



43. Tukoh Serikaya – 44. Wizards Hut - 45. Toro Moncong - 46. Tondok Rasa (Roller coaster) - 47. Tanjung Tondok Rasa - 48. GPS-Point - 49. Galley rock (Ghally's rock) - 50. Batu Baso
Sangeang island: 51. Black Forest (Hot Rocks) - 52. Tanjung Menjangan (Lighthouse Bay) - 53. Bantoh

A) Komodo island

43. Tukoh Serikaya is a small island and **44. Wizards Hut** a rocky pinnacle lying to the west of Komodo islands. Both dive sites are very exposed to the currents sweeping through the Sape strait. These dives sites are only reached by liveaboards and even they venture seldom here, mostly on their way to Banta island.

45. Toro Moncong (Monco): Lying on the most western tip of North Komodo this dive site is visited mainly by liveaboards. You dive on a slope with some larger coral blocks on 25 to 30 meters. There is a very nice miniwall on the upper part with cracks full of colorful glassfishes. The landscape underwater is beautiful with table corals, small sea fans and a lot of small fish and large schools of batfish. A place to relax and look for small animals. I was lucky and found a yellow baby warty frogfish (*A. maculatus*) only about 5cm large and on another dive a pair of tiny shrimps living in black corals and a rare nudibranch, *Notodoris gardineri*. The bay Teluk Toro Monco is a good place for a **night dive**.

B) Gili Banta

Banta is not part of the Komodo National Park but well worth a visit. Some of our best dives during liveaboard trips were around this island in the northwest of Komodo, sitting pat in the entrance to the Sape Strait. Currents are especially strong here because this is one of the widest gaps between islands in Nusa Tenggara, although only 200 to 300m deep. Cold water from the Flores basin in the north is pressed against and up through this gap so temperatures are low but visibility is good.

46. Tondok Rasa (Roller coaster): The fierce currents that can develop here give this dive site its name. Actually on one of our dives we startled a shark which was laying in one of the crevices and even he got swept up and down until he managed to get around the corner to calmer waters! I nearly had to laugh to see him struggle! The conditions make for an exhilarating dive. On another dive we had so much upcurrent, that we were swept dangerously fast up from about 18m to 8m and had to finish the dive early out in the blue - there was no way we could have gotten back to the reef. But this dive site is also the place I saw one of the largest group of sharks while diving in the Komodo area. There is an impressive area with large blocks of rock and a deep canyon between them around 45 meter depth. On the way up I had just spotted three large whitetips below me, when a large grey shark appeared in the somewhat murky water (visibility around 15m) and swam directly towards me. Suddenly there loomed another grey just behind him and they started to circle. I had to go up, because my computer showed me decompression approaching fast, when suddenly five whitetips joined the greys. Great!

47. Tanjung Tondok Rasa: The large bay (Tanjung) between GPS-Point and Tondok Rasa forms a protected area ideal for a night dive. On one dive we so saw so much, we didn't want to leave the water! It started with a small black frogfish perching on a red sponge, then a real stonefish, large nudibranchs and several species of colorful flatworms, crabs and shrimps and to top it off a sleeping shark.

48. GPS-Point is a submerged sea mound and lies some distance north of Banta in an exposed area. This dive was recommended to us by several fellow divers and it lived up to our expectations! Currents were moderate (but our dive guide said, they can be fierce!) but we saw 8 whitetips, a large school of barracudas, several groups of king mackerels and dogtooth tunas and a large turtle. But even with relatively calm waters it was amazing how just a couple meters over and closer to the reef there were strong whirls and eddies.

49. Galley rock (Ghally's rock): When we arrived by boat we circled around the rock and tried for some fishing. Looking at the surface current it seemed a dangerous place to dive. Everywhere whirls and the water crashing against the jutting rocks. Several times the whole boat was slightly turned by the strong current. Then my dive buddy (an Englishman who actually likes to cook, especially if it is freshly caught fish), who was fishing hooked something so large, that it managed to get off the hook again (there went our dinner - sigh!), we decided this had to be a great dive area. When the current calmed down some time later we jumped in the area just in-between the two arms of current running against and around the rocks. A great dive with sharks, large tunas, yellowfin barracudas and several Wahoos. The dive area is first a gentle slope but then changing to a wall, then around 30m it is relatively flat with large sponges. You can dive both the north and the south side depending on the currents. Actually there is a difference in the type of animals living on each side, similar to the differences observed when diving in the northern or southern part of the Komodo islands. What was not so great here - it was 24° C - f... cold!

50. Batu Baso: This partly submerged rock lies smack in the middle of the Sape strait, a short distance south of Banta. This strait is a major throughflow for water coming from Sulawesi in the north and flowing to the Indian Ocean in the south. Currents mostly flow north to south and around an obstacle like Bato Baso. From the boat we could see whirls and whorls trailing the rock for hundreds of meter! We dived both sides before and after the change of tides. This is such a great place! On our first dive we saw a marble ray that must have been more than 2 meter in diameter and a huge school of rainbow runners and several Spanish mackerels. On the second dive there were so many sharks (small and middle size, whitetips and greys) that I gave up counting. Deep down, large schools of bannerfish and damselfish were doing a syncopated dance for us.

C) Sangeang island

Sangeang island is formed by the volcano Gunung Api (fire mountain) formed by two peaks Doro Api (1949m) and Doro Manto (1795m). This volcano, one of the most active in the Lesser Sunda Islands with the last eruption in 2012. The island is about 13 km wide and lies to the northeast of Sumbawa Island. The volcano is large and if the weather is fine it can even be seen from Labuan Bajo, lying to the east towards the sunset.

51. Black Forest (Hot Rocks): This dive site on the north east of the island really makes you realize what it means to dive at an active volcano! There is an area with bubbles rising from warm black sand, the water at some places is really hot. Further down you have a really nice dive area with black coral bushes, gorgonians with hawkfishes and pygmy seahorses living in them. Currents can be a bit tricky.

52. Tanjung Menjangan (Lighthouse Bay): A sheltered dive site with black sand and a colorful coral garden. A great place for small critters like nudibranchs, shrimps and crabs (even boxercrabs), frogfishes and pipefishes and a place to see the flame file shell which seems to show electric flashes (actually it is light reflecting on thin bands on the mantle of the shell). Really good muck diving!

53. Bantoh: A small fishing village on the west side of Sangeang. A good place for a night dive.

