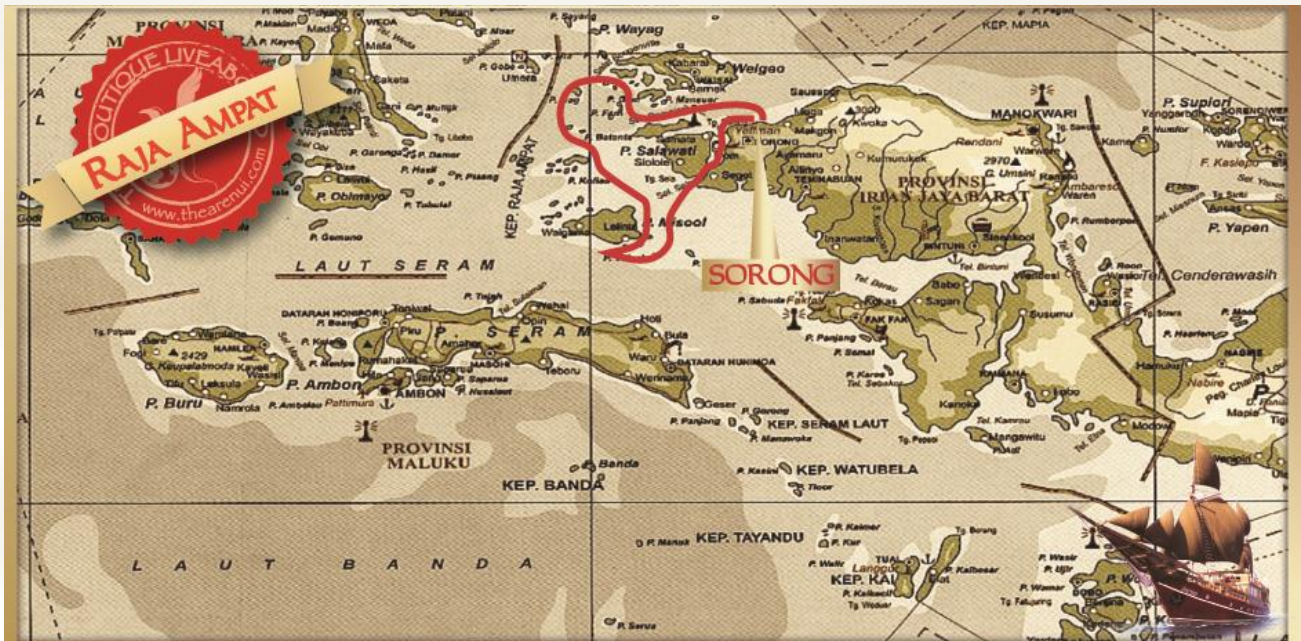


# RAJA AMPAT



Arenui The Boutique Liveaboard



## SAMPLE ITINERARY "RAJA AMPAT" 12 Day/11 Night Sorong - Sorong Cruise

### Day 1 Embarkation in Sorong

Raja Ampat means 'Four Kings'. In an archipelago of over 1,500 small islands there are four main islands or 'kings'— Waigeo, Salawati, Batanta, Misool. The majority of Raja Ampat is in Marine Protected Areas. These islands usually experience varying visibility depending on the weather conditions and warm water around 27-30C (81-86F).

### Days 2-5 Misool, Raja Ampat (13-14 dives)

Misool is in the south of Raja Ampat and we will dive at the many small islands in the southeast. Southeast Misool is famous for the profusion of colourful soft corals and sea fans beautifully draped all over the reefs. Take a look at some photos taken in this area in our album [Soft Coral Heaven](#).

We will stay three and a half days in the Misool area, on Day 5 we will complete 1-2 dives before traveling to the central part of Raja Ampat. There is a possibility to visit Tomolol Cave that has a river-sized waterway running through it. We take a 30-minute tender ride through a pearl farm and into the rugged interior. Once at the cave we float and paddle our way inside to enjoy the amazing rock formations. There is a large opening at the other end and also a 'secret' cave to explore. This tour is dependent on receiving permission from the pearl farm and local village.

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The islands in southeast Misool are grouped by areas. Here are the names of the areas and dive sites we may visit (weather permitting):

### Misool – Boo Area

**Boo Windows** is the famous dive site in this area. It is best known for the “windows” or rounded openings on the end of the largest rock that completely pierce the reef from the surface down to about five meters/fifteen feet. Although the two rocks appear separate from the surface they are in fact connected underwater by a magnificent reef draped in soft corals and brimming with fish. See photos of the Windows [here](#). **Boo Ridge** is an underwater ridge coming off the eastern point of Boo Island. Both sides are covered in huge gorgonian sea fans. At these dive sites look out for turtles, reef sharks, pygmies, nudis and schooling batfish, fusiliers and snappers. **Shadow Reef** is a submerged seamount south of Boo. The fish life here is profuse with napoleon wrasses of all sizes, baby white tip reef sharks sleeping under the table corals, schooling barracuda and batfish and for the lucky ones maybe a manta ray circling the cleaning stations.

### Misool – Yuliet Area

The tiny islands of **Yuliet** and **Romeo** both have surrounding plateaux in the shallows that slope down to reefs or small walls. At Yuliet there is a good chance to see the ‘Santa Claus pygmy’ a red colour variation of the Denise pygmy seahorse. In the shallows are large coral heads completely covered in colourful soft corals. Schools of barracuda and batfish as well as napoleon wrasses are often seen here. Romeo is a great night dive where we will look for the endemic epaulette shark, the ‘walking’ shark.

### Misool - Fiabecet

Fiabecet area has a selection of dives where the colourful soft corals and beautiful sea fans literally smother the reefs. The soft corals here are truly outstanding. There is a deep underwater ridge connecting the island of Boo in the east to the island of Kalig in the west. In parts this ridge moves up shallower and forms the dive sites of Boo West Corner, Batu Kecil (aka Tank Rock), Nudi Rock, Whale Rock and **Kalig Ridge**. Expect healthy fish life, pygmy seahorses galore, nudis, colourful anemones, reef sharks and perhaps a Wobbegong shark. **Anti-chovy** is a large underwater seamount with some deep pinnacles in the surrounding area. Manta rays have been known to visit this dive site. On top of the seamount look for Wobbegongs, turtles, stonefish and reef octopus.

### Misool - Wayilbatan Area

**Neptune Fan Sea** is a small channel between two islands with a shallow wall completely covered in some of the biggest gorgonian sea fans you will ever see. At the start of the dive explore the beautiful coral heads where a wobbegong shark or even a huge grouper can be hiding. Then drift along the wall and enjoy the view of the sea fans, stopping once in a while to find the tiny pygmy seahorse. **Four Kings** is a stunning dive site made up of four underwater pinnacles. Swim from one rock to the next enjoying the soft corals and fish life. Look out for turtles here. **Wedding Cake** and **Wayili Rock** offer chances to see schools of batfish, trevallies, barracuda, pygmy seahorses and even a walking shark at night.

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## Misool – Daram Area

**Daram** is the most easterly point of the islands we might visit in Misool. The reef at **Andiamo** is stunning and is large enough for at least two dives. There is a submerged pinnacle where sea fans are surrounded by schools of fusiliers and batfish. A short swim across a sandy bottom brings you to the main reef lush with soft corals. In between the two islets is a gap thick with sea fans and is excellent for wide-angle photography. Look out for black tip reef sharks and napoleon wrasse, if you can see them through all the fish! **Candy Store** is so named because the first divers to explore this reef felt like kids in a candy store. Huge sponges, beautiful soft corals and sea fans cover this dive site, especially in the valleys where schools of fusiliers, butterfly fish and sometimes barracuda gather.

## Misool – Pele Area

**Pele's Playground** has a long plateau that runs west out from the northwest corner of Lenmakana, which is northwest of Pele Island. Towards the deep the ridge has a wall on each side completely covered with soft corals. There is a large crevice in the wall where the corals are concentrated. Up in the shallows the reef is sparse but mobula and manta rays have been spotted here. **Kaleidoscope** is so called because of the profusion of colours produced by the huge soft corals draping the shallow rocks and coral heads. A ridge extends out west from the island which can full of fish when the current is running. Back at the island finish the dive under the overhangs.

## Misool - Sagof/Wagmab/Farondi Area

This area offers several different dive sites. At Sagof the little islets of **Baby Rock** and **Two Tree Island** create amazing dive sites with abundant fish life. There is a resident school of batfish at Baby Rock and Two Tree Island is often full of thousands bait fish. At Wagmab and Farondi dive into **Eddy Cave** and surface inside to see the stalactites hanging from the top of the cavern. Outside the wall is full of overhangs and caves where divers are likely to encounter groups of snapper and large groupers resting at the bottom. At **Three Sisters**, **Grouper Net** and **Wagmab Corner** look for wobbegong sharks resting under ledges or on top of cup corals. Sea fans fill the walls and slopes so be on the look out for pygmy sea horses. Between dives there is a chance to go on our Jungle River Tour to see the secret lagoons around Wagmab Island.

## Day 6 Manta Sandy/Arborek (4 dives)

The first two dives of the day we dive at **Manta Sandy**, well-known for the much bigger visitors as it is one of the most consistent spots for finding congregating mantas. It is easy to spend a whole dive observing these majestic animals as they somersault through the water while being cleaned by several species of wrasse and even butterfly fish. In addition to the cleaning, they come to feed on plankton carried along by the currents so can be seen lining up on the surface. If you're lucky you'll be able to witness the unforgettable sight of what is called a "manta train", where half a dozen or more mantas glide around and follow each other head-to-tail. Take a look at a video of the mantas at [Manta Sandy](#).

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The afternoon and night dive are at **Arborek Jetty**. In the shallows the jetty posts are covered in soft corals and below look for pipefish and cuttlefish. The local children love to jump off the jetty and pose for the cameras, great fun! On the reef see the huge giant clams nestled among pulsing soft corals. At night listen for the toadfish croaking from under the rocks and look for the blue ringed octopus. The reef also provides shelter for many interesting small animals like hermit crabs, flatworms and skeleton shrimp. See our Arborek Jetty photo album [here](#).

Between the dives there is an opportunity to visit the village on Arborek Island to see the traditional way of life for these island people. Be ready to be greeted by many children who are more than willing to pose for photographs. Anyone joining our cruise is more than welcome to bring along some goodies for the children at Arborek. Obviously the children love sweets but we encourage people to bring pencils, pens, notebooks, colouring books all of which don't rot their teeth! The school always needs more materials and the girls love hair clips and bands.

## Day 7 Wofoh/Aljui Bay (4 dives)

**Wofoh Black Forest** has a deep ridge full of large bushes of black corals, hence the name Wofoh Black Forest. The shallow reef is beautiful and is covered in large purple soft corals, leather corals and healthy staghorn hard corals. There is a wall where you can look for nudibranchs and even Wobbegong sharks resting on the many ledges. We will do two dives here before heading to Aljui Bay.

Aljui Bay is on the west of Waigeo Island, situated in an area also known as Sel Pele. There is a pearl farm here and we can organise a tour to see the operation and visit the gift shop. The two jetties at the pearl farm have created great artificial reefs for amazing diving. Explore underneath the **Pearl Farm Jetty** to find wobbegong sharks, stonefish, hundreds of schooling scads, ghost pipefish, juvenile batfish and more. **Channel Island** and **White Arrow** are a mix of walls and slopes full of soft corals and sea fans hiding pygmy seahorses and a huge variety of nudibranchs. The night dive here is probably the best of the whole cruise. A whole host of critters come out at night at the **Cendana Fuel Jetty** with a chance to see velvet fish, ghost pipefish, waspfish, coconut octopus, Helmut flying gunnards and even the walking shark.

## Day 8 Kawe and/or Aljui Bay (4 dives)

The rocks and seamounts of this group of islands around Kawe are truly singular as they actually sit on the equator. A combination of currents and feeding stations in this area combine to draw in a profuse amount of fish life. Usually we will do the two morning dives in the Kawe area before heading back into Aljui Bay for the afternoon and night dive, of course this is weather dependent. **Black Rock** gets this name due to the group of sharp, dark rocks jutting out of the water with a mini wall and sloping reef to the northwest. Bushes of black corals and mini gorgonian sea fans decorate the reef and rocks. Schools of sweetlips, fusiliers and surgeonfish live here. The dive site of **Eagle Rock** is a large area and is made up of 3 islets all interconnected underwater. At one end there is a group of deep rocks creating swim throughs, cracks and crevices where sleeping reef sharks and Wobbegong sharks can be found. In between two of the islets is a shallow, barren patch of rock and rubble where reef manta rays like to congregate to feed and clean.

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## Day 9 Gam Area or Penemu Area (4 dives)

**Citrus Ridge** is situated between Gam and Yanggelo Islands and is a reef that extends out into a point in the middle of the channel. The white sand provides amazing contrast to the colourful orange and yellow soft corals. The coral heads are teeming with glassfish with batfish and sweetlips grouping around them.

There are also two pinnacles off Yanggelo Island (**Takat Yanggelo North** and **Takat Yanggelo South**) where we see huge schools of fusiliers, snappers, surgeons, batfish and barracuda. Wobbegong, black tip and white tip sharks cruise the reefs here and look out for the allusive blue ring octopus creeping around the hard corals. **Mangrove Ridge** is deep inside the mangroves between the two islands. A ridge extends out from Yanggelo and is covered in black corals and sea fans. In the shallows you can explore the mangrove roots for juvenile fish, cardinal fish and archerfish.

Penemu is an island west of Waigeo with a selection of dives sites. **Melissa's Garden** is the most well known. Here there are very healthy hard coral reefs in the shallows. Hundreds of anthias dance in and out of the corals where you might also see a sea snake. **Takat Penemu** is a long submerged seamount. The shallow part of the seamount has a beautiful coral garden sloping to the sides where schooling fish hang out in the current. Wobbegong sharks like to sleep inside the large cup corals here. Penemu Wall, **My Reef** and **Harto's Reef** are also great dives in this area.

## Days 10 and 11 Dampier Strait (5-6 dives)

The strait that flows between Waigeo and Batanta is rapidly becoming known as having some of the most spectacular diving in Raja Ampat as a result of the nutrient-rich ocean currents passing through. Everything that makes for a wonderful dive can be found here. But even beyond the usual delights and the satisfaction of spotting prized macro subjects such as the newly discovered Pontohi pygmy seahorse on the coral heads, there are surprises to be found in every dive.

Ironically, sardines are about the only reef fish not found at the site of **Sardine Reef**, but you won't even notice as you see swarms of fusiliers, surgeonfish, trevallies, rainbow runners, sweetlips and bannerfish practically blocking out the sky swarming over a reef decorated with sea fans, soft corals and huge orange elephant ear sponges encrusted with pastel colonies of tunicates. One of the more unique thrills of this site is being able to hear "fish thunder" - the loud booming sound made when a large number of fish move rapidly through open water. **Chicken Reef**, **Kerupiar Island** and **Friwin Bonda** are all dive sites in Dampier Strait full of these wonders.

The fish life in this area is as plentiful as can be expected at sites with a great deal of healthy hard and soft coral. Wobbegong sharks can also be found at any of these dive sites, especially at **Mioskon**. **Cape Kri** holds the impressive record of 374 fish species identified during one 90-minute dive. At **Otdima Reef** there is a school of friendly sweetlips who group around one deep coral head. **Blue Magic** is a submerged seamount where there is a chance to encounter Giant manta rays. A muck night dive awaits you at **Saonek Jetty** or **Jembeser Jetty** where we can find bobtail squid, octopus, stargazers, ghost pipefish, toadfish and lots of nudis.

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An optional tour in the Dampier Strait area is a hike in the jungle to see Birds of Paradise. There will be an extra charge for this tour and it is dependent on the weather and all of the guest's preferences.

On the last full day of the cruise there will be one or two dives depending on the weather conditions and also on the flight times out of Sorong the next day. After the dives we will travel back to Sorong.

**Day 12 Disembarkation in Sorong**

**Total dives: 34-36 dives**

