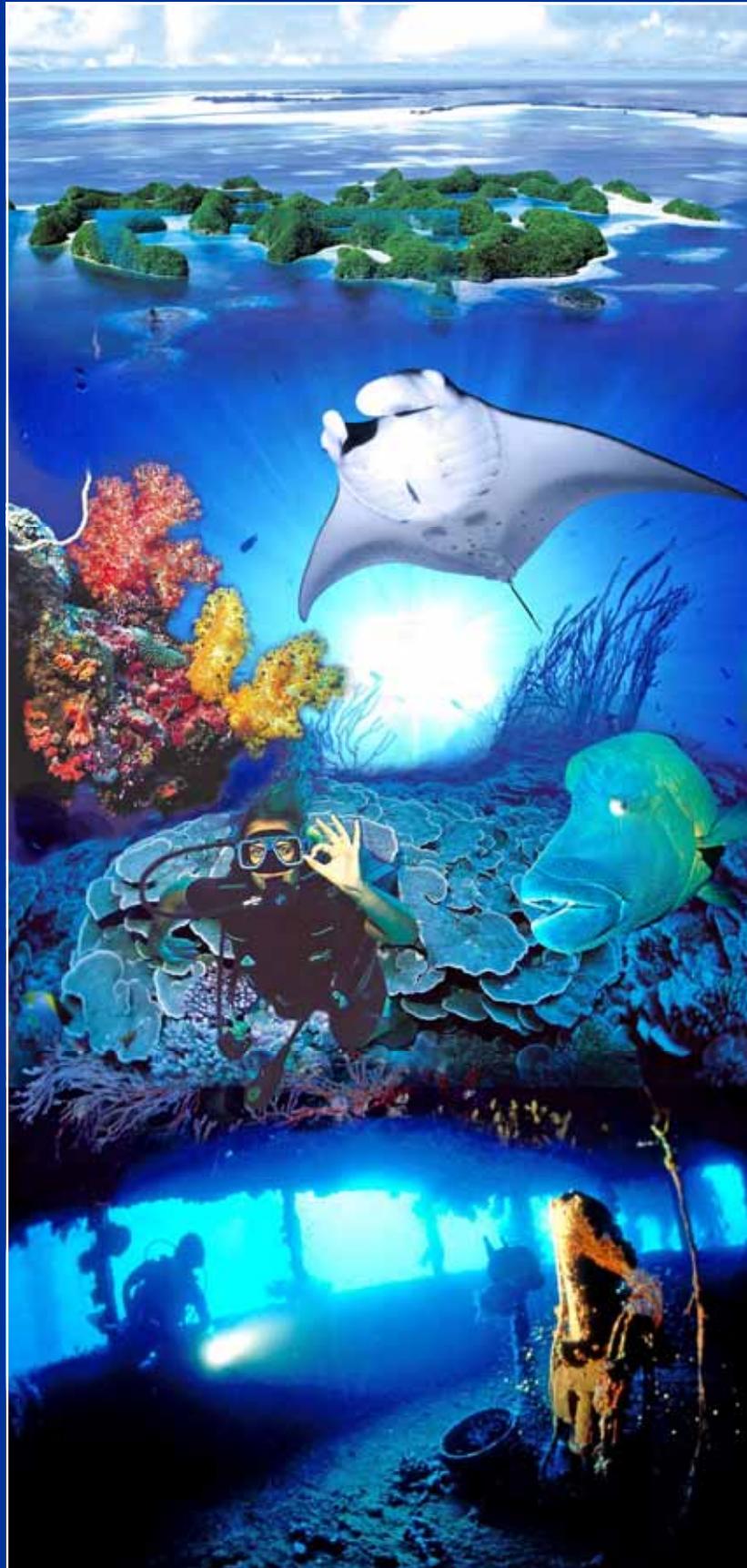




Micronesia



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The Islands of Micronesia

The Islands of Micronesia

The vast, tropical island archipelago of Micronesia consists of 2,000 islands scattered across thousands of miles of the north-west Pacific Ocean, between Hawaii and the Philippines. The islands and atolls are the result of volcanic activity in the region millions of years ago. Many islands are the summits of huge underwater mountains or the rims of sunken volcano craters. The islands were originally settled by ancient seafarers coming from South East Asia and Polynesia. Over the years Micronesia has seen parts of the nation administered by the Spanish, German and Japanese. Following WWII, the U.S.A. accepted the role of "Security Trusteeship" of the islands until 1986 when the islands assumed a Compact of Free Association with the U.S.A. Many of the islands are currently independent, with the exception of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, which remain unincorporated U.S. territories.

Guam is the largest and most populous of the islands. Just south of Guam lies The Marianas Trench, boasting the world's greatest ocean depth at 10,925 metres, indirectly making Guam the highest point on Earth.

Chuuk (Truk) Truk Lagoon as it is better known is a world renowned diving destination. The lagoon bed holds an entire WW II Japanese naval fleet, frozen in time where it sunk following a surprise attack by U.S forces in February, 1944. The site has been declared a national monument.

Palau is famous for its unusual Rock Island formations. Three ocean currents converge on Palau bringing in a variety of dazzling marine life. The area also boasts spectacular drop-offs and sunken WW II wrecks.

Yap is a land steeped in ancient traditions and fascinating legends. The giant stone money, grass skirts, traditional men's houses and cultural village tours offers an insight into Micronesian life hundreds of years ago. Yap is renowned for up-close diving with the magnificent Manta Rays.

Bikini Atoll, located in the Marshall Islands, is best known as the site of a series of nuclear tests conducted by the U.S. during the 1940s and 50s. Commercial diving in the area became available in 1996 and the site offers diving on the ships that were sunk during the controversial testing.



General Information:

Climate: Tropical, with only slight season variations. Average temperatures are between 25-30C. with 70% humidity. The lowest rainfall is from January-March. Water temperatures are 26-31C.

The people: Settled approximately 3000 years ago by ancient seafarers from South East Asia. The total population is less than 500,000.

Language: English is widely spoken along with a number of indigenous languages including: Palauan, Yapese, Chuukese and Marshallese.

Religion: Predominantly Christian.

Health: Vaccinations are not required unless coming from an infected area. There are no known tropical diseases and health care is available in the main regions. Guam and each of the FSM have a hospital.

Currency: U.S. Dollars is the main currency throughout Micronesia. Credit cards are widely accepted. Banks and ATMs are available in main towns.

Time Zones: Palau is 9 hours ahead of GMT. Guam and Saipan 10 hours ahead and the Marshall Islands is 12 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity: 110 volt / 60 cycle current.

Passport and Visas: All visitors require a valid passport with a minimum 6 months validity as well as an on-going travel ticket. Australian passport holders do not require a US visa but must complete a Visa Waiver Form. Always check for visa requirements before you depart for travel.

Guam

Guam, is the gateway to Micronesia. The popular tourism area of Tumon Bay is lined with hotels, resorts, restaurants, shopping malls, designer boutiques, Vegas-style nightclubs and a variety of entertainment attractions.

Diving: Underwater attractions include; wrecks, drop-offs, tunnels, coral coves and gardens with a variety of exotic reef fish.

Popular sites include: The Blue Hole and the wrecks of the "Tokai Maru," which came to rest on top of the "Cormoran". Each vessel a casualty of the two World Wars. Local Dive operators pick you up from your hotel and take you to some of the best local dive sites.

Outrigger Guam Resort is located along the beachfront of Tumon Bay. The air-conditioned rooms offer panoramic views from the balcony, cable TV, fridge, tea and coffee making, phone and in-room safe. The resort has a pool, kids club, volleyball, lounge bar and spa services.

Fiesta Resort Guam. Located 7 minutes from Guam Airport. The Fiesta Resort is a boutique style property with 318 rooms overlooking Tumon Bay. Ideal for short stopovers and transit stays.

Bayview Hotel near Tumon Bay, offers air-conditioned rooms with queen size bed, TV, table and chairs, fridge, tea and coffee making, phone and in-room safe. Perfect for transit stays.



Truk Lagoon

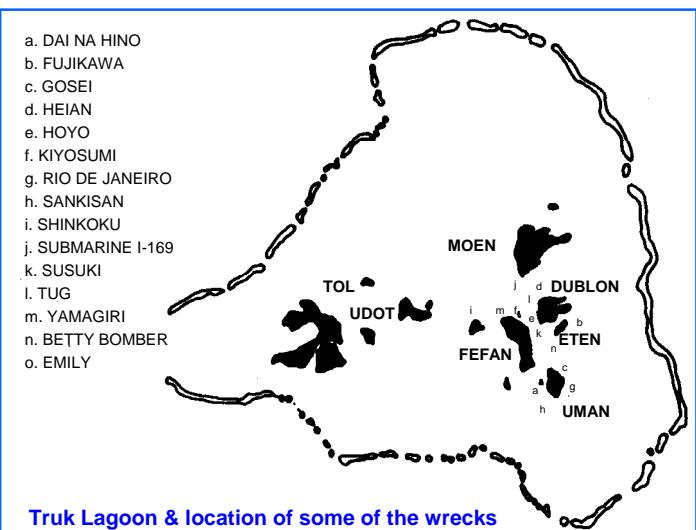
Truk Lagoon (Chuuk)

Truk Lagoon as it is better known, has officially changed its name to Chuuk. The huge atoll consisting seven major island groups is surrounded by an outer barrier reef with high islands rising up from the centre of the vast lagoon. The lagoon measuring over 70 km in diameter and up to 100 metres in depth, makes it one of the world's largest. It was within these idyllic, protective conditions that the Japanese positioned itself for their military blitz on the Western Pacific during WW II.

During February 1944, U.S forces launched a surprise and devastating air- raid attack on a complacent Japanese Imperial Fleet, based within the sheltered waters of the lagoon. Code named "Operation Hailstone", the assault was fifteen times more powerful than the Japanese' assault on Pearl Harbour. The initial strike by 72 fighters was launched from five carriers. When the smoke cleared, 15 Japanese naval ships, 6 tankers, 17 cargo ships, 250 Japanese planes and 25 American planes lay on the bottom of the lagoon. Subsequent air- raids destroyed more ships and by the wars' end, more than 70 vessels lay on the lagoon floor culminating in the largest naval loss in history.

The majority of wrecks lie off Dublon, Eten, Fefan and Uman Islands. Cargoes of tanks, trucks, airplanes, mines, bombs, machine gun bullets along with thousands of artefacts, including beautiful china pieces, are all there to be explored. The passing of time, the warm, tropical waters and prolific marine life has resulted in the wrecks being festooned in a kaleidoscope of soft and hard corals. Nowhere else in the world will you see so many wrecks in such close proximity and in clear, shallow water, making some sites visible while snorkelling.

Note: Chuuk Lagoon has been declared a national monument. Any souvenir taking of relics is prohibited by law.



Some of the more popular dives.

Fujikawa Maru

Covered in soft & hard corals, anemones & crinoids the armed aircraft ferry has guns on the bow and stern. Of the five cargo holds, four are open. Hold number 2 contains intact Zero fighters. Depth (9-34m).

Shinkoku Maru

The well preserved vessel with bow and stern guns is adorned in soft corals and life. Inside is a sick bay with operating table. The engine room can be accessed. Great night dive. Upright at about 29m.

Submarine I-169

A 92 m (300) feet long submarine, lying port side in about 38 metres of water. During the April raid the submarine submerged to avoid any damage. Unfortunately, the valves were not closed during the manoeuvre and the sub consequently sunk.

Susuki Maru

A destroyer sub chaser lying on the port side. The bow is in 3 metres of water, the stern with propellers in 15 metres. Gas masks and depth charges are still scattered on the deck.

Rio De Janeiro Maru

A 140 m (450 feet) cargo vessel converted from a luxury passenger liner. The holds contain supplies ranging from beer bottles to guns and other military supplies. The ship, is lying starboard side, with the deck only 15 metres from the surface.



Sunset - Truk Lagoon



Truk Lagoon

Plane Wrecks - During the battles approximately 250 aircraft were destroyed and plummeted into the lagoon. While the shipwrecks are the main attraction for divers, the warplanes lying at relatively shallow depths are ideal for 2nd and 3rd dives later in the diving day. Some notable airplane wrecks are the "Betty Bomber", a Mitsubishi G4M1 attack bomber, give the code name "Betty". The plane is 65 ft. long with an 82 ft. wingspan and sits in 16m of water. Others include the **Emily Flying Boat** and **Kate Torpedo Bomber**.

Reef Dives - There are a number of good reef dives on the outer edges of the barrier reef. Here you can dive the passes or vertical walls on the outside of the reef. Visibility outside the lagoon is generally very good, often surpassing 200 ft. Sharks, manta rays, sea turtles, tuna and schools of fish are commonly sighted.

Any time of the year is good for diving in Truk Lagoon. The lagoon is sheltered from the Pacific Ocean currents and waves making diving easy and relaxed. Visibility varies with each dive site and other conditions, but is normally 20-40m. The water temperature is 27-30°C year round. A 1mm wetsuit or polartec suit is adequate thermal protection for most divers. For those considering doing 3-4 dives per day, a 3mm suit is advisable.



Blue Lagoon Resort - Chuuk

Blue Lagoon Resort on the island of Moen, is set amongst a tropical garden, with views over the lagoon. The hotel offers over 50 air-conditioned rooms with private bathroom facilities, balcony, TV, phone and email services.



Facilities: restaurant, bar, conference room, gift shop and PADI dive shop.
Activities: Diving, snorkelling, Island tours, fishing, kayaking and swimming in the clear lagoon.

Truk Stop Hotel - Chuuk

Truk Stop Hotel is located on the edge of the lagoon close to the centre of Moen. The family-run hotel offers 23 guest rooms 13 deluxe, 6 ocean view rooms and 4 suites. All rooms offer private bathroom,



air-conditioning, ceiling fans, balcony, refrigerator, cable TV and phone and internet services. Facilities include: restaurant, Hard Wreck Café & Bar and a dive centre.

Truk Lagoon – Live aboard Dive Vessels

S.S. Thorfinn

"S.S. Thorfinn"
The 170 ft, steam powered vessel accommodates up to 22 guests in 11 air-conditioned staterooms. Each room has a queen size bed, private bathroom facilities and a multi system TV/VCR. The vessel offers the comfort of a large salon, open-air lounge deck, spa and sundecks, tempting food delights, safety equipment and experienced dive guides. A camera and video service centre and dive gear service centre are onboard. Diving is accessed by dive tenders. Each tender can transport a maximum 6-8 divers to the various sites. Nitrox facilities available.



M.V. Odyssey

"M.V. Odyssey" The 132 ft motor vessel accommodates up to 16 guests in 9 air-conditioned staterooms, with private bathroom facilities. The vessel offers a large dining area, entertainment lounge with TV, DVD, VCR, stereo, library and onboard kayaks for recreational use. Diving is from the mother ship and Nitrox facilities are available. Odyssey will also travel to reefs outside the lagoon.



Palau



Palau

The Palauan archipelago consists of over 300, mostly uninhabited, islands. The unique, jungle topped, limestone knobs, known as the Rock Islands, rise from the sea like giant, emerald-green mushrooms, covering an area of over 35 kilometres. Rich in diversity, Palau has an extraordinary variety of marine life, plants and bird life, thriving tropical rainforests, spectacular waterfalls, caves, white sandy beaches and hidden lakes including the world famous Jellyfish Lake, where you can swim with thousands of sting-less Jellyfish.

The largest island, Babeldaob, is where the airport and the "new capital" Melekeok, are located. A pleasant drive over the newly built, bridge road brings you to the island of Koror. Koror is the most populated of Palau's islands and where the majority of resorts and hotels are located. The township has a selection of restaurants, grocery stores, a pharmacy and a small department store, carrying a variety of local souvenirs.

Diving: Palau sits at the junction of three major ocean currents. The merging currents bring in an abundant food supply, necessary to support the vibrant coral reefs and huge variety of marine life. Palau is world renowned for its marine bio-diversity with over 1500 species of reef and pelagic fish, as well as more than 700 species of coral, identified in the region. During the air-raids of 1944, more than 70 World War II military ships were sunk around the islands, with numerous American and Japanese planes joining them. The nutrient rich waters have resulted in the wrecks being covered in a kaleidoscope of colourful soft corals and sponges. Palau is legendary for its dramatic sheer walls that rise from the depths to within inches of the surface, capped off with thriving coral reefs. The majority of dives are drift dives along the walls, plateaus and coral gardens of the outer reef. The dive boat follows along the surface and meets you upon ascent. Experience the sites that make Palau one of the worlds top diving destinations, expect to see lots of sharks, turtles, huge mantas, barracuda, colourful reef fish as well as the tiny critters like the seahorse and the elusive mandarin fish.

Snorkelling: The crystal clear, warm waters of Palau provide ideal snorkelling conditions. Coral formations and the array of fish life residing below, can be viewed from the surface. Excellent snorkelling can be experienced at the inner lagoon, in the sheltered marine lakes and around the hidden inlets and narrow passes of the Rock Islands. **Jellyfish Lake;** Snorkel in the clear water lake filled with nearly two million jellyfish. The salt water from the ocean seeps through fissures in the limestone into the lake, whilst other marine life is kept out. Due to a lack of predators the jellyfish have evolved to a point of having no ability to sting.

Kayaking or canoeing around the Rock Islands is also a thoroughly enjoyable way to explore this amazing region.



Some of the More Popular Dive Sites;

Blue Corner; A shallow coral shelf that juts out into the ocean and has vertical walls on both sides. The strong tidal currents bring nourishment to the large pelagic fish. Grey reef sharks cruise the wall, schooling barracudas, turtles, manta rays, eagle rays, dogtooth tuna and a variety of reef fish populate the site.

Chandelier Cave; Formed by calcium carbonate laden mix of leaves and rainwater seeping through the limestone above. Swim through a tunnel that opens into a cave with 3 air-filled chambers created by the beautiful stalactites that hang from the ceilings piercing the water.

Short Drop-off; A sloping wall covered with giant sea fans. At the top of the wall is a coral garden crowded with tropical fish and invertebrates.

Big Drop-off; Considered Palau's best wall dive. An abundance of hard and soft corals, sea fans, schools of pyramid butterfly fish and thousands of tropical reef fish. From 70cm to 200m.

Blue Holes; Four large holes in the top of the reef form a giant under-water chamber. The huge opening on the wall has sea fans, whips and hard and soft corals. Popular site for large pelagics such as the grey and white tip reef sharks, turtles, Napoleon wrasse, barracuda, eagle rays, tuna, groupers, triggerfish, Moorish idols and butterfly fish.

Denges Passage; The natural channel is home to an entire family of cuttlefish. The rare creatures are very accommodating to photographers

Wonder Channel; Located within the rock islands, near Jellyfish Lake. The wall reaches a depth of 80 ft and features sea fans, anemones, blue and red starfish, crabs, pipefish, sea slugs, and nudibranchs.

Wreck of Iro Maru; Sitting upright in 120 ft of water the 145 ft merchant ship was sunk during WW II. Three mast and gun turrets at the bow and stern supports a large variety of hard corals and invertebrates.



Palau

Palau Pacific Resort - Palau

Palau Pacific Resort
Overlooking the Rock Islands, the five star resort is set along a private, white sand beach and surrounded by 64 acres of tropical gardens. The resort offers 160 guest rooms in a variety of categories, all with views over the ocean or



lush gardens. The air conditioned, well appointed rooms feature a private bathroom, balcony, TV, mini bar, IDD telephone, kettle, hairdryer, robes and room safe. Resort facilities include; a selection of restaurants and bars, swimming pool and jacuzzi, fitness centre and two tennis courts.



Palasia Hotel - Palau

Palasia Hotel is centrally located close to shops, restaurants and beaches. The hotel offers 165 rooms and suites with views overlooking the Rock Islands and the Northern Bay of the island. All rooms are air-conditioned and feature, a balcony, private bath-



room facilities, refrigerator, cable TV, hairdryer, robes, IDD phone, radio clock and in-room safety box. Hotel facilities include a variety of restaurants featuring Western and Asian dishes, buffet dinners, BBQ parties, a cocktail bar, swimming pool, health spa, fitness centre and free wireless internet.



Palau - Live aboard dive vessels

Micronesia has always been hailed as one of the premier dive destinations of the world. From large manta rays to tiny cleaner shrimp, the underwater world truly blossoms and comes alive in Palau.

The ultimate way to experience the amazing diving Palau has to offer, is aboard one of Palau's live aboard charter vessels. The outer reefs can not be easily reached by day boats from Koror. Most of the boats operate 7-10 night scheduled trips that include a range of great dive locations.

Ocean Hunter I - Palau

The Ocean Hunter I is a 60 foot long (12 foot beam) intimate liveaboard designed for up to 6 divers. A limited number of passengers means you receive personal attention, easy entry into the water, and maximum bottom time. Ocean Hunter I provides the most flexible and accommodating dive experience in Palau. The experienced chef serves fresh low-fat gourmet cuisine in the dining room. The vessel has three cabins, each with a private bath and air conditioning. Cabin One sits at the front of the boat and accommodates two guests in single bunk beds. Cabin Two, sitting right behind Cabin One also accommodates two guests in single bunk beds. Cabin Three sits at the back of the boat and accommodates two guests in a king bed and twin bed sitting side-by-side.



Ocean Hunter III - Palau

Ocean Hunter III is the newest addition to the Ocean Hunter Fleet in Palau. The 96 foot long by 26 foot beam former research vessel was luxuriously redesigned in 2007 to accommodate 16 divers. It has a large main deck with saloon, galley and a large dive deck.



The vessel has 3 standard cabins, 3 deluxe cabins and 2 master staterooms all with private bath and air conditioning. The Standard Cabins each hold two passengers in a queen sized bed with a single bunk. Deluxe Cabins each accommodate two passengers in a king sized bed with a single bed bunk. The two upper deck Master Staterooms each accommodate two passengers in a king sized bed with a single bed adjacent. Ocean Hunter III is designed for professional underwater photography, TV and Film production, with a sizeable working area, 110, 220 and 415 volt electrical outlets and extra storage space.

Palau - Live aboard dive vessels

S/Y Palau Siren - Palau

The 40 metre S/Y **Palau Siren** will be the newest member of the Siren fleet. The cabins offer flexibility and can be used as twin or double bedded rooms. The dining area is very spacious offering a great setting for all meals. The dive deck is perhaps the most spacious and comfortable you would have experienced. Designated areas for charging and preparation of camera and video equipment, the S/Y Palau Siren, as all Siren Fleet yachts, truly sets out to be the pros choice for underwater photography and videography. You will find no other dive live aboard as beautiful in the waters of Micronesia, and being that she was built by divers for divers you can rest assured every need has been thought of.

S/Y Palau Siren can accommodate up to 16 guests on each trip.



Palau Aggressor II - Palau

The **Palau Aggressor II** is a 106-foot luxury state-of-the-art, catamaran that brings a new era of comfort and opulence to live-aboard diving. With a beam width of 30 feet 6 inches, it comfortably holds 18 passengers offering around-the-clock pampered service, delicious meals, accommodations that rival fine hotels and the most innovative diving amenities. The comfortable salon includes an entertainment center, with a TV, VCR, DVD, stereo and CD player. Outside you will find a partially covered sun deck with chaise lounges, a hot tub and a unique indoor/outdoor wet bar. Diving Palau from the Palau Aggressor allows passengers easy and convenient access to Palau's pristine outer reefs and famous dive sites.



Bikini Lagoon



Bikini Atoll is located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, just north of the Equator and is one of twenty nine atolls and five islands that comprise the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The isolated islands and atolls, scattered over 357,000 square miles of ocean, form part of the geographical area of Micronesia. In 1946, the US chose the remote Bikini Atoll with its deep lagoon, as the site for a number of tests on the effects of nuclear bombs. A "mock fleet" was gathered and following the tests Bikini Lagoon became the resting place for some of the world's most significant warships. The area was recently listed as a World Heritage site and after many decades of being off-limits, to all except authorized research officers, Dive Adventures can now offer a limited opportunity to experience this once in a lifetime adventure.

Diving Bikini Lagoon.

Diving Bikini Lagoon is available from May to October from aboard the self-contained "MV Windward".

The voyage from Kwajalein Atoll to Bikini Atoll is 215 nautical miles and takes approximately 25 hours, depending on conditions. 65 miles through the sheltered waters of Kwajalein Atoll takes 7 hours while the remainder of the journey in open seas takes around 18 hours. En-route there is the option of stopping at Wotho or Rongelap Atoll for a wall dive. "MV Windward" is equipped with an on-board Deck Decompression Chamber, Nitrox, O2, Helium and sorb can be organized for the technically oriented diver.

Dive sites include: the US aircraft carrier "**Saratoga**" (one of only two diveable WWII aircraft carriers in the world), "**HJMS Nagato**" once the flagship of the Japanese Navy, the battleship "**Arkansas**" and the submarine "**Apagón**".

NB: Bikini Atoll has no land based dive operations and diving is only recommended for experienced and advanced divers. The primary wreck site is at a depth of approximately 52m.

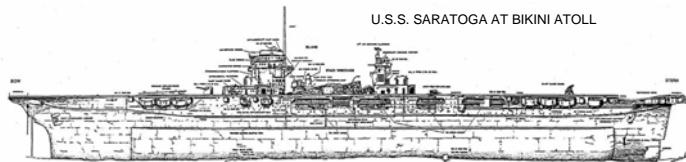


Photo © Peter Mesley



Torpedo tubes on the USS Lamson

Photo © Luke Baade



Exploring wrecks of Bikini Atoll

Photo © Peter Mesley



Diver helmets USS Saratoga

Yap

Yap, situated between Palau and Guam in the Western Caroline Islands, is one of the most intriguing islands of Micronesia. Affectionately known as the "Land of Stone Money", due to its ancient currency of huge stone disks, Yap lies just 9 degrees north of the equator. Yap consists of green rolling hills, lush mangroves and tropical, jungle-like vegetation while the coastal areas are mostly mangroves with the occasional beach and coral reefs. The Yapese people are shy, but warm and extremely proud of their ancient culture, traditions and fascinating legends. Dance is a most important art form where-by legends are told and passed down through the generations. Traditional village life, where grass skirts for women and thu'us, a type of loincloth, for men are still worn, consists of fishing, sailing and weaving. The capital, Colonia, is slightly more urbanised than the village areas with a number of small hotels dotted around the harbour.

Diving

Yap is famous for its clear waters, sheer drop-offs and large population of resident manta rays. The encircling fringing reef provides a backdrop for some of the most colorful and diverse marine and coral life with schools of tuna, dolphins, sharks, turtles and tropical reef fish, found in abundance. Yap is one of the few places in the world where Mantas can be seen up close, all year round. Yap offers gentle slopes, channel drifts as well as the protected confines of the harbour area. Most dive sites are less than 30 minutes from Colonia Harbour.

Things to do include: snorkel or dive with giant manta rays, deep-sea fishing, ocean kayak tours, mountain biking, hike along ancient stone paths and experience cultural village visits.



Manta Ray Bay Hotel

Manta Ray Bay Hotel is located in Colonia overlooking Tamil Harbour. The hotel offers 28 air-conditioned rooms with private bathroom facilities, hairdryer, TV, DVD, refrigerator, tea / coffee facilities making and in-room safe box. Hotel facilities include;



"The Mnuw', a moored sailing ship which houses the restaurant, bar and grill and movie theatre. Spa, plunge pool. Also on-site is the Stone Money (micro) Brewing Company and Yap Divers. Activities include diving, snorkelling, kayaking, fishing and wildlife walks.

Yap Pacific Dive Resort

(Formerly Trader's Ridge) This elegant retreat, styled in 1880s Victorian architecture, overlooks Chamarro Bay. The resort offers 20 rooms and 2 suites. The spacious rooms



feature handcrafted furniture, original artworks, hardwood floors and French doors, opening onto a patio or veranda. All rooms have air-conditioning, ceiling fan, TV, VCR, IDD phone and mini bar. Resort features include a restaurant, café and bar, swimming pool, spa, massage retreat and gift shop.

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