

A must-read for anyone heading to Palau and/or Solitude One for the first time

The official **languages** of Palau are English and Palauan

Time Zone: GMT +9

Climate: Tropical Climate with an annual mean temperature of 27°C (82°F). Rain is frequent between the months of July and October. However, Palau is not referred to the Land of Rainbows for nothing. Periodic flash rain showers are frequent throughout the year.

Water Temperature, like most tropical countries, varies between 27°C and 29°C (81°F to 84°F) with thermoclines due to the ocean trenches that surround Palau.

Currency is in US dollars. Credit cards are widely accepted in Palau (except AMEX and Diners). Solitude One also accepts **credit card** (Visa/Master Only, Applicable Facility Fee) to accept payments on board for any incidentals incurred during your stay. Please inform the cruise directors at least one night before your disembarkation that you would like to pay these expenses with a credit card.

On land, **electricity and plug sockets** are the same as in the USA (Single phase 60 cycles, 115/230 volts AC). However, universal sockets (EU, USA, AUS, UK, CN, etc) are used on board Solitude One including USB charging outlets (1Amp) – see image.

Duty-Free Allowance – 1 litre of alcohol and no more than 20 sticks of cigarettes or 170g (6 ounces) of tobacco. No fresh or thawed food (such as fruit, meat, vegetables or seafood) is allowed to be brought into Palau. You might be charged with a fee for such items to be disposed of if you are found to have them with you when you enter Palau.

Postal service is provided by USPS (United States Postal Services). All postages originating from the US to Palau are considered local service. State code for Palau is PW and the zip code is 96940. If you are planning to send something to Solitude, please go to the [contact us page](#) for our delivery addresses.

Diving – We have Enriched Air Nitrox, and support side-mount too. Please refer to page 4 for more information.



On your **Palau Immigration arrival form**, indicate “MV Solitude One” as your address in Palau (*section 9*)

What Do I Need To Pay On Board?

Your cruise package essentially excludes Equipment Rentals, Satellite Communications, EANitrox, Alcohol, Laundry Service, Marine Park Fees and Local district administration permits. Marine Park Fees and Local Barangay permits will be collected on check-in. You will pay the other incidental expenses at check-out. Here is the list of what you need to pay for your trip in Palau (data as of 30 January 2018):

- ⚡ State Cabin/Room Tax of 10USD per Day (i.e. 8D7N = 80USD, 11D10N = 110USD) (Definitely, pay on board at welcome briefing)
- ⚡ Peleliu Diving Permit 30USD (Ages 6 or older) + Koror Diving Permit (Ages 7 or older) 50USD = 80USD (pay on board at welcome briefing. You can use an existing permit if it is still valid till the last day of your itinerary)
- ⚡ Jelly Fish Lake and Rock Island Permit = 50USD (only if you want to go on this tour. May be closed to Public at the time of your visit)
- ⚡ Palau Departure Airport or Seaport Tax = 50USD (For Air Tickets purchased before 2018 - Pay on your departure) or 100USD (For Air Tickets purchased from 2018 which will then be priced into your Ticket)

Do we have WIFI? Do you have internet? Yes We Do!

Solitude One provides internet access on board via Satellite using VSAT Services. To access the internet, our guests may pre-purchase data packages and log in via our WIFI Network Hotspot on board.



Available Data Packages are USD20/100Mb, USD40/300Mb, 70USD/200mb and 100USD/300Mb.

You are strongly recommended to manage your device settings (our crew will be able to assist) whilst using satellite internet to ensure that you do not waste precious data traffic, as you can already expect that the charges for satellite internet are significantly costlier than what you would be accustomed to paying for the internet.



Tips on using satellite internet with your devices

Keep your messages short. Use short hand, or acronyms. A longer message means more data.

Disable Auto-Updates, Auto Sync on your devices.

If your device has such a setting, mark our on board WIFI SSID as metered (or similarly referred to as metered so that your device knows that although you are on WIFI, your data is precious and limited)

Please note that the satellite communications are an additional facility provided by an external source. Solitude is not responsible for any consequences resulting from the use or the lack of use of satellite communications including hardware failure.

As connectivity can be affected by weather and is also reliant on a 3rd party service provider (VSAT K-Band), Solitude One, her crew and management are NOT responsible for any inconveniences and/or loss of income, data or information which may arise due to the lack of the service, partially or completely.

Phone Calls, SMS and Emails



When out of local mobile signal coverage, Solitude One's onboard VSAT satellite communication system will be your only option if the need to make or receive calls is urgently required.

Guests will be charged for all incoming/outgoing calls and messages: US \$3 per 60 seconds block.



Voice Call: **+65 67158903** (even though it is a Singapore land line, the system is still using a VSAT Satellite band to relay the phone calls)

Buy a Local Sim Card? Yes, You Can



Yes, you can. We do not sell them on board. You will need to purchase in person in Koror as you will need to register your particulars on purchase. However, even with the recent 3G/4G introduction, you still need to have proper mobile signal for the connectivity.

Currently, Palau does not have support for international roaming except Philippines, China, USA and Taiwan (to the best of our knowledge).

As mentioned, Palau's remoteness also makes voice calls much costlier than usual which is the reason why most people in Palau opt to use SMS instead. Making overseas calls from your local Palau number is also very costly. For more current information on internet and telecommunication services in Palau, visit the PNCC website - www.palaunet.com

Entertainment

Our WIFI SSID on board is also used for our media entertainment library (Powered by PLEX Media Server) from which you will be able to stream/download what we have in our library to watch/listen to. Install PLEX app (RECOMMENDED: Android, Windows or IOs) or [any popular UPNP media player](#) app that will read/discover DLNA devices and you are all set!



Do you have Nitrox? Yes, We Do!

Although the standard mix for EAN is 32%, on most dives we have made an educated decision to provide in the proximity of EAN30 instead, to allow a safer M.O.D. EAN 30% would provide some degree of depth buffer if you are caught especially in a down current, but will still allow ample extended length of bottom time (compared to normal air). EANitrox prices are as follows: US \$8 per dive OR US \$135 for 8 days/7 nights Palau itinerary, with subsequent additional use US \$20 per day.



DIN or International? We have both.

15L/100cuft Scuba Cylinders?

Yes we have. It is an additional US \$8 per cylinder per diving day.

Side-mount Diving?

Additional 12L/80cuft cylinder with air: US \$10 per cylinder per diving day

Additional 12L/80cuft cylinder with EANitrox: US \$28 per cylinder per diving day. Whole Trip Use discount of 10% applies.

Rebreather Diving? Twins?

Yes, we do support Rebreather Diving but we do not have Twin-Tanks. Our support is only on oxygen filling (US \$0.06 per litre) with a booster pump on board. Your dive profile must also follow with the other recreational divers in consideration for other guests' comfort and safety. Complete support (including Twin Tank configurations) can be accommodated for full charters. For full charters, profiles are of course not limited to our standard recreational limits. Do note that the price of helium, if required, can be costly.

How to get to Palau

Being remote with small population (under 25,000) and tourist arrivals averaging between 140,000 to 160,000, Palau does not have daily flight service from one major airport. That said, with 5 gateways to Palau, there are enough options to consider depending on where you travel from. The 5 (major) gateways are Manila, Taipei, Narita, Guam and Seoul and their schedules (gateway to Palau sector) as of October 2016 are:-

Manila United Airlines – Every Tuesdays and Fridays

Taipei China Airlines – Every Wednesday and Saturdays

Narita Delta Airlines - No-Stops Every Tuesdays and Saturdays and United Airlines – One-Stop (Guam). Refer to Guam.

Guam United Airlines – Every day EXCEPT Saturday. USA Visa is required even on transit. **Seoul** Asiana and Korean Air – Thursdays and Sundays

Please refer to the airlines or your travel agent for exact flight's schedule and availability.

Travelling to Palau – Special Mention: Manila Airport

Updated on 19 Dec 2017

On our web page we listed the various ways to get to Palau, we now share with you some tips to prepare yourselves to have a smoother journey, especially when transiting through Manila.

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport is the most challenging airport to transit. Unlike most international airports, ease of moving between terminals is non-existent in Manila. The flight to Palau from Manila with United Airlines leaves from Terminal 1. You are encouraged to choose an airline that arrives into Manila at Terminal 1 if Manila is your choice to transit to get to Palau.

If you find yourself arriving in terminal 2 or 3, assuming there are no delays in your arrival, you MUST leave yourself at least 3 hours (4 if possible) of transit time (the traffic in Manila is really special). Also, you will have NO alternative but to collect your luggage and go through immigration/customs. There are two ways to get to Terminal 1:

1. **RECOMMENDED** – There is a NEW service called the Terminal Transfer Service (Bus). Please ask for directions if you do not see the sign to where you should go to take that transfer bus which is free of charge. This bus though not a short frequent service (30 mins interval) is your best way to get to your terminal. Do queue because the bus is limited space missing one will mean a 30 minutes wait. Make sure you ask the warden or bus driver to ensure that you are getting on the right bus.
2. Taxi. Look for the yellow taxi (metered & airport accredited) counter and inform the counter staff that you are going to Terminal 1. Terminal 3 is the furthest from Terminal 1

and, depending on traffic; it can take you between 60mins to 90mins (for what should be a 30minute drive). Terminal 2 is the closest but can also take 30mins to 60mins due to traffic.

Depending on traffic and which terminal you are travelling from, your taxi fares can vary (yellow taxi meters are a little more expensive than the regular white taxis) but generally it should not be more than 250PHP - make sure they have their meter ON! If you are travelling in groups, be prepared to only fit 2 of you in one taxi with your luggage.

If you are arriving into Terminal 1,

1. do give yourself at least 2 hours of transit time
2. do go to the transfer desk on your arrival and inform them that you are transiting. Once you do that, there is a chance you do not need to go through immigration and customs in Manila, they will assist you to collect your bags at the arrival baggage carousel and check you in for your flight to Palau at the transfer desk.

If you don't find yourself in this fortunate situation, you will then need to proceed to clear immigration (write "transit" on your immigration form), collect your baggage, go through customs, head to the departure hall on the top floor and go through the usual check-in process.

Customs – Transiting in Manila

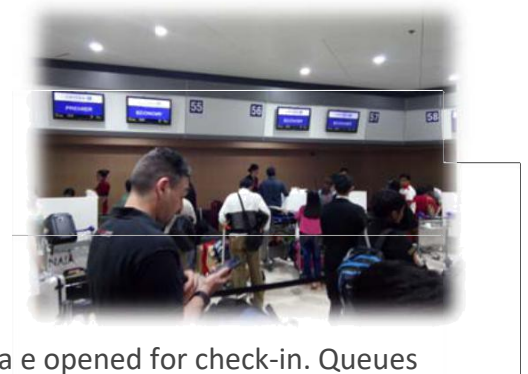
If the customs authority for any reason want to impose "importation" tax on you for bringing any item that you are going to Palau with, do insist to them that you are only transiting, you will need to show them your outbound ticket. If they somehow make it difficult for you, just inform the customs that you can leave it with them in their office and collect it back when you come back into the departure concourse.

Checking In (Manila Airport)

Have your outbound ticket from Palau and Philippines ready. For some reason (I hope), check-in procedure in Manila (and in Palau) loves to ask for you to show your outbound ticket. On Palau side when leaving Palau to transit in Manila, they will even ask you for the outbound flight of the Philippines. Have all your tickets printed for your own convenience.

Do not be shy to stand in the queue even before the counters are opened for check-in. Queues will start to form as early as 45mins before the counters are scheduled to open (Same as the other airlines in Terminal 1). You'd be better off waiting in the departure concourse with a drink then standing in a very long line waiting to check in. Please note that there are no restrooms in the departure check-in hall (there are 2 outside of the departure check in hall but you will need to re-enter the hall via the security checks again).

United Airlines check-in is very strict with a weight limit of 50lbs/23kg per bag, so pack your bags right the first time! The hand luggage policy is a little more generous with the weight. Do make sure you get the most current information prior to your departure with the airline.



Airline/airport security in Manila can sometimes make things difficult when it comes to check-in/hand luggage items. Ensure that you review United Airlines' policies and in fact, have a printed copy to show proof that you have checked and your items are not restricted. From hearing our guests' experiences, common items that may bring about a debate are batteries for recreational drones and scrubbers for rebreathers. Remember, the liquids, aerosols, etc restrictions are in force. If you have bought duty free liquids, you must remember to check it in with your luggage as you will not be allowed to bring it across the security check when entering the departure concourse. We recommend any liquid purchases be made in Manila's duty free shops while waiting for your flight to Palau.

Do go to the boarding gate slightly ahead of the boarding time printed on your boarding pass. There is an additional security check done before you enter the boarding gate's waiting room.