

SS THORFINN Trip Preparation Bulletin

The full enjoyment of your trip with us is our total objective, and the following information has been gathered to assist in this goal.

Read carefully, and please contact us for any clarifications needed. Keep us informed with current addresses, phone numbers and email to enable us to contact you on any items of last minute information.

Diving Conditions:

Micronesia began developing as a dive destination about 25 years ago with the fame of Truk Lagoon's sunken war fleet. The Thorfinn introduced a new approach to diving Truk about 1982 and bridged the gap to remote and beautiful outer island atolls of Truk, Yap, and Pohnpei States.

These virgin atoll reefs provide a kaleidoscope of seldom seen species of fish, sharks and coral in incredibly clear and warm waters.

At Truk, this ship introduced the ability to continuously dive on wrecks located close to various anchorages. Various dive launches depart regularly from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and conduct after dinner night dives about 8:30 PM.

The ship provides comforts of home at the wreck sites with many interesting on board diversions during surface intervals.

Visibility on Truk wrecks can vary from 40 -100/12-30m feet depending on location and prevailing conditions. Strong emphasis applies to all wrecks in Truk Lagoon being designated as historic monuments.

Trukese law forbids disturbance or removal of artifacts from these magnificent relics of war.

Facilities & Comforts Aboard The SS Thorfinn:

The Thorfinn provides fine live aboard accommodations, and the entire ship's crew strive to maintain these standards.

This remote location is occasionally strained for some supplies due to shipping delays and other unforeseeable events.

We buy our supplies locally and much of our produce is grown on the islands. Please realize that we are in a very remote location and that some popular food items may not be available.

The ship's facilities, diving gear, boats, and compressors are well maintained and designed to suit the demanding conditions of this remote location.

Eleven tastefully furnished guest rooms are equipped for two person occupancy. Nine have large double beds with adjacent single berths. Room 11 has two single

berths and Room 1 has one double bed. Eight rooms have private facilities, with three others sharing two adjacent showers and toilets.

Space is our specialty.

A large 'C' deck guest lounge, separate dining rooms, spa deck, sun deck with shade awning, camera service tables adjacent to lounge, and large deck areas of the most stable ship in the trade add to guest comforts and conveniences.

Hundreds of DVDs and music CDs are available from main lounge libraries to serve in each guest room's TV/DVD player.

A main lounge theater sized hi-def plasma TV feeds into a six speaker surround system. Multi-system DVD players cover wide ranging inputs, and a convenient plug-in point permits direct inputs from all guest data supplied equipment.

Weather Conditions:

Moderate Tropical Temperatures:

- Daytime.....85 - 90 °F/29-32°C
- Night.....70 - 75 °F/21-24°C
- Humidity: 65 - 75%, average

Water Temperature Year round: 83 - 86°F/28-30°C

Winds:

- December through April.....NE Trade Winds 10 - 15 knots
- May through November.....Light variables

Rainfall: 4 - 6 inches per month, average

Travel Documents:

U.S. Citizens only require proof of citizenship, which may be one of several items:

- Valid passport
- Voters registration card
- Notarized copy of birth certificate

Other citizens (Non-U.S.) will require a valid passport for legal entry.

Visitor VISA Forms are issued by airlines and processed by Immigration Clearance without charge. Your copy of this visa must be retained and is usually stapled to your identification for relinquishing on departure.

Clothing Suggestions:

Light clothing is suitable in this tropical environment. Shipboard informality dispenses with need for formal items.

A recommended checklist:

* Clothing

- 2 pairs slacks
- Cotton shirts
- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Swimsuits
- Tennis shoes or sandals
- Sun hat
- Windbreaker

* Toilet Articles

- Toothbrush/paste
- Suntan lotion
- Skin cream/lip balm

* Beach Towel

* Insect repellent

* Personal medication

* Medical Kit

- Aspirin
- Anti-motion tablets
- Sudafed or other decongestant
- Ear Eze (or other ear protection)
- Band-Aids
- Antibiotics (check with your doctor)

* Sunglasses (spare)

* Flashlight (extra batteries)

* Extra batteries for cameras, etc,

Our female guests are advised to include a mid length skirt in their clothing. It will provide the most comfort for shore visits, especially on traditional outer islands (see Customs and Conduct).

Photography:

These waters provide very fine underwater photography. Bring sufficient memory cards, batteries, power adapters, strobes, and cameras needed along with back-ups.

A big multi-system Plasma TV monitor with DVD player is in the lounge for instant playback of your video footage.

Each guest room is also fitted with a multi-system TV and DVD for personal use.

Diving Equipment:

Dive Computer, BCD, regulator, masks, fins, snorkel, submersible pressure and depth gauges, wet suit (if desired), dive light (extra batteries), and repair kit are the divers' responsibility, with a limited rental supply of most items aboard.

Tanks, weights, and weight belts are provided on the vessel.

Light wet suits are optional in the 85 deg F (29 C) water, but do provide protection against coral and abrasions on the wrecks.

It is highly recommended to have critical equipment serviced and checked by a reputable service facility with emphasis on first and second stages of your regulators, hoses and gauges.

A supply of "O" rings and a check of your B.C. is also recommended. It is most distressing to have people arrive at this distant destination and then lose valuable dive time over malfunctioning equipment.

A limited rental supply of most gear except suits is available. Dive lights are UK400 with 4 'D' cell batteries.

Diving Procedures:

Wreck diving under auspices of expert Trukese guides is conducted by mooring or anchoring our dive launches to wreck sites with divers proceeding up and down anchor or buoy lines.

Personal dive gear bags supplied from ship are given to dive boat staff for valet type service with gear mounted and removed before and after each dive. Bags are stowed in under-seat gear lockers of two dive launches, or in bins aft on mother ship.

Whether moored or drift diving on reefs and at passes, expert dive guides will assist or lead divers while explaining and showing a site's key interests. Further diving details are given under heading of Virtual Dive procedures at Menu Page.

Most regular diving is done on a no decompression basis, with mandatory stops at certain ascent points to assist in your safety. Technical divers are welcome to request extended deep or other considerations with Nitrox use. A privately

maintained double lock recompression chamber/facility is available at Chuuk, and dive insurance is mandatory to offset any fees assessed with a treatment.

The divemaster will oversee and profile each diver to keep track of his or her daily dive records. We ask everyone to record accurate bottom times and depths on our lounge log board after each dive.

Night divers should bring suitable dive lights and batteries. Spear fishing is not permitted.

Truk dive permits and related costs of \$35.00 per person will be assessed onboard and is not included in your package.

Baggage:

Baggage insurance is highly recommended, and we recommend keeping critical items such as camera, regulator, mask, with you in a flight bag.

Clothing and dive gear is best packed in soft bags or duffel bags for onboard stowage. Please tag bags with your name, address and phone number in case of mishandling, and for easy onboard room placement by crew.

We advise you check baggage allowances and restrictions with your air carrier for the most up to date information and costs.

Health Precautions:

There are no current official requirements for vaccinations or inoculations, but you may wish to check with your doctor about any specific need.

Micronesia has very little pest or insect problems for a tropic location, but carry some antidotes for infections from light coral cuts and scratches.

Ear infections are easily contracted in warm waters and a vial of Ear Eze or equivalent for dropping in each ear at end of daily diving activities is highly recommended.

Sunburn can represent a great health risk and does require careful attention if you have not been exposed to the sun for some time prior to your trip with us. A good sunblock is essential.

Insurance:

Every effort is made to assure a safe trip, but the purchase of a short-term trip cancellation policy, in case of unexpected changes in your plan is wise.

Diving Insurance is mandatory for diving onboard the Thorfinn. Also recommended are accident, medical, and baggage insurance.

Customs & Conduct:

In order to preserve warm welcome given to visitors at remote islands of the Pacific, an insight of their customs will be helpful in making the most of your opportunity for cultural interaction.

Common sense can guide you much of the time but the following is a guide as to what to expect. Pacific islanders by nature are soft-spoken and reserved in their personal manner and it is recommended that a like conduct be displayed in their presence.

Do not appear unexpectedly in a village or gathering. Have a local person introduce you to the ranking chief and other prominent villagers.

Exposing the thighs is considered improper for females, therefore, skirts are recommended for shore visits. Onboard dress is casual and unrestricted.

During shore excursions, the Captain will arrange the formalities of introductions. In keeping with traditions of the island group, visitors may be asked not to walk in a particular part of the island or dive and fish in a particular area adjacent to the island, which we ask all guests to respect.

Visitors will delight in the warmth of the people and the gentle displays of friendship exhibited by offerings of coconuts and fruits and offers of a walking tour of their island. Please do not pick your own fruits unsolicited, as you may be trespassing. When encountering domestic scenes, ask for permission before taking pictures.

The people will be most cooperative but it could be found offensive to take pictures or video without first asking. On the other hand, don't be surprised by people, especially the children, offering to be photographed and it is expected that pictures will be taken during performances by the islanders for their visitors.

Polaroid pictures left, as souvenirs, with the people are a big hit as with any small token such as soap, needles, combs, candies, fishing tackle, etc. are very much appreciated.

Enterprising islanders will display handicrafts and shell for exchange or sale. Young children whose natural curiosity will overtake their shyness to exchange stories and questions, often punctuated with fits of giggles, will delight you.

Micronesians will not show open disapproval if you violate their social codes so we ask our guests to keep in mind this simple guide for the mutual benefit of a cultural exchange.

Currency:

The U.S. dollar is the local currency. You can pay your onboard account with US\$ cash, US\$ travelers checks or credit card (VISA or MasterCard only - there is a 3% fee charged to offset higher merchant fees)

Banks:

Two banks operate within the Federated States of Micronesia and provide most regular services.

In Truk:

- Bank of Guam
- Bank of FSM

Communications:

- On Capitol Islands: Cellular services are GSM 900 system via locally purchased SIM cards. Regular telephone services by FSM Telecommunications Corpn cover most local and international needs
- Aboard SS Thorfinn: Cellular services via FSM tel when in range. Email and Internet browsing is provided from shipboard PC via 'Seawave' Iridium satellites system. Onboard services readily arranged via shipboard GRO or Captain.

Electric Current:

Electric current throughout Micronesia as well as on board the Thorfinn is 110 VAC-60 Hz with American type outlets. 220VAC-60 Hz power is additionally provided in five rooms as well as at a central 220V charging point via Australian type outlets. If you are traveling from the UK or Europe we advise you to bring adaptors to fit these types of outlets.

Airport Transfers to and from Ship:

Arrivals/Departures to and from airport:

Our office staff and/or crew will greet your arrival at airport and take you to a nearby pier (in our 10 seat van) where a dive boat will be waiting for final transfer to the anchored ship. This trip is repeated in reverse at trip end.

Arrivals/Departures to and from hotels: Guests will be contacted at their hotel by our Office to confirm their transfer arrangements and timings. At the end of their trip guests will be transferred back to the hotel or airport as appropriate.

Beverages:

Courtesy soft drinks, lemonade, coffee, tea, cocoa, and reasonably priced alcoholic beverages (beers, wines and spirits) are available on board.

Menu:

All foods served on board are of wide variety in generous quantity. Our two cooks conduct all baking, and produce a well-received fare. Special dietary requests will be handled to our best ability within range of any supply limitations.

Water:

Domestic water aboard is a product of shipboard desalination equipment. It is of the highest quality and perfectly safe to drink. We do ask guests not to waste water aboard, as it is a valuable commodity.

Laundry:

Limited facilities are available, with a careful view to water consumption and availability.

The Crew:

The Thorfinn has a full Pacific Island crew complement of twenty-two, most of whom are Micronesian. Some may have a slight difficulty with English but usually comprehend quickly if spoken to in a measured manner. Their quietly reserved manner is the way of Pacific Island people.... to not appear obtrusive and forward speaking. Our high 22 crew to 22 guest ratio is to maintain the most attentive standard of service possible. Soon after boarding, the ship's crew will place luggage in your respective rooms while we gather at lounge or spa to proceed with a full orientation on shipboard routines and dive procedures.

Gratitudes:

Tipping is not required aboard "Thorfinn, but if you would like to reward the crew at trip end for a job well done, it will be graciously accepted. On board policy is for guests to give any contribution to two or three different departments together to avoid any chance of it not being divided evenly as the crew have set up between themselves.

In Closing:

Seaward Holidays strives to offer guests the very best in a live-aboard dive vacation. We invite you to contact us prior to and after a trip to discuss any aspect of your diving experience. It is our goal to earn your respect and loyalty to ensure a future return and positive referrals.