

Comisool

frequently asked questions





frequently asked questions

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Q: Where the heck is Misool?

A: We are located on our own private island in Southern Raja Ampat, West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), Indonesia, on the site of a former shark-finning camp. Our island is just south of the equator, S 02.244661, E 130.558167. We are surrounded by our own 300,000 acre Misool Private Marine Reserve. All of our dive sites are within our own patrolled No-Take Zone.

Q: How do I get to Misool?

A: We will meet you at the Sorong Airport and then bring you to the harbour and onto a private speedboat, scheduled to depart at 09:00.

We recommend all guests transit through Jakarta, arriving the evening *before* the start of your stay at Misool. From Jakarta, plan to fly with Garuda Indonesia Airlines, departing Jakarta at 00:20 with GA682. You'll arrive in Sorong at 06:35 on the first day of your stay at Misool.

Transit through Bali is also possible, though the flights are less convenient. Contact us for current flight details.

Of course you may make alternate arrangements, but our transfer boat will only wait for this flight. In the unfortunate event that you are booked in a different flight which is cancelled or delayed past 09:00, we will have to make alternate arrangements to get you to the island, at your own expense.

NB: We no longer recommend Express Air.

Q: What is the baggage allowance?

A: Baggage allowance for Garuda domestic travel is 20 kg, and excess baggage fees around 40,000 IDR/kg. Please note that if the international flights are on a SkyTeam Alliance airline such as Delta, KLM, Air

France, Korean Air, or Garuda, you may be able to check your baggage all the way through to Sorong. In this case, Garuda currently gives 30 kg for domestic flights as well.

Q: Yikes, this sounds complicated. How do I book my domestic flights?

A: Don't worry, we're here to help. We will happily book your internal flights for you. We can also book a hotel for you in Sorong should you need one.

Q: How long does it take to reach the resort island?

A: The speedboat transfer from Sorong to Batbitim, our resort island, is about 4 hours, depending upon sea conditions. The first third is a scenic passage between the Papuan mainland and small islands of the Salawati group, fringed by mangroves. The second third of the journey is an open crossing over generally calm seas. During the final leg of the journey, we enter the breathtakingly beautiful island chain to which Batbitim belongs. We'll cruise between sheer karst cliffs and innumerable small islands, often escorted by dolphins. About 30 minutes before we arrive at the resort, we'll cross the border into our No-Take Zone.

Q: What sort of boat will we travel on?

A: We'll travel on a private speed boat. On most departure dates, we'll travel on Bintang Fortuna 3. Built in 2013, she's purpose built for cruising Raja Ampat's waters. She's a comfortable 16 meters long, equipped with 4 x 200hp engines, air conditioning, comfortable seating, and a toilet. The boat is fully equipped with safety and navigation equipment.



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Q: How much does the speedboat transfer cost?

A: The transfer costs \$335. Of course if you are arriving/departing by liveaboard or private vessel this fee will be adjusted.

Q: What if I have to spend the night in Sorong before the trip?

A: We can arrange a Sorong Arrival Package for you. We will collect you at the airport, take you to your hotel and check you in. We'll collect you again the following morning and bring to the dock for a 09:00 departure.

Q: When can I visit?

A: Misool offers all-inclusive packages for to 7+1, 9+1, and 12+1 night stays. That means 7 nights at the resort followed by 1 night in Sorong on scheduled departure dates. Please refer to our schedules for detailed information.

Q: What's included in the accommodation package price?

A: Package price includes accommodation, meals, snacks, soft drinks, drinking water, coffee and tea, and one hotel night in Sorong with breakfast following your stay at Misool. Government tax is included in the package price.

- ▶ Airport pick-up and drop-off service in Sorong, porter fees, transport between the airport and the harbour on scheduled transfer days
- ▶ Packages quoted per person based on double occupancy. Please refer to our rates sheets for details.

Q: What's included in the dive package price?

A: tanks, weights, expert guides, fuel, free

Nitrox for qualified divers.

- ▶ Your first dive/check dive is counted as part of your package, the same as all other House Reef or Boat Dives.
- ▶ Government tax and service charge is included in the package price.

Q: What's not included in either of those packages?

- ▶ Speedboat transfer from Sorong to our resort island. The cost is USD 335 per person per return trip on scheduled departure dates.
- ▶ Equipment rental. To avoid disappointment, please advise us at the time of booking if you require any rentals - supplies are limited. Please note that we do not rent wetsuits, mask, or fins, so you will need to bring those with you.
- ▶ Each guest (whether diving or not) must purchase a Raja Ampat Marine Park Entry permit. This is available for 1,000,000 IDR (about USD 73), or 500,000 IDR for Indonesian nationals. The tag is valid for one calendar year. We'll arrange this for you if you need it.
- ▶ Most other experiences, like cooking classes, kayaking tours, SUP tours, scooter snorkeling, private beach picnics, etc.
- ▶ Spa services.
- ▶ Laundry
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages. We have beer and a selection of imported wine available for purchase.
- ▶ Satellite Internet connection.
- ▶ Dinner in Sorong before departing.v



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Q: What sort of payment do you accept for incidentals incurred during my stay?

A: Incidental charges such as spa services, excursions, internet, souvenirs, etc can be paid by Visa, Mastercard, or cash (Rupiah, USD, or Euros) before your departure. Our bank will charge you 2% for this service. If you'd like to pay in cash, please note that foreign notes must be in perfect condition - otherwise Indonesian banks will not accept them for exchange or may choose to give you a lower exchange rate. USD 100 notes receive the best exchange rate if dated 2000 or later. If you'd like to pay in Indonesian Rupiah, there is an ATM near the hotel where you'll be spending the night after your stay with us.

Q: What should I bring with me?

A: Please refer to our Packing List for more details, but some important ones:

- ▶ proof of dive insurance and dive certification card. We'll need to see them before you get in the water.
- ▶ All dive equipment, including a torch, surface marker buoy, dive computer, wetsuit, and well-maintained gear. Computer and surface marker buoy (safety sausage) are required safety equipment. If you need to hire any equipment, please let us know at the time of booking. We don't rent wetsuits, masks, or fins.
- ▶ 1 copy of your passport info page for your travel permit which we will arrange for you
- ▶ passport valid from 6 months from the time of entry into Indonesia. Nationals of most countries will be granted a 30-day
- ▶ one full empty page in your passport in which to put the Visa on Arrival sticker
- ▶ You may be asked by Indonesian Immigration officials to show a copy of your

airline ticket out of Indonesia within the 30-day period.

- ▶ a warm pullover or jacket. Evenings can occasionally be brisk, and the domestic flights are often extremely cold.
- ▶ sun hat and polarised sunglasses
- ▶ reef-safe sunscreen (no oxybenzone or octinoxate)
- ▶ light coloured clothing. For some reason, light colours are generally less appealing to mosquitoes than dark ones.
- ▶ any toiletries you may need such as sunscreen, razors, tampons, toothpaste, medications, etc. We supply shampoo, conditioner, and soap.
- ▶ Rechargeable batteries
- ▶ binoculars
- ▶ sturdy walking shoes like Tevas or Keens if you're planning on some non-diving excursions. Otherwise, flip-flops will do.
- ▶ your favourite tippie. It's very difficult (and very expensive) to get alcohol in Sorong. We encourage you to bring your favourite bottle of wine or spirits from the Duty Free shop in your home country (the Duty Free shop in the Jakarta airport is not very well stocked). If you are inclined to share, we've got a special affinity for Gin and Campari...
- ▶ a postcard from your hometown for our staff bulletin board. Our staff are thrilled to know guests come from far and wide to visit their home.
- ▶ Some very basic English books to add to our small staff library. We also sponsor two local primary school libraries, and we've just finished construction on a local kindergarten.



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- ▶ Our Ranger Patrol will also very happily accept donations of items which are often difficult to obtain in our area and needed to conduct 24-hour surveillance. They don't need to be new or fancy, just functioning. Examples include handheld GPS's, basic waterproof cameras for documenting activities and illegal fishermen, waterproof or underwater torches, handheld marine VHF radios, and any type of dive equipment.
- ▶ If you're planning to upgrade your kit, consider retiring your gear after your stay with us and avoid carrying it all back home again!

Q: What should I not bring with me?

A: Please plan carefully to minimise your rubbish.

- ▶ Whenever possible, choose rechargeable batteries and avoid bringing things like disposable razors, excessive plastic bags, plastic water bottles, etc. Any non-biodegradable and non-recyclable rubbish will have to be returned to Sorong. We are operating in a pristine environment, and we'd like to keep it that way.
- ▶ Anti-bacterial soap. Our waste water treatment system relies on plant life to remove nitrogen, phosphates, and bacteria from grey and black water. Using harsh detergents and bactericidal agents will harm our plants, reducing the efficacy of our filtration system. Please don't use them.
- ▶ Dive gloves. You will not be permitted to wear them.
- ▶ Fishing/spearfishing equipment. We're located inside a No-Take Zone, and fishing is strictly forbidden. Yes, that includes catch and release.

Q: What sort of power do you have?

A: 220 volts, 24 hours a day. We also have some 110 V transformers available in the Dive Centre.

Q: What is the baggage allowance for the flights between Jakarta and Sorong? And what about airport departure tax?

A: Baggage allowance for Garuda domestic travel is 20 kg, and excess baggage fees around 40,000 IDR/kg. Please note that if the international flights are on a SkyTeam Alliance airline such as Delta, KLM, Air France, Korean Air, or Garuda, you may be able to check your baggage all the way through to Sorong. In this case, Garuda currently gives 30 kg for domestic flights as well. At the time of writing, all domestic and international tickets already include Departure Tax, and payments are no longer collected at the airport.

Q: When is the best time of year for diving?

A: The weather is rough in July, August and early September, and the shoulder season in June and September can be variable. Aside from this yearly occurrence, diving in Raja Ampat is not particularly seasonal. September and October bring massive schools of bait fish, which attract bigger hunting fish and Mobula rays. The south winds in May and June bring more sharks and pelagics. Visibility tends to be at its best in November and February/March.

Q: How many dives can I do per day?

A: There are three scheduled boat dives per day, as well as either a dusk dive or a night dive each night. The House Reef is open from 08:00 to 20:00 every day for buddy teams or guided dives.



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Q: How big will my dive group be?

A: Maximum group size is 6 divers to one guide, but 4 is more typical. Please let us know in advance if you'd like to engage the services of a private guide.

Q: What about child divers?

A: We can accommodate child divers upwards of age 10. Please enquire about depth restrictions, equipment, and private guiding.

Q: Can I do deco diving?

A: No. Because of our remote location we dive very conservatively. We do not allow deco diving, and the maximum depth is 30 metres. We do not allow solo diving.

Q: What about Nitrox?

A: Nitrox is provided free of charge to qualified divers and subject to availability.

Q: What can I do at Misool if I don't dive?

A: Lots of stuff! It's lovely to lounge around in a hammock with a good book, enjoying the balmy tropical breezes, watching the baby sharks passing by in the lagoon and the colour of the water change over the course of the day. Sample some of our extensive spa services, or join our chef for a cooking class. If you're looking for more active pursuits, we highly recommend snorkelling on the House Reef, where you can spot turtles, sharks, and an endless parade of colourful reef fish. You might also enjoy taking one of our kayaks for a spin or joining one of our non-diving excursions like a visit to the local village or sacred caves. Ask to see our Experiences Menu for more details.

Q: What sort of food can I expect?

A: Meals are served our beach-front Restaurant. We offer a tasty, nutritious, and whenever possible, organic menu with an emphasis on fresh local food.

The first breakfast, available before the first dive, is buffet-style. A cooked breakfast with a small á la carte menu is available after the first dive. Lunch is served family-style. Afternoon teatime features homemade cookies and savoury snacks. Dinner service is plated, so your meal is always prepared fresh even if you're planning a night dive. There is also an all-day á la carte menu available. We do not recommend undertaking a diet during your stay with us.

Out of respect for our Muslim hosts, we do not serve pork products. All our fish is locally sourced, line-caught blue water fish. We do not serve reef fish or long-lined fish. We also do not serve prawns due to similar concerns about sustainability.

Q: I'm vegetarian/vegan. Is this an issue?

A: Absolutely not. We can easily accommodate vegetarians and vegans (and you'll be in good company: most of our management is vegetarian/vegan). Please let us know about any other dietary restrictions or allergies well in advance of your arrival.

Q: What about drinks?

A: Clean drinking water, Papuan coffee, tea, and soft drinks are provided free of charge. Beer, imported wine, and imported sparkling wine are available for purchase.



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Q: What sort of service can I expect?

A: As part of our commitment to conservation and building the local community, we employ as many local people as possible. Many of our waiters and housekeepers you'll meet have been with us from the very start, when they worked as labourers, carpenters, dishwashers, and roofers. These staff members of course learned English and service skills along the way. But even more importantly, they all possess a certain quality which is impossible to teach: the art of warm and authentic hospitality.

Q: What if I get sick or hurt while I'm there?

A: We are a long way from the nearest doctor, hospital, or recompression chamber. Your health and safety are of paramount importance, so we advise all guests to take utmost care. Several of our staff are certified PADI Emergency First Aid Responders. Oxygen is available. In the event of a general medical emergency, you will be evacuated to the nearest hospital, which is in Sorong. In the event of a diving emergency, your diving insurance provider will advise us on the appropriate course of action. You must have dive insurance if you plan on diving. We recommend DAN or PADI insurance, which covers emergency evacuation. We also strongly recommend health and travel insurance.

Q: Should I take precautions against malaria?

A: We recommend that you always sleep under a mosquito net, wear light-coloured clothing, cover up during evening and early morning hours, and use an insect repellent if necessary (we have natural and very effective mosquito repellent available on site). As for malarial prophylactics, we suggest you consult with your doctor.

We have never had a case of malaria contracted on our island, but malaria is endemic to Papua.

Q: How can I stay in touch with my family and friends while I'm at Misool?

A: Enjoy the luxury of some screen-free time while at Misool. Prepare to turn off your mobile phone, as we are well out of range. We do have a satellite internet connection available in the Dive Centre, but it's slower than 1993 dial-up. Take this rare opportunity to disconnect with the outside world and reconnect with your inside world. If your friends and family need to contact you, we suggest they write to guest@misoolecoresort.com. We'll pass the message on to you via Island Post.

Q: How does Misool contribute to marine conservation?

A: We thought you'd never ask! Misool is deeply committed to a policy of environmental and social responsibility. We seek to provide exceptional and enriching experiences in a sustainable environment, for both staff and guests alike. We aim to protect and revitalize both our natural surroundings and the community in which we operate. We are committed to demonstrating to our hosts, our guests, and the local government that tourism can support a local economy with much more favourable terms than mining, logging, overfishing, or shark finning.

If you booked your stay after 1 January 2017, we have already donated \$50 per person to our marine conservation initiative, Misool Foundation, on your behalf. We'd love to sit down with you over a cup of coffee and share more. And we hope you'll consider matching our donation.