



*This itinerary is provided as example only – prevailing conditions and local arrangements may cause variation.  
West Papua remains an untouched paradise and guests are invited to join in the exploratory nature of this cruise.  
Helicopter flights can be purchased as a package or individually.*

## West Papua Discoverer

### Darwin – West Papua – Darwin

The land of un-contacted peoples and undiscovered species. The land beyond sunrise. An expedition for the true adventurer! Includes return flights ex Darwin.

Captain Kevin Stone talks about North Star Cruises' latest adventure... "After more than 10 years as a captain with North Star Cruises Australia, the West Papua Discoverer Cruise looks like one of the most adventurous and exciting cruises that we have undertaken. Make no mistake about it - it will be a 'discovery cruise' but we will be most fortunate to have local experts Dr. Mark Erdmann and Dr. Gerry Allen onboard. If you want to experience some truly unique adventure – don't miss this one!"

**Day One:** Your adventure begins this morning amidst the tropical charm of Darwin, however embarkation proceedings will be a little different! One of our crew members will escort you aboard North Star's chartered aircraft for your flight to Sorong – gateway to the world's last frontier, West Papua! Sorong is also where we welcome you aboard the True North and after enjoying some refreshment, it's time for our first excursion - a tour of nearby Batanta Island. Donning mask and snorkel will provide a different perspective or perhaps a troll along the outer-reef is more your style. See the sun set in a different land before indulging in an equally stunning dining experience!

**Day Two:** It's an early start this morning for those keen on joining Dr Mark Erdmann, senior advisor to Conservation International, on a walk through the forests of Pulau Mansuar. Mark is a renowned expert on West Papua and he will be joining us onboard for the entire cruise. This morning he will try to locate the rare and beautiful Wilson's Bird of Paradise. We will also see the cathedral-like caves found on the island and, we'll snorkel in the island's crystal clear lagoons. The island of Pulau Mansuar is part of the Raja Ampats, an archipelago comprising over 1,500 islands, cays and shoals. Consider this

- the whole of the Caribbean is home to fewer than 70 species of coral whilst over 450 confirmed species plus countless yet to be discovered species are sure to be found in the Raja Ampats! The snorkeling and diving here promises to be the best that we have ever encountered! Then it's back to the ship for a scrumptious lunch before a spot of fishing in the expedition boats. Or why not take a scenic flight in the ship's helicopter over the picturesque atolls, islands and lagoons that make up the archipelago. Celebrate a perfect day in paradise with gastronomic delight!

**Day Three:** Today is spent on Waigo - the largest and most striking island in the Ampats. The island is home to a wide variety of exotic fauna and flora. After a hearty breakfast you may be lucky enough to encounter a cuscus, or giant monitor lizard. Take a ride around Majalibit Bay - a striking expanse of water that almost completely bisects the island. Lunch today consists of local mud crabs and in the afternoon we feature not to be missed heli-flights over spectacular Majalibit Bay. There will also be an opportunity to cast a line from one of the expedition boats, or to have a relaxing swim in the bay!

**Day Four:** Start the day with a refreshing snorkel amongst the stunning coral of Fam Island or try your hand at catching breakfast! The morning is yours to explore Fam's breathtaking beauty. After lunch we'll make our way north to Gam Bay and then it's everyone in for a snorkel like no other! Surrounding currents converge to create a ½ mile long 'drift' channel. Slip from the expedition boats and the current will guide you over stunning orange cup corals, seahorses and clownfish - the vibrant water movement is one of the reasons why the area is so rich in coral and fish life! At the end of the channel the ship's expedition boats will be waiting – you may just want to do it all over again! Enjoy a cocktail on the observation deck and marvel at yet another stunning sunset before recounting day's adventures over an equally memorable dining experience!

**Day Five:** Another day of unique experiences! We cross the equator today as we continue north to Waiag Island. These small limestone atolls are totally uninhabited and are quite diverse. Take a stroll along a pristine beach or for the more adventurous, climb to the island summit and enjoy spectacular views of the surrounding islands. Join a scenic heli flight over the island or hop in an expedition boat for an afternoon of fishing – but make sure you're back in time for the infamous 'Captains Party'!

**Day Six:** Awake this morning in beautiful Aljui Bay. After breakfast it's time to take part in a manta ray convention! Plankton rich currents attract large numbers of manta ray to the aptly named Manta Point - a shallow coral ridge surrounded by crystal clear oceanic waters. As many as 20 mantas line up on the ridge to be cleaned by schools of colourful wrasse. Jump in and have a swim with these gentle giants of the sea. This afternoon we visit a pearl farm and we'll also fish for the revered mangrove jack – a great fighter and one of the best tasting fish you can catch!

**Day Seven:** Today we visit Kofiau Island. The island is covered by 40 metre high forest and is home to the canary tree python and the Kofiau paradise kingfisher. We will visit the island village and learn about the local way of life. West Papua has more 'un-contacted people' than any other region in the world! The cultural experiences in this land are sure to be unique and unchallenged by modern life! Then we head off to the blue water mangroves of Nam Plae. Snorkel amongst mangroves growing on the top of a coral reef! Then indulge in more world class fishing before returning to the True North for fabulous evening fare.

**Day Eight:** This morning we arrive at South East Misool. The waters surrounding this island are teeming with fish life and the huge sea fans are equally impressive. Dive in the crystal clear caverns and on the outer reef or take your snorkel and try to spy the pygmy seahorses. Then it's off to explore the island's unusual marine lake. Join world renowned ichthyologist Dr Gerry Allen and discover some yet to be discovered fish species. Dr Allen is one of the world's foremost experts on marine life and lately he has been spending more time in West Papua than anywhere else - but underwater adventures from all around the world will bring a very unique set of life experiences to your dinner table!

**Day Nine:** A day devoted to swimming, snorkeling and diving off Karas Island. Spend a lazy day on a palm fringed beach or take an expedition boat out for a spot of fishing. It's entirely up to you!

**Day Ten:** Today we venture to Arguni – an area known as Jurassic Park after its rugged cliffs and mountainous forests. The grandeur of this geological wonder is a sight to behold! After a sumptuous breakfast a local park ranger will join the expedition boats as we explore this vast wilderness via its ancient rivers. The ship's helicopter will also offer a bird's eye view of the forest canopy and its unique inhabitants!

**Day Eleven:** Wake to another beautiful day in paradise! Today is a fun filled day of snorkeling and diving off Watubela Island. This was one of the first barrier reefs in the Archipelago to be discovered by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace in 1869 and is one of the few surviving areas of primary tropical rainforest with a rich natural history. Take a guided walk through the jungle, or a snorkel on the outer reef - the choice is yours! Return to the True North for a sunset cocktail as we cruise to Banda Island.

**Day Twelve:** Today we'll explore Banda Island and all that she has to offer. Steeped in history, the Maluku Islands or 'Spice Islands' were an important and highly sought after route for the European spice trade until the early 1800's. We'll learn more about Banda's rich history on a guided tour, then head off in the expedition boats for a scenic cruise or a spot of fishing. Back onboard, Dr Erdmann will present an interesting lecture on this vast and wild destination. Then join us in the dining room for a farewell dinner before we head up to the lounge for one last time - this time to enjoy a photo essay of the most intriguing holiday of your life!

**Day Thirteen:** You'll enjoy breakfast together this morning before clearing customs onboard. A private car transfer will escort you to Ambon airport where you'll board the plane for a chartered flight back to Darwin.

## North Star Cruises Australia

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