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8 Laws of Marketing to High Net Worth Individuals

Pg. 10

Do's and Don'ts
of Dual Agency
Representation
Pg. 26



CHARTERING IN INDONESIA: THE ULTIMATE FAMILY ADVENTURE



At anchor in Wayag



Indonesia is one of the most fascinating countries on the planet. It is located within the Coral Triangle, an area of abundant marine life and diversity, where local cultures and customs are almost as varied as the 17,000 islands that comprise this nation. These beautiful archipelagos make for unforgettable charters. The 10-night sample charter itinerary offered below for Indonesia's Raja Ampat region lets you embark on a far-reaching exploration of what is, without a doubt, one of the least-visited but most remarkable adventure destinations on our planet.

Suggested for the November-to-March cruising season, the adventure starts in Sorong, the hub for West Papua's growing marine tourism industry, including yacht charters and a few small resorts. The domestic airport, SOQ, has daily flights from Jakarta and Makassar. It is a short ride from the airport to the port, where you will connect by tender with your yacht anchored in the bay.

Charming wooden yachts

In Indonesia, every yacht has its own character and style: no two are alike. Most of the yachts in the charter fleet have been custom-built from ironwood and teak (if you love wooden boats, you're in for a treat!); they are charming, tasteful and immaculately finished. The yachts in Indonesia are what we would usually call explorer yachts with capacities and redundancies to operate independently for weeks or

months at a time due to the vast distances and remote areas in which they operate.

The bustling port city of Sorong has little to offer to thrill-seeking or conservationist-minded adventurers, but is an access point to some interesting cultural excursions in the surrounding regions of the Bird's Head Peninsula.

Next, the itinerary will take you north to Wayag, then through Waigeo, Batanta and Misool to cover the highlights of the entire Raja Ampat region. Raja Ampat is a very remote destination. (All charter yacht provisioning must be air-freighted out there.) Tailor-made for an active and nature-loving group, the expedition is packed with fun ways to enjoy the bounties of Raja Ampat's equatorial wonderland. Each day presents opportunities for adventure in stunning natural habitats supported by the amenities of the yacht.

Trek through rainforests in search of rare birds-of-paradise, take RIB rides through epic natural formations, explore limestone caves, kayak across pristine lagoons, plunge into waterfall pools and swim with unique marine life.

The landscapes are straight out of a pirate story where buried treasure awaits on shore.

Equatorial Garden of Eden

Raja Ampat's hundreds of islands stretch over more than 15,000 square miles, which is about the size of Switzerland. Countless dive sites

vary from underwater worlds where soft coral grows in mangroves to cave systems and underwater peaks that gather swarms of pelagic fish in fierce currents.

This is the heart of the Coral Triangle, the most biodiverse marine region on earth, where Raja Ampat divers observe wildlife ranging from the smallest pygmy seahorse to the largest whale shark and everything in between. Even for snorkeling, one can find brightly colored soft corals close to the surface that when illuminated by natural sunlight make for a feast for the senses.

Beach bordering rainforest

Cruising through Raja Ampat's fabled islands on a yacht charter, one's eyes are bound to wander to the bright white shorelines caressed by hues of the turquoise sea. Framed against rich green backdrops of

lush rainforest teeming with exotic wildlife, the landscapes are straight out of a pirate story where buried treasure awaits on shore.

Set up a private beach club for the day and enjoy the sensation of being a castaway on a paradise island, but with a full bar and music. As sunset approaches, prepare for a BBQ of epic proportions and enjoy the show as the sky lights on fire in a display of fantastical colors.

Suitable for all ages, including children, what follows is a non-diving itinerary. The activities have been designed for all family members to participate equally. If desired, some of the world's best diving also can be added to supplement this itinerary.

Day 1: Sorong – Wayag

105 nm (195 km) ~ 15 hours

Board the yacht and head north for an overnight cruise into Raja Ampat and its breathtaking natural sites. If conditions are right, raise the sails for the first time as you head into the sunset. Steam overnight to ensure you reach the most beautiful scenery the next day.

Day 2: Wayag

At sunrise, cruise through Wayag's stunning karst formations. Enjoy a leisurely day of water sports, then head ashore for a cocktail party set up by the crew on a pristine stretch of beach.

Day 3: Wayag – Wayag Ranger Station

4 nm (7 km) ~ 0.5 hour

Start the day with a morning snorkel, then visit the Wayag Ranger Station where baby black tip reef sharks circle in the shallows. Spend the rest of the day snorkeling or exploring the iconic karst pinnacles by kayak.

Day 4: Wayag Ranger Station – Kawe

12 nm (22 km) ~ 1.5 hours

Hike to a waterfall on the west side of the island in the morning, then snorkel across the equator in the afternoon where soft corals bloom in a vibrant display of colors near the surface. Keep an eye out for manta rays.

Day 5: Kawe Island – Wofoh

14 nm (26 km) ~ 2 hours

Go for a snorkel and relax on a deserted beach in the morning. For



Arborek Island



Wofoh Island

a taste of local culture in the afternoon, visit Manyafun village, set partially on stilts overlooking the clear, fish-abundant waters.

Day 6: Wofoh – Kabui Bay

19 nm (35 km) ~ 2.5 hours

Separating Gam and Waigeo islands is a narrow waterway that looks like a river. The clear water hosts colorful soft corals near the surface, perfectly viewed via snorkeling or stand-up paddle boarding.

Day 7: Kabui Bay – Arborek

18 nm (33 km) ~ 2.5 hours

Awake before dawn for a trek to spot the greater bird-of-paradise. Snorkel Manta Sandy for a chance to see manta rays and visit the conservationist village of Arborek in the afternoon, known for its epic jetty snorkel.

Day 8: Arborek – Arefi Village/Batanta

25 nm (46 km) ~ 3.5 hours

Embark on a morning island trek to see birds on Batanta's north coast, then walk along the riverbed to see two jungle waterfalls. In the afternoon, relax at anchor where the sounds of the rainforest fill the air.

Day 9: Batanta – Tomolol Bay

97 nm (180 km) ~ 14.5 hours

Take RIBs through Tomolol Bay, where dolphins sometimes can be seen between islands. Swim through cathedral-sized Tomolol cave, leading to a grotto of turquoise water surrounded by sharply rising cliffs.

Day 10: Tomolol Bay – Misool Eco Reserve

27 nm (50 km) ~ 4 hours

Explore the area's exciting scenery on a RIB excursion through the Mushroom Islands with colorful coral just below the surface. End the day with a party onboard before cruising overnight back to Sorong.

Day 11: Misool Eco Reserve – Sorong

92 nm (170 km) ~ 14 hours

Disembark after lunch for flights home.



Wayag



Tomolol cave