



*Dewi Nusantara*

CRUISING ITINERARY 12

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

MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA  
(AMBON TO AMBON)





MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

DEWI NUSANTARA ITINERARIES

# AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

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PHILIPPINES



MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

# The Indonesian Archipelago

PACIFIC OCEAN

SINGAPORE

KALIMANTAN

MANADO

TERNATE  
HALMAHERA

SORONG

MANOKWARI

SUMATRA

SULAWESI



AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU  
& THE BANDA ISLANDS

WEST PAPUA

BALI SEA

MAKASSAR

KAIMANA

TUAL

ARU

JAKARTA

JAVA

FLORES SEA

BALI

SUMBAWA

LABUAN BAJO

FLORES

MAUMERE

KALABAHI

EAST TIMOR

SAUMLAKI

INDIAN OCEAN

DENPASAR

SUMBA

WEST TIMOR

KUPANG

SAVU SEA

ARAFURA SEA

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AUSTRALIA







M O L A N A - R U N - M A N U K - H A T T A - B A N D A N E I R A - N U S A L A U T - A M B E L A U - B O A N O - L A H A

## 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 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 islands of Nusa Laut and Molana, offer a wide range of wonderful sites.

### The Banda Islands

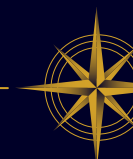
Now firmly on any tropical diver's wish list, the remote Banda Islands are a sparkling oasis that rises out of the deep blue Banda Sea. Aside from a remarkable topside history, this region boasts some of the world's finest diving, ranging from critter havens in the harbour to the magnificent walls and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

### Manuk Volcano

The programme also features a visit to 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



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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).

## 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?

## 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.

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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

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

Cruise Route ➡

Molana & Saparua ➡

Run & Suanggi ➡

Manuk Volcano ➡

Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef ➡

Banda Neira ➡

Nusa Laut ➡

Ambelau ➡

Boano ➡

Laha (Ambon) ➡

Cruise Notes ➡

Key: ➡= To destination. ⬅= Back to this page



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MOLANA - RUN - MANUK - HATTA - BANDA NEIRA - NUSA LAUT - AMBELAU - BOANO - LAHA

THE  
CERAM SEA

BURU

BOANO

CERAM

THE  
CERAM SEA

THE  
BOMBERAI  
PENINSULA

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

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THE TANIMBAR  
ISLANDS





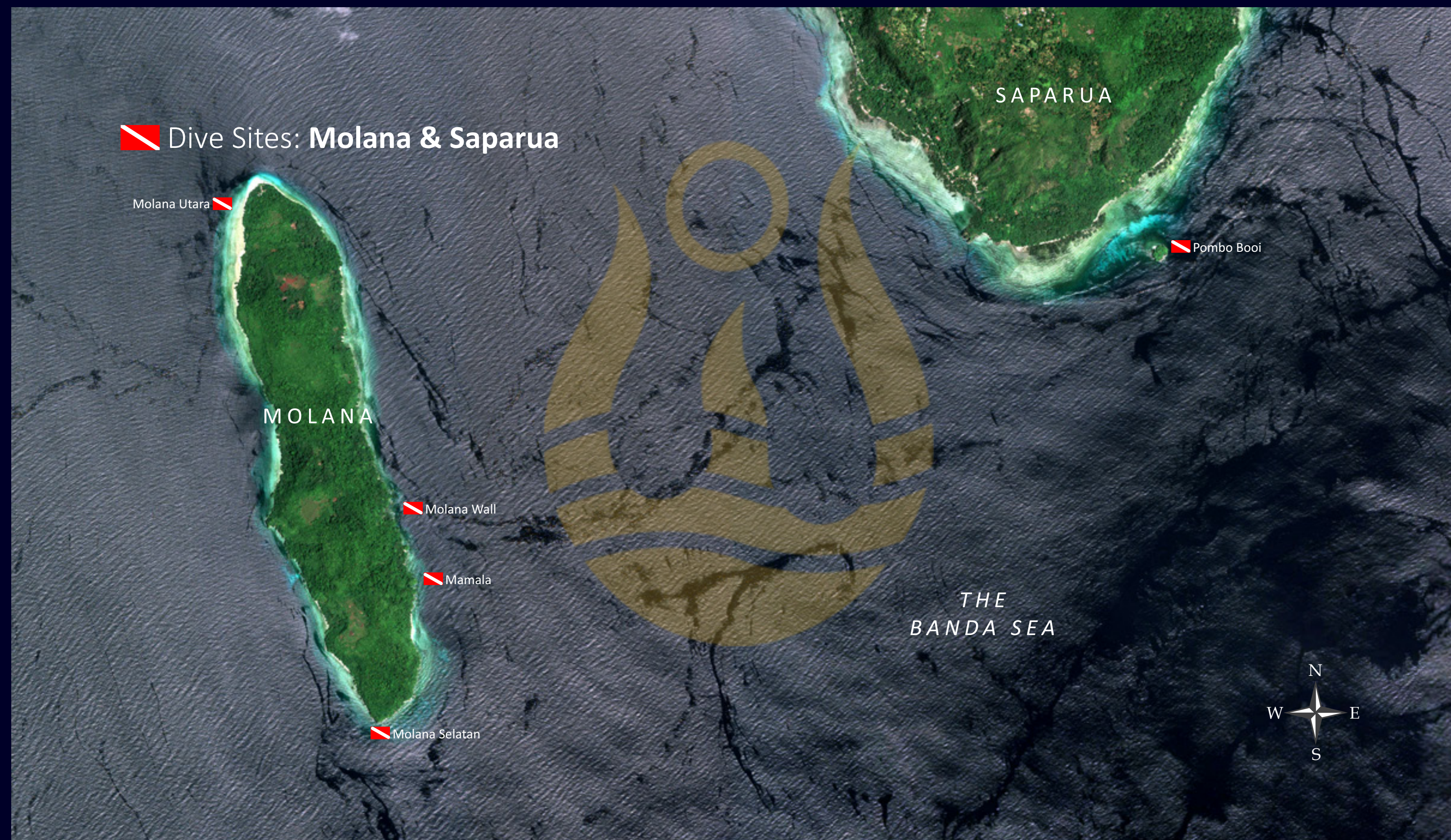


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## Molana & Saparua

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.



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## 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.



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## 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.

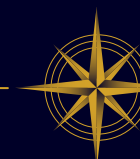
Diving at Manuk is a somewhat unique experience. The island’s constant geothermal activity likely attracts a large community of sea snakes, with the olive variety being the most common.

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**



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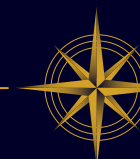
## Pulau Hatta & Skaru Reef

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.



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## 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**







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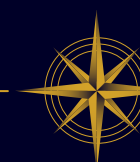
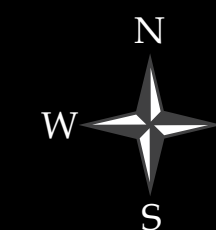
## Nusa Laut

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 more familiar 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**







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## 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.

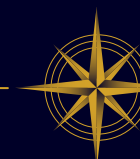
Our guests were treated to a spectacular array of marine life, including schools of tropical fish and the occasional reef shark. The underwater terrain features an intriguing mix of steep drop-offs, colourful coral gardens, and fascinating ledges and caverns, providing diverse habitats that cater to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

### Dive Sites: **Ambelau**



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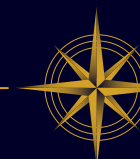
## Boano

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.



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## Laha (Ambon)

Not far from Ambon airport, along the northern shore of the Ambon Inlet, the village of Laha is renowned for hosting some of the most extraordinary muck diving sites in the world. Most of the dive points are clustered fairly close together, with names such as Middle Point, Mandarin City, Rhino City, and the one that started it all, the aptly named Twilight Zone. This legendary dive site, located close to as well as underneath the fishing boat piers, is a haven for macro photographers and critter enthusiasts seeking rare and unusual marine life.

What makes The Twilight Zone so exceptional is the unique interplay of natural and human elements. Over time, local fishing activities have contributed organic debris to the sandy, silty, and gravel-strewn seabed, inadvertently creating an ideal microhabitat for an astonishing variety of marine species. Divers venturing into these waters are rewarded with encounters with some of the ocean's most bizarre and captivating creatures,



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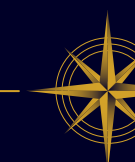


making every expedition a true treasure hunt for the weird and wonderful.

In recent years, the discovery of additional dive sites a little further afield along this thriving stretch of shoreline has further cemented Ambon's reputation as a world-class muck diving destination. Notably, it was here that the psychedelic frogfish, one of the rarest and most visually striking marine species, was first documented - an extraordinary testament to the area's biodiversity. With ongoing exploration, there is no doubt that more ground breaking discoveries await.

For those seeking a contrasting yet equally thrilling dive experience, the Duke of Sparta shipwreck offers an entirely different underwater adventure. Resting in deeper waters further into the bay, closer to the city, this massive and remarkably intact wreck invites divers to explore its hauntingly beautiful remains - a striking juxtaposition to the critter-filled world of The Twilight Zone.

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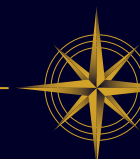
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## Cruise Notes

- **Flexible Itineraries:** Our cruise routes are intentionally adaptable. Throughout the journey, the captain and cruise director continuously assess sea conditions, weather, and tides to ensure the best possible experience. Guest preferences for specific dive sites are always considered whenever feasible.
- **More Than Is Listed:** The locations featured in these itineraries represent only a portion of what's possible. Numerous additional anchorages and activity options are available along the way, making each voyage truly unique.
- **Simplified for Clarity:** The destinations shown in our presentations are not necessarily listed in the order they will be visited. They are organized for clarity and to help guests visualize the overall routing.
- **Extended Stays:** If a particular anchorage offers exceptional experiences, guests may opt to linger a bit longer. The captain and cruise director have the flexibility to accommodate such preferences, provided they align with the overall cruise schedule.
- **Overnight Passages:** To maximize daylight hours at our most spectacular destinations, longer transits between anchorages are typically conducted overnight.
- **Escape the Crowds:** With the exception of embarkation and disembarkation points, our itineraries are carefully crafted to avoid congested areas and busy commercial ports, allowing for a more tranquil and immersive experience.
- **Beyond the Dive:** Many of our anchorages offer more than just diving and snorkelling. Guests can enjoy kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and occasional visits to local villages and cultural sites — adding even more richness to the journey.



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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

## AMBON, CENTRAL MALUKU & THE BANDA ISLANDS

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Dewi Nusantara: Ambon, Central Maluku & The Banda Islands. April 2025. (Ambon to Ambon)

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