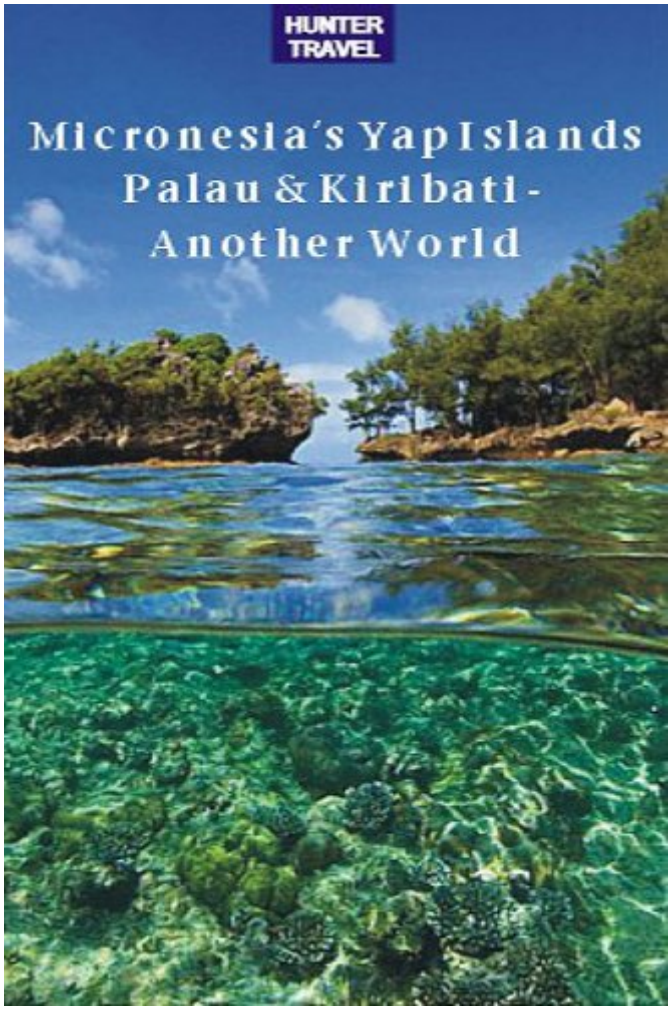
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Micronesia's Yap Islands, Palau & Kiribati - Another World



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Synopsis

Physically, the first thing that comes to mind about these little-known islands is beauty. It’s a tropically profound beauty associated with palm-clad islands, white sandy beaches, multi-hued gin-clear lagoons, and sometimes abrupt green mountains covered with jungle and laced with waterfalls. Palau, is a richly appointed composite of all Pacific islands. And within its reef fringed 80-mile length there are jungled mountains with lacy waterfalls and picture-perfect atolls. From north to south this complex known as the Republic of Belau stretches 80 miles and contains more than 300 islands, only nine of which are inhabited. Some islands are no more than curiously shaped nobs of greenery, others are substantial in size. One of them, Babeldaop, is the second-largest island in Micronesia after Guam. Belau is 169 square miles in size, and the population is about 14,000. Koror, home to 9,000, is the capital of this new country. Just south of Koror, stretching a good 18 miles, there is a collection of about 340 verdant nobs of limestone, the Rock Islands, sometimes called the Floating Garden Islands. There’s nothing qulte llke them anywhere in the world. When moving about by boat among the labyrinth of channels made by these islands there are grottos to snorkel over, sea turtles to be seen, beaches to picnic or camp on (bring water), schooling of all sorts of fish to be seen, and the transparent water is filled with vibrant coral formations. Yap, 600 miles southwest of Guam, an hour and a half by air, maintains the most genuine cultural environment of all Micronesia. Six thousand proud but gentle people live on this 62-square-mile cluster of four islands. Clinging to traditional ways, they keep the 20th century mostly at bay. Now is the time to visit. The people are friendly, there are no health problems and English is spoken everywhere. This guide tells you all you need to know, from the best hotels in each price range to the restaurants worth a visit, how to get around and what’s worth seeing on each island.

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