

PALAU SEA KAYAKING & SNORKELING



TRIP DATES

2006

February 1– 11

February 17–27

March 1 –11

March 17–27

April 16–26

May 15–25

June 13–23

June 28–July 8

2007

January 7–17

February 5–15

March 7–17



WILDERNESS TRAVEL

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Palau is the underwater Serengeti of our planet, and its superabundance and diversity of reef fish and coral life is simply without parallel anywhere else on earth. We experience the majesty of Palau in the phenomenally scenic Rock Islands, one of the natural masterpieces of the Pacific, where hundreds of luxuriant limestone outcrops jut straight up from aquamarine seas. We begin in protected waters, snorkeling in Palau's unique marine lakes, sea grass beds, over surreal giant clams, and into coral gardens. Later, we head to the outer reef environment for unforgettable experiences, including snorkeling over vertical walls that descend to depths of over a thousand feet. All the while we enjoy a fascinating natural history education from our Trip Leader, who knows these heavenly waters well. We take a maximum of just eight participants on this adventure, so early sign-up is advised!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Meals included are specified at the end of each itinerary day as "B," "L," or "D" (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 1 Koror, Palau

Our group flight arrives in the late evening in Koror, capital of the Republic of Palau, where you will be met for transfer to our hotel, The Palau Pacific Resort, overlooking the broad, blue Pacific. It offers lovely hilltop bungalows with private facilities, air conditioning, fans, and verandas perfectly situated for sunset viewing....*Meals on your own*

Day 2 Koror / Babeldoab

We explore around Koror town, Palau's capital and commercial hub, then enjoy a day trip to the volcanic island of Babeldoab, the second largest land mass in all of Micronesia, with its spectacular jungle-draped hills. On Babeldoab, we visit the waterfall at Ngardmau, hike along an ancient pathway, and explore evocative World War II sites. Back in Koror, we visit the National Aquarium for a preview of what's to come. Tonight we gather for our welcome dinner...*BLD*

Day 3 Rock Islands: Lee Marvin Beach

Note: Our activities on the Rock Islands vary with wind and weather as well as group interests. The following itinerary gives a general idea of what to expect. Our first day of paddling on the Rock Islands is incredibly diverse: reef fish nurseries, coral gardens, World War II bunkers, limestone caves, arches, and tunnels. The big theme for the day is geology, and these wondrous islands present a dramatic example of how an uplifted ancient reef eroded away into 300 islands, lakes, lagoons, undercuts, and archways. Our first camp is usually at Lee Marvin Beach, with its great birding and exotic night sounds (endemic owls and burrowing frogs). Beautiful green sea turtles nest at this beach in season.

Camp amenities include walk-in tents, toilet tent, solar shower, and a dining tent with table and chairs. At camp, we enjoy fresh multi-course meals, including fresh fruits, salads, and wine. Cold beer and cold sodas are available. Away from camp, meals are picnic style.

Day 4 Rock Islands: Lee Marvin Beach

Another diverse day, with a chance to focus on inner lagoon nursery habitats: highlights include caves, drift snorkeling, an ancient Palauan village, the Blue Devil Gardens, and most amazingly, a salt-water waterfall spilling into a turquoise oasis. Our snorkeling focus is on juvenile fish, and on our paddle excursions, we should see baby sharks and rays in tranquil little nursery bays. Fruit bats wrestle in the trees above camp tonight and look down with envy at our beautiful camp, lit with tiki torches.

Day 5 Rock Islands: Margie's Beach

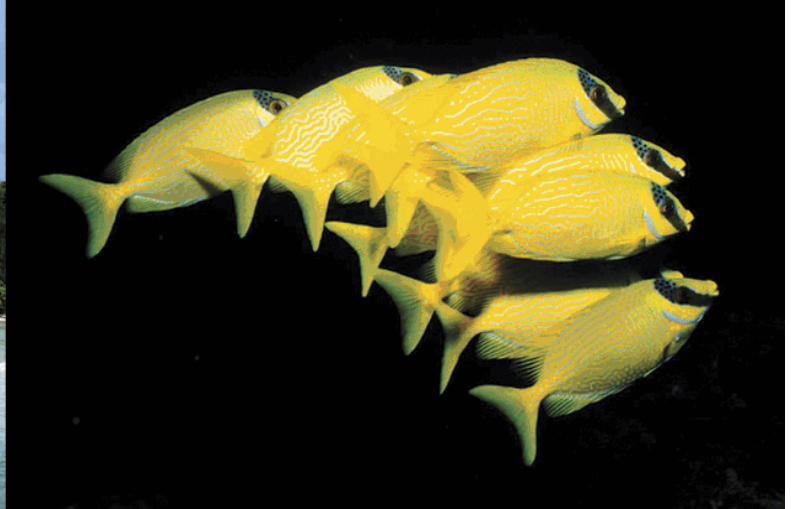
Today we snorkel over the wreck of a Zero airplane from World War II, paddle across the opaque waters of narrow channel known as the Milky Way, and pass through a tunnel to a secluded Secret Lake. Snorkel sites include Einstein's Garden and the Tunnels of Doom. Themes of this day might be stunning beauty, sea birds, and local flora, including the leafless orchid. This is a good camp to enjoy a beach bonfire. The gentle lapping of the waves helps put us to sleep tonight.

Day 6 Rock Islands: Margie's Beach

A day's excursion takes us to Long Lake, a place unique even by Palau standards. A rushing current carries our kayaks through the crystal-clear waters of a mangrove forest, and the sounds of birds ring out all around us. This winding passage leads us into a mile-long lake that serves as a hidden oasis for nesting birds and baby fishes. Many of the ancient plants here (cycads, for example) are not seen anywhere else in Palau, or anywhere else in the world for that matter. When we return to our camp, we have a talk on today's theme, coral—what it is, how it grows, why it is important, and what its threats are. Afterwards, we immediately head to the coral gardens at a place called Honeymoon Beach—much more beautiful than any picture postcard beach, with its



Carp Island Resort



tiny sand spit and swaying coconut palms sandwiched between two limestone islands. The coral here is simply pristine. Overnight at Margie's Beach.

Day 7 **Rock Islands: Ngerchong Island**

Paddling past isolated little beaches, we stop to inspect, refresh, and snorkel along the way. Two very memorable highlights today are Giant Clam Beach and Jellyfish Lake. Giant Clam Beach has stacks of 500-pound clams simply piled on top of one another, and no one dares to touch these ancient leviathans, now protected in this marine preserve. Jellyfish Lake is truly beyond description—here, millions of non-stinging jellyfish bounce off our bodies as we snorkel among them. Later, we make impromptu stops including a foray into the jungle to see hidden treasures that only Wilderness Travel trip members ever see! Our camp is at an outer-reef beach with direct access to vertical walls plummeting straight down into a 3,000-foot abyss—unrivaled for snorkeling.

Day 8 **Rock Islands: Ngemelis Island**

This is the perfect grand finale to our natural history expedition in the Rock Islands: best-of-the-best snorkeling in crystal-clear seas with 100-foot visibility amid sharks, rays, turtles, and an overwhelming profusion of reef fish. This is the place where we really come to understand Palau as the “underwater Serengeti” of our planet. (This is also an optional scuba day for those who are certified divers.) Tonight, our last on the Rock Islands, we enjoy a special traditional feast complete with lobster, smoked fisher, clam chowder, sashimi, sweet tapioca, local fruits and much more.

Day 9 **Paddle to Carp Island**

More world-class outer-reef snorkeling awaits us this morning, after which we bid farewell to the magical Rock Islands and paddle right up to the beach in front of our bungalows at Carp Island Resort. This tranquil resort is located on a private island near the best dive sites and has its own meandering, mile-long beach. The Palau-style beachfront bungalows with ensuite facilities are cooled with ceiling fans, as the trade winds make air conditioning unnecessary...**BLD**

Day 10 **Peleliu / Anguar / Koror / Depart**

We motor to scenic Peleliu, with a quick stop to see its World War II battle sites, then catch a very short flight to the pretty island of Anguar for a day of easy touring by bike or moped. We follow pathways shaded by the island's canopy of flowering trees, alive with troops of macaques, giant monitor lizards, and fruit bats. The island has idyllic coves and beaches perfect for beachcombing, along with more World War II ruins. We enjoy a picnic feast of local reef fish, crabs, and lobster, with fresh fruits and vegetables. In the late afternoon, we have one final trip highlight: a spectacular 30-minute flight back to Koror that takes us right over the Rock Islands for breathtaking views. As we pass over the islands, the Trip Leader and the pilot will point out our camping beaches and snorkel sites. Back in Koror, day rooms will be held for us. We enjoy a farewell dinner tonight before a late-evening transfer to the airport for early morning flights departing on Day 11...**BLD**

Note: No full overnight is included tonight.

EXTENDING YOUR STAY IN PALAU

We are happy to arrange additional hotel nights for you in Palau, such as at our group hotel, Palau Pacific Resort in Koror. There are many dive shops on Koror through which you can arrange day trips to one of the many wonderful nearby diving destinations.

Cost For Extending Your Stay: from \$250 per night, with a complimentary airport transfer.

Trip Cost & Important Trip Details

2006 LAND COST*:	\$4095 (7-8 members)
	\$4395 (6 members)
	\$4695 (4-5 members)
Single supplement:	\$595

Our trips are budgeted for a full or nearly full sign-up. It is more costly to operate a trip with four passengers than with eight (eight is our maximum for this special trip). Therefore, to avoid canceling a trip, we charge a little more to cover fixed costs if there are fewer trip members. Costs are based on double occupancy; if you are traveling alone and wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. If you are willing to share accommodations, we will match you with a roommate if one is available. If you are willing to share accommodations but we cannot match you with a roommate, the "forced single supplement" will be 50% of the single supplement listed above.

LAND COST INCLUDES:

- C 3 nights hotel accommodations in Koror and Carp Island.
- C 6 nights camping, including group camping equipment (except sleeping bags)
- C internal airfare Koror/Anguar
- C most meals, as noted in the itinerary, including welcome and farewell dinners
- C charter boat and ground transportation
- C kayaks, paddles, PFDs (life jackets), and all boat safety gear
- C services of Trip Leader and camp crew

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE: international airfare to/from Palau, meals not specified at the end of each itinerary day, optional gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule or other factors (including an overnight in Guam), expenses such as immunizations (if any), travel insurance, and other expenses of a personal nature (liquor, laundry, and so on). Participants must provide their own lightweight sleeping bags.

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$500
120 days prior to departure	\$500
60 days prior to departure	Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee	\$0
46-90 days prior to departure	25% of land cost
45 days or less	100% of land cost

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

Koror is the meeting point for the journey. Those on the suggested Continental Micronesia flight are met at the airport for transfer to the hotel on Day 1. At the end of the trip, those on the departing Continental Micronesia flight are transferred to the airport in Koror. Our *Arrival & Departure Logistics* memo, included with your confirmation packet, has details.

ABOUT AIRFARES TO PALAU

Wilderness Travel has extensive experience making air arrangements for our Palau trip members. We have negotiated special fares with Continental Micronesia that are significantly lower than advertised fares. There are many ways for us to route your air travel to Palau, depending on destination, departure dates, and/or other scheduling considerations such as anticipated pre- or post-trip extensions. We are happy to work with you to provide you with the best options and fares for your individual travel plans.

As a point of reference, here is a sample airfare. *Airfares are subject to change and are not guaranteed until ticketed:*

LAX (Los Angeles) / Koror

\$1850

LEADERSHIP

Renowned for their ability to share their knowledge of Palau's wildlife, habitats, and cultures, our leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of our leaders, and of the incredible travel experiences that they make possible. *For photos and bios of many of our Trip Leaders, go to www.wildernesstravel/leaders/leader_list.html*

Ron Leidich was born in Japan, raised in a Marine Corps family that traveled around the world, and since 1994 has made his home in Palau. He has a degree in Zoology, certification in advanced life saving and rescue, and has been a master scuba instructor since 1991. Ron initially became a guide “as an excuse to spend every waking hour in the outdoors and among amazing creatures.” After many years of leading our trip members through aquatic and terrestrial wilderness adventures, he admits that he enjoys sharing the experience as much as the experience itself. “If I was forced to pick my favorite places on Palau’s Rock Islands, I think it would have to be marine lakes. Like each of the Galapagos Islands, these isolated lakes are evolutionary laboratories that serve as protected nurseries for vulnerable juvenile fish. They have 300-foot limestone walls that offer complete protection and also allow encrusting coral species to grow into giant baskets--up to six feet high and ten feet wide!” Ron is a passionate conservationist who lobbies tirelessly to ban shark finning. He is also in charge of Palau’s crown-of-thorns reduction program, which removes more than 5,000 of these coral-eating beasts every year. Ron also plans to be the first to record all of the bird calls in Palau. He speaks English, Spanish, Palauan, and some Indonesian.

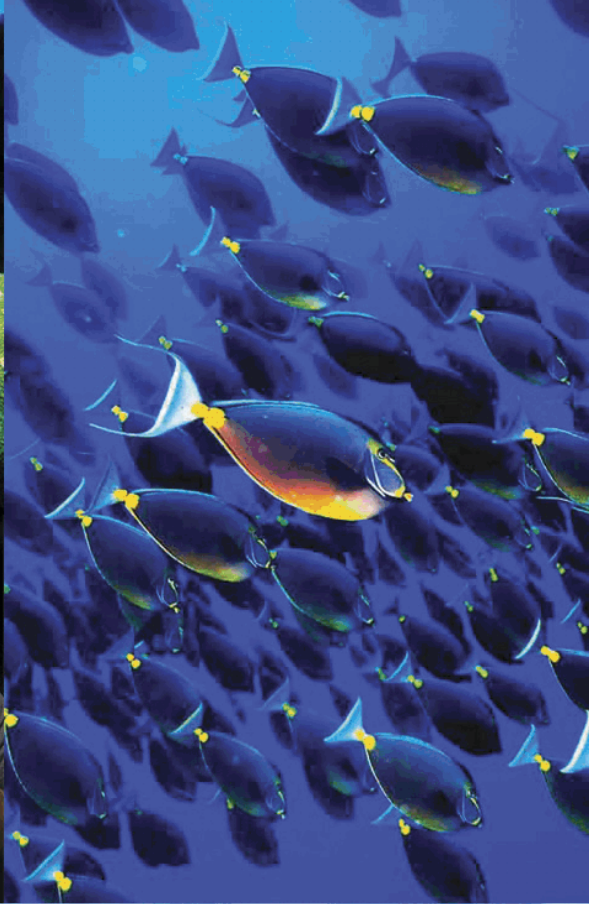
WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated 3+, Moderate, according to our trip grading system. It is relaxed enough to allow ample time for photography, snorkeling, extra paddling, and beachcombing. The Trip Leader gives a daily background briefing on the natural history of each area we explore, including its geology, birding, reef fish, coral reef ecology, or archaeology. We are supported by a motor-launch boat throughout our time on the Rock Islands. Days are spent kayaking through gorgeous, crystal-clear turquoise waters, snorkeling, hiking to sites of interest, birdwatching, swimming, and relaxing on untouched beaches. On most days, we paddle for four to five hours, although usually not more than an hour at a time, interspersed with snorkeling and other activities. The paddling distances are short, and we cover a linear distance of no more than 30 miles during our seven paddling days.

The trip is designed to offer an enjoyable vacation—you need not have done any previous kayaking. On any given trip, however, it is impossible to predict what the weather will have in store and it often varies with each successive day. In fact, it is difficult to assign a fixed rating to kayaking trips, since they are so dependent upon the weather. In general, we choose routes that are largely protected from high winds and strong currents, and we run the trips at the times of year when the weather is most reliable. We also adapt our daily schedule to local conditions. The Trip Leader will present each day's combination of paddling, snorkeling and hiking activities based on the prevailing conditions.

On kayaking trips, more so than virtually any other adventure trip, you have to bring a spirit of flexibility to enjoy what nature has in store. If the paddling ends up being easier than you had expected, you will have the option of doing some extra kayaking or hiking in the afternoon after we reach camp. If it turns out to be more difficult than you had expected, you can opt out of kayaking for that day. We have welcomed both beginner and experienced paddlers on this trip, and they have found sea kayaking to be a fantastic way to experience the wonders of Palau.

Our support boat goes ahead to each new campsite with our gear so that our new camp is set up and awaiting us on arrival. Campsites are chosen for their beauty and/or access to fantastic snorkeling. Our days of physical activity will fuel good appetites, and our two camp cooks provide delicious repasts. Typical breakfasts may include fresh papaya, pineapple, eggs, pancakes, or Palauan specialties; lunch is usually picnic style, featuring sandwiches and tropical fruits; dinner is usually a delicious barbecue with fresh-grilled fish or chicken, vegetables, and baked local desserts.



Rock Islands

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. *If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Pacific department or email pacific@wildernesstravel.com.*

REFERENCES

We are proud to have an exceptionally high rate of repeat travelers. We'd be happy to put you in touch with a client who has traveled with us in Palau.

CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Micronesia has a warm, humid tropical climate with some of the most uniform year-round temperatures in the world. Temperatures range from 70-90 F, with the average a steady 81F . The average humidity is a balmy 78 percent. Water temperatures range from 60 to 80 F. In general, the weather is very slightly cooler and drier between December and March.

DEPARTURE NOTES

Once you have signed up on the trip, we send you Departure Notes that include a complete packing list, required travel documents, and a reading list.

VISIT US ONLINE

At www.wildernesstravel.com you can you find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and special *WT Expeditions* that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access a complete library of our detailed itineraries and browse the customized reading guides for each of our adventures. And while you are there, check out our Guestbook to see what other website visitors and past clients have said, and leave us a comment of your own!

TESTIMONIALS

“Snorkeling is unbelievable and the kayaking pleasant & leisurely. Especially appreciated the level of interaction with locals, which allowed us to learn the history and culture in a very personal way. Scenery is stunningly beautiful. Enjoyed the WWII history, and the photo CDs Ron gave everyday were a nice touch.”
Pamela Griffin, Omaha, NE

“Ron is the greatest Trip Leader I’ve ever traveled with. I’ve been on lots of WT trips but this was the best--maybe my best vacation ever!”
Keith Ranna, New Orleans, LA

“On a scale of 1 to 10, this trip is an 11 or 12. Just outstanding. Ron is a truly great guide, the best I’ve encountered on many adventure travel trips.”
Ron Smith, West Linn, OR

“Have never met a Trip Leader with more knowledge, enthusiasm, and capability than Ron. I've never had so much fun, and the setting was paradise.”
Toni Colvin, Topanga, CA

“Ron’s knowledge, passion for Palau, & ability to share these made all the difference in making this a world-class trip. We can’t say enough good things about him.”
Jay & Carolyn Pritchett, Petersburg, AK

“Ron was the perfect trip leader. His enthusiasm and knowledge for sea life, birds, the environment, and world history far exceeded my expectations. Ron’s love for Palau and wonderful sense of humor made this the best vacation I’ve ever had.”
Dusty Cavaliere, Snoqualmie, WA

“I’ve taken many guided trips with many different outfitters; Ron is the best guide I’ve ever had! His knowledge base is astounding, as is his general enthusiasm. He truly loves what he does and imparts that to his “guests”. He also demonstrates excellent managerial skills with his staff, all of whom appear to respect him very much.”
Sandra Sipkin, Ann Arbor, MI

“This was my 5th WT trip and my husbands 7th. This was the BEST, due in large part to Ron’s attention to detail, incredible knowledge, and the amazing underwater sights he showed us.”
Ann Cornwall, Silverthorne, CO

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law which took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign “providers of transportation or travel services” are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel’s tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. *California Seller of Travel #1007696-40*

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the **General Information** section of the **Wilderness Travel** catalog.



Wilderness Travel is recognized as one of the **World's Best Tour Operators** by *Travel & Leisure* readers; winner of the *Forbes Directory* **Best of the Web**; featured in *Outside Magazine's* **Trip of the Year** as well as *National Geographic Adventure's* **25 Best New Adventure Trips** and **Classics Done Right**; and 2005 recipient of one Gold and two Silver awards from *Catalog Age*.

Revised: January 16, 2006