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sojourns



*Journey to
The Original Spice Islands of*

BANDA

7 Nights

Itinerary specially prepared by Silolona Sojourns for



An introduction to this unique journey....

Before the lookout on the bow sights land, the scent of spice is gently wafted across the miles of teak decks of your tall wooden ship sailing the Banda Sea. Ahead lies an enchanted fragment of history, the center of the Spice Island trade. As the world's sole source of the valuable spices, nutmeg and mace, these nine tiny islands have attracted traders since at least 2000 years ago from China, South East Asia and the Middle East. In the 16th century, European explorers discovered entire continents on their quest for these islands. A Portuguese Expedition was the first to arrive on Banda's shores in 1512, quickly followed by the Dutch and the English. Many intrigues and blood was shed for control of the precious nutmeg cargo. However, by 1667 the Dutch had established a virtual monopoly on nutmeg and the English had relinquished their claim by trading the tiny island of Run in the Banda Sea in exchange for the equally tiny island of Manhattan in the New World.

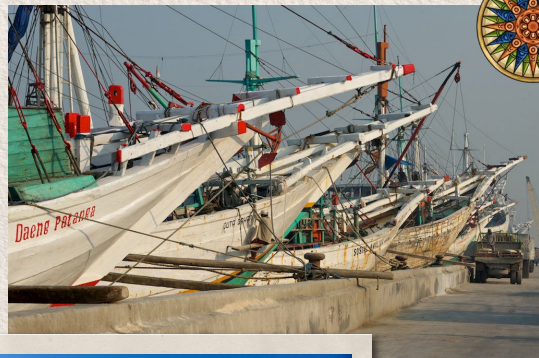
Patti Seery's long association with Banda will provide a unique introduction to the culture, history and natural beauty of the Banda Islands, the world's original home of the stately nutmeg tree. Get a true insider's view, visit private colonial mansions and savour remnants of Banda's once glorious past and the idyllic charms of these now nearly forgotten islands.



DAY 1

AMBON, MALUKU

Upon arrival in Ambon, the capital of the Maluku Archipelago, you will be greeted by the crew of Silolona/ Si Datu Bua and whisked by tender to the nearby Silolona/ Si Datu Bua. Within a short distance of our anchorage in the Bay of Ambon are several excellent dive sites including an excellent “critter” dive. Just out of the Bay of Ambon are several other interesting dive sites including Pintu Kota. At sunset set sail for the fabled Spice Islands following in the wake of many world’s most famous explorers for a distance of 120 nautical miles.



DAY 2

BANDA NEIRA

As the sun peaks above the horizon on our approach to Banda you will soon be able to distinguish the outlines of the various islands and the tall, prominent cone-shaped peak of Gunung Api, with its thin plume of smoke drifting from the summit. The rich volcanic soil and fresh sea breezes provide the perfect home for Banda's native tree, the stately *Myristica Frangrans*, whose fruit yields both nutmeg and mace. The approach to Banda Neira stirs thoughts of past explorers and captivates the imagination as our two-masted wooden schooner glides into the deep still waters of the Zonnegat Passage framed by the volcano and drops anchor.



Evocative remnants of Dutch mansions and two ancient forts dominate the quaint sleepy town of Banda Neira. Stroll through the wide tree-lined streets of Banda Neira town stopping to visit the museum, the former VOC Governor's Mansion, the old church and Fort Belgica, the now silent sentinel and guardian of the Zonnegat Straits between Banda Neira and Pulau Lonthor. Small dug out canoes paddle each morning to supply the outdoor market with freshly caught tuna, local savoury snacks, wild almond candy, mounds of spices, and tropical fruits.



DAY 2

BANDA NEIRA

On May 10, 1988, Gunung Api last erupted after laying dormant for centuries. Lava flowed north from near the summit and into the sea, cooling in gentle undulating waves destroying both nutmeg gardens and corals. Today, just a little over 20 years later the lava flows provide one of the most stunning dives with giant sea fans and other corals set against a black backdrop. The coral growth is phenomenal largely due to the nutrient-laden currents and clear waters that encircle Banda. Also the lava itself seems to be conducive to speed coral growth and this spectacular growth has amazed scientists and coral specialists the world over.

Sunset cocktails on the ancient ramparts of Fort Belgica as the sun sets slowly over the towering Gunung Api volcano.



DAY 3

LONTHOR BESAR ISLAND & BATU KAPAL

Early morning is the perfect time to go fishing for some of Banda's large tuna with the tender at nearby Batu Kapal, a large rock monolith rising from the deep sea and which bears an uncanny resemblance to a large ship afloat on the sea. After an alfresco breakfast on deck, and hopefully, freshly cut sashimi, prepare for a dive on the vibrant reef surrounding Pulau Pisang. Schools of yellow fin tuna and swirling masses of barracuda, turtles and rays drift near flawless coral walls sometimes dropping to 70 meters with visibility often up to 40 meters. Snorkeling is also excellent with a constant parade of small colorful fishes.

Afternoon hike through the world's oldest nutmeg gardens shaded by ancient kenari or wild almond trees on the nearby crescent shaped island of Pulau Lonthor. Pulau Lonthor is the ancient caldera of a long extinct volcano and the rich volcanic soils at one time produced the majority of the world's nutmeg.

At dusk dive the shallow waters right in front of the Maulana in Banda Neira town where the colorful mandarin fish congregate to display their colors.



DAY 4

PULAU RUN

"By the treaty of Breda, signed on July 21, 1667, England gave up to the Dutch The claim to Pulo Run (Banda) in the east. The Dutch yielded New Amsterdam (Manhattan), New Jersey and the Delaware estuary, thus retiring completely from the North American Continent."

A Short History of British Expansion by Jason A. Williamson, 1922



Full Day cruise/sail to Pulau Run to see the old church and wonder at the quirk of fate that moved Run from the center of world trade to become a very isolated dot that is home to only one remaining family. Hiking and exploration of ruins of old mansions and nutmeg factories.

Pulau Run is also noted for it's diving with great deep walls teeming with fish life as well as the nearby tiny island of Neijalaka. Sail back to Banda Neira arriving at sunset for our overnight anchorage. In battle and were celebrated in certain villages by energetic rituals featuring drumming, dancing, chanting, and the invocation of powerful forces lasting over a period of many months.



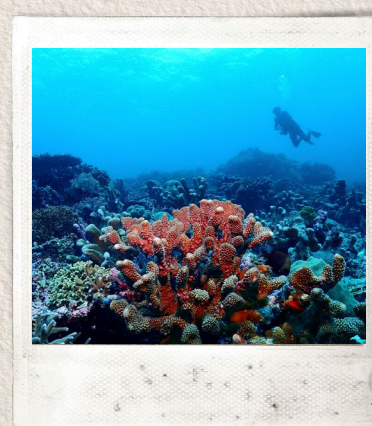
DAY 5

GUNUNG API & PULAU HATTA

Predawn departure for the hike to the summit of Gunung Api Volcano. While it is only 666 meters in height the climb is a bit challenging due to the volcanic skree and steepness of the slope. Every bit of effort is well rewarded by the stunning panorama from the summit towards Banda Neira and beyond over the crystal blue waters of the Banda Sea. Return to Silolona/ Si Datu Bua for a swim and a well- deserved breakfast. During breakfast, Silolona/Si Datu Bua will sail to Pulau Hatta, formerly called Rozengain Island in colonial times.

Pulau Hatta is noted for some of the best dives in the Banda Islands. Sir Alfred Russel Wallace, leading naturalist and co-founder of “The Theory of Evolution” with Darwin wrote in the mid 19th century , “living coral and even the minutest objects are plainly seen on the volcanic sand at a depth of six or seven fathoms.” Hatta provides great deep dives with dramatic dropoffs and large schooling pelagic fish. Sail back to the calm, picturesque anchorage in the Bay of Banda Neira.

Tonight a traditional Riistaffel dinner consisting of many local Indonesian dishes will be served in a private, partially restored old Dutch mansion.



DAY 6

PULAI AI

Pulau Ai remains amongst the most traditional of all the islands with one large village boasting of the perpetually winning team of 40 men who paddle their sacred ceremonial war canoes called Kora-Kora to the rhythm of the drum and chanting. Tradition and ritual remain very much alive and offerings must be prepared weeks in advance before any adat rituals or dances that keep their violent history alive for the coming generations are performed. Visit the village and hike to the ruins of the old Dutch Fort Revingil where a few cannon remain.



The diving on Pulau Ai is considered to me amongst the best in the Bandas again with crystal waters and beautiful soft corals and large schools of fish. From Pulau Ai we will bid farewell to these nearly jewel-like islands and set sail for an overnight trip to Ambon.



DAY 7

AMBON

Bid Farewell to the crew of Silolona/Si Datu Bua and with a short tender ride transfer directly to the airport for your flight to Makassar and onwards to Bali.



Selamat Jalan!