



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Join us on a unique and remote swimming adventure in the far eastern reaches of Indonesia. Based on a liveaboard boat, we'll enjoy the freedom our floating home for the week gives us to find the best swimming in this group of islands. Straddling the equator, Raja Ampat is an archipelago of over 1,500 islands, islets and cays which lie off the northwest coast of New Guinea. Raja Ampat translates to the 'Four Kings' and refers to the four main islands of Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati and Misool.

This location is one of the richest marine biodiversity sites in the world and over 90% of the marine life that lives in these waters lives just four metres below the surface, so it's an ideal location for swimmers to explore. Over 1,500 fish species, 500 coral species and endangered mammals, such as the dugong and blue & pygmy whales call these waters home.

Our trip is based aboard SMY Ondina, our live-on-board yacht, allowing us to travel to some of the most remote locations amongst this picturesque archipelago. It also gives us the chance to make changes to our itinerary when required in order to find the very best conditions and to complete a truly stunning selection of swims over the course of the week.

On top of the organised swims which are included in the trip itinerary, there is also plenty of time to take part in additional activities throughout the trip. These include shore excursions and guided snorkelling sessions either before breakfast or after lunch with our guides. Scuba dives are also available, which can be paid for locally during your trip.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is for intermediate open water swimmers who want to explore the incredible ecosystem that make up Raja Ampat in Indonesia. Some of the swims may be challenging due to local weather conditions and currents, so it is important that swimmers are comfortable in these situations. Swimmers should be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 4km (split over a minimum of two swims) prior to the start of the trip.

## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Raja Ampat

Situated off the northwest tip of Bird's Head Peninsula on Papua, the most eastern island of the Indonesian Archipelago, Raja Ampat or 'The Four Kings' is an archipelago comprising over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals surrounding the four main islands of Waigeo, Batanta, Salawati, and Misool. The name Raja Ampat itself is believed to derive from a legend where a woman found seven eggs, with four of them hatching and going on to become the kings of the four main islands.

### Sorong

The town of Sorong, located on the 'beak' of the Bird's Head Peninsula in West Papua is our departure point for our trip to the Raja Ampat marine park. The word 'Sorong' originates from the local Soreri language meaning 'deep and turbulent seas'. Mountains, hills, lowlands, and protected forests surround the town. The seas around Sorong are rich in tuna and shrimp, which are also major export commodities.



## Wayil Batan

These craggy karst islets of karst became separated from the main island years ago, creating a maze of turquoise lagoons dotted with caves and mushroom resembling outcrops covered in wild orchids.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Sorong Airport, Indonesia
Start Time	12:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Sorong Airport, Indonesia
Finish Time	10:00 on Day 8
Vessel	<a href="#">SMY Ondina</a> , Indonesia

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of your trip; however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

### Day 1

Upon arrival at Sorong Airport, our SwimTrek representative will meet you at arrivals. From here, there is a short transfer ride to our liveaboard vessel, the SMY Ondina, a classic Phinisi style vessel, built with tropical woods following traditional techniques. Once you have had a chance to relax, your SwimTrek guides and ship's captain will host a welcome drink and briefing on the ship's aft deck where we will cover the plan for the week in more detail.

We weigh anchor and head for Mioskon island, which lies off the Gam Peninsula on Waigeo. Here we set about on a short circumnavigation of this limestone outcrop. The reef here fringes right next to the island and can be within a few metres of the surface which makes it excellent for swimming over. Yellow Snapper is often spotted in this vicinity. Back on board, we enjoy the first of our dinners, a blend of modern Indonesian cuisine with a Western touch.

### Day 2

This morning we travel to Cape Kri, which sits at the crossroads of different ocean currents which make for an incredible variety of flora and fauna. This area even holds the world record for the most fish species spotted in one dive! We use the current to our favour as we swim down Kri island's south coast and we may also catch sight of turtles and manta rays as we go as these are known to inhabit this fringing reef system. After lunch on board the Ondina we have a chance for a snorkel at Sawan Darek Reef, where our local guides will get in the water and point out what you may have seen on your earlier swim.

The afternoon's swim goes along the south coast of Mansuar Island which features recessed beaches, and rocky promontories. The island's stunning reef is our constant companion and is only ever a few metres from you as we make our way along the coast to Sauwandarek village, which is our finishing point for this swim.



### Day 3

Today we have an early start to enjoy a special sunrise hike. We take a 30-40-minute walk to view birds-of-paradise, locally known as the Cendrawasih, in their natural habitat. There are actually 38 species of this bird and they are one of the most iconic symbols of Papua. Many Papuans believe these birds are the reincarnation of fairies flitting around their jungles.

After a revitalising breakfast, we head back into the water for our first crossing of the trip. We start from Waigeo Island and make our way to the twin islands of Friwen and Yenbeser, which sit just 1km off the mainland. This swim is a mix of reef coastal swimming and a short crossing. Around the twin islands the seafloor undulates and has a large number of sea mounds. Octopus, moray eels and clams are also often spotted here. After lunch there is time for a snorkel near Friwen Island, and, if conditions allow, we'll head to the renowned Friwen Wall to see its many sea fan corals.

In the afternoon, we have a chance of pace and will take the time to go manta spotting. At Manta Sandy, butterfly fish and cleaner wrasse can be spotted as they gather to help mantas clean themselves. Following this we visit Arborek Village, a traditional commune and a hub for community-based marine conservation, which lies on the Dampier Strait.

### Day 4

Today we head west on our way to the Fam Islands in Western Raja Ampat. Our swim this morning is in the inland sea of Penemu Island, which features some of the most active and vibrant reefs anywhere in Raja Ampat. From the open sea, a small entry through the limestone rocks gains you access into the inner lagoon where you'll find an extensive fringing coral reef covered by emerald waters.

Our daily snorkel takes us to Melissa's Garden, considered to be one of Raja Ampat's geologically oldest coral reefs. Nestled between three limestone islands the site features everything from snapper, sturgeon fish, pygmy seahorses and reef sharks.

In the afternoon we head out on a short coastal of Southern Penemu Island featuring stunning limestone karsts which as well as being swum around can also be climbed to admire the view. Water visibility is superb here as we are in one of the remotest sections of the trip. Once everyone is onboard after the swim, we head out on our journey south to the islands that surround the main southern island of Misool. This isolated area is home to the Misool Marine Reserve and is a haven for green turtles, hunting octopus and bumphead parrotfish.

### Day 5

This morning we head out to the stunning island group of Wayil Batan which has a great labyrinth of passages and caves to swim around. The swim sees us journey between 2 bays and pass 5 islands and is one of the highlights of the week.



After time to rest for lunch, we'll enjoy another highlight of the week as we carry out a short hike on Walib Island to what the locals call Jellyfish Lake. Thousands of years of isolation have rendered these jellyfish harmless and give a magical experience as you swim through this freshwater lake. In the afternoon we head to the north of Walib Island and carry out a shallow coastal swim over a pristine reef teeming with corals and fish life.

## Day 6

Today takes us to Balbulol Lagoon, with the water dominated by the many limestone karst monuments. Resembling a mix between a pyramid and an obelisk, these formations are a great sighting point during our swim. Today's lunchtime snorkel takes place at the Farondi Islands, where a spectacular archway dominates the scene and makes for an idyllic swim through.

Our afternoon swim takes place on Wagnab Island and features a stunning lagoon swim. Keep an eye out for caves both above and below the water, as some of which you can swim into. The visibility here is exceptional and it is home to trevally and tuna. It's not unheard of to find yourself in the middle of one of their schools as you swim here.

## Day 7

Today we head to one of the most remote destinations of the trip as we visit Dharam Island. Here you won't see any other land on the horizon but plenty of unique flora and fauna. Schools of fusilier and barracuda are some of the life you can expect to see below the surface as well as colourful soft corals and sponges.

Our two swims for the day feature a mix of crossings and coastals over reef, rocks and sand and are a great way to finish off this quite amazing trip in Raja Ampat. At the end of our two swims here, we weigh anchor and head towards Sorong and spend a final night looking back on an incredible week of swims.

## Day 8

There is time for a short early morning swim before our last breakfast together and a debrief about the trip before we depart our vessel.

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## TRIP INFORMATION

### Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:



✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweater / Fleece
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream (Factor 30+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Light Clothing for Shore Excursions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel**	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scanned copy of photo page of passport***
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rash Vest		

\*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

\*\*A towel will be provided on board, however, please feel free to bring your own along, if preferred.

\*\*\*A scanned copy of the photo page of your passport will be required by local authorities.

Please note that SwimTrek will supply swim hats and provide water and electrolyte drinks in shared water bottles on your safety boat. If you prefer to use your own drink bottle, please feel free to bring one along. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

### Suncare

Please ensure you take the necessary steps to ensure you are well protected. High factor, waterproof sun cream, cover ups, long sleeved rash vests, leggings and a good sun hat are all strongly recommended.

### Group Size and Boat Support

This trip has a maximum group size of 14. The trip will be split into a maximum of two groups based on speed, each of which is accompanied by own safety support vessel. Boat support on this trip includes two support boats piloted by your crew and SwimTrek guides. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.



## TRIP GRADING

### Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Mioskon Island Circumnavigation	1½km	Kri Coastal	3km
Mansuar	2km	Waigeo-Friwen	2½km
Manta Sandy	1km	Penemu Inland Sea	3½km
South Penemu	2km	Wayil Batan	2½km
Walib	2km	Balbulol Lagoon	2½km
Wagmab	2km	Dharam Morning	2km
Dharam Afternoon	2km		

### Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience but you need to be aware that marine life is abundant in the coral waters of the Indonesian archipelago. When swimming in the Coral Triangle, you should be aware that certain marine life such as stonefish, scorpionfish, rays, jellyfish, sharks, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims. In the areas that we swim, there is a long history of snorkelling/swimming, so sea life is used to human interaction. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however, if you suffer from anaphylaxis please consult the office prior to booking.

### Walking Distances

There are optional walks on this trip, for which we recommend that you wear comfortable walking shoes or sandals.

- A 30-40-minute walk to view the Birds of Paradise on Day 3.
- A short hike on Walib Island on Day 5.

### Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
December	28-30°C / 82-86°F	28-31°C / 82-88°F
January	28-30°C / 82-86°F	28-31°C / 82-88°F

\*Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

### Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. As a consequence, open water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.



## GETTING THERE

Your liveaboard boat will sail from and return to the port in **Sorong**. The easiest option is to fly into Jakarta Airport and then catch a connecting flight to Sorong. There are also direct flights from Surabaya (East Java), Makassar (South Sulawesi) and Manado (North Sulawesi). There are no direct (non-stop) flights from Bali to Sorong.

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. We suggest that you use [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) to search for alternative flight options for this trip. Whichever route you choose to take, we recommend confirming your flights and other travel arrangements as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues.

### Flights to Jakarta Airport (CGK)

To search for available flights into Soekarno-Hatta International Airport serving Indonesia's capital city Jakarta, on the island of Java, please visit [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net).

Please note that, due to long journey times to Jakarta and connecting flight schedules to Sorong, we recommend that guests book at least one night's accommodation in Jakarta.

### Flights from Jakarta to Sorong Airport (SOQ)

From Jakarta, there are a number of airlines which operate daily flights to and from Sorong Airport (SOQ), including Lion Air, Batik Air and Garuda Indonesia. Please note that luggage allowances on these airlines is often limited, so please ensure that you book an adequate amount for your trip.

To search for available flights from Jakarta to Sorong, please visit [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net).

### Transfer from Airport/Hotel to SMY Ondina

Transfers from the airport or a local hotel to our liveaboard vessel on Day 1 of the trip are included in the trip price for all guests.

For guests who arrive on Day 1 of the trip, you will be met in the arrival area by one of our local representatives and transferred directly to your home for the week on board the SMY Ondina. If you arrive prior to the trip start time of 12:00, you will be able to leave your bags on board the boat while you spend some time exploring the local area prior to meeting your guides and fellow guests.

For guests who arrive prior to Day 1, you will be collected from your accommodation and transferred to the liveaboard SMY Ondina on the first morning of your trip. The exact time of your transfer will be available from your hotel reception the day prior to pick-up.

**IMPORTANT:** All guests must provide the SwimTrek office with their arrival details, including flight number and arrival time, as well as any pre-trip accommodation plans, at least **two weeks prior to the start of their trip**, so that we can arrange the necessary transfers.

### Return Transfers

Return transfers from SMY Ondina to the airport or local hotel are also included in the trip price. Please note that these transfers are available on the morning of Day 8 or your trip and will be arranged on location in order to group guests together, where applicable.



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Accommodation

Our accommodation over the course of your trip is aboard the Sailing Motor Yacht Ondina, a classic Phinisi, built with tropical woods following traditional techniques. This beautiful vessel features eight guest cabins with en suite facilities and air conditioning, as well as ample deck space to relax between swims or enjoy the meals that are prepared by our very own onboard chef. The crew on board also includes our captain and a qualified dive instructor at all times.

Due to the limited number of cabins on the boat, there is only one single supplement available on each departure, which may be booked very early. If the single supplement is still available for the departure that you are interested in booking, it will be available to select during the booking process. Please also note that bed preferences cannot be guaranteed and will be finalised upon arrival on the yacht at the start of your trip.

### Food and Drink

All breakfasts, lunches and dinners on your trip are included as part of your package and are prepared on the M/Y Ondina by our very own onboard chef.

Mineral water, juice, tea and coffee are also included in the price of your holiday. Beer and soft drinks are available to be purchased on board and are charged locally at the end of your trip. All other alcoholic drinks, including wine and spirits, can be bought at Duty Free and brought on board at the start of your trip.

### Extra Activities

During our time on board SMY Ondina, we have a qualified dive guide travelling with us at all times. For non-qualified divers wishing to dive during the trip, there is option for a beginner's dive, plus equipment hire, and is payable locally in cash. Prices for dives and equipment hire for qualified divers are available on our partners' website, [thebestdivingintheworld.com/cruises/on-board-services](http://thebestdivingintheworld.com/cruises/on-board-services). A medical form and liability waiver will need to be signed prior to diving.

### Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as meals, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. whilst ashore prior to and after your liveaboard SwimTrek. The local currency is Indonesian Rupiah; however, Euros and US dollars are also widely accepted. Please note that onboard extras can be paid in **cash only**.

For optional tipping of crew members, we suggest that an additional €35-50 per guest is budgeted.

### Passports and Visas

Non-residents of Indonesia require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. They must also have proof (tickets) of onward travel or return passage.



Visitors from most countries, including the UK, EU, the US, Canada and Australia, do not require a visa for visits of less than 30 days. For further information and a full list of countries which are eligible for visa-free travel to Indonesia, please visit <http://www.indonesia.travel/gb/en/before-you-go/visa-immigration>. Please note that all visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

### **Travel Insurance**

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information about travel insurance, please visit [www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance](http://www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance).

### **Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations**

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to Indonesia, including all recommended and required vaccinations, please visit [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries). Please note that this information is subject to change and you should re-check this site regularly prior to your trip.

### **Travel Plugs & Electricity**

Please note that electricity on board the SMY Ondina is 220v and all sockets and plugs are two round pins (i.e. EU standard). For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit [www.worldstandards.eu/](http://www.worldstandards.eu/).