

Raja Ampat Snorkeling Expedition

Exploring the best of Raja Ampat with marine biologists
Lee Goldman and Ethan Daniels

April 18 - 30, 2016

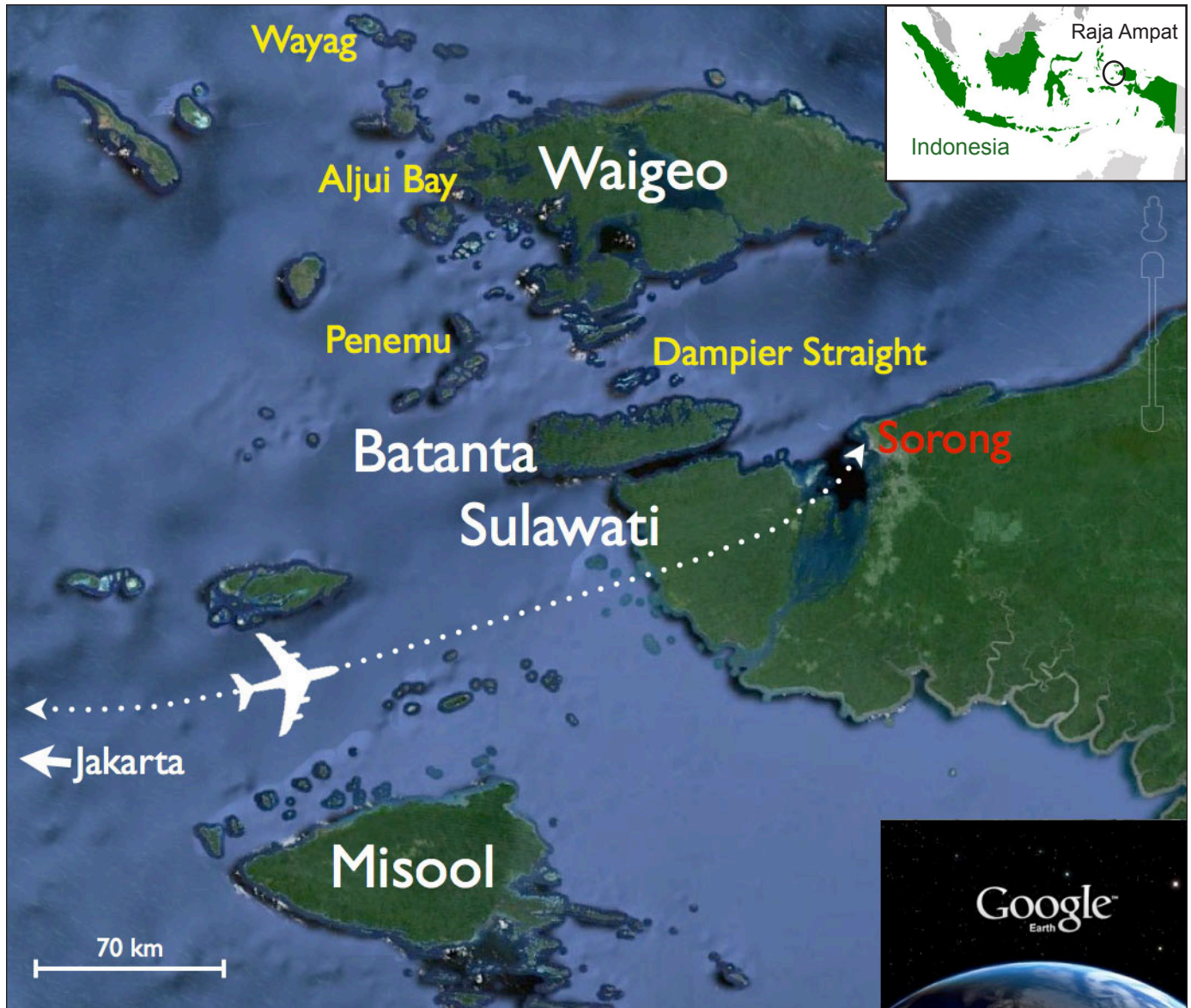




The islands of Raja Ampat offer a scenic backdrop to the unspoiled underwater wilderness that showcases thousands of reef creatures in crystal clear water. With its diversity of habitats ranging from exposed seaward reefs to sheltered lagoons and hundreds of kilometers of unspoiled underwater wilderness, Raja Ampat is arguably the epicenter of marine biodiversity on the planet! Our unique programs offer you the chance to snorkel the best shallow reefs of the area as we explore islands both north and south of Dampier Strait in style on board the luxury liveaboard, Mermaid I. As your expedition leaders, we have led over 30 snorkeling tours to this region and have come to know more than just a few islands and snorkel sites unknown to other operators, and that have some of the best reefs and scenery that Raja Ampat has to offer.

In addition to our days filled with snorkeling adventures there will be ample time for bird watching and beach walks to explore the spectacular surroundings. We complement our daily activities with insightful presentations on marine ecology, coral reef biology, and underwater photography. Please join us for this 12-day/11-night expedition into one of the world's most remarkable marine regions!





Raja Ampat

Raja Ampat, or 'four kings', is located off the northwestern tip of Bird's Head Peninsula, a region of West Papua on the island of New Guinea. The archipelago covers nearly 50,000 square kilometers with most of the islands residing just south of the equator. The name Raja Ampat refers to the four main islands, Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati, and Misool. These large islands are a combination of volcanic rock and limestone, but many of the over 1500 smaller islands and islets are pure raised limestone. Raja Ampat is famous for its diversity of habitats ranging from exposed seaward reefs to sheltered lagoons and hundreds of kilometers of unspoiled underwater wilderness and is arguably the epicenter of marine biodiversity on the planet!

Weather and Water Conditions

The main islands of Raja Ampat south of the equator and generally have good weather throughout the year. Air temperatures are usually in the lower 30s C (upper 80s F) during the day without much of a difference at night. Given the tropical climate, rainfall can be expected. Rain clouds often develop quickly, dump intense amounts of rain, but last for only a short period of time (sometimes only a few minutes) before the sun is shining once again. Water temperatures average around 28° C (82° F).

Our Expedition

What makes our Raja Ampat snorkeling expeditions successful is our knowledge of the area combined with a bit of flexibility, an important element in adventure travel. The general itinerary includes areas that, historically, have always delivered the best snorkeling experiences. The plasticity of our itinerary allows us to incorporate local weather, tides, and currents into our design so that we can visit these areas at the best possible times. Furthermore, we seamlessly budget in time to explore a new area or visit areas we have recently discovered. This approach results in a solid, proven itinerary that not only delivers the best snorkeling areas but also promotes a sense of adventure and uniqueness.

Route: The expedition begins and ends in Jakarta, Indonesia. One round trip, internal flight (Jakarta-Sorong-Jakarta)

Day 1: Meet in Jakarta, Indonesia at our group resort, the Sheraton Bandara for the expedition orientation and welcome dinner.

Day 2: Fly to Sorong and transfer to our boat, the Mermaid I and have our boat orientation and lunch before we depart for our snorkeling adventure into the islands.

Day 3 - 11: What makes Raja Ampat truly special is the access snorkelers have to an amazing diversity of habitats. Just a few of the examples are shallow, protected lagoons with extensive coral gardens, exciting channels where soft corals, sponges, and tunicates of just about every color completely cover the substrate, and seaward reefs that support thousands of reef fish, turtles, sharks, and rays. Each area we visit will give us the opportunity to snorkel upon some of the healthiest reefs in the world.

On Batanta Island we will visit Dayang where the shallow reefs along the shoreline contain an mind-blowing diversity of hard corals in every color imaginable. Although it is hard to take your eyes away from the coral, a look out into the clear blue water may reward you with schools of snapper, turtles, and rays. This is also a good spot for finding the wobbegong shark, a type of carpet shark known only from this region of the world.

Waigeo is home to Aljui Bay, perhaps one of the greatest snorkeling destinations in the entire world. We love this place for its passages where strong water movement supports a dazzling amount of life along the shallow edges of the islands. If colorful corals and nudibranchs are your thing, then Aljui is your place! In Kabui Bay, we have the chance to snorkel along Sea Fan Alley and be swept along the edges of the passage between Gam and Waigeo. These sites provide us with the chance to see massive sea fans in just a few meters of water. Of course, the huge

schools of reef fishes, including giant bumphead parrotfish, are complimentary.

The seaward reefs along Kri and Mansuar are simply some of the best Raja Ampat has to offer. Huge schools of snapper, bumphead parrotfish, barracudas, unicornfishes, plus the thousands of reef fishes make this a must-do for fish-loving snorkelers. Look out for sharks and turtles as they are common sightings as well. If we are able to incorporate Misool into the itinerary, we will visit Segaf, Pelee, and Wagmab/Len Kafal as they have some magnificent reefs located in scenery you'd think was part of a dream.

As always, weather and tides will help us plan our daily itinerary and with dozens of visits to Raja Ampat, we have developed quite an extensive list of places we want you to see. The challenge for us (and we are always up to it) is trying to show you it all during our time in the islands!

Day 12: Disembark for our connection to Jakarta. Check in to our group resort, the Sheraton Bandara. Farewell dinner at the resort.

Day 13: International flights or extensions.

What to Expect

Daily schedule

Our snorkeling tours are designed to provide you with a unique, educational, comfortable, safe, and exciting snorkeling experience and we strive to deliver on that promise the entire time. Our daily itinerary generally includes two snorkel sessions, a beach walk or dinghy tour, and a presentation before dinner. Our first snorkel session begins after breakfast and can last up until lunch. We generally budget for at least three hours of water time so its up to you! About an hour after lunch, we jump back in the water for another session. Beach walks or dinghy tours can happen either in the early morning (before breakfast) or in the late afternoon to take advantage of the cooler air temperatures and less intense sun (plus the birds are more active!). This schedule may change if we have special activities planned, such as visits to villages and cultural sites on specific islands.

Boat support

All of our snorkel activities are 100% boat supported. There are two inflatable dinghies, each with easy-to-use ladders. Our programs are designed so that you can stay in the water for as long or as short as you like. When you are ready to return to the expedition boat, simply signal the dinghy drivers to pick you up and take you back. Easy!

Water conditions

Water temperatures in the park average around 28° C (82° F), though cooler temperatures may be experienced. As such, please be prepared with exposure suits appropriate for cooler temperatures. Many of the reefs we will snorkel upon are subjected to currents associated with tide cycles that prevail in the area. While we often schedule our session during a time when the currents are minimal, there may be planned drift snorkels. These types of snorkels take advantage of the water movement and allow us to float over the reef without having to actively swim. This activity usually becomes an instant favorite among our guests as it is very exciting and yet very passive at the same time! In some cases, however, the unpredictability of the tides may expose us to strong water movement. This may require a bit of effort though we will always

have our dinghies standing by to help if needed.

Land excursions

There will be opportunities to visit beaches. In true expeditions style, we may take advantage of any opportunity to visit a village or hike on semi-established trails on the limestone islands.

Costs (inclusions and exclusions)

\$6500 USD per person double occupancy

\$8550 USD per person single occupancy

Tour cost includes:

Accommodations on day 1 through day 13

All meals on days 2 through 11 (dinner on day 1; breakfast on day 12)

All internal transfers including international arrival and departure transfers

Internal flight (Jakarta-Sorong-Jakarta)

Non-alcoholic beverages

All snorkeling and park fees

All internal airport departure taxes (Jakarta and Sorong)

All gratuities except for boat staff of the Mermaid I

Tour cost does not include:

Round-trip international airfare

Additional hotel accommodations and meals as a result of travel outside of the program dates

Visa requirements including payments

Alcoholic beverages

International departure taxes

Extra / overweight baggage fees

Trip insurance (recommended; to learn more click [Travel Guard](#), [Travelex](#), [TravelSafe](#))

[DAN insurance](#) (required unless personal insurance program has worldwide emergency evacuation services)

Additional accommodations while on tour in the event of flight schedule changes or events of force majeure

Payment schedule:

Reservation deposit: \$500 USD

August 1, 2015: \$3000 USD / single: \$4025 USD

October 1, 2015: \$3000 USD / single: \$4025 USD

Cancellation policy:

Notification of cancellation must be received in writing. Due to the nature of the absolute boat costs and the payment schedule dictated by the boat, we provide the following cancellation policy: On or before March 15, 2015: Full refund of deposit amount (\$500 USD per person).

March 16, 2015 to July 31, 2015: Forfeiture of \$500 deposit. August 1 – September 30, 2015: Up to 50% of tour cost. After October 1, 2015: Up to 100% of tour cost. In the event of cancellations, we will endeavor to find a replacement, in which case, arrangements can be made for partial refunds (amount to be determined as a case-by-case basis).

For further information, please visit our website and refer to our [Terms and Conditions](#)

Further Documentation

One month prior to our departure, we will send out departure notes that detail everything you will need to know about visas, arrival and departure transfers, equipment, clothing, gratuities, and special items you may need. We will also include vouchers for our group hotel/resorts and e-tickets for applicable internal flights.

Boat Information

M/V Mermaid I is a 28 meter, double engine steel motor yacht. She comfortably holds 15 guests in one master state room (king bed), one single and four deluxe cabins (double or twin beds), and two budget cabins (double/twin beds) below deck. The master, single, and deluxe cabins have ensuite bathrooms, refrigerators and, except for the budget cabins, panoramic sea view windows. All cabins have TVs, DvD access, bathrobes, toiletries, and loads of fluffy towels. There is a wide stern dive platform with two exit ladders and fresh water showers. Delicious Thai, Indonesian, and western meals are served in our "Sawasdee Restaurant" with large windows to enjoy the views. Our salon is equipped with a large flat screen TV/DvD and a full selection of marine life books. There are also two outside decks, one shaded with outside seating and the fabulous sundeck with sunshade plus cushioned sun beds.



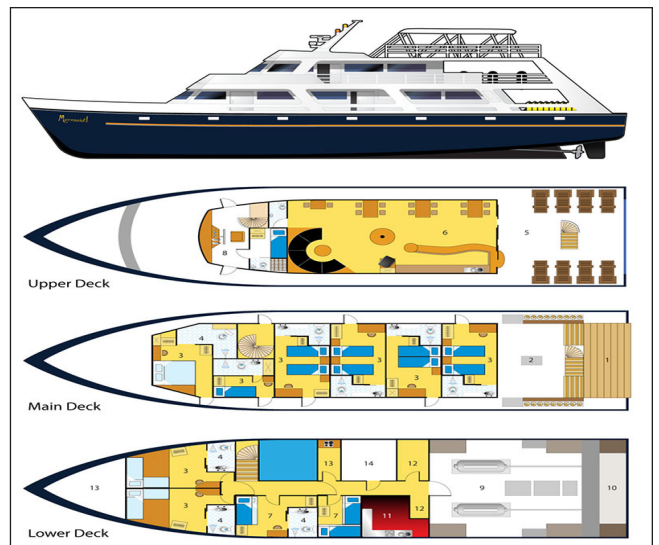
Mermaid I



Deluxe cabin (twin or king)

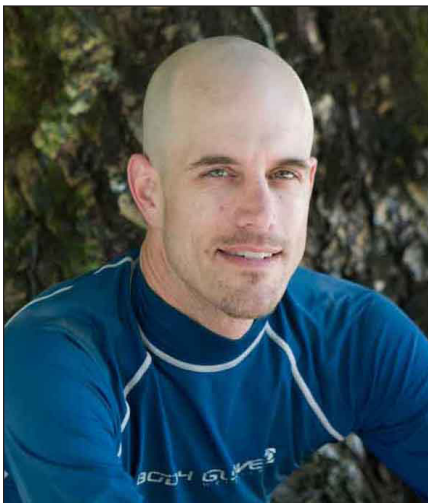
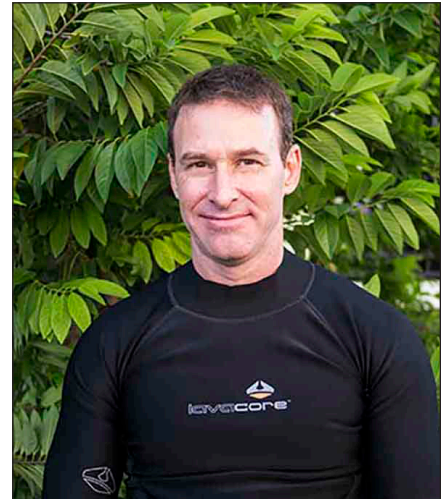


Dining area



The Guides and Owners of Coral Triangle Adventures

Lee Goldman grew up in Philadelphia and got his first taste of the underwater world on a SCUBA diving trip to the island of Bonaire, Netherland Antilles. A year after his return from the warm Caribbean waters he left to pursue his dream of working as a marine biologist for the beautiful but much colder waters of the Pacific Northwest. There he earned a degree in Marine Biology from Western Washington University. After graduating and upon completion of an underwater video called Sea Symphony a video he produced and filmed to showcase some of the beautiful marine life in the Pacific Northwest, he spent the next 10 years traveling around the world as a guide and biologist working in places such as the Florida Keys, Belize, Vancouver Island B.C., Palau, Guam, and the Philippines. In 2002 he left Palau to earn a Master's Degree at the University of Guam where he investigated coral interactions and pioneered new techniques for culturing corals. During his time on Guam, he also was the principal investigator for the Department of Fisheries' Sea Turtle Monitoring Project and helped develop a community-based sea turtle awareness program. Lee is a certified SCUBA Instructor, an avid birdwatcher, and conservationist. He now makes his home in the Philippines where he designs and guides snorkel tours in Southeast Asia, Philippines, Micronesia, Melanesia, Indonesia, and other destinations around the world. He has written two books, Snorkeler's Guide to Marine Life of the Philippines, published in 2012, and his latest book written with Ethan Daniels, Marine Life and Natural History of the Coral Triangle. Both books are available through booksellers or can be purchased on Amazon.com. They can also be order directly from our [website](#).



Ethan Daniels is a freelance marine photojournalist and dive guide currently based in Berkeley, California. Annual travels take him all over the planet, from the rich, temperate waters of the northern Atlantic and the eastern Pacific, to the warm, diverse Coral Triangle, Andaman Sea, and Caribbean. Having spent his youth on the shores of New England, Ethan became fascinated with the bizarre marine life that thrives beneath the water line. He studied biology at Bucknell University and completed his graduate work at the University of Guam Marine Laboratory in 1999, focusing on the behavioral ecology of reef fishes. Ethan spent most of a decade living in Micronesia, studying and photographing the region's unique marine habitats, flora, and fauna. Favoring parts of the world that are off-the-beaten-track, he currently combines his passions for natural history and photography to guide, write, and promote the security of the world's marine ecosystems. Ethan's work can be found in Scuba Diving, Sport Diver, Scuba Diver Australasia, Asian Diver, Asian Geographic, Ocean Geographic, EZ Dive Magazine, Outside, Fifty Fathoms, Unterwasser, Tauchen, and other publications. His latest imagery found at OceanStockImages.com and his first book, Under Cape Cod Waters, published in 2010 by Union Park Press, is on bookshelves and available online. Coral Triangle Seascapes, published in 2012 can be found on the Asian Geographic website. His most recent book, written with Lee Goldman, titled Marine Life and Natural History of the Coral Triangle is available on Amazon.com or directly from our [website](#).