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## **Planet Deep Expedition Alor - Savu Sea Indonesia**

**11 days: 8<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2020  
Aboard Damai II  
(Kupang to Maumere)**

**Highlights: Spectacular coral reefs, blue and sperm whales,  
traditional cultures, stunning anchorages, ocean conservation.**

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### **Introduction**

Alor is part of a small group of remote islands that are located east of Flores, Indonesia. These islands are a central part of the Coral Triangle - the region with the most extreme marine biodiversity in the world. In addition, these waters have an abundance of blue whales, sperm whales as well as many species of oceanic dolphins. Our Expedition will explore this amazing “coral reef and oceanic hotspot” for 11 days on a luxury traditional “Phinisi” liveaboard.



We will visit Alor, Pantar, Lembata, Adonara and Solor, and all have their unique and fascinating features; azure blue seas, spectacular coral reefs, with exceptional snorkeling and diving sites; stunning anchorages underneath towering volcanoes, distinct local cultures, with traditional customs and artifacts.

In addition, the area is a critical marine migration corridor for blue whales, sperm whales and other large marine mammals. Members of our team have worked here for decades on marine mammal conservation programs, so we have an intimate knowledge of these waters.

During our Expedition we will survey for blue whales and sperm whales as our “priority species”. Other cetacean species we can expect to see include beaked whales, pilot whales, melon-headed whales, (occasionally) orcas, false killer whales, Risso’s and Fraser’s dolphins, as well as the dugong – a rare species of sea cow related to the manatee. The information we collect will help protect this spectacular oceanic wilderness. We welcome our guests to join us on deck when



we conduct these surveys, to help with the sightings and learn more about these incredible creatures, but that is entirely optional and maybe it's time to just relax or read that special book on deck instead.



Our luxury “home away from home” to explore this remote and (still) seldom visited mini-archipelago is the [Damai II](#) (pictured here) - a traditional wooden Indonesian ‘Phinisi’, 40m long and 9m wide, fitted out to the highest specification to guarantee your comfort for the duration of the expedition.

As you would expect with Planet Deep’s [values](#), there is a focus of sustainability and conservation throughout the expedition and vessel: We offset our fuel and flights and strive to reduce our carbon and ecological footprint with each expedition. We minimize single use plastics, reusable water bottles and metals straws are provided.

Meals on board are truly 5-star and if you are not familiar with the term ‘second breakfast’ when you arrive aboard, you certainly will be looking forward to it by day two! Our chef prepares delicious and healthy dishes, serving fresh quality produce that is locally and sustainably sourced whenever possible. At the same time, we opt out of specific seafood with a high by-catch rate or destructive impact on our seas (i.e. no reef fish, no billfish, no shrimp, in particular). The bathroom products and sunscreen we provide are certified reef safe and marine friendly.



To offer our guest the best ocean adventure, we aim to be at the “right place, right time”!

Our expeditions are expertly scheduled, several years in advance, to coincide the best region with “peak season” and often around certain moon phases. At the same time, we select areas of interest that are data-deficient and important for marine conservation.

Here, our observations can make a real difference to our understanding and assist with their protection - by working towards the inclusion of important oceanic habitats in Marine Protected Areas.

Our days will be filled with adventure, and whilst we have provided an itinerary below, this could be subject to change depending on sea conditions and species encounters to maximize your experience.

Flexibility on-board is the key to enjoy this spectacular ocean wilderness!

### **Day 1:**

Embarkation in Kupang. (1 hour flight from Bali, 2 hour flight from Jakarta; several direct flights per day). Members of the Planet Deep team with members of the Damai crew will meet you at the airport of Kupang. After the transfer to the ship by car (approximately 20 minutes), a boat orientation is given whilst we already lift the anchor.



We have got an overnight crossing of the Savu Sea towards Alor ahead of us. You might want to use this time to relax and recover from any jetlag, get to know the boat and enjoy the scenery; for the Planet Deep team this is a good opportunity for a whale survey, as the Savu Sea is a hot-spot for cetaceans. You are more than welcome to join us on the re-purposed “observation deck” equipped with loungers and beanbags to help us spot and learn about these magnificent creatures.

In June we are at the right time at the right place, right in the middle of a blue whale migration route; the whales pass Timor and Alor and then head north towards the Banda Sea!

On our way to Alor we will have a sunset at sea and a near full moon to guide us along.

### **Day 2: Alor, Beangabang.**



Great snorkelling and diving right along the coast - Beangabang is a world class “macro” site full of exotic marine “critters” including the mimic octopus and wunderpus, many species of mantis shrimps, frog fish, rhinopias, dragonets, bob-tail squids, and so much more. We will conduct a guided night snorkel and night dive that are not to be missed.

You are welcome to join us for a land visit to the local community, as part of our Planet Deep community outreach program (we sponsor remote coastal communities with school supplies, cooking oil and other much needed items). And last but not least, there are natural hot water springs on the beach to relax in.

### **Day 3: Pura**

Early morning start just after sunrise (optional to view on deck, or sleep in ☺).

Whale patrol: The sheltered waters between Pantar and Alor are an important migration corridor. We will keep a good watch for blue whales and the resident megapod of melon-headed whales,



spinner and Fraser's dolphins. This pod of mixed species may include over 300 animals and they are often keen to approach and interact with our boat.

Then, dive and snorkel: Anemone City (please note all our site selections are depending on weather and sea conditions).

A unique and spectacular site due to the exceptional high density of anemones. Good coral reef diversity too. Chances to see the rare thresher shark, as this site includes a cleaning station for large marine life.



During the course of today, the local Ikat ladies are likely to come along side our boat for a floating market (Ikat are beautiful traditional hand-woven cloths that are still used in ancient ceremonies).

This evening we will tuck into Kalabahi Bay on a stunningly scenic anchorage.

#### **Day 4: Kalabahi Bay**

The Bay itself is impressive, almost like a tropical fjord – narrow yet 12 nautical miles long with high mountains on either side. Today, there will be an optional visit to a traditional Alor hill tribe village (early morning until lunchtime).

In water activities include more great snorkeling and macro diving, and there could be a sunset or night snorkel/dive for those keen to take part. We often

have a pod of local bottlenose dolphins that swim nearby our anchorage here too.

#### **Day 5:**

Today we will spend the majority of our time exploring remote areas in the calm and clear waters around North Pantar. We will focus on a stunning coral reef site with schooling hammerhead sharks (never guaranteed, always spectacular) in the morning, followed by “whale patrol” heading into the Pantar Strait.

In this area we have a good chance to spot and swim with the elusive mola mola (oceanic sunfish). There will be more excellent coral reef diving and snorkeling in the afternoon on the ‘Great Wall of Pantar’ and we will overnight again in the Kalabahi Bay area.

#### **Day 6:**

Early morning at sunrise we will lift anchor (again, join us on deck or sleep in) and conduct a scenic whale patrol along the rugged coast to Pulau Rusa & Watu Balu. This area is another key



migratory passage for cetaceans and part of a network of four marine corridors with the Alor-Solor island group.

There are several excellent dive & snorkel sites here that we will explore after lunch and all afternoon: Pristine hard corals, and very “fishy” – meaning these sites have an exceptional bio-diversity and abundance of coral reef fish as well as pelagics – an underwater kaleidoscope of colours that are especially vibrant in Alor waters.



### **Day 7:**

Early morning lift anchor, and ‘whale patrol’ passing along amazing coastal scenery with active volcanoes en route to North Lembata’s Teluk Lewaling.

This area has some of the best snorkeling and diving in the region, coupled with stunning scenery. We will have a late morning or early afternoon dive and snorkel here, followed sunset speedboat exploration in the Bay. Depending on conditions, there may be a night dive/snorkel.

### **Day 8**

Today we stay on our spectacular anchorage at the foot of an active volcano, and have a full day at Teluk Lewaling.

In water activities include diving and snorkeling at Shark Wall. The name of the dive site says it all! This is a long wall, along a spectacular coral reef drop-off with so much to see including several species of sharks. We might also encounter large groups of eagle rays and marine turtles here.



We will spend all day in this beautiful expansive Bay with many other activities on offer: canoeing, stand-up paddling (SUP), take a long walk on a remote beach, or simply read a book on deck.

### **Day 9:**



In the bay of Leba Leba, we will once more focus on world-class macro/critter diving and snorkeling in the morning. This is an amazing area, with more chances to see blue whales in between Lembata and Adonara.

If conditions allow, we will snorkel and dive the coral cay islands to the north of the passage, where numerous black-tip and white-tip sharks are often seen patrolling the reef.

### **Day 10:**

We will spend our last day in and around Maumere Bay. Starting off with a dive and snorkel at the very pretty walls around Pulau Serbete. Over lunch we will cruise into Maumere Bay whilst on whale patrol. This area is especially good for pilot whales and occasionally sperm whales. We arrive in Maumere shortly after sunset for our “Captain’s Dinner”.

### **Day 11:**

Alas, all good things come to an end. It’s time for disembarkation in Maumere, East Flores (several direct flights to Bali each day) with the memories you will have made for a lifetime. Our crew will assist you with all aspects of your transfer to the airport.



For more information about our Alor Expedition, or other conservation travel destinations with Planet Deep (Banda Sea/Ambon; Raja Ampat; Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste), email us at [info@planetdeep.org](mailto:info@planetdeep.org)



### **Disclaimer:**

Whilst we endeavour to provide an experience and cruise as close to this itinerary as possible, there are many external influences outside of our control. Factors such as sea conditions, weather, and species behaviour, may impact our ability to conduct all of the activities and/or visit all of the locations listed. Whilst the team will use all of their combined knowledge of the region and their historical experiences to maximise the opportunities of encountering cetaceans, sharks and a wealth of other marine life, this unfortunately cannot be guaranteed. The schedule and conditions will be assessed on a daily basis to ensure we can have the best possible day, and with our safety first and foremost in mind. Any changes communicated to the guests as and when they occur. Flexibility on-board is the key to enjoy this spectacular ocean wilderness!