

Orchids of Sulawesi

Sulawesi, Indonesia

An expedition to explore Sulawesi's exuberant plant life, including endemic orchids and spectacular pitcher plants, as well as the island's extraordinary tribal history

This 16 day expedition begins in Makassar, South Sulawesi. We drive north to the Tana Toraja Highlands to explore amazing, bull-horn-shaped tongkonan houses, and ancient cliffside burial sites, as well as amazing stands of rainforest home to unique orchids and bird life. We go in search of rare *Paphiopedilum* slipper orchids and the remarkable *Nepenthes* pitcher plants, which produce pretty pitchers that attract, trap and digest insects.

Near Lake Poso, we pass diminutive 3000 year old stone megaliths said to resemble the famous Easter Island statues. We visit one of Sulawesi's best birdlife trails, home to nightjars, sparrowhawks, and bee eaters, epiphytic orchids such as *Oberonia* and *Mediocalcar*, as well as the rare pitcher plant *N. pitopangii*. We then travel to the Tangkoko Nature Reserve to photograph black crested macaques, amazing spectral tarsiers -- the world's smallest primate -- as well as hornbills and, with luck, cuscus and winged lizards.

This expedition offers excellent opportunities to observe and photograph Sulawesi's iconic traditional cultures and many of the island's most spectacular animals, birds, and plants (in particular orchids and carnivorous pitcher plants). During our 2013 Sulawesi expedition, two new species of pitcher plant were discovered, along with a new species of *Paphiopedilum* orchid now named *P. robinsonianum*.

Optional pre- or post-expedition add-ons that can be arranged include outstanding diving opportunities on remote islands to visit pristine reefs, and the exploration of peaks previously unvisited by plant experts, offering the possibility of discovering new species -- a physical challenge for the hardy adventurer.

COST: £2,100 per person for 15 days / 14 nights (all inclusive from start point to end point).

START POINT: Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

END POINT: Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

DATES: Sunday July 23 – Sunday August 06 2017.

Email askus@activetravel.com.au for more information and to make bookings.



ORCHIDS OF SULAWESI ITINERARY

Day 1: We meet in Makassar, South Sulawesi, and transfer into mini-bus vans and begin the 7 hour drive to the Tana Toraja Highlands, where we will overnight in the area of Rantepao. We stop for lunch on the way, and have dinner in a local restaurant famous for its fragrant chicken, fish and crunchy greens.

Day 2: Early morning start to visit the hills surrounding Rantepao in search of two species of *Paphiopedilum*. We may also encounter a range of other orchids including *Peristylus*, *Liparis*, *Dendrobium* and *Coelogyne*, as well as the carnivorous pitcher plants *Nepenthes maxima* and *N. glabrata*.

Day 3: After breakfast, we depart for a morning of cultural exploration in the Rantepao area, home to some of the most idiosyncratic cultures in all of Indonesia. Here, the gables of a traditional Tongkonan house rise majestically towards the sky, the supporting column adorned with the horns of tens of sacrificed water buffalo. After lunch, we visit the orchid collection of a local collector as well as the cliff burial sites of Lo'ko Mata.

Day 4: We descend towards Palopo in the lowlands, stopping along the way to visit roadside orchid sites that may include *Dendrobium*, *Corybas* and a range of small terrestrial species. Gesneriads and other shade growing plants are abundant. Overnight in Palopo.

Day 5: We drive towards Pendolo on the south end of Lake Poso, stopping for orchids along the roadsides. An optional deviation to see the endemic *Nepenthes tomoriana* is also possible.

Day 6: Drive towards Tentena along the western shore of Lake Poso, stopping at the local orchid reserve near Bancea, where the crystal clear waters of the lake wash up on a sandy beach, excellent for swimming. An afternoon arrival into Tentena will offer the chance to visit the local market with its unusual fare.

Day 7: A day trip into the mountains in the direction of Bada offers excellent roadside botanising, including orchids like *Bulbophyllum* and *Mediocalcar*, as well as *Coelogyne*, *Dendrobium* and *Spathoglottis*. *Nepenthes nigra* may also be encountered, along with a variety of *Impatiens* and other herbaceous plants.

Day 8: We make the journey from Tentena to Wuasa, entering an ancient agrarian zone where terrestrial orchids such as *Phaius tankervilleae* and *Spathoglottis* occasionally poke through the grasses alongside the carnivorous sundew, *Drosera burmannii* as well as two species of *Nepenthes*. Roadside copses also offer a range of known orchid sites. Before reaching our accommodation, we stop by two ancient, if diminutive, megaliths both 3000 years old. We overnight in a homestay famous for its excellent kitchen!

Day 9: We explore the Lore Lindu National Park in search of local plants that include terrestrial orchids (*Liparis*, *Malaxis*), the endemic pitcher plant *Nepenthes pitopangii* and a host of other upland species. Endemic birdlife is good, and includes nightjars, sparrowhawks, bee eaters and fruit doves among others.

Day 10: We explore other areas of the Lore Lindu National Park including the local lake and roadsides. The moist conditions favour the growth of epiphytes, both orchids as well as Gesneriads such as *Aeschynanthus*.

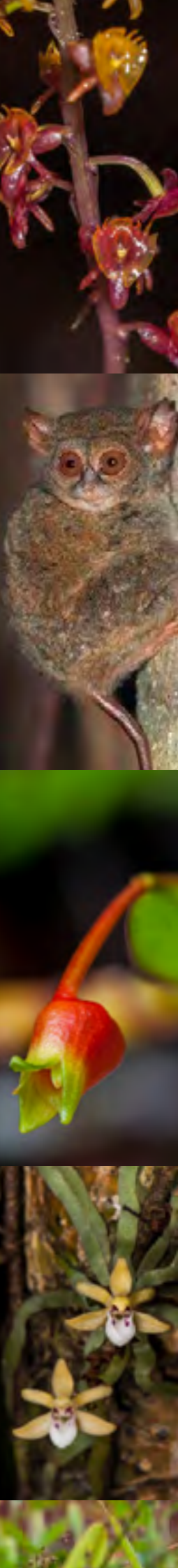
Day 11: We continue towards the coastal city of Palu, stopping along the roadsides according to what is in flower. On arrival, we check into a modern hotel for an afternoon of well deserved rest before sampling some of the excellent local seafood for dinner.

Day 12: We fly from Palu to Manado via Makassar, and transfer by car to the Tangkoko Nature Reserve, famous for its wildlife. Scops owls may sometimes even nest right above our accommodation, and other striking birds are not uncommon.

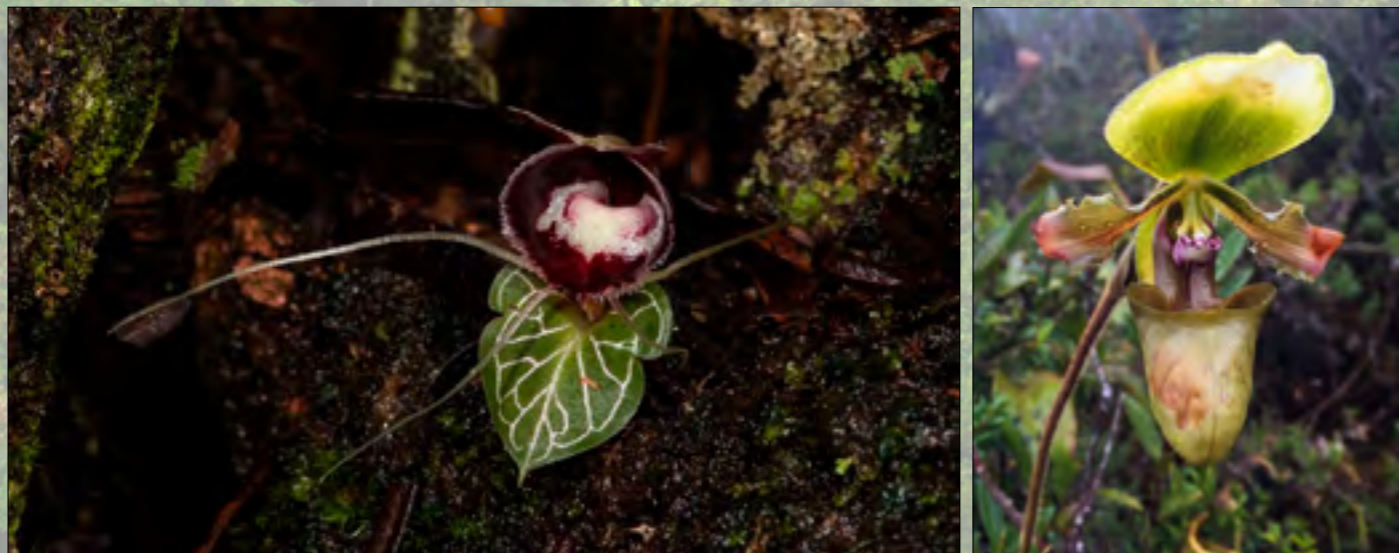
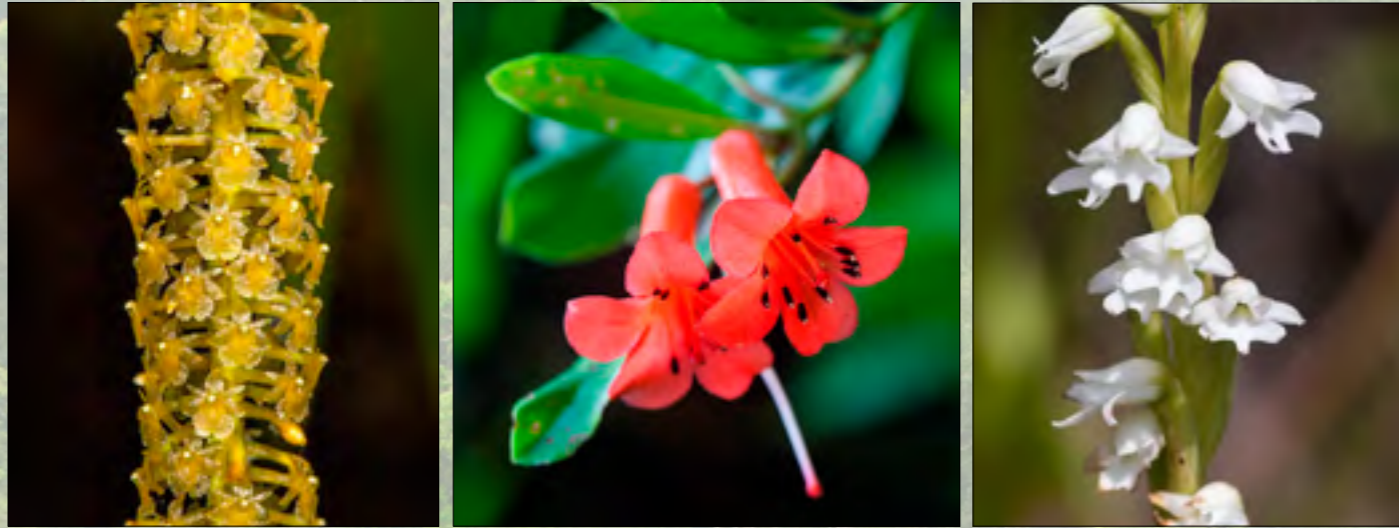
Day 13: At Tangkoko, we are guided to see black crested macaques (*Macaca nigra*), little spectral tarsiers (*Tarsius tarsier*) and (with luck) a flying dragon (*Draco volans*), a lizard with beautiful yellow or orange wing flaps. Hornbills and kingfishers are also regularly sighted.

Day 14: A second full day at Tangkoko is always appreciated, offering the chance to locate any animals we may have missed, including the amazing local vipers, but also the chance to go snorkelling in the warm waters off the coast.

Day 15: We return from Tangkoko to Manado to catch a lunchtime flight to Makassar, arriving mid-afternoon for onward departures.



Highlights of the **Orchids of Sulawesi Expedition**
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