



Eight Days - Raja Ampat South

Sorong - South Raja Ampat - Sorong

The Raja Ampat archipelago lies to the west of the Bird's Head Peninsula, straddling the equator off the extreme northwestern tip of the Papua province of Indonesia. Comprising 610 – 1,500 islands (depending on the accepted distinction between an island and a rocky outcrop), the region has been described as the 'Last Paradise on Earth.' The name Raja Ampat literally means 'the Four Kings' and dates back to the time when the islands were ruled by the North Moluccan sultanates of Ternate and Tidore – in those days each of the four larger islands in the group, Waigeo, Salawati, Batanta and Misool, used to bow to an independent 'raja.' The islands are distinguished by their rugged and steep limestone coastlines, covered with virgin rainforest extending right down to the water's edge. The larger islands are lightly populated, but most are uninhabited. Until the Millennium, the name Raja Ampat was completely absent from Indonesian travel brochures. Trailblazing diving expeditions, undertaken by modern-day explorers and adventurers, have since put the archipelago on the map, and today Raja Ampat is world famous as one of the most noteworthy ecological niches on the planet, on a par with the Great Barrier Reef and the Galápagos.

Marine biologists have established that Raja Ampat is home to 70 percent of the known coral species on the planet. Many of the fish, corals and crustaceans that live in these waters are found nowhere else on Earth. Yet, while the below-surface world is reminiscent of a living kaleidoscope, the above-surface views are among the most stunning that you are likely to behold in a lifetime.

During this eight-day cruise, we will take you on a far-reaching exploration of what is without a doubt one of the least visited but most memorable adventure-destinations on our planet. You do not need to be a diver to be able to experience this global epicentre of marine diversity. Nor do you need to be a seasoned birdwatcher to see and appreciate the dazzling birdlife that brought Alfred Russel Wallace to this region over a century ago. We certainly hope to witness the curious bobbing, flapping and weaving display dance of the red bird of paradise, to hear the shrieks of the Sulphur Crested Cockatoo and the loud whooshing wing beats of Hornbills in flight.

Note: Guests will meet the Katharina in Sorong, West Papua. As we would like to make a punctual start, we recommend that you to fly to Makassar (Sulawesi) one day in advance of the start date, and then take an early morning flight from Makassar to Sorong. Please note that airfares to and from Sorong are not included in the tour package. Our SeaTrek office will be happy to assist you with any information and flight reservations.

Trip Highlights

- ▶ Explore one of the most biodiverse regions in the world
- ▶ Snorkel the most pristine and deserted coral reefs
- ▶ Encounter amazing Fauna and Flora





Day to day itinerary

Day 1

Your flight will arrive in the West Papuan port town of Sorong, the gateway to Raja Ampat. From the airport we will transfer you to the harbour where the Katharina will be waiting at anchor. Once settled into your cabin, your cruise director will familiarise you with the vessel's facilities and safety procedures. Ready to start our adventure, we will weigh anchor and set a southerly course for the Misool archipelago, stopping for a refreshing swim along the way. We will then dine alfresco on the main deck while meeting the other passengers and crew and watching the sun set on our first day at sea.

Day 2

This morning we will awake to see the sun rise over the picturesque chain of islands that makes up the Misool archipelago. The topography is typical of 'karst dissolution,' featuring a great number of tiny islets whose bases have been eroded over time by the relentless motion of the tides. We will spend the day maximising everything that this fascinating

area has to offer by marvelling at both the marine wonderland under the water and the magnificent landscape above the surface. We can test out our paddling skills in the sea kayaks, watch for birds perched on the rocks, or just sit back and take in the glorious scenery. After a full day of island hopping through this archipelago,



the Katharina will spend a quiet night at anchor in Misool's Tomolol Bay.

Day 3

A swim through Tomolol's mysterious dome-topped cave is undoubtedly one of Raja Ampat's most memorable activities. After an early breakfast, our tenders will take us into the heart of the bay to see

this partially submerged cave where it is possible to swim, snorkel or simply float while gazing up at the cavernous grotto adorned with astonishing stalactites. The more adventurous can swim or paddle through the dark waters to the other mouth of the cave. In the afternoon we will go on a short trek to the Jellyfish Lake, which is connected to the ocean through fissures and tunnels within the limestone of an ancient Miocene reef. Millions of jellyfish migrate horizontally across the lake daily and we may be lucky enough to see three different species: Golden Spotted, Moon and Cassiopeia.

Day 4

This morning, the brave and the fit can join us for a trek to the top of one of the hills. We will follow a beaten track but it is nevertheless a very challenging climb, rewarded with a fabulous view. After lunch we use our tenders to explore more of this impressive maze of karst islands, both above and below the surface, complete with mysterious skull cairns in sea-cave cemeteries, and prehistoric 'petroglyph' cave paintings, estimated to be anything between 3,000 to 5,000 years old and



depicting various human figures and huge human palms, fish, flowers and plants, tools and vessels.

Day 5

Waking up before sunrise, we will follow in the footsteps of the famous naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace in a pre-dawn quest to spot the remarkable Red Bird of Paradise, one of the species that Wallace was most anxious to collect. We hope that the efforts of our trek through the forest will pay off, enabling us to catch a rare and privileged sight of the bird's elaborate courtship dance as the day breaks over the forest canopy. Whether we spot the birds or not, for sure we will experience a wonderful trek. After we get back and have had some time to relax, we will explore 'Putri Termenung' – two caves featuring lots of stalactites, birds' nests, and a rock that looks like a 'contemplative princess.' The caves were used by Japanese soldiers to hide during World War II.

Day 6

Today we will pay a visit to Misool Eco Resort; we will snorkel on their incredible house reef and see some of their

conservation programmes in action; hopefully we will be able to see some baby Black Tip Reef Sharks. There's a lot to see in Raja Ampat, yet you couldn't pick a

better place to get away from it all, therefore today will be dedicated to relaxation, snorkelling and beach combing. In between the jungle's dawn bird chorus



and the reflected glow of the setting sun, there's nothing but the tranquil passing of another day within a paradise of tropical islands.

Day 7

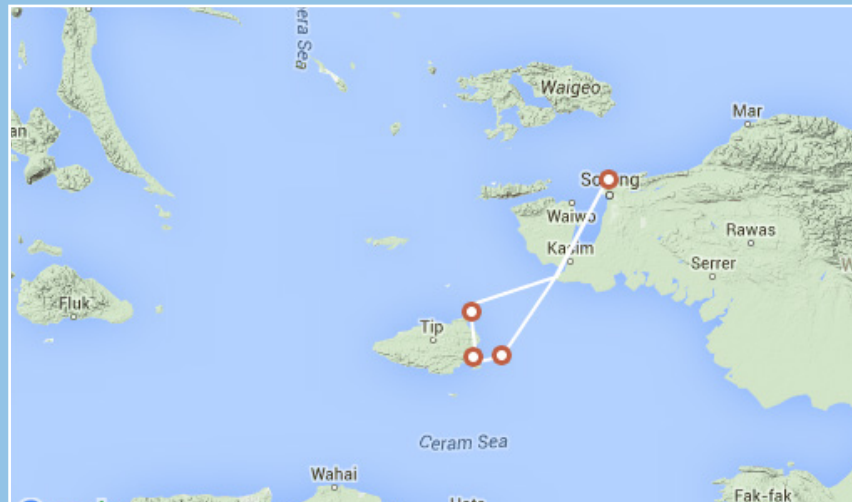
Our last day will be spent discovering the Daram Island group; these tiny islands are at the most easterly border of the Raja Ampat marine park area. The islands are mostly uninhabited and have lush green forest interiors that are great to explore. Furthermore, they are fringed by beautiful white-sand beaches and great snorkelling spots. We will spend the most of the day here, and the evening we will have our farewell dinner with our captain and crew before we cruise back to the port of Sorong.

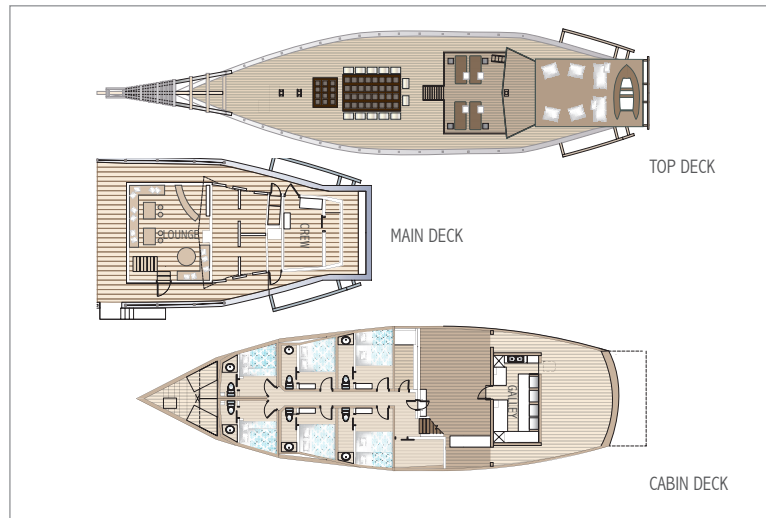
Day 8

After a quick stop for a final swim and refreshments on one of the nearby islands we will make our way back to the harbour of Sorong, arriving around lunch time. Here we will bid farewell to the Katharina and her crew. Our tenders will take you ashore for your transfer to the airport for your onward travel



Route Map





KATHARINA

Six superior cabins with en-suite bathrooms.
Saloon & bar. Outdoor covered dining area. Rooftop lounge area.
Kayaks. Stand-up-paddle boards (SUP). Snorkelling equipment.
Fishing gear. Two tender boats.
Full complement of crew: engineering and service.

Length overall: 35 metres
Deck length: 26 metres
Draught: 3.5 metres
Rig: Gaff-rigged ketch
Cruising speed: 7-9 Knots
International standard navigation & safety equipment
(including radar and satellite phone).

ABOUT SEATREK SAILING ADVENTURES

Based in Bali, SeaTrek is the premier adventure sailing operator in Indonesia, with over 25 years of experience showing guests the distinctive beauty and charm of the archipelago's exotic islands and seas. Our vessels have highly-trained crews and multilingual tour guides and we offer a variety of cruises to suit those looking for the unique natural wonder, history and cultures of this far-flung corner of the world.



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