

# SABAH & LABUAN

101 DIVE TREASURES

A DIVER'S ULTIMATE PLAYGROUND



TOURISM  
MALAYSIA

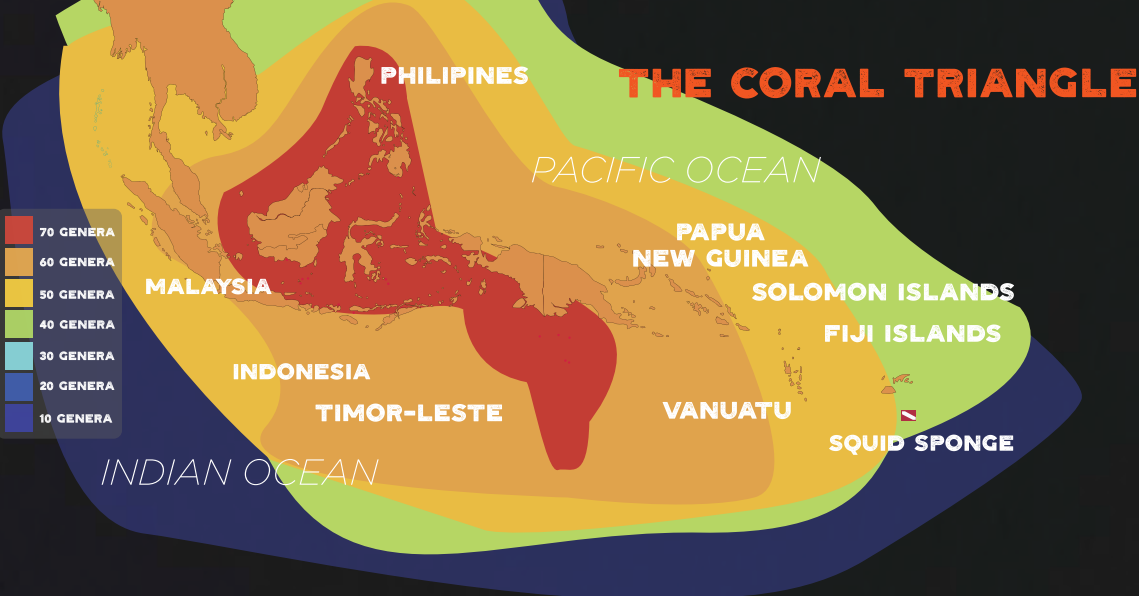
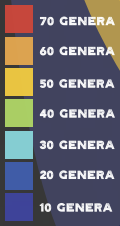


Clement Lee  
PHOTOGRAPHY

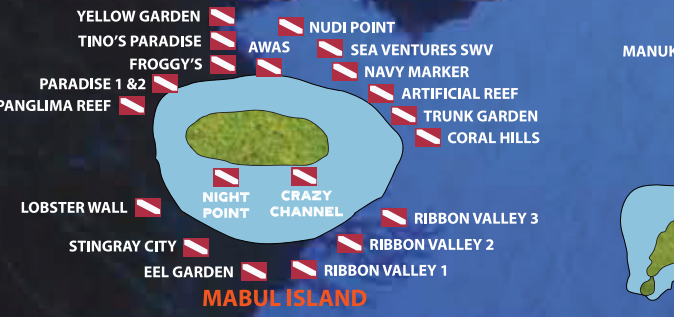


LEGEND	
	MAIN TOWN
	DIVING SITE

# SABAH MAP



MAP NOT DRAWN TO SCALE  
Disclaimer: Although every reasoning care has been ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this is neither the







**“When you step into Sabah you step into the entire South East Asia with our marine biodiversity of more than 3,000 species of fish and several hundreds species of corals that you will be spoilt for choice on dive destinations- try us! ”**  
– Clement Lee, Sabah Diving Industry Pioneer & Former Tourism Malaysia Diving Ambassador

*Sabah & Labuan are home to some of the best diving in the world ! Blessed with its location within the nest of the Coral Triangle which is the epicentre for the biodiversity, divers will experience sighting not only spectacular corals and fish, but also of many other marine organisms and sea creatures. It is also the habitat for six of the world's seven marine turtle species. Thanks to Sabah ‘Land Below The Wind’ pleasant climate, you can go diving all year round with water temperature ranging between 82-86°F (28-30°C).*

*You'll definitely enjoy some of the best underwater experience namely the legendary Sipadan, muck diving mecca Mabul, Kapalai and Langkayan to name a few. The east coast district is also a gateway to island and dive sites paradise such as Blue Ring Reef, Mataking, Pom-Pom and Bum-Bum.*

*Corals lover? Then these are for you - Kudat, Kota Belud, Tiga ‘Survivor’ Island and Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park are all located in the West Coast of Sabah. Not to be missed, Layang Layang Island, one of the few places in the world where you can spot massive schools of hammerhead sharks. For the more adventurous and challenging dives, haul your dive gear over and head to Labuan for its famous Ship Wrecks Diving experience !*

*There are many reliable diving operators that organise diving trips to more than 100 dives sites around Sabah & Labuan. For those first timers, courses for different levels and specialties are available too. Coupled with warm hospitality and easy access to most of the best spots for scuba diving, teeming with incredible marine life thriving in its waters, these two states are easily a diver's ultimate playground !*



**MANTANANI ISLAND**

© S&M-Lorien Kok

The Mantanani Islands are a tiny collection of three islands located off the northwestern coast of the Malaysian state of Sabah, directly across from the town of Kota Belud in northern Borneo. Mantanani Besar is the largest of the three, while Mantanani Kecil and Lingisan are the other two. These islands are around a 45-minute speed boat journey from Kota Belud's Kampung Kuala Abai Jetty.

A fantastic location for spotting macrolife including nudibranchs, frogfish, and even mimic octopuses. Nearby dive areas offer opportunities to see large resident Jenkins, marble rays, and enormous green sea turtles.



**BLUE RING REEF**

© Kent Chen

Another diving gem is The Blue Ring Reef, which is roughly 20 kilometres from Lahad Datu and 30 minutes by boat from Darvel Bay. It is believed that there are only 10 Blue Ring Hole sites in the world, each with a blue hole structure.

The Tingkayu Reef is unique because it has two marine sinkholes. It has a depth of about 15 meters or 45 feet. The Blue Ring Reef is a sizable marine cavern or sinkhole that has grown in a bank or island made of limestone or other carbonate bedrock.



**LANGKAYAN ISLAND**

© Davies Austin Spiji

Lankayan Island has been declared part of an immense Marine Protected Area to adopt the eco-tourism concept. Unpopulated and covered by thick tropical island vegetation on its topside, this peaceful, untouched little bit of paradise is ringed by an endless pure white sandy beach, offering simply elegant and exquisite accommodation in all 23 wooden, roomy and perfectly appointed seafront chalets.

Sea turtles, mostly Green and Hawksbill Turtles, use Lankayan Island as a nesting and foraging area. As a result, visitors will have the opportunity to witness turtles nesting as well as the release of newly hatched baby turtles into the ocean, especially between the months of June through September.



**POM POM ISLAND**

© Stephen R

It is located on the east coast of Sabah and reachable a mere 5-10 minutes by boat from Semporna. This serene island is flanked by white sand and the Celebes Sea's turquoise waters. While underwater marine life is the main attraction for any guests, the island is also an important nesting ground for green and hawksbill turtles and boasts a white sand coral beach.

On a regular basis, it's possible to see coral catsharks, eagle rays, barracudas, bumphead parrot fish, butterflyfish, angelfish, parrotfish, and sweetlips. A truly dive haven for any divers.



**KAPALAI ISLAND**

© GL Moments Redefined

Kapalai Island which sits on Ligitan Reefs boasts a mile-long sandbank of powdery white sand where one can sunbathe at complete leisure while gazing out to the miles of brilliant turquoise stretching into the horizon offering the purest image of natural serenity. Dive spots are extremely close and can be reached in just a few minutes by speedboat and some of them, actually, just by swimming from the resort's dive center pier.

Diving around Kapalai is exceedingly easy and shallow but quite spectacular: the sandy bottom and the spare coral heads host an amazing array of small, often yet-to-be classified, shamelessly colorful subjects, making the diving here an unforgettable experience. Home to the weird and techno-colored flamboyant cuttlefish, it is also the domain of the invisible frogfish found in Kapalai in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colors.



**SELANAN ISLAND**

© Aminor Azmi

This island is a part of Tun Sakaran Marine Park which is also known as Semporna Island Park. Geologically, Selakan Island, located on the southeast corner of the Sebangkat-Selakan reef complex is formed from Quaternary pyroclastic material, which was ejected during explosive volcanic activity. The primary tourism activity in this island is diving and snorkeling. Approximately 12 dive sites been discovered and ready to be explored by diving enthusiasts.

Selakan Island's most distinctive feature is the abundance of macro marine life, including seahorses, shrimp, crabs, and other creatures that are very much sought after by scuba divers who specialise in seabed macro photography. There were reports that divers have also sighted eagle rays, turtles, barracuda, bumphead parrotfish and nudibranchs.



**BOHEY DULANG ISLAND**

© Maklarin Lakim / Sabah Parks

Bohey Dulang Island is the second largest island in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park archipelago which is located off Semporna. Nestled in Coral Triangle aka as Amazon of the Sea, 528 species of coral reef fish and over 320 species of hard and soft corals, and variety of sea creatures such as eagle rays, barracuda, turtles and nudibranchs are found in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park. This island park is getting well-known as a scuba diving and snorkeling site.

The views from Bohey Dulang's highest point are what draws most people to the island. From the 353m-high viewpoint, visitors are greeted by an almost unreal panorama of the lagoon's crystal-clear waters and the coral reefs that lie beneath.



**TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN MARINE PARKS (TARP)**

© Azami Bongsu / Sabah Parks

TARP was gazetted in 1974 as Sabah's second national park and located in Gaya Bay, which is 3 km offshore from Kota Kinabalu. The Park covers an area of 50 sq kilometers comprising 5 islands, Pulau Gaya ('big'), Manukan ('fish'), Mamutik ('for shell collection'), Sapi (the sound of a mowing buffalo), and Sulug (commemorating the ancestry of the Sulu peoples of Sabah).

TARP is a great scuba diving for beginners and experienced divers. Some of the commonly seen macro life are cuttlefish, moray eels, lionfish and pufferfish crustaceans, scorpionfish, pipefish, demon stingers, cuttlefish and stonefish. In 2016, a ship wreck spot was created for dive enthusiast. The 1966 103 foot long patrol boat which lies 20m deep in the water does not only provide a great wreck diving spot but also act as an artificial reef system for marine life to thrive.



**SIPADAN ISLAND**

© Alfi Ajak / Sabah Parks

Located about 20 miles from Semporna, Sabah, Sipadan is Malaysia's only oceanic island of volcanic origin. As the top of a steep sea mountain, it rises from a 600-metre abyss in the Celebes Sea. The best diving season is from February to November when visibility is about 20 to 60 metres.

Sipadan is the turtle capital of the world. Its large breeding colony of green and hawksbill turtles can grow up to one metre in carapace length and weigh more than 140 kilogrammes. Sipadan's rich and diverse marine life also include more than 3,000 species of fish and hundreds of coral species. Besides turtles, schools of barracuda, bumphead parrotfish, manta rays, big-eye trevallies, and hammerhead sharks are also frequently seen there.

Notable sites include Coral Gardens, White-Tip Avenue, Hanging Gardens, North Point, West Ridge, Turtle Patch, Lobster Lair and Staghorn Crest. The best thing about diving in Sipadan is that every dive holds the promise of an encounter of a lifetime.



**SIBUAN ISLAND**

© Azami Bongsu / Sabah Parks

It has a footprint of 15.13 hectares. The sandy cay-shaped island was most likely totally formed from the eroded fragments of the nearby coral reef. It rises between one and two metres above sea level. Numerous locations on the island, especially towards the northern end, have developed limestone beach rock.

Sibuan is a fantastic location for holding open water courses because of the calm waters and sand bottoms that are perfect for new dives. It is also a haven for macro divers and one of our all-time favourite islands. Sandy bottoms with debris mixed in and sloping reefs provide a hunting field for divers. On different sides of the islands, at 30 metres of water, pygmy seahorses are frequently sighted.

In the vicinity, this is one of the best islands for frogfish because many of them call Sibuan home. The mandarin fish, which are a macro diver's dream come true and reside in the black urchins that line the shallows, are another highlight.





This popular island is located just 45 minutes by boat from Semporna town jetty off the southeast coast of Sabah. In addition to being well-known for its immaculate white sand beach, Mabul Island is also a world class destination for muck diving and underwater macro photography. Home to macrolife that includes juvenile eagle rays, blue-ringed octopuses, flamboyant cuttlefish, and mimic octopuses.

Dive sites at Mabul Island is the ideal place for night dive because bizarre creatures can be spotted such as Papuan cuttlefish, tiny bobtail squid, Cephalopods and crustaceans.



Situated at the southwest corner of the Mantabuan reef, roughly 2.5 kilometres from Bodgaya's northern coast. With a surface size of 10.08 acres, it is the smallest island in the Tun Sakaran Marine Park. A sandy beach wraps around the entire island, which is flat. While the ground is hard and compacted in the island's corner.

Mantabuan Island is a great place to see a wide variety of ray species, including the Manta, Eagle, and Devil Rays. The Black Coral, which is prized by humans for uses ranging from curse-proofing to jewellery ornamentation, is the star of this island.



Matak Island is well-known for its romantic getaways due to the surrounding blue ocean's exquisite clarity. Various sea animals, vibrant reefs, and gorgeous fishes enriched the rugged natural marine life beneath Matak's surrounding Ocean. Prepare to encounter some rarity; from charming species of shrimps, pygmy seahorses, enormous barracuda, ribbon eel, to 'Orang Utan' crab which can be occasionally spotted lurking calmly around the depth.

On the Southern side of Matak Besar island, a place aptly named Garden of Eden offers a sight of gorgeous soft corals, anemones and featherstars, while D'Wall dive site of Matak Kecil offers a chance for memorable drift dives; containing some of the island's most colorful fishes and marine life. Those are just two of many mores to go!



Pulau Tiga Park is a fascinating spot rarely visited by tourists. Gazetted in 1978, it covers 158 square kilometers, most of which is sea. It comprises three small islands - Pulau Tiga, Pulau Kalampunan Besar and Pulau Kalampunan Damit (snake island). The islands have been dubbed 'Survivor islands' from a television series which was filmed here in 1996.

There is a wide range of diving opportunities in Pulau Tiga. For those who enjoy macro photography and underwater photography, Pulau Tiga is a superb site. The island is surrounded by healthy, sloping coral reefs and coral patches. Divers can choose from shallow (3 m) to deep (30 m) offshore dive spots. On some of the offshore reefs, the visibility can exceed 30 metres (15 metres on average). There are countless whip corals, soft corals, hard corals, and barrel sponges. The reefs are home to schools of tropical fish, snappers, barracudas, rays, sea turtles, cuttlefish, nudibranchs, lionfish, and scorpionfish.



It spans three districts and has an area of 898,762.76 hectares (ha) (i.e. Kudat, Kota Marudu and Pitas). Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) is one of the richest marine flora and fauna complexes in the world and the largest multiuse marine protected area in Malaysia.

Three-fourths of the world's coral species and more than 3,000 different fish species may be found in TMP. The TMP is home to more than 250 different coral species, according to WWF. Dugongs, endangered green turtles, and more than 300 different fish species can be found there as well. A true heaven for divers.



Located 60km away from Sabah's capital Kota Kinabalu is Kota Belud, a small but charming town. Although this town is well known for its community-based tourism, this town is gaining popularity for its abundance of aquatic life. The diving here is relatively new which makes its underwater marine life a joy to explore. Apart from Pandan-Pandan Island and Usukan Cove, other frequented dive sites are the Mantanani Islands.

Pristine underwater seascape with mixtures of hard and soft corals, large boulder formations, marble rays, eagle rays, leopard sharks, coral cat sharks, bamboo sharks, whale sharks, pelagic such as tunas, wahoo, dorado, and macro diving (seahorses, frogfish, pygmy squids, decorator crabs, ghost pipefish, and a host of colourful nudibranchs) are found here.



Timba Timba island is located approximately 1 hour boat ride from Semporna and known for its clear water with long white sandy beach and picture-perfect landscape in almost every direction.

Several facilities are made available on the island such as toilet, gazebo and deckchairs for visitor's convenience and comfort. There are 10 dive sites around Timba-Timba Island where Green Turtle, Barracudas and Nurse sharks are commonly encountered here. Other frequent sights include blue ribbon eels, moray eels, barracudas, lobster, large coral trout and snappers.

Due to frequent landings of turtles hatching on the island, a turtle hatchery has been set up as part of the island's efforts in turtle conservation.

## DIVERS' DO'S AND DONT'S

### 1. STICK TO THE PLAN

Scuba diving isn't the time for spontaneity

### 2. TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT

Yes, its monotonous. But it's also life-saving.

### 3. DIVE WITHIN YOUR LIMITS

Don't push yourself further than your experience allows.

### 4. STAY ALERT

Get a good night's sleep and don't drink for 24 hours prior to the dive.

### 5. CHECK YOUR GAUGES

Keep your dive buddy regularly up-to-date on how much air you have left

### 6. REVIEW YOUR DIVE SIGNALS

Before you get in the water, go over them with your dive buddy.

### 7. LISTEN TO YOUR DIVE INSTRUCTOR

They're there to keep you safe, so don't get a big head



This island is easily spotted from the city centre and from Likas Bay. Sepanggar Island shelters it's own share of Marine Life wonders. This location offers clearer visibility, uncrowded and healthy marine life. Due to it's varying bottom composition, the marine life found in Sepanggar Islands ranges from the large Whales Sharks to the tiniest shrimps. Night dives is another must experience adventure, where the nocturnal side comes out to play.



Layang Layang Island is truly a diver's paradise and fondly known as "The Jewel of the Borneo Banks". Layang Layang Island lies in 2,000m of ocean and due partly to the depth, this atoll has become famous for sightings of large pelagic species and for wall diving. It is an hour flight north of Sabah's capital Kota Kinabalu.

It is dubbed as one of the world's best dive destinations with its breathtaking underwater scenery of vibrant coral walls and the pristine, large sea animals in the crystal-clear water where visibility is between 30 and 60 metres year-round. Hammer-head sharks, pigmy seahorses, Jacks and Barracudas as well as rare manta rays are among the unique marine lives here.



Labuan, fondly known as 'Pearl of Borneo' is a duty free island located in the South China Sea, just off the coast of Sabah. Divers come from around the world to explore the many excellent ship wrecks and rich marine history that rest in Labuan's shallow waters. Four of these wrecks are particularly outstanding namely Cement Wreck, American Wreck, Australian Wreck, and Blue Water Wreck. The newest diving site is Vernon Banks which is equally spectacular.

Of these, two were sunk during WWII and two were commercial vessels that sank in the 1980s. The 'American Wreck' and the 'Australian Wreck' were both sunk by the Japanese towards the end of the war. They are both in decent condition and lie at a safe dive depth of 33m. The third is the 'Cement Wreck' which happened 20 years ago. It is also the shallowest and therefore the easiest to dive, especially for less experienced divers. The most popular is the 'Blue Water Wreck' which lies north-east of Labuan. The wreck is the 'MABINI PADRE', a large Philippine fishing trawler which caught fire and sank in 1981.



SCAN FOR LIST OF  
**SABAH & LABUAN**  
TRAVEL DIVE & RESORT OPERATORS



SCAN FOR  
**E-BROCHURE**