

RAJA AMPAT AND PHILIPPINES: THE LAST PARADISE ON EARTH

Embark on a rare expedition cruise with Swan Hellenic, sailing from the pristine, reef-fringed islands of Raja Ampat to the vibrant capital of Manila in the Philippines. This unique voyage reveals the cultural and ecological treasures of Southeast Asia, offering a fresh perspective on one of the world's most biodiverse and captivating regions. Created for curious and adventurous travelers, the journey blends quiet luxury with meaningful exploration across a stunning mosaic of remote islands and reefs. You'll discover the iconic karst landscapes in Kabui Bay and world-class marine life of Pulau Mansuar in Raja Ampat, before continuing through the central Philippines with stops at Casulian Island and Bohol. Sail through turquoise waters and lush tropical scenery, encountering exceptional biodiversity both above and below the surface.



ITINERARY

Days 0 - 1. Pre Cruise & Sorong, Papua

**Charter flights to the port of embarkation/disembarkation (Longyearbyen, Ushuaia, Kangerlussuaq, Nuuk, Honiara, Jayapura and Sorong)**

**One night pre-cruise accommodation with breakfast in a 4/5-star hotel (exemptions apply)**

Arrive in Sorong in the early morning for disembarkation, with the reefs and islands of Raja Ampat still fresh in mind. Take a



last look at the water and the jungle edged coastline as you step ashore, then continue onward with the sense of having reached one of the most biodiverse corners of the planet

Day 2 Kabui Bay, Waigeo Island, Raja Ampat

Start with Zodiac cruising through Kabui Bay's limestone waterways and the narrow channel between Gam and Waigeo, often called "the Passage". Follow in the footsteps of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, who travelled this route in 1860 and wrote about its scenery, which still feels like a river run through karst cliffs and mushroom shaped islands. Dive at world-class sites such as Mioskon, Blue Magic, Mayhem and the Passage.

In the afternoon, continue to Pulau Kri for snorkeling and a dive at Cape Kri. Look for manta rays, turtles, nudibranchs and vibrant corals

Day 2. Pulau Mansuar, Raja Ampat

Pulau Mansuar is a long, narrow island crowned by a high limestone ridge and blanketed in dense tropical jungle. The surrounding reefs link Mansuar to neighboring Kri, and several small villages line the northern coast. In traditional palm-leaf-roof homes, just over a hundred residents live a measured, sea-and-forest rhythm of daily life. A walk across the island can take you to the salt lake Telaga Yenauiyau, a perfect place to enjoy a fresh coconut and listen to the jungle. Keep an eye out for the impressive coconut crab among the palms, and snorkelers will love the underwater world, where hundreds of colorful fish swirl above the corals. Those who wish can also go diving at Yenbuda Jetty

Day 3. Pulau Penemu, Raja Ampat

Pulau Penemu is one of Raja Ampat's most striking landscapes, with towering limestone pinnacles rising straight from the water. Piaynemo peak is the signature viewpoint here. A short hike takes you up to the top for wide views over lagoons and limestone islets. Just offshore, the Piaynemo Geosite is also one of the area's best known snorkeling and diving zones, with dense coral diversity in the surrounding reefs and abundant fish life. Two dives are scheduled today, Melissa's Garden, a coral rich plateau with three pinnacles and frequent macro life, and Batu Rufas, a drift along an island wall with swim throughs, fusilier schools, and regular turtle and shark sightings

Day 3. Pulau Fam, Raja Ampat

The Fam Islands form a small cluster of islets in the Raja Ampat Geopark, with Pulau Pam as the inhabited centre. Three villages sit near hidden lakes, one where crocodiles are known to live. The local community produces high quality virgin coconut oil, supporting both livelihoods and cultural traditions. Fascinating and seldom visited, this stop allows time to explore a cultural village, experience the warm hospitality of local communities, and see daily island life up close. Fam's reefs are among the most pristine in the region, with rich coral gardens and marine life that can include reef sharks, ribbon eels, turtles, schooling fusiliers, and manta cleaning stations

Day 4. Pulau Kri, Raja Ampat

Later, you head to Pulau Kri, one of Raja Ampat's most important hubs of marine biodiversity. At Cape Kri, known for exceptionally high fish diversity, you'll snorkel with the guidance of the expedition team. In these waters, you may encounter manta rays, sea turtles, mollusks, reef fish, and brilliant corals in every direction



Day 4. Sorong, Papua

The bustling port city of Sorong in West Papua is known as the gateway to the crystalline waters of Raja Ampat, the world's most biodiverse marine habitat, home to over 1,500 species of fish and 75 percent of the world's known coral species. In town, the Buddhist pagoda of Sapta Ratna stands tall on a hilltop overlooking the harbour. Local fishing boats come in with their catch at the bustling Pasar Jembutan Puri fish market

Days 7-8. Days at sea

Sea days are rarely dull. Take the time to sit back and let the world go by. The ship's observation decks provide stunning views of the passing ocean. A day at sea gives you the opportunity to mingle with other passengers and share your experiences of this incredible trip or head to our library which is stocked full of reference books. Get an expert's view in one of our on-board lectures or perhaps perfect your photography skills with invaluable advice from our onboard professional photographers

Day 7. Casulian Island

Casulian Island (or Corregidor Island) lies off Siargao's southern coast. Rolling palm-covered hills lead to a summit with sweeping Pacific Ocean views. Pristine white-sand beaches and secluded turquoise coves ring the shoreline, while vibrant coral reefs thrive in the surrounding waters. Visitors flock here to hike the scenic hilltop trails and snorkel among the colourful marine life, making it one of Siargao's most sought-after destinations

Day 8. Pintuyan, Panaon Island & Day-Asan, Surigao

Day 9. Bohol Island, Baclayon

After crossing the Bohol Sea, you arrive at tiny Balicasag Island, about six kilometres southwest of Panglao. The sea drops away into deep submarine cliffs. Soft and hard corals surround the reef, with multicoloured shoals moving through the water. Afterwards, head to Tagbilaran, a gateway to Bohol's jungly interior. Tarsiers live here, nocturnal primates less than 16 cm tall with disproportionately large eyes. These adorable animals can be seen at the conservation centre and sanctuary. Bohol is also famous for the Chocolate Hills, a striking quirk of geology

Day 10. Cuatro Islas, Digyo Island

Tucked away in Western Leyte, the Cuatro Islas are a serene tropical escape, offering a distinct charm on each of the four islands. Apid, the most populated, offers a cultural touch with its fishing community and traditional mat weaving. Digyo is the smallest, known for its stunning sandbars and quiet beauty. Mahaba features a long beach, marine sanctuary, and sea turtles, while Himokilan enchants with a curving sandbar and a hidden tidal pool

Day 11. Marinduque Island, LayLay Port

Marinduque, a peaceful island in the heart of the Philippines, is known for rolling hills, pristine beaches, and vibrant traditions. Small fishing villages welcome visitors and preserve time-honored crafts and festivals, including the famous Moriones Festival. Surrounding waters host rich coral reefs and diverse marine life, ideal for snorkeling and diving. Inland, verdant forests and hidden waterfalls offer quiet exploration, blending natural beauty and cultural heritage in a serene island escape.

Day 12. Manila



Arrive in Manila today. The capital of the Philippines is a teeming, sprawling metropolis. Its flaws are no match for its creative, exciting energy, which infused everything from its art to food. There's so much to see and do here: the city's museums, Fort Santiago, San Agustin Church and the Chinese Cemetery are some of the highlights. Intramuros - the old Spanish walled town at the heart of the city - is unmissable. Explore if timings allow and be sure to sample some Filipino cuisine in all its bold sour, sweet and tangy glory. Alternatively, head straight to your home for the next several days. After a seamless check-in, settle into your cabin or stateroom and take time to explore your ship's luxurious facilities

**Group return transfers from airport to cruise port and to the hotel (where included)**

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: MINERVA

YOUR SHIP: **Minerva**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

The 5 star elegant Scandi-design boutique ship offers you an intimate setting from which you will be fully immersed in all the sights and scenery of your voyage. Introducing SH Minerva Minerva has been designed to journey to off the beaten path destinations and remote polar regions in style and comfort. The ship incorporates a PC5 ice-strengthened hull combined with extra-large stabilisers to make your journey as smooth as possible. Sophisticated Elegance We know how important outdoor space is, so our spacious, relaxing public spaces provide wide open, unobstructed views throughout the ship. The destination will always be in view. Your Wellbeing The safety & happiness of the guests is paramount to the 120-strong crew on board as well as the passionate expedition team who'll be serving up thrilling shore excursions and lasting memories. Cabin Types The 76 cabins including 6 suites have all the amenities you will need to feel comfortable including dressing gowns, hairdryers, personal safes and minibars. The stylish cabins all have desks, a dressing area and comfy seating. En suite bathrooms all feature glass-enclosed rain showers. Wheelchair access Guests who use wheelchairs must bring their own, as we have only a small number of wheelchairs stored onboard for emergencies. To ensure ease of movement on the ship, wheelchairs and mobility aids must be no wider than 65cm. All mobility or medical equipment brought on board must be capable of being carried safely and must be declared before sailing. To ensure that all guests can safely evacuate during an emergency, guests requiring a wheelchair can only be accommodated in our ADA-accessible cabins. There is an Oceanview stateroom on Vega which is specifically designed to be completely ADA compliant and have a fully operable wheelchair-access wet unit. Vega has two lifts, serving every passenger deck apart from the Stargazing top deck, which is, therefore, more difficult to access, as are the Aft Marina and Swan's Nest forward observation platform. Also, we don't have special equipment to access the swimming pool, jacuzzi, or sauna. Otherwise, the ship is entirely at your disposal. Many of the expeditions ashore in remote places are by Zodiac. Boarding these boats and returning aboard can present challenges for wheelchair users, as can navigating uneven terrain. These challenges are by no means always insurmountable, though, and our highly experienced crew is trained to provide reliable advice and assistance. They will make every effort to ensure wheelchair-using guests enjoy a memorable experience at each destination. Our general guidance, however, is to recommend wheelchair users travel with a companion for their ease and enjoyment. If you prefer to remain aboard, our panoramic interiors and ample open decks ensure an immersive, intimate experience of your inspiring





surroundings.

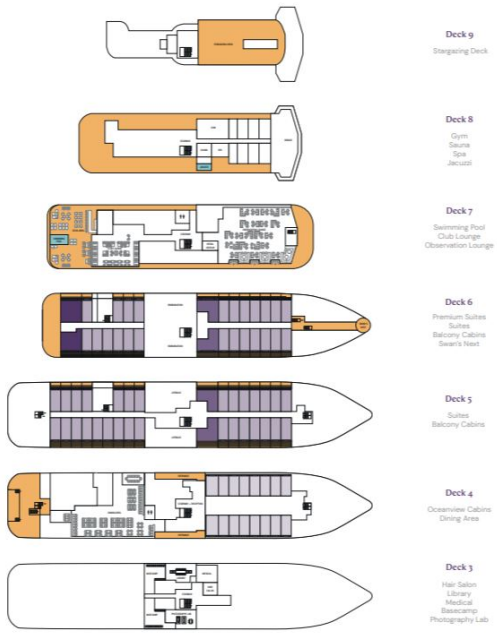
The Small Cruise Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | **small-cruise-ships.com**



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Balcony D5



Balcony D6



Balcony M5



Oceanview D4



Oceanview M4



Premium Suite



Suite





PRICING

06-May-2027 to 18-May-2027

Oceanview M4	£7755 GBP pp
Oceanview D4	£7389 GBP pp
Balcony D6	£8865 GBP pp
Suite	£12915 GBP pp
Premium Suite	£14765 GBP pp
Balcony D5	£8125 GBP pp
Balcony M5	£8489 GBP pp

28-May-2027 to 09-Jun-2027

Premium Suite	£14765 GBP pp
Balcony D6	£8865 GBP pp
Oceanview D4	£7389 GBP pp
Balcony D5	£8125 GBP pp
Oceanview M4	£7755 GBP pp
Balcony M5	£8489 GBP pp
Suite	£12915 GBP pp