

PAPUA'S WHALE SHARKS & BIRDS OF PARADISE

Snorkelling & Raja Ampat Cruise

(November 2019)

Day 1 ~ Sorong /Raja Ampat

Your flight will arrive in the West Papuan port town of Sorong, the gateway to Raja Ampat. From the airport we will transfer you to the harbour where the yacht *Ombak Putih* will be waiting at anchor. Once settled into your cabin, your cruise director will familiarize you with the vessel's facilities and safety procedures. Ready to start our adventure, we will weigh anchor, leave the harbour behind, and enter the marine protected area of Raja Ampat, home to unique birdlife and the most biodiverse coral reefs in the world. We will cruise towards the island of Waigeo, stopping for a refreshing swim along the way before watching the sun set on our first day at sea.



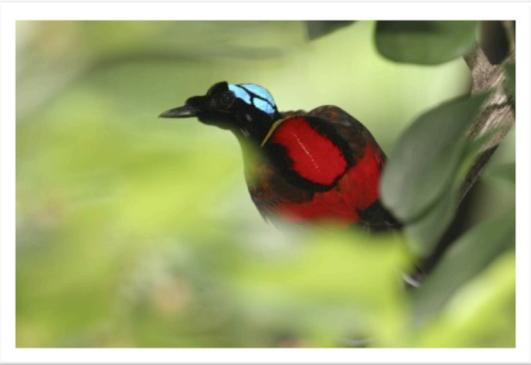
Ombak Putih (D)

Day 2 ~ Sapokren

While it is still dark, our tenders will ferry those of us who are feeling fit and adventurous to the village of Sapokren, where a local guide will take us on a challenging trek into the forest in the hope of seeing the Wilson's bird of paradise. The male is red and black with a yellow mantle on his neck, light green mouth, rich blue feet and two violet tail feathers. The featherless crown is turquoise, ornamented with double black crosses. If we are lucky, we may be able to observe the male dancing from a distance of just five metres. Before the dance, he will clear the ground from any leaves or other obstacles that may disrupt his performance. On our way back to the boat,

accompanied by the sounds of the jungle coming to life, we will be sure to spot a number of bird species along the way. We will spend the remainder of the day resting from the morning's activities and enjoying the waters and reefs of Raja Ampat.

Ombak Putih (B, L, D)



Day 3 ~ Sapokren / Dampier Strait / Pulau Arborek

Today will present another opportunity for keen birdwatchers, as we rise early and walk into the forest on a pre-dawn quest to spot the remarkable red bird of paradise, one of the species that Wallace was most anxious to collect. With a little luck and the help of our knowledgeable guides, we might catch sight of this rare bird's elaborate courtship display as dawn breaks over the forest canopy. After returning to the ship, we will turn our attention from the sky to the sea as the Ombak Putih makes her way through the Dampier strait, home of some of Raja Ampat's premier reefs. If the currents are in our favour, we might see some of the area's larger specimens of marine life, which are attracted to the strait's nutrient-rich waters. We will end the day by mooring off Pulau Arborek in front Arborek Village. Here, we can easily circumnavigate the tiny island by foot and gain a sense of the Asai culture, which is still kept alive by the villagers living in this isolated place.



Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 4 ~ Misool Archipelago

This morning we will wake to see the sun rise over the picturesque chain of islands that makes up the Misool archipelago. The topography is typical of 'karst dissolution,' featuring a great number of tiny islets whose bases have been eroded over time by the relentless motion of the tides. A swim through Tomolol's mysterious dome-topped cave is undoubtedly 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, snorkel or simply float while gazing up at the cavernous grotto adorned with astonishing stalactites. The more adventurous can swim or paddle through the dark waters to the other mouth of the cave. After returning to the ship, we will use our tenders to explore more of this impressive maze of karst islands, both above and below the surface, 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. We will then spend a quiet night at anchor.



Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 5 ~ Misool

Today we will have a relaxing day in Misool. We will spend the day maximising everything that this fascinating area has to offer by marvelling at both the marine wonderland under the water and the magnificent landscape above the surface. We can test out our paddling skills in the sea kayaks, watch for birds perched on the rocks, or just sit back and take in the glorious scenery. After a full day of island hopping, the Ombak Putih will begin her overnight journey.

Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 6 ~ Pisang Islands / West Papua

This morning we will explore the Pisang Islands. These tiny gems isolated in the vast waters of the Ceram Sea offer us a chance to relax and enjoy the sparkling white-sand beaches, clear waters, and vibrant reefs before making our way to the shores of West Papua. Here we will follow the shoreline until we reach the village of Sipitnanam. After visiting the village and meeting the residents, who spend their days fishing the nearby waters and tending their nutmeg plantations, we will continue south along the coastline through the night.

Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 7 ~ Cape Papisol / Karawawi / Triton Bay

Today we will wake up to the beautiful sight of Kitikiti waterfall. Here, in the wilderness, a roaring river cascades down the jungle-clad mountains and crashes into the sea below. We can swim under the waterfall and explore the extraordinary reefs nearby before rounding Cape Papisol to the Karawawi region, where we will stop to refresh ourselves before journeying on to Triton Bay.

Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 8 ~ Triton Bay

Triton Bay is a place of unsurpassed natural splendour, where time and tides have sliced the limestone landscape into tall cliffs and numerous islands separated by lagoons and narrow channels. It is also home to fishermen who keep masses of baitfish in nets that attract a migratory group of whale sharks, which we may have the chance to swim and snorkel with. We can't make any promises, but fingers crossed we will. We will also spend our time swimming from secluded beaches, snorkelling the vibrant turquoise waters and kayaking amongst the rocky outcrops. We can also enjoy watching the birdlife from the comfort of our tenders as we explore this extraordinary maze of karst islands, before visiting the village of Lobo, which is a friendly place at the foot of a 1000-metre-high cliff.



Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 9 ~ Triton Bay / Namatote Passage / Harbor of Kaimana

We will make the most of our last morning in Triton Bay by cruising through the undisturbed coves, caves, and lagoons before heading north through the Namatote Passage. Namatote's cliffs are also well known as a gallery of prehistoric art, boasting an impressive collection of cave paintings, glyphs and pictorial signs left by ancient nomads high upon the rock walls. We will spend our final evening on the ship resting at anchor and enjoying a farewell dinner with our captain and crew.

Ombak Putih (B, L, D)

Day 10 – Harbor of Kaimana/Disembark

In the morning, we will find ourselves at anchor in the harbour of Kaimana. After a final, hearty breakfast, we will say goodbye to the *Ombak Putih* and her crew. Our tenders will take you ashore for your transfer to the airport for your onward travel. (B)

End of Cruise

(Code: B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)

CRUISE COST FROM: \$5,950 per person sharing