

# Palau

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)

This article is about the country. For other uses, see [Palau \(disambiguation\)](#).

## Republic of Palau

*Beluu er a Belau*



[Flag](#) [Seal](#)

**Anthem:** *[Belau loba klisiich er a kelulul](#)*



Palau is circled in green.

### Capital

[Melekeok<sup>\[1\]</sup>](#)

 [7°21′N 134°28′E](#)

### Largest city

[Koror](#)

### Official language(s)

[English](#)

[Palauan](#)

[Japanese](#) (in Angaur)

Recognised regional languages

[Sonsorolese](#) (in Sonsoral)

[Tobian](#) (in Hatohobei)

### Demonym

Palauan

### Government

[Unitary presidential  
democratic republic](#)

- [President](#)

[Johnson Toribiong](#)

- [Vice President](#)

[Kerai Mariur](#)

### Legislature

[National Congress](#)

### Independence

- <a href="#">Compact of Free Association</a> with <a href="#">United States</a>	October 1, 1994
<b><u>Area</u></b>	
- Total	459 km <sup>2</sup> ( <a href="#">196th</a> ) 177 sq mi
- Water (%)	negligible
<b><u>Population</u></b>	
- 2011 estimate	20,956 ( <a href="#">218th</a> )
- Density	28.4/km <sup>2</sup> 45.5/sq mi
<b><u>GDP (PPP)</u></b> 2008 estimate	
- Total	\$164 million (2008 est.) <sup>[2]</sup> ( <a href="#">not ranked</a> )
- Per capita	\$8,100 <sup>[2]</sup> ( <a href="#">119th</a> )
<b><u>HDI</u></b> (2011)	0.782 <sup>[3]</sup> ( <a href="#">high</a> ) ( <a href="#">49th</a> )
<b>Currency</b>	<a href="#">United States dollar (USD)</a>
<b>Time zone</b>	( <a href="#">UTC+9</a> )
<b>Drives on the</b>	right
<b><u>ISO 3166 code</u></b>	<a href="#">PW</a>
<b><u>Internet TLD</u></b>	<a href="#">.pw</a>
<b><u>Calling code</u></b>	+680

On October 7, 2006, government officials moved their offices in the former capital of [Koror](#) to [Ngerulmud](#) in [State of Melekeok](#), located 20 km (12 mi) northeast of Koror on Babelthaup Island and 2 km (1 mi) northwest of Melekeok village.

<sup>2</sup>GDP estimate includes US subsidy (2004 estimate).

**Palau** (<sup>ⓘ</sup>/pəˈlaʊ/, sometimes spelled **Belau** or **Pelew**), officially the **Republic of Palau** ([Palauan](#): *Beluu er a Belau*), is an [island country](#) located in the western [Pacific Ocean](#). Geographically part of the larger island group of [Micronesia](#), with the country's population of around 21,000 people spread out over 250 islands forming the western chain of the [Caroline Islands](#). The islands share [maritime boundaries](#) with [Indonesia](#), the [Philippines](#), and the [Federated States of Micronesia](#). The most populous island in the group is [Koror](#), with the capital city, [Ngerulmud](#), located on nearby [Babeldaob](#).

The country was originally settled around 3,000 years ago by migrants from the [Philippines](#), with a [Negrito](#) population sustained until around 900 years ago. The islands were first visited by Europeans in the 18th century, and were made part of the [Spanish East Indies](#) in 1885. Following Spain's defeat in the [Spanish–American War](#) in 1898, the islands were sold to [Imperial Germany](#) in 1899 under the terms of the [German–Spanish Treaty](#), where they were administered as part of [German New Guinea](#). The [Imperial Japanese Navy](#) conquered Palau during [World War I](#), and the islands were later made a part of the Japanese-ruled [South Pacific Mandate](#) by the [League of Nations](#). During [World War II](#), skirmishes, including the major [Battle of Peleliu](#), were fought between American and Japanese troops as part of the [Mariana and Palau Islands campaign](#).

Along with other [Pacific Islands](#), Palau was made a part of the [United States](#)-governed [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands](#) in 1947. Having voted against joining the newly-independent Federated States of Micronesia in 1979, the islands gained full sovereignty in 1994 under a [Compact of Free Association](#) with the United States.

Politically, Palau is a [presidential republic](#) in [free association](#) with the United States, with the US providing defense, funding, and access to social services. Legislative power is concentrated in the [bicameral Palau National Congress](#). [Palau's economy](#) is based mainly on [tourism](#), [subsistence agriculture](#), and [fishing](#), with a significant portion of [Gross National Product](#) (GNP) derived from foreign aid. The country's currency is the [United States dollar](#). The islands' culture is derived from a mixture of Japanese, Micronesian, and [Melanesian](#) elements, with the majority of citizens of mixed Micronesian, Melanesian, and [Austronesian](#) descent, with significant groups descended from [Japanese](#) and [Filipino](#) settlers. The country's two [official languages](#) are [Palauan](#), a member of the wider [Sunda–Sulawesi language group](#), and [English](#), with [Japanese](#), [Sonsorolese](#), and [Tobian](#) recognised as [regional languages](#).

## Contents

- [1 Name](#)
- [2 History](#)
- [3 Politics and government](#)
  - [3.1 Free association](#)
  - [3.2 Foreign relations](#)
  - [3.3 Nuclear-free constitution](#)
  - [3.4 Asylum for former Guantanamo prisoners](#)
- [4 States](#)
- [5 Geography](#)
  - [5.1 Environment](#)
- [6 Economy](#)
- [7 Demographics](#)
  - [7.1 Religion](#)
- [8 Culture](#)
  - [8.1 Society](#)
  - [8.2 Traditional government](#)
  - [8.3 Sports](#)
  - [8.4 Education](#)
  - [8.5 Libraries and museums](#)
- [9 Transport](#)
- [10 Media](#)
- [11 See also](#)
- [12 References](#)
- [13 External links](#)
  - [13.1 Government](#)

## Name

The name for the islands in the [Palauan language](#), *Belau*, likely derives from either the Palauan word for “village”, *beluu*,<sup>[4]</sup> or from *aibebelau* (“indirect replies”), relating to a creation myth.<sup>[5]</sup> The name “Palau” entered the [English language](#) from the [Spanish](#) *Los Palaos*, via the German *Palau*. An archaic name for the islands in English was the “Pelew Islands”.<sup>[6]</sup>

## History

Main article: [History of Palau](#)

The archipelago is also known as “The Black Islands.” Vintage maps and village drawings, as well as photos of the tattooed and pierced Ibedul of [Koror](#) and Lundee, can be found at the Australian Library Online listed in the external links section of this article.

Palau was originally settled between the [3rd](#) and [2nd millennia BC](#), most likely via the [Philippines](#) or [Indonesia](#).<sup>[7]</sup> The islands sustained a population of short-statured [Negrito](#) or [Pygmy people](#) up until the 12th century, when they were replaced. The modern population, judging by its language, may have come from the [Sunda Islands](#). [Sonsorol](#), part of the [Southwest Islands](#), an island chain approximately 600 kilometres (370 mi) from the main island chain of Palau, was sighted by Europeans as early as 1522, when the *Trinidad*, the flagship of [Ferdinand Magellan](#)’s voyage of circumnavigation, sighted two small islands around the [5th parallel north](#), naming them “San Juan”.<sup>[8]</sup> British traders became prominent visitors in the 18th century, followed by expanding Spanish influence in the 19th century. Following its defeat in the [Spanish-American War](#), [Spain](#) sold Palau and most of the rest of the [Caroline Islands](#) to Germany in 1899. Control passed to [Japan](#) in 1914 and during [World War II](#) the islands were taken by the [United States](#) in 1944, with the costly [Battle of Peleliu](#) between September 15 and November 25 when more than 2,000 Americans and 10,000 Japanese were killed. The islands passed formally to the United States under [United Nations](#) auspices in 1947 as part of the [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands](#).

Four of the Trust Territory districts formed a single federated Micronesian state in 1979, but the districts of Palau and the [Marshall Islands](#) declined to participate. Palau, the westernmost cluster of the [Caroline Islands](#), instead opted for independent status in 1978, approved a new constitution and became the Republic of Palau in 1981,<sup>[9]</sup> and signed a Compact of Free Association with the United States in 1982. After eight referendums and an amendment to the Palauan constitution, the Compact was ratified in 1993. The Compact went into effect on October 1, 1994,<sup>[10]</sup> marking Palau de jure independent, although it had been de facto independent since May 25, 1994, when the trusteeship was cancelled.

Legislation making Palau an “offshore” financial center was passed by the Senate in 1998. In 2001, Palau passed its first [bank regulation](#) and anti-[money laundering](#) laws.

## Politics and government

Main article: [Politics of Palau](#)

Palau’s politics takes place in a [multi-party](#) framework of a [presidential representative democratic republic](#), whereby the [President of Palau](#) is both [head of state](#) and [head of government](#). [Executive power](#) is exercised by the government, while [legislative power](#) is vested in both the government and the [Palau National Congress](#). The [judiciary](#) is independent of the executive and the legislature. The new capital is Ngerulmud.

Palau adopted its own constitution in 1981, and the governments of the United States and Palau concluded a [Compact of Free Association](#) in 1986, similar to compacts that the United States had entered into with the [Federated States of Micronesia](#) and the [Republic of the Marshall Islands](#).<sup>[11]</sup> The compact entered into force on October 1, 1994, concluding Palau’s transition from

trusteeship to independence<sup>[11]</sup> as the last portion of the [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands](#) to gain its independence.

## Free association

Main article: [Compact of Free Association](#)

The [Compact of Free Association](#) between the United States and Palau<sup>[12]</sup> sets forth the free and voluntary association of their Governments, and is primarily focused on the issues of government relations, economic relations, and security and defense relations.<sup>[13]</sup> Palau has no independent military, and relies on the [United States](#) for its defense. Under the Compact, the [American military](#) has been granted access to the islands for 50 years. The role of the [US Navy](#) is quite minimal, limited to a handful of Navy [Seabees](#) (construction engineers) but the [United States Coast Guard](#) does have a stronger presence in patrolling the waters.

## Foreign relations

As a sovereign nation, Palau conducts its own foreign relations.<sup>[11]</sup> Since independence, Palau has established diplomatic relations with a number of nations, including many of its Pacific neighbors. Palau was admitted to the United Nations on December 15, 1994, and has since joined several other international organizations. In September 2006, Palau hosted the first Taiwan-Pacific Allies Summit, and its President has gone on several official visits to other Pacific countries, including the [Republic of China \(Taiwan\)](#).

The United States maintains the usual diplomatic delegation and an embassy in Palau, but most aspects of the two countries' relationship have to do with Compact-funded projects, which are the responsibility of the U.S. [Department of the Interior](#)'s [Office of Insular Affairs](#).<sup>[14]</sup> This has led to some ambiguity in the official status of Palau,<sup>[citation needed]</sup> though regarded as de jure independent.

Since 2004, Palau has joined the United States and Israel as the only nations voting consistently against an annual U.N. resolution condemning the [United States embargo against Cuba](#) which has been in place since 1962.

On October 5, 2009 Palau formalized Diplomatic and Trade Ties with Malaysia and Lord Morris Davidson was appointed as Palau's first Honorary Consul to Malaysia.

Palau is a member of the [Parties to the Nauru Agreement](#).<sup>[15]</sup>

## Nuclear-free constitution

In 1981, Palau voted for the world's first nuclear-free constitution. This constitution banned the use, storage, and disposal of [nuclear](#), [toxic chemical](#), gas, and [biological weapons](#) without first being approved by a 3/4 majority in a referendum.<sup>[16]</sup> This ban held up Palau's transition to independence because while negotiating a [Compact of Free Association](#) with the United States, the U.S. insisted on the option to operate [nuclear propelled vessels](#) and store nuclear weapons within the territory.<sup>[17]</sup> After several referendums that failed to achieve a 3/4 majority, the people of Palau finally approved the Compact with the U.S. in 1994.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

## Asylum for former Guantanamo prisoners

See also: [Uyghur captives in Guantanamo](#)

On June 10, 2009, Palau announced that it would accept up to all 17 of the remaining [Uyghurs](#) detained in [Guantanamo](#) “as a humanitarian gesture”.<sup>[20][21][22][23][24][25]</sup> Five Uyghur captives were released without being prosecuted in 2004, and transferred to [Albania](#) in 2006. The remaining seventeen were released due to lack of evidence in 2008.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

[Stuart Beck](#), Palau’s representative to the [United Nations](#), published an [op-ed](#) in the [New York Times](#) disputing the widely distributed report that Palau’s agreement to accept the Uyghurs was tied to Palau’s receipt of US\$200 million in foreign aid.<sup>[20][21][22][23][24][25][26]</sup> Beck asserted that Palau was receiving funds from the USA connected with accepting the Uyghurs, but it was \$90,000 per Uyghur, not “\$12 million”. Beck asserted that the \$90,000 was to compensate Palau for its “relocation costs” and was “to cover transportation, food, housing and medical help until the men can get oriented and get jobs”. [ABC News](#) confirmed that the United States would be paying Palau for each captive who was resettled and quoted a senior official who described the amount as “not very substantial”.<sup>[27]</sup>

William Cleary, writing in the [Pacific Daily News](#), reported that Palau was in a poor bargaining position to decline the American request:<sup>[28]</sup>

“The detainee transfer deal comes at a time when generous U.S. financial aid and economic development grants to Palau under a 15 year old treaty of free association between the two nations have expired. Palauan leaders apparently wanted to demonstrate their commitment to sharing mutual interests and burdens with the U.S., as they make the case for renewal of U.S. grant assistance.”

However, Cleary also described the assertions that the captive resettlement was a straight [quid pro quo](#) as “misleading”.<sup>[28]</sup>

He listed the USA’s desire to continue to be able to base U.S. military personnel on Palau, to balance the growing military force of the [People’s Republic of China](#), as one complicating factor. He also listed Palau’s desire to have exemption from growing pressure within the United States to restrict immigration from former protectorates like Palau as another complicating factor.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

An official “technical working group” from Palau traveled to Guantanamo to meet with the Uyghurs in mid-June 2009.<sup>[29][30]</sup> On June 23, the Palau government published a press release which said only eight of the thirteen Uyghurs agreed to meet with the delegation. Their report stated: “*The team advised President Toribiong that in their opinion only a few of the detainees that were interviewed had any real interest in being relocated to Palau.*” On June 30, [Radio New Zealand International](#) reported only one Uyghur agreed to be temporarily resettled in Palau.<sup>[31]</sup> On September 10, [The Times](#) reported that three of the Uyghurs have accepted the invitation to be transferred to asylum in Palau.<sup>[32]</sup> On September 19, [Fox News](#) reported that in the week since the first announcement three further Uyghurs agreed to be transferred to Palau.<sup>[33]</sup> Fox reported that five of the other Uyghurs had refused to speak with Palau officials. On October 31, six Uyghurs were reported to have been transferred to Palau.<sup>[34][35][36][37][38]</sup> Twelve of the thirteen



State	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Census 2005
<a href="#">Angaur</a>	8	320
<a href="#">Hatohobei</a>	3	44
<a href="#">Kayangel</a>	3	188
<a href="#">Koror</a>	18	12,676
<a href="#">Melekeok</a>	28	391
<a href="#">Ngaraard</a>	36	581
<a href="#">Ngarchelong</a>	10	488
<a href="#">Ngardmau</a>	47	166
<a href="#">Ngaremlengui</a>	65	317
<a href="#">Ngatpang</a>	47	464
<a href="#">Ngchesar</a>	41	254
<a href="#">Ngiwal</a>	26	223
<a href="#">Peleliu</a>	13	702
<a href="#">Sonsorol</a>	4	100

Historically, Palau's uninhabited [Rock Islands](#) have been part of the State of Koror.



Republic of Palau.

## Geography

Main article: [Geography of Palau](#)

Palau's most populous islands are [Angaur](#), [Babeldaob](#), [Koror](#), and [Peleliu](#). The latter three lie together within the same [barrier reef](#), while Angaur is an oceanic island several miles to the south. About two-thirds of the population live on Koror. The [coral atoll](#) of [Kayangel](#) is situated north of these islands, while the uninhabited [Rock Islands](#) (about 200) are situated to the west of

the main island group. A remote group of six islands, known as the [Southwest Islands](#), some 375 miles (604 km) from the main islands, are also part of the country and make up the states of Hatohobei and Sonsorol.

Palau has a [tropical climate](#) all year round with an annual mean temperature of 82 °F (28 °C). Rainfall is heavy throughout the year, averaging a total of 150 inches (3,800 mm). The average humidity over the course of the year is 82%, and although rain falls more frequently between July and October, there is still much sunshine. [Typhoons](#) are rare, as Palau is outside the main typhoon zone.

[\[hide\]](#)Climate data for Palau Islands (1961-1990)

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
<b>Average high °C (°F)</b>	30.6 (87.1)	30.6 (87.1)	30.9 (87.6)	31.3 (88.3)	31.4 (88.5)	31.0 (87.8)	30.6 (87.1)	30.7 (87.3)	30.9 (87.6)	31.1 (88.0)	31.4 (88.5)	31.1 (88.0)	30.97 (87.74)
<b>Daily mean °C (°F)</b>	27.3 (81.1)	27.2 (81.0)	27.5 (81.5)	27.9 (82.2)	28.0 (82.4)	27.6 (81.7)	27.4 (81.3)	27.5 (81.5)	27.7 (81.9)	27.7 (81.9)	27.9 (82.2)	27.7 (81.9)	27.62 (81.71)
<b>Average low °C (°F)</b>	23.9 (75.0)	23.9 (75.0)	24.1 (75.4)	24.4 (75.9)	24.5 (76.1)	24.2 (75.6)	24.1 (75.4)	24.3 (75.7)	24.5 (76.1)	24.4 (75.9)	24.4 (75.9)	24.2 (75.6)	24.24 (75.64)
<b>Precipitation mm (inches)</b>	271.8 (10.701)	231.6 (9.118)	208.3 (8.201)	220.2 (8.669)	304.5 (11.988)	438.7 (17.272)	458.2 (18.039)	379.7 (14.949)	301.2 (11.858)	352.3 (13.87)	287.5 (11.319)	304.3 (11.98)	3,758.3 (147.965)
<b>Avg. precipitation days</b>	19.0	15.9	16.7	14.8	20.0	21.9	21.0	19.8	16.8	20.1	18.7	19.9	224.6
<b>Mean monthly sunshine hours</b>	198.4	194.9	244.9	234.0	210.8	168.0	186.0	176.7	198.0	179.8	183.0	182.9	2,357.4

Source: Hong Kong Observatory,<sup>[40]</sup>

## Environment



[Rock Islands](#) in Palau.



WCTC Shopping Center



Aerial view of limestone islands

While much of Palau's natural environment remains free of environmental degradation, there are several areas of concern, including illegal fishing with the use of dynamite, inadequate facilities for disposal of solid waste in [Koror](#), and extensive sand and coral dredging in the Palau lagoon. Like the other Pacific island nations, a potential major environmental threat is rising sea levels. Water coverage of low-lying areas is a threat to coastal vegetation, agriculture, and the purity of the nation's water supply. Palau also has a problem with inadequate water supply and limited agricultural areas to support the size of the population. The nation is also vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic activity, and tropical storms. Sewage treatment is a problem, along with the handling of toxic waste from fertilizers and biocides.

On November 5, 2005, President of Palau, Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. took the lead on a regional environmental initiative called the [Micronesia challenge](#), which would conserve 30% of near shore coastal waters and 20% of forest land by 2020. In addition to Palau, the initiative was joined by the [Federated States of Micronesia](#) and [Marshall Islands](#), and the [U.S.](#) territories of [Guam](#) and [Northern Mariana Islands](#). Together, this combined region represents nearly 5% of the marine area of the [Pacific Ocean](#) and 7% of its coastlines.

On September 25, 2009, Palau announced that it would create the world's first "shark sanctuary".<sup>[41]</sup> Palau has banned all commercial shark fishing within its [EEZ](#) waters. The sanctuary protects about 600,000 square kilometres (230,000 sq mi) of ocean,<sup>[42]</sup> a similar size to the [European](#) country of [France](#).<sup>[43][44][45]</sup> [President Johnson Toribiong](#) made the announcement at a meeting of the [United Nations](#).<sup>[43][46][47]</sup> President Toribiong also requested a worldwide ban on fishing for sharks.<sup>[43]</sup>

[Saltwater crocodiles](#) are also residents of Palau and occur in varying numbers throughout the various mangroves and even in parts of the beautiful rock islands. Although this species is generally considered extremely dangerous, there has only been one fatal human attack in Palau within modern history, and that was in the 1960s. In Palau the largest crocodile measured in at 4.5 metres (15 ft).<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Economy



### [Koror-Babeldaob Bridge.](#)

Main article: [Economy of Palau](#)

Palau's economy consists primarily of [tourism](#), [subsistence agriculture](#), and [fishing](#). Tourist activity focuses on scuba diving and snorkeling in the islands' rich marine environment, including its barrier reefs walls and World War II wrecks. The government is the major employer of the work force, relying heavily on financial assistance from the US. Business and tourist arrivals numbered 50,000 in the financial year 2000/2001. The population enjoys a per capita income twice that of [Micronesia](#) as a whole. Long-term prospects for the key tourist sector have been greatly bolstered by the expansion of air travel in the Pacific, the rising prosperity of leading East Asian countries, and the willingness of foreigners to finance infrastructure development.

In July 2004, [Palau Micronesia Air](#) was launched with service from Palau to [Yap](#), [Guam](#), [Micronesia](#), [Saipan](#), [Australia](#), and the [Philippines](#). By offering low fares it was planned to be a competitor of [Continental Micronesia](#), however it ceased operations in December of the same year, mainly because of rising fuel prices. [Palau Micronesia Air](#) has not restarted operations since but has made a [codeshare](#) alliance with [Asian Spirit](#), a carrier that operated flights between Palau and the [Philippines](#) ([Davao](#), [Cebu](#), and [Manila](#)). There were two flights weekly from Manila via Cebu to Palau and one flight weekly from Davao. Just after few months of service, Asian Spirit ceased its Philippines to Palau route. In March 2010, [Pacific Flier](#) began providing air services to [Clark](#), [Gold Coast](#) and [Guam](#), however, Pacific Flier suspended operations shortly after, in August 2010.<sup>[48]</sup>

In November 2006, the [Palau Saving Bank](#) officially announced bankruptcy. On December 13 of the same year the [Palau Horizon](#) reported that there were a total of 641 depositors that had been affected by the event. Among the 641 accounts, 398 held less than \$5000 USD, with the remainder ranging from \$5000 to 2 million USD. On December 12, 79 of the affected people received compensation, one was [Taiwanese](#), while the rest were Palauan, Filipino and US citizens. Mr. Toribiong said, "The fund for the payout came from the balance of Palau government's loan from [Taiwan](#)." From a total of \$1 million USD, which originally was for assisting Palau's development, there was \$955,000 USD left at the time of bankruptcy. For the \$955,000, Toribiong requested the Taiwanese government use it to repay its loans. Taiwan agreed to the request. The compensation will start its paying to depositor, who held less than \$4,000 USD in the account.<sup>[49]</sup>

[Taxes](#) are moderate, the [income tax](#) has 3 brackets with medium rates (9.3%, 15% and 19.6%), [corporate tax](#) is 4% and general [sales tax](#) is 7.5%. There are no [property taxes](#).

## Demographics



A [deserted island](#) in Palau.

Main article: [Demographics of Palau](#)

### Historical population

Year	Pop.
<a href="#">1970</a>	11,210
<a href="#">1980</a>	12,116
<a href="#">1990</a>	15,122
<a href="#">2000</a>	21,000

The population of Palau is approximately 21,000, of whom 70% are native Palauans, who are of mixed [Melanesian](#), [Micronesian](#), and [Austronesian](#) descent. Many Palauans also have some Asian ancestry, which is the result of intermarriage between settlers and Palauans between the 19th and 20th centuries. Palauans with mixed [Japanese ancestry](#) accounted for the largest group, and some also had some [Chinese](#) or [Korean](#) ancestry. [Filipinos](#) form the second largest ethnic group.

The official languages of Palau are [Palauan](#) and [English](#), except for two states (Sonsorol and Hatohobei) where the local language, along with Palauan, is official. [Japanese](#) is also spoken widely amongst older Palauans, and is an official language in the State of [Angaur](#).<sup>[50][51]</sup> [Tagalog](#) is not official in Palau, but it is the fourth largest spoken language.<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>

## Religion

Main article: [Religion in Palau](#)

The German and Japanese occupations of Palau both subsidized missionaries (first brought to the islands by Spain). Three quarters of the population are [Christians](#) (mainly [Roman Catholics](#) and [Protestants](#)), while [Modekngei](#) (a combination of Christianity, traditional Palauan religion and fortune telling) and the ancient Palauan religion are commonly observed. According to the 2005 census<sup>[52]</sup> 49.4% of the population is Roman Catholic (a legacy of Spain's historical presence),

21.3% Protestant, 8.7% [Modekngei](#) and 5.3% Seventh-day Adventist. There is a small Jewish community in Palau. In 2009 it sent 3 members to the 18th [Maccabiah Games](#). There are also approximately 400 [Bengali Muslims](#) in Palau,<sup>[53]</sup> and recently 6 [Uyghurs](#) detained in [Guantanamo Bay](#) were allowed to settle in the island nation.<sup>[54]</sup>

## Culture

See also: [Music of Palau](#) and [Palauan language](#)

## Society



This section **does not cite any references or sources**. *(October 2011)*

Palauan society, much like the island's language, has always been one unique to the island and its people. A very noticeable aspect of Palauan society is that it follows a very strict matrilineal system. Matrilineal practices are seen in nearly every aspect of Palauan traditions, especially in funeral, marriage, inheritance, and the passing of traditional titles.

To this day, the Palauan people still hold true to their traditions very seriously. This is very clear in the fact that the traditional government still holds extreme influence over the nation's affairs. In fact, the traditional government has held so much influence, that the federal government has had, on numerous occasions, attempts at limiting its power. Many of these attempts occurred and continue to occur, from 1990 to the present. These attempts, many of which in the form of amendments in the constitution, were put into place because of the corporate sector of the nation, they having felt that the traditional government was encroaching on what they deemed should be free economic zones. One such example occurred in early 2010, where the Idid clan, the ruling clan of the Southern Federation, under the leadership of Bilung, the clan's and Palau's Southern Federation's queen, raised a civil suit against the KSPLA (Koror State Public Lands Authority). In the civil suit, the Idid clan laid claim over Malakal Island, a major economic zone and Palau's most important port, citing claims that went back as far as the German Era. The civil suit, however, ended with the verdict that Idid clan could not use such citations and claims, and resulted in the conclusion that Malakal Island was land that belonged to the KSPLA.

## Traditional government



This section **does not cite any references or sources**. *(October 2011)*

The present day traditional government of Palau is a direct continuation of the ancient traditional government, composed of practices that span thousands of years. In the traditional government, Palau is divided geographically into different categories. At the smallest level of geographic division is the village or hamlet, then the chiefdom (which is now politically referred to as a state), and finally the federation, or alliance of chiefdoms. In ancient times, there were numerous federations, or alliances, but upon the introduction of firearms by the British in the 17th century, a major imbalance of power occurred. Palau was divided into just two major federations, the northern and southern federations. The Northern Federation is headed by the high chief and

chiefess of the ruling clan Uudes of Melekeok state, the Reklai and Ebilreklai. As a result of their position, they are commonly referred to as the king and queen of the Northern Federation. This northern federation comprises the following states: Kayangel, Ngerchelong, Ngardmau, Ngiwal, Ngaraard, Ngatpang, Ngeremlengui, Melekok, Aimeliik, Ngchesar, and Airai. The Southern Federation is likewise represented by the high chief and chiefess of the ruling Idid of Koror state, which also results in their titles as king and queen of the Southern Federation. The Southern Federation comprises the following states: Koror, Peleliu, and Angaur. Despite the presence of these terms however, lesser and lesser Palauans have knowledge of the concept of federations, and the term is slowly dying out. Federations had been established as a way of safeguarding states and hamlets who shared economic, social, and political interests, but now with the advent of modernism and a federal government, there is no need for such safeguarding. It is interesting to note however, that in international relations, the king of Palau is often synonymous with the Ibedul of Koror. This is a result of the fact that Koror is the industrial capital of the nation, and because of such, his position and reputation among the corporate sector of the country has a much greater impact than that of the Reklai of Melekeok.

There is also a misconception that the king and queen of Palau, or any chief and his female counterpart for that matter, are married. This is not the case in Palauan society. Traditional leaders and their female counterparts, have always been related and unmarried (marrying relatives in Palauan society has always been a traditional taboo). Usually, a chief and his female counterpart are either brother and sister, or are close cousins, and have their own spouses.

## Sports

See also: [Baseball in Palau](#)



This section **does not cite any references or sources**. (October 2011)

[Baseball](#) is a popular sport in Palau and was introduced to the islands by the Japanese in the 1920s. The [Palau national baseball team](#) won the gold medal at the [1990](#), [1998](#) and [2010 Micronesian Games](#), as well as at the [2007 Pacific Games](#).

Palau also has a [National football team](#) organised by the [Palau Soccer Association](#) but is not a member of [FIFA](#). The [Association](#) also organizes the [Palau Soccer League](#).

## Education



This section **does not cite any references or sources**. (October 2011)

Some fields of study are available at [Palau Community College](#). For professional and graduate programs, students must travel to a larger institution.

## Libraries and museums



This section **does not cite any references or sources**. (October 2011)

There are several libraries in Koror, including a public library with a collection comprising about 17,000 books. The Belau National Museum, established in 1956, is also located in Koror and has an affiliated Research Library. Palau Community College also houses a library. In addition to the National Museum, the Etpison family has also opened the Etpison Museum in Koror, which contains many culturally important artifacts.



Wikinews has related news: [\*Bones of “small-bodied humans” found in cave\*](#)

## Transport

[Palau International Airport](#) provides scheduled direct flights to [Guam](#), [Manila](#), [Seoul](#) and [Taipei](#) and [Delta Air Lines](#) launched new direct flights to [Tokyo-Narita](#) in December 2010. In addition, the states of [Angaur](#) and [Peleliu](#) have regularly served international airports. Freight, military and holiday cruise ships often call at Malakal Harbor, on [Malakal Island](#) outside [Koror](#). The country has no railways, and almost half of the roads are unpaved (of the 61 km/38 mi of highways, only 36 km/22 mi are paved). Driving is on the right and the speed limit is 40 km/h (25 mph). Taxis are available in Koror. They are not metered and fares are negotiable. Only Koror maintains a bus service. Transportation between islands mostly relies on private boats and domestic air services.

## Media



Logo for the tenth season of “Survivor.” The U.S. media exposure helped to boost tourism in Palau.



This section **needs additional citations for verification**. (October 2011)

- The 1968 World War II movie *Hell in the Pacific* starring [Lee Marvin](#) and [Toshirō Mifune](#) was filmed on Palau’s Rock Islands.
- Palau was the site for the [reality television](#) program *Survivor*. *Japanese Survivor* used the islands for its first season in 2002. It was also the location of *Survivor: Palau*, the tenth edition of the *American Survivor*, which aired from February 17 to May 15, 2005 in [United States](#), and *Survivor: Micronesia*, the sixteenth edition, which aired from February 7 to May 11, 2008. In August 2009, *Survivor Philippines* also used the islands for its second season.
- The islands are also mentioned in the song “[Orinoco Flow](#)“ performed by the Irish singer [Enya](#).

- Palau was featured in an episode of the children’s TV show *Toot and Puddle*, which was based on the book series by American children’s author [Holly Hobbie](#).
- Palau has also been featured a few times by National Geographic.
- Palau was featured in [Journey 2: The Mysterious Island](#).
- Palau is the basis for the fictional nation of “Panau” in the video game [Just Cause 2](#).

## See also



[Geography portal](#)



[Oceania portal](#)



[Micronesia portal](#)

- [Outline of Palau](#)
- [Index of Palau-related articles](#)
- [List of islands in Palau](#)
- [Palau'amine](#)

## References

1. [^ CIA Factbook](#)
2. [^ a b “Palau”](#). *CIA World Factbook*. CIA. Retrieved 2009-08-09.
3. [^ http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2011\\_ES\\_Table1.pdf](#)
4. [^ Culture of Palau](#) – Every Culture. Retrieved 25 May 2012.
5. [^ The Bais of Belau](#) – Underwater Colours. Retrieved 25 May 2012.
6. [^ Palau: Portrait of Paradise](#) – Underwater Colours. Retrieved 25 May 2012.
7. [^ Palau](#) – Historical Boys’ Clothing. Retrieved 25 May 2012.
8. [^ Palau](#) – Foreign Ships in Micronesia. Retrieved 25 May 2012.
9. [^ “Pacific Island Battleground Now the Republic of Belau”](#). Associated Press. Bangor, Maine, USA: Bangor Daily News, via Google News. January 23, 1981.
10. [^ “Palau Gains Independence on Saturday”](#). Associated Press. Salt Lake City, Utah, USA: The Deseret News, via Google News. September 30, 1994.
11. [^ a b c \*Compact of Free Association: Palau’s Use of and Accountability for U.S. Assistance and Prospects for Economic Self-Sufficiency\*. United States Government Accountability Office. June 10, 2008. p. 7](#)
12. [^ Compact of Free Association Between the Government of the United States of America and the government of Palau](#), Preamble
13. [^ Compact of Free Association Between the Government of the United States of America and the government of Palau](#), Table of Contents

14. [^ USDOJ Office of Insular Affairs](#)
15. [^ “Pacific Nations Extend Fishing Ban”. \*Radio Australia\* \(East West Center\).](#) 2010-10-05. Retrieved 2010-10-06.
16. [^ “The Constitution of the Republic of Palau”. The Government of Palau.](#) April 2, 1979. Retrieved 2009-11-01.
17. [^ “Issues Associated With Palau’s Transition to Self-Government”. \*Government Accountability Office\*.](#) July 1989. Retrieved 2009-11-01.
18. [^ Lyons, Richard D. \(November 6, 1994\). “Work Ended, Trusteeship Council Resists U.N. Ax for Now”. \*New York Times\*.](#) Retrieved 2009-11-01.
19. [^ \*Trusteeship Mission reports on Palau voting. \(plebiscite on the Compact of Free Association with the United States\)\*.](#) **27.** [UN Chronicle](#). June 1990.
20. [^ \*a b\* Matthew Lee, Devlin Barrett \(2009-06-09\). “US eyes Pacific to resettle Uighur detainees”. \*WTOP\*.](#) Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
21. [^ \*a b\* Ray Lilley \(2009-06-10\). “Island nation of Palau to take Gitmo’s Uighurs”. \*Toronto Star\*.](#) Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
22. [^ \*a b\* “Pacific state Palau to take Uighur detainees”. \*CTV News\*.](#) 2009-06-10. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
23. [^ \*a b\* “Palau to take 17 Uyghur Guantanamo inmates”. \*China Daily\*.](#) 2009-06-11. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
24. [^ \*a b\* Mike Levine \(2009-06-09\). “Palau Agrees to Take Uighur Gitmo Detainees”. \*Fox News\*.](#) Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
25. [^ \*a b\* “Palau to take Uighur detainees from Guantanamo Bay”. \*Yahoo News\*.](#) 2009-06-10. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-06-11. Retrieved 2009-06-11.
26. [^ \*Stuart Beck\* \(2009-06-19\). “The Myth of the \\$12 Million Uighur”. \*New York Times\*.](#) Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-11-01.
27. [^ Kirit Radia \(2009-06-10\). “US and Palau wrangling over Gitmo transfer details, including \\$\\$\\$”. \*ABC News\*.](#) Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-11-01.
28. [^ \*a b\* William Cleary \(2009-06-24\). “Will taking detainees pay off for Palau?”. \*Pacific Daily News\*.](#) Retrieved 2009-06-26.<sup>[*dead link*]</sup>
29. [^ Kevin Kerrigan \(2009-06-23\). “Uyghures Don’t Show Much Interest In Palau”. \*Pacific News Center\*.](#) Retrieved 2009-06-28.<sup>[*dead link*]</sup>
30. [^ “Ministry of State: Press Release”. \*Government of Palau\*.](#) 2009-06-23. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-11-01.
31. [^ “Palau Government still not sure if Uighurs are coming”. \*Radio New Zealand International\*.](#) 2009-06-30. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-11-01.

32. [^ Anne Barrowclough \(2009-09-10\). "Palau move imminent for Guantanamo Uighurs". London: \*The Times\*. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-09-19.](#)
33. [^ "2 More Uighur Detainees at Gitmo Heading to Palau". \*Fox News\*. 2009-09-19. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-09-19.](#)
34. [^ "Six Guantanamo Uighurs arrive in Palau: US". \*Agence France Presse\*. 2009-10-31. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-10-31.](#)
35. [^ "6 Muslim Uighur Detainees From Guantanamo Arrive In Palau". \*Pacific News Center\*. 2009-11-01. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-10-31. Retrieved 2009-09-26.](#)
36. [^ "United States Transfers Six Uighur Detainees from Guantanamo Bay to Palau". \*United States Department of Justice\*. 2009-10-31. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-10-31.](#)
37. [^ David Johnston \(2009-10-31\). "Uighurs Leave Guantánamo for Palau". \*New York Times\*. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-10-31.](#)
38. [^ "Guantanamo Uighurs sent to Palau". \*BBC News\*. 2009-10-31. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2009-10-31.](#)
39. [^ "Palau receives aid boost from US". \*Australia Network News\*. 2010-01-30. Archived from \[the original\]\(#\) on 2010-02-04. "The president insisted there was no link to the island's hosting of six inmates from Guantanamo Bay. Palau had earlier rejected a 156 million dollar offer and the settlement came after the island nation agreed to resettle six Muslim Uighurs who had been held for more than seven years at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay. The six arrived in Palau in November. But Johnson said the two issues were not related."](#)
40. [^ "Climatological Information for Palau Islands, Pacific Islands, United States". Hong Kong Observatory.](#)
41. [^ "Palau creates world's first shark haven". \*The Philippine Star\*. 2009-09-26. Retrieved 2009-09-28.](#)
42. [^ Black, Richard. "Palau pioneers 'shark sanctuary'. BBC News website. September 25, 2009. <http://usproxy.bbc.com/2/hi/science/nature/8272508.stm>. Retrieved 2009-09-25.](#)
43. [^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup> "Palau's EEZ becomes shark sanctuary". \*Xinhua News Agency\*. 2009-09-27. Retrieved 2009-09-28.](#)
44. [^ Sophie Tedmanson \(2009-09-26\). "World's first shark sanctuary created by Pacific island of Palau". London: \*The Times\*. Retrieved 2009-09-28.](#)
45. [^ Ker Than \(2009-09-25\). "France-Size Shark Sanctuary Created -- A First". \*National Geographic\*. Retrieved 2009-09-28.](#)
46. [^ "Palau creates shark sanctuary to protect tourism and prevent overfishing". \*Radio New Zealand\*. 2009-09-27. Retrieved 2009-09-28.](#)

47. [^](#) Cornelia Dean (2009-09-24). [“Palau to Ban Shark Fishing”](#). *The New York Times*. Retrieved 2009-09-28.
48. [^](#) [“Palau’s PacificFlier relooks business plan after suspension”](#). Retrieved 2011-09-13.
49. [^](#) [“Taiwan pay for the bill of compensation for PSB bankruptcy!”](#). udn.com Center. Retrieved 2010-12-20.
50. [^](#) [“CIA - The World Factbook -- Field Listing :: Languages”](#). [Central Intelligence Agency](#). Archived from [the original](#) on 2010-02-17. Retrieved 2010-02-17.
51. [^](#) Lewis, Paul M. (ed) (2009). [“Languages of Palau”](#). SIL International. Archived from [the original](#) on 2010-02-17. Retrieved 2010-02-17.
52. [^](#) Office of Planning and Statistics, Republic of Palau: [2005 Census of Population and Housing](#), Table 59, Retrieved 2007-03-01
53. [^](#) [Lawyers: Uighurs agree to go to Palau](#)
54. [^](#) [Lawyers: 3 Uighurs agree to go to Palau](#)

## External links

Find more about **Palau** on Wikipedia’s [sister projects](#):

	<a href="#">Definitions and translations</a> from Wiktionary
	<a href="#">Images and media</a> from Commons
	<a href="#">Learning resources</a> from Wikiversity
	<a href="#">News stories</a> from Wikinews
	<a href="#">Quotations</a> from Wikiquote
	<a href="#">Source texts</a> from Wikisource
	<a href="#">Textbooks</a> from Wikibooks

- [Palau](#) entry at *The World Factbook*
- [Palau](#) from the *University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries (USA) - Government Publications*.
- [Australian library online](#), subscription, or membership via institutional access, is required.
- [Palau](#) at the [Open Directory Project](#)
- [Palau profile](#) from the [BBC News](#)
- [Palau](#) *Encyclopædia Britannica* entry
- [Wikimedia Atlas of Palau](#)
- [Palau travel guide](#) from [Wikitravel](#)
- [Palau, an external wiki](#)

- [NOAA's National Weather Service - Palau](#)

## Government

- [Official Site of the Republic of Palau](#)
- [Official Site of the Consulate of the Republic of Palau to United Kingdom](#)
- [Palau National Congress - Olbiil Era Kelulau, Senate](#)
- [Chief of State and Cabinet Members](#)

[\[show\]](#)

- [y](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

## Palau topics

[\[show\]](#)

## Articles Related to Palau

### [Categories:](#)

- [Palau](#)
- [Oceanian countries](#)
- [Archipelagoes of the Pacific Ocean](#)
- [Countries bordering the Philippine Sea](#)
- [Freely associated states of the United States](#)
- [Micronesia](#)
- [Island countries](#)
- [Former Spanish colonies](#)
- [Former Japanese colonies](#)
- [Former German colonies](#)
- [Spanish East Indies](#)
- [English-speaking countries and territories](#)
- [Republics](#)
- [Liberal democracies](#)
- [States and territories established in 1994](#)
- [Member states of the United Nations](#)

