



# *Dewi Nusantara*

CRUISING ITINERARY 09

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

THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA  
(TUAL TO AMBON)





THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

DEWI NUSANTARA ITINERARIES

# THE EASTERN FORGOTTEN ISLANDS, THE BANDA ISLANDS, CENTRAL MALUKU & AMBON

THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

*Dewi Nusantara*







PHILIPPINES

MALAYSIA

THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

# The Indonesian Archipelago

PACIFIC OCEAN

SINGAPORE

KALIMANTAN

MANADO

TERNATE

HALMAHERA

SUMATRA

SORONG

MANOKWARI

SULAWESI

WEST PAPUA

JAKARTA



CERAM

AMBON

KAIMANA

BANDA SEA

TUAL

THE EASTERN FORGOTTEN ISLANDS, THE BANDA ISLANDS, CENTRAL MALUKU & AMBON

JAVA

INDIAN OCEAN

BALI

DENPASAR

SUMBAWA

LABUAN BAJO

FLORES

MAUMERE

KALABAHI

EAST TIMOR

SAUMLAKI

SUMBA

WEST TIMOR

KUPANG

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AUSTRALIA







THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

## The Eastern Forgotten Islands, Banda Islands, Central Maluku & Ambon

Dewi Nusantara presents a brand new itinerary that combines some exciting new areas for our guests on the Goddess of the Archipelago to discover. Starting at Tual, the capital of the Kei Islands our route runs north along the East Forgotten Islands line of Kur and Watubela before reaching the outpost of Koon on the south-eastern corner of Ceram. We then make our way south-west and visit the historic Banda Islands. After exploring Banda it is on the Lease Islands of Nusa Laut, Saparua, Haruku and finally Ambon.

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

### The Eastern Forgotten Islands

The programme starts out heading north from Tual along a seldom visited archipelago that runs along the eastern border of the Banda Sea, the Eastern Forgotten Islands. The islands in this chain feature some wonderful dive sites where the marine life has rarely seen scuba divers. These islands also offer idyllic topside scenery to go along with their underwater treasures.

### 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 KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA



## 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.

## 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?

## Get On-Board with Dewi Nusantara

For a single cruise during her cruising season, Dewi Nusantara will depart on this groundbreaking new itinerary. 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.

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THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

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

[Cruise Route ↗](#)

[Bui ↗](#)

[The Watubela Islands ↗](#)

[Koon ↗](#)

[Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef ↗](#)

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[Nusa Laut ↗](#)

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[Cruise Notes ↗](#)

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THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

THE CERAM SEA

THE CERAM SEA

THE BOMBERAI PENINSULA



BURU



CERAM

AMBON  
LAHA  
MOLANA & SAPARUA  
NUSA LAUT

KOON

SUANGGI  
BANDA NEIRA  
PULAU RUN  
PULAU HATTA

THE WATUBELA ISLANDS

BUI

THE KEI ISLANDS

TUAL

THE BANDA SEA

LUCIPARA ATOLL

# Cruise Route: The Eastern Forgotten Islands, The Banda Islands, Central Maluku & Ambon

*Dewi Nusantara*

THE TANIMBAR ISLANDS







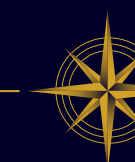
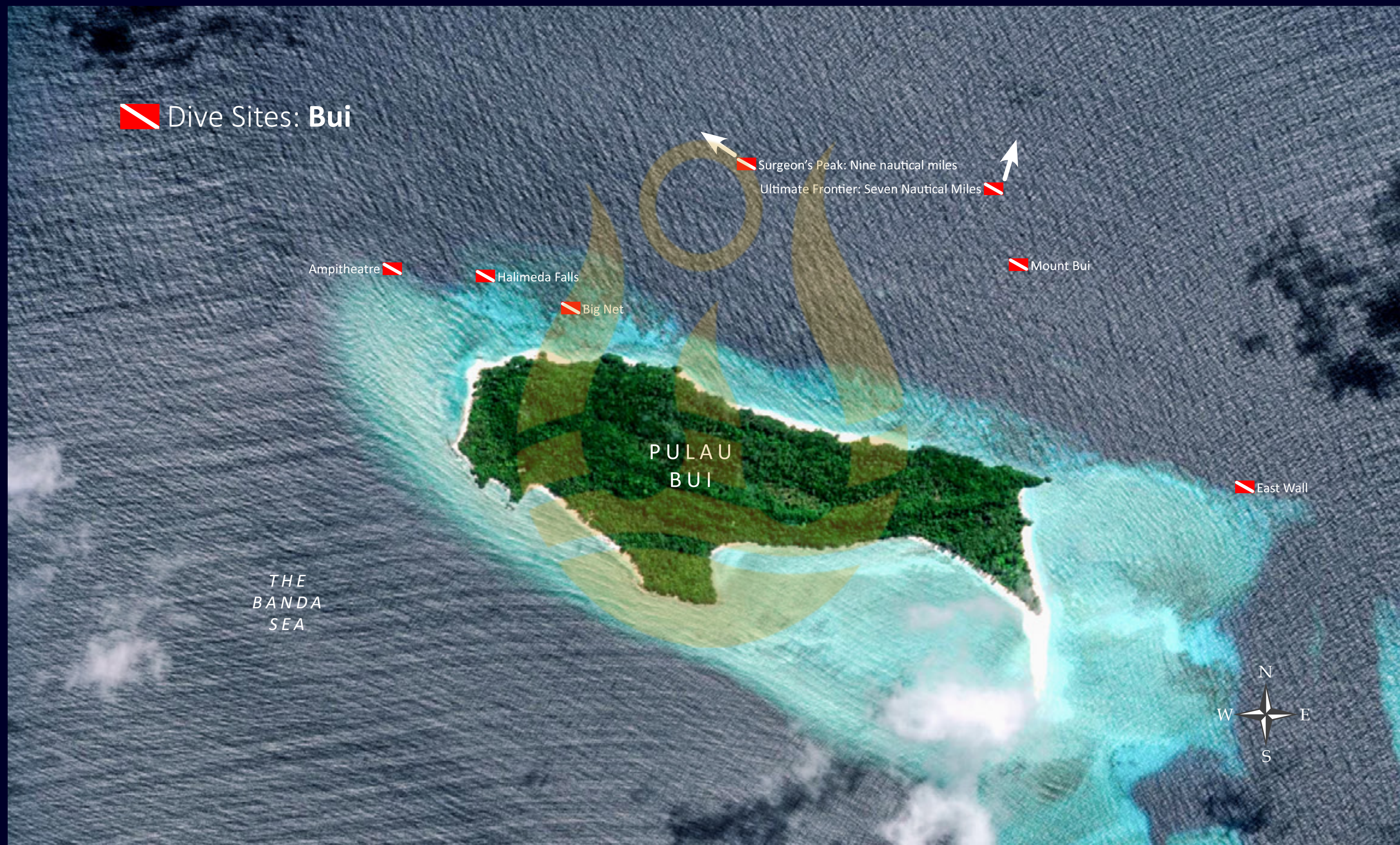
## THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

### Bui

Bui is the name of a small outpost island at the northern end of the stunning Kei Island collection. This palm-fringed group of flat sandy islands boasts some of the best beaches in Indonesia, and Bui is no exception.

Most of the dive sites are located on the north side of the island and feature an intriguing collection of reefs, slopes, and deep walls, along with plenty of critters, both large and small. To add to the excitement, just a few nautical miles further north, there are two huge seamounts that rise from the depths of the Banda Sea. These are both magnificent sites to dive. Just a few metres under the surface, huge schools of pelagic fish drift in the crystal-clear water, and both seamounts are generously populated with pretty coral heads.

The currents that flow over the tops of these marine mountains also attract some of the sea's larger animals. There are manta ray cleaning stations over the reefs, and huge marlin have been spotted while divers are hanging out on an SMB line while completing safety stops.







THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

## The Watubela Islands

Stretching for 30 nautical miles from north to south, the Watubela Islands, an enchanting archipelago in Indonesia's Maluku Province, offer an unparalleled diving experience for adventurers and marine enthusiasts. This remote group of islands boasts pristine waters teeming with vibrant marine life and stunning underwater landscapes.

The coral reefs feature a kaleidoscope of colours and intricate formations, providing a habitat for an array of marine species, from tiny, delicate nudibranchs to larger creatures such as reef sharks and manta rays. The biodiversity is astounding.

The remoteness of the Watubela Islands has ensured that the dive sites are unspoiled, far from the crowds found at more popular destinations. This tranquility, combined with the rich marine diversity and stunning underwater vistas, makes diving in the Watubela Islands an excellent waypoint along this new itinerary for Dewi's guests to discover.

### Dive Sites: The Watubela Islands







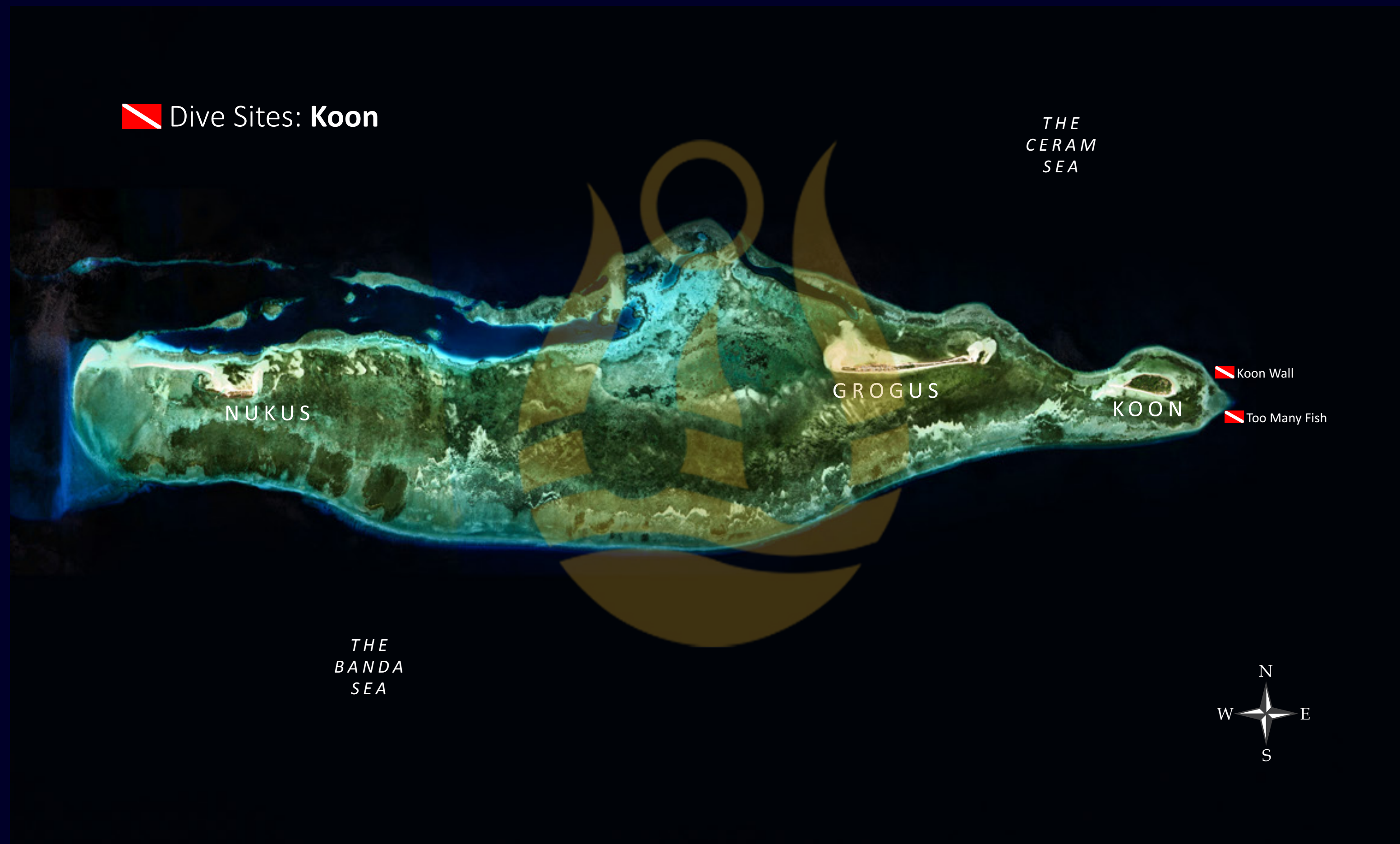
THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

## Koon

Koon is the furthest east of a collection of three small sandy coral cays, which also include Nukus and Grogus. Extending out into the depths of the Ceram Sea, they cover just eight nautical miles of shallow reefs, deep drop-offs, and sandy terra firma. The whole group is fantastic for snorkelling, swimming, and kayaking in the numerous blue pools and over sparkling corals, but it is scuba diving that Koon is most well-known for.

The focal point of Koon diving is a site called “Too Many Fish,” and this title gives you a good idea of what can be seen under the surface. It is located at the eastern tip of the mini-archipelago, where it drops off into much deeper water. Located around a ridge that has a deep wall on the north side and a steeply sloping reef on the south, this is an excellent site that can be dived from numerous entry points.

It is not uncommon to see zebra and hammerhead sharks at the north wall, along with the “too many fish” that school around this incredible seascape. In addition, there is a lot of potential for exploration along the deep water drop-offs and sparkling reefs that surround the three islands.





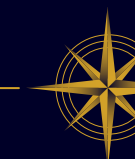


THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

## 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.







THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

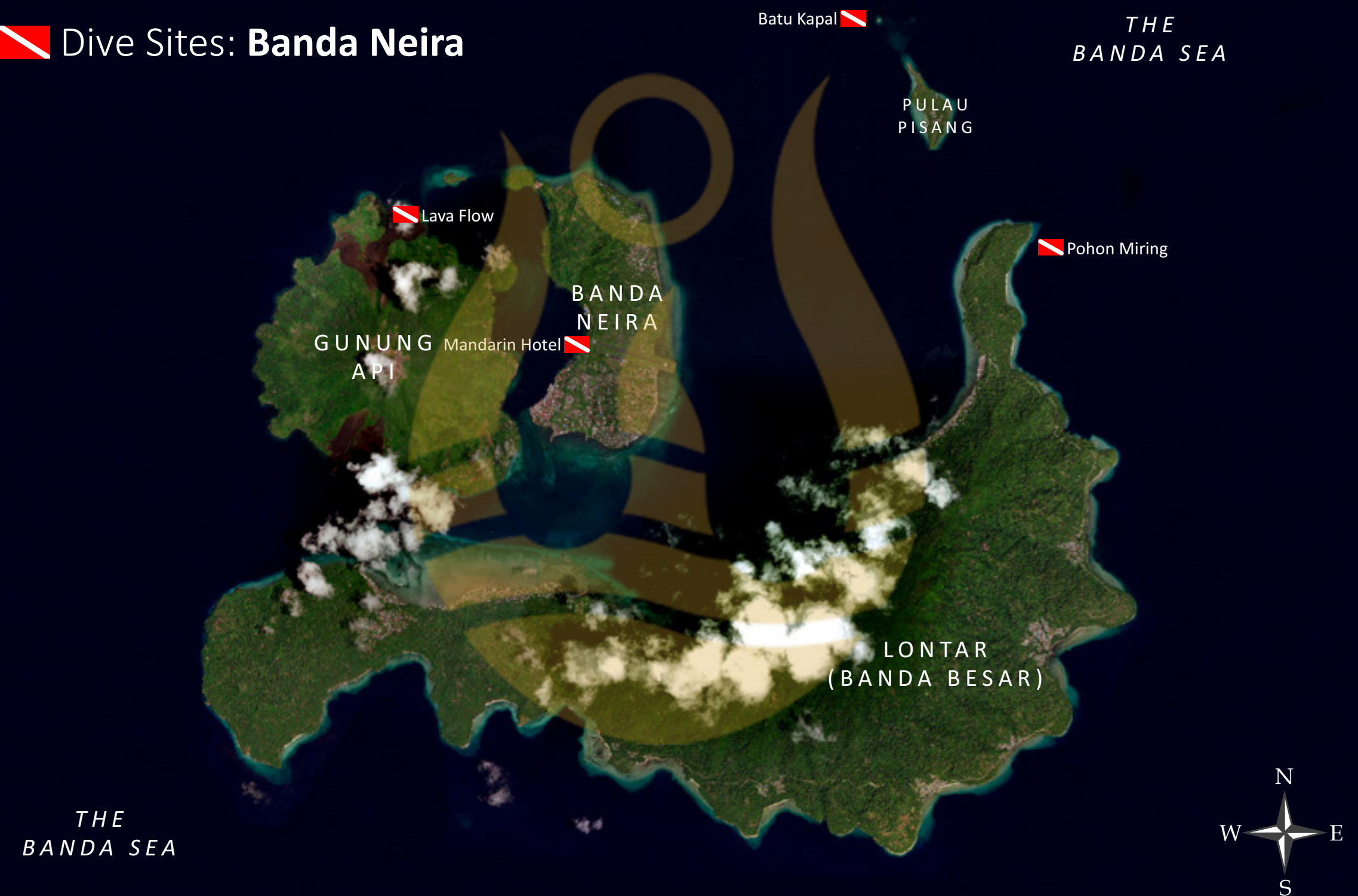
## Banda Neira

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**







THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

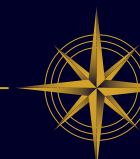
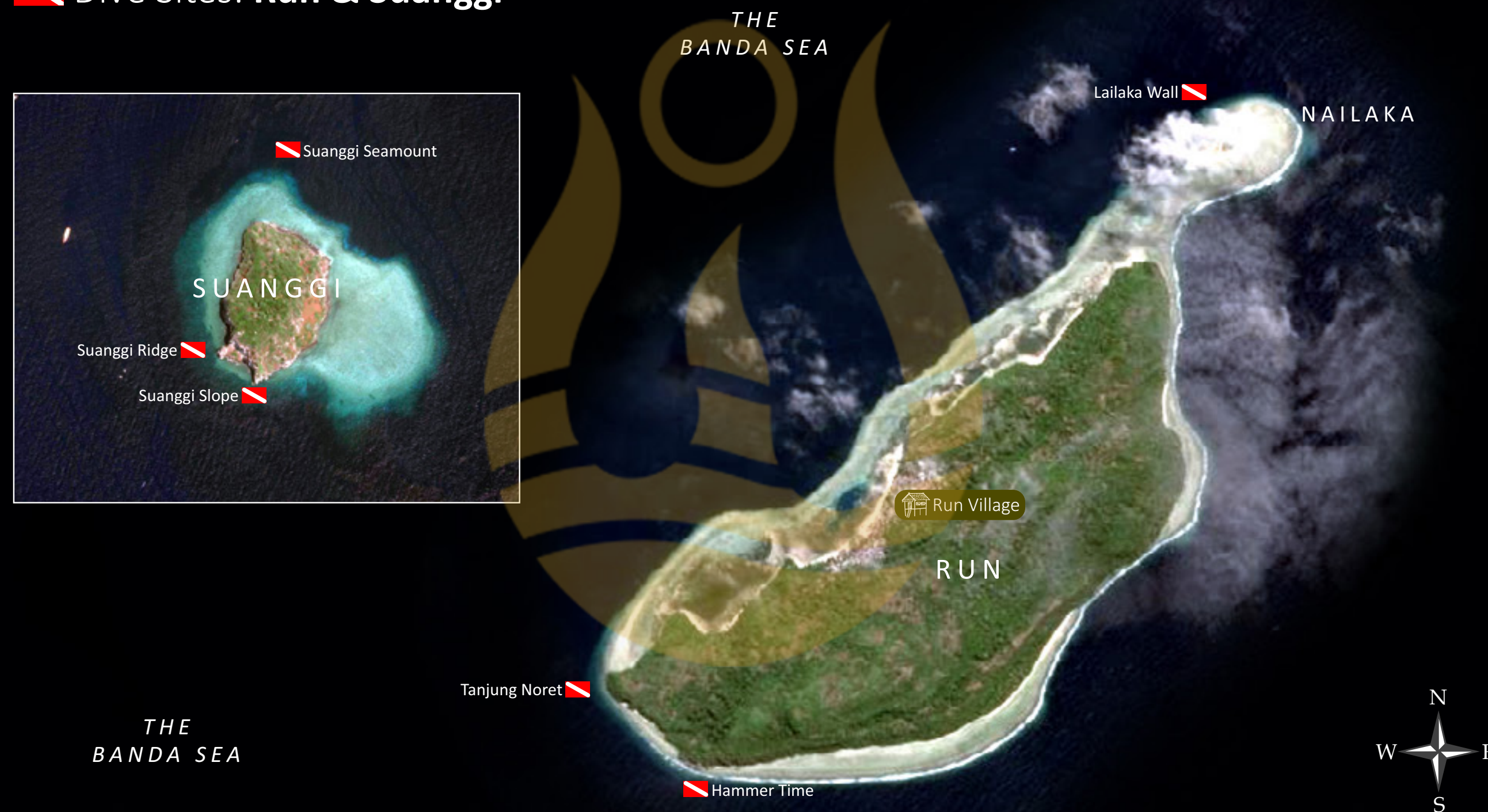
## Pulau Run & Suanggi

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







## THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

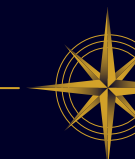
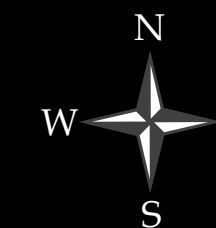
### Nusa Laut

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.

#### Dive Sites: **Nusa Laut**





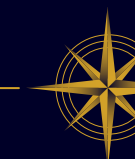
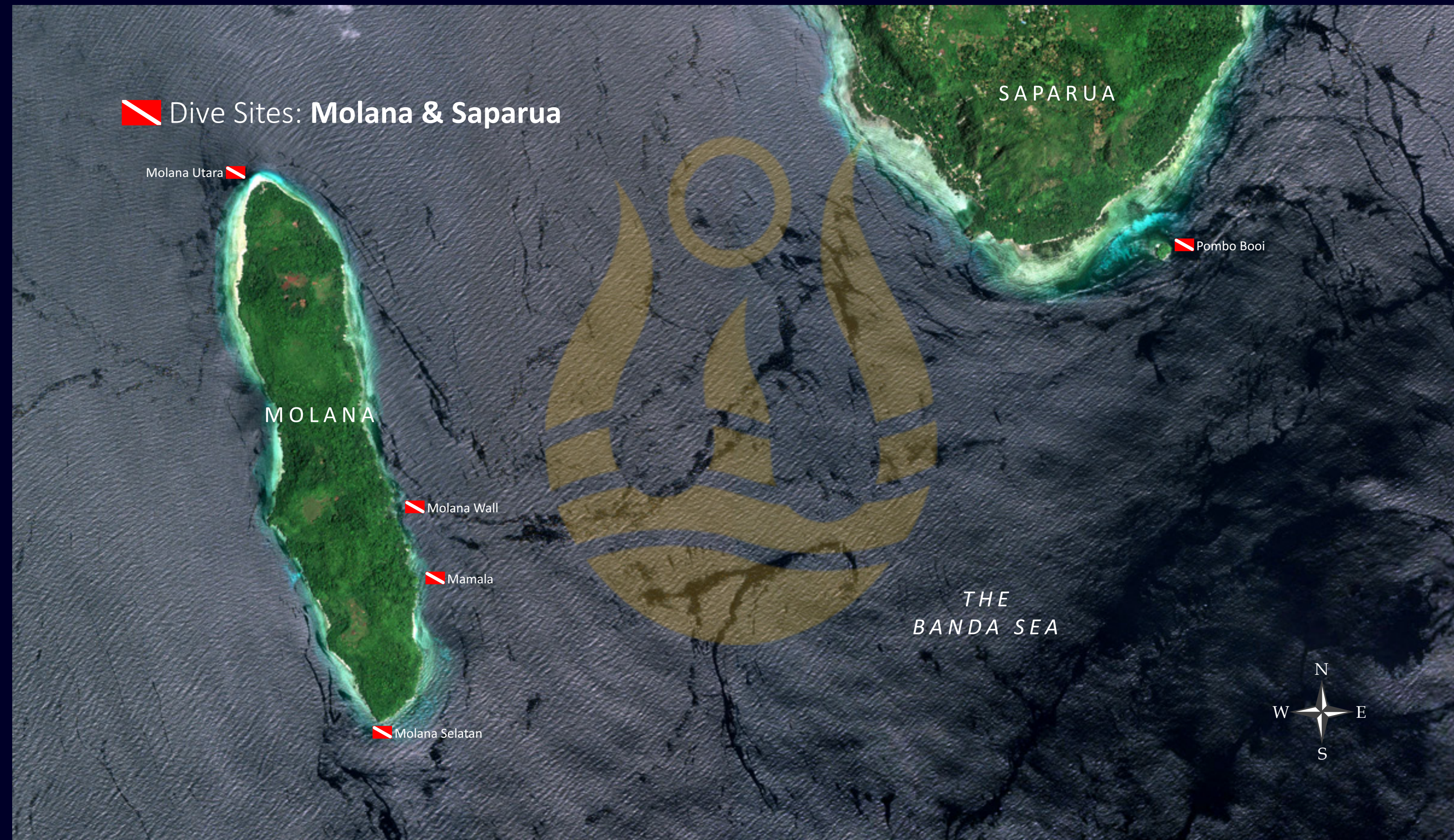


## THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

### 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.







THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

# 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**







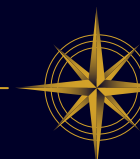
THE KEI ISLANDS - WATUBELA - KOON - BANDA - NUSA LAUT - LAHA

## 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.



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

## THE EASTERN FORGOTTEN ISLANDS, THE BANDA ISLANDS, CENTRAL MALUKU & AMBON

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Designed, written and produced by Garry Bevan

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