

Palau Wreck Experience

Itinerary

The following is a sample itinerary of dive sites we may visit during your liveboard cruise on board S/Y Palau Siren. We wish to show you the very best diving possible, however, a number of factors determine which route the yacht takes and which dive sites we visit. Weather, tides, currents and the number of other dive vessels at a particular site all play a part in the Cruise Director's decision of where the Palau Siren is heading to. This itinerary involves some long distance travel. Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specific dive site in good time. The safety of our guests on board is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations, should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and either a sunset or a night dive. A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Sunset or Night dive
- Dinner

For your final day aboard we schedule 2 morning dives to allow plenty of time for off-gassing before disembarkation and your flight home. To remain on the safe side, we kindly request our guests to check their own flight times and ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and their flight home.

The main focus of this itinerary will be the wrecks noted below; however, it will also be possible to dive some of the other highlights in Palau; for instance **Blue Corner, Ulong Channel and New Drop Off**. Guests are welcome to suggest preferred dive sites to the Cruise Director. He/she will be happy to accommodate guests' wishes, providing it is possible and the schedule allows for it.

For more information on the more popular dive sites, you can find our regular Palau itinerary on our website: <https://sirenfleet.com/diving-destinations/palau/>

The Wrecks of Palau

During World War II, Truk Lagoon was Japan's main naval base in the Pacific region, heavily fortified for Japanese operations against the Allied forces. The Americans launched the well-known 'Operation Hailstone' in February 1944, which resulted in the wreck diving mecca that Truk Lagoon now is. Not so well-known is that before and during this Operation, the Japanese navy had evacuated more than 200 of these war and cargo vessels to Palau.

Only six weeks later, the American Navy launched 'Operation Desecrate One' in Palau, in order to destroy as much of the remaining Japanese fleet as possible. In 2 days' time in March 1944, more than 36 Japanese vessels, as well as sundry aircraft, were sent to the watery depths of the lagoon. This special itinerary presents you the highlights of the historic wrecks that are waiting for you to be explored.

Over the course of our cruise we will explore many of these wrecks mentioned below. On 10-night trips, we will also explore the deeper walls of the outer lagoon.

Dive sites we visit include, but are not limited to:

Amatsu Maru - One of the largest wrecks in Micronesia, the Amatsu sits perfectly upright in 40m of water with the deck at 23m - 30m. A huge wreck of a tanker with many places to penetrate for those experienced and qualified to do so. This wreck deserves at least 2 visits if diving within recreational limits and, for Tec divers, a 3 hour dive only just begins to cover all the highlights such as the pump house, the main super structure and the engine room, even though they are severely damaged by American bombers.

Bichu Maru - This wreck went down close to the Rock Islands; therefore, the visibility can often be challenging. However, the penetration on this wreck can be extensive. It is possible to swim through the empty cargo holds and to the engine room area which received heavy damage during the bombing. After the engine room the old funnel lays broken in the sandy bottom at around 24m, with more cargo holds leading to the stern where the deck gun points skyward, still ready to repel attackers. After covering the length of wreck, which landed on its side, you can move up to the starboard side and explore the lovely marine growth.

Kesebuku Buoy No. 7 - Not the biggest wreck in Palau, believed to be an auxiliary submarine chaser, this wreck needs to be dived on slack currents as it lies perfectly upright in a channel close to Malakal. When the tide is just right, however, the marine life on the wreck is magnificent.

Chuyo Maru - This wreck is close to the Amatsu and, whilst smaller, is the perfect example of a wreck dive!! Lying perfectly upright and in great condition, there are many opportunities to penetrate this wreck. It is an ideal wreck for both Tec and recreational divers alike.

Iro - This is most likely the most dived wreck in Palau. Lying in 40m of water, with the bow at 18m and the stern at 30m there is something for every level of diver on this wreck. Surrounded by abundant marine life and with many ways of exploring the ship, this wreck should be dived a couple of times to ensure you cover all the highlights such as the bow and stern guns, the hold with many artefacts still inside and a huge engine room with easy access.

Kamikaze Maru - Being close to the Bichu Maru, the Kamikaze often suffers from poor visibility. Even so, it will definitely be worth your while for the adventurous diver, as this is the only wreck in Palau where you can see the advanced weaponry the Japanese used against the enemy ships throughout the Pacific, the Long Lance Torpedo. Many still litter the holds and even the deck.

The ship suffered significant damage from the American bombings as it went down. It is, in fact, a miracle that the torpedoes did not explode!!

Kibi Maru - The Kibi was part of a convoy trying to escape the relentless American attacks by leaving the lagoon and heading out to open ocean, but she never made it. She was heavily damaged in the attack and was grounded on the reef for a number of years before falling down the steep channel to end up upside down on a depth of about 36m. The life on the keel is fantastic and for the adventurous the option to slip underneath her starboard side and into the cavernous empty holds is a great adventure dive.

Nagisan Maru - With below average visibility and heavily damaged, this can be a challenging dive for the less experienced but an adventure for the true wreck explorer. 34m to the sea bed, long dive times can be undertaken for those who are qualified.

Raizan Maru - Another of the convoy that tried desperately to escape Palau but failed. She is situated in 38m of water but was heavily salvaged after the war. Due to the abundant fish life around her, the local name of the 'Fish Locker' is well justified!!

Ryuko Maru - Lying at a depth of around 34m, this is a wonderful wreck for all levels of divers. Artefacts still remain on the bridge and visibility can be great, so this is a real favourite for photographers. The deck is shallow, 20m, so longer dives can be planned by both recreational and Tec divers.

Sata Maru - The Sata may be lying upside down but she is an amazing 'real' Tec wreck dive. Being the sister ship of the **Iro**, which is located a little over a mile away, the Sata is a Tec divers dream. With a maximum depth 38m, there are amazing wreck penetration opportunities for the qualified and adventurous. From the engine to the super structure and the bomb damaged holds, this wreck can draw you back again and again for what can be a challenging but amazing dive.

Helmet/depth charge wreck - Only discovered 20 years ago, the Helmet wreck is a favourite among recreational divers as it is relatively shallow, with the stern at around 12m and the bow at 23m. Many artefacts are still scattered on the wreck such as the holds filled with depth charges and the wartime helmets. A great dive for the recreational diver!

Teshio Maru - On her way to seek refuge from the attacks, the Tehsio Maru was bombed and strafed by a passing US fighter north of the Malakal harbor. This army cargo shipwreck rests in a shallow 24m (80ft) of water on her starboard side. She measures 100m (330ft) in length and is one of the best wreck dives in Palau, for the usually outstanding visibility. With holds, bow gun, superstructure and a heavily damaged engine room, there is something for everyone on this wreck

Transport T1 - Propped up upside down against one of the Rock Islands, this wreck was initially designed as a destroyer but the Japanese converted it into a transporter. With the rudder and prop shaft clearly visible at the stern to the heavily damaged engine room, this is one of the few chances you will get to dive a warship in Palau.

Urakami Maru - The Urakami was an auxiliary repair ship stationed in Palau and would have been very busy at the time she was attacked. This large (almost 130m) vessel sunk to a depth of 42m, is huge opportunity for exploration. The stern gun still points skyward and very close by on the sea bed there are still full boxes of ammunition, ready to be loaded. Swimming forward to the bridge area, the old compass binnacle is still visible. Once at the bow area, the huge bow gun now lies in the sand perfectly upright surrounded by boxes of ammunition. This wreck is a great Tec dive due to the deeper location. Recreational divers need at least 2 dives to cover all the highlights.

Please note: The majority of the dives on this itinerary are deemed suitable for recreational divers. Guests can plan multi-level profiles for those who are not Tec qualified. However, some of the wrecks lie beyond recreational dive depths. These wreck sites can only be dived by those with deep diver or technical diving qualifications.

Our Cruise Director and the Unique Dive Expeditions dive crew will offer wreck penetration, within the bounds of their own training and experience. Both Richard and Paul are rebreather divers and can therefore accommodate long dive times, including decompression. Prior to each dive, there will be an in-depth briefing for all our guests, which will include a detailed dive site map with entries/exits, points of interest, hazardous objects and special considerations for the dive to enable you to plan appropriately.

Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and for obtaining suitable dive insurance to cover deeper diving. We respectfully request our divers stay within the bounds of their training, follow dive computer guidelines and make decompression stops where necessary. When planning deep dives or dives with extended bottom times, please bear in mind that recompression facilities in the region are limited, therefore we recommend that you dive conservatively.

The Palau Siren provides equipment and facilities for deep, technical and rebreather diving for your convenience. All divers who wish to go beyond recognised recreational depth limits, plan to make deep wreck penetration, or decompression dives, must show proof of qualification and experience upon boarding and will be requested to sign an additional liability waiver.

Optional activity during your liveaboard safari (additional charges apply)

Peleliu Island WWII Land Excursion

When you just cannot get enough of wrecks! A local tour guide will escort you around the impressive historic remnants of WWII battles that took place on the island. The tour will take approximately 2 hours. Please ask your cruise director to organise this tour for you.