



## Introduction to Guam



With a shape reminiscent of a footprint left in the sand, Guam is the largest and most populated island in Micronesia and just as its shape implies, is also a first step into the “many tiny islands” which make up this beautiful region of Micronesia. As an organized, unincorporated U.S. territory, Guam is located in East Asia, is the closest U.S. destination when arriving from neighboring countries

such as China and is ideally situated approximately nine hundred miles north of the equator. The thirty-two miles of longitude Guam covers ranges from 4 to 8 miles in width. Besides being a gateway to Micronesia, Guam is also a communications, transportation and financial hub for the area. We are just a short plane ride away to many of the outer islands such as the Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Rota and Tinian, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Conversely,

Guam is also a gateway to the world and America in Asia. By air travel, our island is only three and a half hours away from many Asian cities, four and a half hours from Cairns and a little over seven hours from Hawaii. The island is an international travel hub with regular flights to Japan, Korea, The Philippines, The United States and Hawaii, Australia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. We are proud to be serviced by airlines such as United Airlines, JINAIR, Delta Air Lines, China Airlines, JAL, Eva Air, Korean Air, and Philippine Airlines.

Our island is blessed with a warm climate and scenic geography. Guam’s average daily temperature is a pleasant 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29 degrees Celsius). The land which comprises Guam rises from the depths of the Mariana Trench, the deepest underwater trench in the world, and the limestone cliffs which drop dramatically to the sea in the northern part of Guam are contrasted with windswept rolling hills and panoramic views to the south. Our highest mountain, Mt. Lamlam, rises in the southern part of the island and certainly looks tall when looking up from its base, but it is actually the tallest mountain in the world, when measured from its



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true underwater base deep below the sea. Further south, Cocos Island sits near the rear of a turquoise lagoon at the very southern tip of Guam.

The people of Guam are diverse, welcoming and are well known for their friendly and warm hospitality. According to the 2010 Census from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 159,358 people living on Guam. Although the demographics for Guam are not yet available from 2010 at the time of this writing, as of the 2000 Census the population of Guam was comprised of 37.1% Chamorro, 26.3% Filipino and 11.3% other Pacific islanders. The remaining island population is comprised of Caucasian, Asian and other ethnicities. All people born on Guam are U.S. citizens, and the official languages are Chamorro and English. As shown, overall Guam is a varied, multicultural society with both American and Asian influences.

The first European contact with the Chamorro, the first native people of Guam, was made by Ferdinand Magellan on March 6, 1521. The Spanish would consequently go on to rule Guam for over three hundred years and much of their architectural and cultural influence can be found in abundance throughout the island. More recently in history, Guam was ceded to the U.S. following the Spanish-American War of 1898 and changed hands again after the



island was captured by Japanese forces on December 10, 1941. After being occupied by the Japanese for over two years, on July 21, 1944, Guam was liberated by the U.S. and remains to this day a part of the United States. In remembrance of this event, Liberation Day remains one of the most celebrated holidays on Guam with a colorful parade, air show and island wide barbecues commemorating the occasion.



Getting to Guam is easy, and staying here is, too. There are currently combined over fifty hotels, resorts and motels on Guam which boast over 9000 hotel rooms, with new properties typically added regularly. Guam is also brimming with glimmering white wedding chapels and has many qualified wedding companies to insure the important

day is planned with expertise and perfection. In the near distance, overlooking many of these chapels is Two Lovers Point, one of Guam's most regularly visited sites, and an often photographed landmark. The legend of this sheer cliff tells of a young woman, who in order to avoid a forced marriage, ran away with a true love and rather than face separation, jumped to their death from the top of

the point so their love could live on forever. In the calm waters below, The Tumon Bay Marine Preserve is one of Guam's five protected marine preserves, home to more than two hundred coral and five hundred marine species, which helpfully can be identified through beachside kiosks and posters. Fish cards are also available at the Guam Visitors Bureau to help identify the vibrant sea life. In addition, Tumon Bay is also the heart of Guam's tourism industry, where the majority of Guam's luxury hotels and resorts can be found.

Guam is surrounded by a watery playground, with world class snorkeling, diving and



water sports opportunities along with a regulated and professional dive industry. An outstanding coral reef rings the island and our bays boast some of the world's best snorkeling, with snorkeling in the open ocean also an option with the assistance of one of Guam's many friendly instructing professionals. Diving on Guam is particularly spectacular, with The Blue Hole, Hap's Reef and the many wrecks being truly amazing spots for diving. The visibility is thirty to sixty feet in Apra Harbor and up to one hundred and fifty feet outside the reef. Guam is the only place in the world where shipwrecks from two world wars lay side by side, the SMS Cormoran and the Tokai Maru.

Sightseeing on Guam is rich in cultural and historical significance. Hiking the backcountry of the island, or the "boonies" as it is known locally can be a great adventure and guided hikes are available. Visitors can get around Guam through a wide variety of transportation, including rental cars, scooter rentals, tour buses,

taxi, trolleys and shopping buses. Golfing is a favorite pastime on the island, with pleasant temperatures year round and remarkable natural vistas of verdant tropical jungle and foaming ocean waters awaiting the golfer at any one of our seven world class courses, with over 180 holes in total, some designed by golfing legends such as Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer. Conveniently, all of the golf courses on Guam are within about a twenty minute drive from major hotels.

The Gef Pa'go Park in Inarajan was created to replicate an authentic Chamorro Village and hold demonstrations in traditional weaving, cooking, coconut husking and salt making. It is located in the historic district of Inarajan in southern Guam. Likewise, the Chamorro Village area in Hagåtña has a wide selection of local shops and vendors, cultural boutiques and restaurants with local and international food available. On Wednesday evenings, the village comes alive with lights, sounds

and crowds of locals and visitors on site to enjoy the entertainment, local fiesta food, music, dancing, shopping and more at one of the most popular night markets on the island.

When it comes to dining and nightlife, both the restaurants and our bars and clubs located throughout the island showcase delicious food and memorable nights. Fine dining restaurants feature local and international cuisine, with entertaining dinner shows and sunset cruises sailing into the perfect romantic evening. Top notch, modern bars and clubs feature DJ's playing cutting edge international sets and local bands playing everything from jazz, reggae to rock. Guam is also known as the place to go for luxury shopping, with our duty free retail sales environment making all purchases on island tax free. Department stores, malls and fashionable boutiques offer great value on luxuries while local street markets and festivals give a taste of locally produced goods.





Locally made food is served throughout the year at village gatherings known as fiestas, where tables groan under the weight of mouthwatering traditional dishes such as barbecued meats, fish and poultry, succulent vegetable dishes and an island staple, our famous red rice, all eaten during cultural exhibitions of music and art. For a taste of some more tradition, The Guam Micronesia Island Fair is an annual event sponsored by the Guam Visitors Bureau to showcase

the culture of Guam as well as the surrounding islands. At this event, there are many vendors selling traditional arts, crafts and food while displaying entertainment over the course of three days in early October. Also in October, Guam hosts the Ko'ko' Road Race, which is a half marathon and a 4 person Japanese style ekiden relay featuring more than 1600 runners from Guam, Japan, Micronesia, the U.S. mainland, Australia and Asia. Besides being fun for all involved,

the race is for the great cause of raising awareness for Guam's beloved territorial bird, the endangered Guam rail, or ko'ko bird. Whether it is for relaxation, adventure, culture or some combination, we welcome you to our shores. ■

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