



TRIP OVERVIEW

Join us on a unique and remote swimming adventure in the far eastern reaches of Indonesia. Based on a live-on-board boat, we'll enjoy the week-long freedom of our floating home as we seek out 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 roams just four metres below the surface - 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 and 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 this picturesque archipelago has to offer. It also gives us the chance to make changes to our itinerary when required, enabling us 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.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is for intermediate open water swimmers who want to explore the incredible ecosystem of 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 also have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of around 2 km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 4km (split over a minimum of two swims).

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Raja Ampat

Situated off the northwest tip of Papua's Bird's Head Peninsula - the most eastern island of the Indonesian Archipelago - Raja Ampat is an archipelago with over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals. The four main islands are: 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, which translates to '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 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

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during 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 live-on-board 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 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 curves up right next to the island and can be seen 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 and offers an incredible variety of flora and fauna. This area even holds the world record for the most fish species spotted in one dive! The morning'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 to Sauwandarek village - our finishing point for



this swim.

After lunch on board the Ondina we then make our way to Manta Sandy - a dive site just off GAM Island, which is a known cleaning station for manta rays when in season. It being such a shallow site, you will see all manner of marine life. If we have time, we can snorkel after the swim - our local guides will also get in the water and point out features you might have missed on your earlier 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 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 many 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 change 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 is home to everything from snapper and sturgeon fish to pygmy seahorses and reef sharks.

In the afternoon, we head out on a short coastal swim of Southern Penemu Island, featuring limestone karsts to swim around and climb onto for incredible views. 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 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, passing 5 islands - 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 offer 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 shoals of fish.

Day 6

Today takes us to Balbulol Lagoon, with the water dominated by the many limestone karst monuments. Resembling a mixture of pyramids and obelisks, 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 Wagemab Island and features a stunning lagoon swim. Keep an eye out for caves both above and below the water - 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 lives you can expect to discover below the surface as well as colourful soft corals and sponges.

Our two swims for the day feature a mix of crossings and coastal swims over reef, rocks and sand - a great way to finish off this 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.



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.

WALK	DISTANCE
Birds of Paradise	5km
Walib	2km

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.

TRIP INFORMATION

Group Size

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

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.

Extra Activities

During our time on board SMY Ondina, we have a qualified dive guide always travelling with us. 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. A medical form and liability waiver will need to be signed prior to diving.

Essential 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Drinks Bottle (x2)

For more information, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website.

*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.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water, and electrolyte drinks. The guides will no longer distribute shared drinks bottles but will fill your personal drink bottles. Please ensure these are clearly marked to help our coaches identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel, or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

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

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.

As SwimTrekters come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out our [SwimTrek flight tips](#) page on the website.

Flights to Jakarta Airport (CGK)

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 several airlines which operate daily flights to and from Sorong Airport (SOQ). Please note that luggage allowances on these airlines is often limited, so please ensure that you book an adequate amount for your trip.

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 to group guests together, where applicable.

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 always includes our captain and a qualified dive instructor.

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.

*Please note sleeping at sea is an entirely different experience to dry land as lapping waves may affect sleeping patterns. Most people will adjust quite quickly but we would advise light-sleepers to bring earbuds.

**Please also note that the exact details of the liveaboard and facilities may vary without notice.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts, lunches and dinners on your trip are included as part of your package and are prepared on the SMY 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.

For more information, please visit our [food and drink](#) page on the website.

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.

In some countries, tipping (gratuities) is not part of the culture - in others it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is done entirely at your own discretion. If you have been provided with excellent it may be something you wish to do. Your SwimTrek Guides can advise on local norms for



service providers like boat crew, waiters or taxis. Nothing is expected for your SwimTrek Guides but many groups like to present something to the Guides at the end of the trip.

Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.

For more information, please visit our [Responsible Travel](#) page on the website.

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 many countries, including the UK, all EU member states, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, are automatically granted a free tourist visa upon arrival in Indonesia which is valid for up to 30 days and cannot be extended or transferred into any other type of stay permit. For further information and a full list of countries which are eligible for visa-free travel to Indonesia, please visit: <https://www.indonesia.travel/uk/en/trip-ideas/types-of-Indonesian-visas-you-need-to-know>

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 our [Travel Insurance](#) page on the website.

Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations

Here at SwimTrek we pride ourselves on our focus on safety and the well-being of all our guests. As we operate in some beautiful and remote locations medical facilities are not always easily accessible. SwimTrek Guides, and many staff working for our local partners, are first aid trained. However, we ask that you read our [Travel Health](#) page to ensure that you are informed about general Travel and Swim Health precautions.



Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs

There is no confirmed Wi-Fi internet access on the boat.

The boat houses 220 V electricity supply, with two-pin European standard sockets

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit worldstandards.eu