



Sea for Yourself®

Snorkeling Safaris

The Remote Reefs of the Philippines

March 28-April 8, 2016



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Snorkeling Safaris

Dear Friends and Snorkeling Enthusiasts,

The Indo-Pacific Coral Triangle, with over 500 reef building species, is considered the epicenter of marine biodiversity and a global priority for conservation. At its northernmost point lies the Philippines, an archipelago of over 7000 islands strung like jewels between the South China, Sulu, Celebes and Philippines Seas.

Off the beaten track for most, these islands are a tropical wonderland of gentle ocean breezes, white sand beaches and palm trees. They are also home to the legendary warm and unflaggingly optimistic Filipino people. Marine life in the Philippines ranges from large pelagic fish to a wealth of invertebrate reef creatures including nudibranchs, corals, huge shallow sponges and cryptic cephalopods. These islands offer us world class snorkeling.

This program embodies Sea for Yourself values: a solid logistical foundation supporting excellent snorkeling and a rich educational and cultural experience. These are remote islands, and while not fancy, they provide us with quite comfortable infrastructure to support our snorkeling explorations.

Come join us in late March-early April 2016 as we snorkel the remote reefs of the Philippines.

Jul Simon

- ✓ from \$6990 per person
- ✓ 12 days / March 28-April 8, 2016
- ✓ 900 fish species and 500 coral species
- ✓ resort snorkeling as often as you like
- ✓ privately-chartered snorkeling boats for the exclusive use of our snorkeling group
- ✓ marine biology lectures
- ✓ snorkeling instruction from novice to expert!





Trip Overview

Snorkel the rich waters of remote islands and explore the wonders of El Nido!

After an overnight in Manila, we fly to El Nido where on a clear day we will be treated to magnificent aerial views of a few of the 7107 islands and islets that make up the Philippines. As we fly over Northern Palawan, we may also see Apo Reef, one of the largest continuous fringing reefs in the world and hundreds of tiny islets connected via shallow reef flats.

From the airport in El Nido, we transfer by van and boat to Apulit Island where we will stay in the water cottages for the next 5 nights. Each day after breakfast, we will use our privately-chartered snorkeling boat to explore its nearby pristine reefs. The typical daily program will involve breakfast followed by a boat-supported snorkel, lunch at the resort, and another boat-supported snorkel in the afternoon. The specific sites we choose to explore during our program will depend on local conditions at the time of our visit.

We will then journey back to the El Nido town and transfer by boat to the Miniloc Island Resort, situated in the heart of the El Nido Marine Reserve where we will stay in garden cottages. There we will continue our snorkeling adventures for the next 5 days. El Nido Marine Reserve, an ecological wonderland on the northwestern tip of Palawan, includes Bacuit Bay and 45 majestic karst-limestone islands, some of which tower up to 3 stories high. As on Apulit Island, the snorkeling sites we visit by boat will be adapted to weather conditions at the time of our visit. The resort is set on a cove filled with marine life.

Throughout our program, evenings will be highlighted by marine ecology and natural history lectures and/or interpretative sessions followed by leisurely dinners. On our final morning, we return to El Nido town to catch our return flight to Manila.



Species great and small!

Marine life in the Philippines includes a wealth of fish and invertebrate reef creatures, including nudibranchs, corals, huge shallow sponges and cryptic cephalopods, residing in diverse underwater environments.

At **Apulit Island** we will have the opportunity to see the adult forms of many reef fish as well as many species of fish and coral that are found in areas associated with seaward fringing reefs.

Nabat Island will allow us to spend our time snorkeling amongst shallow hard coral gardens. This island is home to one of the most diverse staghorn coral reefs in all of Palawan with colonies in a variety of colors. Damselfish and resident schools of anthias and spadefish can also be found here. The east side of the island offers a steep reef with fields of soft corals and enormous boulder corals covered with colorful invertebrates.

Noa Noa Island, a private island near our resort, has been under the care and protection of its owner for nearly 10 years. The reefs in front of the island's main beach are incredibly healthy and vibrant. Nearby is **Lopez Reef**, home to a variety of habitats living within a small zone of vertical walls, shallow reef flats, sea grass and sand beds, and shallow rubble zones. These combined habitats offer a wide diversity of fish and coral.

Isla Blanca harbors a variety of hard coral, hundreds of species of reef fish including jacks, parrotfish, wrasse, a schools of silversides. Turtles are common as are large helmet shells.

The waters of the **Nido Marine Reserve** are a naturalist's paradise with more than 400 species of coral and more than 800 species of fish, including butterflyfish, parrotfish, anenomefish, wrasse, triggerfish, angelfish, surgeonfish, damselfish, emperors, snappers, groupers, and rabbitfish.

At **Matinloc Island**, we snorkel through a small tunnel to visit Secret Beach, a picture-perfect marine lake that includes its own little white-sand beach. **Abdeens Reef** will allow us to snorkel amongst shallow, beautiful coral gardens.

Big Lagoon features sheer vertical cliffs and turquoise-hued water that provides a habitat for a unique marine community of dozens of species of juvenile fish and rare corals and sponges.

At the end of the pier on **Miniloc Island**, there are groupers, a school of jacks, sergeant majors, damsel fish, colorful anemone fish and other tropical fish. Weather permitting, we will night snorkel at Miniloc Island house reef, where we will have an opportunity to see many of the reef creatures that are usually secretive during the day, including octopuses, lionfish, anemone-crabs, and rays.

Pinisil Cave, a small islet in the southern end of the bay, has a shallow coral garden with nearly 100% live coral coverage and colonies that are neon green in color. The **Lagen Island** house reef is a unique protected environment containing a lush coral gardens as well as thick mangrove stands and sea grass communities.

Simizu Island where a narrow channel between Simizu and Paglugaban creates a variety of habitats including fields of branching acropora and century-old boulder coral interspersed with colorful anemones and soft corals. At **Pangulasian** a magnificent reef parallels a beautiful white sand beach.





Itinerary

Day 1

Our program begins in the late afternoon when we join fellow participants in Manila for a program orientation at the Dusit Thani Manila, followed by a welcome dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at the hotel. D

Day 2

Our early morning flight takes us directly to El Nido where we transfer to the east side of Palawan for the opportunity to explore the Sulu Sea, the shallow waters between the main archipelago and Palawan. Our drive through lowland jungle and farmlands makes for great birding, with the chance to see both the greater coucal and chestnut-breasted malkoha, both found only on Palawan. From the small town of Taytay, we take a boat ride to Apulit Island, home of Apulit Resort. The resort owns the entire island and the spectacular reefs that surround it. Many of these reefs, just a few minutes from the resort, are ours to explore. After lunch, we spend the afternoon snorkeling the house reef in front of the resort. Here we may also explore the outer reef slopes and seaward fringing reefs of Taytay Bay. Overnight at Apulit Island Resort. B,L,D

Days 3-6

Each day we will use our privately-chartered snorkeling boat to explore reefs near Apulit Island, including those of Nabat Island, Noa Noa Island, Imorique Island and Isla Blanca, a small islet about 20 minutes from the resort. The specific sites we choose to explore during our program will depend on local conditions at the time of our visit. The typical daily program will involve breakfast, a boat-supported snorkel, and lunch at the resort. There will be another boat-supported snorkel in the afternoon, returning to the resort with time to freshen up before a marine biology talk, some free time before dinner, and selected evening activities. B,L,D

Day 7

After breakfast we embark on our transfer to Palawan's El Nido Marine Reserve, an ecological wonderland on the northwestern tip of Palawan that includes Bacuit Bay and its 45 majestic karst-limestone islands. We then transfer by boat (approximately 45 minutes) to the Miniloc Island resort. After lunch, we snorkel Miniloc's house reef which contains some of the highest diversity of reef fishes in Bacuit Bay. In the late afternoon, there will be a presentation on reef fish ecology. Dinner and overnight will be at Miniloc Island Resort B,L,D

Days 8-11

Each day we will use our privately-chartered snorkeling boat to travel from the Miniloc Island Resort to many of the wonderful shallow reefs that abound in Bacuit Bay. We plan to visit sites such as Mantinoc Island, Abdeens Reef, Big Lagoon, Lagen Island, Pinisil Cave, Simizu Island and Pangulasian. The specific sites we choose to explore during our program will depend on local conditions at the time of our visit. The typical daily program will involve breakfast followed by a boat-supported snorkel, and lunch at the resort. There will be another boat-supported snorkel in the afternoon, returning to the resort with time to freshen up before a marine biology talk, some free time before dinner, and selected activities in the evenings. B,L,D

Day 12

Return to Manila via El Nido town in the late morning/early afternoon for flight connections or transfers to hotels for those staying in Manila. B







Trip Details & Prices

Trip limit

Our Remote Reefs of the Philippines is limited to 18 participants. Due to the limited space available for this tour, reservations will be accepted in the order deposits are received. You will be notified when your space is confirmed.

Program Costs

Tour fee is based on land and domestic air within the Philippines. The land/domestic air cost of this program is \$6990 per person, based on double occupancy. For those requesting a single room an additional supplement of \$2895 will be added to the tour cost. Please be advised that single space is limited and subject to availability. If you wish to share a room, we will do our best to find a roommate for you. If, by the final payment due date, a share cannot be found, you will be charged a single supplement.



Deposits & payments

A deposit of \$850, plus a signed, completed reservation form confirms your registration for the trip. You will be notified when your space on the program is confirmed. Final payment, plus single supplement, if applicable, are due 120 days prior to departure.

Airfare

Sea for Yourself does not issue airline tickets. Trip participants are responsible for making their own air travel arrangements to and from the Philippines. Please do not purchase airline tickets until your reservation for the program has been confirmed and you have reviewed your travel schedule with our office.



The tour fee includes

Domestic air within the Philippines, all group bus transfers and meals as indicated in the itinerary, accommodations in resorts and hotels as specified, all snorkeling activities, cultural and natural history excursions, local taxes, group gratuities to resort/hotel staff, services of the trip leader including any needed snorkeling lessons, interpretative sessions and marine biology and cultural lectures.

The tour fee does not include

Airfare to and from the Philippines, air upgrades, departure taxes, medical immunizations, medical expenses, visa and passport fees, accident/baggage/cancellation insurance, individual transfers, excess baggage charges, meals not specified in the itinerary, dishes and beverages not part of included meals, laundry, internet, telephone, internet or fax charges, room service, Sea for Yourself staff gratuities, rental gear, SCUBA diving activities and other items of a personal nature.



Trip Preparation

Skill level

This program will be enjoyed by snorkelers of all levels. Our trip leaders will gladly provide any needed snorkeling instruction, from floating to free-diving. Whenever possible, we will seek out protected waters for our snorkeling excursions, but at times the surface may be choppy due to wind.

Climate and weather

Weather patterns in the Philippines are dictated by the prevailing winds—the habagat (southwest monsoon), which runs from May to October, and the amihan (northeast monsoon), which prevails from November to early May. For most of the country, the dry season is during the amihan. The most comfortable, least humid months include March/April when temperatures range between the mid-70's to mid-80's during the day. Although we have selected March/April when the temperatures are most comfortable on both land and sea, there is always a chance of rain. Water temperature during this period will be approximately high 70's-low 80's.

Thermal tolerance obviously varies with each individual. As a guideline, many people wear a thin wet suit when in the water longer than 30 or 40 minutes. Please remember that some kind of covering (such as a Lycra suit or even pajamas!) when in the water is highly recommended as protection from sun, occasional stinging zooplankton, and to prevent coral abrasions. In the water individuals will best know their own "comfort zones" which can be extended with the use of a lightweight wetsuit which will help conserve body heat and add comfort and buoyancy while in the water. We wear wetsuits and strongly recommend that you consider wearing one as well.

Departure information

After you have reserved space on a trip and the program is confirmed, you will receive information to help you prepare for departure, including airline information to arrange for your international and/or domestic flights, optional supplemental travel insurance information, a complete packing and a reading list and other useful information about our destination.

Insurance

Sea for Yourself provides participants who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with limited medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group travel insurance policy. We highly recommend the purchase of optional baggage and trip cancellation insurance; information will be sent to registrants. Exclusions for pre-existing conditions may be waived with the prompt purchase of travel insurance.



Reservation Form

The Remote Reefs of the Philippines 2016

I/We wish to hold _____ spaces on the Remote Reefs of the Philippines, March 28-April 8, 2016.
Enclosed please find my/our deposit check of US\$ _____ (\$850 per person, made payable to Sea for Yourself)

Name 1 _____ Birth Date _____
(as it appears on passport)

Name 2 _____ Birth Date _____
(as it appears on passport)

Address _____

(If using a P.O. Box, please also include a street address)

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Accommodations:

- ☐ Twin, sharing with (List name of accompanying person if not shown above)
- ☐ Single (not guaranteed) with single supplement of \$2895
- ☐ Share (to be assigned; not guaranteed; if share is unavailable, single supplement will apply)

Waiver of Liability: I have read the schedule of activities and other information in the Sea for Yourself: Remote Reefs of the Philippines tour materials and recognize and accept all risks thereof. I understand and agree on behalf of myself, my dependents, heirs, administrators, and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth under "Liability/Responsibility" and to release and hold harmless Sea for Yourself and any of its officers, employees, agents, licensees, or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries, or death, or for the loss of or damage to property, however occurring, in relation to this Sea for Yourself program scheduled for March 28-April 8, 2016. By signing this, I also certify that I do not have any mental or physical condition that would create a hazard for myself or other passengers.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE: Each participant must sign this waiver.

Please send your completed reservation form and deposit to Sea For Yourself, 729 College Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Fax: (650) 323-1201 Phone: (650) 322-1494 Email: info@seaforyourself.com



Terms & Conditions

A deposit, plus a signed, completed reservation form will confirm your registration for one of our programs. You will be notified when your space on the program is confirmed. Final payment will be due 120 days before departure.

Cancellations & refunds

If it becomes necessary for you to cancel your trip, notice of cancellation must be received in writing at Sea For Yourself, by email, fax or postal mail. At the time Sea For Yourself receives your written cancellation, the following per-person penalties will apply: Full refund less a per person handling fee of \$250 if cancellation is made 120 days or more prior to trip departure. No refunds will be granted for cancellation less than 120 days prior to trip departure, unless the trip departs full and your space is resold. Once the trip has departed, there will be no refunds for any unused portions of the trip. Cancellation could cost you as much as 100% of the tour cost. In the event the tour is undersubscribed or sold out, you will be notified and receive a full refund of any payments you have made. No refunds will be given for unused portions of the trip.

Single supplements & shares

Please be advised that single space is limited and subject to availability. If you wish to share a room, we will do our best to find a roommate for you. If, by the time of your final payment, a share cannot be found, you will be charged a single supplement.



Possible land & fuel cost increases

Our prices are based upon the prevailing rates made far in advance of the trip's departure. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if land or fuel costs increase significantly prior to departure, it may be necessary to increase these costs. While we reserve the right to institute such an increase, since 1995 it has not been necessary to do so on any of our programs.

Liability and responsibility

While Sea for Yourself, Inc. endeavors to choose the best suppliers available, we do not have the right to control their operations and they are subject to the laws of the state or country where the service is provided. As such we make the travel arrangements described via Sea for Yourself Services upon the express condition that Sea for Yourself, Inc., and its own agents and employees, shall not be liable for any damage, delay, loss, accident, bodily injury or death, or other irregularity that may be caused by the defect of any vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved in Sea for Yourself tours. Nor does Sea For Yourself, Inc. accept responsibility for losses or expenses due to sickness, weather, strikes, wars, or other such causes. Any such losses or expenses must be borne by the participant.

Most travel, including international travel, is completed without incident. Still, prior to booking travel, Sea for Yourself, Inc. urges passengers to review travel prohibitions, warnings, announcements and advisories for its destinations. Information from the U.S. Government may be found at <http://www.state.gov>, <http://www.tsa.gov>, <http://www.cdc.gov>, <http://www.customs.gov> and similar sites. Sea for Yourself, Inc. does not represent or warrant that travel to its destinations is advisable or without risk and Sea for Yourself, Inc. disclaims liability for damages or losses that may result from travel to such destinations.

Sea For Yourself, Inc. reserves the right to make changes in the published itinerary, trip leaders or number of participants on the program whenever, in its judgment, conditions warrant, or if it is deemed necessary for the comfort, convenience, or safety of the tour. Sea For Yourself, Inc. reserves the right to withdraw without penalty any tour announced. Sea For Yourself, Inc. also reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a member of the tour, or to require any participant to withdraw from the tour, at any time, if such action is determined by the appropriate staff member to be in the best interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of the tour group or of the individual participant. Under such circumstances, no refund will be given. Baggage and personal effects are solely the responsibility of the owner at all times.

Dates, schedules, program details, and costs, given in good faith, based on information available and in force at the time of publication. Sea for Yourself, Inc. reserves the right to make photographs and video of any of its trips, and may use any such materials for promotional and commercial purposes.

Trip participant responsibility

As a condition to acceptance of enrollment, participants must read, agree to, and sign, the Waiver of Liability statement provided as part of the trip reservation. Participants have the responsibility to sign up for a trip appropriate to their abilities and interests. Our program materials provide information on skill level, local conditions and other information that will help you make an informed choice. We would be happy to discuss any of our trips with you to assist you in making a decision. Participants should be in good health and able to participate in the activities described in the program itinerary and are responsible for being familiar with the pre-trip information provided by Sea for Yourself, including information about equipment and clothing appropriate for the trip.

In 1995, the California legislature enacted the Seller of Travel Law creating the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund (TCRF) for the benefit of consumers located in California who suffer losses as a result of the bankruptcy, cessation of operations, insolvency, or the failure to provide travel services as contracted. This law applies only to California residents, but it does not cover foreign travel for California residents where the foreign providers are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (those registered in the State of California as a Seller of Travel and a participant in the TCRF). Sea for Yourself is required by law to advise you that this tour is not covered by the TCRF. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. Sea for Yourself operates with a trust account.

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