



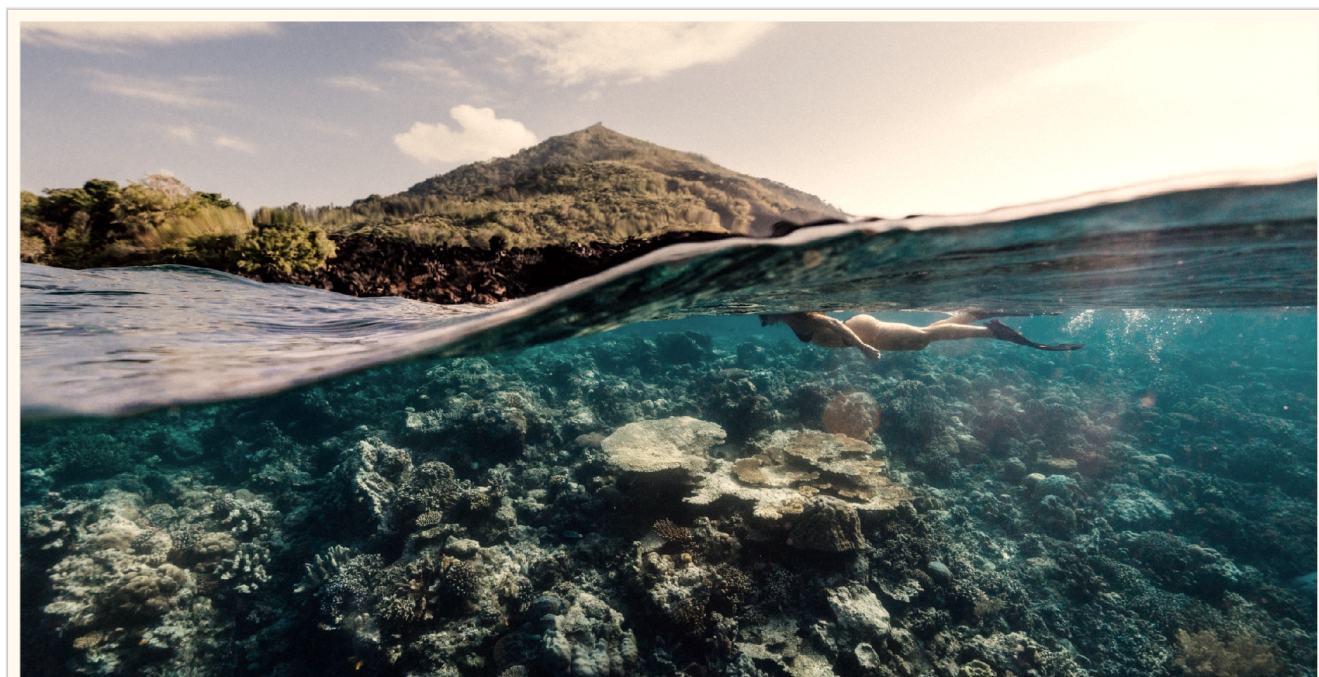
EASTERN INDONESIA · CRUISING GROUNDS

Banda Neira

The Spice Islands · Maluku

7 DAYS & 6 NIGHTS · AMBON → AMBON

Relive the Spice Island voyages of adventurers throughout history, and discover the best of Wallacea.



10

DIVE SITES AROUND BANDA
NEIRA

1615

THE DUTCH BUILD FORT
REVENGE ON AI

Rhun

TRADED FOR MANHATTAN

THE REGION

The spiceries

The ‘spiceries’ were for centuries the most sought-after islands in the world, capturing the European imagination and inspiring Columbus to undertake his famous journey westward. Relive the Spice Island voyages of adventurers throughout history and discover the best of Wallacea, a region that is a key contributor to the mega biodiversity of the Indonesian archipelago, a waypoint for migratory birds and marine life.

Snorkel in remote waters, see diverse species of birds and set anchor at the legendary Banda Islands, the original source of nutmeg and mace and now home to some of the most resilient coral and breathtaking underwater worlds.

Travel back in time among nutmeg and cinnamon plantations and colonial architecture. One of the smallest of the Banda Islands, Pulau Rhun, was ‘exchanged’ by the British in the seventeenth century for another island at the other side of the world, a place known today as Manhattan.

Highlights at a glance

Laha Bay, Ambon — the ‘twilight zone’, one of the world’s most famous muck dives, on the first afternoon.

Pulau Rhun — Pak Guru welcomes you to the nutmeg plantation and colourful village.

Fort Revenge, Pulau Ai — built by the Dutch in 1615, and still standing to visit.

Fort Belgica — ancient cannon on the hill above Banda Neira Bay.

Lava Flow — a reef destroyed by eruption, regrown on fertile ground into an even prettier dive.

Batu Kapal — a pinnacle dive for advanced divers, with pelagic marine life.

Karang Hatta — migrating schools of hammerheads pass through the Banda Sea.

Whales & dolphins — keep a lookout as the ship leaves the harbour for open water.

When to go

SEASON	CONDITIONS
Sep – Apr	Prime cruising. Settled Banda Sea, clear water, reliable crossings.
Oct – Dec	The most likely window for schooling hammerheads on the deeper walls.
Jun – Aug	Stronger south-easterlies and swell; open crossings become uncomfortable.

This route involves a real open-water crossing of the Banda Sea, usually made overnight. Whales and dolphins are regularly seen along the way.

Diving & snorkelling notes

There are around ten dive sites in Banda Neira, one of them Lava Flow, which can also be explored snorkelling. Several prime dive sites lie around the island of Rhun, always accessible with the speedboats in no time, and Ai's greatest attraction is a pristine coral drop-off just off the beach — equally good with a tank or a mask.

Getting there

- Fly to Ambon (AMQ)

Pattimura Airport, connecting through Jakarta or Makassar.
- Harbour transfer

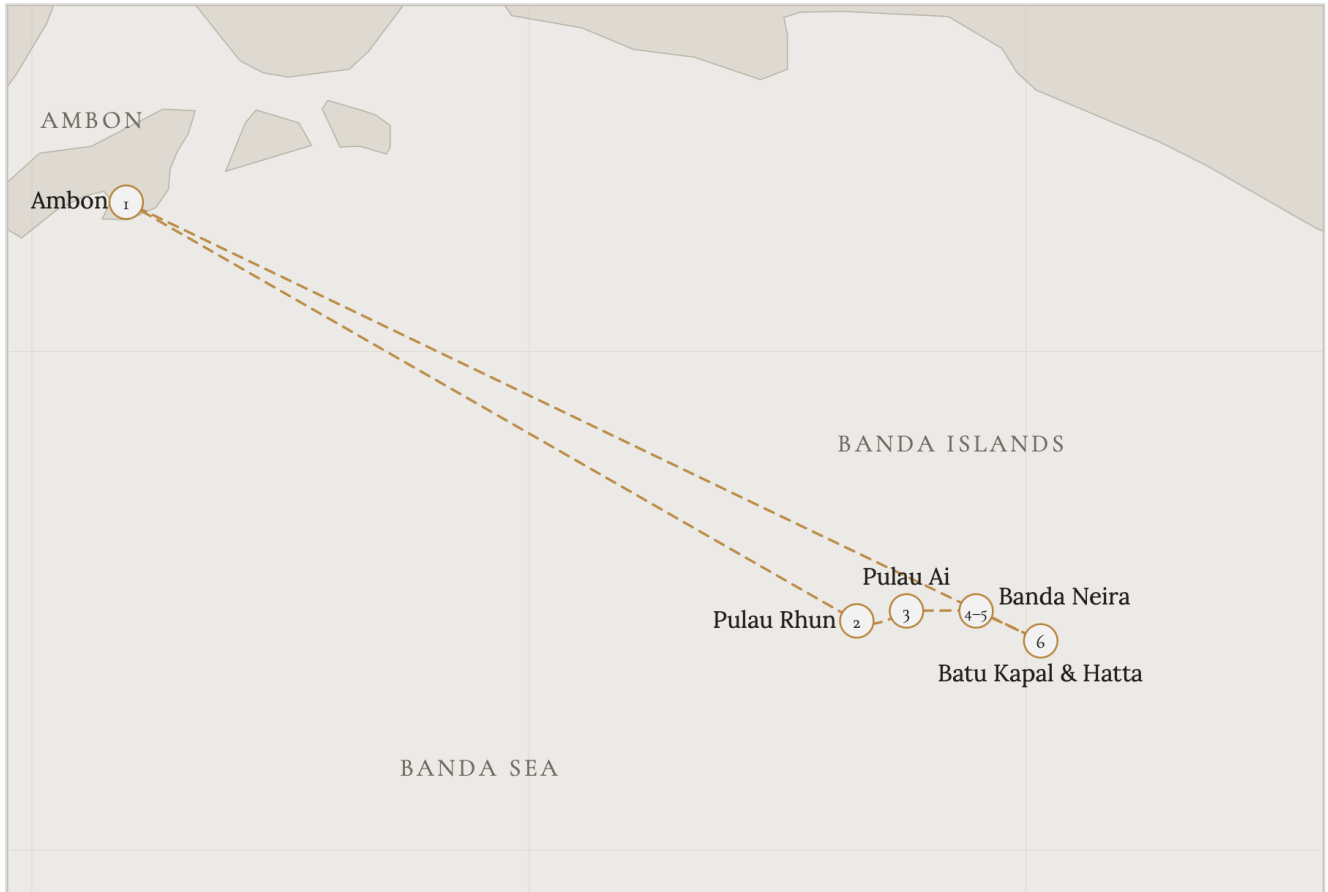
A fifteen-minute ride from the airport to the boat at Laha Bay.
- Round trip

The route starts and finishes at Ambon, so no open-jaw flights are needed.

Batu Kapal offers a pinnacle dive that would suit more advanced divers who can encounter pelagic marine life; the reefs and beach on Pulau Pisang are gentler. Advanced divers may try their luck throughout the trip for the migrating hammerheads visible on various sites around Banda Neira, including Karang Hatta.

Banda Neira

South across the Banda Sea to Rhun and Ai, two full days in the harbour at Banda Neira, then the outlying islets and Hatta on the way back.



NUMBERED ANCHORAGES FOLLOW THE DAY-BY-DAY BELOW. COASTLINES FROM NATURAL EARTH.

DAY 1

Embarkation

After arrival at Ambon Airport and a fifteen-minute ride to the boat, we depart from Laha Bay, which is one of the world's most famous muck diving sites known as the twilight zone, where divers can find some of the rarest and most unique marine life anywhere in the world. Ambon is famous in the circles of science and natural history as the Galapagos of Asia. As we leave the harbour and enter the Banda Sea, keep a lookout for whales as well as schools of dolphins.

DAY 2

Pulau Rhun

Wake up in Rhun, the (in)famous island once traded by the British to the Dutch for Manhattan. Kayak over gentle, shallow coral reef to visit the island where Pak Guru will welcome you and show you around the local nutmeg plantation and colourful village. Over lunch, the ship moves to the east side of the island with a picture-perfect white-sand beach at your doorstep. There are several prime dive sites around the island of Rhun, always accessible with our speedboats in no time.

DAY 3

Pulau Ai

In 1615, the Dutch invaded Pulau Ai and built Fort Revenge, which you can still visit. Until today, there are active nutmeg plantations as well as colonial-style mansions on the island. One of Ai's greatest attractions is snorkelling and scuba diving on a pristine coral drop-off that lies just off the beach.



AMBON · PULAU RHUN · PULAU AI

DAYS 4-5

Banda Neira

Welcome to the heart of the Spice Islands. Banda Neira is one of the most scenic harbours to arrive in and certainly a highlight of the journey. Stepping onto the shores of Banda Neira is like taking a stroll through history. Visit Fort Belgica atop the hill overlooking Banda Neira Bay, with ancient cannon reminding us of times when Banda's production of one of the most sought-after commodities was one worth fighting for. Colonial architecture is evident everywhere on the island, built by those once catapulted into wealth after completing an arduous journey for spices once worth their weight in gold. There are around ten dive sites in Banda Neira, one of them Lava Flow, where an erupting volcano destroyed the reef but it has regrown on the fertile grounds to an even prettier dive experience.

DAY 6

Batu Kapal & Hatta

In the morning we visit a group of islets of which Batu Kapal and Pulau Pisang stand out. Batu Kapal offers a pinnacle dive that would suit more advanced divers who can encounter pelagic marine life, or enjoy the more user-friendly reefs and beach on Pulau Pisang. The last afternoon we spend around Pulau Hatta, originally named Rozengain Island. It was renamed Hatta to commemorate the first vice president, Mohammad Hatta, who was exiled in Banda Neira in 1936 for fighting the Dutch and gaining Indonesian independence. The Banda Sea is home to migrating schools of hammerhead sharks, visible on various dive sites around Banda Neira including Karang Hatta, the nearby reef.

DAY 7

Ambon · disembarkation

After breakfast, pack and prepare to disembark from Ambon Airport.



BANDA NEIRA · BATU KAPAL · HATTA

This is a sample itinerary and can be adjusted to your preferences. Routes may also change on the day due to weather, tide or other conditions; your captain and cruise director will always choose the best available anchorage.



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