Tour Code
UP20

ADVENTURESABROAD

UNTOUCHED PACIFIC ISLANDS

Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Naoero, Kiribati & Tuvalu

17 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Honolulu, Hawaii

Welcome to Hawaii!*

When it comes to tourism, there are always those countries that get most of the fame. There are those destinations that top the list of the 'most visited countries' in the world year after year. Now it is time for us to share with you the less visited -- but no less interesting -- nations of the world. This is a chance to explore some remote, far flung areas where few travellers venture. On this tour we will visit some countries where even the arrival of tourists is a newsworthy mention. Each year the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) collects the number of international tourism arrivals that each country receives, and on this tour we will visit some of the least visited countries in the world based on these statistics. With the globalization of the modern day world, only a small handful of countries have managed to truly stay 'off the radar'. This tour offers you the chance to visit some of these unique destinations that are not promoted in glossy guidebooks... places where you will not find crowds of tourists and luxury lodges.

This is an ambitious itinerary and a true adventure! This is a tour for real travellers -- those who have passion for exploration and discovery -- those who seek an adventure that is off the 'tourist trail' to places where few have been before. Do not come looking for 5-star resorts and high-speed wifi. Just be sure to come with a true sense of adventure and a great travel spirit!

Note: Some itinerary modifications may occur closer to the departure date due to flight routing and schedule changes, which can, of course, impact the final itinerary. The order of islands visited may change, and the number of nights on each island may have to be adjusted. We may lose one night on one island and gain a night on another.

* This itinerary does not include any sightseeing or touring in Hawaii. If this is something that you are interested in then you may want to consider arranging some extra nights prior to the tour. Due to the early start on Day 2 we also strongly recommend booking an extra night if your arrival on Day 1 is late in the evening.

Overnight in Honolulu (Waikiki). PLEASE NOTE: As is typical in the USA, our hotel does NOT include breakfast.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Hawaii - Fly to Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

This morning we depart Honolulu on our flight to the Federated States of Micronesia.* Our routing takes us across the International Date Line, and we therefore arrive the following calendar day.

* This tour is unique for us in many ways, one such way causes our automated system headaches in terms of dates and days-of-the-week. Upon booking you will receive a version of this itinerary that shows the dates of each day of your trip in the day heading. On this tour, those dates/days may not be accurate as we hop back and forth over the International Date Line. Your Tour Leader will clarify which day/date it is as the tour progresses (your final hotel list WILL be accurate). Apologies for any confusion!

Day 3 Arrival in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

Our flight from Honolulu touches down in Pohnpei a calendar day after we departed Honolulu, and today is simply about arrival.

Pohnpei is the largest and most mountainous of the Federated States of Micronesia's four states — a rugged, brilliantly green island that is the peak of a five-million-year-old extinct shield volcano. Dense rainforest cloaks the interior, and mountains rise to over 2,600 feet. With more than 300 inches of annual rainfall recorded in the highlands, Pohnpei ranks among the wettest places on earth, a fact written into its landscape in cascading waterfalls and some of the Pacific's largest intact upland rainforests. The coast is fringed by mangrove swamps rather than beaches, with several smaller inhabited islets and atolls scattered nearby.

After checking in we have leisure time until dinner. Over the next three days we will explore Kolonia — Pohnpei's colonial-layered capital — and visit Nan Madol (Micronesia's only UNESCO World Heritage Site), then take a boat out to the reef islet of Nahlap. For now, a quiet first evening is the right introduction to an island that rewards patience.

Overnight in Pohnpei.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 4 Pohnpei: Kolonia Touring

This morning we explore Kolonia, Pohnpei's coastal capital and the administrative heart of the Federated States of Micronesia. Built by Spain in 1887 as a colonial administrative centre with a protective fort, the town passed to Germany in 1899 and then to Japan during World War I. Unlike previous colonial occupiers, the Japanese brought thousands of settlers who eventually outnumbered indigenous populations on some islands. Today, remnants of those successive occupations linger in the streetscape — a church bell tower and cemetery from the German period, and the crumbling walls of the original Spanish fort. Wandering the quiet waterfront, we'll also see colourful local markets, government buildings, and the mix of island and colonial architecture that gives Kolonia its distinct character.

This afternoon we are welcomed into a celebration of Pohnpeian culture with a performance of traditional dance and song. Dance is central to Pohnpeian life, used to mark important occasions, tell ancestral stories, and honour community and chiefs. Performers in woven skirts and shell adornments move to the rhythm of wooden drums and chanting, with movements that reflect the ocean, navigation, and daily island life. The vibrant costumes, precise formations, and powerful vocals offer a genuine window into Pohnpeian traditions — something few visitors ever get to experience.

Overnight in Pohnpei.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Pohnpei & Nan Madol

Early this morning we visit Nan Madol, the ruins of an ancient city and Micronesia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inscribed in 2016 on both the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, this ceremonial centre comprises over 100 artificial islets off Pohnpei's southeast coast, constructed with basalt and coral boulder walls rising from the shallows of a coastal lagoon.

Built between 1200 and 1500 CE, these stone palaces, temples, tombs and residential domains formed the ceremonial heart of the Saudeleur dynasty. The scale and technical sophistication of the megalithic structures testify to the complex social and religious practices of the period. At its peak, Nan Madol housed over 1,000 people at a time when Pohnpei's entire population barely reached 25,000. The construction remains one of the Pacific's great mysteries — some basalt columns weigh 80 to 90 tonnes, yet have stood perfectly stacked for over a thousand years. UNESCO recognises Nan Madol as representing the Pacific's most completely preserved architectural ensemble of habitation, leadership and ceremony.

Overnight in Pohnpei.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Pohnpei: Nahlap Island

This morning we transfer by boat to Nahlap, a small private islet a short distance off the coast of Pohnpei. Fringed by white sand and surrounded by one of the healthiest reef systems in Micronesia, Nahlap offers a complete change of pace after the cultural intensity of the preceding days. The reef here is remarkably accessible -- snorkelers can enter directly from shore to find an immediate world of coral formations, reef fish, and the occasional sea turtle moving through the shallows. For those who prefer to stay dry, the island's shaded shore and clear turquoise water make for an equally restorative morning.

The afternoon is yours at leisure back on the main island — an opportunity to wander Kolonia's waterfront, browse the local market, or simply find a quiet spot and let Pohnpei's pace do its work. This evening we enjoy a final dinner together before tomorrow's departure.

Overnight in Pohnpei.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Pohnpei - Fly to Majuro, Marshall Islands

Fewer than 6,000 tourists make their way to the Marshall Islands each year; indeed this island nation is often rated one of the top 5 'least visited' countries in the world! Today this is also considered to be one of the most 'endangered' countries in the world due to climate change and flooding. The Marshall Islands may actually disappear in our lifetime.

The island of Majuro appears as a delicate necklace of land draped around a turquoise lagoon — some of it barely wider than the airport runway. This is a nation of aquamarine atolls sprinkled with coconuts, pandanus and breadfruit trees, where few other crops survive the salty sand, and where the Marshallese long ago turned to the sea, becoming expert fishers and navigators. One of the world's youngest nations, independent only since 1986, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has a total land area of just 70 square miles scattered across over 750,000 square miles of central Pacific Ocean. With few natural resources, the economy rests on a modest service sector, fishing, small-scale agriculture, and significant aid from the United States — a community-centred society making the most of a very slender geography.

Today we'll visit the Adele Museum, where authentic tools, artifacts and 19th century photographs trace the arc of Marshallese history and tradition. At the WAM (Waan Aelon in Majol) canoe house we learn about traditional Marshallese canoe construction — a vocational programme keeping alive the arts of boat building, sail-racing, navigation, woodworking and weaving. At the Tobolar Copra Processing Plant we see copra converted into coconut oil, soaps, body oil and press cake. The Peace Park Memorial, constructed by the Japanese government, commemorates the soldiers who fought and died in the Pacific during WWII.

Overnight in Majuro, Marshall Islands

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Majuro: Island Touring

There is a certain kind of travel day that cannot be planned, only experienced. Majuro specialises in these. As one of the least visited places on earth, this is a destination where the concept of a fixed itinerary softens at the edges — where a chance encounter can redirect the afternoon, and where the unscripted moment is often the one you'll remember longest.

This morning we have the option of getting out on the water, which in the Marshall Islands is less a leisure activity than a cultural imperative. The Marshallese are among the great seafaring peoples of the Pacific, and to be on the lagoon — even briefly — is to understand something essential about this place and its people. At the WAM canoe house we may again cross paths with Alson Kelen, the programme's founder and director, whose lifelong dedication to reviving traditional Marshallese navigation and boat-building has made him one of the most remarkable figures in contemporary Pacific culture. If the opportunity arises, don't let it pass — a conversation with Alson is the kind of thing that doesn't show up in any guidebook.

This afternoon we make our way to Laura Beach at the far western end of the atoll — the longest stretch of white sand on Majuro, and about as far from the urban bustle of the capital as it is possible to get on an island that is never more than a few hundred metres wide. En route we may stop to watch a weaving demonstration, one of those quietly absorbing activities that Majuro does without fanfare or tourist theatre. The beach at Laura is unhurried and lovely, and we linger as long as the light allows.

Overnight in Majuro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Majuro, Marshall Islands - Fly to Naoero

Today we fly to the Republic of Naoero (formerly Nauru) -- consistently ranked among the least visited countries in the world. Plunked in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, this tiny island nation covers just 21 square kilometres and is home to fewer than 12,000 inhabitants. Only one

airline, the national carrier, serves Naoero, and flights are few and far between; the island receives only a few hundred tourists a year. Most visitors are diplomats, politicians, development workers and contractors. We are something rather rarer.

Our routing today involves a few stops, and it will be a full day of travel before we arrive this evening. This is simply the nature of reaching one of the world's most isolated nations -- a point of geography that has kept Naoero almost entirely off the tourist map. Naoero is the smallest country in the world without a true capital, although Yaren -- the largest village — serves that function in practice. We check in and rest up, with a full day of exploration ahead tomorrow.

Overnight in Naoero.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Naoero Touring

This morning we commence touring the island. The Naoero experience is the exact opposite of typical South Pacific cliches -- there is nothing tourist-oriented here, and our time is partly dictated by airline schedules. What we find instead is a destination unlike any other: a place where extraordinary wealth and almost total ruin exist side by side, written into the landscape itself.

Naoero was a German colony in the late 19th century, then became a League of Nations mandate administered by Australia, New Zealand and the UK after WWI. Japanese occupation during WWII was followed by UN trusteeship until independence in 1968. Once the Pacific's richest nation through phosphate wealth, Naoero's economy peaked in the early 1980s before those reserves were almost entirely depleted. The central plateau is now a barren terrain of jagged limestone pinnacles -- a landscape so otherworldly it is known simply as "topside." When the phosphate was gone, so too was the wealth; by 2005 Naoero had become a failing state dependent on foreign assistance, a far cry from the prosperity of a generation earlier.

Inland we see the site of Australia's controversial offshore processing centre set against the stripped moonscape of topside; under a 2025 agreement, Naoero has also begun resettling people removed from Australia, a sign of how closely the island's fortunes remain tied to its larger neighbour. The picturesque Buada Lagoon -- the island's only body of fresh water, a slightly brackish lake ringed by dense vegetation and palm groves -- offers a striking contrast to the surrounding desolation. This afternoon we continue into Yaren, exploring Parliament House, government buildings and scattered WWII relics before finishing at Anibare Bay, home to the island's finest stretch of white sand beach.

Overnight in Naoero.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Naoero - Fly to Tarawa, Kiribati: South & North Touring

This morning we fly to Tarawa, capital of Kiribati — the 4th least visited country on earth and one of the most geographically improbable. Its 33 atolls amount to just 800 square kilometres of land scattered across 3.5 million square kilometres of ocean, making it the only nation falling into all four hemispheres. It is also among the most threatened — rising seas may render much of it uninhabitable within this century, and the government has already purchased land in Fiji as a contingency. We arrive at a place that is both ancient and urgently present.

Our early arrival gives us a full day. We begin with an orientation drive through South Tarawa — from Bouta down to Betio — the closest thing Kiribati has to a city tour. Our guide threads through a landscape of Japanese-funded hospitals, World Bank roads, and a string of brightly painted Catholic churches. At the Parliament buildings, constructed on reclaimed land and funded by fishing licence revenues, we learn that 42 elected members govern a nation of 100,000 people spread across the Pacific. The President's house, modest to the point of humility, says something worth noting.

Betio carries the Pacific War with particular intensity. In November 1943, one of the bloodiest 76-hour battles in Marine Corps history was fought on these beaches. Japanese guns still point seaward from concrete emplacements, and we walk Red Beach and Green Beach as our guide recounts what happened here. Bunkers, memorials, and the old Japanese Command Centre fill in the picture. On occasion visitors have encountered researchers from History Flight, quietly working to identify marines buried in common trench graves on these shores — the kind of unscripted encounter this tour occasionally delivers.

This afternoon we cross to North Tarawa, where the islets feel genuinely untouched and the arrival of outsiders is still something of an event. Children are curious and unguarded; nothing is for sale. We walk through village life as it actually is — women weaving pandanus mats, toddy

being cut, thatched roofing being prepared — before visiting a clam farm to learn about these vivid reef-dwelling creatures. Slow, observational travel at its best.

We return in time for dinner, followed by a performance of traditional I-Kiribati dance.

Overnight in Tarawa.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Tarawa Exploration

The Battle of Tarawa lasted just 76 hours in November 1943, but its consequences were felt across the entire Pacific campaign. The US Marines who stormed these beaches paid an extraordinary price to secure a strategically vital airstrip — over 1,000 Americans killed, nearly 2,300 wounded, and almost the entire Japanese garrison of 4,500 dead. The sites we visited yesterday tell part of that story. Today, Tarawa tells another one entirely.

This morning we make our way to the channel crossing for Abatao Island — a small adventure in itself. At high tide we board local boats in groups of five for the short crossing; at low tide, the more intrepid among us may simply wade across. Either way, arrival on Abatao feels like stepping off the map. We spend time here on a village walk, watching weaving demonstrations and visiting local homes — the kind of unhurried cultural exchange that no amount of planning can manufacture and that this tour, almost by accident, keeps delivering.

Lunch is served in a traditional Maneaba — the open-sided community meeting hall that sits at the heart of I-Kiribati village life — with views across the lagoon and a spread that reflects the generosity of island hospitality. The afternoon takes us out onto the water for a lagoon cruise to Tabitewea islet, where time is yours to swim, explore the beach, or simply do nothing in particular. A small shack dispenses refreshments; hammocks and shaded resting huts offer a quieter retreat from the group. Those who find unstructured time on tour a little disorienting may need a moment to adjust. Those who don't will find this one of the more restorative afternoons of the entire journey.

Overnight in Tarawa.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 Tarawa, Kiribati - Fly to Nadi, Fiji - Suva

Today we fly from Tarawa to Nadi, Fiji. The town of Nadi (pronounced 'Nandi') was established in 1947 as a "Government Station" on the higher grounds of Nadi, and established itself as Fiji's tourist hub in the 1960s. For most travellers Nadi is a transit point for other destinations in Fiji. Our overnight in Fiji is a necessary one in order to connect with our next flight from Suva to Tuvalu.

Our drive to Suva takes us along the southern coast to the east coast. Viti Levu is Fiji's largest island and home to 70% of the population (about 600,000). At 146 kilometres long and 106 kilometres wide, the island is comparable in size to the Big Island of Hawaii. In the realm of Pacific islands, it is exceeded in size only by New Caledonia.

* If you're wondering* why we don't deliberately spend more time in Fiji, we have found in the past that any time here was not considered a highlight by past travellers. That, plus the fact that the 'thrust' or theme of this tour is toward the more unknown, obscure islands, is why we do not emphasize Fiji in our promotion of the tour and treat it as simply a logistical point on our overall route.

Due to the possibility of an early flight tomorrow, and to give you a break from the group meal dynamic, dinner is on your own this evening.

Overnight in Suva.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast

Day 14 Suva, Fiji - Fly to Tuvalu: Island Exploration

This morning we fly from Fiji to the Polynesian nation of Tuvalu, one of the smallest and most remote countries in the world.

Extremely inaccessible and far off the travellers path, this tiny nation is one of the least visited countries in the world. Situated midway between Hawaii and Australia, on average fewer than 2,500 visitors make it here each year (and just a small percentage of those are true 'tourists'). It has often been said that if you want to disappear for a while, head to Tuvalu! Due to the country's remoteness, tourism here is not significant. This is one of the least populous states in the world (after the Vatican City and Nauru), and the second smallest country in the world in terms of population size, having only around 11,000 people in its entire population.

Many believe time is running out for Tuvalu due to rising sea levels threatening its low-lying atolls. The urgency of this threat has led to an unprecedented response: Australia has created a special climate migration treaty allowing up to 280 Tuvaluans to relocate permanently to Australia each year. This represents the world's first planned migration of an entire nation due to climate change. More than a third of Tuvalu's population has already applied for these climate visas, highlighting the very real fear that their homeland may soon become uninhabitable.

Funafuti is Tuvalu's capital and the location of its international airport. Approximately 4,000 people make up the entire population here, and life is 'easy going' and laid back. Only some small manufacturing facilities remind visitors of the modern world lingering beyond the horizon. Although Tuvalu literally means 'cluster of eight', there are 9 islands in the nation (six true atolls and three reef islands).

Upon arrival we will head to the local Community Hall (Falekaupule), which is located just nearby the airport. The traditional island meeting hall is where most important matters are discussed, and is often used for wedding celebrations and community activities. Here we are welcomed with a traditional dance, and we can enjoy a light snack before heading to our hotel.

After checking in and taking some time to refresh we will head out for a short afternoon tour of the island.

Overnight in Tuvalu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Tuvalu: Funafala Islet Visit

After breakfast we will head south along the island road and then take a boat across to the gorgeous little islet of Funafala, a tiny piece of land inhabited by just a handful of families. Our journey to this 'outer island' of the atoll will take approximately 1 hour +/- (depending on weather). Along the way we will pass the southern tip of Fongafale islet, and then several other islets, before the atoll curves as we head in a southeasterly direction towards the southern end of the atoll of Tuvalu. In the northern part of Tuvalu the islets are generally quite far one from another, but here in the south we find a string of islets with only small channels between them. Believe it or not, Funafala is the second most popular islet of the atoll.

This beautiful islet makes a nice day-trip escape. Several families from Funafuti relocated here for safety during WWII, and while most moved back after the war there is still a very small community settled here. The more traditional village lifestyle in this remote paradise gives us a taste of what life on the outer islands is like. We will have time to relax in the shade and/or walk around the white sandy beach, collect some beautiful shells to take home, and see the mangroves that are part of a coastal protection project.

We will enjoy a light lunch here before heading back to the capital island. You may have some free time this afternoon to explore on your own.

Overnight in Tuvalu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 Tuvalu - Fly to Nadi, Fiji

Today we fly from Tuvalu, back to Fiji where we have many connection options for your flight home.

Overnight in Nadi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 17 Departure from Nadi

Departure from Nadi.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast