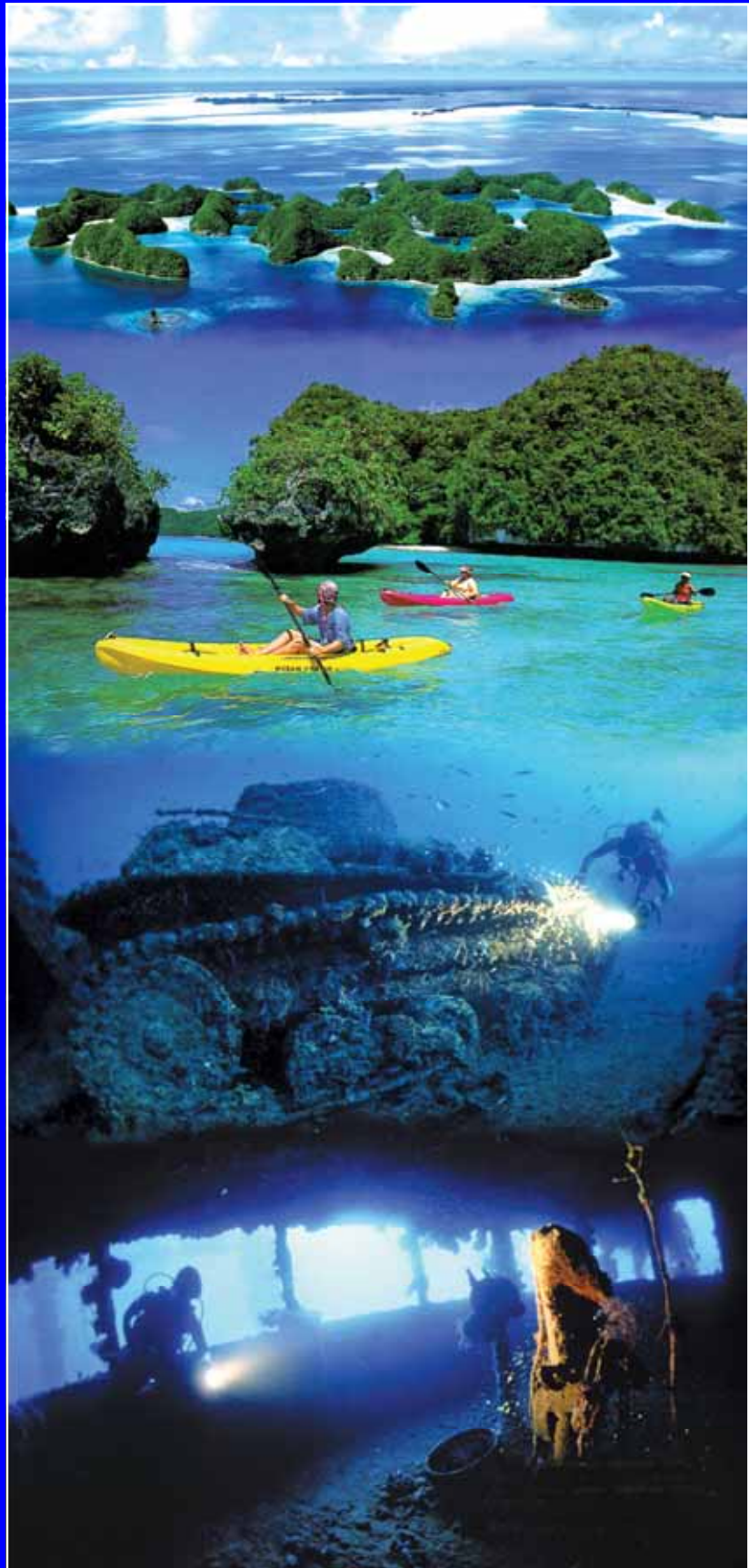


Micronesia



Continental Airlines  

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The Islands of Micronesia

The Islands of Micronesia

Micronesia means "small islands". It is the name given to the 2,000 tropical islands, scattered over more than 3 million square miles of the Pacific Ocean, between Hawaii and the Philippines. The islands and atolls are the results of volcanic activity that occurred millions of years ago. Many of the islands are the summits of huge underwater mountains or the rims of sunken volcano craters. Over the years parts of Micronesia has seen Spanish, German and Japanese administration. Following WW II, the U.S.A took over as administrators and the islands became part of the U.S. Trust Territories. In 1986 the Islands assumed free association with the U.S. and are currently independent, with the exception of the Northern Marianas Islands, including Guam, Saipan and Tinian. These islands remain U.S. Trust Territories.



Guam is situated at the southern end of the Marianas chain. It is the largest and most populated, of the islands. The Marianas Trench, located just to the south of Guam, has the world's greatest ocean depth, 10,925 meters, indirectly making Guam the highest point on Earth.

Chuuk (Truk), The lagoon bed in Truk holds an entire, WW II Japanese naval fleet, frozen in time where it sunk during a surprise attack, in February 1944. The site, complete with skeletons, jeeps, tanks and fighter planes still waiting in the holds, has been declared a national monument.

Palau is famous for its Rock Island formations and sheer, underwater reef drop-offs. Three ocean currents converge in the waters surrounding Palau, bringing in some of the most varied and dazzling marine life.

Yap, with its giant stone money, grass skirts, and traditional men's houses, offers an insight into the way Micronesia was hundreds of years ago.

Yap is renowned for its up-close diving with Manta Rays.

Bikini Atoll is located in the Marshall Islands. It is best known as the site of a series of nuclear tests, conducted by the United States, in the 1940s and 50s. Diving in this area only became available in 1996. The site offers historical dives on ships sunk during the controversial testing.



Culture and tradition - Yap

General Information:

Climate: Tropical, with only slight seasonal variations. Average temperature is between 25-30 degrees Celsius with 70% humidity. Lowest rainfall is from January-March. Water temperatures are 26-31 degrees C.

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 as well as a number of indigenous languages including: Palauan, Yapese, Chuukese and Marshallese.

Religion: Predominantly Christian.

Currency: U.S. Dollars are used throughout Micronesia. We recommend purchasing U.S. dollar travellers cheques. International credit cards are widely accepted. Banks and ATMs are available in main towns.

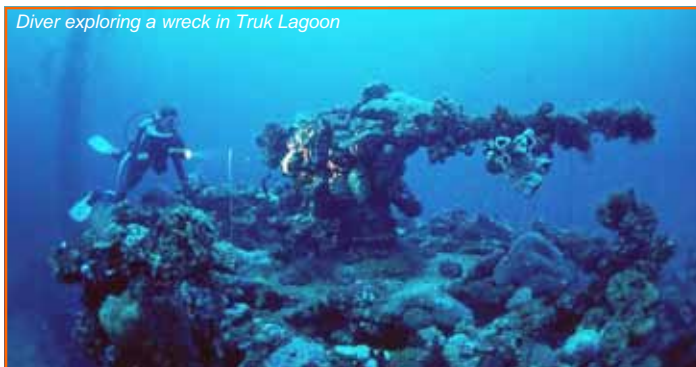
Time Zones: Palau is 9 hours ahead of GMT. Guam and Saipan 10 hours ahead and the Marshall Islands is 12 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity: 110 volt / 60 cycle current.

Car hire: Available throughout most of Micronesia

Passport and Visas: All visitors require a valid passport with a minimum of 12 months validity as well as an on-going travel ticket.

Check with your travel agent for any Visa requirements.



Diver exploring a wreck in Truk Lagoon

Guam



Guam - popular holiday destination

Guam is a popular holiday destination and the gateway to Micronesia. The white, sandy beachfront of Tumon Bay is lined with modern hotels and resorts. Adjoining these are, shopping centres featuring designer fashion boutiques, restaurants, nightclubs, Las Vegas-style shows and many other entertainment attractions including the Aquarium.

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

Popular dive sites: the Blue Hole and the wrecks of the "Tokai Maru," which rests ontop of the "Cormoran". Each a casualty of the 2 World Wars. Local Dive operators, will pick you up from your hotel and take you to some of the best local dive sites.



Wreck diving - Guam

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

Ohana Bayview Hotel overlooking Tumon Bay, offers air-conditioned rooms with a queen size bed, colour T.V, table and chairs, fridge, tea/coffee making, phone and in-room safe. Guests of Ohana Bayview have access to the Ohana Beach Club at the Outrigger Resort.



Tumon Bay - Guam

Truk Lagoon – Diving

Truk Lagoon

The correct name for Truk is actually, Chuuk, but is better known worldwide, as Truk Lagoon. Truk is a wreck diver's ultimate destination and suitable for the novice as well as experienced diver. The calm, clear, sheltered lagoon, is one of the largest in the world and relatively free from currents, providing safer and easier diving conditions.

During February 1944, the U.S Navy launched a devastating air raid on the Japanese Imperial Fleet, situated inside the sheltered waters of Truk Lagoon. Code named Operation Hailstone, the assault was fifteen times more powerful than the Japanese' assault on Pearl Harbour. The initial strike, made up of 72 fighters was launched from five carriers. When all the smoke had cleared, 15 Japanese naval ships, 6 tankers, 17 cargo ships, 25 American planes and 250 Japanese planes, lay on the bottom of the Lagoon. Subsequent air raids in April, May and June 1944, destroyed more ships and by the end of the war, more than 60 vessels were on the Lagoon bed, culminating in the largest naval loss, in history.



Diving "Nippo Maru" - Truk Lagoon

The majority of wrecks lie off Dublon, Eten, Fefan and Uman Islands. Their cargoes of tanks, trucks, airplanes, mines, bombs, machine gun bullets and thousands of artefacts, including beautiful china pieces, are all there to be explored. The combination of warm, tropical water and prolific marine life has resulted in the wrecks festooning in a variety of soft corals, hard corals and sponges, providing an eerie home for many fish, plankton and other underwater creatures. Nowhere else in the world, is there so many wrecks, in such close proximity and situated in shallow, clear water. Many of the wrecks are visible while snorkelling. For history buffs, there are also many on-shore wartime locations to visit.

Some of the more popular dives.

Fujikawa Maru

A 132m (436 feet) armed aircraft ferry with five holds, four of which are open. One of the most fascinating dives in Truk Lagoon. There are incomplete zero fighters in the number 2 hold and large deck guns on the bow and stern. Depth to the deck is only 15 metres.

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.

Shinkoku Maru

One of the most colourful and spectacular dives. This vessel is well preserved with small guns mounted on the fore and aft. The ship is upright in about 33 metres of water, 12 metres to the top of the bridge and 18 metres to the main deck.

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.

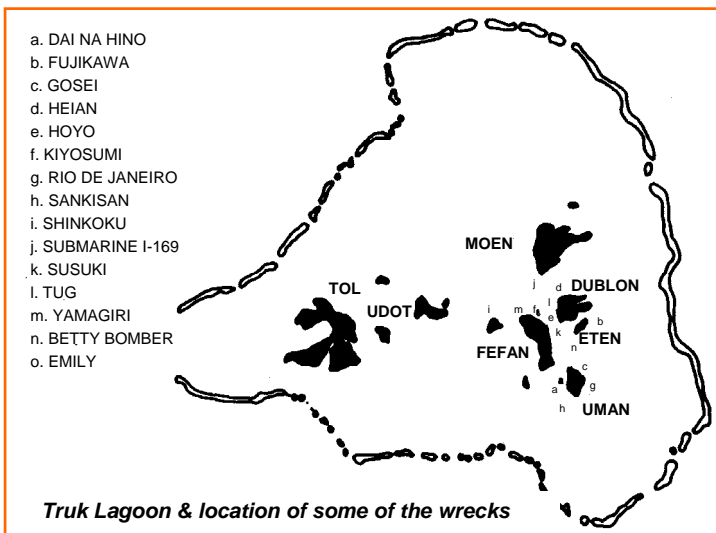
Rio De Janeiro Maru

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.



Mines in the cargo hold "San Francisco Maru"

Note: Truk Lagoon has been declared a national monument. Salvage or souvenir taking of any relics is prohibited by law.



Exploring WWII "Betty Bomber" - Truk Lagoon



- a. DAI NA HINO
- b. FUJIKAWA
- c. GOSEI
- d. HEIAN
- e. HOYO
- f. KIYOSUMI
- g. RIO DE JANEIRO
- h. SANKISAN
- i. SHINKOKU
- j. SUBMARINE I-169
- k. SUSUKI
- l. TUG
- m. YAMAGIRI
- n. BETTY BOMBER
- o. EMILY

Truk Lagoon & location of some of the wrecks

Truk Lagoon – Accommodation

Blue Lagoon Resort - is set on 14 acres of lush, tropical gardens along a white sandy beach, on Weno Island. The sprawling resort consists of several, 2 storey, low-impact blocks that blend well with the natural environment. The resort offers 56 spacious, air conditioned rooms each with private bathroom, TV, IDD phone and a balcony with views of the lagoon. The property has a restaurant and bars, coffee shop, gift shop. Blue Lagoon Dive Centre, the local dive operator, will pick divers up from the hotel dock.



Unit accommodation - Blue Lagoon Resort

Truk Stop Hotel - is centrally located within the township. The hotel offers 23 air-conditioned rooms, some overlooking the lagoon. All rooms have an ensuite bathroom, private balcony, refrigerator, telephone and colour cable television. The hotel has an on-site restaurant with an outdoor eating area and bar. Truk Lagoon Dive Centre, based at the hotel, offers many services such as nitrox facilities, rental equipment and lockers.



"Truk Stop Hotel" - Chuuk

Truk Lagoon – Live Aboards

"S.S. Thorfinn" is a 170 foot, steam powered, live-aboard vessel, accommodating up to 22 guests. The 11 air-conditioned staterooms have queen size beds, private bathroom facilities and a multi system TV/VCR. The vessel offers, comfort in the large salon, relaxation in the open-air lounge deck, spa and sun decks, tempting food delights, safety equipment and experienced dive guides. There is a camera and video service centre and a dive gear service centre onboard. Diving is from dive tenders. The tenders carry a maximum of 6-8 divers each, to different sites.



"S.S. Thorfinn"

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



"M.V. Odyssey"

Bikini Atoll

Bikini Lagoon - Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is situated half way between Guam and Hawaii. The nation, made up of 29 coral atolls and 5 small, low lying islands has a population of approximately 58,000. In 1946, following the end of WW II, the USA gathered together a "mock" naval fleet, to test the effects of atomic bombs on the large fleet. The site chosen for the explosive tests was Bikini Atoll. About the same time French fashion designer, Louis Reard, was looking for a name for his new, controversial, tiny swimsuit design and the "Bikini" was launched. Following the controversial tests, Bikini Lagoon became the final resting place for some of the most significant warships in history. Bikini Atoll was opened for diving in 1996 allowing divers to experience some of the most historic and amazing wreck diving in the world.

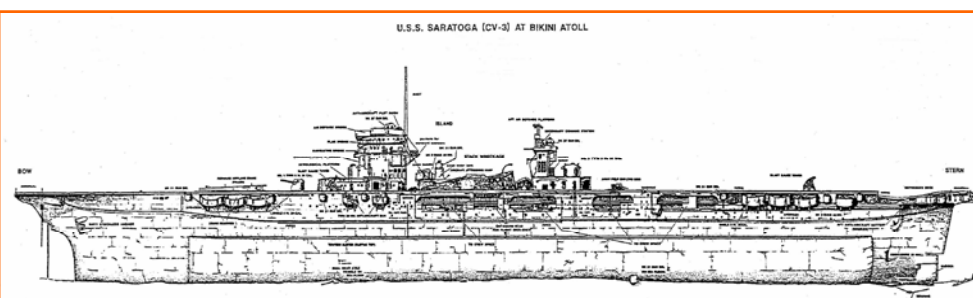
Accommodation: Bikini Lagoon Atoll Divers offer air conditioned, twin share beach units with private facilities. A field station building houses all kitchen, dining and entertainment areas.

Some of the more popular dives:

USS Saratoga - The only "dive-able" US aircraft carrier in the world lies upright in 180 feet of water. The superstructure is at 70 feet, deck at 100 feet and the airplane hangers at 130 feet. The USS Saratoga is a steel-hulled vessel with a waterline length of 830 feet and a flight deck of 888 feet officially weighing 33,000 standard tons.



Exploring "USS Apogon" - Bikini Lagoon



U.S.S. SARATOGA (CV-3) AT BIKINI ATOLL

HIJMS Nagato - Considered the flagship of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The ship is inverted, lying in 160-170 feet of water. The steel hulled vessel is 708 feet long and weighed 38,500 standard tons.

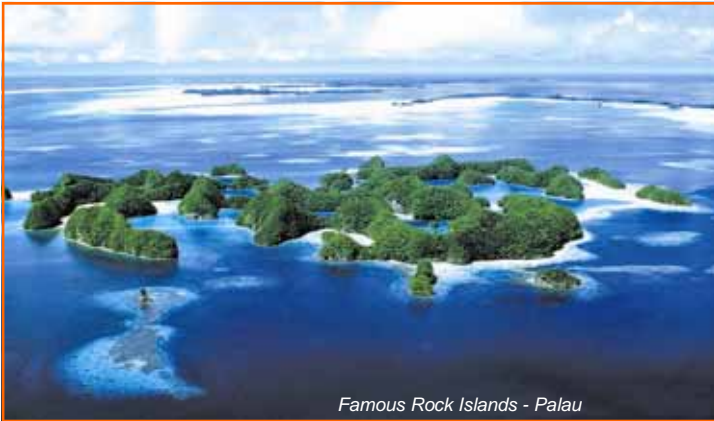
USS Arkansas - A US battleship lies inverted in 180 feet of water. The riveted steel vessel is 562 feet long and weighed 23,066 standard tons.

USS Pilotfish & USS Apogon - Both US navy submarines, 311.8 feet long and weighing 2424 standard tons submerged.

Palau

Palau

The Palau archipelago consists of over 300 islands. The unique, jungle topped, limestone islands, known as the Rock Islands, stretch over 35 kilometres, rising from the sea like giant emerald mushrooms.



Famous Rock Islands - Palau

Palau sits at the junction of three, major ocean currents. The merging currents carry an abundant food supply that supports the vibrant coral reefs, teeming with an enormous variety of tropical fish and marine life. Palau also has, a rich diversity of plant and birdlife, thriving tropical rainforests, spectacular waterfalls, caves, hidden lakes and white sandy beaches. The Rock Islands are world famous for housing the Jellyfish Lake, where you can swim with thousands of sting-less Jellyfish. Kayaking or canoeing is the perfect way to explore the islands.

Diving. Palau offers wall-drift dives, wreck dives and specialty dives, such as diving with Manta rays and Nautilus.

Renowned for its' marine bio-diversity and abundance of large pelagics, Palau, has over 1,300 species of fish and more than 700 species of coral. Palau also has one of Micronesia's largest collection of WWII shipwrecks. More than 48 Japanese ships were sunk around Palau during air raids in 1944. Numerous American and Japanese planes joined them. The wrecks are now covered in colourful soft corals and sponges, fed by the nutrient rich waters.



Exploring WWII wreck



WWII fighter in shallow water - Palau

Some of the Most Popular Dive Sites; The Ngemelis Drop-Off

Considered to be one of the world's best wall dives. Starting in knee deep water, the wall drops off vertically

nearly 300 meters. Divers can free float past a brilliant rainbow of sponges and soft corals. The intense colours of blues, reds and snowy whites form a colourful back-drop for the quivering 9 foot, orange and yellow sea fans and the giant black coral trees. **Blue Corner** has an abundance of underwater life. The strong tidal currents bring nourishment to the large pelagic fish, schooling barracudas, sharks, turtles, the hard and soft corals and fans and the enormous variety, of tropical fish. The best diving is at 15 - 24 m and is not recommended for beginners.

Chandelier Cave was formed by calcium carbonate laden rainwater.

This simple acid was formed by the mixture of leaves and rainwater, seeping through the limestone above. The cave only has a main tunnel with a single entrance and exit. The cave has 4 air-filled chambers created by the stalactites

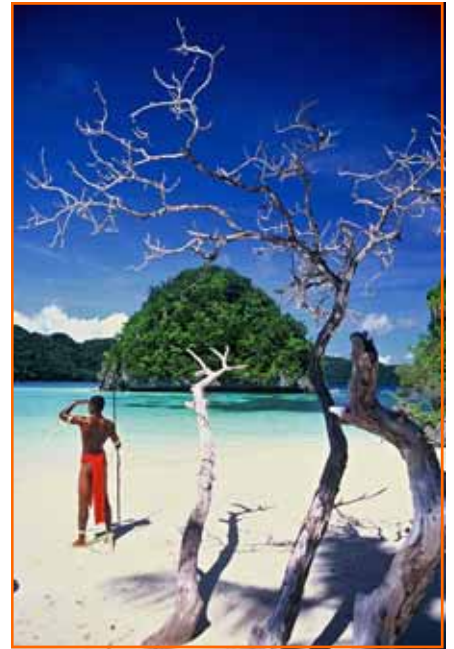


Spectacular diving - Palau

piercing the water. The last chamber has a further tunnel above water, where divers are able to remove their gear and walk through.

Accommodation

Palau Pacific Resort: is set amongst 64 acres of lush, tropical gardens, with stunning views of the Rock Islands. This 5 star resort offers luxury and style, in a selection of room categories. The air-conditioned rooms have a tropical-style décor and feature a private bathroom with hairdryer, slippers and robes, two twin or one queen-sized bed, patio or balcony, ceiling fans, IDD telephone, TV, mini-bar, safety deposit box, electric kettle, radio and nightly turndown service. The resort has 2 restaurants and bars, a well-equipped fitness centre, fresh-water swimming pool, 2 outdoor Jacuzzis and tennis courts, equipped for day and night games. Water sports enthusiasts can choose from windsurfing, snorkelling, sailing or kayaking. There is also an on-sight PADI dive centre.



Poolside - Palau Pacific Resort

Carolines Resort:

Situated hilltop overlooking the sea and distant Rock Islands. The resort has 7 individual, hand crafted bungalows all with private facilities, air conditioning, T.V, refrigerator and a balcony to enjoy the view

of the spectacular sunsets, over The Philippine Sea. Guests have access to the private beach, swimming pool, tennis courts and fitness centre located at the Palau Pacific Resort. Breakfast is available at the resort. A selection of restaurants are available in nearby, Koror.

West Plaza By The Sea: Located close to the central business district and main shopping centre of downtown Koror, West Plaza has views over the placid lagoon and nearby islands. The 35 air conditioned guest rooms are comfortably furnished and feature cable TV, refrigerator and IDD phone. The hotel boasts the stylish Sea Horse Restaurant, coffee shop and cocktail bar. Other West Plaza hotels on request are: West Plaza Coral Reef, West Plaza Desekei, West Plaza Malakal.



Inside bungalow - Carolines Resort



West Plaza By The Sea - Palau

Yap

Yap Island is situated in the Western Caroline Islands, between Guam and Palau. This lush, tropical island is steeped in ancient traditions and fascinating legends. Yap is known as the "Land of Stone Money", due to their ancient currency of huge, stone discs. The stones, some measuring over 3.5 meters in diameter, were quarried from the limestone islands of Palau. The "loose change" is still used in local and traditional customs and can be seen lying around the island, today.



Aerial view of Yap



Yapese in traditional dress in the local bank

Manta Ray Bay Hotel is situated in the township of Colonia overlooking Tamil Harbour. The 28 room hotel offers a choice of Ocean View, Garden View or Deluxe rooms. The tastefully decorated rooms have private bathroom facilities, air conditioning, refrigerators TV and VCR. For that special treat, one room has a spiral staircase leading to a private rooftop Jacuzzi and sun deck.

Yap Divers, the local dive host, is located on the premises of the hotel.



Manta Ray Bay Hotel

Diving

Yap is almost completely encircled by a fringing reef. The reef provides a backdrop for some of the most colorful and diverse, marine and coral life, to be found anywhere. World famous for it's up-close diving with

Manta Rays, Yap is one of the few places in the world where Mantas can be seen consistently, all year round. Yap offers sheer drop-offs, 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.

Some of the More Popular Dive Sites;

The Caverns - A magnificent drop-off. Grey reef sharks and a multitude of marine life patrol the magnificent wall, adorned with a variety of corals. Visibility is usually in excess of 30 meters.

Mill Channel - A truly majestic sight. Strong currents encourage up to 40 Manta Rays to make their permanent home here.



Diver with Manta Rays - Yap

SOME OF OUR OTHER POPULAR ADVENTURE DESTINATIONS



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