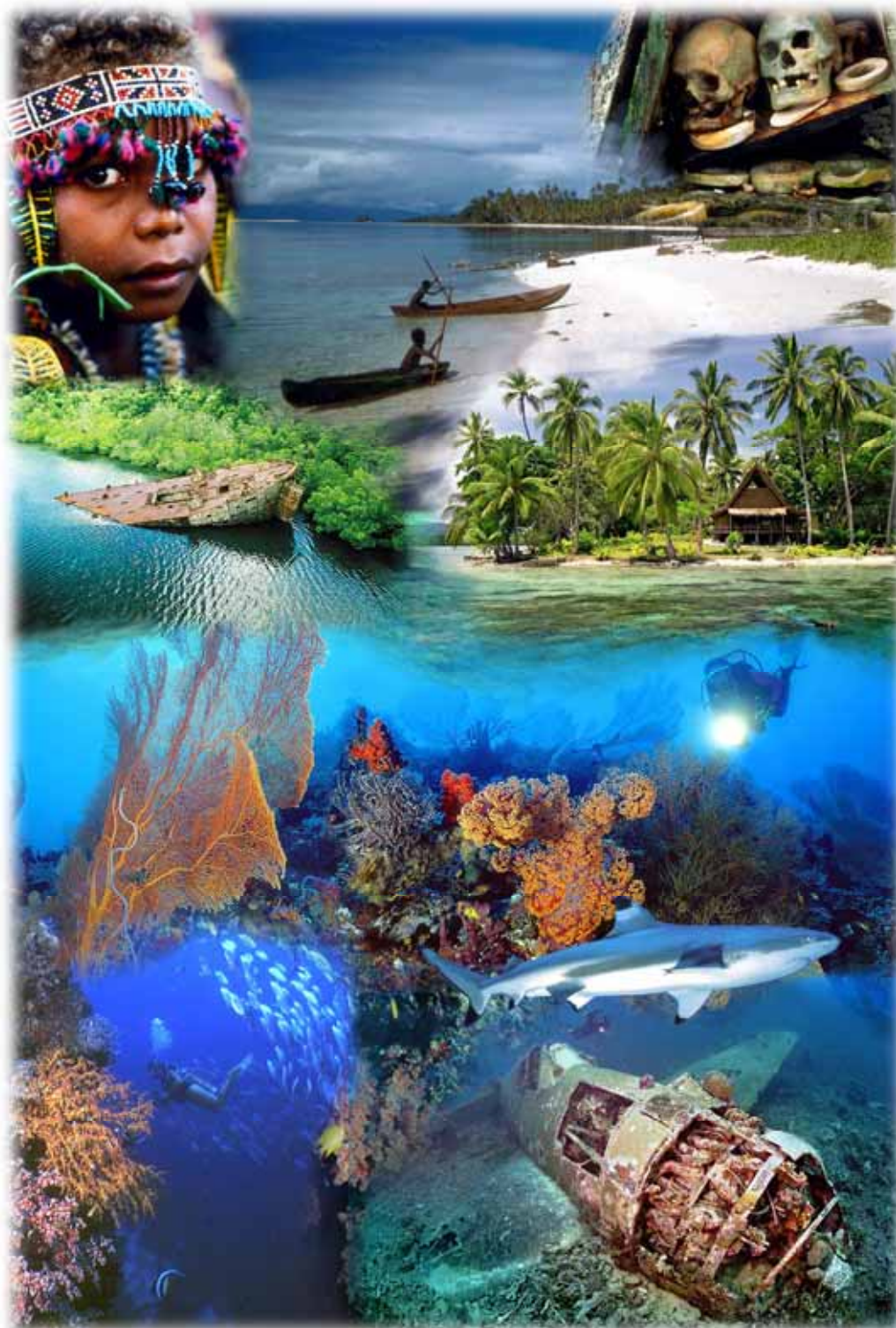


SOLOMON ISLANDS

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DIVE ADVENTURES

SOLOMON ISLANDS



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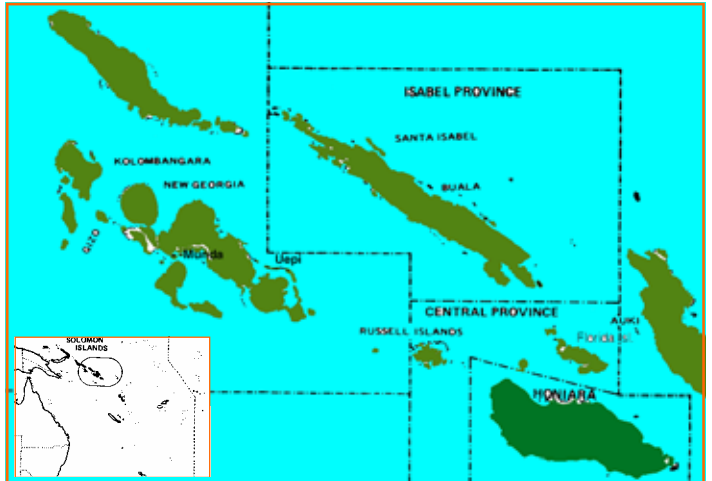
The Solomon Islands remain untouched by the influences of the modern, western world and unspoilt by 20th century development and tourism.

Rich in cultural diversity this exotic wonderland of varied landscapes offers the visitor a feast of adventures.

Located north-east of Australia in the South Pacific, the coral island nation is fast gaining a reputation for having some of the worlds best diving, snorkelling and fishing. The main islands of Choiseul, Isabel, Guadalcanal, Malaita, Makira and New Georgia make up most of the 28,000 square kilometre land mass, with hundreds of smaller islands scattered throughout the group.

During WW II the Solomons became the key turning point in the struggle by allied forces to repel the Japanese advancement in the South Pacific. One of the most fierce encounters in naval history "The Battle of Guadalcanal", occurred here on the 13th of November 1942. The Japanese lost over 11 ships, with many more boats and aircraft plummeting into the blue waters in the days surrounding the battle.

The area became known as "Iron Bottom Sound" and today the machines and relics of destruction, form artificial reefs with an abundance and diversity of corals attracting countless species of fishlife. The Solomons also boast some of the most pristine reef diving in the world. Dramatic outcrops of hard and soft corals, breathtaking drop-offs, excellent visibility and 28°C water temperatures, assures year round quality diving. Other activities and tours with experienced guides include snorkelling, canoeing, fishing, eco tours, visits to local villages, treks through pristine rainforests and visits to waterfalls and volcanoes.



General Information :

Passport: Travellers must hold a current passport with a minimum of 6 months validity plus a return or onward travel ticket.

Visas: A visa is not necessary for Australian citizens or for many other nationalities. Check with your travel agent.

Health: Visitors are strongly recommended to take a course of anti-malaria medication. See your doctor for professional advise.

Electricity: Where available 240 volts. 50 cycle AC.

As the Solomons is vastly undeveloped many areas are powered by generators. Water in many outer hotels and resorts is not heated.

Customs: The people are friendly but quite shy. The official language is English. Business hours are 8am - 12 noon & 1 - 4pm. Tipping is not encouraged.

Currency: Solomon Island Dollar. Travellers cheques and monies can be exchanged at the banks in Honiara, Gizo and Munda. Visa and Master Card is accepted at most resorts.

Packing Hints: Light and airy clothing, preferably cottons. Long sleeves and pants are recommended for evenings. Sweater, comfy shoes, hat, insect repellent, sunscreen and torch.

NOTE: All wrecks in The Solomon Islands are National Heritage listed and the removal of any items from them is strictly prohibited.



WW II wrecks abound

Honiara



Waterfront markets - Honiara

Honiara is the capital and international port of entry to the Solomon Islands. Located on the northern coastline of the island of Guadalcanal, Honiara, is the main stop-over point for travellers wishing to visit many land based WW II sites. The town is the centre for commerce in the region

with banks, restaurants, clubs, tourist information, shops and colourful, outdoor markets specializing in local handicrafts.

King Solomon Hotel is built on a terraced hillside in the heart of Honiara. The hotel offers 59 guest rooms and self-contained units, boasting spectacular views of Iron Bottom Sound and the surrounding islands. All rooms are fan-cooled or air conditioned with private facilities, telephones, TV, in-house video, refrigerator, IDD phone and tea and coffee making facilities. The hotel has a 24 hour reception area, gift shop, licensed restaurant and bar, swimming pool and tennis court. Guests are transported to their hillside rooms, via a ground based cable car.



King Solomon Hotel - Honiara

Kitano Mendana Hotel over looks the blue lagoon of "Iron Bottom Sound" with palm-fringed islands, in the distance. The hotel offers standard rooms with garden views, deluxe rooms with sea views and 3 luxurious suites. All rooms are air-conditioned and have private facilities, refrigerator, TV, tea and coffee making facilities and room service. The hotel has a licensed restaurant and bar, coffee shop, beauty salon, tour desk, gift shop, boutique, business centre, swimming pool with deck chairs and pool side bar.



Poolside "Mendana Hotel" - Honiara

Diving: "Iron Bottom Sound" is host to hundreds of wrecks including troop carriers, transport ships, submarines and planes.

Some of the more popular dive sites:

B-17 Bomber is an excellent shallow dive. Lying on a sandy slope in 10-18 metres the plane has gun turrets, props and motors intact.

Submarine a large sub close to 100 metres length rammed and driven on to the reef. The bow begins in 5 metres and the stern sits in 30 metres. **US John Penn** for the experienced diver. American troop ship lying on the sand at 60 metres covered in Black Coral Growth.

"Hirokawa Maru" (Bonegi I) Japanese transport ship, 6860 tons, length 508 feet. Dive starts at 3 metres plunging to 55 metres. **"Kinugawa Maru" (Bonegi II)** Japanese transport ship, length 436 feet, resting partly above water with the stern in 27 metres.



Some of the wrecks in the "Iron Bottom Sound"

Florida Islands

The Florida

Islands is a small island group located 35 kilometres north of Honiara, across "Iron Bottom Sound". A boat transfer to Tulagi takes approximately 50 minutes. Tulagi was the original capital of the Solomons until being completely destroyed during WW II. The area offers incredible



Waterfront Tulagi



Vanitas Divers Lodge - Tulagi



Some of Tulagi residents

WW II wrecks, pristine coral gardens, drop offs, tunnels and prolific marine life. Vanitas Divers Lodge is situated across the road from Tulagi wharf. Ideally suited to the budget conscience traveller, Vanitas offers clean, comfortable, single or twin accommodation. The lodge offers dormitory style accommodation with shared bathroom facilities. There is also two double rooms with private facilities. All rooms have power and ceiling fans but no hot water. Vanitas has a restaurant and bar offering indoor and outdoor dining, and a resident dive shop. Activities include diving snorkelling, WW II tours, island picnics, and visits to local villages.

Diving:

Solomon Islands Diving, the local dive operator, is based at the Vanitas Divers Lodge. They operate a 7.5 meter Orca, ideally suited for divers demanding a good stable platform for deeper wreck dives. The main wrecks are only minutes away from the wharf. Nitrox and limited mixed gas facilities are available for the technical and more experienced divers.



"Aaron Ward"

Some of the more popular dive sites:

Aaron Ward discovered in 1995 is the only diveable destroyer in the Solomon Islands. Depth 53-73 metres. Kanawha an American oil tanker of 14500 tonnes sunk in Tulagi Harbour on the same day as the Aaron Ward, 7th April 1943. Sitting upright on a flat bottom the deck is strewn with artefacts and debris. Depth 40-60 metres.



Diver exploring the wreck of "Aaron Ward" - Florida Islands

Sandfly Passage is a beautiful coral garden studded with big red and yellow fans. A great diversity of coral and marine life here. Depth 3-40 metres.

Twin Tunnels features ancient lava tubes starting at a patch reef and dropping down vertically to about 35 metres. The twin tunnels join into one tunnel that exits on the reef wall. You are greeted by a mass of fish that swarm around the reef including sharks, dogtooth tuna, giant trevally and barracuda. Depth 18-40 metres.



Magnificent corals "Sandfly Passage" - Florida Islands

Dive Charter Boats

Live-aboard Vessels

The ideal way to experience the diverse range of diving in the Solomon Islands is aboard one of the 2 charter vessels operating out of Honiara. In addition to the well documented world renowned diving, the Solomons offer a hidden wealth of cultural and natural wonders. During trips to villages you will be welcomed by the shy, friendly smiles of the local people offering hand made souvenirs for sale. In the evenings you can fish for kingfish, wahoo, yellowtail or tuna, with assistance from the crew.

Vessel Specifications

	MV Bilikiki	MV Spirit of Solomon's
Construction	Steel	Steel
Main engine	350 HP 3406 Turbo Charged Caterpillar Diesel	350 HP 3406 Turbo Charged Caterpillar Diesel
Voltage	231W 50HZ	231W 50HZ
Accommodation	10 staterooms all with private shower and toilet	7 Deluxe cabins with private shower and toilet. 6 Twin cabins sharing two toilets and three showers.
Length/beam	125ft/24ft	125ft/24ft
Air-conditioning	Fully Air-conditioned	Fully Air-conditioned
Charging facilities	Fully equipped	Fully equipped
Special Features	E-6 Colour processing, Nitrox, Multi-format video DVD system, Evening slide shows, Large camera tables, Separate rinse bins for photo gear and	E-6 Colour processing, Multi-format video system, Evening slide shows, Large camera tables and Separate rinse bins for photo gear.

Bilikiki Cruises operates 2 live aboard vessels "M.V Bilikiki" and "M.V Spirit of Solomons". Both boats offer unparalleled space and comfort, immense sun decks, plenty of covered deck space and air-conditioned accommodation. All meals are included during your trip. A full range of hire equipment is available, including underwater photographic equipment. Each vessel has two 21 foot aluminium dive tenders, which transfer divers to the dive site and picks them up again when they surface. There is no need for lengthy swims back to the vessel.



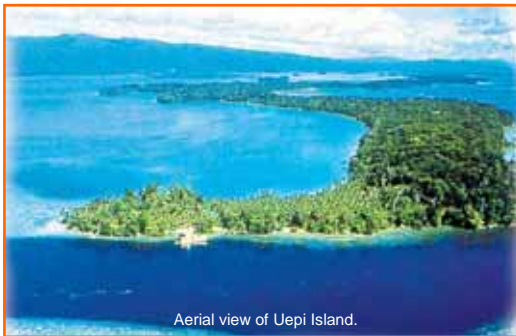
M.V. Spirit of Solomons



M.V. Bilikiki in the Florida Islands

Uepi Island

Uepi Island is a two and a half kilometre barrier reef island, located on the edge of Marovo Lagoon. This remote and stunningly beautiful island, comprises some 100 hectares of raised coral reef, covered with



Aerial view of Uepi Island.

lowland rainforest. A 60 minute flight from Honiara, brings you to Seghe Airport, originally a WW II fighter air strip. From here you will be met and transferred across Marovo Lagoon to your accommodation. Transfer is by a 22 foot open canoe, powered by an outboard engine. The canoes are very sturdy and safe but the journey across the lagoon can be a little bumpy at times and you may get wet from the sea spray. The pristine environment of Uepi is very much in its natural undisturbed state. The island is approximately 10km from the nearest local village



Kayaking over magnificent coral drop-offs.

and 150km from the nearest port of supply. Although there is a wet and dry season it is not easy to notice the difference. Uepi has approximately 3000mm of rain per annum, falling mainly in the evenings and evenly distributed, throughout the year. There is no monsoon and tropical cyclones are very rare.



Snorkeling on Uepi's doorstep

Uepi Island Resort sits on a small peninsula at the eastern end of the island. Catering for up to 34 guests the resort is set on its own sandy beach, with the tranquil waters of the lagoon on one side and fringing reefs and ocean drop-offs on the other.

Six bungalows, each sleeping up to 4 guests, are widely spaced amongst the jungle-like gardens, providing maximum privacy. Each bungalow has private amenities, tea and coffee making facilities, refrigerator and a deck overlooking the lagoon and distant New Georgia Mountains. Other accommodation includes 2 spacious, twin-share units with views over the lagoon, and two guest-rooms offering share-basis accommodation for 2 to 4 guests. All accommodation is modern, clean and comfortable with insect screening and connected rainwater. There is no running hot water service available.



View of the Marovo Lagoon

Due to the remoteness, a compulsory, pre-paid meal package is required. Meals are based around fresh, local seafoods, fruits and vegetables which are prepared by talented local chefs.

The resort has a fully equipped dive centre with a limited amount of hire gear. A qualified instructor is available for resort courses, full open water certificate courses and specialty courses. Courses are on a request basis and a



Great snorkeling - Uepi



Sharks - a common site at Uepi

medical certificate is required. For the non diving visitor Uepi offers swimming, snorkelling, day and overnight sea-kayaking tours, fishing, volleyball, bush walking and cultural trips to nearby islands. Secluded picnic and snorkelling areas can be accessed by boat or walking tracks through the rainforest.

Diving

*Uepi is renowned for its world class diving. All dive sites have exciting marine life at all depths, allowing for multi-level diving. The dive sites along the Uepi Island passage, barrier reef drop-offs and bays are exclusively coral reef ecosystems. The 10 main dive sites offer differing structure and bio-assembly including shallow (15m) and deep (30m) coral gardens with magnificent drop-offs, ledges, gutters featuring an enormous diversity of reef fish, light game fish and sharks. Turtles, mantas and eagle rays are fairly common sights, as well as the friendly Uepi hammerheads (in season). Many of Uepi's dives are conveniently located within a 5 to 10 minute boat ride from the resort. There are no wrecks in the immediate area but excursions to wreck sites can be arranged. Excursions to the wreck of **P38** fighter plane, **2 WW II Japanese supply ships** and a fishing boat are approximately a one hour boat trip away.*



Photo - Peter Lange

Some more popular dive sites:

The Elbow (24M) an incredibly steep drop-off. The sheer wall drops to depths in excess of 600 metres and is covered with colourful hard and soft corals.

Uepi Point (30m) this passage meets The Slot at Uepi Point, where a near vertical

reef corner is coated profusely with hard and soft corals. At 30m a coral peninsula juts out into the deep blue, and the walls plunge into the abyss. This provides the stage for a spectacular procession of pelagics including schooling barracuda, jacks, runner, rays and sharks. At various times and tides the point area becomes a hunting/feeding ground. As a result the underwater action can be very exciting.

Uepi Welcome Jetty a wall dropping off to 50m crammed with gorgonians, soft and hard corals and profusely growing amphora sponges. The range of colourful marine life includes trevally, mackerel, sharks, rainbow runners, tuna, barracuda and smaller reef fish.



Colourful marine life



Wreck of P38 WW II fighter

Gizo

Gizo is a tropical treasure trove of sun drenched lagoons, coral cays and pristine waters. Situated in the Western Province, surrounded by hundreds of small tropical islands, Gizo



Pacific Islands charm - Gizo

is the ideal base for exploring this fascinating region. This colourful, rustic island has a population of only 4000 people with a mixture of friendly native cultures. Embedded in the history of Gizo are memories of the heavy fighting that occurred in the region, during WW II. Stories

about the rescue of John F Kennedy, (who later became President of the United States), and the PT 109 crew, the aerial battles over Vella Lavella and of the "Tokyo Express", steaming down the "Slot." abound.



Fatboys Bar & Restaurant overlooking JF Kennedy Isl.

The quality of the diving and snorkelling in 28°C water temperatures with excellent visibility, is spectacular and diverse. Dive WW II wrecks, off shore reefs, drop-offs and caves. Trek to waterfalls and volcanoes, visit unspoilt villages, or get "marooned" on your own island for a day.

Gizo Hotel is only a 5 minute boat ride from the airport.

Situated on the main street overlooking the harbour, the hotel offers a variety of accommodation to suit most budgets. The standard rooms are fan-cooled with



Aerial view of Gizo Hotel

private facilities, refrigerator and tea and coffee making facilities. The poolside and sea-view rooms feature private facilities, air-conditioning, refrigerator, IDD phones, tea and coffee making facilities and a balcony with views overlooking the harbour or pool area.

The hotel has its own private jetty, a restaurant specialising in fresh seafood, bar, tour desk, gift shop and dive shop. The saltwater swimming pool is an ideal setting for pre dinner drinks or a relaxing swim. The hotel tour desk can arrange various other activities from sport fishing, island tours, romantic picnics on deserted islands, nature hikes and cultural tours.



Sanbis Resort

Sanbis Resort is an exclusive property set amidst a tropical jungle of coastal trees, exotic flowers and coconut palms, overlooking a tranquil lagoon.

The 6 individual

private bungalows have modern ensuite bathroom, a private verandah with views over the lagoon and it's own private beach, where you can snorkel in 30°C waters. Enjoy pre dinner drinks or a delicious cocktail from the shady platform while watching the magnificent sunsets over Simba Island. Dining at Sanbis is a lavish affair, breakfast on tropical fruits, wood fired oven bread and fresh coffee. Lunch and dinner consists of cheese platters, home made soups, exotic seafood delicacies, spicy island BBQs and a variety of western style meals cooked with an island touch. Strongly committed to preserving the environment, the lighting throughout the resort is powered by solar energy and waste is recycled. Kayaks, windsurfers, waterskiing and wake boards are available for hire.

Diving Gizo is renowned for having the most diverse and exciting diving to be found anywhere in the world. It offers WW II wrecks, numerous offshore reefs, spectacular coral formations, plummeting walls, manta rays and an abundance of marine life.



WW II aircraft wrecks abound in the waters around Gizo

Adventure Sports (Dive Gizo) located in Gizo has been exploring the waters around Gizo since 1985. Their experience and the variety of dive sites available will satisfy most divers skill levels and interests. Adventure Sports is a complete tourist facility providing services for diving, snorkeling, bush walking, as well as information for WW II history enthusiasts. Nitrox facilities are available for qualified divers.



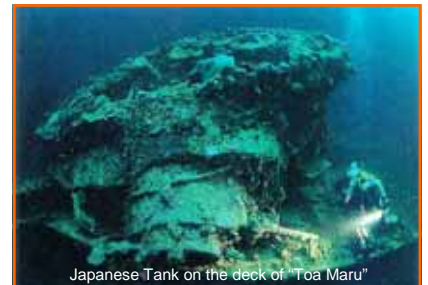
Colourful corals - Gizo

Solomon Watersport is based at Sanbis Resort and caters to all levels of diving skills and experience. They offer wreck, reef, wall and muck diving. Their custom built dive boats are powered by 100hp 4 stroke motors kitted out

with First Aid and DAN oxygen kits. The eco friendly dive store offers a full range of courses with a good range of rental equipment and in-house photo pro. Solomon Watersports also offer snorkelling, fishing, island trips, beach BBQ's and water skiing.

Some of the more popular dive sites:

Toa Maru a 6700 ton 140 metre Japanese transport ship lying on her starboard side, sitting in 10-37m of water. This dive site is worth several visits as you can explore the ships holds containing ammunition, saki bottles and even a two man tank.



Japanese Tank on the deck of "Toa Maru"

Plum Pudding Island is historically interesting as the late U.S. President, John F Kennedy and his crew of the PT 109 were shipwrecked here.

Japanese Zero and Float Plane are two easily accessible wreck dives in Gizo Harbour.

Grand Central Station is one of the best fish dives in Gizo. Just park yourself on a 18 metre deep "bench" and watch a multitude of fish life pass you by. Rays, sharks, kingfish, porpoises share the area with an abundance of colourful corals.

Hot Spot is a deep water pinnacle the top of which is at 5-6 m. A concentrated fish dive. Home to 7 species of Anemone fish found at the safety stop.



Amazing macro photo opportunities - Gizo

Munda



Local village - Roviana Lagoon

Munda is the ideal destination for the traveller seeking adventure in a unique environment, off the beaten track. Located on the main island of New Georgia one hours flight from Honiara. Munda lies close to the junction of the Roviana and Vona

Accommodation is in very basic traditional thatched huts powered by generators. Shared bathroom facilities are housed separately nearby. The property has a restaurant, dining and bar area. For groups staying at Zipolo diving can be organised on request.

Diving - Adventure Sports (Dive Munda) is based at Agnes Lodge and offers professional services catering for all levels of divers from beginners to the most experienced.

Some of the more popular dive sites:

Mushroom Island (Tomba-Tuni) is perched on an extinct volcano with soft coral overhangs, fantastic visibility and big fish action.

Custom Shark Cave is an amazing cave system that



Great wall diving - Munda

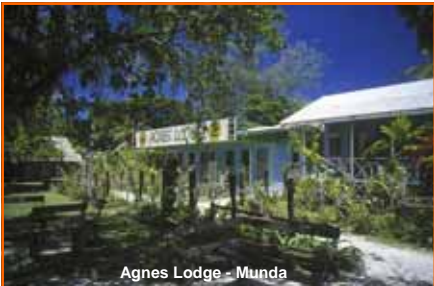
Vona lagoons. Culturally Munda was the centre for the headhunting Roviana people and eerie remnants from that era, are still visible today. Diving is still largely unexplored with majestic wall dives and virgin reefs a specialty. Munda is also strewn with historic reminders of the



Relics on "Skull Island" - Munda

heavy fighting that occurred in the region during WW II.

Agnes Lodge overlooking the Roviana Lagoon, offers a range of accommodation, from budget guest rooms with shared facilities, to individual cabins with private facilities. Each room offers fridge and hot and



Agnes Lodge - Munda

cold water. A traditional leaf thatched building on the waters edge houses the lounge bar and restaurant specialising in seafood. Activities available on the island include diving, snorkelling, canoeing, fishing, trekking, island picnics, cycling, visits to local vil-

lages and WWII sites. Zipolo Habu Resort is located on the Vona Vona Lagoon, a 30 minute boat trip from Munda. With its white sandy beach and classic "desert island" location, Zipolo is popular with surfers and fishermen.



Thatched huts - Zipolo Habu Resort



Exploring WW II wrecks - Munda

extends from a fresh water pool at the centre of the island, to a cavern that opens onto an 800 metre reef-wall, ablaze with soft corals, whips and sponges, with a myriad of fish life.

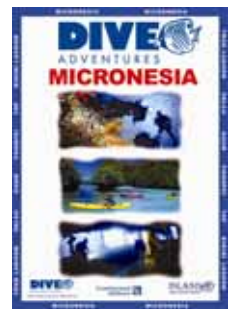
Rainbow Passage a very colourful dive with an impressive array of corals, gorgonians and invertebrates teeming with fish life including sharks and turtles

Douglas Dive Bomber this historical wreck lies intact in 12 metres of water.

Casi Maru a 700 ton, Japanese freighter lying at 16 metres.



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