

EXPLORE!



West Papua Seatrek

14 days

Indonesia - Trip code SWP

West Papua Seatrek

Join us on this pioneering adventure in the far-eastern frontier of Indonesia. Sailing aboard a traditional Indonesian Schooner, we explore the remote archipelagos of Raja Ampat and West Papua, known to host some of the greatest marine bio-diversity in the world. Snorkel amongst pristine coral reefs, swim with mantas, witness the elaborate courtship of the Red and Wilson Birds of Paradise, encounter remote island village communities and discover mysterious sea-cave cemeteries on this epic adventure!

Trip highlights

- ★ Snorkel through the turquoise waters and pristine reefs of Raja Ampat - a world class dive and snorkel spot.
- ★ Paddle and kayak past towering pinnacles and through eerie caves, discovering skull cairns and sea - cave cemeteries.
- ★ Makassar - Discover the centuries old harbour town on the island of Sulawesi, the gateway to the islands of the east.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:**Relaxed**

You can enjoy easy-going activities and experiences on these Relaxed pace tours, with opportunities to absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings, but still come home feeling relaxed and refreshed.

GROUP SIZE:**8 - 12**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Makassar

Our trip starts this evening in the island's capital, Makassar. The city was established as a major trading port in the sixteenth century, trading exotic spices, rattan and sandalwood with its near neighbours the Javanese and Malays. In the 17th Century the Dutch reached the East Indies and Sulawesi was subsequently colonialized, changing the character and face of this city. Modern Makassar showcases an interesting blend of this history with modernity, where glass-fronted skyscrapers jostle for position alongside Dutch colonial buildings, and the bustling harbour still remains a major stopping point for sea trade. If there is time we hope to have a stroll along the main promenade, as at night the seaside boulevard comes alive with street vendors setting up their push cars along the pavement, offering a variety of local delicacies.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Morning exploring Makassar harbour; afternoon visit to Maros

We head out to nearby Maros this morning, known for its beautiful rice fields and towering karst topography. Here we plan to explore the area on foot, with a short walk of about 1 ½ - 2 hours past rice terraces and in the shadow of rocky limestone outcrops. We will stop for tea at a local Bugis house before returning back to our start point by canoe. This afternoon we are back in the city, where modern Makassar serves as the main gateway to the Eastern islands of Indonesia. On our visit to Poatere harbour we will find the traditional wooden sailing ships, known as Pinisis, lined up along the harbour being loaded by hand before making the journey east. We will continue on foot from the harbour to the nearby fish market, where the expert Bugis fisherman come to sell their catch of fresh fish. It is an interesting, if somewhat pungent market frequented entirely by locals bartering for their lunch, and we expect to be quite the tourist attraction ourselves here. Leaving the fish market behind we move onto a reminder of Dutch colonial rule when we discover Fort Rotterdam. When the Dutch settled in Sulawesi they decided to build on top of an existing fort from the Gowa Kingdom, creating some very curious architecture. We return to our hotel later in the afternoon, where the remainder of the day is at leisure.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Morning flight to Ambon then board our schooner and meet the crew.

We rise early this morning to catch our flight to the far east of Indonesia, our destination the tropical island of Ambon, part of the Maluku province. After transferring to the harbour we catch the first glimpse of our home for the next 9 nights - the Katharina. This attractive vessel has been built in the style of a traditional Indonesian Pinisi schooner, where it looks at home cruising the waters of the East Indies. But whilst it appears a traditional vessel at first glance, underneath the ship has been completely refitted and renovated to a modern standard. The Katharina comprises of 6 comfortable en-suite cabins with toilets and hot showers, there is a spacious lounge and bar area, along with a large and comfortable sundeck with chairs and cushions. Electricity is available on-board, and two tender boats are present to help with on-shore excursions, allowing us to get closer to the action. Once we have some time to settle in to our cabins, we weigh anchor and enjoy an alfresco dinner as we watch the sun dip into the sea.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 4 - Ashore on Manipa, visit a local distillery for 'kayu putih' oil

This morning will be spent on the island of Manipa, said to have magical powers because the Portuguese, Dutch and Japanese never set foot on its soil despite occupying the surrounding islands. The village that we will explore is simple but bright with tropical blooms, while the surrounding gardens, groves and forests are ideal environments to yield generous quantities of produce such as cashew nuts and the sago palm. We will visit a distillery for the region's famous 'kayu putih' oil. Distilled from vats full of the crushed leaves from melaleuca trees, it is a universal panacea that no Indonesian household is without, said to relieve aches, pains, colds, stomach upsets and a number of other ailments. During lunch we will cruise towards the Pulau Tiga Islands for the opportunity for some exceptional snorkelling and beachcombing.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Discover the karsts and white-sand beaches of Boano Island

We wake this morning in front of Boano Island, an idyllic combination of karst formations, towering cliffs, lush forest and white-sand beaches. We explore much of this dramatic coastline this morning by tender before heading to a nearby snorkelling spot, known by the locals to be teeming with an array of colourful marine life. Later in the evening we leave this dramatic scenery behind as we sail towards the island of Seram.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - On the island of Seram; Visit the village of Sawai and the chance to trek through in Manusela National Park

The beautiful island of Seram is made up of remote hilly jungle and small villages revered for holding onto the local beliefs and culture of the Lease Islands. Seldom visited by outsiders, our tenders will allow us access to the rugged coastline and an insight into this mysterious and fascinating island and its culture. We will base ourselves in the village of Sawai, where we spend the day getting to know the locals, trekking, bird watching and exploring the surrounding area. This evening we move on, sailing gently overnight into the famous and beautiful region of Raja Ampat.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Swim through the dome-topped cave of Tomolol and explore the karst islands sea-cave cemeteries

For the intrepid few that visit these remote chain of islands, Raja Ampat is undoubtedly the jewel in West Papua's crown. Sitting in a vast area of the equatorial Pacific Ocean known as the Coral Triangle, it is so named for holding more than 75% of all known coral species, offering its few visitors some the greatest coral reef biodiversity in the world. A morning swim through Tomolol's mysterious dome-topped cave is 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 or simply float while gazing up at the cavernous grotto adorned with astonishing stalactites. Those feeling more adventurous can swim or paddle through the dark waters to the other mouth of the cave. We will then move on to the mysterious jellyfish lake and swim amongst the many thousands stingless creatures. After returning to the ship, we will continue by tender to explore more of this impressive maze of karst islands, complete with mysterious skull cairns in sea-cave cemeteries, and prehistoric 'petroglyph' cave paintings, estimated to be anything from 3,000 to 5,000 years old and depicting various human figures and huge human palms, fish, flowers and plants, tools and vessels.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Explore the Misool Archipelago, with options for paddleboarding or kayaking

Waking to see the sun rise over this beautiful chain of islands is the perfect accompaniment to our al-fresco breakfast this morning, fuelling ourselves for the day of adventure ahead. The landscape here is made up of towering limestone pinnacles and a numbers of tiny islets where the erosion of the ocean has worked away at the soluble rocks below. We spend our day immersing ourselves in the landscape both above and below the water, swimming, snorkelling, watching for some of the sea birds perched on the rocks, paddling thorough the impressive karst landscape on our kayaks or just taking in the vista from the comfort of the sun deck.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - On the island of Penemu; option for walks on the island, or snorkelling the world-class reefs

We wake this morning in front of the island of Penemu. Waiting for us at the end of a short hike into the islands interior is one of Raja Ampat's greatest views, that of the 'Hidden Bay'. We spend time taking in the glorious scenery that surrounds us, as well as snorkelling and paddleboarding in the area, which is known to be teeming with tropical marine life. We board the boat in the late afternoon before setting sail for the teeming Dampier Strait.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Sail through the Dampier Strait

This morning we sail through the Dampier Strait, an area known to attract an abundant amount of marine life to its nutrient-rich currents. With some luck we hope to snorkel with some of the larger marine life that is often found here, such as manta rays, wobbegongs and white-tip reef sharks. We later continue onto Arborek Village, where we can explore the island on foot and learn about the Asai culture that is practiced here, fiercely kept alive by the villagers living in near-isolation. We will also visit a local manta conservation project where we can learn about the important work being done by the island's volunteers to educate locals and protect these beautiful and elegant rays.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Explore Sawinggarai village, for a chance to spot Birds of Paradise

We rise early this morning in order to maximise our chances to catch a glimpse of the beautiful Birds of Paradise. Birds of Paradise are found almost entirely on the island of New Guinea, and are perhaps best known for their incredibly bright and colourful plumage. Interestingly the females are often dull in colour; it is thought that going 'incognito' improves their chances of protecting their nests. The males however are some of the most colourful birds in the world, and pair their famous bright decorations with an elaborate courtship dance in order to win over a mate, creating quite the spectacle to witness. We make our way by tender to the small village of Sawinggarai, and arriving under the cover of darkness, we embark on a short 20 minute walk through the forest to arrive as dawn breaks over the forest canopy. This is the ideal time to get good views of the Red Birds of Paradise, known locally as Cendrawasih Merah. During our time on Raja Ampat we may also have a chance to glimpse the Wilson Bird of Paradise, known for its bright blue head and curved violet tail feathers. We later make our way back to the village where we have the opportunity to meet with the local community and perhaps even visit the island's school. Back on-board the boat, we hope to have an opportunity to stop off at Pef Island where we learn about the local legend surrounding the pre-historic 'hand print' visible high up on the limestone cliff. We should have some time for swimming and snorkelling the reefs of Mioskon Island before our evening's dinner and recap of the day's events.



Accommodation: Aboard Katharina Schooner (or similar)



Premium Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 12 - Bid farewell to our boat at Sorong, transfer the airport to fly back to Sulawesi

After our last alfresco breakfast this morning, we will bid our crew and vessel goodbye as we make our way to Sorong airport, for the flight back to Makassar and to civilisation again. Upon arrival in Makassar, the rest of the afternoon is free to relax or spend at leisure.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Cookery Class in Makassar with local family

Today we will test our culinary skills in a cookery class with a twist - not in a restaurant but in the kitchen of a traditional Bugis house! We first visit two markets with our local guide; a fish market and a vegetable market where we purchase ingredients for our meals, and the guide talks us through the various exotic and unusual fruits and vegetables on display. We then journey by bendor (a motorised rickshaw) to a small Bugis village on the outskirts of the city where our cookery class begins. We meet the family of the house and receive a demonstration of local cooking before trying it for ourselves. The course ends with in a full sit down meal where we can eat all of our exotic creations.



Accommodation: Aston Makassar Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Makassar

Trips ends in Makassar after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Surveys suggest that the diversity of marine life found in West Papua is some of the highest recorded on earth, with over 1,300 species of coral reef fish and 600 species of hard coral. This trip has been designed to give you the opportunity to explore this world-class region both above and below the water, from the comfort of a traditional-style Indonesian schooner. It's a relaxed paced trip with plenty of opportunity for swimming, paddling and snorkelling the rich tropical waters of Raja Ampat. The focus however, is not just in the ocean, as we plan to explore remote islands on foot, meet traditional communities and witness the unique bird and mammal life found in this far eastern frontier of Indonesia. This is a unique opportunity to visit a region that is still very much in pristine natural condition, virtually untouched by the western world. We will plan on operating this trip as an exclusive charter voyage, but this will be dependent on us filling the boat. If the required passenger numbers are not met, there may be customers on board which have not booked through Explore.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 9
Dinner: 9



Transport

Boat
Flight
Minibus



Trip staff

Boat Crew
Cook
Expedition Crew
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

9 nights premium boat
4 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Indonesia Holidays & Tours

Climate

Lying on the equator, Indonesia stays hot all year round, with daytime temperatures in the 80's (26°-28°C). Humidity is usually high. The wet seasons are roughly: Java- October to April; Bali- November to May; starting later the further east you travel. Nights are much cooler in the mountains than on the plains. Sea breezes normally keep the coastal strips of the islands from becoming too uncomfortable.

Time difference to GMT

+7

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Islam, Christian, Hindu

Language

Indonesian (official), numerous regional dialects, Sundanese, Javanese and some English.

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Temperatures tend to hover between 27 and 33 degrees so lightweight cotton and linen clothing is recommended. A pair of long trousers or sarong is recommended for the village visits, as are a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Don't forget swimwear, and you may also want to consider a t-shirt or rash-vest for swimming and snorkelling to avoid sunburn on your back and shoulders. A sun hat is essential, and a jumper or lightweight fleece is useful for the cooler and breezy evenings.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals/flip flops.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage and cabin space is limited, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Pack a torch, sunglasses, binoculars, insect repellent, and a waterproof bag for your camera. You may wish to bring your own snorkel and mask, although these are provided onboard. High factor sun cream and sunhat is essential, and as the water intensifies the sun's strength, we recommend a minimum of factor 30. Towels are provided on board. You may also wish to pack motion sickness tablets/patches if you are particularly sensitive to seasickness, although the waters in this area are generally considered calm.

Tipping

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly you should allow approx. £40 for gratuities for local staff.

Country Information

Indonesia Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£9

Beer price

£1

Water price

£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rupiah (Rp).

Recommended Currency For Exchange

USD, EUR and GBP.

Where To Exchange

Always check rates first. Banks and moneychangers usually have the best rates. Exchange is also possible at airports. Always keep receipts.

ATM Availability

In major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major towns.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are accepted but require the purchase receipt. Well known brands and higher denominations are recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Boat, Flight, Minibus

Ship description

The Katharina is a traditional Bugis-style Pinisi schooner, constructed in 1995 in Kalimantan, Indonesia. It has received two major re-fits, the latest in 2014. The Katharina is equipped with latest navigation and safety equipment, and can power itself under sail or, more commonly, using its 280Hp 6-cylinder marine engine in order to stick to the planned timescales. The schooner measures 40 metres in length, 8.6 metres in beam and the draught is 3.5 metres, with a comfortable cruising speed of 7-9 knots. It has 3 decks comprising of the cabin deck, the main deck with lounge, bar and crew quarters, and the top deck with a dining area and sun deck. Electricity is available onboard, free tea, coffee, soft drinks, juices and mineral water is provided throughout the cruise, whilst a wide selection of wines, beers and spirits are available for purchase. All meals are included, with a wide variety of cuisine and snacks on offer, and special dietary requirements can be catered for when notified to Explore in advance. The ship carries an array of complimentary snorkelling equipment, 2 sea kayaks and 4 paddle boards all available for the guests use.

Cabins

Cabins onboard the Katharina are a mix of double and twin-share, with private en-suite facilities. Although cosy, they are finished to a high standard with teak wood furnishings, air-conditioning and in-room safes. Please note as there are only 6 cabins on the boat, we are unable to offer a single room option whilst aboard the Katharina.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Indonesia: British nationals travelling to Indonesia for tourism purposes can enter the country without a visa for up to 30 days at certain ports of entry including international airports in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bali, Medan, Makassar, Surabaya and Batam, and sea ports in Batam and Bintan. If travelling on a free visa you must also exit via one of these approved ports. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining after departure from Indonesia. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Indonesia Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, infectious hepatitis, typhoid and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
