



My Fourth Beautiful Trip on the Seven Seas

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My fourth beautiful trip on the boat! Because of some last minute cancellations, the group on board this time was made up of only seven guests. Three of the guests appeared to be serious underwater photographers with their impressive camera equipment, two normal divers and another gentleman was, like me, 'just a snorkeler'.

Flying from Bali to Maumere, East Flores, was already an eye-pleasing experience, while passing so many beautiful islands. A smooth, organized pick-up from the airport, a short drive to the harbour, where the Seven Seas boat was in view: 'our home' for the coming days! A fast speed boat transfer and we were on board. Nice to meet again Captain Wahyu, Cruise Director Karl and the extensive crew. We left the small industrial harbour of Maumere and after only two hours sailing, we stopped for lunch and our first snorkel trip. From now on, views of green islands, blue seas, no other boats or people, pure nature!



This whole stay on the boat was so pleasant and relaxing for me, not only because of the amazing snorkel trips, but also because of the absence of emails, phone calls and work pressure. Time to read books, working on sketches, dreaming away with stunning vistas, only changing a seat from the lounges of the front to the back deck.

Almost twice a day the boat brought us to different locations. A bay with perhaps some small fishing villages, a sea strait with tiny islands in between, sailing to a huge sleeping volcano island in the middle of the sea, with ashes fuming, a sand atoll for sunset drinks, and after sunset, hundreds of flying foxes passing over us on their way from a nearby mangrove forest to the main island.



In addition, the early wake ups to witness the sunrise was such an enjoyable experience. Sometimes with the jumping dolphins beside the boat. Needless to say how beautiful the corals are and every time the unbelievable quantity of different fishes, when snorkeling, always a sensation, this endless aquarium...

Another fantastic aspect of joining the Seven Seas are the unexpected island visits, walking and swimming along white bounty beaches, just in reach of the big boat, or visiting small villages. Lamalera is a unique traditional whale hunting village, with small wooden boats lined up in pavilions along the beach. In a particular season, the selected senior village men use their tiny boats and, apparently standing on the front of their boat with a single spear, they hunt, nowadays a sad story. Lamalera is close to the hill village of one of the crew, Big John, where we went for fresh coconut milk!

Another day a visit to the local market on North Alor, followed by a climb up to the Abui tribe, previous headhunters, where they were now all dressed in unique weavings and were dancing and singing for us.

With 17.000 islands in Indonesia, it is very special to visit some of these remote islands. Sometimes after a snorkel trip, small boats from a nearby village came alongside our boat. Once a boat with 20 ladies with colourful woven cloths for sale - most attractive. Later tiny 'perahus' with schoolkids, joking and singing, while asking for a soft drink!



While during the day the decks were covered with canvas sun shields, before sunset cocktails these canvasses were rolled up and the astonishing sunsets started. Cocktails and another delicious dinner were served al fresco.

Too fast these 11 fantastic days!
Many thanks to the entire Seven Seas crew!

Joost van Grieken
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