



DIVE SHOP

New Orleans

Truk and Palau

November 18-December 6, 2012

This is a two-week, once-in-lifetime diving adventure, during which we will visit not one, but two of the Pacific's most famous dive destinations.

Palau

Palau first came to the attention of the outside world when Captain Henry Wilson of the English vessel *Antelope* was shipwrecked on Palau's barrier reef near the island of Ulong in 1783. With assistance from Koror's High Chief Ibedul, Captain Wilson and his crew used wreckage of the *Antelope* to build another vessel and sailed away three months later.



Palau saw heavy fighting during World War II, including massive aerial bombardments of Koror launched from fast carrier task forces and particularly during the assault and liberation of Peleliu Island by US Marines which resulted in horrendous casualties on both sides. Remnants of WWII are still visible throughout Palau today including a huge fleet of ship wrecks and plane wrecks resting at the bottom of Palau's inner lagoon.

Palau is world renown for marine bio-diversity and an abundance of large pelagic animals that includes schools of sharks and lots of manta rays. Its warm clear tropical waters are legendary among divers for dramatic coral encrusted walls rising from the depths to within inches of the surface. Home to over 1,300 species of fish and more than 700 species of coral, Palau also offers exciting wreck diving with one of the Pacific's largest collection of intact WWII shipwrecks and plane wrecks.



From sheltered coral gardens filled with colorful reef fishes and lots of turtles to current swept plateaus patrolled by schools of sharks and barracudas, Palau offers a wide and wonderful range of diving for divers of every interest and skill level. Healthy reefs, stunning walls, beautiful hard corals and soft corals, lots of sharks, huge mantas, turtles

on every dive and huge schools of fish, tiny seahorses, elusive mandarin fish and lots and lots of tiny critters, all topped off with an amazing collection of WWII wrecks. See turtles, sharks, barracuda and multitudes of colorful reef fish as you glide over dazzling coral reefs.

The Trip at a Glance

Departs November 18, 2012

Returns December 6, 2012

Duration Two Weeks +

Cost \$6,200/Diver (Subject to Change)

Included Price includes:

- Accommodations
- Meals on board
- Diving
- Use of tanks, weights

You Provide Not included in price:

- Personal dive gear
- Taxes, gratuity

The majority of diving in Palau consists of drift diving along the beautiful walls, plateaus and coral gardens of the outer barrier reef, a forty minute boat ride through the picturesque rock islands. While you dive the boat follows along from the surface to meet you upon ascent.

Among the most unique dives in Palau is Jellyfish Lake, a fresh-water body where divers can swim with thousands of beautiful, translucent and non-stinging jellyfish.

Because Peleliu and the surrounding areas of Palau are sparsely populated, a rich legacy of war sites and relics remains, many of them hardly disturbed in the intervening 60 years. Visitors can crawl over the carcasses of Sherman tanks, crashed F4U Corsairs and Mitsubishi Zeroes, and into many of the Japanese tunnels and storage caves still littered with Saki bottles, live grenades, rusting cannons — and, in some cases, human bones. (Just a few years ago, a crashed Japanese plane was discovered on a nearby Palauan island with an intact skeleton in the cockpit, dog tags still dangling from its neck.)

Plane buffs who don't mind getting wet can don snorkel, mask and fins for close-up views of a Corsair, a Mitsubishi Zero and two Japanese "Jake" sea-planes, all ditched in shallow water. Scuba divers can choose from dozens of shipwrecks, both Japanese and American, at depths ranging from 15 to 125 feet.



Truk Lagoon

Truk Lagoon, also known as *Chuuk*, is a sheltered body of water in the central Pacific. The atoll consists of 140 miles of protective reef, enclosing a natural harbor 50 miles long by 30 miles wide. Its eleven major islands are home to less than 50,000 people.

During World War II, Truk Lagoon served as the forward anchorage for the Japanese Imperial Fleet. Five airstrips, seaplane bases, a torpedo boat station, submarine repair shops, a communications center and a radar station were constructed during the war.



Protecting these various facilities were coastal defense guns and mortar emplacements. At anchor in the lagoon were the Imperial Japanese Navy's giant battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, tankers, cargo ships, tugboats, gunboats, minesweepers, landing craft and submarines. Some have described it as Japan's equivalent of the Americans' Pearl Harbor.

Once the American forces captured the Marshall Islands, they used it as a base from which they launched an early morning attack on February 17, 1944, against Truk Lagoon. The Japanese withdrew most of their heavy units. Operation Hailstone lasted for three days, with an American bombardment of the Japanese wiping out almost anything of value. Sixty ships and 275 airplanes were sent to the bottom.

In 1969, Jacques Cousteau and his team explored Truk Lagoon. Following Cousteau's 1971 television documentary about the lagoon and its ghostly remains, the place became a scuba diving paradise, drawing wreck diving enthusiasts from around the world to see its numerous, virtually intact sunken ships. Scattered mainly around the Dublon, Eten, Fefan and Uman islands within the

Truk group, a number of the shipwrecks lie in crystal clear waters less than 50 feet below the surface (the average dive depth for Truk is 65 feet).



In waters devoid of normal ocean currents, divers can easily swim across decks littered with gas masks and depth charges and below deck can be found numerous human remains.

In the massive ships' holds are row upon row of fighter aircraft, tanks, bulldozers, railroad cars, motorcycles, torpedoes, mines, bombs, boxes of munitions, radios, plus thousands of other weapons, spare parts and other artifacts. Of special interest is the wreck of the

submarine I-169 *Shinohara* which was lost when diving to avoid the bombing. The sub had been part of the attack on Pearl Harbor.



The coral encrusted wrecks attract a diverse array of marine life, including manta-rays, turtles, sharks and corals. In 2007, 266 species of reef fish were recorded by an Earthwatch team and in 2006 the rare coral *Acropora pichoni* was identified.

Superb buoyancy skills are a must when gliding through the interiors of these WWII wrecks. See unopened bottles of Sake, bands of ammunition, torpedoes, spare ship propellers, trucks, cars, planes, bicycles and more. And the soft corals are magnificent in every color and hue you can imagine.

Our base of operations for this phase of the trip will be the Blue Lagoon Resort. \$1,000 will save your place. Payment in full is due by August 30, 2012.