PALAU AGGRESSOR

Best of Palau, 7 nights

Koror to Koror | Rock Islands, Ulong, Blue Corner and Peleliu

On the incoming tide the mouth of a Palau channel fills with gray reef sharks, and along the barrier reef giant manta rays come to be cleaned.

Palau's walls are covered in sea fans, soft corals and hard corals, and the most beautiful of them drops from the shallows to 600 feet.

Where currents hit a shallow shelf, an upwelling draws schools of fish and large pelagics, with eagle rays, hammerheads and schooling barracuda in the blue.

A tunnel opens into a cave hung with stalactites.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
8 days / 7 nights	Koror, from late afternoon	Koror, 08:00 check out	Certified diver







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Pick-up from Palau hotels at 4 to 5 pm, and guests may board from late afternoon.
After everyone is on board there is a welcome and safety briefing.

STOP 2

Diving begins

The yacht leaves the dock early the next morning, at 6 to 6:30 am, and diving begins that morning.

STOP 3

Diving days: Diving days

Full days of diving with up to 4 or 5 dives a day, including night dives on three evenings.

STOP 4

Last day: Last morning of diving

One last morning of diving, then the yacht returns to port.
The Captain’s cocktail party follows at 6 pm, with dinner ashore.

STOP 5

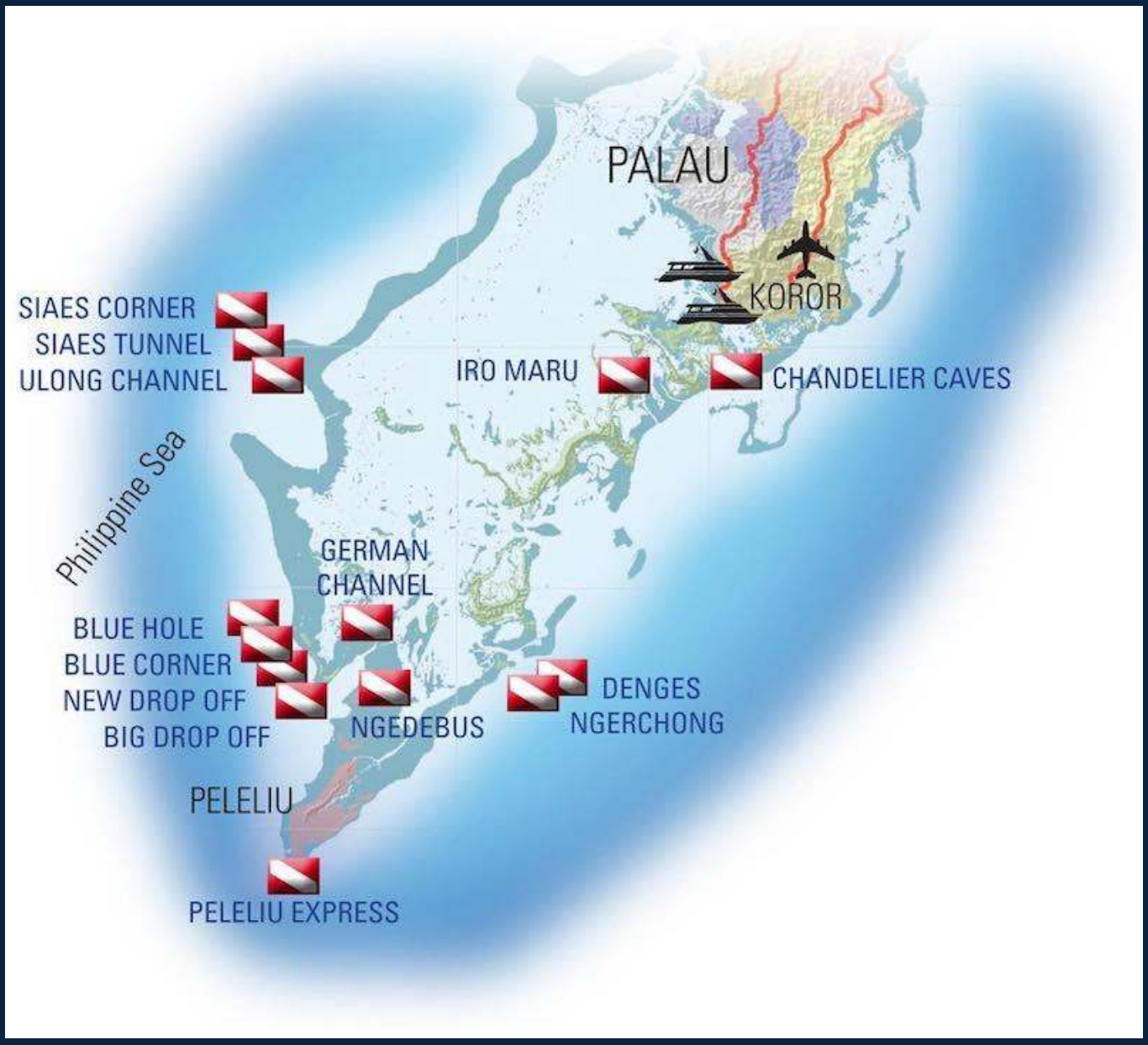
Disembarkation

Check out is at 8:00 am.
The crew assist in organising transport to the airport or a local hotel.

THE ROUTE

Route map

The map shows the main dive areas around Koror, from Ulong Channel and Siaes in the west to Peleliu in the south and Denges and Ngerchong in the east.



THE TRIP

How the trip works

EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION

Guests who are already on the island can board from late afternoon on the embarkation day, and a pick-up from Palau hotels is arranged for 4 to 5 pm. The yacht leaves the dock early the next morning, at 6 to 6:30 am, and guests can board at any time until then. The last evening ends with the Captain's cocktail party and dinner ashore, and check out is at 8:00 am. The crew help organise onward transport to the airport or to a local hotel if you are extending your stay.

THE DIVING

Diving runs from the first morning until the end of the trip, with up to 4 or 5 dives a day, including night dives on three evenings. Depths run from about 11 to 40 metres and currents range from gentle to strong, with most sites running a current, so drift diving is common and comfort in a current is recommended. All dives are made from a dive skiff lowered into the water by a hydraulic cradle, and a staff member enters the water with each tender group.

HOW MANY DIVES

The seven night trip has 21 to 24 dives, with night diving on three nights, and the ten night Best of Palau has 30 to 33 dives. Dive numbers depend on the weather.

THE DIVING

Top dive sites in Palau

These are the dive sites the yacht visits in Palau. The exact sites on any day depend on the tides, currents, weather and the group.

BIG DROP-OFF

A wall dive that begins as shallow as 2' at low tide and drops to 600'. It is considered by most to be the most beautiful wall dive in Palau because of its abundance of hard and soft corals, seafans, schools of pyramid butterflyfish, and a multitude of tropical reef fish.

BLUE CORNER

The best known and most highly rated dive site in Micronesia features a shallow coral shelf that projects out into the ocean and has vertical walls on both sides. An upwelling created by the currents attracts schools of fish and large pelagics to the top edges of the walls. The dive is best known for its schools of gray reef sharks that cruise the edge of the wall. Two resident Napoleon wrasses often accompany the divers throughout their dive. Dogtooth tuna, eagle rays, manta rays, white tip and hammerhead sharks, turtles, schooling barracudas, and schools of reef fish populate the site.

BLUE HOLES

This is a series of four large holes in the top of the reef that converge to form a gigantic underwater chamber. The chamber has a huge opening on a wall that is home to soft corals, sea fans, sea whips and hard corals. Large pelagics often encountered here include tuna, jacks, gray and white tip reef sharks, barracuda and eagle rays. Grouper, Napoleon wrasse, triggerfish, Moorish idols, butterflyfish, anemones and turtles are common at this site, which is situated next to Blue Corner.

CHANDELIER CAVES

A short swim through a tunnel at depth of 35' opens into a cave consisting of three chambers. Beautiful stalactites formed by water dripping down through the rock island above, hang from the ceilings and give the caves their name. Tiny holes to the outside wood allow fresh air to enter the chambers so that divers can surface and admire the beautiful surroundings.

DENGES PASSAGE

This natural channel, situated on Palau's eastern coast, is home to an entire family of cuttlefish. The uncommon creatures, related to the squid family, are as accommodating to photographers as they are rare. They are not often encountered by divers because of the relatively few locations in he world where they can be found, their ability to remain relatively motionless, and their excellent camouflage.





GERMAN CHANNEL

This man-made channel through the southwest side of the barrier reef is home to two diving areas. One site, known as Manta Rock, is a natural cleaning station where giant manta rays come to have their bodies cleansed of parasites and debris by cleaner wrasses. Gray reef sharks also often avail themselves of the wrasses' services. The area is also inhabited by barracudas, snappers, titan triggerfish, gobies, lionfish, leaffish, and an octopus. Nearby is a coral garden that features crocodile fish, nudibranchs, flatworms, anemones and clownfish.

NEW DROP-OFF

Halfway between Blue Corner and Big Drop-Off, this vertical wall is similar to Blue Corner in that it is a shallow shelf that juts out into the ocean, catching the current and creating an upwelling that attracts schools of pyramid butterflyfish and barracudas, along with a number of gray reef sharks. The steep wall is covered with soft corals and seafans.

NGEDEBUS CORAL GARDENS

One of the best collections of hard corals in the Pacific, this dive features a spur and groove reef structure that supports turtles, cuttlefish, anemones, tridacna clams, white tip reef sharks, and thousands of small schooling fish.

NGERCHONG

The island of Ngerchong, just beyond Denges Passage has two dive sites nearby: Ngerchong Outside and Ngerchong Coral Gardens. Ngerchong Outside is a sloping wall dive featuring sea fans, anemones, soft corals and many hard coral formations. Sharks, bumphead parrotfish, and schooling fish are frequently seen here, as well as an occasional manta ray. The Coral Gardens, also known as Ngerchong Inside, is probably the best dive in Palau for seeing an abundance and variety of hard corals. Table coral, staghorn coral, elkhorn coral, mushroom coral and brain coral are just some of the varieties of corals found here. In addition, many anemones with clownfish, along with cuttlefish, turtles and other fish thrive here. This dive can be enjoyed at any depth between 10' and 80'.

PELELIU

The island of Peleliu, at the southern tip of the main archipelago of Palau, is bordered by magnificent walls. The dive sites include Peleliu Corner, Yellow Wall, and Orange Beach, among others. Peleliu dive sites are mainly steep walls covered with sea fans, sea whips, hard corals and anemones, but dominated by soft corals. Peleliu is an excellent place to observe large pelagic life, particularly sharks.





SHORT DROP-OFF

A sloping wall just outside the entrance to Koror Harbor that is covered with giant seafans. The top of the wall is a beautiful coral garden loaded with tropical fish and invertebrates.

SIAES TUNNEL

An extraordinary deep dive on the west side of the Palau, close to the Ulong Channel. The dive begins on a sheer wall with the opening of the tunnel starting at 70'. You enter through an opening, which is about 50' across and 20' high, and swim through the tunnel, which parallels the wall for 150'. The inside of the tunnel is a large cavern with a ceiling at 80-90' and the floor at 120-130'. Halfway through the tunnel is a "Window" in the wall that looks out onto the deep blue. You exit through a large opening on the wall at 80'. Stingrays, turtles, schools of jacks, and sharks can be seen in and around the tunnel.

ULONG CHANNEL

This channel is located on the west side of Palau, close to Siaes Tunnel and Wall. Its entrance is surrounded by walls that are topped by beautiful coral gardens. On the incoming tide, the mouth of the channel is filled with gray reef sharks. The channel extends for a distance of approximately one-half mile, averaging 100' in width. The maximum depth is about 60'. Coral covered walls run the length of the channel on either side. A shallow ridge running the center of the channel is blanketed with soft corals, hard corals, sea fans, and anemones. Unique to this site is a huge patch of plate coral resembling lettuce leaves that is home to schools of squirrelfish, soldierfish and glasseyes. The current provides a gentle push, resulting in a beautiful, leisurely ride along the channel.

WONDER CHANNEL

Located within the rock islands just a short distance from Jellyfish Lake and Clam City, this channel is best dived on the east side along a wall that starts at the surface and reaches a depth of 80'. Soft corals, sea fans, anemones, blue and red starfish, crown of thorns star-fish, crabs, pipefish, and a large variety of sea slugs, flat worms and nudibranchs can be found along this wall.

WRECK OF THE IRO MARU

A 145' long merchant ship sunk during World War II by American bombers, the Iro Maru sits upright in 120' of water just 10 minutes south of Koror. Three mast and gun turrets at the bow and stern support a large variety of invertebrates and hard corals. The main deck is at a depth of 80'with open holds containing oil drums and machinery.







CONDITIONS

Weather, visibility, temperature and currents

Temperature

The water is generally 27 to 30°C (81 to 86°F): 27 to 29°C from November to April and 28 to 30°C from April to October. A 3 mm wetsuit or thermal skin is generally enough.

Visibility

Visibility is typically 20 to 40 metres or more. In the peak season from November to April it often exceeds 30 metres, and in the wetter months from July to October it can drop to 15 to 20 metres.

Currents

Conditions range from gentle to strong and most sites have a strong current, so drift diving is common.

Marine life

Palau is a year-round destination. Manta rays are common from December to March, with 20 to 30 seen at once in mating season, and in February and March there are large schools of Moorish idols, unicorn fish and butterflyfish. Big bait balls of scad gather at Blue Corner all year.







SNORKELLING

Snorkelling and Jellyfish Lake

Non-divers are welcome to snorkel, and Palau law requires a dedicated guide for each snorkeller. Jellyfish Lake is for snorkelling only and may be closed without notice.







DIVE ORGANISATION

How the diving is organised

Diving is recreational and non-decompression. A dive computer, a reef hook and a surface marker buoy with reel are required, and gloves are not permitted anywhere in Palau. Tanks are 80 cubic foot aluminium with air fills included, weights are provided, and 32 percent Nitrox is available to certified divers. Dive staff accompany each tender group, and buddy teams plan and manage their own dives within the briefing and their certification limits. Optional photography coaching and a video professional are available on board.

ON BOARD

Service and cuisine

THE CUISINE

Breakfast is cooked to order, with hot entrees, fresh fruit, cereal and juice. Lunch is served family style with soups, breads, salads and sandwiches, and dinner is a plated meal with seafood, beef or chicken, vegetables and desserts, with snacks through the day and between dives. Dietary needs can be noted on your guest information form and discussed with the chef when you arrive.

DRINKS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Fruit juices, soft drinks, iced water, iced tea and coffee are complimentary, along with a limited selection of local beer and wine. There is entertainment each evening, and the Captain hosts social events including the cocktail party on the last night.

THE TEAM

A Captain, a Cruise Director, dive staff who accompany each tender group and a culinary team look after the guests.







INCLUDED

What your trip covers

INCLUDED IN THE TRIP PRICE	NOT INCLUDED
Diving with air fills, tanks, weights and skiff transport	Spirits
Full board meals and snacks	Nitrox, equipment rental and courses
Juices, soft drinks, iced water, tea and coffee	Video service
Limited selection of local beer and wine	Dinner ashore on the last evening
Nightly entertainment	Gratuities for the crew, which are optional
Captain’s cocktail party on the last evening	Diving and travel insurance