



SOLID SEAVENTURES
LIVEBOARDS

**M/V BIG SKY
EXPLORER**

SPECIAL EXPEDITION TRIP: CEBU-ANILAO

Join our Special Expedition Voyage and experience the most diverse diving cruise in Philippine waters! This trip has it all; from the best macro dives sites the country has to offer, to the densest reef ecosystem found anywhere in the world, to exploring the remotest islands in the archipelago and to special encounters with rare shark species; the Special Expedition Trip that cruises from Anilao through the Sibuyan Sea to Malapascua, is a complete adventure package that will whet the appetite of even the most seasoned of divers.

Malapascua, Cebu

Starting off in embarkation point Mactan, the Big Sky Explorer cruises its way to the northern tip of Cebu to spend two full days exploring the waters of **Malapascua**. Here, divers are treated with the rare chance to witness **thresher sharks** getting cleaned on top of an underwater island, Monad Shoal. The experience is truly beyond words as one may also get the chance to witness **oceanic mantas** getting cleaned themselves, while squadrons of **playful devil rays** cruise above.

An hour or so away from Malapascua is **Gato Island**, a remote marine sanctuary complete with an abundance of pelagic and macro subjects. **White tip reef sharks** patrol in and around the island's underwater tunnels, while a plethora of macro subjects including **pygmy seahorses and ornate ghost pipefish**, show themselves to the patient photographer.

Ticao, Masbate

The cruise then moves forward to the remote and seldom visited islands of **Masbate**, where bigger pelagics such as **whale sharks and manta rays** are the top draw. Due to the high concentration of plankton around the area, manta rays and whale sharks find the waters of Masbate ideal for cleaning and feeding. **Swarming schools of manta rays** frequent the site aptly known as **Manta Bowl in Ticao**, while whale sharks migrate to Masbate's waters between December to May. **Hammerheads, thresher sharks**, and other large pelagics are also often seen cruising around the area.

Romblon and the Sibuyan Sea

After spending two days exploring Ticao and other remote places around Masbate, the Big Sky Explorer then progresses its way to the eco-rich waters of the Sibuyan Sea, setting base for two days in **Romblon**. In recent times, Romblon has been fast becoming recognized as the **top-tier macro/super-macro dive destination** of the Philippines, even surpassing world-famous macro capitals of Anilao, Dauin, and international counterpart Lembeh. Acres of pristine coral reefs in Romblon are habitats for a plethora of muck and

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macro subjects including [Sevensi and Ponhoti Pygmy Seahorses](#), [spanish dancers](#), [mandarin fish](#), and much more. The most sought after hard-to-find nudibranch, [Melimbe Colemani](#), can easily be spotted by the dozen! Schooling fish such as jacks, fusiliers, bannerfish and surgeonfish are also typically seen in any Romblon dive. [Eagle rays](#), [blue-spotted sting rays](#), [white and black-tip reef sharks](#), and [green and hawksbill turtles](#) are common, too. A [blue hole](#) in the waters of Romblon may also be explored, where divers are brought down to an inverted tunnel densely filled with soft and hard corals reaching as deep as 30-meters before exiting into the open blue.

Moving northward, the vessel then reaches the distant island of [Maestre de Campo](#) also known as Sibale Island, where diving opportunities are endless. The lack of a dive operator within reachable distance makes liveaboard diving the only way to explore the island's underwater treasures. Getting up close with [pelagic fish](#), [turtles](#), and [exquisite corals](#) are ensured when diving around Sibale's [crystal clear waters](#), while visibility normally reaches 35m. [Dolphins](#), [whale sharks](#), and [manta rays](#) are also casually spotted in these waters.

[Bird watching enthusiasts](#) will find a feast for their cameras on Sibale. There are birds of every color, shape and size here: from [black-naped orioles](#) and [emerald doves](#), to a variety of [scub fowls](#) and the strangely marked [coleto](#). Many of the birds on Sibale are endemic to the Philippines and some are possibly unique sub-species found nowhere else on the planet. If you are a bird watcher you will find more than you bargained for here on the island of Sibale.

Puerto Galera and Isla Verde

Moving closer to disembarkation point Anilao, the Big Sky Explorer eventually cruises its way to the [Center of the World's Center of Marine Biodiversity](#), Isla Verde, to have divers experience [the densest coral gardens and reef walls the whole world has to offer](#). The astonishing variety of fish and corals found in Isla Verde is truly a remarkable wonder of nature and is sure to enthrall even the most experienced divers. Macro critters such as [frogfish](#) and [nudibranchs](#) abound, while out in the blue, pelagics such as sharks, mantas, and tunas cruise around the area. Nearby Puerto Galera offers [world class diving](#), from exhilarating drift dives to relaxing macro sessions.

This special trip is only offered once a year; to secure slots, bookings are advised one year ahead of schedule.



The Cruise Director will be arranging up to 4 dives per day, except for the last diving day, which will only have 2 to 3 dives depending on guests' flight schedules the following day. A total of 5 meals will be served each full day on board.

A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

0600 Light Breakfast followed by dive briefing
0700: Dive 1
0830: Full Breakfast, followed by relaxation and dive briefing
1000: Dive 2
1200: Lunch, followed by relaxation and dive briefing
1430: Dive 3, followed by relaxation and afternoon merienda (snacks)
1700: Dive briefing followed by Dive 4 (sunset dive)
1900: Dinner

Sample Itinerary

Cebu – Anilao (9d/8n)

Embarkation Port: Cebu Yacht Club, Mactan
Disembarkation Port: Anilao, Batangas

Mactan → Malapascua → Ticao → Masbate → Romblon → Maestre de Campo → Puerto Galera → Isla Verde → Anilao

Day 1: Embarkation in Cebu Yacht Club between 2PM to 6PM. Service starts with a welcome drink and a boat briefing followed by dinner before departure to Malapascua at approximately 8PM.

Day 2: Malapascua 3-4 dives

Day 3: Malapascua 3-4 dives

Day 4: Manta Bowl, Ticao 3-4 dives

Day 5: Masbate 3-4 dives

Day 6: Romblon 3-4 dives

Day 7: Maestre de Campo 3-4 dives

Day 8: Isla Verde and Puerto Galera 3-4 dives

Day 9: Arrive Anilao approximately 5AM. Disembark between 8AM and 10AM. Breakfast will be served before disembarkation and transfer to the Anilao.



Additional Information

<u>INCLUSIONS</u>	<u>EXCLUSIONS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full board accommodation in a twin or quad sharing cabin. Single occupancy rates available.• Five (5) meals a day (including light breakfast and afternoon snacks).• Unlimited coffee, tea, juice and drinking water.• Diving (3-4 non-deco dives a day), service of a dive master, full dive tanks and weight belts.• FREE UNLIMITED NITROX (for fully paid bookings 6 months or more prior to the scheduled trip).• Two-way transfer between M/V Big Sky Explorer and Mactan/Anilao.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International and domestic air transportation (if required).• Hotels and meals before and after the cruise.• Dive, travel, and medical insurances.• Soft drinks, beer, wine or spirits (minimal corkage fees apply)• Extra services such as laundry, massage, etc.• Diving equipment rental.• Nitrox-filled tanks (for fully paid bookings less than 6 months prior to the scheduled trip).• Park entrance fees and dive permits.• Crew gratuities.