

# RAJA AMPAT - HIDDEN MARINE WORLD NEEDS MORE TOURISTS



Diving is a gateway to a different world revealing wonders of the natural kind. The list of top sites keeps on changing; however, those who have seen Raja Ampat look no further. This place is magical.

Raja Ampat is located at the tip of the Bird's Head Peninsula, New Guinea. Its name literally translates 'the Four Kings' and the place is an astonishing natural phenomenon. **It encompasses some 1,500 islands and islets, cays and shoals which surround four biggest islands - Misool, Salawati, Batanta and Waigeo.**

Raja Ampat is a true marine paradise with a diversity of fauna and flora which astonishes even the most spoiled of divers. This wonderful destination is accessible by plane from Jakarta or Bali yet still, tourists are scarce.

The 'Four Kings' features all the expected leisure and sports opportunities, such as kayaking, snorkeling, diving, local beaches are pristine and basically empty. **Only 8 000 tourists arrive here annually, which is certainly an issue.**

Local community has difficulty profiting from timber, fishing, and minerals; sustainable marine tourism has the potential to turn their situation around and hopefully, once the news spreads about the abundance of local marine life, more visitors will come to see for themselves.

Raja Ampat is located in the midst of the coral triangle, luring scientists, divers and photographers alike, as this is the most bio-diverse marine region in the world. Diversity is all this place stands for, with hundreds of fish and coral species, including dozens that are endemic.

The dive sites are plentiful, and as the underwater domain has not been fully explored yet, many more are emerging. This fact makes diving here a tad more exciting, considering the astounding diversity and purity of local waters combined with the secluded, magical atmosphere of Raja Ampat.

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