Tour Code
MCSP

ADVENTURESABROAD

SOUTH PACIFIC EXPLORER

Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands & Palau

22 days

Created on: 18 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrive in Apia, Samoa

Arrival in Apia, Samoa (airport APW).

The Pacific's morning light breaks across Samoa as we arrive in Apia, where the rhythm of fa'a Samoa—the traditional Samoan way of life—still pulses through villages unchanged for centuries. This archipelago serves as Oceania's cultural storehouse, where oval fales dot landscapes much as they did when Robert Louis Stevenson chose these islands as his final home in 1889.

Each South Pacific island group carries its own history, culture, and language, yet common threads unite them—indigenous peoples descended from epic migrations spanning millennia, traditions that evolved in isolation yet share remarkable similarities. Nowhere are these variations more evident than in the dozens of Polynesian dialects that greet visitors across this vast oceanic realm. Oceania's diverse nations harbour some of the world's most remote and culturally isolated villages, connected not by land borders but by the vast Pacific itself.

** Some itinerary modifications may occur closer to the departure date due to flight routing and schedule changes. Access to most islands is restricted by flight schedules (sometimes just 1-2 flights per week). This may, of course, impact the itinerary. The order of islands visited may change, and the number of nights on each island may have to be adjusted; ie we may lose 1 night on one island and gain a night on the other.

Overnight in Apia, Samoa.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Samoa: Island Touring

Morning mist lifts from Mulinu'u's sacred grounds as we discover why Samoa remains the Pacific's most authentic cultural experience. These burial grounds of chiefly families anchor our exploration of a nation where most inhabitants still live in traditional fales, some standing for centuries despite tin roofs replacing ancient thatch.

We trace Samoa's complex colonial story through monuments marking pivotal moments—the German flag raising site, the first Catholic missionary's landing, and the imposing Parliament House where independence was declared. At Mulivai Cathedral, European Gothic architecture marries traditional Samoan design in stunning stained glass windows that filter tropical light into kaleidoscopic patterns.

Our pilgrimage to Robert Louis Stevenson's former home reveals why the Scottish author chose this paradise for his final chapter. Now a museum, the estate preserves artifacts, books, and settings from his Samoan years, when he became known locally as "Tusitala" (teller of tales). The author who gave us Treasure Island found his own treasure in these islands, writing some of his finest works while embracing Samoan culture so completely that chiefs granted him the rare honour of burial on Mount Vaea.

Overnight in Apia, Samoa.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 Samoa: Aleipata Districts & East Coast

Upolu's rugged interior unfolds as we traverse the Cross Island Road, where ancient mountains draped in emerald rainforest reveal why early Polynesian settlers chose these islands. Our scenic journey passes the distinctive Baha'i Temple before descending to the island's southern point, where traditional villages line the southern coast, fales visible through the palms

At Lalamanu Beach, we feast on scrumptious BBQ and traditional umu—earth oven cooking that transforms simple ingredients into extraordinary flavours through techniques perfected over millennia. Fresh tropical fruits complement this ancient culinary art, where hot stones and banana leaves create natural ovens that infuse food with subtle, smoky essence.

Sopo'aga Falls thunders through lush vegetation as local guides demonstrate the coconut's remarkable versatility—from fresh cream making

to the dozens of uses that make this "tree of life" central to Pacific island survival. At 518 metres (1,700 feet) above sea level, Le Mafa Pass provides breathtaking panoramas of east and south coastlines, where azure Pacific meets emerald mountains in dramatic beauty.

Our route winds through plantations where taro, breadfruit, and banana groves sustain the same families they always have. In Falefa village, colourful gardens burst with hibiscus, bougainvillea, and other tropical blooms, creating perfect photo opportunities while reflecting the Samoan love of natural beauty.

Overnight in Apia, Samoa

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Samoa: Savai'i Island Touring

Dawn's early ferry carries us across sapphire channels to Savai'i, Samoa's largest island and keeper of its most authentic traditions. This massive volcanic shield remains one of Polynesia's least populated islands, where traditional villages with oval-shaped houses nestle beside freshwater bathing pools fed by underground springs—a landscape many consider the "real" Samoa.

Our 90-minute crossing from Mulifanua wharf offers spectacular views of the Samoan archipelago, volcanic peaks rising from azure waters like sleeping giants. Upon arrival, Savai'i's slower pace immediately captivates—here, time moves to ancient rhythms rather than modern schedules.

At the island's fresh produce market, we witness trading traditions where locally grown taro, breadfruit, and handwoven handicrafts change hands through relationships rather than mere transactions. The air fills with the sweet scent of ripening bananas and the melodic cadence of Samoan voices sharing news, gossip, and laughter.

Savai'i's volcanic origins remain visible everywhere—lava fields that stopped just short of villages, natural pools carved by ancient eruptions, and fertile soils that have supported continuous settlement since the islands first rose from the sea. This is where Polynesian culture exists in its purest form, largely unchanged since the first Austronesian seafarers arrived over 3,000 years ago.

Overnight in Apia, Samoa.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 Samoa: Manono Island Touring

A turquoise jewel appears as our boat approaches Manono Island, where time stopped in 1995—not metaphorically, but literally when electricity first arrived. This three-square-kilometre paradise, completely enclosed by coral reef, once held such political importance that Samoa's highest chiefs made it their home.

Our journey begins with an hour's drive west to Cape Lefatu, where we glimpse the volcanic crater island of Apolima before our 20-minute boat ride to Manono. Samoan hosts greet us with genuine warmth, sharing customs and coconut lore their grandparents taught them. Here, among just four villages housing 889 souls, we discover a world without noise, dogs, or vehicles—only a coastal footpath connecting communities where men still fish from traditional canoes each dawn.

Walking this paradise, cooling trade winds carry the fragrance of frangipani and tiare flowers through lush gardens where families still grow everything they need. The crystal-clear lagoon displays every shade of blue imaginable, from pale aquamarine shallows to deep sapphire depths where coral gardens thrive.

This represents adventure travel at its purest—friendly people, unchanged traditions, and an island virtually untouched by the last century. Life flows to natural rhythms: men paddle to coral reefs at sunrise, returning only when they've caught enough fish to feed their families.

Overnight in Apia, Samoa

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 6 Apia, Samoa - Fly to Nuku'alofa, Tonga (Via Fiji)

Leisurely morning hours in Apia provide final glimpses of Samoan life before we journey to another Pacific realm entirely. Our afternoon flight carries us via Nadi, Fiji—a crucial connection point that ties together this complex island-hopping adventure through Oceania's most remote destinations. If you're wondering why we don't spend more time in Fiji, we've found that time there wasn't considered a highlight by past travellers. The 'thrust' of this tour focuses on the more unknown, obscure islands rather than established tourist destinations, which is why we don't emphasize Fiji despite its importance as our connection hub.

As we soar above endless Pacific waters, the scale of Oceania becomes apparent—hundreds of thousands of square kilometres where scattered atolls and volcanic peaks represent the world's most dispersed nations. Each island group developed unique cultures during millennia of isolation, creating the remarkable diversity we're experiencing.

Tonight we enter the Kingdom of Tonga, one of the Pacific's most traditional societies and one of the world's few remaining absolute monarchies. Here, ancient Polynesian customs blend with royal protocol dating back over 1,000 years, creating a cultural experience unlike anywhere else on earth. The flight path traces ancient migration routes followed by Polynesian navigators who used stars, currents, and bird behaviour to find these specks of land in the vast Pacific—a seafaring achievement that ranks among humanity's greatest exploration accomplishments.

Overnight in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 7 Tonga Touring

Royal drums echo across Nuku'alofa, where Captain James Cook coined the name "Friendly Islands" after his warm 1773 reception. This sovereign archipelago of 176 islands—52 inhabited—remains one of the world's last absolute monarchies, where social order follows feudal traditions and the king distributes land and positions without democratic oversight.

At the 'Ancient Tonga' village in Fangaloto, master craftsmen reveal coconut mythology and traditional methods for extracting the precious milk that sustains island life. We witness the ancient art of earth oven cooking, where volcanic stones heated over hardwood fires transform simple ingredients into feast-worthy dishes through techniques unchanged for centuries.

The rhythmic pounding of tapa cloth making provides our soundtrack as women demonstrate how mulberry bark becomes the finest textiles in Polynesia. Mat weaving and wood carving exhibitions illustrate skills passed from generation to generation, each pattern and technique carrying cultural significance beyond mere decoration.

Local markets burst with tropical abundance—giant taro roots, sweet kumala, breadfruit, and fish so fresh they were swimming at dawn. The traditional "umu" lunch includes multiple courses prepared in earth ovens, where banana leaves impart subtle flavours while maintaining the food's natural essence.

Song and dance performances celebrate Tongan heritage through movements that tell stories of voyaging ancestors, royal genealogies, and island legends passed down through oral tradition for over a millennium.

Overnight in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Tonga: Tongatapu Island Touring

Tongatapu unfolds its treasures as we explore the main island housing two-thirds of Tonga's population, where royal traditions and ancient mysteries create an unforgettable cultural tapestry. In Nuku'alofa, towering Norfolk pines frame the Royal Palace overlooking Pangai field, where royal feasts, kava ceremonies, and parades maintain customs dating back centuries.

The Royal Tombs provide solemn reminders of Tonga's unbroken monarchy—King George I, King George II, Queen Salote, and King Taufa'hau Tupou IV rest at the field's centre, their graves marking nearly two centuries of Pacific royalty. Each monument tells stories of leaders who navigated their kingdom through colonial pressures while maintaining independence.

At Mu'a village, Captain Cook's Landing Place monument marks where the great British explorer met the reigning Tu'i Tonga in 1777, resting under a massive banyan tree that still shades visitors today. This encounter between European and Polynesian cultures began centuries of interaction that shaped modern Tonga.

The Ha'amonga Trilithon—Tonga's Stonehenge—dominates the eastern landscape with massive coral limestone blocks assembled in 1200 AD by the eleventh Tongan King. Recent scientific interpretation suggests this monument functioned as an ancient sundial, tracking seasonal changes crucial for agricultural and ceremonial cycles. Nearby, the Maka Fa'akinanga stone bears mysterious markings resembling a human form, where oral traditions claim kings once sat while maintaining safe distances from potential assassins.

At some point during our time in Tonga, we hope to visit Anahulu Caves. We'll spend about a half-hour in an illuminated cave (with a low-headroom entry) which opens up to amazing stalactites and stalagmites and a beautiful cave pool.

Overnight in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 9 Tonga: Fly to Port Vila, Vanuatu (Via Fiji)

Early morning departure carries us from Tonga's royal traditions to Vanuatu's incredible cultural diversity—a nation of 221,000 people speaking 113 distinct languages, making it one of Earth's most culturally diverse countries per capita. This linguistic treasure trove resulted from thousands of years of sporadic immigration from various Pacific regions.

Natural boundaries—vast ocean stretches, dense jungle, and mountainous terrain—isolated many groups even from the same ethnic origins, creating not just warfare but sophisticated, distinctly different societies and political systems. Over millennia, these isolated communities developed unique traditions while maintaining common Melanesian threads that unite the archipelago.

The geographic isolation that created this diversity now makes Vanuatu fascinating for visitors seeking authentic cultural encounters. Villages separated by mere kilometres may speak completely different languages and practice distinct customs, yet share fundamental beliefs about community, spirituality, and connection to the land.

During our stay, we'll explore the excellent National Museum, where artifacts and exhibitions trace the complex cultural evolution that created modern Vanuatu. From ancient Lapita pottery shards to colonial artifacts and contemporary art, the museum illustrates how isolation bred creativity and cultural innovation.

Tonight we rest in Port Vila, preparing for adventures that will take us from active volcanoes to traditional villages where stone-age technologies still serve daily life—a reminder that progress takes many forms across the Pacific's scattered islands..

Overnight in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Vanuatu: Tanna Island / Yassur Volcano Excursion

The earth's heartbeat becomes audible as we approach Yasur Volcano, one of the world's most accessible active volcanoes and a sacred site where local tribes believe their ancestors' spirits reside. Our scenic one-hour flight to Tanna Island reveals spectacular aerial views of Port Vila Harbour, South Efate, and Erromango's pristine coastline, weather permitting.

White Grass Airport's approach provides stunning perspectives of Tanna's dramatic landscape—ancient volcanic formations, lush tropical forests, and ash plains that speak of the island's violent geological history. Friendly 4WD Safari staff transport us across the island, passing traditional villages where life continues much as it has for centuries despite the rumbling giant nearby.

The journey traverses diverse ecosystems—dense native bush gives way to volcanic ash plains as we approach Yasur, locally known as 'Old Man' in recognition of its ancient power. At 361 metres above sea level, this geological marvel features a crater 300 metres wide and 100 metres deep, constantly active for over 800 years according to local oral histories.

A short 10-minute uphill walk brings us to the crater rim, where we witness nature's raw power as molten lava fountains erupt with

thunderous roars every few minutes. This 'once in a lifetime' experience puts visitors face-to-face with the creative forces that built the Pacific's volcanic islands, a humbling reminder of our planet's dynamic nature.

Tanna Island represents a natural paradise beloved by volcanologists and adventure travellers seeking authentic encounters with both geological wonders and traditional Melanesian culture.

Overnight on Tanna, Vanuatu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Tanna Island Touring - Fly to Port Vila

This morning we explore western Tanna Island, visiting the coffee hulling plant where organic beans grow in volcanic soil enriched by centuries of eruptions, with traditional processing methods creating distinctive flavours. Lenakel Markets burst with handwoven baskets, carved wooden artifacts, and tropical produce, serving as the community's social hub where news, gossip, and trade create connections that bind island society together.

The famous Giant Banyan Tree—claimed as the largest on record—dominates a sacred grove where traditional ceremonies still occur. This magnificent specimen represents the interconnectedness of life that defines Melanesian worldview, serving as community meeting places and sources of traditional medicine.

This afternoon we fly to Port Vila and enjoy comprehensive touring including Parliament House, Council of Chiefs, Erakor wharf, Independence Park, and market houses.

Port Vila's vibrant character reflects Vanuatu's unique history as the New Hebrides, jointly administered by Britain and France in a colonial arrangement so bizarre it created two of everything—currencies, police forces, legal systems, and schools. Parliament House and the Council of Chiefs building symbolize Vanuatu's unique governance system blending Westminster democracy with traditional Melanesian leadership structures.

At Independence Park we commemorate 1980 liberation from joint colonial rule, while the bustling market houses embody cultural fusion where traditional woven bags sit beside French pastries.

Overnight in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Vanuatu: Round Island Tour - Fly to Nadi, Fiji

Our comprehensive round island tour begins at Pepeyo Cultural Village, where ancient traditions come alive through master practitioners who demonstrate skills that sustained Melanesian cultures for millennia. Here we witness mesmerizing custom dancing performances that tell stories passed down through generations, followed by an amazing fire-walking display that showcases the profound spiritual connections between people and the volcanic landscapes that define Vanuatu's cultural identity.

We continue with a brief stop at the Pangpang Trees along the main road, where massive ancient banyan trees reveal fascinating botanical secrets. Our guides explain the difference between male and female specimens while sharing traditional knowledge of how these giants became central to village life—serving as meeting places and providing essential resources including fiber, medicine, and construction materials that communities have relied upon for centuries.

At Emua Wharf, we pause for a short walk and informative talk about the surrounding islands, gaining perspective on how geography shaped settlement patterns and cultural development across this remarkable archipelago. Our journey through history continues at the WW2 Museum, where World War II artifacts and scattered relics remind visitors how global conflicts reached even the most remote Pacific islands, forever changing the trajectory of local communities.

Lunch at Survivor Beach and Gideon's Landing provides a perfect midday break, where our buffet lunch features traditional preparations using ingredients and techniques passed down through generations. Each dish tells stories of adaptation and cultural evolution, showcasing how Pacific island communities have maintained their culinary heritage while embracing new influences. Here we reflect on how external events shaped local communities while enjoying afternoon coffee and tea in settings that blend historical significance with natural beauty.

Our refreshments include local organic fruits in season and fresh juices that showcase the incredible biodiversity thriving in volcanic soils, each taste reflecting the unique terroir that makes Vanuatu's produce so distinctive.

This comprehensive tour illustrates how geography, culture, and history interweave across the Pacific, creating unique destinations where ancient wisdom meets modern understanding. From spiritual fire-walking ceremonies to wartime artifacts, from giant banyans to pristine beaches, the day reveals the complex layers of experience that make Vanuatu one of the Pacific's most fascinating destinations.

In the evening, we fly to Nadi for our overnight stay. While we have no organized touring in Nadi, you may want to explore the famous Sri Siva Subramaniya Swami Hindu Temple, conveniently located close to the hotel and airport area, offering an opportunity to experience Fiji's diverse cultural heritage.

Overnight in Nadi, Fiji.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 Nadi, Fiji - Fly to Solomon Islands

Today we travel from Fiji to the Solomon Islands, where Melanesian cultures developed distinct characteristics during millennia of isolation in one of the Pacific's most remote archipelagos.

Upon arrival at Honiara's Henderson International Airport, we receive our meet and greet transfer to the hotel, beginning our introduction to a nation where over 900 volcanic islands comprise one of the world's few remaining unspoiled destinations. Here, rainforests and active volcanoes create landscapes virtually unchanged since geological formation, while communities in both the coastal lowlands and interior highlands maintain customs their ancestors established centuries ago.

Overnight in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Solomon Islands: City Tour & Amazing Grace Cocoa Tour

Our West Guadalcanal half-day WWII historical and sightseeing tour begins in Honiara's vibrant central market, where traditional foods and handicrafts showcase the blend of contemporary life with Melanesian culture. From there, we proceed to the US War Memorial, which commands magnificent views across Iron Bottom Sound—named for numerous warships resting on the sea floor.

We'll visit the National Parliament building and National Museum Art Gallery, where our orientation tour reveals how this small capital balances rapid modernization with traditional culture. Contemporary government buildings stand alongside markets selling traditional goods, while local guides share stories of how families survived wartime occupation and how post-independence development has transformed Solomon Islands society.

We then journey to Amazing Grace Cocoa Farm for our comprehensive farm tour, where traditional agricultural knowledge meets contemporary markets. The tour reveals chocolate-making processes that blend ancient cultivation techniques with modern processing, showcasing how Pacific island communities balance tradition with economic opportunity in an increasingly connected world.

Honiara's Botanical Garden showcases the incredible plant diversity that makes the Solomon Islands a botanist's paradise, where endemic species evolved during millions of years of isolation.

Overnight in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Solomon Islands: Culture and WW2 Tour

Our scenic and historical tour begins with a visit to Henderson Field and Memorial Garden, where we'll explore one of the Pacific War's most strategically important airfields. The memorial garden provides a peaceful setting to reflect on the fierce battles that determined control of this crucial aviation hub.

We then journey to Hotomai Cultural Village for an immersive cultural tour experience with the Bira tribe of Guadalcanal. This authentic encounter allows us to witness traditional customs and lifestyles that Solomon Islanders have maintained for centuries, creating rare opportunities to witness traditions that have survived entirely on their own terms.

Our historical exploration continues at the Ikichi Memorial, followed by a break for lunch. The afternoon takes us through the haunting Pagoda Tunnel, where we'll discover underground shelters carved during wartime, before ascending to Bloody Ridge—site of one of Guadalcanal's most decisive battles.

At Mt Austin Japanese Memorial, we'll pay respects to all who fought in these remote Pacific locations, while the Betikama Museum provides comprehensive context for understanding how global conflicts reached even the most isolated corners of the world.

Overnight in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 16 Solomon Islands: West Guadalcanal

Our exploration of western Guadalcanal begins at the Vouza Memorial, which honours Jacob Vouza, a Solomon Islands police sergeant who endured brutal torture rather than reveal Allied positions to Japanese interrogators. His extraordinary courage exemplifies how Pacific islanders contributed to Allied victory despite becoming unwilling participants in global conflict.

We continue to the Vilu Outdoor Museum, an open-air collection of wartime artifacts that provides tangible connections to the battles fought across these islands.

The afternoon's highlight takes us to Bonege Beach for snorkeling around the Kinugawa Maru, a Japanese vessel that now serves as an underwater memorial and artificial reef. This experience combines historical reflection with the natural beauty of Solomon Islands' marine environment, where coral growth has transformed wartime wreckage into thriving ecosystems.

The afternoon's exploration focuses on western Guadalcanal, where these sites collectively tell the story of how global conflict transformed remote Pacific communities. The day's experiences confirm the resilience of both human communities and natural environments in recovery and renewal.

Overnight in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 17 Honiara, Solomon Islands - Fly to Manila

Our journey across the Pacific traces ancient migration routes as we travel from Melanesian Solomon Islands to the Philippines, where Austronesian-speaking peoples began their epic dispersal across the Pacific thousands of years ago. The connection through Port Moresby (transit only) reminds us how geographic proximity created cultural connections despite vast ocean distances.

Manila awaits as the former "Pearl of the Orient," where Spanish galleons connected Asia with the Americas in history's first truly global trade network. Located on Manila Bay's eastern shores, this strategic position made Manila the jewel of Spain's Pacific Empire during the 16th century, when silver from Mexico and Peru financed trade in Chinese silk, porcelain, and spices.

This evening's arrival launches our exploration of Southeast Asian cultures that provided the ancestral foundation for Polynesian and Melanesian societies we've been experiencing. Manila represents the western terminus of Pacific cultural exchanges that began with prehistoric migrations and continued through colonial trade networks that connected Pacific islands with Asian civilizations.

PLEASE NOTE that the order/placement of our Manila sightseeing elements may vary depending on arrival/departure flight times.

Overnight in Manila, Philippines

Included Meal(s): Breakfast

Day 18 The Charms of Old Manila

Today we explore Old Manila, including the Chinese Cemetery showcasing elaborate mausoleums reflecting the community's prosperity and cultural preservation, where Christian, Buddhist, and Taoist burials illustrate the religious diversity that characterizes overseas Chinese communities. Nearby, the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene (Quiapo Church) draws millions of devotees to the most venerated religious icon in the Philippines.

Roxas Boulevard carries us to Rizal Park, named for Dr. Jose Rizal, whose execution by Spanish authorities in 1896 sparked the Philippine Revolution. This vast green space serves as Manila's social heart, where locals jog, picnic, and gather in scenes that reveal contemporary Filipino life beyond tourist attractions.

Intramuros—meaning "within the walls"—preserves remnants of Spanish Manila, where Miguel Lopez de Legazpi built fortifications on a ruined Islamic settlement site. The 4-kilometre (3-mile) walls, up to 13 metres thick, protected Spanish colonial society that included 15 churches and 6 monasteries within this exclusive European enclave.

Fort Santiago guarded Manila Bay's entrance through centuries of conflict, serving as military headquarters, prison, and execution site during various periods of foreign occupation. The fortress walls tell stories of resistance, tragedy, and cultural transformation that shaped modern Philippines.

Overnight in Manila, Philippines.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 19 Manila: Chinatown/New Manila Tour / Fly to Palau

Binondo's aromatic streets transport us into the world's oldest Chinatown, where Chinese traders established communities four centuries ago to serve Spain's galleon trade connecting Asia with the Americas. Our walking exploration reveals culinary traditions where local must-eat delicacies blend Chinese techniques with Filipino ingredients, creating unique fusion flavours found nowhere else.

Makati's gleaming towers represent modern Philippines' economic emergence, while the American Cemetery and Memorial honours the 17,206 American servicemen killed in Pacific operations during World War II. The beautifully maintained grounds provide breathtaking views across Manila while commemorating sacrifices that liberated the Philippines from Japanese occupation.

Ayala Museum showcases works by Fernando Zobel and other prominent Filipino artists, illustrating how colonial encounters influenced contemporary culture and artistic expression. The collection traces artistic evolution from traditional indigenous forms through Spanish, American, and modern influences that created distinctly Filipino artistic traditions.

Casa Manila (if not visiting on Sunday) reproduces a 19th-century Spanish colonial house equipped with oriental and European décor alongside Philippine antique furniture. Built by Imelda Marcos, this restoration project displays stunning antique furniture and artwork that illustrate the cultural fusion characterizing Spanish colonial society in the Philippines. The exhibits reveal how Chinese, European, and indigenous Filipino influences created unique decorative arts and architectural styles that influenced cultural development throughout Spanish territories in the Pacific.

Tonight's late flight carries us back into Micronesia, where small island nations developed distinct cultures despite sharing common ancestral roots with Philippine populations. Palau awaits with some of the Pacific's most pristine marine environments and archaeological mysteries that continue puzzling researchers studying Pacific prehistory.

Overnight in Koror, Palau.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 20 Palau: Island Touring

The Palau Islands are an archipelago composed of about 350 islands and atolls having an area of approximately 160 square miles. All of the islands except two small atolls to the north and the islands of Angaur and Peleliu to the southwest are enclosed within the barrier or fringing reef. These islands are located at a crossroads where the Pacific Ocean meets the Philippine Sea, creating one of the worlds' richest zones of tropical marine bio-diversity. This island group is home to one of the highest number of species not found anywhere else in the world. The main island of Babeldaob is the second largest landmass in Micronesia and is recognized as one of the largest undisturbed tropical rainforests in Micronesia.

We will spend today exploring the island of Babeldaob, Palau's largest island, and often called the "Big Island". This is a truly mysterious place that appears physically impenetrable for the most part and shields enigmatic monoliths whose origin and purpose is unknown. The east coast has beautiful stretches of sandy beach, while the west coast has a largely mangrove-studded shoreline. Ancient stone footpaths connect many villages, there are no traffic lights, and resort hotels are a world away.

Archaeological highlights include the Stone Faces (Badrulchau) of Ngerchelong, the ancient Stone Monoliths, and the mysterious terraced hillsides found in various locations around Babeldaob. We will also visit a traditional Bai (Men's meeting house). In the past each village had a Bai built on top of a raised stone platform. These houses were constructed from giant timbers reinforced with coconut fiber ropes, and assembled without nails in a timber frame design. Women were only allowed to visit the Bai ra Cheldebechel. Today we see one of the few remaining bais in Palau, which offers us a unique look at authentic Palau'an culture.

At some point during our time in Palau, we'll visit the Belau National Museum, the oldest museum in Micronesia. The indoor and outdoor exhibits detail Palau's history, and include information about the past possessors of the territory such as Germany, Japan, Spain and the USA. In the museum we will see exhibits from all eras of Palauan life, including artworks, photography, sculpture, storyboards and more, all tracing the history of the colonial occupation on the island.

Overnight in Koror, Palau.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 21 Palau: UNESCO Protected Rock Islands & Peleliu Island Excursion

Today we will enjoy a scenic boat trip and excursion to the historic island of Peleliu.

Our route takes us through the Rock Island Lagoon, a marine wonderland harbouring the world's highest concentration of marine lakes—isolated seawater bodies separated from the ocean by land barriers, creating unique ecosystems where evolution proceeded independently for thousands of years.

Peleliu Island represents a different kind of wonder—a place where "the irresistible force of the sea meets the immovable mass of the reef," creating spectacular underwater walls teeming with countless fish species. However, Peleliu's natural beauty cannot overshadow its tragic World War II history, when this strategic island became a brutal battleground.

Japanese forces constructed elaborate underground tunnel systems and fortifications defended by tens of thousands of troops. The resulting battle cost nearly 11,000 Japanese and 1,000 American lives, making Peleliu one of the Pacific War's costliest engagements relative to the island's size.

Our comprehensive tour covers important natural sites alongside WWII remnants and the local War Memorial Museum, where exhibits illustrate how global conflict transformed peaceful Pacific communities. The juxtaposition of pristine coral reefs with rusted military equipment provides sobering reminders of war's impact on paradise.

Overnight in Koror, Palau.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 22 Departure from Koror

Our South Pacific odyssey concludes as we prepare for departure from Koror. From Samoa's traditional fales to the marine lakes of Peleliu,

we've witnessed how Pacific island societies balance ancient wisdom with contemporary challenges.

This journey through Oceania's most remote destinations revealed common threads connecting scattered cultures—Polynesian navigation skills that populated vast ocean regions, Melanesian traditions that sustained isolated communities, and Micronesian adaptations that created unique island civilizations.

Departure from Koror, Palau.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast