

Welcome to CHUUK

A Guide
to the
Historic
Wrecks
and
Island

Attractions

- Best Wrecks
- Island Maps
- Activities
- History

Courtesy Chuuk
Visitors Bureau

CHUUK



VISITORS BUREAU

Welcome

The many islands within this huge atoll are crowned with natural beauty. The outer barrier reef is punctuated with idyllic sandspits dotted with coconut palms. The high islands in the central lagoon rise into the blue Micronesian skies. The word “Chuuk” means “high mountains” in the Chuukese language.

Chuuk State, which is one of four states in the Federated States of Micronesia, consists of 290 islands with 250 islands uninhabited. The islands have natural beauty and most still display a traditional lifestyle.

The main population area is within the vast Chuuk Lagoon (sometimes called Truk Lagoon) where the vestiges of WWII attract divers from around the world. The huge inner lagoon is famously known for the “World’s Greatest Wreck Diving.” The islands were heavily attacked by the US in the Second World War then bypassed and blockaded by the Allies. The sunken hulls of Japanese ships remain along with ruined weapons and fortifications on land.

Many divers feel it has the best collection of shipwrecks and WWII era airplanes in the world. The hulks have been transformed into amazing “shipreefs”, holding the very best of the undersea world and maritime history at one site. Incredible corals in a kaleidoscope of colors and shapes fed by warm, clear waters attract divers worldwide. The reefs also are home to a great variety of fish and corals.

Visitors can see the islands and there are many “picnic islands” that are great for day trips and relaxing. Some even have facilities to overnight under the stars.

Islands & Culture



Chuukese people enjoy meeting and talking to island visitors. It is customary to offer a guest a drink, which may be in the form of a freshly picked and cut coconut. The Chuukese also have a major market in Weno where fruits and other

fresh foods may be found and tasted. Say "Ran Anim" (Hello) and enjoy the easy-going island lifestyle of the lagoon. Traditional life can be viewed as men pound breadfruit and women weave baskets from coconut palms.



Chuuk's WWII History



It was still dark the morning of February 17, 1944, when Japanese detected the approach of a large grouping of planes. Alert was sounded but it was too late. They had been on watch for over two weeks and had decided no attack was imminent. The pilots and troops in Truk had been partying the night before thinking the previous US Liberator plane sighting was a false alarm. Few troops were battle ready that early morning.

At sunrise, the Japanese were shocked. One hundred American planes descended on the lagoon. They were followed by nine more waves of planes for a total of 450. Japanese intelligence failed. The Japanese could not believe so many carrier-based planes had arrived. Seventy-seven Japanese planes scrambled to the Truk defense, but 37 were lost before ever

engaging in battle.

The results were devastating. Runways, people and planes were destroyed on Eten, the main air base. Dauntlesses, Hellcats and Avenger torpedo bombers filled the skies and emptied their loads. By noon, the Japanese defenses were weakened considerably.

The attacks continued and no planes countered because they were either damaged or unable to take off because the runways were filled with craters.

In two days, Truk was shaken and broken. Four-hundred-plus planes were useless, over 50 ships were sunk or sinking, support and communications facilities were destroyed or in flames and thousands of Japanese troops (and Chuukese) were left behind without food, or support. Isolated, the remaining soldiers waiting in strife for war's end.

20 Great Chuuk Lagoon Wreck Dives

Divers come from around the world to visit the WWII shipwrecks scattered around this vast lagoon's sea floor. Here we list the most accessible and most popular wrecks that divers strive to see during a week of scuba in Chuuk.



1) Shinkoko Maru - This ship is without a doubt one of the most popular and beautiful wrecks in the Lagoon. It is one ship everyone should see as it has just about everything the wreck diver hopes for: artifacts, great coral growth, excellent fish life and a manageable diving range. The numerous sea anemones and beautiful soft corals show why many of these wrecks are sometimes called "shipreefs".



The Shinkoko has an intact bowgun that is relatively shallow. Currents roll over the wreck attracting sharks



and other bigger fishes like dogtooth tuna.



2) Fumizuki - This upright ship is destroyer and is close to Shinkoko Maru. It is much narrower than the large freighters normally dived on. It has nice marine growth. Diver like ti visit this ship for a unique entry in their logs as destroyers are few and others are very deep.

3) I-169 Submrine -This submarine is also a unique entry into the logbook. It actually sank when trying to avoid being hit. One of the crew left a hatch cover open in the haste to hide. It is too narrow to penetrate but has some maine life and sits on a sandy bottom.



4) Heian Maru - Divers can actually easily see the ship's name on the front of the Heian. It was first made famous long ago in a Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau TV segment. The ship sits on the port side and holds all kinds of interesting artifacts. This ship is the biggest

wreck in the lagoon. Divers can visit the twin props at the stern and see the props of aerials bombs while swimming along the deck areas. Periscopes line the passageway of this big supply ship. The bridge is open.



20 Wreck Dives



5) Kenschō Maru - The ship apparently went down after being struck by a torpedo at the first hold. Many of the artifacts are still intact on the Kenschō as is the bowgun. It has a very accessible engine room as the main skylights are open. Bottles and plates are common. The davits are adorned in amazing soft corals.



6) Kiyosumi Maru -The Kiyosumi sits on its port side. The holds are open and the marine life along the starboard side is nice. Also look for resting sea turtles. Hold Two has remnants of bicycles. The engine room on the ship is wide open. The aft props are huge.

7) Emily Seaplane, Zero - Eten Island was built up using forced labor and was a major airstrip for the Japanese. The waters west of the old runway hold a number of planes including a Zero that can be seen on snorkel. An Emily Seaplane is upside down but has wings intact.



8) Fujikawa Maru -This, like the Shinkoko, is among the most popular wrecks for its combination of artifacts, beautiful corals and abundant marine life. A resident school of bigeye jacks can be found at the shallow bridge area. Inside the

holds are such items as Zero wings, an intact fighter fuselage and machine guns. The bowgun is decorated in soft corals and surrounded by fusilers. The bridge area has partially collapsed but bathtubs and washing areas can still be seen. It is a must-see wreck for every visitor and night dives are great.



9) Sankisan Maru - While the blast that led to this ship's demise left only three holds, the bow and lots of mangled metal, it is one of the best ships for coral growth with beautiful cargo booms, davits and an intact bow mast with swirling marine life. Divers marvel at the thousands of bullets scattered through a large part of the first hold. Truck frames, a machine gun, plane cowlings and small bottles are also found.



Where in the world is Chuuk?



Chuuk State is part of the Pacific country called The Federated States of Micronesia, located in the North Central Pacific. Chuuk comprises many islands within this state. The main population area and tourist destination is known as Chuuk Lagoon, which holds Weno Island, the state's capitol. Prior to WWII, Chuuk was overseen by Japan and was a main Naval base for that country's Pacific operations. This is why there are so many war era shipwrecks here now. Chuuk can be reached from all major Asian and Oceania airports. It is a beautiful tropical destination full of history and culture.

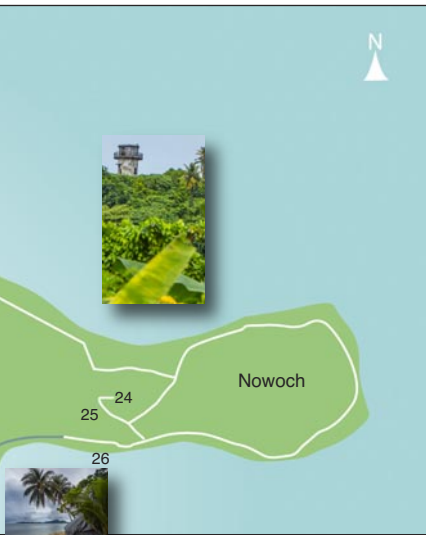


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Weno Points of Interest

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Blue Lagoon Resort | 13) Japanese Memorial |
| 2) Truk Stop Hotel | 14) Post Office |
| 3) Bank of FSM/ATM | 15) High Tide Hotel |
| 4) Bank of Guam | 16) Chuuk Int'l Airport |
| 5) Police Headquarters | 17) Chuuk Visitors Bureau |
| 6) Shigeto Store | 18) L-5 Hotel |
| 7) Chuuk State Hospital | 19) ATM/Telecom |
| 8) Pharmacies/Clinic | 20) Kurassa Hotel |
| 9) State & Chuuk Govt Bldg | 21) Falos Island |
| 10) Nefo Cave | 22) Rachel Beach Resort |
| 11) Local Markets | 23) Anna's Beach Resort |
| 12) Commercial Port | 24) Xavier High School |
| | 25) Sapuk Japanese Lighthouse |
| | 26) LavaLava Beach |



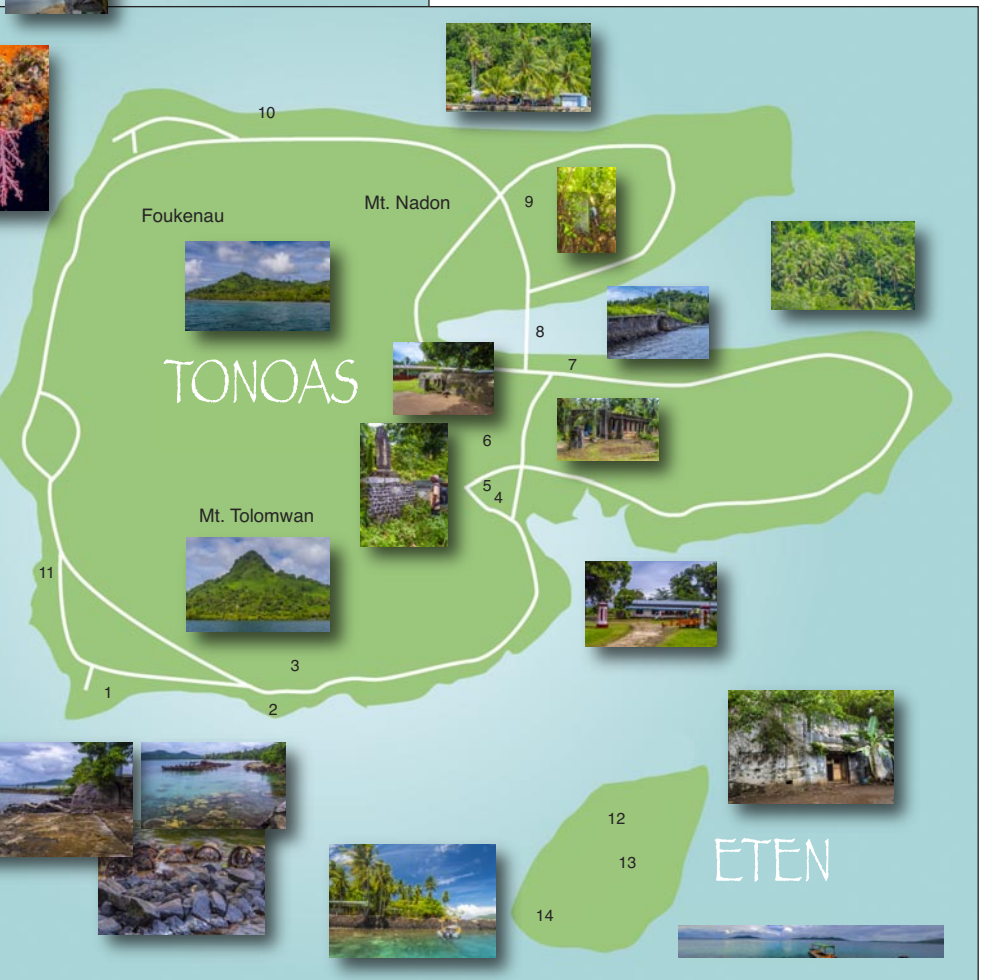
Tonoas Points of Interest

- 1) SeaPlane Jetty/Moorings/Torpedoes
- 2) Seaplane Base
- 3) Fuel area
- 4) Municipal Bldg
- 5) Japanese Memorial
- 6) Old Radio Station
- 7) Hospital
- 8) Japanese Causeway/Mangroves

- 9) General's Cave & Radio Tower
- 10) Submarine Base
- 11) Cannaries

Eten Island Points

- 12) WWII Runway area
- 13) Bombed Out Officer Quarters & Support Bldgs
- 14) Epinum Rest Area





Chuuk's main tourism attraction is scuba diving the coral-laden WWII shipwrecks found in the inner lagoon. Shown on the map are 20 of the most popular wrecks and other sites that divers like to see during a week of Chuuk diving. Approximate dive site areas are marked by dive flags on the map.

- 1) Shinkoko Maru
- 2) Fumizuki
- 3) I - 169 Submarine
- 4) Heian Maru
- 5) Kensho Maru
- 6) Kiyosumi Maru
- 7) Emily Seaplane/Zero
- 8) Fujikawa Maru
- 9) Sankisan Maru
- 10) Gosei Maru

- 11) Rio de Janiero Maru
- 12) Hoki Maru
- 13) San Francisco Maru
- 14) Momokawa Maru
- 15) Nippo Maru
- 16) Patrol Boat 34
- 17) Hoyo Maru
- 18) Yamagiri Maru
- 19) Betty Bomber
- 20) South Pass

20 Wreck Dives

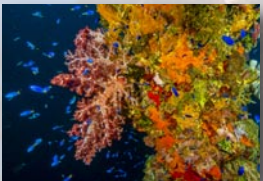
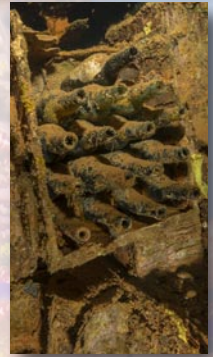


10) Gosei Maru - This ship sits down south near Uman and has quite shallow aft props and then rests cascading down a slope with a bent bow sitting on the sand past 100 feet. The water here tends to be clear most of the time and corals thrive harboring clouds of beautiful blue damselfish and restless goatfish shoals. The holds are open and divers can weave down the slope exploring items like bottles and the remnants of the engine room.



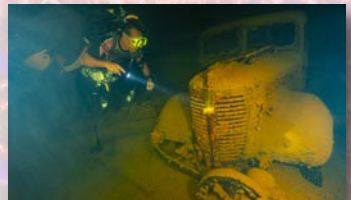
11) Rio de Janeiro Maru - The "Rio" lies on the starboard side and is full of marine life with dogtooth tuna, bigeye jacks, batfish and sea turtles commonly seen. The aft hold is a popular stop

with many cases of old bottles and even a case of guns found inside. Local guides have brought some beautiful plates and bowls out for people to see. This was a former passenger ship before the war and is a rather elegant looking vessel.

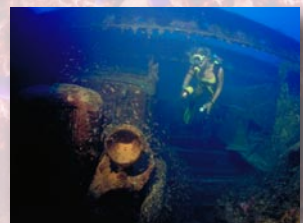


12) Hoki Maru -The Hoki is another ship, like Sankisan, whose damage reflects a catastrophic blast and not much of the ship remains. But what is there is fascinating, albeit a bit on the edge for sport diving. The aft hold is an undersea parking lot with a jeep,

bulldozer, road roller and intact trucks. The next hold has an assortment of bombs, mines and bottles. The mast is still intact and is stunning with a resident batfish school and soft corals.



13) San Francisco Maru -The San Francisco is a super deep wreck but many like to do quick bounce dives just to see the cargo that includes tanks, trucks and a forward hold famous for its rows on mines and aerial bombs. The upper reaches are still deep but nicely adorned and surrounded by marine life.

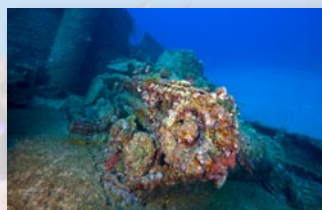


20 Wreck Dives

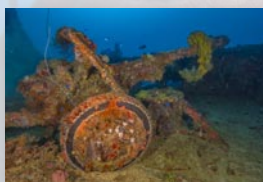


14) Momokawa Maru - The Momokawa is a nice medium-range dive with items in the holds and good coral cover. This ship has brilliant yellow tubastrea coral growth on the upper kingposts. It lays on its port side. Looks for truck remnants and shells forward.

15) Nippo Maru - This popular deep dive offers a lot of deck items behind the bridge like field artillery guns still pointed at the sky. The bridge has an intact ship's wheel stand and compass. There's a tank and truck frame resting along the forward port deck. This ship sits



in a current area and sharks, eagle rays and barracuda schools are found aft and around the masts and cargo booms. These also have very nice coral growth. This is a fascinating ship and many divers choose to repeat a dive here.



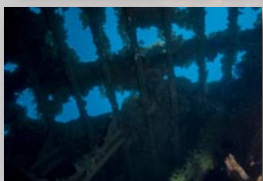
16) Patrol Boat 34 - Sometimes done as a snorkeling venture, this shallow ship sits off west Tonoas. Some of the aft areas have collapsed a bit but the stern and bow are intact and full of marine life as well as hard and soft corals. Big propellers remain intact and adorned. As it is shallow, photographers can spend a long time here being creative. It is one of the oldest ships here.

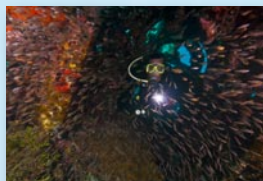


17) Hoyo Maru - Part of the aft of the Hoyo Maru actually sits out of the water. It is upside down and the hull is an amazing hard coral reef. The bow rests at 110 feet. It has a large clearance midship to swim under the vessel. Cream-colored crinoids appear at night.



18) Yamagiri Maru - The Yamagiri rests on its port side. The first hold most divers head for is hold five. This is where the large shells are located. They are impressively long, perhaps a yard in length, and tumbled together. The depth here is 100 feet. The bridge is very colorful.





19) Betty Bomber - This plane is a fun dive and not very deep. Parts of the plane, like the upright landing gear, have beautiful soft corals and tons of tiny fish. The fuselage can be carefully entered. Two coral-covered engines sits in the sand a bit away from the wreckage.



20) South Pass - For divers wondering what the reef life is like on the outer walls of this vast atoll, South Pass is a popular dive as it is very sharky and has lots of nice coral growth. In calm season, nearby Kuop Atoll Point outside the pass can also be a great fish school dive.



Conservation - Preserving the Shipwrecks

Many factors combine to cause the deterioration of a wreck including the environment, wave and current action, the circumstances of its sinking, removal of sessile marine growth, imprudent anchoring and diver pressure. Divers can do a few things to hasten slow the deterioration process:

1. Take care when diving - After a ship sinks and the paint decays, marine animals settle on the ship. Their presence retards corrosion and decay. Watch fins, bubbles, hands and tank so as to not break coral and marine life.

2. Cautious Anchoring - Imprudent anchoring also damages sessile growth

and speeds corrosion at the point where the anchor is repeatedly placed. Ask your guide to moor only on the buoys.

3. Stop pilferage - This at least helps maintain the historical significance of a ship. Look but don't touch. Take a photo but not a historical souvenir.

4. Respect marine life - Do not take marine life from the wrecks. Fishing on the wrecks as well as spearfishing on the ships is not allowed. Leave shells and other creatures where they have naturally settled.

In reality, it may be there is very little that divers can actually do, but every little bit helps to slow the deterioration.

Other Activities



Chuuk is a “diver’s haven” as the state license plates say, but there are many other things to do.

Land Tours

As you might guess, there are many historical sites on Chuuk, mostly related to the world war. Your hotel can provide tours around Weno and also to the other islands to see the war remnants, overlooks, beaches and catch a glimpse into life Chuukese daily life.

Kayaking

This sport is relaxing. One can just explore the coasts or even try a hand at fishing from a kayak. Veteran kayakers can make a day of it and visit other islands.

Birding

For those who know what they are looking for, going after winged creatures

with binoculars or camera can be very rewarding. Beautiful kingfishers, honeyeaters, herons and lots of other birds make up the 200 or so species found in Micronesia. The Chuuk greater white-eye lives in the mountain jungles of Tol. Tol's terrain is its sole habitat.

Fishing

The fishing is good, especially outside the lagoon. Yellowfin tuna, albacore, marlin, wahoo, mahi-mahi and rainbow runners are just some of the blue water fish that can be found off the shores of these islands. The diving services can arrange a trip or even a dive and an afternoon of trolling.

Camping

The tiny islets of the lagoon can be the perfect places to hear the waves and watch the Milky Way. Cameoing in Chuuk is an unforgettable experience.

Practicalities



Climate

The FSM enjoys a tropical climate, with relatively even, warm and humid temperatures throughout the year. The climate in the FSM averages 80° F year round, with highs in the high '80s and lows in the mid-70s a night.

Language

English and Chuukese are the official language of the Chuuk government and of commerce. English is commonly spoken and understood. Many elderly people are fluent in Japanese as Chuuk was a Japanese possession prior to WWII.

Getting There

Most visitors to Chuuk arrive on United Airlines daily by way of Guam or Hawaii. Air Niugini has flights arriving now on a regular basis and connecting with nearby Pohnpei, the FSM Capitol.

Shopping

The most sought after artform in Chuuk, next to the T-shirt, are undoubtedly the carvings. These can be found at many small stores and a few of the larger ones. Carved heads of ancient warriors, sea turtles, beautiful canes and lots of other clever wooden figures can be found.

For more Information, contact:

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CHUUK HOTELS

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Truk Stop Hotel

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Web: www.trukstop.com

High Tide Hotel

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E-mail:

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L-5 Hotel

Tel: 330-7048

E-mail: admin@l5hotel.fm

Kurassa Hotel

Tel: 330-4415

E-mail:

Kurassahotel@yahoo.com

Runway Inn

Tel: 330-2883

E-mail: lei_side@yahoo.com

Falos Resort

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E-mail: kachutosy@hotmail.com

Fenomu (Kimiuo Aurora)

E-mail: suenaga@mail.fm

Web:

www.trukoceanservice.com

JEEP Island

The Blue Lagoon Resort

Island Hideaway.

<http://www.jeepisland.com/>

Picnic Islands

Pisar Beach Resort

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RESTAURANTS

Blue Lagoon Restaurant

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BS Café

Tel: 330-4191

Truk Stop Restaurant

Tel: 330-0281

High Tide Restaurant

Tel: 330-4644

Rose Garden Restaurant

Tel: 330-7351

Lei-Side Restaurant

Tel: 330-6727

Oriental Restaurant

Tel: 330-6565

Café Lauffer

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