
the next, and that the balance is tilting in favor of *Plasmodium*. In many areas, however, the balance still favors chloroquine, and where it doesn't, doxycycline may be your best bet if you're a diver.

Quinine has long been the drug of choice to rid the body of malaria, but it isn't readily available in the U.S. Liability-conscious manufacturers withdrew it from the American market last year. It can have toxic side effects, and there's not much of a gap between therapeutic and toxic doses.

Now that you've got all the data, discuss it with your physician, and keep in mind that medicine is an art, not a science.

Put some effort into personal protection from mosquitoes by using netting, repellants, and common sense about exposure. Suppressant drugs may not be one hundred percent effective, but if you don't get bitten, you don't catch malaria.

Acknowledgements

In Depth thanks Dr. David Brannon of Bryan, Texas, and Max Benjamin of Walindi Plantation, Papua New Guinea, for their assistance and cooperation.

Delmar Mesa

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers a fax-on-demand service for disease information around the world. I dialed up, punched in the code for Central America, and within five minutes I had nine pages of nasty things that could befall me while traveling there, including where, how to avoid, and what to take to prevent them. Dial 404-332-4565 (open 24 hours) and follow instructions. No fax? Call 404-639-2572.

Diseases by Fax

J. Q.

Adventures on the *Baruna Adventurer*

Just glad to get home alive

A new Indonesian live-aboard, the *Baruna Adventurer*, is operating in the Bali, Lombok, Komodo, Flores, and Alor areas. Returning "Adventurers" report fantastic dive sites at Gili Banta, Valerie's Rock in Komodo, Maumere, and Tukang Besi. Marine life in the area is plentiful and sometimes very unusual. However . . .

The boat crew, while friendly and helpful, are woefully inadequate when it comes to operating a dive cruise. From all reports and from personal experience, the captain and divemasters could not locate many of the good dive sites. Divers were dropped on dynamited reefs, with good reefs only minutes away. In one case the captain anchored in the wrong bay, and in another made

an overnight run in the wrong direction. There's no GPS aboard.

Knowledge of currents is also lacking. On a couple of occasions divers were geared up and loaded into dinghys, only to find the current so unmanageable that they had to motor back to the mother ship and move. But those who stayed dry may have been the lucky ones. Several travelers reported being separated from the group by strong currents, surfacing without a boat in sight, and waiting 30 to 40 minutes to be picked up, all the while being carried farther and farther away. One diver and his buddy were ignored when they surfaced near crashing surf, even though they used their whistles and safety sausages to indicate an emergency.

The area is known for its strong and unpredictable currents — all the more reason to have experienced divemasters and dinghy handlers.

One guest awoke in the middle of the night to find the live-aboard dragging anchor and drifting toward a reef; the night watchman had apparently fallen asleep. The captain was alerted and, with some convincing, moved the boat before it hit the reef. Later in the trip, the boat actually did run onto a reef in the Tukang Besi area. In that instance, poor boat handling caused the dive deck to be ripped off the stern. It could not be replaced, so the rest of the trip was even more difficult because divers had to board dinghies from the ladders.

Nassau Scuba Center Responds

Dear *In Depth*:

Regarding your article about Nassau Scuba Centre: I'm glad G. D. seemed to enjoy his trip, but I would like to point out a couple of things about our end of the business.

Dive operators in the Bahamas have tremendous overhead expenses; five years ago a gallon of gas for the van cost me \$1.99; scuba tanks cost me \$135 each, as long as I buy 40 or more at one time. The guys on the front line have to deal with a lot of things behind the scenes that you, the traveling diver, would not even think exist. A case in point: Kennedy, the driver who picked up your writer at Orange Hill at 8:30 a.m., had to wake up at 6:00 a.m. so he could pick up people at other hotels and still be on time to get you. This after perhaps not getting home until 10 or 11 the night before because he did a night dive after a full day of divemastering, filling tanks, etc.

When you consider that we work six days a week, 50 weeks a year, and there are busy times when we may go weeks working seven days without a day off, it can get tough. So G. D.'s idea that we should start the day an hour earlier is on the face of it a good one, but I think I'll let you tell the staff here that they get to wake up an hour earlier.

Keep in mind that over 50 percent of the divers that come here don't even give the staff a tip, no matter how good a time they have had. We don't include a gratuity for our dive staff in our packages; it is the clients' option to tip if they have had good service. Keeps the package price down.

As for the fact that you felt rushed: sorry about that, but there were other divers here who wanted and paid for four dives a day and the only way we could accomplish that was by keeping things moving fairly quickly. This is especially true during the shorter daylight hours of winter.

Our job is to show you a good time so you will keep coming back. You, the traveling diver, are our bread and butter. You have paid hard-earned money for your trip, and you are on holiday, so you probably aren't interested in our problems, but try to understand that you don't see the whole picture during the two or three days you are here.

Thanks and all the best,

Gene Kruger
President, Nassau Scuba Centre

Dear Gene:

Thanks for writing. While traveling divers may have some interest in your problems, I doubt they'll be sympathetic to your defense. While you have a four-tank-a-day volume business, you don't help your repeat business by providing boring second sites, then explaining to paying customers such as G. D. that you rushed him because other people had paid for four dives a day.

And why not find someone else besides the divemaster to drive the van, so he can have more than six or seven hours of sleep and a little time for himself? But then, in a country where employees aren't protected by minimum-wage laws, I suppose people have to work longer hours, even though they don't have to pay income tax — while their employer has the benefit of no corporate, no capital gains, and no withholding tax.

Nonetheless, G. D. assures us that she had a good time and still hates to be rushed when on vacation.

Ben Davison

On the same trip, both engines failed; the boat drifted in the open ocean until one of them was repaired. During the May trip, only one engine was functional. I would be especially leery of trips involving long crossings, especially in rough weather, when directional control is essential. The cabins on the lowest deck have large wood-and-glass windows that open inward; heavy seas could force the windows open and fill cabins with water.

Harbor Boat at Sea

Built in 1988 as a harbor boat in Jakarta, the wooden-hulled *Baruna Adventurer* is 100 feet long, carries 12 crew, and cruises at 10–12 knots. It was refitted in 1995 for dive cruises. The cabins (10, for 20 passengers) are well designed and clean, are equipped with comfortable bunks, private showers, and toilets, and have centrally controlled air conditioning. Some passengers, however, considered the air conditioning barely perceptible. The temperature was stifling in port and occasionally while anchored, but okay when the boat was underway.

With only one compressor aboard, tanks were refilled after each dive directly from the compressor. Taking a minimum of 45 minutes to fill all the tanks occasionally caused a dive to be missed. A couple of times the compressor was down.

The dive deck is so small it's impossible to sit down. Divers had to work in teams to have space to gear up, and even then had to be very careful to avoid bumping another diver or knocking over a camera. Once geared up, divers climbed into two rubber dinghys for transportation to the dive sites.

The boat is not equipped for hot water, but the water on our trip was generally lukewarm and

not uncomfortable. There's only one water maker, which fails frequently (on every trip reported). The boat can only run two or three days using water from the tanks (even with only one quick shower a day and scant equipment rinsing). Making frequent trips to an island to get water means missing at least two dives on each trip as the water tanks are slowly filled with a small garden hose.

Food is the *Adventurer's* strong suit. Simple but tasty American and Asian dishes were prepared fresh for each meal. There was a good variety of fish, meat, vegetables and fresh fruit, served buffet style for lunch and dinner. Breakfast was ordered from a menu. In some cases, such as a severe allergy to shellfish, the chef went out of his way to accommodate. In others, such as special requests by vegetarians, appropriate meals were not forthcoming.

The top deck is combination sundeck and covered lounge with plenty of room to spread out. However, with no space dedicated to camera storage or maintenance, the forward lounge was commandeered by photographers for equipment, leaving no space for tired divers to relax. Between meals, photographers used the

comfortable, pleasant dining room to work on equipment. A single transformer in the lounge was available for electrical devices such as battery chargers, but in

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general the boat's power supply (220V) fluctuated wildly. With a full load of photographers, some would be forced to charge batteries in the cabins, frying converters and chargers in the process.

Dollars and Sense

The schedule and air transportation have been a bit of a problem. Travelers have arrived in Bali to find that they could not join the boat until a day later than planned because the boat was not in port (missing a day's diving) or have arrived in Maumere and been told that they did not have

confirmed return reservations (another delay).

With the poor navigation, trips for water, compressor problems, engine failures, and airport-related delays, divers can expect to make 25 dives on a on a ten-day trip — far fewer than the 4 to 5 dives per day promised. The price is \$2,360 standard, \$2,750 deluxe per person for a ten-night package; \$1,470 standard, \$1,800 deluxe for a seven-night package. Air to Bima or Maumere and return (not included) runs about \$200, plus fees for excess baggage, which can be expensive (or not, depending on the mood of the agent and your negotiating skills).

Several agents in the U.S. book the *Adventurer*, including Maluku Adventures (800-566-2585 or 415-321-1387), and Posideon Venture (800-854-9334 or 516-231-4475, fax 516-231-4496). However, Dive Discovery and Posideon say they won't book the boat again until they see these problems resolved.

G. D.

The Baruna Adventurer is owned and operated by Baruna Adventure Cruises in Bali, phone 62-361-753820, fax 62-361-753809; address is P.O. Box 3419, Denpasar 80361, Bali, Indonesia.

Reader Reports

Living aboard in the Caribbean

Live-aboards are not for everyone. Says one dissatisfied diver, "We discovered we missed the flavor of being abroad. We ate with Americans and dived with Americans." But it's certainly a kick for others: "The live-aboard [*Wave Dancer*] is

great. I wouldn't do it any other way. I've been on two and have another planned for next year."

With advantages and disadvantages to both ways of going diving, it's not always an easy decision,

but if you're considering climbing aboard, here's a look at what's going on afloat in the Caribbean.

Bahamas

A boat I would like to see make it the Bahamas is the *Ballymena*, but the luxurious 124-footer appears to be having some difficulties filling and making departure dates. Planned schedules have included exotic Baha-