

The Spice Islands

We start our cruise exploring the world-famous muck in Ambon Bay, then will cross towards Alor through the Banda Sea & the Spice Islands.

Itinerary

The following is a sample itinerary of dive sites we may visit during your liveaboard safari on board the S/Y Indo Siren. We wish to show you the very best diving possible, however, several factors can determine which sites we visit. Our Cruise Director and Diving Director, along with the Captain will take weather, tides, currents and many other factors into consideration to determine which route the yacht takes, and which sites are selected for diving. Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled; bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time. The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best in offering diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit those sites listed below. This itinerary involves some long distance (overnight) travel.

The diving day on board the S/Y Indo Siren has a typical schedule as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack, relaxation, followed by briefing & Dive 4
- Dinner

For your final day aboard, we schedule two morning dives to allow plenty of time for off-gassing before disembarkation and your flight home. Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and for obtaining suitable dive insurance to cover all diving activities.

Depending on weather conditions and where we are, we will always try to offer a sunset, or night dive. Guests should bring along dive lamps, though of course we have rental lights for those that need them

Dive sites we visit may include but are not limited to:

Ambon Island

Situated 7 miles of the southwestern coast of the island of Ceram in the heart of the Moluccas, lies the famous dive sites of Ambon. It offers world class muck diving, diverse marine ecosystems and dramatic topographies.

Pintu Kota – This area boasts incredible underwater architecture, with a massive archway decorated with hanging colourful Soft corals from its walls to ceilings. Many White Polyps Red sea fans are dotted along the bottom, whilst shoals of Fusiliers, Bannerfishes & Surgeonfishes feed along the steep walls covered with huge Barrel Sponges.

Twilight Zone – At night or during the day, we will explore this renowned muck diving spot beneath the harbor of Laha. Amongst detritus, countless species of Nudibranchs, Shrimps, Crabs

& Dwelling fishes are waiting to be discovered. During your treasure hunt, you may come across Flamboyant Cuttlefishes, Ornate Ghost Pipefishes, Donald Duck Shrimps, Tiger Shrimps, Starry Octopus and even Rhinopias.

Banda Island

This group of islands, also called the Spice islands, boasts fantastic diving, with up to 40 meters of visibility. On land, enjoy the view of Gunung Api, a 650-meter-high active volcano, from the top of Fort Belgica, built by the Dutch in 1611 and located in the historical town of Banda Neira. Clove, nutmeg, mace and cinnamon are still the main spices that are grown here.

There are various dive sites that can will visit:

Karang Hatta – We will dive in a spectacular submerged reef south of Hatta, which offers steep slopes surrounded by deep waters. Dense Redtooth Triggerfishes alongside with Fusiliers, Napoleon Wrasse and Hawksbill Turtles populate this long reef. You might also get the chance to spot a few rare creatures like Devil Rays or even a Scalloped Hammerhead shark during your dive. Keep your fingers crossed before you enter this wonderful water.

Hatta Blue Hole – A widespread hard coral shallow plateau which extends away from the island to a majestic drop off. A large opening on top of the reef opens to a swim through densely covered with huge vibrant Gorgonian fans. Also, massive Badecrel Sponges which are inhabited by tiny Hairy Squat Lobsters decorate the wall.

Pohon Miring – Stunningly covered with colorful Soft corals and Gorgonian fans, a swim through will take you through a sheer wall covered with Leather corals. Numerous big Napoleon Wrasses inhabis the reef and Dogtooth tunas patrol the blue waters.

Batu Kapal – This island is named for its boat-like shape and is an exhilarating dive, with walls decorated with Yellow Soft corals. Curtains of Redtooth Triggerfishes, Pyramid Butterflyfishes, Fusiliers and Surgeonfishes cluster into a multicolor fish soup. On the rocky and sandy bottom, you can spot large groups of Longnose Emperor which hunt alongside Bluefin Trevallies and opportunistic Napoleon Wrasses. Look in the blue for Grey reef sharks, while Blackfin Barracudas hover above the reef.

Laval Flow – In 1998, the volcano on Naira island erupted and the lava flow destroyed jungle and reefs in its wake. While only a few trees have grown on the basaltic rock, underwater it's a totally different story! From 3 meters to 40 meters an extensive hard coral garden completely blankets the solidified lava flow.

Banda Jetty – Famous for its Mandarin fishes that can be observed at sunset, which you can see just by looking from the Jetty. In many places, these fishes are elusive, small and shy. Here, it's all the contrary! Once they have done their mating business, a wide array of critters awaits to be discovered on the black sand, including colorful Nudibranchs, Octopus, Cockatoo Waspfishes and Frogfishes.

Manoek Island

Next we will voyage to this tiny island in the middle of the Banda Sea, which offers a wide variety of dive topography including walls, coral slopes and sandy areas. Famed as the home of a multitude of sea snakes and where you can witness the snakes hunting together. Larger fish pass by on the outer walls, which include tunas and jacks, as well as smaller creatures that can be found amidst the pristine corals.

Nil Desperandum & Serua

Upwelling and currents around these islands bring nutrient rich waters and with them an abundance of marine life. We see many larger fish species in these little visited waters. Hammerhead sharks, tunas, napoleon wrasse and groupers are amongst the most common sightings. Schooling surgeon fish, bannerfish and barracuda give divers a spectacular display.

Nyata and Terbang Islands

Further to the east of Wetar, the islands of Pulau Nyata and Terbang offer unspoiled reefs for a great diving experience. At Nyata, rainbow colored soft corals and a myriad of hard corals dominate the landscape, whilst at Terbang we find dramatic walls with soft corals reef top gardens and plenty of Bumphead parrotfish and schooling reef fish.

Wetar and Reong Islands

These tropical islands have walls that are covered with huge sponges and soft corals, along with colorful reefs teeming with marine life, including eagle rays and turtles. The currents can be fairly robust in the channel between Wetar and Reong, therefore all divers are advised to carry reef hooks and remain within close range of a dive buddy or their dive guide. Guests will have 3 dives in this location spread across one day to explore the area's varied diving sites.

Pantar Strait

Our final stop will be the Pantar Strait, which is the second largest island in the Indonesian Alor Archipelago, located 45 miles north from Timor. The area is known for both critter diving and thriving reef walls where larger pelagic species roam. Some stronger currents are to be expected, but these currents bring nutrients that feed the reef and other inhabitants of the strait; enough to support the numerous villages dotted about the islands. The dive sites in this location are very diverse and the optimum sites are chosen depending on the diving conditions on the day. The water temperature is often colder compared to surrounding areas, around 22°C / 72°F, due the flow of water from the south.

The French Man's Window – An incredible wall dive site situated in front of Alor's Divers Resort, which is covered in a vibrant array of soft corals. Look closely and you can find a wide variety of colourful nudibranchs. Swimming around, you can also spot a shark or two.

Pak Yan's Village – Situated on the north of Pura Island, it is one of the most iconic sites within the strait. It is a well-known critter hotspot, where divers can see Pegasus sea moths, dragonets, scorpion fish, ghost pipefish and Bargibanti seahorses.

Clown Valley – Hundreds, if not thousands, of anemones cover the shallow reef slope on the south side of Pulau, Pure, all hosting the Clark’s anemone fish. A spectacular site, but beware of some very chilly water, as there are thermoclines that are to be expected in these waters.

The Arch – Famous for its overhangs and fissures providing stunning topography, as well as a home to schooling fusiliers and colorful Anthias. The waters are also home to larger pelagic fish, including black tip reef sharks.

Mucky Mosque – An iconic dive nestled at the entrance of Kalabahi bay. A fantastic muck dive where the attentive eye can find Paddle-Flap & Frondosa’s Rhinopias, Ornate, Robust and even Halimeda & Velvet Ghost Pipefishes, Frogfishes, Bobtail squids, Long-arm Octopus and sometimes Wunderpus!

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team info@sirenfleet.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.