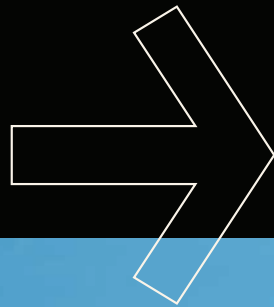




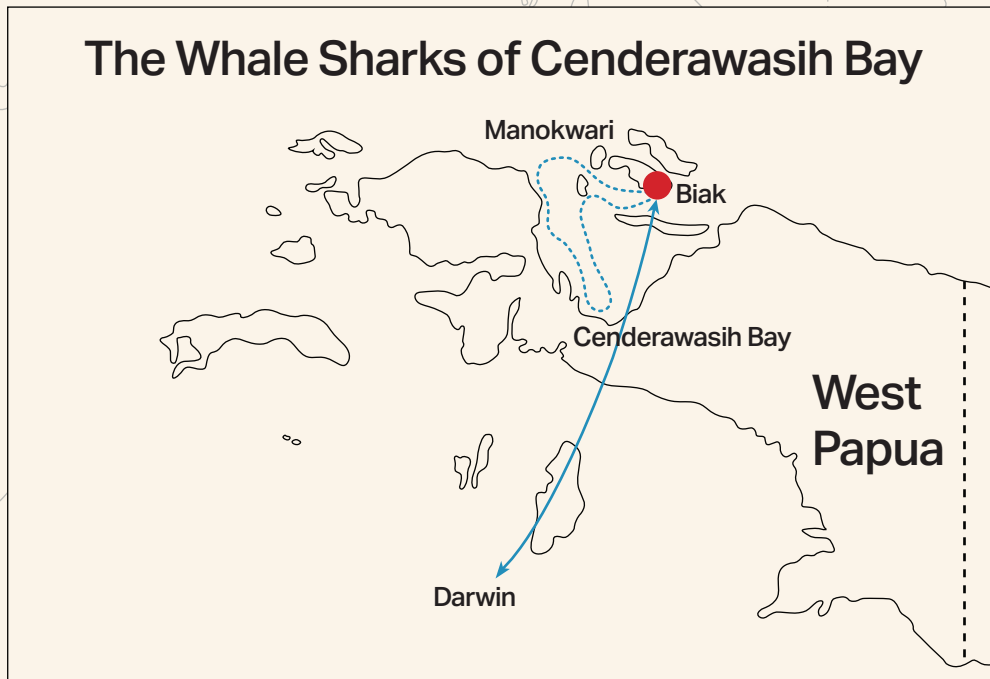
7 Nights

The Whale Sharks of Cenderawasih Bay

Darwin to Cenderawasih Bay and Return



Itinerary Map



Terms & Conditions

Return charter flights ex Darwin ARE INCLUDED in the tariff. This itinerary is provided as example only – prevailing conditions, local arrangements and indeed, what we discover on the day, may cause variation.



A Flourishing biodiversity hotspot

West Papua is the last frontier of the Indo-Pacific and deep in the heart of this flourishing equatorial wilderness is a biodiversity hotspot – Cenderawasih Bay. See the biggest fish in the world interacting with local fishermen and then snorkel with these gentle leviathans for hours enjoying countless breath-taking encounters.



Day
01

Welcome Aboard

Your adventure begins amidst the tropical charm of Darwin. One of our crew members will escort you aboard our chartered aircraft for your short flight to Biak.

Biak is also where we will welcome you aboard the magnificent TRUE NORTH.

Enjoy a welcome aboard cocktail as we set sail on a journey through the very heart of the 'Coral Triangle' – the world's most bio-diverse marine region.

West Papua's coastal areas encompass more than 275,000km² of land and sea including the Cenderawasih Bay Marine Park – the largest marine park in Indonesia and, setting for one of the most unique animal encounters on the planet!

Enjoy a welcome aboard cocktail as we cruise to Misool Island and then watch the sun set in a different land before indulging in an equally stunning dining experience!



Mapia Atoll

Mapia Atoll is a very remote and exquisite coral atoll seldom visited by tourists. Located north of the equator and lying basically in the middle of nowhere, the atoll presents classic opportunity to indulge in nature's tropical ocean splendour. Vertical walls rise several thousand feet from the ocean floor and come alive with brilliant soft corals, gorgonians, sponges, myriad of tropical fish and a dense population of green and hawksbill turtles. The area also has an enviable reputation for light game fishing! Snorkel, dive and fish to your hearts content!

Take a scenic cruise around spectacular Balbulol Island or enjoy a second dive at "No Contest" (you'll soon see why it's so named!) Over lunch we'll steam into one of the prettiest anchorages in Raja Ampat – the Mesempta Karst Channels. But the views will have to wait as we are first off for a unique snorkel/float through the sacred Tomolol cave system – a truly awesome adventure.

In the late afternoon join your favourite adventure boat for a TRUE NORTH 'raft-up'. Enjoy a cool beverage and some delicious nibbles as we cruise through the picturesque Karst Islands – don't forget your cameras!

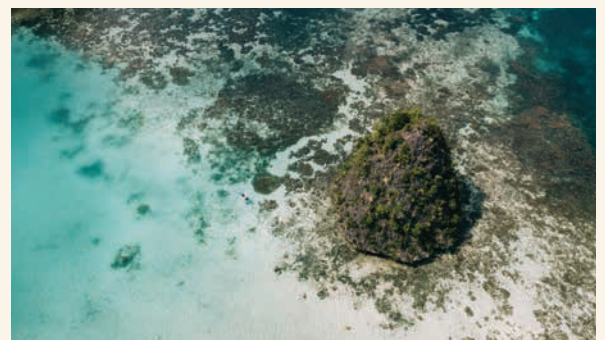
"We had an amazing first day in the Banda Islands – a fascinating island tour, diving on a coral encrusted lava flow and then sunset drinks in a Dutch fort that was built in the 16th century – but even more memorable – our sunset event was attended by local school children who were tasked to practice English on their unsuspecting guests – they were absolutely charming – a very unique and genuine experience that left us all quite overwhelmed!"



Day
03

Pulau Num and Pulau Swande

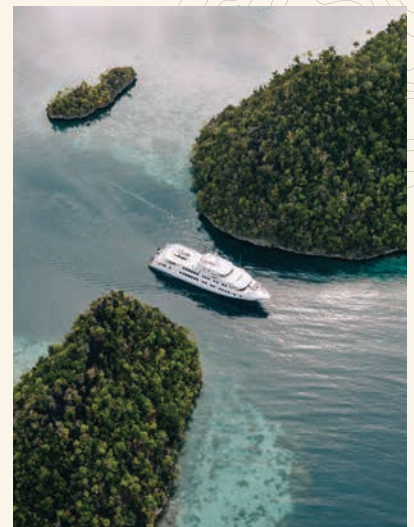
Today we visit Pulau Num and Pulau Swande. These highly picturesque islands offer another day of spectacular snorkelling, diving, beach-combing and fishing. Take an adventure boat ride through the bays of Pulau Num where locals live in huts stilted over the water and soak-up the stunning tropical scenery at Palau Swande. After lunch our guides will give an informative presentation on what makes Cenderawasih Bay so biologically and culturally unique. At the end of the day stroll along your very own beach, indulge in a refreshing beverage and watch the sun set in paradise!



The Auri Islands

The Auri Islands offer the most beautiful clear-water snorkelling and diving in Cenderawasih Bay, as well as some of the most beautiful (and uninhabited!) white sand beaches in West Papua. Revel in breathtaking snorkelling and diving on the sheer walls of Tridacna Atoll (named for the plethora of giant clams on the reef) and again at Wild Fish Reef. After lunch, we'll be treated to an informative presentation on what to expect when we encounter tomorrow's giants and then everyone will be given the opportunity to enjoy a mid-afternoon adventure boat ride through Auri's spectacular Karst islands. Later in the day, snorkel over a trio of American WWII fighter jets mysteriously sunk in formation in only a few metres of water. End the day with beach drinks on our very own pristine sand spit as the setting sun turns the Cenderawasih sky to fire.

Kri is a long and narrow island that offers some of the Raja Ampat's best diving and snorkelling. In fact, the abundant variety of fish seen at Cape Kri will likely astound! It was here that the TRUE NORTH's specialist guide, ichthyologist Dr. Gerry Allen, smashed his record for the total number of fish species recorded on a single tank dive – 374 species!



Day
05

Swim with Whale Sharks

The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is the biggest fish in the sea! They feed predominately on plankton (although in Cenderawasih they've taken a liking to small baitfish!) and can grow to more than 12 metres in length. There are several places in the world where snorkelers can seek out a close encounter with these gentle giants – however we are pretty sure that nothing compares to a whale shark encounter in Cenderawasih Bay!

Most encounters with whale sharks are fleeting – although they mostly swim slowly, mouths open and gulping buckets of microscopic plankton – they don't have any trouble cruising past even the most determined snorkeler. But not in Cenderawasih Bay – here whale sharks linger close to the surface for extended periods and the reason for this unusual behaviour is not difficult to appreciate – they have long become accustomed to taking advantage of small fish that spill from the nets of local fishermen. This 'learnt behaviour' provides even the most inexperienced snorkeler with a unique opportunity to truly interact with these mammoth fish.

Join the crew for many 'once in a lifetime' experiences!

In the afternoon we'll take a short cruise to the Equator Islands for a unique opportunity to dive, snorkel or swim across the equator! You'll want to do all in style because King Neptune is watching – and he'll be sure to recount your glory (or lack thereof!) at tonight's infamous Equator Party!



Cenderawasih Marine Park

Two days will also afford ample opportunity to explore further afield. The Cenderawasih Marine Park features over 15,000km² of relatively undisturbed marine and coastal habitat and the extensive coral reefs rank amongst the finest in the world. Cenderawasih is renowned for its diversity of coral reef fish species. Over 1040 species inhabit the park including numerous species of colourful butterfly fish, angelfish, damselfish, parrotfish, rabbitfish and anemone fish. Renowned Australian ichthyologist Dr. Gerald Allen has called Cenderawasih the “Galapagos of the East” in reference to the numerous endemic species of fish and coral and also because local evolution seems to be heading very much on its own trajectory! Species of mollusc are also particularly diverse and four species of turtle are often seen – the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys Imbricata*), the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the Pacific ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), and the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys corlacea*). Dugong (*Dugong dugon*), coconut crab (*Birgus latro*), dolphin and various shark species are often frequently sighted inhabitants.



Day
07

Roon Island

Roon Island is known for its excellent and varied dive sites, beautiful shallow snorkelling reefs, friendly villagers and stunning aerial scenery. Begin the day with either an energising snorkel on the lovely reefs of the Numamuran Strait or a dive at the southern end of Roon – where a Zero fighter lies on a hard coral slope in just 12 metres of water and green turtle, barracuda and surgeonfish are known to swim alongside equally curious divers. After morning tea have another go at snorkelling or diving on the unique underwater geological formations. In the afternoon join a walk around the village at Yende and discover the local culture – the village church contains a bible that dates back to 1898!

Then all too soon we'll steam east into the Auri Islands for one last reflective moment with your fellow-adventurers – celebrate an adventure-packed Cenderawasih sojourn with farewell sunset drinks on the beach!



Day
08

Return to Darwin



Enjoy breakfast on-board before a private car transfer to Biak Airport and your chartered flight back to Darwin.



True North
+61 8 9192 1829
experiences@truenorth.com.au
www.truenorth.com.au