## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Molana & Saparua

Molana and the larger island of Saparua are two islands in the Lease Island group. Lying in the northern reaches of the Banda Sea, these islands are renowned for their vibrant coral reefs, diverse marine life, and pristine waters. Molana is particularly famous for its stunning coral gardens and abundant marine biodiversity. Divers can explore a kaleidoscope of corals, sponges, and sea fans, accompanied by a myriad of colourful reef fish, as well as some larger species. The island's underwater terrain includes gentle slopes, drop-offs, and underwater caves, providing varied dive experiences from shallow reef dives to more challenging deep-water explorations.

Saparua's underwater landscape features walls, slopes, and pinnacles, offering divers a chance to experience different underwater topographies. The island's historical significance, with remnants of Dutch colonial forts and artefacts, adds an extra layer of intrigue for divers who are also history enthusiasts.





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

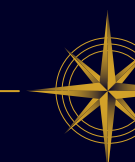
### Run & Suanggi

Diving around the island of Run and its much smaller neighbour, Suanggi, a few miles further north, offers an extraordinary underwater experience rich in history and natural beauty.

Suanggi is a small, rocky outpost on the approaches to the Banda Islands. This remote islet is rapidly gaining a reputation for being one of the expanding number of destinations where it is possible to encounter schooling hammerhead sharks.

The dive sites at Run feature stunning coral gardens, dramatic drop-offs, and an array of vibrant sea creatures, including colourful reef fish, majestic manta rays, and, like Suanggi, the chance to spot schooling hammerhead sharks. The crystal-clear waters provide exceptional visibility, often reaching up to 40 metres, making it a paradise for underwater photography and exploration. The island's historical significance as a former centre of the spice trade adds a unique cultural layer to the diving experience, blending adventure with a sense of discovery. Whether you are a novice or an experienced diver, Run Island's untouched marine environment promises a captivating and unforgettable diving adventure.

#### Dive Sites: Run & Suanggi





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Manuk Volcano

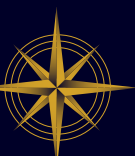
The BBC wildlife documentary “Island of the Snakes” made Manuk’s mythical island volcano famous. Arriving here at dawn, the air becomes pungent with a sulphur aroma as a yacht gets closer to the island. Although this small island is not particularly high, rising to just under 300 metres, Manuk is a favourite with seabirds and supports huge frigate and booby communities.

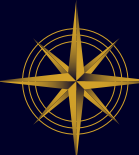
A jagged, rocky coastline, devoid of beaches, borders the island. As the terrain rises, there is only a small amount of growth above the short tree line. However, the stark volcanic scenery is nothing short of spectacular, with one or two sulphur-encrusted smoke holes. For the brave of heart, there appear to be one or two likely places where it is possible to get onto the islands for an exploratory trek.

Diving at Manuk is a somewhat unique experience. The island’s constant geothermal activity likely attracts a large community of sea snakes, with the olive variety being the most common.

The signature dive site, Manuk Ridge, on the south-east corner of the island, is a big favourite, both with divers and, at times, schooling hammerhead sharks. The west side of the island has a gently sloping nature and supports large coral gardens, making it a favourite for sea snakes. At times, they gather in such large numbers that the underwater experience can be a little unnerving.

#### Dive Sites: **Manuk Volcano**



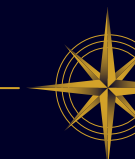


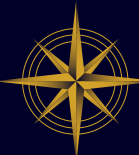
## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef

Hatta Island offers scuba divers a remarkable underwater adventure. The island, part of the Banda Islands group, boasts crystal-clear waters teeming with vibrant marine life and stunning coral reefs. Divers can explore diverse underwater landscapes, including dramatic drop-offs, coral gardens, arches, and underwater caves. The marine biodiversity is extraordinary, with sightings of colourful tropical fish, turtles, reef sharks, and occasionally manta rays and dolphins. Hatta Island's relatively undisturbed ecosystem provides an ideal environment for both novice and experienced divers seeking to experience the beauty of Indonesia's underwater world. The island's warm, inviting waters and the abundance of marine species make it a must-visit destination for anyone passionate about scuba diving.

Just two nautical miles further south lies Skaru Reef, or Karang Hatta. This massive, surface-breaking rock formation has numerous points around its exterior where the shimmering shallows drop off into deep water, providing plenty of dramatic big fish dive sites to explore.





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

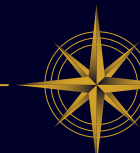
### Banda Neira

Already during this trip, we have visited the outer islands of the Banda group, Run and Hatta. Now it is time to explore the central hub. Several diverse dive sites await us here, starting with the Mandarin Hotel. At first glance, this stretch of rocks and sand, right on the border of the colonial Molana Hotel's lovely gardens, appears to be quite unremarkable. However, once under the surface in the shallows, it turns out to be very interesting indeed. It is home to a group of mandarin fish, some of them quite large, that perform their elaborate mating displays at dusk. They are also relatively easy to photograph; they don't have any corals to hide in and have to perform al fresco, out over the rocks.

The 600-metre-high volcano Gunung Api, located across the water from the harbour, dominates Banda Neira, the principal island. This fiery mountain's most recent eruption was in 1988. This cataclysmic event produced a lava stream that flowed into the sea on the mountain's north-east corner. This has produced a magnificent, fast-growing coral garden over the years since it oozed into the water. This is another site that should not be missed, if only to see how rapidly corals can take hold after such an explosive event.

Outside of Banda's natural harbor's shelter, there are even more exciting dive sites to discover. One favourite is Batu Kapal. This is quite different from the last two sites and takes in an offshore seamount much favoured by honeycomb moray eels and huge schools of fish.

#### Dive Sites: **Banda Neira**





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Nusa Laut

Nusa Laut is the furthest east of the archipelago known as the Lease Islands, which also includes Saparua, Haruku, and Ambon. The topside scenery on Nusa Laut is fairly flat and green, with a few small fishing villages dotted around the pretty bays and waterways. Some of these bays, on the north side of the island, support a population of dugong, the south-east Asian cousin of the American manatee or sea cow.

Ameth and Akon villages on Nusa Laut's north-east coast are shining examples of what can happen when people stand up to illegal fishing practices. It is necessary for visiting yachts to report to the village head at Ameth. However, because the locals in both villages closely monitor their coastlines to prevent any unauthorized fishing boats from operating, this is a small price to pay. This communal vigilance helps to keep their waters full of fish and makes sure that their splendid coral reefs do not sustain any damage.

While the area offers some excellent wall and reef dives, the main draw of the Nusa Laut area is the reef located on the north-west side of the island. The beautiful corals and marine life and the frequent sightings of schooling hammerhead sharks in the deep blue away from the reef have made this a popular destination. Other sites worth visiting include an enormous marine arch just under the surface on the east side of Nusa Laut.





## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

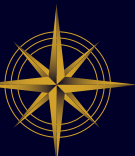
### Ambelau

Diving at Ambelau Island is a brand-new Dewi Nusantara experience that offers a glimpse into the rich underwater ecosystems of Indonesia’s Maluku province. Ambelau, located off the south-east coastline of Buru Island, boasts beautiful, clear waters and vibrant coral reefs.

Early in 2024, we began to pioneer this relatively unknown destination. On our first visit, the locals were surprised to even see a dive yacht, the first they had ever seen there. Our keen-eyed dive guides quickly identified several excellent dive sites, which we have now incorporated into our expanding list.

Our guests were treated to a spectacular array of marine life, including schools of tropical fish and the occasional reef shark. The underwater terrain features an intriguing mix of steep drop-offs, colourful coral gardens, and fascinating ledges and caverns, providing diverse habitats that cater to both macro and wide-angle photography enthusiasts.

With its relatively untouched and less frequented dive sites and the absence of other divers, Ambelau Island offers a serene and pristine environment, perfect for those seeking a unique and immersive diving adventure.





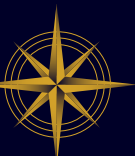
## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Boano

Diving at Boano offers a captivating underwater experience characterised by its vibrant marine life and stunning coral formations. The island, located offshore from the north-west corner of Ceram, is a hidden gem for divers looking for pristine dive sites away from the crowded tourist spots. Boano's dive sites are teeming with a diverse array of marine species and macrophotographic environments. Visibility often exceeds 30 metres, allowing divers to fully appreciate the intricate beauty of the coral reefs, which are among the healthiest in the region. The underwater landscape features dramatic drop-offs, walls, and coral gardens, providing a range of dive sites for visitors to explore.

Boano Island's tranquil and relatively untouched nature enhances the diving experience, in addition to its rich biodiversity. Because of its remoteness, there are fewer divers and boats, providing a more intimate and serene underwater experience. The island's dive sites are suitable for both novice and experienced divers, with gentle currents in some areas and more challenging conditions in others. With its combination of stunning underwater scenery, abundant marine life, and peaceful setting, Boano stands out as a new must-visit destination for Dewi Nusantara's guests.

#### Dive Sites: **Boano Island**





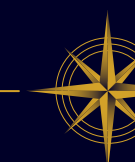


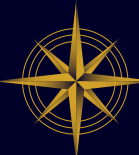
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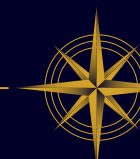




## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

### Cruise Notes

- The suggested itinerary is not fixed. During the cruise, the captain and cruise director assess the prevailing sea, weather, and tide conditions. Where possible, our guest's preferences for certain dive sites will be taken into account.
- The locations included in this itinerary are by no means the only points of interest along the route. There are many more anchorage and activity options available.
- The destinations and anchorages in this presentation are not necessarily in the order the cruise might follow. They are there solely to make the routing easier to understand.
- At times, guests may wish to stay longer at certain anchorages to fully take advantage of what is on offer in that area. The captain and cruise director have discretion over this as long as it fits within the cruise timeline.
- Between anchorages, there can be longer passages, mostly undertaken during the night.
- Aside from the arrival and departure destinations, our itineraries avoid densely populated areas and busy ports.
- Some of these anchorages offer a variety of activities besides scuba diving and snorkelling, such as kayaking or SUP/paddle boarding. Occasionally, we offer village and cultural visits along with other wonderful topside attractions.





# *Dewi Nusantara*

G O D D E S S   O F   T H E   A R C H I P E L A G O

## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

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Designed, written and produced by Garry Bevan

Dewi Nusantara: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands. July 2024  
(Ambon to Ambon)

14/07/24

