



EXPEDITION LEADER X-RAY MAGAZINE

2017 • EXPEDITION PALAU WRECKS

UNKNOWN WRECK PARADISE. Join this very special and different liveaboard cruise through the stunning archipelago of Palau in Micronesia. A dive destination well-known for its wildlife and deep walls. But not many people know that below the surface you can explore a lot of wrecks from World War II.

- ❖ World War II wrecks
- ❖ 36 Japanese vessels, as well as sundry aircraft
- ❖ Steep walls with abundant fish life
- ❖ Manta Rays and Reef Sharks
- ❖ Stunning archipelago
- ❖ Luxury stay on Palau Siren



Palau Wreck Expedition

As many people know, during World War II Truk Lagoon was the Empire of Japan's main base in the Pacific theatre. However, what is less known is that before and during 'Operation Hailstone' in February 1944, which resulted in the wreck diving mecca that Truk now is, some 200 plus vessels were evacuated to Palau.

Only six weeks later the American Navy launched 'Operation Desecrate One' on Palau, to destroy as much of the remaining Japanese fleet as possible. Over 2 days in March, more than 36 Japanese vessels, as well as sundry aircraft, were sent to the watery depths of the lagoon, and now you have the chance to see them as part of this special itinerary.

During this safari you will explore many of these wrecks and whilst on 10-night trips you will also explore the deeper walls of the outer lagoon.

The majority of shipwrecks and regular dives within this itinerary are deemed suitable for recreational divers and offer varying depths for multi-level profiles. Some sites do however lie beyond, or have interesting features deeper than, the recognised recreational diving depth limit of 40m (130ft). As such they may be more suited to divers with deep diver or technical diving qualifications.

The Republic of Palau is Micronesia's western most island chain. The tightly clustered Palau archipelago, consists of over 200 islands covering a distance of around 200 km. Palau is the home to one of the world's unique phenomena, the Rock Islands.



Palau Siren - Your liveaboard

The 40 metre S/Y Palau Siren luxury liveaboard was launched in July 2012. She has the same specifications as her sister yachts, the S/Y Philippine Siren and the S/Y Indo Siren.

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 your meals. The dive deck is perhaps the most spacious and comfortable you would have experienced. Designated areas for charging and preparation of your 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 liveaboard 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 and is being implemented. Aboard the S/Y Palau Siren we shall welcome up to 16 guests on each trip. This ensures abundant space for all divers.



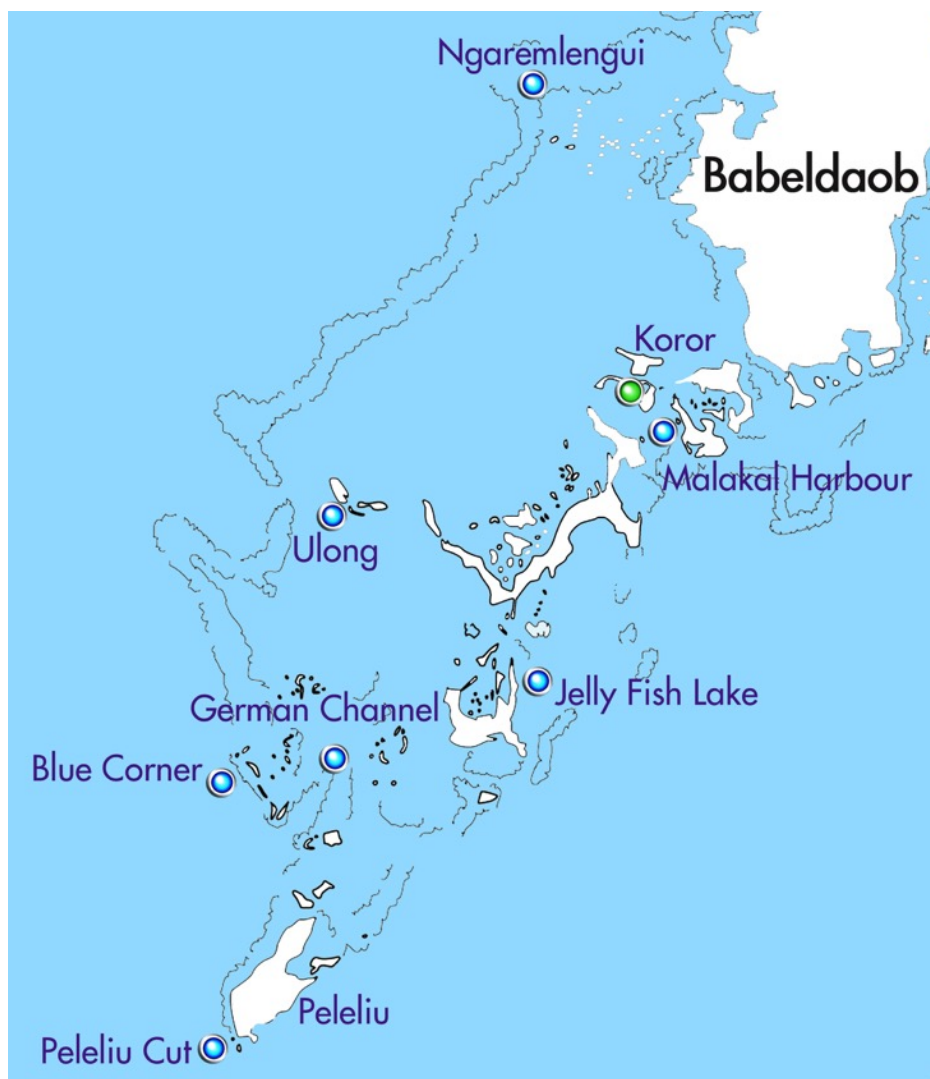
Getting to and from Palau

Palau is situated on its own in Micronesia, in the midst of the Pacific Ocean, and it requires several flights to get there. The flight schedule is published approximately ten months before the trips departure and at that time, we will contact you with a flight suggestion. The best flight route is often through Manila, with one, or two stops in Europe enroute.

We recommend a minimum of a one night stop in Manila on the way to Palau, as the ticket from Manila to Palau are purchased separately from your other international ticket. Scuba Travel can arrange all flights, as well as any necessary hotel nights along the way.

Should you wish to extend your holiday, there are several good options, the Philippines being the best. For instance, you can add a week in Puerto Galera for some beach and tropical diving. Contact us for more information and options.

It might be that the flight to Palau will go via Guam. As Guam is an American territory, all passengers must have an ESTA visa approved a minimum of 72 hours prior to arrival, just as in the USA. This is mandatory for all passengers, even though you will not be staying in Guam. The ESTA visa can be purchased online and costs approximately 17 USD per person. As the visa is only valid for one year at a time, we suggest that you purchase it at the time that we buy your flight tickets. Here is the link to the ESTA website: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>





DIVE SITES ON PALAU WRECK SAFARRI

Amatsu Maru - One of the largest wrecks in Micronesia, the Amatsu sits perfectly upright in 40m of water with the deck at 23m - 30m. A huge wreck of a tanker with many places to penetrate for those experienced and qualified to do so. This wreck deserves at least 2 visits if diving within recreational limits and, for Tec divers, a 3 hour dive only just begins to cover all the highlights such as the pump house, the main super structure and the engine room, though this received heavy damage from the American bombers.

Bichu Maru - This wreck lays close to the Rock Islands and as such the visibility can often be challenging, however, the penetration on this wreck can be extensive. It's possible to swim through the empty cargo holds and to the engine room area which received heavy damage during the bombing. After the engine room the old funnel lays broken in the sandy bottom at around 24m, with more cargo holds leading to the stern where the deck gun points skyward, still ready to repel attackers. After covering the length of wreck, which lays on it's side, you can move up to the starboard side and explore the lovely marine growth.

Kesebeku Buoy No. 7 wreck - Not the biggest wreck in Palau, believed to be an auxiliary submarine chaser, this wreck needs to be dived on slack currents as it lays perfectly upright in a channel close to Malakal. When the tides are just right, however, the life on the wreck is magnificent.

Chuyo Maru - This wreck is close to the Amatsu and, whilst smaller, is the perfect example of a wreck dive!! Laying perfectly upright and in great condition there are many opportunities to penetrate throughout this wreck. Ideal wreck for both Tec and Recreational divers alike.

Iro - This is most likely the most dived wreck in Palau. Lying in 40m of water, with the bow at 18m and the Stern at 30m there is something for every level of diver on this wreck. With abundant marine life and many places to penetrate, this wreck should be dived a couple of times to ensure you cover all the highlights such as the bow and stern guns, hold with many artefacts still inside and a huge engine room with easy access.



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Kamikaze Maru - Close to the Bichu Maru, the Kamikaze often suffers from poor visibility but for the adventurous diver the rewards can be worth it as this is the only wreck in Palau where you can see the advanced weaponry the Japanese used against shipping throughout the Pacific, the Long Lance Torpedo. Many still litter the holds and even the deck, but heavy bomb damage means the wreck has significant damage and it is a miracle that the torpedoes did not explode!!

Kibi Maru - The Kibi was part of a convoy trying to escape the relentless American bombers by leaving the Lagoon and heading out to open ocean, but she never made it. She was heavily damaged in the attack and was grounded on the reef for a number of years before falling down the steep channel to lie in about 36m upside down. The life on the keel is fantastic and, for the adventurous, the option to slip underneath her starboard side and into the cavernous empty holds is a great adventure dive.

Nagisan Maru – With below average visibility and heavily damaged, this can be a challenging dive for the less experienced but an adventure for the true wreck explorer. 34m to the sea bed, long dive times can be undertaken for those qualified.

Raizan Maru - Another of the convoy that tried desperately to escape Palau but failed. She lays in 38m of water but was heavily salvaged after the war, though the fish life abounds and the local name of the 'Fish Locker' is well justified!!

Ryuko Maru - Laying in around 34m of water this is a wonderful wreck for all levels of divers. Artefacts still remain on the bridge and visibility can be great so this is a real favourite for photographers. The deck is shallow, at 20m, so long dives can be achieved for both recreational and Tec divers alike.

Sata Maru – The Sata may be lying upside down but she is an amazing 'real' tec wreck dive. The sister ship of the Iro, laying a little over a mile away, the Sata is a Tec divers dream. With a maximum depth 38m there are amazing penetration opportunities for the qualified and adventurous. From the engine to the super structure and the bomb damaged holds, this wreck can draw you back again and again for what can be a challenging but amazing dive.



Helmet/depth charge wreck - Only found around 20 years ago, the Helmet wreck is a favourite amongst recreational divers as it is relatively shallow, with the stern at around 12m and the bow at 23m. Many artefacts still litter the wreck such as the holds filled with depth charges and the wartime helmets. A great dive for the recreational diver.

Teshio Maru - Lying in the middle of the lagoon the Teshio, on her side, has some outstanding visibility. With holds, bow gun, superstructure and a heavily damaged engine room there is something for everyone on this wreck. At only 24m maximum depth, this is a relatively shallow wreck but with lots to explore and look at.

Transport T1 - Laying up against one of the rock Islands, upside down, this wreck is essentially a destroyer that the Japanese converted to transport duties. With the rudder and prop shaft clearly visible at the stern to the heavily damaged engine room, this is one of the few chances you will get to dive a warship in Palau.

Urakami Maru - The Urakami was a repair ship stationed in Palau and would have been very busy at the time she was attacked. A large vessel sat in 42m of water, there is huge opportunity for exploration. The stern gun still points skyward and very close by on the sea bed there are still full boxes of ammunition, ready to be loaded. Swimming forward to the bridge area the old compass binnacle is still visible and once at the bow area the huge bow gun now lies in the sand perfectly upright surrounded by boxes of ammunition. A great Tec dive due to the depths, or the need for at least 2 recreational dives to cover all the highlights.

Optional activities during your liveaboard safari (additional charges apply)

Peleliu Island WWII Land Excursion - A local tour guide will escort you around the historic remnants of WWII battles which took place on the island. The tour is approximately 2 hours in duration.

Jellyfish Lake - One of approximately 70 inland marine lakes found throughout Palau. Here the golden jellyfish (Mastigias) have adapted over time to shed their stinging cells allowing for this one-of-a-kind experience with them. The jellyfish follow the sun each day using the sunlight to help algae produce sugars which it in turn shares with the host.



YOUR PALAU WRECK EXPEDITION

DAY BY DAY

Sunday August 27

You leave home and fly to Manila, Philippines. You might even leave on March 1 depending on the flight schedule.

Monday August 28

You arrive to Manila and make a stopover for the night. This since it is separate flight tickets between Scandinavia and Manila and Manila and Palau and we want to make it safer in case we run in to any delays. You get transfer to a hotel close to Manila Airport and stay there for 1-2 nights depending on the flight schedule. The extra cost for the stay in Manila will be presented together with the flight booking.

Tuesday August 29

You leave Manila and fly to Palau. When you arrive you will get transfer to the liveaboard. The safari starts and finish in Koror.

Wednesday August 30 - Wednesday September 7

These nine days are your diving days! How much you will be able to dive is depending on the weather, but usually your day will be like this. You wake up and have a light breakfast followed by your first dive. You will eat a full breakfast, relax and then do the second dive. You will have lunch, relax and then do your third dive. You will then have a delicious dinner and do either a sunset or night dive. Last day you will do maybe two dives or less dives, depending on when your flight leave.

Thursday September 8

You will check out from the boat and get transfer to the Palau airport. Today you will fly back to Manila. Most likely you will land the same day. You will get transfer back to the hotel in Manila, where you will be staying 1-2 night (extra cost) before you leave to fly back home.

Please Note!

Please note that the itinerary is only a preliminary plan. Activities can change, or may need to be exchanged, in the case of adverse weather conditions or other unexpected incidents. The dates might change a day or two back or forward, since we do not know the flight schedule yet.



Date August 29 – September 8, 2017 (liveaboard only)
Destination Palau - Micronesia - Pacific Ocean
Liveaboard Palau Siren

Included in the price

- Transfers Koror Airport – boat r/t
- 10 nights in shared cabin with en-suite bathroom on board Palau Siren
- 3 meals a day, snacks, water, tea, coffee, soda and beer
- 9 days diving (3-4 dives a day) incl. guide, tank, weights, mask, fins, wet suit (3 mm shorty), regulator, BCD and SMB
- Free 32 % Nitrox on board

Not included in the price

- International flights R/T
- Extra nights and transfers in Manila before and/or after the cruise
- Marine park fees around €155 (paid on board)
- Departure tax \$20 plus “green fee” \$30
- Dive computer and light: €5 per item per day
- Additional activities, dive equipment/gases and meals not specified above
- Tips for guides and crew (recommended, but not a must)

Price per person € 4 875

How can I pay for my trip?

Via bankgiro, bank transfer or via online payment with Visa and MasterCard.

How much do I pay and when?

When you have accepted the offer from Scuba Travel Scandinavia, you will receive a booking confirmation within one to two workdays. To confirm your spot, a deposit of € 300 is required within 7 days from the booking date. This is a trip with a scheduled flight, you will need to pay the total flight cost for us to be able to confirm your flight. Before this has been done flight cost and availability can change. Flights will be available ten month before your trip departure. The final trip cost should be paid at the latest 14 days before your departure date.

Contact

Scuba Travel Scandinavia
0301-22100 - info@scubatravel.se



Extras

→ Equipment rental

Complete equipment rental is available. See above for details. Please contact us about Tech equipment and gases. Technical equipment must be pre-booked a minimum of 6 months before your departure to make sure it is available upon arrival. Palau is so remote that it takes a long time to ship things there (i.e. sorb).

→ Insurance

Cancellation insurance with ERV is available for a cost of 6% of the total trip cost.

→ Extra baggage

Due to the ever-increasing restrictions placed on checked-in baggage on flights, overweight/extra baggage must be reported to and accepted by, the flight company. We will happily assist you to book your extra weight that is required. Please note that prices and baggage allowance varies between flight companies. Contact Scuba Travel in good time before your departure.

Important

- Your passport must be whole and valid for more than six months after you are back home
- All divers must have a dive certificate, dive logbook, proof of dive insurance with them on their dive trip and dive with dive computer and a Surface Marker Buoy, can be rented.
- Diving around Palau suits all levels of diver, however several sites have some currents. To get the most out of your trip we recommend that you have an Advanced Open Water certificate and a minimum of 30 logged dives. If you have not been diving within one year before your departure date, we recommend that you complete a scuba review course before your departure.

We reserve the right for price changes due to currency fluctuations or flight price increases. When you book your trip you accept Scuba Travel Scandinavia's terms and conditions. The given information that Scuba Travel Scandinavia has in its written information (i.e. the trips content, amount of dives, diving at a special location) is provided under the pretence of optimal conditions (i.e. political/ governmental decisions, weather, etc). The dive leader or boat captain that is in charge of the trip always has the right to change the contents of the trip due to weather, political decisions, or other acts that lie outside of their control that can affect the customers or ships safety. In this situation, the customer has no right to compensation or refund.