

THE EAST INDIES EXPLORATION: CULTURE, SEA & SPICE WITH VINCENT, CORAL SCIENTIST AND PIONEER

Spice trading and shipbuilding histories go hand in hand in Indonesia and on this trip with coral expert, Vincent Chalias, you will visit the fabled Banda archipelago, home to nutmeg and some would argue the islands that lie at the root of modern capitalism. The Moluccas are the original Spice Islands, a magical destination, beautiful, remote, and unspoiled, with a long, fascinating, and turbulent history. For millennia, these fertile volcanic isles were the world's only source of the 'holy trinity' of rare spices: cloves, nutmeg, and mace, which were once worth their weight in gold. You will also experience unique landscapes, snorkel rich and diverse reefs, sail past and get close up to many active and dormant volcanoes, meet and experience local customs with the wonderful people who live in these remote regions, and so much more.





ITINERARY

Day 1 & 2

After settling in on the boat, we will head to the small village of Watublapi, where we will be met with singing and dancing by the local people. Famed for their unique textiles, we will be shown firsthand their ancient techniques of spinning, dyeing, and weaving their famous fabrics. Here we will have the chance to view (and purchase) some of the local textiles, try their betel nut, and brave their locally produced liquor.

Pay a visit to the local village that was abandoned when we will snorkel and watch the sunset over Ile Ape, another active volcano.

Day 3 & 4

Go ashore and meet the villagers of Umapura, a village famed for its weaving and dyeing, where we can see how the local women create their intricate ikat cloth. There is every chance to purchase some as a memento.

We went on some local boats to visit with Mawar, a friendly but wild dugong who lives in the seagrass beds of the nearby bay. We will also get to meet the "local hero", Pak One, who ensures that Mawar is well protected.

Visit the traditional village of Takpala up in the hills of Alor, where we will be welcomed by the chief and witness a ceremonial war dance in honour of our visit. We will see their traditional 'Moko' war drums and intricately designed 'Ikat' fabrics, which have been woven and dyed using age-old techniques, and used in local bridal dowries for centuries.

Day 5 & 6

We do a bit of island hopping over the next few days as we make our way up the Banda Arc, a string of volcanic islands that forms part of the Ring of Fire.

We will visit Wetar and Damar Islands and go ashore to a local village to meet the locals and see their way of life as they dry their catch on the beach. Spend the day swimming and beaching, snorkelling and exploring, and indulge in a bit of local culture by way of 'sopi', a strong alcoholic drink made from a local palm tree.

The crew will set up for a beach BBQ, and we will dance and sing our way into the night before heading off again for an overnight cruise to our next destination.

Day 7 & 8

We will visit a very simple village where the people's houses are made using the products of the sago palm, the staple crop in



this part of the world. The villagers will demonstrate for us how they process the heart of the sago palm into the edible product that sustains them.

We will pass by an uninhabited island that is home to tens of thousands of sea birds (brown and red-footed boobies and frigate birds), who will likely come out to encircle the boat in great numbers on our approach. If the tide allows, we will go ashore and investigate, and surely have a snorkel.

We will enjoy a full day at sea as we do a long crossing to the legendary Banda Islands - home of nutmeg, mace, and mystery.

Day 9 & 10

By dawn, we should have the Banda Archipelago 'Spice Islands' in our sights, original home of the nutmeg and the scene of much bloodshed between the colonial powers of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries over control of the spice trade. We will visit Pulau Run, England's very first colony, as well as Pulau Ai where we will visit Fort Revenge, built by the Dutch in the 17th century.

In the capital Banda Neira, with its quaint, characterful streets, a museum, churches, a waterfront market, and forts. Just across the harbour is Banda's perfect, jungle-clad volcanic cone Gunung Api ('Fire Mountain).

We will also visit the other small islands of the Banda archipelago - Lonthor, Ai, Run, Hatta - each of them with its own remnants of old plantations, Dutch cemeteries, and fortifications. The tiny outlying island of Run was the subject of an unbelievable real estate deal when, in 1667, under the Treaty of Breda, it was ceded by the English to the Dutch in exchange for Manhattan. Yes, the Manhattan where New York stands.

Day 11 & 12

We will observe the age-old technique of harvesting nutmeg by hand, and can taste (and buy) baked goods, condiments, and jams flavoured with fresh mace and nutmeg. The fruit enclosing the nutmeg seed is sold dried and has a unique and intense flavour. It is a delicacy rarely obtainable outside the Banda Islands.

There are some excellent coral reefs here, and we should see some amazing marine life whilst snorkelling. Ironically, in the less-than-pristine waters of the harbour, we have a good chance of seeing (at dusk) arguably the world's most stunning fish, the small but jewel-like Mandarin Fish.

Leaving Banda, we will navigate through the Sonnegat ('Sun's gap') between Neira and Gunung Api, possibly escorted by kora-kora - the big Moluccan galleys used traditionally for ceremony and warfare, propelled by banks of warrior-oarsmen.

Please Note:

Our mission is to provide the best experience possible for our guests given the current conditions and when unexpected opportunities for adventure may present themselves along our cruise routes. Sometimes weather conditions, tides or other local factors dictate that we need to vary from the published route, and at times there are special opportunities to explore and discover new locations, events and activities. These explorations will always be a definite enhancement to the published itinerary and will be undertaken after discussion and



agreement among guests. Ultimately, the boat captains and your tour leader will make decisions to maximize trip safety and your overall enjoyment, so please come prepared to be flexible!



YOUR SHIP: KATHARINA

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

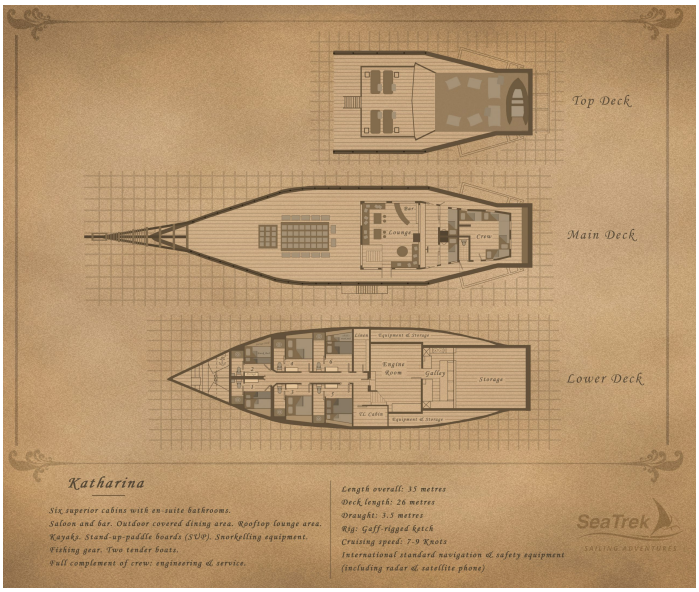
Katharina is a mix of traditional and modern design. Her hull and rigging are traditional, while the deck house and interior were custom designed to adapt to Western tastes of space, privacy and comfort. While Indonesian traditional sailing vessels are customarily referred to as Bugi Schooners, strictly speaking Katharina is rigged as a Ketch, the foremast being higher than the aft mast. The deck area of Katharina is dominated by the 25m tall main and top masts and a large central table around which we enjoy our meals alfresco. Just aft is the main lounge and bar, accessible on the port side. On top of this main cabin there is a sun deck, where you find several additional deck chairs and comfortable day beds. Below decks there are 4 double cabins (with one extra single upper berth) and 2 twin cabins (upper/lower berth). All cabins are air-conditioned (individually controlled) and have private bathrooms with warm and cold water. Obviously, we provide all hotel amenities you may require. Each cabin has a wardrobe, a built-in mini safe, individually controlled cooling systems and soft lightning. All cabins have their own private bathroom with shower and toilet. Unlike typical ship accommodation, your cabin provides ample space to store your stuff and still move about with ease. We know from experience that during a cruise in the tropics some of our guests discover the pleasure of sleeping under the stars and there is plenty of room to sleep on the upper deck. Mattresses as well as light blankets are available for that purpose. Spacious twin shared cabins with twin bunk beds or double bed Each cabin has a private bathroom with toilet and hot shower Washbasin and soap toiletries in your cabin Cabins have individually controlled air conditioning Towels and beach towels that are regularly changed each cabin has an individual minisafe for valuables and travel documents Free tea, coffee and mineral water Excellent food and snacks (vegetarian food on request) Excellent wine selection, cold beer and other alcoholic drinks for sale Chilled towels and a welcome drink upon arrival Outdoor sleeping facilities Unlimited use of our snorkeling equipment and 2 sea canoes Television, DVD and music



centre in lounge



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Stateroom





PRICING

06-Sep-2027 to 17-Sep-2027

Stateroom	**£7895 GBP pp**

06-Sep-2027 to 17-Sep-2027

Stateroom	**£7895 GBP pp**

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