PALAU SIREN

Palau Islands, 7 nights

Koror to Koror | Rock Islands Southern Lagoon and Peleliu

Palau's Rock Islands Southern Lagoon is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and its channels and walls make for exhilarating drift diving.

Walls encrusted with hard and soft coral drop away beside schools of sharks, jacks and barracuda, and where the current is strongest, wide-open shark action is part of every dive.

Hawksbill and green sea turtles are among the usual suspects, and Napoleon wrasses sometimes come close enough for a perfect photo.

Wartime wrecks lie in clear water, and a floatplane rests in one piece, making for amazing photographs.

A tunnel lit by natural windows and a cave hung with stalactites add to the variety.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
8 days / 7 nights	Koror	Koror	Advanced Open Water







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Embarkation from the meeting point at 17:30, followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and dinner.
There is no diving on embarkation day.

STOP 2

Malakal Harbour

The boat leaves Malakal Harbour after breakfast, followed by a check dive and up to 3 more dives.

STOP 3

Days 3 to 6: Diving days

The Cruise Director schedules up to 4 dives a day: 3 day dives and either a sunset or a night dive. A typical diving day is a light breakfast, briefing and dive 1; full breakfast, relaxation, briefing and dive 2; lunch, relaxation, briefing and dive 3; a snack; a briefing for the sunset or night dive; and dinner.

STOP 7

Last full day

Up to 3 dives before the boat cruises back to Malakal Harbour, where she stays at anchor overnight.
Please leave a minimum of 24 hours between your final dive and your flight home.

STOP 8

Disembarkation

After breakfast on board, disembarkation is at 10:00.

THE TRIP

How the trip works

EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION

Embarkation is at the meeting point in Koror at 17:30 only, and disembarkation is at the meeting point at 10:00. Transfers between Koror airport or a local hotel and the meeting point are provided on embarkation and disembarkation days. Hotel pick-up is usually between 16:30 and 17:00, and pick-up from the airport depends on flight arrival time, so guests arriving in the early hours should book a hotel for the night before. The latest transfer from the meeting point to the airport is 18:00, and guests with evening flights who use a hotel for the day arrange their own transfer from the hotel to the airport.

PERMITS AND FEES

Palau permits and fees are mandatory, depend on the length of the trip and are paid on board before disembarkation.

DIVING EXPERIENCE

Divers need Advanced Open Water certification, or equivalent, with a minimum of 30 logged dives, and experience diving in currents is recommended. Divers who do not meet the minimum certification and experience may be denied some or all dives, and the crew may ask guests with insufficient experience to sit out certain dives. Open Water divers are limited to 18 metres and can complete a Deep Adventure dive on board, which allows diving to 30 metres. Diving insurance covering emergency evacuation and recompression is mandatory.

SMALL DIVE GROUPS

In line with local regulations every guest dives with a guide at all times in Palau. Palau Siren carries three permanent dive guides, so dive groups stay small at 5 to 6 divers. Safety and dive briefings are given in English.

THE ROCK ISLANDS

Diving on these trips focuses on the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The islands have narrow channels and tidal currents, so the skiff tenders are best suited to getting around parts of the lagoon, and all liveaboards in Palau must use set mooring areas and anchorage points around the Rock Islands, so cruising within the lagoon is minimal and the boat stays at anchor for much of the time.

THE DIVING

Dive sites

The sites below are a sample of where Palau Siren may dive. Which are visited, and which are left out, is at the Captain's and Cruise Director's discretion and depends on the length of the trip, diver experience and conditions. If a site cannot be dived the crew offers an alternative, and guests are welcome to suggest favourite sites to the Cruise Director, who accommodates them where the schedule allows.

ULONG CHANNEL, ULONG ISLAND

Often considered the best dive in Palau! This exhilarating drift dive has it all; hard and soft coral encrusted walls, schools of sharks and other pelagic action, a beautiful stand of lettuce coral as you drift through the channel, and plenty of groupers just to name a few. Keep your eyes open, seeing just about anything is possible on this dive! Siaes Corner Schools of grey reef sharks, jacks and barracuda can be seen off the corner's edge while butterfly fish, moorish idols, anthias and fusiliers are abundant throughout the reef. Hawksbill and green sea turtles are also among the usual suspects.

SIAES TUNNEL, ULONG ISLAND

Siaes Tunnel offers divers an awesome experience as they dive through a naturally lit tunnel with several windows where they can experience endemic species only normally seen in deeper water. Cup corals, soft corals, reef fish and invertebrates inhabit the walls and ceilings of the tunnel. Near the bottom, dart fish, long nose hawk fish, and gobies can be found. White tip reef sharks sleep on the bottom near the tunnel's exit, while bigeye trevally circle around.

SHARK CITY, ULONG ISLAND

Southwest of Ulong Island, a wall dive where currents attract many large pelagic fish from grey reef sharks to the occasional sighting of a bull shark or hammerhead. The wall drops to 50m (150ft) and is dotted with gorgonian fans. Shallower, huge lettuce corals host colourful anthias and moorish idols. Bumphead parrotfish are regularly seen here and you might see eagle rays cruising the reef wall.

SAND BAR, ULONG ISLAND

This shallow sloping reef featuring garden eels and stingrays is also the place where hundreds of thousands of bumphead parrotfish are known to congregate for spawning; this stunning spectacle may only be witnessed at certain times of the month during the right moon phase. Night dives on this site reveal many interesting species including pleurobranchs.

CHANDELIER CAVE, MALAKAL HARBOUR

A gorgeous cave system, containing four separate chambers with stalactites and stalagmites thus creating a 'chandelier' effect. The opening to the cave is wide and provides plenty of natural light; however, the inner section is quite dark and a torch is necessary. Keep an eye on your buddy and stay near your dive guide.

TESHIO MARU, MALAKAL HARBOUR

On her way to seek refuge from the American attacks, the Teshio Maru was bombed and strafed by a passing US fighter north of the Malakal harbor, during “Operation Desecrate One” on March 30th 1944. This Japanese army cargo ship now rests in 24m (80ft) of water on her starboard side. She measures 100m (330ft) in length and is one of the best dive wrecks in Palau.

IRO MARU, MALAKAL HARBOUR

This Japanese oil supply ship, sunk during ‘Operation Desecrate’, lays upright in 20m (75ft) of clear blue water. Descend via the mooring line to the bow and the 5 ½ gun mount, which is covered in black coral trees; then explore this coral encrusted wreckage. Schools of bat fish and large groupers hover above the wreck.

CHUYO MARU, MALAKAL HARBOUR

Located just west of Malakal Island, this is a medium sized Japanese coastal freighter that was also sunk during World War II. She lies upright on the seabed at a depth of 40m (120ft) with her deck at 30m (90ft). The guns on her stern deck are clearly visible and inside the bridge you can see the remains of the ship’s brass compass and telegraph. The Chuyo is also host to a variety of crustaceans, mollusks, lionfish and well-camouflaged stone fish.

JAKE SEAPLANE, MALAKAL HARBOUR

Jake was a reconnaissance floatplane that is believed to have crashed during take-off. The plane is still in one piece and makes for amazing photographs. There is little current and visibility is usually very good. Numerous mollusks have made their home here and we frequently see octopus, cuttlefish and nudibranchs, whilst the surrounding patch reef provides shelter for many juvenile reef fish.





BLUE CORNER, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

The most famous dive site in Palau, World-class diving does not get much better than Blue Corner! Known for its strong currents, as well as consistent and abundant shark action, each dive is action packed where anything can happen. Schools of snapper, barracuda and jacks are regularly spotted and Napoleon wrasses are sometimes very inquisitive; coming close to divers for a perfect photo opportunity. Reef hooks are needed for this dive. Smaller creatures including pipefish and leaf fish can be found in the channels.

BLUE HOLES, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

Just along the reef from Blue Corner, is a large cavern with four “blue holes” at the top allowing natural light to enter from above. These rays of light make diving in the cavern a unique and amazing experience. White tip reef sharks can be seen on the sandy bottom and there are numerous critters, including dart fish and the flaming scallop, lining the cavern walls.

NEW DROP OFF, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

Located south of Blue Corner on a shallow plateau. The walls are filled with a medley of colourful reef fish including butterfly fish, angel fish, wrasse and triggers. Soft corals, large anemones and sea fans cover the wall while grey reef sharks cruise the blue water. Large Spanish mackerel commonly cruise on by with the sharks, whereas turtles amble about feeding on the soft corals.

BIG DROP OFF, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

Another one of Palau's famous wall dives. This vertical wall is covered with colourful soft corals, sponges, smaller reef fish and sea fans. Sharks patrol along the reef edge, but this is also a fantastic site to see filefish, longnose hawkfish, fairy basslets and schools of surgeonfish, parrotfish and angelfish. Turtles are often found feeding along the wall as well. You can also see WWII remnants here, don't forget to ask your guide to show you Barnum's Ball.

GERMAN CHANNEL, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

This artificial channel was created during the German occupation (1899 – 1914) to enable easier transportation of the phosphates they were mining. Today, the mouth of the channel is best known for encounters with manta rays which feed on plankton and visit the cleaning stations. White tip and black tip reef sharks can also be seen along with schools of snapper. We will visit this site several times during your trip.

VIRGIN BLUE HOLES, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

Just south of Blue Corner, this site offers divers swim throughs and caverns to explore, before exiting onto the reef wall.

DEXTER'S WALL, NGEMELIS ISLAND AND THE GERMAN CHANNEL

A wonderful wall dive filled with soft corals, sea fans, nudibranchs, anemones and sea turtles. The area is well known for leopard shark sightings but also teeming with groupers, snappers, sweetlips and other reef fish.

PELELIU CUT, PELELIU ISLAND

A site where we can experience some of the strongest currents of our trip due to converging ocean currents that flow around the archipelago. The cut is full of life; we will see plenty of pelagic species, such as sharks, jacks, barracuda, rainbow runners, snappers, tuna and sweetlips. Reef hooks are a must for this dive! Turtle Cove The dive begins by plunging into a small blue hole on top of the shallow reef. Upon exiting at the bottom divers drift through schools of surgeonfish, butterfly fish and red-tooth triggerfish. Large schools of black snapper enjoy coming right up to divers along the wall. The plateau at near the end of the dive is filled with beautiful anemones, reef fish, sharks and turtles to finish off the dive. Occasionally, a leopard shark or ray will make an appearance.

YELLOW WALL, PELELIU ISLAND

Named after the golden yellow cup corals (Tubastraea faulkneri) that cover the wall along this area of the reef, Yellow Wall is located northeast of Peleliu Express. The top of the reef features many crevices, cut backs and arches, where sweetlips, emperors, eels, and turtles can be found. Along the wall, when the current is running, look for sharks, wahoo, dogtooth tuna and other large pelagics. During March and April, approaching the new moon, large schools of blue lined sea bream arrive for their annual spawning event. The school can number up to 100,000 and they will aggregate on this site after spawning in the early morning.







PELELIU EXPRESS, PELELIU ISLAND

Located at the southernmost tip of Peleliu Island, the open ocean currents converge bringing in large schools of pelagic fish. Sharks, giant trevally, dogtooth tuna and many varieties of barracuda, to name a few. Along the wall, hawksbill turtles, schooling snapper, and bumphead parrotfish are all commonly found, with large groupers, palette surgeonfish (Dory!), and many others on the shallow reef top. The currents here can be extremely strong at times, most notably

around the new and full moon phases, with speeds of 4 knots not uncommon. They are also known to pick up and change direction with little to no warning. When the current is running the Peleliu Express is considered one of the ultimate drift dives, however it is not for the faint hearted.

BARNUM'S WALL, PELELIU ISLAND

A favourite spot for a night dive. Turtles, groupers, sweetlips and a variety of sharks can all be seen here, as well as a myriad of nudibranchs, flatworms, sea whips and crinoids.

PELELIU WALL, PELELIU ISLAND

Covered with black corals and large sea fans, this huge wall allows for an easy drift dive whilst observing reef sharks, jacks and barracuda. On occasion bull sharks and tiger sharks have been seen here.

ORANGE BEACH, PELELIU ISLAND

A soft drift dive along a colourful coral garden. Among the boulders, divers can encounter nurse sharks, turtles, scorpion fish, crocodile fish and nudibranchs. Divers may also come across WWII remains, such as bullets and shells.

SOUTH DOCK, PELELIU ISLAND

A beautiful reef wall where divers can find parrotfish, surgeonfish as well as whitetip reef sharks cruising.

ACTIVITIES

Optional activities

ROCK ISLANDS AND JELLYFISH LAKE TOUR

During the cruise guests can take a speedboat tour through the Rock Islands, stopping at the world famous Jellyfish Lake and The Arch for the classic photo. You also pass islands shaped like an elephant or a whale, and can simply relax and enjoy the beauty of these Palauan islands. The tour is included in the cruise.





PELELIU ISLAND WWII LAND EXCURSION

A local guide takes you around the historic remnants of the WWII battles fought on Peleliu. The tour lasts about two hours and is arranged through the Cruise Director as an optional extra.

CONDITIONS

Weather, temperature and currents

Water temperature

The warm tropical water averages 27°C (82°F) all year. Most guests find a 3 mm shorty wetsuit enough, and many dive in just a skinsuit or rash guard and shorts.

Weather

Palau lies 7 degrees north of the equator, with a warm tropical climate and temperatures around 27°C (82°F). Rain falls through the year but more often between July and October, and the high season for diving is November to May, though diving is excellent all year.

Currents

Currents in the channels and at the outer corners change with the tides and can be strong, which is why reef hooks are needed at sites such as Blue Corner and Peleliu Cut.

Flying after diving

Please leave a minimum of 24 hours between your final dive and your flight home.

ON BOARD

Service, cuisine and dive organisation

FOOD AND DRINK

Meals are full board: a light breakfast, a full breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks, with unlimited drinking water, tea, coffee, fruit juices and soft drinks. The menu offers international and locally inspired cuisine, and most special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice. Local beer, wine and spirits are available from the cocktail bar.

FOR UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHERS

Palau Siren has indoor and outdoor workstations for preparing and maintaining cameras, individual storage drawers for cameras and accessories, and large rinsing tanks with frequently changed fresh water. The crew are trained in handling delicate camera equipment and help with cameras when entering and leaving the water.

DIVE ORGANISATION

Guests dive from two fibreglass skiff tenders that accompany Palau Siren. Entry is by giant stride from the side of the skiff, or by backward roll or seated entry if you prefer, and you exit by ladder with help from the tender drivers if needed. Gloves are not permitted anywhere in Palau, a dive computer and a surface marker buoy are required on every dive, and reef hooks may be needed on some dives. A single 11 litre cylinder is provided for each dive, and weights and belts are included.

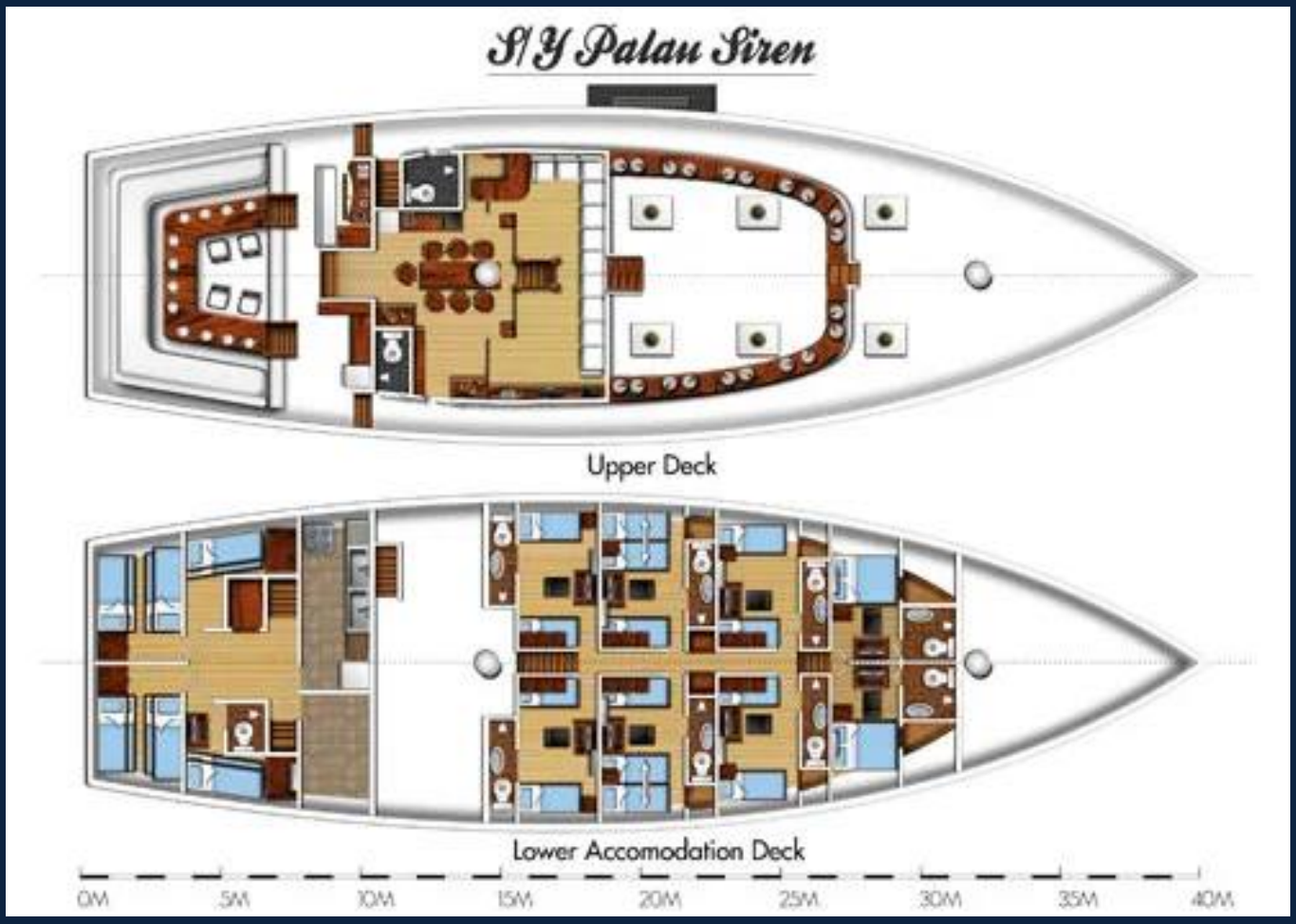






DECK PLAN

Deck plan



INCLUDED

What your trip covers

INCLUDED IN THE TRIP PRICE

- Full board meals and snacks
- Drinking water, tea, coffee, juices and soft drinks
- Guided diving with three permanent dive guides
- One 11 litre cylinder per dive, weights and belts
- Rock Islands and Jellyfish Lake speedboat tour
- Use of kayaks
- Transfers between Koror airport or hotels and the meeting point on embarkation and disembarkation days

NOT INCLUDED

- Palau permits and fees, paid on board
- Drinks from the cocktail bar
- Equipment rental and Nitrox
- Peleliu WWII land excursion
- Wi-Fi and laundry
- Gratuities for the crew, which are optional
- Diving and travel insurance