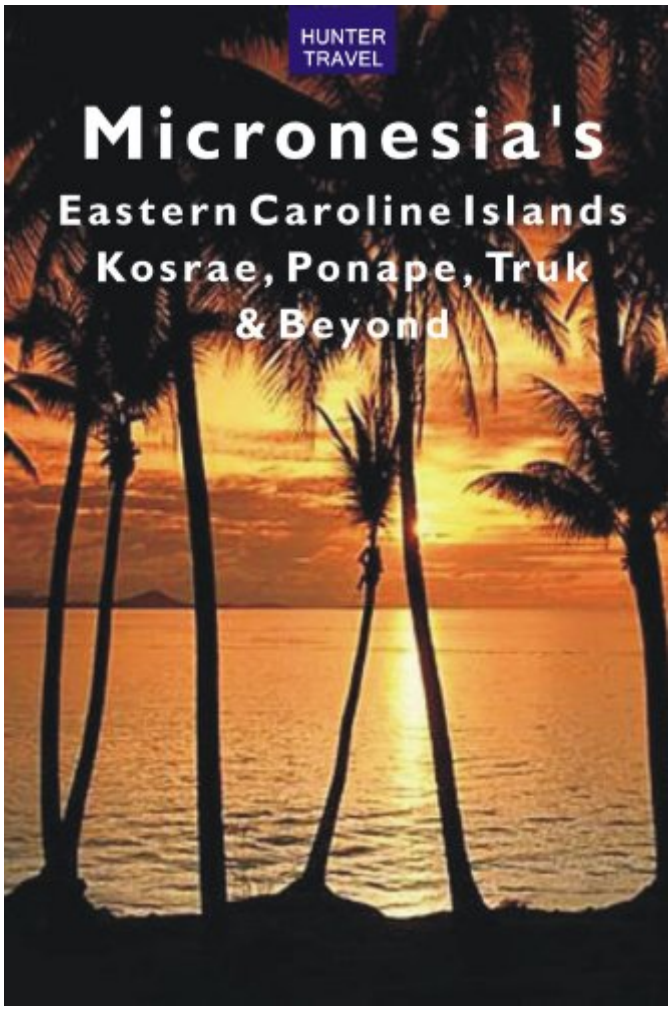
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Micronesia's Eastern Caroline Islands: Kosrae, Ponape, Truk & Beyond (Travel Adventures)



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Synopsis

These fascinating and stunningly beautiful Pacific islands lie midway between Hawaii and the Philippines. Seen from the air, Kosrae is a mountainous green craggy island with curious pointed peaks thick with jungle, fringed with white sandy beaches and a system of close-in mangrove-covered reef islands. The beauty of this high island can only be described as magnificent. Coming from the low atoll islands of the Marshalls I got the feeling that here was a mini-continent, a fragment of land, albeit small, with 42 square miles, complete with rivers, streams, waterfalls, mountains, valleys and a number of villages. And then there is Ponape. Some travel writers insist that it is one of the world's most beautiful islands Ã¢â ¬â œ we tend to agree. Seen from the air, this precipitous high green island encircled by a barrier reef and laced with waterfalls will take your breath away. For folks who have seen Moorea and Tahiti, bells will ring. The premier attraction on this island, Nan Madol, is the place to start. Nan Madol ruins Ã¢â ¬â œ constructed at least 700 years ago Ã¢â ¬â œ lie deep in a mangrove swamp. Situated as they are in mystery and separated by Venetian-like narrow channels, these basalt rock ruins form a complex of fallen temples, ancient tombs, bath houses, and pools for fish. Then hike up the trail through majestic jungle only half a mile to Kepirohi Falls, which you'll hear before seeing. This cataract, about 70 feet high, has a pool at its base, a refreshing spot to frolic. Joy Island is near here too, only 15 minutes by boat. This small island covered with palms, breadfruit, and papaya, does have a beach. There are also primitive cottages, where you can stay. And then there is Ant Atoll. Eight miles southwest of Pohnpei, this privately owned island is a jewel. Snorkeling and diving in the ultramarine 30-square-mile lagoon is magnificent. Inside the barrier reef of Pohnpei Island, or just outside it, there are fine drop-offs where visibility exceeds 150 feet, and the walls are covered with an unusually fine array of Pacific hard corals. Truk, now officially called Chuuk, an hour and 439 miles by air beyond Pohnpei, is a collection of semi-high islands set in a huge lagoon, surrounded by a coral reef, which is the second-longest in the world. This is a paradise for divers. You can see the submerged hulks of many World War II Japanese ships here. This, plus scores of other ships and aircraft throughout the lagoon, is what attracts 70% of all visitors. The ships on the floor of the lagoon are now dramatically available to divers, many of them to snorkelers too. Chuuk is Mecca to divers, but this doesn't mean that diving is limited to viewing wrecks of ships. The coral and marine life of all kinds is an attraction here. And there are fascinating remnants from World War II scattered throughout the islands - giant rusted Japanese tanks still sit on some of the beaches, canons still point out to sea from the mountains above the water. There are no health problems, people are friendly, English is spoken. And this applies throughout the Eastern Caroline Islands. The author

first encountered these islands in World War II, when he was stationed there. He fell in love with them and, afterwards, he returned repeatedly with his wife until right up to the present. In this guide, he details all of the features of each island, what to do there, how to get around, the places to stay and eat, the history and culture... everything you need to know.

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