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## **PALAU VISITORS AUTHORITY HISTORY OF PALAU**

Palau's early history is still largely veiled in mystery. Why, how or when people arrived on the islands is unknown. Studies indicate that today's Palauans are distant relatives of the Malays of Indonesia, Melanesians of New Guinea and Polynesians. Calculating the date of their arrivals, carbon dating of artifacts from the oldest known village sites on the Rock Islands and the spectacular terraces on Babeldaob place civilization as early as 1,000 BC.

The most noteworthy first foreign contact took place in 1783 when the vessel Antelope, under the command of English Captain Henry Wilson, was shipwrecked on a reef near Ulong, a Rock Island located between Koror and Peleliu. With the assistance of Koror's High Chief Ibedul, Wilson and his men stayed for three months to rebuild his ship. From that time onward, many foreign explorers called on Palau and the islands were exposed to further European contact.

Foreign governance of our islands officially began when Pope Leo XIII asserted Spain's rights over the Caroline Islands in 1885. Two churches were established and maintained by two Capuchin priests and two brothers, resulting in the introduction of the Roman alphabet and the elimination of inter-village wars. In 1899, Spain sold the Carolines to Germany, which established an organized program to exploit the islands' natural resources.

Following Germany's defeat in WWI, the islands were formally passed to the Japanese under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. The Japanese influence on the Palauan culture was immense as it shifted the economy from a level of subsistence to a market economy and property ownership from the clan to individuals. In 1922, Koror became the administrative center for all Japanese possessions in the South Pacific. The town of Koror was a stylish metropolis with factories, shops, public baths, restaurants and pharmacies.

Following Japan's defeat in WWII, the Carolines, Marianas and Marshall Islands became United Nations Trust Territories under U.S. administration, with Palau being named as one of six island districts. As part of its mandate, the U.S. was to improve Palau's infrastructure and educational system in order for it to become a self-sufficient nation. This finally came about on October 1, 1994, when Palau gained its independence upon the signing of the Compact of Free Association with the United States.

With their World War II artifacts, the islands of Peleliu, home to the WWII Memorial Museum, and Angaur are perhaps known more for the man-made relics left over from momentous battles more than half a century ago. But this does not in any way diminish their substantial contribution to the natural beauty of Palau.

**Location and Geographic Description:**

7° 30' North Latitude, 133° 30' East Longitude

Located in Micronesia, Palau is an island nation comprised of 16 states. Officially the Republic of Palau, this island nation in the Pacific Ocean is about 500 miles east of the Philippines and 2000 miles south of Tokyo. Having emerged from United Nations trusteeship (administered by the United States) in 1994, it is one of the world's youngest and smallest nations. In 1989, Palau was ranked and listed by CEDAM International as the ranking Number 1 Underwater Wonder of the World out of the seven underwater wonders. It is sometimes referred to in English under its native name Belau.

Palau's most populated islands are Angaur, Babeldaob, Koror and Peleliu. The latter three lie together within the same barrier reef, while Angaur is an Oceanic Island several miles to the South. About two-thirds of the population lives on Koror. The coral atoll of Kayangal is situated north of these islands, while the uninhabited Rock Islands (about 400) are situated to the west of the main island group. A remote group of six islands, known as the Southwest Islands, some 375 miles (600 km) from the main islands, are also part of the country and make up the States of Hatohobei and Sonsorol.

**Population:**

The population of Palau is approximately 19,750, of whom 70% are native Palauans, who are of mixed Melanesian, Micronesian, and Malayan descent. Filipinos form the second largest ethnic group. Other Asians and Europeans account for the minority groups.

Three quarters of the population are Christians (mainly Roman Catholics and Protestants), while Modekngei (a combination of Christianity, traditional Palauan religion and fortune telling) and the ancient Palauan religion are commonly observed. According to the 2005 census<sup>[6]</sup> 49.4% of the population are Roman Catholics, 21.3% Protestants, 8.7% Modekngei and 5.3% Seventh-day Adventists.

The official languages of Palau are Palauan and English, except for two states (Sonsorol and Hatohobei) where the local language, along with Palauan, is official. Japanese is also spoken widely amongst older Palauans, and, indeed, retains official status in the State of Angaur. Tagalog is not official in Palau, but it is the 4th largest spoken language.

**Economy:**

The economy consists primarily of tourism, subsistence agriculture and fishing. Tourist activity focuses on scuba diving and snorkeling in the islands' rich marine environment, including the Floating Garden Islands to the west of Koror and the Rock Islands to the south. The government is the major employer of the work force, relying heavily on financial assistance from the USA. Business and tourist arrivals numbered 88,175 in the financial year 2007. The population enjoys a per capita income twice that of the Philippines

and much of Micronesia. Long-term prospects for the key tourist sector have been greatly bolstered by the expansion of air travel in the Pacific, the rising prosperity of leading East Asian countries and the willingness of foreigners to finance infrastructure development.

**Climate:** Palau enjoys a pleasantly warm climate all year round with an annual mean temperature of 82° degrees F. (27° C.). Rainfall can occur throughout the year, and the annual average is 150 inches. The average relative humidity is 82%, and although rain falls more frequently between July and October, there is still much sunshine. Typhoons are rare as Palau is located outside the typhoon zone.

**Time Zone:** When it's Noon Monday in Palau, it is:  
Manila 11:00 a.m. Monday  
Tokyo 12:00 a.m. Monday  
Sydney 1:00 p.m. Monday  
Honolulu 5:00 p.m. Sunday  
Los Angeles 7:00 p.m. Sunday

**Getting There:** From the western seaboard of the United States, you can hop to Hawaii, skip to Guam, then jump to Palau. For a scenic island route, you can do an island hop across Micronesia to Palau.

Flying Times and Distances to Palau: Honolulu – 4,609 miles, 8:45 hours; Los Angeles – 7,161 miles, 13:55 hours; New York – 9,612 miles, 18:55 hours; Cairns – 2,087 miles, 4:30 hours.

**Airline Info:**

**Airline services to Palau**

1. United Airlines, (formerly Continental Airlines), offer twice a week flight service from Manila to Palau. 5 times a week via Guam to Palau.
2. JAL - Charter, Direct flight from Japan
3. Korean Air - Scheduled Charter twice a week
4. China Airlines - Scheduled Charter 4 times a week
5. Asiana Airline - Scheduled twice a week
6. Trans-Asia Airline - Charter flights only
7. Delta AirLines - resumed on December 28, 2011. Schedule TBA

**Customs & Immigration Requirements:**

One bottle of liquor and up to one carton of cigarettes can be brought into Palau duty-free. Importation of controlled substances and weapons is strictly prohibited. Proof of citizenship (passport) by U.S. citizens is required. Visas are not required. All non-Palauan passport holders must have a valid passport with return travel arrangements. Upon arrival, 30-days visa is issued by

Immigration and may be extended for additional 30-days for a fee of \$50.00 (U.S. Dollars).

## **SCUBA Diving**

See-through waters bequeath underwater visibility beyond anyone's imagination. So much so that from the most immaculate shorelines in the world, a boat 50 meters beyond creates the magical illusion that it floats merely on air, with its conspicuous shadow cast on a translucent seabed a few feet beneath. A prism of colorful coral reefs and virtually limitless variety of sea life set the stage in this tropical paradise.

From beginners and intermediate to expert divers, there are over 50 existing dive sites, each possessing distinct characteristics and individual personalities to appeal to everyone's desires. *Chandelier Cave*, for instance, is a sub-surface catacombs of rooms filled with massive, ancient icicle-shape stalactites deposits that simultaneously hang from the ceilings of cavernous openings. Experienced guides ensure measures are taken to adroitly negotiate the dives that result from this shallow-water, yet challenging diving experience.

The *Ngemelis Wall*, commonly known as the Big Drop-Off, and declared by diving's immortal icon, Jacques Cousteau to be the best wall dive in the world, is but one. Its precipitous 1,000 feet drop confers a profusion of intriguing sights of soft corals and reef animals, while its upper portion is encrusted with a rainbow of multi-colored sea fans, sponges, coral whips and soft corals.

*Blue Corner*, arguably one of the best in the world and the most famous of Palau's underwater attractions, shows off constantly cruising gray reef sharks searching the rich waters for their prey. Insatiable photographers, their excitement masked considerably by the slow motion pace of underwater movement, train their equipment and snap away at schools of barracuda, giant resident Napoleon Wrasse that often reach six feet in length, snappers and butterfly fish. The dense concentration of marine life is revealed as these countless underwater fruits of nature dart in and out of a scintillating panorama of hard and soft corals that house them. And they are but a fraction of the more than 1,400 species of coral that thrive in these extraordinarily clear waters.

The famed *Siaes Tunnel*, with its enormous cavern bathed in ethereal blue light and peppered with sea fans and ancient bushes of black coral, is an unparalleled aesthetic dive. On its spotless, white sand bottom can often be seen whit tip reef sharks and black spotted stingrays slumbering.

On the east side of Palau Lagoon is a site known as the *Ngerchong Coral Gardens*, famous for its fabulous variety of intricate coral formations and high concentrations of small, schooling reef fish. The photographic opportunities here are inexhaustible.

Visualize diving amid gentle manta rays as they engage in the ritual of circling reefs to render their gills cleaned by small fish. When not chased, these graceful creatures remain calm and even maneuver friendly approaches, as if intent on giving welcomed divers close proximity glimpses of their undulating beauty. Or how about encounters with endangered species like the Hawksbill Turtle and the Chambered Nautilus, the latter of which is now only found in a few Pacific Islands.

World War II relics randomly dot the underwater seascape with an almost perfect sense of dispersion; displaying haunting wrecks over 40 World War II Japanese seaplanes and shipwrecks that render the islands a dream for wreck diving aficionados. There is an uncanny distribution to the intervals and space between their whereabouts and the effect that they effortlessly blend in with the underwater environment while at the same time embellishing what are already exceedingly attractive natural diving venues. The irrepressible synergy between all the wonderful elements found in Palau's diving sites gives way to the many of the finest diving venues. And they in turn do nothing better than invite diving enthusiasts of the world to visit and dive in our unsurpassed immaculately preserved waters.

Diving is year-round in Palau and during the busiest season from January to April, spectacular sights such as migratory whale sharks passing by, sharks or mantas mating, and large schools of fish spawning can be seen. Palau is strategically straddled by two extremely deep channels to the east and to the west, those of the Philippine Trench and Palau Trench. The cold nutrient-rich waters of these fathomless abysses teem with sub surface natural gifts, and the results are striking; in very few other places can such awe-inspiring underwater activity and life be witnessed with such regularity and ease.

And this is all not to mention the incredible Rock Islands, probably most enduring image of Palau. Beneath each of her more than **424** islands, is an ocean of dazzling gardens replete with luminous, rainbow-like collection of fish and crustaceans. The sheer splendor of the diving experience here is said to leave scuba divers speechless upon their return to the surface.

And as for the "icing on the cake," shark enthusiasts will enjoy the Micronesian Shark Foundation's (MSF) annual shark week full of adrenalin-packed activities. The MSF is a Palauan-based, non-profit foundation whose goal is to research and monitor the

many sharks of Palau as well as scientific shark data collection. Between February and April, hundreds of grey reef sharks migrate to the waters of Palau to mate. This generates a fabulous opportunity for shark lovers to dive with the world famous sharks of Palau and to participate in data collection. Following a dedicated day of shark diving, a full evening's program of shark themed seminars and activities are conducted at a local dive shop.

## **Nature**

Few places on earth can match the astonishing natural beauty of Palau. It is where the journey of discovery is decorated with fantastic flora and flourishing fauna. Rare orchids, plants and vines embellish the island's lush jungle interiors, and they are, in uncannily poetic turn, located on lands strewn with awe-aspiring tropical vistas. Splendid waterfalls such as the largest one on Palau, Ngardmau Waterfall, can be reached after a serene trek through jungle. Each presides majestically over their respective natural domains, and along the way, captivating endemic birds and plants proliferate.

The island of Babeldaob, the largest Micronesian landmass next to Guam, was born over 70 million years ago as a product of intense volcanic outbursts of the Eocene Age. Today, it is covered by almost impenetrable greenery, expansive savannas, graceful rolling hills and picturesque, jagged peaks. And core to it all are wild birds and animals, flowers and ferns, rivers and waterfalls and just about anything imaginable under a tropical sun.

The friendliness of Palau's people is unabashed and disarming, but it is their immense esteem for the island's natural resources – a respect anchored in steep tradition – that has yielded broad conservation of nature's gifts. The effect is profound in that Palau remains an earnestly enchanting land, a tropical paradise of untouched coral reef rife with exotic sea life. There are over 1,400 species of fish, about 300 species of marine sponges and at least 500 diverse coral species. In the world, there are only nine known species of Giant Clams and Palau has seven.

Many of these reefs lie in unbelievable proximity to dozens of deserted, glistening white sand beaches on the edges of palm-shaded tropical islands. One can simply marvel at the marine life that thrives in Siales Tunnel, located along the reef where over two centuries ago fate washed up the British Ship, The Antelope, and instantaneously initiated Palau's first recorded contact with the outside world. In the tunnel, at the entrances to their homes on the sandy bottom, the multicolored and decorative Helfrich's dartfish and Randall's shrimp goby thrive can be found. On the other side of the tunnel, is a sheer

drop off that is domicile to impressive schools of hump-head parrotfish, Napoleon wrasse and dazzling soft corals. There may even be a leopard shark resting against the wall of its numerous small caves. In its many shallow-water canyons, there are bi-color blennies, lionfish, black-spotted puffers, unicorn fish and triggerfish. And the list goes on.

Palau is also home to one of the world's most unique phenomena – the Rock Islands. These are collections of largely uninhabited, mushroom-shaped islets located in a vast lagoon protected by fringe reefs from the fury of the open sea and they house one of the world's greatest concentrations of coral and marine life. Palau, to date, has 586 islands with Koror and its southern lagoon containing a majority of 424 Rock Islands.

Schools of fish feed in the shallows of the reefs, exotic birds nest in high reaches of these Rock Islands and on occasion, majestic birds soar directly above with imperial bravado.

Attractions most can only dream of also include the daring and the unusual – like Jellyfish Lake, where two types of jellyfish can be found, namely the golden jellyfish known as Mastigias and the moon jellyfish known as Aurelia. This intriguing lake departs radically from convention for it is an enclosed body of water wherein, over the course of millennia, resident jellyfish have completely lost their sting because they have not had to fight off predators. Instead, they spend their days in privileged leisure, pulsating gently from one side of the lake to the other while catching the sun's rays and feeding on the generous algae rich waters.

There is also the incomparable Ngerukuid Islands Nature Reserve commonly referred to as “70 islands,” a group of islands with maze like channels and aquamarine water. Regular sightings of Manta Rays are not uncommon either, as in the German Channel where they come in to hover over rock outcroppings, while having their expansive slippery surfaces serviced by cleaner wrasses.

World War II artifacts dot the islands and are perhaps known more for the man-made relics left over from momentous battle more than a half a century ago, but they do not in anyway diminish their substantial contribution to the natural beauty of Palau by providing new haven for both marine and terrestrial residents.

Palau's natural assets are preserved almost beyond what any conventional human norm can envision.

## **Activities**

As diverse as the colors of Palau's rich marine environment, the list of action-packed activities in Palau reveals a rainbow of colorful choices as well.

With water sports alone, the opportunities are limitless. For instance, Palau has an abundance of the most spectacular sports fishing opportunities. One can troll for game fish such as mammoth 400-pounds blue marlin, sailfish, giant trevally, wahoo and tuna. As a matter of fact, sport-fishing is so popular in the islands that the Palau Sports Fishing Association holds an annual fishing derby in the month of May that is open to anyone. Generous cash prizes are awarded for the biggest catches in several categories including tuna, barracuda, wahoo and marlin, to name a few.

Formal competitions aside, it's truly a rare day when one of several fully-equipped custom sports fishing vessels fails to come back with the proverbial "big catch," when guided by friendly local guide. And, for die-hard fans of the intriguing sport, the joy of tug-of-war combat with formidable predators of the deep is likely to be the unforgettable experience of a lifetime. Choices for those who favor more relaxing activities include spear fishing, reef casting, hitching a ride on a bamboo raft or simply bringing a hand line to the Rock Islands to catch lunch, the local way, bottom fishing.

Activities abound for those not into fishing as well. Inside the area sheltered by the Rock Islands' tiny isles are calm seas that afford ideal sites for snorkeling, and taking brisk rides on inflatables towed by powerful speedboats. Moreover, all over Palau, the tranquility of white, sugar sand beaches – where perhaps the only footprints are one's own – are abundant. This is where swimming in the privacy of one's own traveling party can be relished, and where year-round, 80 to 86° F water temperatures are indescribably soothing and therapeutic.

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These very conditions make snorkeling compelling as well, where shallow reefs reveal tropical fish and Technicolor giant clams thriving amongst a prism of corals. After splashing around or snorkeling the sparkling blue waters, soak up the sun or immerse in a favorite novel on a postcard-perfect coconut tree covered beach.

Palau was made for kayaking, where paddlers can make their way into any one of hundreds of deserted bays and lagoons with perfectly unspoiled scenery, impeccable preserved reefs and coves, and only the swirling sound of the paddles breaking through the turquoise surface. Palau is probably the best place in the world for nature-loving kayakers. The same serenity of nature's pure embrace, unimpeded by the whine of a motor, is available in sailing charters through our protected lagoons.

Attractions most can only dream of also include the daring and the unusual – like Jellyfish Lake, where two types of jellyfish can be found, namely the golden jellyfish



known as Mastigias and the moon jellyfish known as Aurelia. This intriguing lake departs radically from convention for it is an enclosed body of water wherein, over the course of millennia, resident jellyfish have completely lost their sting because they have not had to fight off predators, allowing interested adventure seekers a rare opportunity to swim amongst this truly unique water creatures.

For vigorous-activity enthusiasts, a must is hiking in Babeldaob, Palau's biggest island and the second-largest landmass of the region after Guam. Measuring 27 miles/43 kilometers in length and 15 miles/24 kilometers across at its widest point, Babeldaob's terrain transforms gracefully from steep mountains to freshwater lakes to sand dunes along the longest natural beach in Palau. Blessed with these natural as well as historic wonders, ancient stone paths carved out of the jungle centuries ago lead to fascinating remnants of old villages and ancient hillside terraces.

Babeldaob's dense jungle foliage is interrupted only by farms and villages, and by the paths and roads that connect them. On foot or by bike, energetic naturalists can stop at any one of the island's vista points, wander into the jungle to commune with both plant and animal life, picnic by a river and then wash away the heat of the day under one of the island's four picturesque waterfalls.

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For those who want to get off their feet for exploration, Palau offers a Jungle River Boat Cruise, where soft adventurers will cruise along the calm river to an ancient Palauan village and historical site. Along the way, discover the abundance of beautiful flora and fauna of Palau, spot the birds and even catch glimpses of the crocodiles. This adventure is most suitable for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts and an excellent opportunity for photographers to capture the wildlife along the river where the mangroves are nature's nursery.

Sightseeing is also a must in Palau, with hundreds of destinations calling for discovery. There are steep limestone cliffs that hide ancient archeological sites and caves, as well as World War II planes, tank and war paraphernalia scattered about the islands.

In Peleliu, a reef island measuring 4.6 miles in length that date from 1944, derelict tanks, amphibious landing ramps, airplane propellers, bomb casings and steel helmets now dot the landscape. In Angaur, a raised coral limestone island situated southwest of Peleliu, white sand beaches alternate with rocky protrusions along the island's rugged coastline and a tree-covered roadway provides cool shelter for a meandering stroll around

the island. Both Peleliu and Angaur provide scheduled boat transportation with a picturesque view of the Rock Islands as you make your way to your destination.

When back in Koror, one must take a trip to the Belau National Museum and the Etpison Museum, both housing natural treasuries of over 1,000 historical and cultural artifacts. The Palau International Coral Reef Center, featuring the Palau Aquarium, is the most ideal place to see the best of underwater Palau without even getting one's feet wet. This marine research center showcases outdoor pools and indoor aquariums teeming with marine life. A visit to Dolphins Pacific, the world's largest Dolphin Research Facility and a Non-Profit Corporation, is where one can interact with the dolphin, when supervised by the dolphin trainer.

### **16 States of Palau** (In Alphabetical Order)

**Aimeliik:** Located on the southwest corner of Babeldaob, it encompasses 37 square km of land and mangrove areas, with low rolling hills and some rugged terrain along the west coast through the other villages. Large areas of commercial agricultural development exist in Aimeliik. The famous prehistoric terraces can be found in the village of Ngedebech. Located in Elechui Village lays Malsol's Tomb. It is said that Malsol was a fierce warrior from a neighboring state that was stoned to death by the women of the village for killing one of their sons. The stones were left to form his tomb. Visitors going to Aimeliik can visit Malsol's Tomb, Elechui Village and the Aimeliik Bai.

**Airai:** Located at the southernmost tip of the Babeldaob Island, Airai has over 55 square km of land covered with forests, savanna, mangroves and several limestone rock islands. It is connected to Koror by a suspension bridge named Japan-Palau Friendship Bridge. The Palau International Airport is also located in Airai, with a 77,000-foot runway; it is Palau's main link to the outside world. The Ngerimel River, which supplies water to Koror and Airai from a reservoir, is located in the south central part of the state. Airai is only second to Koror in population. Visitors coming to Airai can visit the Bai Ra Rengar (Airai Bai), the Metuk Ra Bisech, known as the Yapese Stone Money Quarry or the Ngerusar Village.

**Angaur:** Located 10 km southwest of Peleliu Island, at the southern most tip of the main group of islands in the Palau archipelago, it is approximately eight square km in size. Angaur has some of the most spectacular sights of waves crashing on the steep shorelines. The beaches are also a treat for visitors because of their clean white sand and the cool breeze of fresh air. The island has a large number of phosphates mines that were used during the German Administration. The legend of Uab originated from Angaur, which tells a story of a giant whose fall led to the creations of Palau Islands. There is so much to explore in Angaur from WWII plane wrecks, old German Light House, Historical sites and stone platforms.

**Hatohobei (Tobi Island):** Commonly referred to as "Tobi," the island is located some 450 kilometers southwest of Angaur. The island state is comprised of Tobi Island and Helen Reef, covering a combined area of .63 square km. Like the island of Sonsorol, Tobi is composed of limestone and sandy soils. Tobi Island is a few feet above sea level and has a depressed swampy interior due to phosphate mining during the Japanese Administration. Significant sites include the Ferehuhuh Diangel or Canoe House. Today,

a part of it is buried in the dirt and some is destroyed due to its location near the water's edge. Other sites include the Banuyong, a man-made cave and the matahong, Japanese living quarters.

**Kayangel:** At approximately 1.78 square kilometers, Kayangel is Palau's only true coral atoll with untouched beaches and reefs that surround the island and about 25 miles away from the tip of Babeldaob. The waters around this atoll are a favorite spot for fishermen to troll and the land is rich with a lot of different species of bananas, for which Kayangel is known.

**Koror:** Claiming one of the largest areas in Palau, Koror only has a land mass of 58 square kilo-meters. It consists of hundreds of islands of all different sizes and shapes and includes most of the world-renowned Rock Islands of Palau. Koror State also has many world class dive spots for which Palau is known, such as Blue Corner, Big Drop-Off, German Channel and Ngemelis Wall, just to name a few. The former capital of Palau, Koror remains the center for most businesses along with major local and international banking businesses, stores and sport facilities. Some of the best resorts and hotels are in Koror as well as tour operators and fine dining restaurants. Those coming to Palau can visit the Belau National Museum and the Etpison Museum, Palau's only Community College that is located in the center of Koror.

**Melekeok:** Located on the central east coast of Babeldaob is about 25 square kilometers that extends from the lagoon on the east coast to the central divide of Babeldaob. The state consists of stretched white sand beaches, thin fringe of mangroves along parts of the coast, swampy marshes, rolling hills and Palau's largest fresh water lake and conservation area, Ngardok Lake. Ngardok Lake nature reserve is open to visitors for hiking and visiting the natural wildlife surrounding the pristine lake. With the new Republic of Palau's Capital Building, in Melekeok, it is now the new capital for the Republic after Koror State.

**Ngaraard:** Home to one of the finest and longest beaches in Palau, it is also known for the North Beach Cottages. The age old stone pathway that connects the east to the west part of Babeldaob Island is great for hiking, or visiting Ngerchokl spring and Ngerkall Lake. One can also snorkel, kayak or fish in Ngaraard. This state features both spectacular sunsets as well as idyllic sunrises. Local and international dishes are served in most accommodations located in Ngaraard including the national dish, taro leaf soup.

**Ngardmau:** With an approximate area of 30 square miles of land bordered by Ngeremlengui, Ngiwal and Ngaraard states, it consists of thick fringe mangroves along its coastline and high hills within the state. Ngardmau proudly boasts the highest mountain, Ngerechelchuu and tallest waterfall in Palau. Also found in Ngardmau State, is an ancient natural spring, Ikeam el Diong that was discovered by an old childless widow in need of water when people would not help her. The spring was what saved the people of the village from a drought during that time. Ngardmau's trade dish is Ngduul--Mangrove Clam, a great delicacy with fresh lemon.

**Ngatpang:** With less than 200 people, Ngatpang is situated on Ngeremeduu Bay, with extensive mangroves, rivers and waterfalls. Wildlife includes mangrove crabs, freshwater eels, water snakes and crocodiles. There are new aqua- and agri- cultural farms in this state, and it is a great place for hiking and kayaking. Ngatpang also has ancient terraced hills, stone monoliths and pathways and two Japanese shrines. Traditionally, this was the pottery making center of Palau because of the excellent natural clay.

**Ngchesar:** Ngchesar is located on the south central east coast of Babeldaob Island between Melekeok and Airai states. It covers an area totaling 41 square km and has a thick mangroves swamp forest. It has an abundant source of coconut trees and savanna grasses on its ridges and plains. The state of Ngchesar, like some of the other states, still has dirt roads connecting its small villages. Most of the state is covered with open forests and the unimproved trails make it a great place for hiking on the steep hills. Thought to be one of the most important archaeological sites in Palau, the Ngerngesang Terraces in Ngerngesang Village, are considered to be one of Palau's best examples of terracing and through radio carbon dating, they date as far back as A.D. 491 and A.D. 1150. Sites to visit include these terraces and a war canoe.

**Ngarchelong:** Located at the northern tip of Babeldaob Island, Ngarchelong extends north from the narrowest part. It is covered with mostly grass and low vegetation. Popular for an impressive archaeological site called Badrulchau, the stone monoliths cover an area of five acres with scattered stones and carved faces. Badrulchau is considered Palau's premier archaeological site, which dates as far back as A.D. 161. This state is also abundant in fish and sea life such as giant clams and is known for its national dish, clam chowder.

**Ngeremlengui:** The largest landmass of Palau's archipelago, covering of about 68 square miles of central Babeldaob one will find the longest river in Palau, called Nermeskang River. In addition, the Ngeremduu Bay is a breeding area for marine life, which is now a protected area. Ngeremlengui has recently established Noni plantations, which utilize the medicinal properties of the abundant Noni plant and fruits in Palau. Ngeremlengui is famous for their sea cucumber (cheremrum), a delicacy that Palauans enjoy eating but they also take pride in the State's secret marinade and preparation for fish that they refer to as "You'll Never Know."

**Ngiwal:** This state offers unique legends and sights that are part of its history, such as the famous "Basket of Taro for Iluochel" (Sualel a Iluochel), the sunken village of Ngibtal-where the old stone platforms are still visible under the sea and the amazing Bird Nest that is made of stones called "The Nest of the Morning Bird" (Lukel a Tutau). Visitors can visit the legendary warrior/Liberator, Ngirngemelas, the main feature in the center of Ngirngemelas Square. Legend has it that the people of Ngiwal were big-eaters, eating about seven meals and nine soups per day. Today the phrase "7-eat 9-soup" is a common phrase that made the pumpkin with coconut milk the famous soup of Ngiwal, known as "subliwal."

**Peleliu:** Located at the southern tip of the lagoon, which encompasses the main group of islands, Peleliu has a total area of 19 square km and is home to one of the bloodiest wars in the Pacific. During the battle for Peleliu in WWII, much of the island's geography was changed by the Japanese in anticipation of an American invasion. Some 10,000 Japanese defenders dug caves into the limestone fissures and built bunkers that are still accessible today. Visitors going to Peleliu can get there by speed boat. Peleliu is great for fishing, diving as it has some of the best dive sites in Palau. It also boasts a museum packed with WWII memorabilia. Visitors can enjoy the beautiful beaches and war monuments, and most war era equipments are lying through out the island (i.e., tanks, planes, and pillboxes, etc.).

**Sonsorol:** Located 250 to 350 kilometers southwest of Angaur, combined with other small outer islands such as Pulo Anna and Merir, they total an area of three square kilometers. The islands are miniature platforms of reefs composed of limestone and sandy soils covered by forest and brush. Along the sandy beach, coconut palm trees are

abundant and are also the primary resource of copra production on the island. For culture and history seeking travelers, Sonsorol State has the Bai ra Ringal. A registered site for its significance as it was the place used by the island chiefs for meeting at the same time used as a navigation learning center and a place to stay for travelers seeking shelter as they journey between the islands.