

# Raja Ampat: Kayak and Live Aboard

12 day trip itinerary including the Misool Islands





# Raja Ampat: Kayak and Live Aboard



## The Trip

The island of New Guinea sits just below the equator, bounded by the Pacific Ocean in the north and the Arafura Sea in the south. New Guinea is divided into two halves, the eastern part is the independent country of Papua New Guinea and the western half is known as West Papua. It's on the north-west tip of West Papua that the approximately 1500 islands that make up Raja Ampat are situated. The area abounds in stunning beaches, sapphire seas and one of the world's most spectacular marine habitats. Using a deluxe live aboard as our floating home base, we'll explore our surrounds both on and under the water, returning to the boat for delicious meals and relaxation. On this 12-day itinerary we discover the stunning Misool Island chain where few have paddle before. Join us for an amazing adventure!

## A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Board the vessel and transfer to the Raja Ampat islands. L • D

**Days 2-11:** Explore the islands by kayak, snorkel and diving. B • L • D

**Day 12** Return to Sorong. Transfer to airport. Trip concludes. B

## Meeting Place and Time

We recommend arriving into Sorong the day before the trip start date in case of flight delays and to recover from jet lag. You will be picked up from your Sorong hotel on the morning of Day 1 and transferred to the live aboard vessel. For pre and/or post trip accommodation in Sorong, we recommend the Swiss Belhotel. Please note that Sorong accommodation is not included in the trip cost.

If you choose to arrive into Sorong on Day 1, please make sure your flight is scheduled to land before 7.00am. You will be met at the airport for the transfer.

## How to Get There

Garuda Airlines fly direct to Sorong from Jakarta and from Denpasar (Bali) via Makassar in Sulawesi or Jakarta. Smaller carriers, including Batik Air, currently fly to Sorong from Jakarta, Makassar and/or Manado. Singapore Airlines (from Singapore) and Air Asia (from Kuala Lumpur) fly to Makassar and Manado where a connection to Sorong on one of the airlines mentioned above is required. This is not a comprehensive list and we would recommend you check details with your travel agent and/or on airline websites as flight timetables do change.

If you have a long wait between flights at Makassar, there is a very reasonably priced Ibis hotel at the airport. <http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-8867-ibis-budget-makassar-airport/index.shtml>

## Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience is required to participate on this trip.

The kayaks are stable, easy to control and ideally suited for this remote trip. Your trip leader is a highly experienced sea kayaker and professional wilderness guide. They will give a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayaks. We limit the group size to a maximum of ten clients, plus your dedicated kayak guide.

In general, the fitter you are the more you will enjoy the paddling and it's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, gym classes or swimming well before the trip. If you have not paddled recently, we highly recommend some practice and we may be able to suggest a local operator for kayak hire and/or tuition near your home.

The kayaks supplied are all Rainbows - Atlantis doubles and Laser singles. The paddles are all Werner Skagit.

The wind in Raja Ampat during the dry season, (Oct-April), is generally calm with occasional afternoon sea breezes. The boat provides the flexibility to move from one location to the next, shuttling to areas that are more protected from wind.

Generally we will endeavour to organise three outings each day, two paddling and one diving/snorkelling, subject to conditions.

An "average" paddling outing would range from 2-4 hours including breaks and we mix in as much snorkelling and exploration walking as possible. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

## Diving

Our charter vessel is fully equipped for scuba diving. Please note, the diving in Raja Ampat is suitable for advanced divers as the area can experience strong currents. There is an additional cost for the dive package, please contact our office for details.

There is a dive master on board *Jakaré*, gear to hire, compressors and two rigid dinghies. Diving is subject to water, weather and logistical conditions.

Please advise the office on booking your trip if you'd like to scuba dive. Your PADI certification and your dive log book will need to be scanned and sent to our office for participation in the dive program. Divers will be required to complete a PADI medical questionnaire and provide a subsequent doctor's certificate if aged 60 years plus and/or for any pre existing medical conditions. An online dive waiver, provided by the vessel owners, will be emailed to divers and should be completed prior to the trip.

Your travel insurance must cover scuba diving and it's recommended that divers have DAN membership.

The diving on board is operated by the charter vessel owners, not by Southern Sea Ventures.

## Proposed Itinerary

**The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather and logistical conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

**Day 1:** You will be picked up from your Sorong hotel (or airport if arriving early this morning) for the transfer to our charter vessel, *Jakaré*. There will be a crew introduction, trip briefing and a ship and kayak safety orientation. The adventure begins as we cruise towards the Misool Islands, located southwest of Sorong.

**L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 2:** Awaken to the stunning Misool Islands! We'll launch the kayaks and spend the day exploring Wayil Island, the most southerly of islands visited.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 3** After a short transfer to Segaf island, we hop back in the kayaks to explore this island paradise. Plenty of time is spent in the water too!

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 4:** Today's paddles are centred around the lagoons, cliff walls and karst pillars of Balbulol Island and surrounds.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 5:** This morning we enjoy a short cruise to the next island in the Misool island chain, Lenkafal. We will be dropped off at the southeastern tip and spend a longer outing paddling around the many nooks and crannies of this island. We will join the boat in time for lunch and spend the afternoon exploring the rest of Lenkafal Island via kayak and snorkel.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 6:** A short transfer will bring us to the Thousand Temple Islets where we will spend nearly three days exploring thousands of intricate islands, of all shapes and sizes. We'll paddle over shallow reefs and deep lagoons, under archways and through hidden passages in the limestone rocks.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Days 7-8:** We continue to explore Thousand Temple Islets, including the most amazing cave Raja Ampat has to offer. Paddle into this incredible cathedral like cave or even explore on a stand up paddle board or by fins and snorkel! We depart Thousand Temple Islets after our three days of exploration and make our way to the northern islands of Raja Ampat.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 9:** We will arrive near Pef Island by mid morning today. Our first excursion will be an exploration of Hidden Lagoon, where we seem to discover something new every time we visit. Our afternoon kayak will be a meandering paddle through Pef Island, with limestone cliffs, mangrove passages and beautiful outer water views.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 10:** We cruise to the southern shoreline of Gam Island to the entrance of Mangrove Lagoon. Paddling into the lagoon, we'll wind our way through the mangrove fingers, eventually reaching three inland marine lakes. Here, we'll keep our eyes peeled for dugongs, up to twelve have been reported to live in the area. On the other side of the lakes we'll enter a new set of mangrove fingers which eventually lead us back to the open ocean where we'll meet the boat.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 11:** Today we explore Kabui Bay and wind our way through hundreds of limestone islands. A maze of islands and passageways will have us paddling in a circle to meet the boat where it dropped us off. We will explore one island that has ancient petroglyphs (carvings) on the rock faces. Tonight we head back to Sorong, enjoying our last group dinner on board.

**B • L • D / ON LIVE ABOARD**

**Day 12:** Morning arrival into Sorong. Enjoy a farewell breakfast before packing up and saying goodbye to the crew. The trip concludes with a transfer to the airport.

**B / END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS**

## End of Trip

Flights can be booked to depart Sorong any time during Day 12. A morning flight is best as we will be required to depart the boat soon after breakfast with the crew preparing for the next charter.

## The Area and its People

Raja Ampat's 1500 plus islands are spread over nearly 40,000 km of area. Conservation groups have estimated that the marine life diversity in the Raja Ampat area is the highest recorded on earth, making the islands an amazing destination for those who love the water.

The name Raja Ampat comes from local mythology and tells the story of a local woman who finds seven eggs. Four of the seven eggs hatch and they become kings of the four of the bigger islands. The other three hatchlings become a ghost, a woman and a stone.

Until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, West Papua had little contact with the outside world. Since then, the Dutch and now the Indonesians have colonised the area. The culture of the islanders in Raja Ampat is predominately Papuan and Christian. Most villagers prefer to use one of the many Papuan local languages when communicating with each other. English is not widely spoken but most locals do understand Bahasa Indonesia. Tourism is now playing a big part in the economy of the islands, providing income for families and funds for conservation projects.

## Climate

The wet season lasts from May to September with June to August the windy months. October to April is generally the drier time, although showers can still happen. The average temperature is 30C and humidity is generally high. Water temperature is around 27C.

## Trip Organisation

The live aboard will act as our floating home and allows travelling in comfort between the islands. We'll launch the kayaks each morning and depending on the day, either return to the ship for lunch or spend a full day exploring, maybe enjoying a picnic lunch on one of the white-sand, coral fringed beaches.

Divers can choose to go kayaking or diving, subject to conditions.

Days will start early to take advantage of cooler temperatures. It's a good idea to prepare your personal items for the day before breakfast. Make sure you take your snorkelling gear as kayakers will be in the water as well as on it!

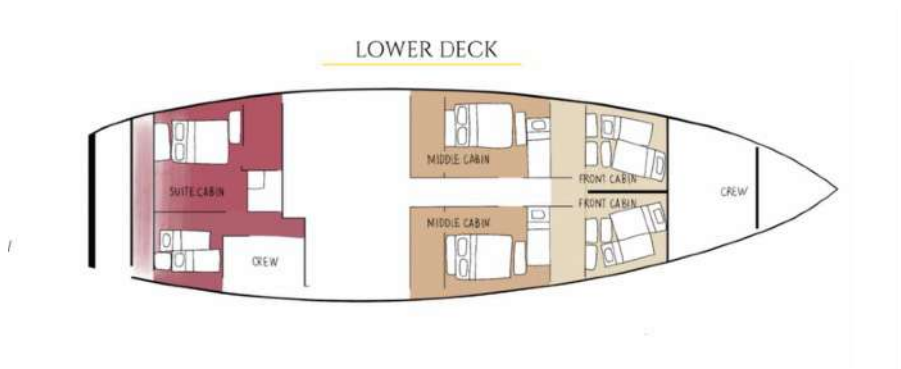
## The Live Aboard

The *Jakaré* live aboard provides a deluxe base for our adventures offering very comfortable cabins and many spacious areas for rest and relaxation.

There are five cabins onboard the *Jakaré*, a combination of twin share and doubles. All cabins are air-conditioned with private en-suite bathrooms and hot showers. Four cabins have portholes and the master cabin has large windows that open as doors to the back deck of the boat.

The ship uses the Indonesian 220 volt system, plugs are two round prongs and guests will need to provide their own adapters.

The boat was built in 2017 in the Phinsi Indonesian Schooner-style. It's 30 metres in length, has five decks and two masts. There are spacious common areas including a dining room, decks with lounges and covered areas. The ship is fully equipped for diving, with a dive deck and dive boats. The *Jakaré*, accommodates 10 guests and 11 crew.







## Expedition Staff

A western kayak guide will lead this trip. They will decide on safety matters, administer the medical kit and liaise with the captain and crew. There is a certified dive master for all diving excursions. Should you have any questions or concerns during the trip, feel free to ask your kayak guide.

## Travel Arrangements

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures and its' ground operators are not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and we will do our best to rectify the situation. Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible. We are sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole island experience.

## Travel Insurance

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness (including Covid-19 infection), accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure. Please note, if you're planning to scuba dive make sure your travel insurance includes this activity.

## Passports, Visas, Permits and Waivers

For citizens of around 80 countries, including Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and those from the UK and USA, a paid visa on arrival is available for a stay of less than 30 days. The current cost is IDR500,000 or US\$35.00. All tourists must have at least six months validity on their passports, a return ticket and a minimum of two blank pages in their passports. Entry requirements for Indonesia do change regularly and it's best to keep checking consular advice.

Entry into Raja Ampat requires a marine entry permit which is included in your trip cost. Our office will require your passport number and expiry date, your name as per your passport and nationality to arrange the permit. Please provide

this at least six weeks prior to your trip departure date. Your guide will hand out the permits in Sorong. Funds raised by the Raja Ampat marine park pass are directed to community development, conservation and patrol programs essential to environmental protection, public health and development of a sustainable eco-tourism industry in the islands.

There are a number of online waiver forms to be completed before setting off on your adventure. Waivers include one from Southern Sea Ventures and expedition partners, a *Jakare* waiver and an additional form for those scuba diving. Our office will forward the links prior to departure.

## Time & Communication

Sorong is two hours behind Australian Eastern summer time.

There is no network (WIFI/phone) on *Jakaré*. If you'd like to use your phone, purchase an Indonesian Telkomsel SIM CARD at Jakarta or Bali airport or in Sorong. Mobile reception is by Telkomsel, the only Indonesian telco with coverage in the islands. Signal strength is good around Sorong and some of the islands.

## Food and Drink

Food is a highlight while on the boat and all meals will be prepared by the chef with a combination of western and Indonesian dishes. Meals will include plenty of fresh fish, chicken, rice and noodle dishes, fresh fruit and vegetables. All drinking water on the boat will be sterilised. Hot and cold non alcoholic drinks, as well as soft drinks, are included in the trip cost.

Alcohol, including beer, wine and limited spirits are available for purchase on board the boat. Preferred payment on board is by IDR (Indonesian rupiah) cash. USD and EUR cash also accepted.

Please let the office know if you have any dietary requirements or food allergies and also note these on your online medical questionnaire.

Gluten-free products are generally hard to source in Indonesia. For those requiring a strict gluten-free diet we suggest you bring your favourite snacks and breakfast cereal from home for your own consumption on board.

Sorong is a small town with a few reasonable cafes. Past travellers recommend Ratu Sayang for grilled fish, Kitong Papua Resto and Sunshine Beach, beside Hotel Tanjung, for all kinds of seafood. As with any change in diet, it is wise to accustom yourself slowly to different foods. It is recommended to wash any fruit bought in the market and to drink sterilised or bottled water rather than tap.

## Cultural Considerations

It is very important to behave in a respectful way towards the people of Raja Ampat, their land and sea. Some basic practices you should observe are:

- ask the locals if they mind being photographed.
- restrict wearing bathing suits to remote beaches.
- in villages use a sarong/shirt to cover singlet tops and brief shorts.



## Conservation

It has always been our motto that “we take only photographs and leave only footprints”. We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, water bottles etc.

## Photography

High humidity, along with paddling in a salt water environment, can damage the delicate electronics in cameras. You might consider bringing a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. It is wise to keep lenses to a minimum, one variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that could be damaged.

## Money Matters

### **Your tour cost includes:**

- Transfer from your hotel (or airport) to the port on Day 1 and from port to airport on Day 12.
- Live aboard boat-twin share accommodation.
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 12.
- Non alcoholic drinks.
- Linen including bathroom towels.
- Snorkelling equipment.
- Stand up paddle boards (SUP).
- One western kayak guide.
- Double and single expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Raja Ampat marine entry permit.

### **Your tour cost *does not* include:**

- Airfares.
- Hotel accommodation in Sorong.
- Meals in Sorong.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Tips.
- Indonesian visa.
- Travel insurance.
- Dive Package.

## Money to Bring With You

We will visit local villages where there may be opportunity to purchase handicrafts, such as carvings and weavings. Money will also be needed to purchase meals in Sorong (if applicable) and purchases on the boat, such as alcohol, scuba rental gear and staff tips. It is highly recommended you purchase rupiah (IDR) when in transit in Bali or Jakarta and not in Sorong. It is difficult exchanging money in Sorong. If using US dollar notes to exchange for rupiah, they need to be in pristine condition (not folded).

## Tipping

Tips for the boat crew are not included in the trip cost. A suggested range is from US\$250.00 to US\$550.00 per guest (paid in the equivalent of IDR cash). Our kayak guides do not expect tips.

## Currency

The unit of currency is the Indonesian rupiah (IDR). The exchange rate is approximately AU \$1 = 9,000 rupiah and US\$1 = 13,000 rupiah.

## Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. Theft is a consideration in Raja Ampat (like at home) and it's a good idea not to leave things unattended when in towns or villages. Always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery, watches and cash. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

## Medical Matters

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with medical details filled out completely and accurately.

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, and attention to medical matters is vital.

### Hygiene

Be conscious of hygiene. Regularly wash your hands, be wary of uncooked food and wash fruit or preferably peel it (with clean hands!)

### Malaria and Vaccinations

Malaria is present in West Papua but not common. **Please consult a doctor or traveller's medical centre for medication and prevention practices for malaria and other insect-borne diseases.**

Some malaria medication can affect people while scuba diving and increase the risk of sunburn.

We advise participants to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and long trousers and socks in the early morning and evenings.

There are no statutory vaccinations at the time of writing. However, you should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information. All travellers should be up to date with their tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis vaccinations.

Please remain up to date on Covid requirements for Indonesia.

### Medical Supplies

On our trips into more isolated areas we carry a comprehensive medical kit. However, it is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sunscreen (water resistant variety at least SP50). Please purchase a reef safe product as generic sunscreens can destroy coral.
- Lip protectant (water resistant variety at least SP50).
- Band-aid strips.
- Insect repellent (containing DEET).
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness.
- Antiseptic soap/liquid hand wash.
- Rapid antigen tests for Covid self-testing.
- Antihistamine.
- Betadine (or equivalent) for scratches.
- Paracetamol.

## Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

There are no baggage restrictions on the live aboard but soft luggage is easier to store compared to hard suitcases. We recommend you bring a small dry bag (5 litres) for your personal items needed while kayaking (to store sunscreen, water bottle, snacks), plus a waterproof case for your camera, if required.

## Gear List

### Essential Items:

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water. Side flaps are a good idea, in particular the type that can be added to conventional sun-glasses by slipping them onto the arms.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- One long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin. A lightweight capilene or polypropylene top may be suitable.
- Two or three T-shirts.
- An extra lycra sun top is useful for snorkelling. A stinger suit (full lycra bodysuit) or waterproof leggings are recommended (good for sunburn prevention too). There are no dangerous marine stingers but there is one that can cause irritation.
- A beach towel (a microfibre towel dries quickly). Bath towels are supplied for cabin use.
- One pair of light-weight, full length trousers and a shirt with long sleeves to wear during the evenings.
- Two pairs of shorts.
- Swimwear. Please note that men's speedos are not culturally accepted, please wear board shorts.



- Sarong.
- One pair of Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly.
- Running shoes and socks (recommended for forest walks).
- Underwear.
- Toiletries. *Jakaré* supplies organic soap. Please provide your own shampoo, conditioner and toothpaste. Ideally organic/ocean friendly as these products will drain to the ocean.
- Laundry soap bar for hand washing clothes (organic/ocean friendly).
- A headlamp or small torch and batteries (batteries can be expensive and difficult to obtain in West Papua).
- One double walled drink bottle, 750ml or larger.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, water bottle, etc on kayak outings.
- A small, fold up day pack to carry your water bottle and camera is useful for hikes.
- Phone charger with adaptor (two round prongs).
- Scuba dive gear is available for hire on the boat, or bring your own for the best fit. Really keen divers might like to bring a small but bright waterproof torch for night outings.
- Cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling. Full fingered gloves are recommended as then the tips of your fingers are protected from the sun.
- Shoes or sandals with a non-marking sole for the boat.

#### **Optional items:**

- Paddle. If you prefer a light-weight carbon paddle, then you may like to bring your own.
- Kayaks come with a padded back band and lightly padded back seat. Bring a gel seat pad if you require more cushioning.
- Camera and film, with waterproof container if the camera is not waterproof.
- Book/games.
- Binoculars.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash.

## **Delays or Problems**

An Indonesian number for your guide will be provided prior to the trip departure.

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia.

#### **SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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