

**UNARMED** The millions of freshwater jellies in Jellyfish Lake have one thing in common: none of them sting.



FELIPE BARRIO

## The All-in-One

Palau

**D**oes it sound impossibly selfish and unreasonable to want to go to one Pacific destination that has great reefs, good wrecks, superior caves, super pelagics and marine lakes that burble with millions of jellyfish? No, it's easy: Get on a plane and go to Palau.

Palau is filled with the unexpected, weird and wonderful. From the air, the jungle-covered islands look like cosmic writing with a green sharpie against a blue-green canvas. One of the weirdest corners lies on Palau's island of Eil Malk. An invigorating jungle walk brings you to Jellyfish Lake, a geological cauldron filled with millions of stingless mastigias jellyfish.

Another reachable and wonderful surprise is Chandelier Cave, tucked away in the corner of Koror Harbor. Really a cavern masquerading as a deep cave, the shallow chamber is filled with enormous stalactites casting brooding shadows against limestone walls.

For an adrenalin fix, find your reef hook and get to Palau's Blue Corner. The sheer drop and current make for a box seat to the ultimate pelagic parade of sharks, jacks and barracuda.

### DESTINATION PRIMER

**AVERAGE WATER TEMP:** 80-84° F **WHAT TO WEAR:** From shorts to lightweight skins; a shorty if you get cold easily **AVERAGE VIZ:** 100+ feet **WHEN TO GO:** Year-round

MUST DO  
MUST DIVE

### Jailhouse Art

Visit the jail in Koror, where inmates carve storyboards: 3-D depictions of Palau legends surrounded by fish-shaped borders.

1. Blue Corner
2. Peleliu Express
3. Big Drop-Off
4. Chandelier Cave
5. The Helmet Wreck

For the history-obsessed, there are WWII wrecks: a Japanese Zero in three feet of water and the "helmet wreck," which has an entire shipment of Japanese army helmets stacked like Pringles potato chips in its hold. — David Doubilet

## Soft Coral Paradise

Fiji

**D**iving Fiji means you're bound to experience a mind-boggling array of colors. Many of the dive sites scattered throughout the archipelago feature the Pacific's most striking soft coral forests. Gorgeous gorgonians, flower-like soft-coral bushes and gigantic vibrant tree corals all compete

### DESTINATION PRIMER

**AVERAGE WATER TEMP:** 78-81° F **WHAT TO WEAR:** A shorty to a 3/2 mm fullsuit **AVERAGE VIZ:** 80-120 feet **WHEN TO GO:** Year-round

for space on the reef. Exquisite invertebrates, a multi-hued array of tropicals and the stunning blue ribbon eel captivate during slack tide.

Dive sites range from remote sea mounts to bommie-studded sandy channels to sheer walls and hard-coral gardens.

MUST DO  
MUST DIVE

### Share the Kava Bowl

Sit with Fijians around the kava bowl, talk story, sing, dance and share the fun feeling of togetherness.

1. North Save-a-Tack
2. Mount Mutiny
3. Shark Alley
4. Great White Wall
5. E6

And while the diving is fantastic, it's an absolute must to explore the islands topside. Hike the highlands of Viti Levu, admire the firewalkers in Beqa, swim in water holes underneath cascading waterfalls on Taveuni, walk the white-sand beaches in the Yasawas or ride through coconut plantations on Vanua Levu. No matter which islands you visit, you can always be assured that you'll be welcomed with big smiles and a sincerity that is truly unique to Fiji. — Astrid Mahaney



JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

**TWO-PART HARMONY**  
A ribbon-eel duet on a Fiji reef.