Itinerary

19 Day Raja Ampat & Spice Islands Expedition Cruise

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

Day 1: Depart Darwin

Embark Darwin: Arrive at Fort Hill Wharf at 6:30am for an 8:00am departure. Spend the afternoon settling in and exploring the facilities onboard Coral Geographer as we begin our voyage north towards the Spice Islands.

As dusk falls, join your fellow travellers at the Captain's Welcome. Your Expedition Team will provide an introduction to the journey ahead and the highlights of this extraordinary voyage.

MEALS: Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 2: Crossing the Timor Sea | Yamdena Island, Spice Islands, Indonesia

Spend a relaxing morning at sea as we cross the Timor Sea en route to Yamdena Island. Join the Expedition Team on the Bridge Deck for an engaging session about Raja Ampat, the Spice Islands, and important safety and cultural protocols for visiting Indonesia.

In the afternoon, visit the artisan village of Tumbur. Here, you'll gain a unique insight into the heritage craftsmanship of the local 'pemahat kayu' woodcarvers and the intricate motifs woven by skilled Ikat weavers. After a warm village welcome, enjoy time to explore and meet the local artisans. This is also a great opportunity to purchase authentic Tanimbarese crafts directly from the makers.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 3: Sea Day

Spend a day relaxing at sea while enjoying the engaging presentations delivered by our guest lecturers. Take this time to unwind and make the most of the ship's onboard facilities.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 4: Banda Neira – Spice Islands, Indonesia

The Banda archipelago is the historic heart of the spice trade and was once the world's only source of nutmeg until the mid-19th century. Portuguese, Dutch and English powers long fought for control of this prized region.

These ten volcanic islands have attracted merchants for over 2,000 years, trading cloves, textiles, batik, and rice. The Banda Islands are lush with tropical vegetation, including the Myristica Tree, and surrounded by vibrant underwater lava flow reefs ideal for snorkelling and diving.

As we approach Banda Neira, witness the impressive silhouette of Gunung Api volcano. Admire the colourful Moluku paddlers in traditional kora kora canoes with elaborately carved figureheads. Enjoy snorkelling and diving, or venture ashore to sip local tea and enjoy snacks along the waterfront.

In the afternoon, explore Fort Belgica, built in 1611 by the first Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. This well-preserved, pentagon-shaped fort offers fascinating insights into Dutch colonial history. End the day with a traditional local performance and a glass of sparkling wine as the sun sets over the fort.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 5: Banda Neira – Spice Islands, Indonesia

This morning, choose to explore the nutmeg villages of Gunung Api in search of the endemic Banda myzomela. Alternatively, enjoy another opportunity to snorkel or dive in the crystal-clear waters above the lava flow reef system.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 6: Molana Island & Saparua Island – Spice Islands, Indonesia

We begin the day with an early arrival at Molana Island, a private and uninhabited island steeped in Portuguese colonial history. Home to 85 species of trees, Pacific monitor lizards, Moluccan scrubfowl, and coconut crabs, the island also holds the ruins of a Dutch-built hospital, left incomplete due to Japanese occupation during World War II.

Snorkellers can explore the island's shallow reefs, enjoying clear water and vibrant marine life. Later, we head east to nearby Saparua Island, where local villagers greet us warmly. This historically significant location is home to Fort Duurstede, a 17th-century Dutch fort with a rich and complex past.

At the fort, witness a traditional war dance performed by local men and boys, dressed with shields, swords, and cultural regalia. Today offers a powerful cultural experience and deeper understanding of the region's heritage.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 7: Seram Island – Spice Islands, Indonesia

En route to Sawai Village on Seram Island, we stop at Besar Island for snorkelling and diving in its coral reef-bound lagoons. The clear waters and abundant marine life make this an excellent spot for underwater exploration.

Sawai Village, one of the oldest in the Maluku Islands, is located in the heart of the Banda Sea. This peaceful village is known for its simple stilt homes built over the water and its quiet charm.

Take a leisurely stroll along the banks of Asinahu Lake, where brilliant blue ceramic tiles line the path to a scenic viewpoint overlooking Sawai Bay.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 8: Misool – Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Our introduction to the spectacular natural playground of Raja Ampat begins at Misool, one of its four largest islands. Raja Ampat means ‘Four Kings’, referring to the main islands of Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati, and Misool, within an archipelago of over 1,500 smaller islands.

Weather permitting, enjoy time to swim or kayak among Misool’s dramatic conical limestone islands. We explore the stunning waterways of Bulbulol, known for their iconic Christmas Rocks. These unique formations rise from a vast, clear lagoon and resemble scattered chess pieces across a board.

Swimming, snorkelling, or diving in these pristine waters is one of the unforgettable highlights of your Raja Ampat experience.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 9: Kofiau Island – Raja Ampat, Indonesia

At Kofiau Island, we are greeted by village dancers arriving on traditional pontoon boats. They lead us ashore to Deer Village, also known as Kampung Deer, where local villagers welcome us and offer a guided walk through their community.

Birding enthusiasts can join a jungle walk in search of the endemic Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher; a rare and colourful species found only in this region. After rejoining the group, continue exploring the village and interacting with its residents.

Following lunch, enjoy time to dive, snorkel, or swim at the uniquely formed Boo Kecil. With luck, you may even catch a glimpse of majestic manta rays gliding through the clear waters.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 10: Waisai, Waigeo Island & Piaynemo – Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Early this morning, birdwatchers will disembark for a guided jungle walk to spot the Wilson's bird-of-paradise or the red bird-of-paradise, among other local species. The moderate 30–40-minute walk takes place in low light, so please bring your headtorches when departing the Xplorer.

In the afternoon, we visit the breathtaking Piaynemo. Climb the 300 stairs to reach the viewpoint and be rewarded with sweeping views of turquoise lagoons and dramatic limestone karst formations – one of Raja Ampat's most iconic scenes.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 11: Wayag – Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Today we uncover more of Raja Ampat's hidden gems as we explore the magnificent waterways and lagoons of Wayag by Xplorer. Enjoy time to swim in crystal-clear waters and stroll along white-sand beaches scattered among the islands.

After lunch, adventurous guests may opt for an energetic hike up to the famed Pindito Peak. Those who reach the top are rewarded with sweeping panoramic views over Wayag's spectacular lagoon and surrounding islands. Alternatively, spend the afternoon relaxing with a swim, snorkel, or paddle in the calm turquoise waters.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 12: Ayu Atoll – Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Spend the day exploring the remote and biodiverse Ayu Atoll, a pristine coral haven teeming with marine life. The Expedition Team will identify the best snorkelling and diving locations based on the day's weather and sea conditions.

This untouched atoll offers some of the richest underwater experiences in Raja Ampat, with opportunities to encounter vibrant coral gardens and schools of tropical fish.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 13: Sea Day

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea as we make our way to the next destination. Take time to relax and take full advantage of the ship's onboard facilities.

Join our guest lecturers for engaging presentations and gain deeper insights into the history, ecology, and culture of the regions we've explored.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 14: Cenderawasih Bay & Kwatisore Village – Indonesia

Cenderawasih Bay, meaning Bird-of-Paradise Bay, is home to an extraordinary range of marine biodiversity. As Indonesia's largest marine park, Teluk Cenderawasih National Park spans over 14,500 square kilometres and supports whale sharks, dugongs, dolphins, over 200 species of fish, and more than 150 species of coral.

This is one of the rare places in the world where you may have the opportunity to swim with the endangered whale shark. Although sightings are not guaranteed, if they appear, snorkelling alongside these gentle giants is truly unforgettable. Whale sharks are completely harmless and can grow as long as a bus.

Later in the day, visit Kwatisore Village with local guides to learn about the customs, culture, and daily life of the West Papuan people.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 15: Roon Island – Indonesia

Roon Island offers a fascinating blend of history and marine life. One of its main highlights is the wreckage of a Japanese Zero fighter plane resting in shallow waters, visible to snorkellers when conditions are favourable.

This wartime relic has become a vibrant marine habitat, now home to large corals, gorgonian fans, lionfish, surgeonfish, turtles, and many other species. It's a unique snorkelling opportunity that combines underwater discovery with historical intrigue.

Take time to connect with local villagers and learn about their daily lives, traditions, and the rhythms of life in this remote island community.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 16: Swande / Manim Island – West Papua, Indonesia

Today's destination is flexible and dependent on prevailing weather and tidal conditions. Whether we anchor at Swande or Manim Island, the day promises rewarding experiences both above and below the waterline.

You'll have the opportunity to beachcomb, swim, and snorkel over nearby reefs from the Xplorer. Divers can explore the clear, calm waters and continue adding to their growing list of marine species encountered throughout the voyage.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 17: Mansinam Island – West Papua, Indonesia

Today we visit Mansinam Island, a quiet island just off the mainland of West Papua. With local guides, learn about the arrival and lasting influence of Christianity across the region and its significance to the local communities.

In the afternoon, enjoy snorkelling over nearby coral reefs or dive at historic World War II wreck sites, adding another dimension to your underwater exploration.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 18: Amsterdam Island – West Papua, Indonesia

Today we visit the remote and rarely explored Amsterdam Island, part of the Su Islands (Mios Su) group off the northern coast of West Papua. This is a special opportunity to experience one of the lesser-known gems of the region.

Join local guides for a cultural welcome performance and enjoy time beachcombing along the shore or swimming in the clear tropical waters. This visit offers a peaceful conclusion to our island explorations.

Note: This is a seasonal stop and may be substituted with an alternate location if a local ceremony is taking place.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Coral Expeditions Ship

Day 19: Arrive in Sorong

Disembark Sorong: We arrive at Sorong early this morning at 8:00am. Guests booked on the charter flight will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before flying to Darwin via Manado.

MEALS: Breakfast