



Underwater Wonders of Palau: A Snorkeling Adventure

and optional pre-trip extension to Yap

with Rich Pagen and Kristin Wornson of Inside Expeditions

Palau | 11 Days | March 9 – 19, 2025

Go with Rich and Kristin

of Inside Expeditions



Kristin Wornson

MARINE BIOLOGIST | ARTIST | NATURALIST

Kristin's love of beauty and wild things has taken her from skimming the surface of mudflats on a surfboard while researching nudibranch foraging behavior, to building a successful jewelry business that incorporates tiny plants and wildflowers.

"I'm delighted to be able to share the vivid beauty of this remarkable archipelago, and immerse ourselves in the wonderful curiosities of the natural world."

ORNITHOLOGIST | MARINE BIOLOGIST | NATURALIST

Rich's career as a biologist has involved an array of fascinating wildlife fieldwork, both on land and at sea. Through it all, exploration and sharing nature with others has been his central passion.

"Oh, what humans must have thought when technology first allowed for looking beneath the ocean's surface! Palau is absolutely one of the world's best places to put your face in the water."



Rich Pagen

Adventure highlights

- Explore a variety of marine environments during daily snorkeling excursions, including the Rock Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Swim among thousands of pulsating, stingless jellyfish in the biologically unique Jellyfish Lake.
- On land, search for Palau's twelve species of endemic birds and over 800 species of endemic flora.
- Embark on a captivating journey through history with a WWII tour of Peleliu Island.



Photo: Rich Pagen

Underwater Wonders of Palau

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Despite its small landmass, Palau boasts an extraordinary abundance of marine biodiversity that is unmatched by many larger countries. Embarking on a snorkeling adventure in Palau opens the door to a world of wonders, where you'll encounter a rich tapestry of aquatic habitats. From magnificent barrier reefs and vibrant fringing reefs to serene inner lagoons, thriving seagrass beds, mysterious marine lakes, and dense mangrove forests, Palau offers a diverse array of underwater ecosystems to explore. Prepare to be mesmerized as you search for over 1,500 species of fish, marvel at the beauty of more than 700 species of coral, and keep an eye out for encounters with majestic large pelagic creatures. Palau's waters are a true paradise for snorkelers, offering an unforgettable journey into one of the most biodiverse marine environments on our planet.

Itinerary

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2025

Koror, Palau

Arrive to Palau in the evening and transfer to the Palau Pacific Hotel, our home for the next 10 nights.

MONDAY, MARCH 10

Palau

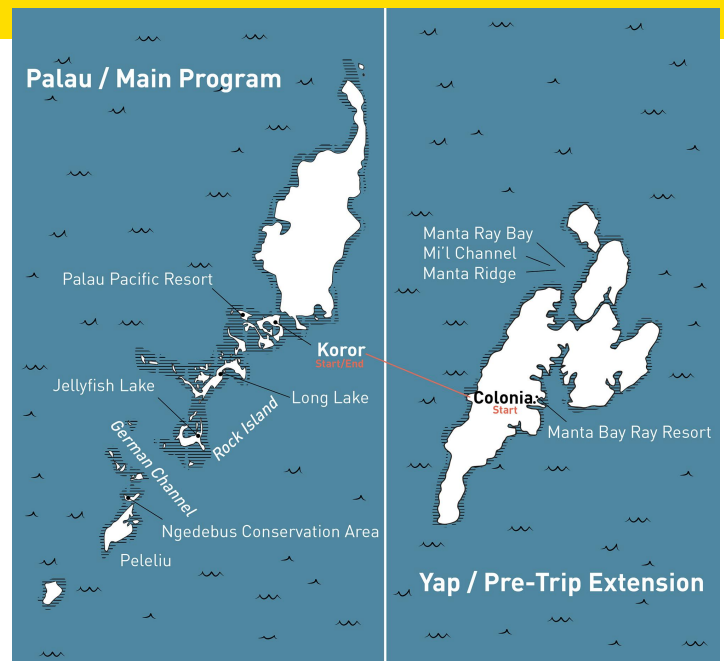
Gather with fellow travelers and trip leaders for a morning briefing and breakfast. Grab your lunch bento box and depart for a day of snorkeling. Today's snorkel sites will be shallow and calm, allowing you to test your snorkel gear and brush up on your skills. After a full day in the water with two snorkel excursions, return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11 – TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Exploration of Palau

In the true spirit of exploration, daily activities will be determined based on current weather and tide conditions. We will work closely with the local guides and experts to ensure that you visit the best sites at the most ideal times. The following is a sampling of locations we hope to experience:

Rock Islands – Board our dedicated covered speedboat and enjoy gorgeous tropical scenery en route to Palau's geologically fascinating Rock Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Jellyfish Lake - Take a short hike through lush forest to the world-famous Jellyfish Lake for an extraordinary snorkeling experience. Here, find thousands of melon-sized jellyfish. But fear not, centuries of isolation and a relationship with symbiotic algae has rendered these jellyfish sting-less. Swimming alongside these pulsating creatures as they follow the movement of the sun is a truly unforgettable experience.

German Channel – During the German occupation of Palau, this channel was blasted and dredged to connect the inner lagoon of Angur Island to the open ocean. Explore these nutrient-rich waters that flow into the channel with the tide as they attract manta rays, schools of sharks, jacks, barracudas, trevallies, and snappers. The sandy bottom is home to garden eels and blind gobies.



Ngemelis Conservation Area – A sheer vertical wall runs along the length of Ngemelis Island, providing a habitat for gorgeous soft, leather, and fan corals. Watch for colorful anemones and an abundance of reef fish on the reef's upper layers. Sharks, green and hawksbill turtles, Moorish idols, sergeant majors, and a variety of butterflyfish and angelfish patrol the reef edge.

Long Lake – Conditions permitting, enjoy a kayaking excursion at Long Lake. Begin with a leisurely paddle through winding mangrove forest, keeping an eye out for kingfishers, herons, and fruit doves. The calm waters of Long Lake provide habitat for a variety of juvenile fish with frequent sightings of young spotted eagle rays and feathertail stingrays. Step ashore on a powdery white-sand beach, fringed by rich tropical rainforest to watch for nesting birds, then go for a snorkel at Einstein's Coral Garden for a look at a fascinating collection of multicolored brain coral.

Cemetery Reef – Named for an artificial structure in the shape of a cross that was placed on top of the reef, Cemetery Reef is a great snorkel site with many hard and soft corals at shallow depth. The area abounds with small reef fish such as fusiliers, anthias, and rainbow runners.

Giant Clam Beach - Home to Palau's largest bivalves, here you will find hundreds of giant

tridacna clams, some weighing up to 500 pounds. With an amazing variation of color and patterns within the clams' iridescent mantles, these beautiful living pieces of art make fantastic subjects for photographers.

Peleliu - During WWII, Palau was the site of a fierce battle between the United States and Japan. The longest battle took place in Peleliu, where the Japanese built a small landing strip. This was the site of one of the Pacific's bloodiest battles as U.S. Marines made an amphibious assault on the beaches in 1944 in an attempt to liberate the island from Japanese forces. Due to its historical significance, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated Peleliu a National Historic Landmark in 1985. Visit the infamous Thousand Man Cave, the Japanese Shrine, and witness remnants of Japanese buildings, gun emplacements, tanks, planes, and weapons still scattered around the island today. Tour the museum, housed in a Japanese storage bunker, where a collection of personal items of Japanese and American soldiers are on display.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

Palau / Homeward

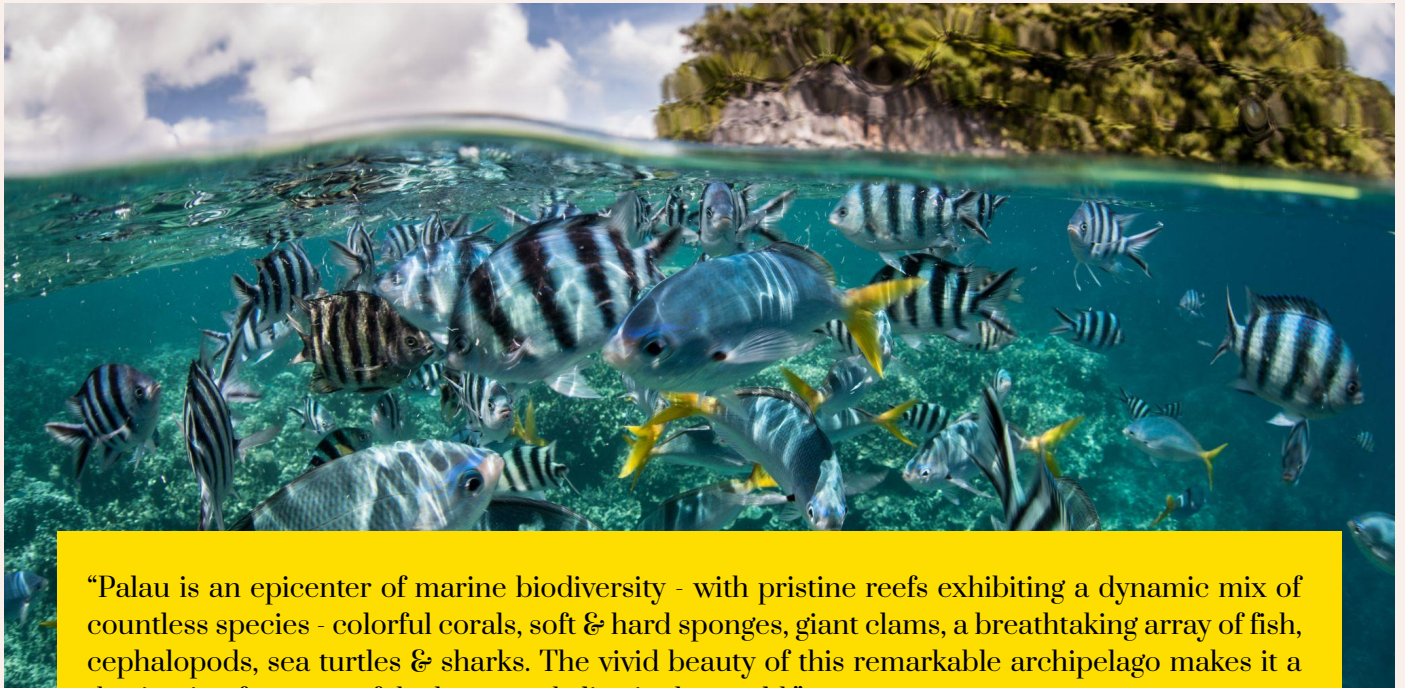
After resting in your room that has been reserved for the night of March 18, depart shortly after midnight (early morning of March 19) for Koror Airport to board your independent homeward flight.



Photo: Brad Climpson



Why we love this trip



“Palau is an epicenter of marine biodiversity - with pristine reefs exhibiting a dynamic mix of countless species - colorful corals, soft & hard sponges, giant clams, a breathtaking array of fish, cephalopods, sea turtles & sharks. The vivid beauty of this remarkable archipelago makes it a destination for some of the best snorkeling in the world.”

Kristin

“Couple that with the culture and WWII history of the area, not to mention a special trip to Yap to seek out and swim with manta rays, and this will certainly be a magical trip we will never forget.”

Rich

PRICE

\$10,490 per person
(add \$3,490 for a single room)

Room upgrades available:

Oceanview: \$600 pp or \$1,095 sgl

Oceanfront: \$1,125 pp or \$2,250 sgl

DEPOSIT

\$1,500

INCLUSIONS

- 10 nights accommodation at the Palau Pacific Resort
- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages
- Beer with lunch and dinner
- Excursions, transportation, & local guides
- Snorkel gear
- Park fees and taxes
- Gratuities
- Arrival and departure transfers

Group size: 12 travelers



BOOK NOW

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Discovering Yap

with Rich Pagen and Kristin Wornson

Yap | 5 nights | March 4 – 9, 2025

Enhance your underwater adventures by opting for a pre-trip extension to the captivating island of Yap. Immerse yourself in the year-round presence of a resident population of manta rays, granting you unforgettable opportunities to witness these majestic creatures up close. You'll have the chance to delve into the fascinating and ancient Yapese culture, renowned as one of the most unique and well-preserved cultures in Micronesia. After immersing yourself in Yap's beauty and heritage, embark on a scenic flight to Palau to join the main program, where the adventure continues.



Pre-Trip Itinerary

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2025

Colonia, Yap

Depart Guam on your independently booked flight to Yap. Arrive in the early morning of March 5 and transfer to the Manta Ray Beach Resort for check in.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

Colonia

After a leisurely morning, breakfast, and a welcome orientation with your leaders, explore the small town of Colonia and take a cultural excursion to learn how the Yapese have surpassed the rest of Micronesia in preserving their ancient culture.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

Manta Ridge

After breakfast, take a speed boat to Manta Ridge, a 30-foot ridge of coral that straddles Mi'l Channel. Conditions permitting, enjoy a drift snorkel as the tidal current allows easy access for mantas to glide in and out of the lagoon, and variety of small reef fish to set up shop providing cleaning stations for the mantas. Additionally, the area is popular with white-tip and gray reef sharks, schools of jacks, and black snappers.

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

Blue Holes

Spend the morning snorkeling at Blue Holes. Named for the sandy holes in Tomil Lagoon, they contain large hard coral bommies and are often surrounded by fields

of staghorn coral. Stingrays are often found resting in some of the shallower holes. After lunch, enjoy free time before a late afternoon sunset cruise followed by dinner at the hotel.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

Yap/Koror, Palau

Enjoy another snorkel in the morning before lunch. Then, depart on a scenic flight to Koror, Palau. While in the air, enjoy a sightseeing tour over the Rock Islands for stunning aerial views of the verdant limestone islets surrounded by dazzling blue water. Upon arrival, transfer to the Palau Pacific Hotel.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Koror

Enjoy a day at leisure to enjoy the Palau Pacific Hotel or explore on your own. This makes a great day for a massage, before we begin our exploration of Palau. Join for dinner tonight at the hotel. Your fellow travelers arrive late tonight.

PRICE

\$3,590 per person (add \$1,490 for a single room)

INCLUSIONS

- 4 nights at Manta Ray Bay Resort
- 1 night at the Palau Pacific Resort
- Meals and non-alcoholic drinks
- All excursions, transportation and local guides
- Taxes and permits
- Gratuities
- Internal air from Yap to Palau



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BOOK NOW