



Palau – Black Pearl Explorer Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable. If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures Liveboard Fleet. Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerventures.com

THE VESSEL

At 46 meters (153 feet) in length, the M/Y *Black Pearl Explorer* is the epitome of luxury, intended for pampering at a level of service found nowhere else in Palau. She is stable, spacious, and offers smooth cruising. Accommodating up to 24 divers, this opulent vessel has 12 staterooms split into two master staterooms (13, 14 – Upper deck – Queen bed only), four main-deck Deluxe sea view staterooms (9, 10, 11, 12 – Main deck – 1 queen or 2 twin beds), and six lower-deck standard cabins (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 – twin beds only). All cabins feature air conditioning, LED TV, high-quality linens, pillows and towels, 220 V universal electricity sockets (except for UK plugs), reading lights, safe box and en-suite bathrooms (with shower, rinsing sink, eco-friendly soap & shampoo and hairdryer). All cabins have an ocean view, some with large windows, some with portholes. There is plenty of space on board, both on the dive deck and on the extensive main deck, which has an outdoor salon, a whirlpool, and an indoor dining area completed with a bar. On surface intervals, divers can unwind on the covered sun deck (with sun beds and comfortable benches), or simply relax in the upper-deck salon or simply relax on in the outside lounge and bar. M/Y *Black Pearl Explorer* is equipped with a small camera station that has plugs and USB ports for use by underwater photographers or videographers. The M/Y *Black Pearl Explorer* is specifically designed for divers looking for luxury and is a well-built vessel for cruising between dive sites. The waterline-level dive deck and the indoor gear station offer enough space for 24 divers, and at least 4 professional guides who will be in the water on each dive. All dives are made from 2 shaded aluminum tenders, each with a capacity of 12. Everything is customized for effortless diving. The M/Y *Black Pearl Explorer* is equipped with essential safety equipment including life jackets and life rafts, plus smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in all cabins, salons, and the engine room. A recompression chamber is also available on board, as well as a free satellite WiFi connection.

DIVING CONDITIONS

Palau is well known as one of the world's best and most complete diving destinations. Situated only 500 miles from both the Philippines and Indonesia, and influenced by 3 major ocean currents, this set of limestone and volcanic islands are rich with a huge marine biodiversity, including many reef sharks, manta rays, tunas, barracudas, bump head parrot fishes, red snappers, napoleon wrasses, turtles, and abundant soft and hard corals. In 2009, Palau created the world's first Shark Sanctuary and protects 600,000 square kilometers of ocean.

In Palau, you can enjoy wall diving, drop offs, drift dives (**reef hook is highly recommended, and even required on certain dives**, like Blue Corner, Ulong Channel or Peleliu Express), cave diving and big pelagic encounters. Palau lagoon also has several WWII wrecks (ships and planes) as it was the theater of much Pacific fighting between Japanese and American forces. Dive sites in Palau will amaze all divers! Diving in Peleliu is weather permitted.

Water temperature is usually warm at a range of 81-86°F (27-30°C) and a 3mm wetsuit will suffice all year. Unusually for a destination with nutrient-rich water and current, the visibility often seems endless and can reach 50m. Due to strong currents, this itinerary is best with a certification level of Advanced Open Water (or similar) with a minimum of 50 logged dives.

DIVING LOGISTICS

All dives aboard the M/Y *Black Pearl Explorer* are offered at scheduled times, up to 3 or 4 times daily (weather & itinerary permitting). Schedules must allow for adequate surface intervals and enable the vessel to travel to different locations. All dives are made from 2 shaded aluminum tenders (12 passengers each) and with at least 4 dive guides. Access to the tenders is easily done from the rear dive platform.

NITROX

Nitrox is available and included in the package price for certified Nitrox divers. Please read our [Nitrox](#) page for more information.

SNORKELERS/NON-DIVERS

Non-divers are welcome onboard Black Pearl Explorer and get a 10% onboard credit (to be used for extra services and drinks – cannot be used for marine park fees, harbor fees and crew gratuity – Unused value of the credit won't be refunded). They can spend time relaxing on the beautiful sundeck, in the whirlpool or in the indoor/outdoor lounge. They can also use our kayaks and stand-up paddle boards (when conditions are good).

Snorkeling cannot be offered onboard due to strict local regulations.



MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most SCUBA certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-old to a maximum depth of 40 feet (12 meters). Children 12-14 years old are restricted to 70 feet (21 meters). Explorer Ventures Fleet therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

- All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor. Minors must be accompanied onboard by a guardian at all times.
- This itinerary offers no diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; **diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-old are not available on this itinerary, and 12-14-year-old will not be able to dive all sites.** For this reason, a minimum age of 15 for divers is strongly suggested.
- A parent/legal guardian will be required to sign the liability release on behalf of a child under the age of 18.
- There are special requirements for minors traveling aboard any of the vessels. Please contact us for full details.

SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. We recommend that divers are certified as Advanced Open Water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization with at least 50 logged dives.
2. We recommend that divers log at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. A dive computer and SMB and are required.
6. Dive lights are required for night & wreck dives.
7. By local regulations, decompression and solo diving are not allowed under any conditions.
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, rebreathers, diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) and multi-cylinder configurations (except for a small pony bottle) may not be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.
10. Dive accident insurance (DAN, DiveAssure or equivalent) is required.

DIVE EQUIPEMENT LIST

The vessel provides tanks (fitting DIN and Yoke regulators), hard weights and weight belts for your use. In addition, there is a limited number of 15L tanks available for rent on board. SMB, reef hooks and Nautilus Lifeline devices are provided for free (when needed). If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have most of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment (and size) you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Any hand-signed PDF forms (only if not completed online)
- Medical form and physician clearance, if required.
- Certification cards
- Proof of DAN (or similar) dive accident insurance
- Diving logbook (strongly encouraged)
- Mask & Snorkel *
- Fins *
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Dive computer (required) *
- Buoyancy Control Device *
- Regulator w/alternate air source *
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)*
- Dive light *
- Tank Marker Lights (suggested for night dives)
- Shorty/ Full Wetsuit – 3 mm *
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety sausage/SMB (required). Can be provided for free.
- Reef hook (Required). Can be provided for free.

* Available for rent on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)

WHAT TO BRING

The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits, though at sea the winds can be fresh, and a light jacket may be necessary. Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. If you plan to extend your stay in Palau, then consider bringing walking shoes or sneakers. Please remember that the sun can be very strong. For this reason, please make sure you have sufficient strength ocean-friendly sunscreen. All bath towels, hand towels, and wash cloths are provided on board. Make sure you remember your Application/Liability Release, medical forms and certification card(s). If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, swimsuit, change of clothes, medications, and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these few items with you will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

Please note: importing, selling, possessing and using electronic cigarettes and vaping liquids is prohibited in the Republic of Palau.



MEALS

Meals are mostly served buffet style, in the main dining lounge. Our chef prepares delicious food, with Western and Asian influences. Aboard the *M/Y Black Pearl Explorer*, meals usually consist of lots of fresh vegetables, several mixed salads, rice, pasta, chicken, beef, lamb, fish, fruits and pastries. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, bacon, pancakes, cheese, cereals, salads, French toast, bread, pastries, and fresh fruits. One snack is served before the first morning dive and in the afternoon. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings, and foods are often unavailable in Palau, and it can also be very difficult for us to find low-fat, gluten-free, or soy products and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

COMMUNICATIONS & WI-FI

There may be limited or no access to mobile networks once the yacht sails into a remote area or open sea. However, *M/Y Black Pearl Explorer* offers SIM card services for you to purchase and use during the cruise (signal is good when the boat is near Koror). The vessel also has a satellite phone, in case of emergency. Free satellite Wifi connection is available onboard. Vital messages may be passed to guests by calling the operations office at 1.800.322.3577, ext 2 (US & Canada) or +1.307.235.0683 (Outside US & Canada). If delayed, call our operations office (see above) or our local operator: +680 488 4343 (Kate - Local office) or +680 7792299 (Ella – Land Manager – Whatsapp).

WHAT IS THE CURRENCY?

The local currency is the US dollar (USD). Euros (EUR) are also accepted onboard. In Koror and in hotels, most major credit cards are accepted.

ONBOARD CHARGES

Retail items, incoming & outgoing telephone calls, scuba instruction, rentals and drinks will be charged to your onboard bill. The bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa, MasterCard or cash (US Dollar or Euro). Credit cards are charged through Paypal, in US dollars, plus a 4% surcharge. Please check our [Onboard Charges](#) page).

American Express cards, personal or traveler's checks are not accepted. The crew gratuity must be paid in cash only.

CREW GRATUITY

Crew gratuities are not included in your package price. The crew works extremely hard, 7 days a week and many weeks at a stretch to provide the best possible service for guests. The standard for crew gratuity (if, of course, you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 200 USD or 10% of the regular package price per passenger. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! All the gratuities collected will be equally shared among the crew. Gratuities must be paid in cash.

ARRIVAL

Same-day transfers from/to your hotel within Koror & Malakal Islands are included in your cruise price. If you are staying overnight in Koror, please make sure that your application form has included your hotel information. If you need additional transfers from/to the airport, a fee will be collected with your final onboard bill (\$25 per person, per way - please check our [Onboard Charges](#) page). Please let us know your needs in advance and the crew can make the necessary arrangements. The usual meeting points are organized as follows:

- Airport: Guests arriving at the required airport on the check-in day will be picked up by a representative holding a sign of *M/Y Black Pearl Explorer*. The meeting point is at the main exit, immediately after luggage collection.
- Hotel or Resort: Guests who are coming from a hotel in the city can be picked up by a representative of *M/Y Black Pearl Explorer*. The meeting is in the main lobby or at the reception of the hotel, usually around 3 or 3:30pm.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Check-in usually starts at 4:00 pm on the day of boarding; check-out starts at 8:00 am on the day you disembark. Each itinerary is set on a day-by-day basis, depending on the sea conditions, the attendance at each dive site, the fish activity, and the daily logistics, according to the Captain's and Cruise Director's discretion. Your safety is our priority. While we cannot control factors that may affect the planned itinerary, we will do our best to offer alternate solutions in order for you to get the maximum experience out of the beauty of Palau Islands. There may be up to 4 dives per diving day (3 dives per day, 1 sunset/night dive - whenever possible). A diving day schedule will look as follows:

- Hot beverages and light breakfast before Dive 1 briefing.
- Dive 1, then breakfast and surface interval before Dive 2 briefing.
- Dive 2, then lunch and surface interval before Dive 3 briefing.
- Dive 3, then afternoon snacks and beverages.
- Dive 4 briefing (if there is a sunset/night dive scheduled).
- Dive 4 then dinner and short briefing on next day's itinerary.

EXCITING



FLIGHT DELAY

If you miss your flight and are not able to make it to the *M/Y Black Pearl Explorer* or have any other delays, please call the USA booking office at 1.800.322.3577, ext 2 (US & Canada) or +1.307.235.0683 (Outside US & Canada) or our local operator: +680 488 4343 (Kate - Local office) or +680 7792299 (Ella – Land Manager – Whatsapp).

RECOMMENDED HOTELS

As a resort town, Palau has a large variety of very good hotel/resort values. Here are some suggested resorts:

- [Palau Pacific Resort](#)
- [The Cove Resort](#)
- [Aliibamu Resort Carolines](#)
- [Palau Central Hotel](#)



MORE INFOS ON TRAVELING TO PALAU

Palau is officially the *Republic of Palau*. Learn more about the country by visiting the tourism website below.

- [Palau Visitors Authority](#)
- [Palau Entry Form](#) (must be completed 72 hours or less prior your arrival time in Palau)
- [Palau Government's Official Website](#)
- [Palau International Coral Reef Center & Marine Sanctuary](#)

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard the vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus light snacks available before the first dive of the day and afternoon snacks
- 3-4 dives daily – for a total of up to 18 dives
- Use of tanks, weights, and belts
- Air fills and Nitrox for Nitrox certified divers
- Hot beverages and biscuits
- Same-day hotel transfers within Koror or Malakal
- Use of kayaks and stand-up paddle boards
- 10% GST

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Hotel accommodations
- Flights to/from Koror
- Airport transfers and optional land tours.
- Rental, instruction, and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Dive accident insurance (required)
- Trip insurance (recommended)
- Special drinks such as cocktails, beers and other alcohol (wine and spirits), sodas, and juices in cans. If you wish to bring your own alcohol, please note that it may incur a corkage fee: \$20 per bottle of wine and \$2 per can of beer, per Palau's universal guidelines
- [Current onboard charges](#) and [Departure & Green Tax](#)

**Have a wonderful trip onboard
Black Pearl Explorer!**

EXPLORER VENTURES
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