



# GUAM

## General Information

### WHERE AMERICA'S DAY BEGINS

Guam, an island territory of the United States, rich with cultural heritage and pride, is located 900 miles north of the equator in the Western Pacific. Guam is four to eight miles wide and 32 miles long and is the largest of the Micronesian islands. Guam's lush tropical terrain along with urban areas within the island covers 220 square miles and is the southernmost island in the Mariana Island chain. Because of its western location from the International Date Line, Guam is the first to experience the new day in the United States; hence Guam is "where America's Day begins." Its capital city is Hagatña (formerly Agana).

The island was formed by the union of two volcanoes; a limestone plateau in the northern and southern sections of Guam joins the extinct volcanoes. Guam sits at 13 degrees North latitude and 144 degrees East longitude, approximately 210 miles southeast of the Marianas Trench, the deepest trench in the world. Sharing a similar culture and weather are Guam's sister islands: Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

Guam is located approximately 6,000 miles from San Francisco, California; 3,800 miles west of Honolulu, Hawaii; 1,500 miles south of Japan; 1,596 miles from the Philippines; 2,026 miles east of Hong Kong; and 1,922 miles east of Shanghai.

### OUR PEOPLE AND OUR POPULATION

The population of Guam is 173, 456 (July 2007 est.). Primary ethnic groups are Chamorro (37%), Filipino (26%), Pacific Islander (7%), Caucasian (6%) and other Asian ethnicities including Japanese, Korean and Chinese (2%). Eighty-five percent of the population is Roman Catholic; the other 15 percent range from Presbyterian, Buddhist, Jehovah's Witness and Seventh Day Adventist.

### OUR CLIMATE

Guam's climate is characterized as Tropical Marine and the weather is very hot and humid with minimal seasonal variations. The yearly temperature is 85° Fahrenheit (29° Celsius), with the mean low at 76° Fahrenheit and a mean high at 86° Fahrenheit. The average water temperature is also 85° Fahrenheit, enabling many visitors to the island to enjoy an array of water sports. The island experiences two seasons—dry season from December through June and rainy season from July through November. September and October are the rainiest months, each averaging about 14 inches of rainfall.

### OUR LANGUAGE

English and Chamorro are the official languages of Guam.



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## POLITICAL STATUS AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Guam is an organized, unincorporated territory of the United States. It is ruled by a civilian government with three branches—executive, legislative and judicial. Residents born in Guam were granted citizenship of the United States when the Organic Act was signed in 1949.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Time:** Guam is 18 hours ahead of Pacific Time and 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Meridian Time.
- **Electricity Voltage:** The electrical current is identical to the U.S. Mainland: 120 volts/60 cycles.
- **Currency:** U.S. Dollar
- **Credit Cards:** American Express, Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club, JCB and other major credit cards are widely accepted.
- **Banks:** Bank of Guam, Bank of Hawaii, Citibank, First Hawaiian Bank, ANZ Guam Inc., Coast 360, Community First Guam Federal Credit Union and BankPacific
- **Internet Services/Media:** Internet dial-up, broadband, Wi-Fi, digital cable television, local and national newspapers and magazine publications available.



## OUR HISTORY

The indigenous Chamorros, the first inhabitants of Guam, were expert seamen who built fast sailing outrigger canoes called proas for travel and trade with the surrounding islands. They navigated by the stars, waves and ocean flora and fauna with ease. It was believed that they traveled from Southeast Asia by canoe to the island more than 3,500 years ago. In addition to their seafaring tradition, the Chamorro people were expert weavers and pottery makers which are evidenced in their cultural artifacts and architecture that still exist today.

On March 6, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese captain-general, sent on behalf of the King of Spain, spotted Guam during his attempt to circumnavigate the globe. More than a century later, Jesuit missionaries and catechists led by Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores arrived to establish a measure of European civilization, including Christianity and trade in Guam. The large presence of Spanish influence and close proximity of Guam to the Philippines shows incidence of Spanish customs and language in the Chamorro culture.

Following the Spanish American War of 1898, Guam became a United States territory. The U.S. Naval Government made many positive changes and improvements on Guam, including agriculture, public health and sanitation, education, land management, taxes and public works.

In 1941 the Japanese invaded Guam and the people of Guam were subjected to Japan rule for three years. On July 21, 1944, Guam was liberated by the United States and was once again under American rule. Three years later, President Harry S. Truman signed the Organic Act making Guam an unincorporated territory with limited self-governing authority.

## TRAVEL TO GUAM

Guam is located in close proximity to many Asian countries including Japan, Korea, Philippines, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. The average travel time from Guam to key Asian cities is 3.5 to 4.5 hours. Travel time to Hawaii is 7 hours. Air service to Guam is provided by Continental Airlines, Northwest/Delta Airlines, Japan Airlines, China Airlines, Philippine Airlines and Korean Air with most direct flights to many destinations in Asia, the United States and islands in the Pacific.



## TRAVEL ENTRY AND EXIT FORMALITIES

Entry requirements for Guam are identical for any U.S. destination. Although U.S. Citizens are required to possess a U.S. passport, on a case-by-case basis, photo I.D. and proof of citizenship may be accepted. Citizens of most other countries must have a valid passport with a U.S. visa.

Effective November 28, 2009, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act will go into effect and includes a new ruling on the Guam Visa Waiver Program. According to the Federal Register, currently, the determination as to which countries may participate is based on the countries' geographical proximity to Guam on the premise that they maintain a traditional interchange with Guam. Countries that are not in geographical proximity to Guam may be included if they have a substantial volume of nonimmigrant admissions to Guam and extend reciprocal privileges to citizens of the United States.

Citizens of more than a dozen countries have been allowed entry to Guam without a visa for a period of up to 45 days; travel onward to other U.S. ports is not allowed and the traveler must arrive on a signatory carrier. Countries on the Visa Waiver Program include Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

For more detailed information, please visit the United States Department of Homeland Security's website at [www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1233261948672.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1233261948672.shtm).

## ACCOMMODATIONS IN GUAM

Accommodations in Guam range from affordable motels to high-end luxury resorts. There are smaller, unique boutique-like hotels as well as major hotel chains such as the Hilton, Marriott, Sheraton, Hyatt, Outrigger and Westin that are primarily located in Tumon, the island's main tourist district. The southern areas of Guam also offer serene, country-like accommodations to visitors of Guam.

## GUAM'S CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

Guam, an island rich in culture and the "Hafa Adai" spirit, is not only a place with great, tropical weather and pristine beaches—it is an island of beauty, history and cultural tradition. Explore the beauty of Guam from the top of Two Lover's Point in the village of Upper Tumon, Fort Apugan in Agana Heights or the Cetti Bay overlook in southern Guam. Take a hike in the southern area of the island and visit one of thirty-two waterfalls on Guam.

Evidence of Guam's rich history lie in such sites as the Senator Angel L.G. Santos Latte Memorial Park, Plaza de Espana, Guam's Historical Village Gef Pa'go Park in Inarajan, War in the Pacific National Historical Park and the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral Basilica, most of which are located in Guam's capital city of Hagatña.

The people of Guam take great pride in sharing their cultural traditions with visitors to the island. Guam's unique parties or "fiestas"—village-wide celebrations introduced by the Spanish in 1668, feature an array of the island's cultural cuisines. It is at fiestas where families prepare heavily laden tables of colorful local delicacies such as chicken and corn chowder soup, spicy coconut eggplant, red rice, hot and spicy chicken, barbecue marinated reef fish, chicken and beef, shrimp patties, chicken kelaguen (a dish consisting of barbecued chicken, lemon juice, coconut and hot peppers) and more. The Chamorro Village's Wednesday Night Market and Friday Ocean Night Market located in Hagatña are excellent displays of Guam's cultural heritage in food, music, art and dance in one spot.

From Yigo to Merizo, each of the nineteen villages in Guam brings unique attributes to the island's culture that visitors to Guam should experience and take home with them.



## ADVENTURE GUAM

What better way to discover Guam while taking in water and land sports? The island's ocean is an open playground to water sports enthusiasts who enjoy swimming, windsurfing, kayaking, snorkeling, jet skiing, kite boarding, parasailing and diving. The best snorkeling spots for both beginners and experienced snorkelers are on the protected reefs of the Tumon Bay Marine Preserve, the Piti Bomb Holes and in the southern village of Merizo.

Another way visitors to the island can enjoy Guam's waters is through the island's only submarine tour, The Atlantis, as well as dolphin watching, riverboat trips in the southern part of the island, or studying marine life in the Underwater World Aquarium located in Pleasure Island.

Guam's diving environment is rated the top twenty percent in the world. Because of the island's close location to the Marianas Trench, Guam has one of the richest and most diverse coral reef areas in the United States. Along Guam's reefs lie more than 300 types of corals, 220 species of benthic marine algae and 950 species of coral reef fishes. Guam's underwater world is home to WWI and WWII shipwrecks, the SMS Cormoran, the Tokai Maru, and the Kitsugawa Maru—three of the most popular dive sites in Guam. Other popular dive sites include the Blue Hole, Gab Gab II, Crevice, Coral Gardens and Haps Reef.

There are numerous dive shops in Guam that have dive instructors that are PADI (Professional Association of Dive Instructors) 5-star certified. These dive shops offer very reasonable dive prices compared to most areas in the world. Guam's tropical waters enable beginner divers to experience warm and calm water conditions at 82-86° Fahrenheit year round and excellent visibility of up to 150 feet.

For more detailed lists and information about the extensive list of dive sites and opportunities available in Guam, most dive shops have websites you can visit that also feature exciting underwater images.

Guam is a golfer's paradise with seven picturesque golf courses including Leo Palace Resort, Onward Talofoto Golf Club, STARTS Guam Golf Resort, Onward Mangilao Golf Club, Guam International Country Club, Windward Hills Country Club and Country Club of the Pacific. These resort courses feature various degrees of difficulty and are located in magnificent spots throughout the island.

For the daredevil visitors to our island, see all of Guam from high in the sky and on the ground, through skydiving with Skydive Guam.



## ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Pamper yourself, island-style at one of Guam's spas or take a shopping trip browsing through high-end shops at the DFS Galleria, Tumon Sands Plaza and the Plaza at Outrigger. Take the family to the world's largest Kmart, the Guam Premier Outlets, Micronesia Mall, Acanta Mall, or Agana Shopping Center to purchase clothing, shoes, accessories, island souvenirs, food, beverages and toiletries.

Guam's white sand beaches are lined with one-of-a-kind wedding chapels for visitors who dream of having a destination wedding. There are also countless wedding companies and boutiques that can assist in making your wedding dream a reality.

Guam's nightlife can be just as busy as visitors' day excursions—when the sun sets, the party begins. The SandCastle located in Tumon is Guam's version of a Las Vegas style dinner show. Visitors can experience an island-style, cultural dinner show at various hotel resorts throughout Tumon. There are also numerous nightclubs including the Globe at the Sandcastle, the Hard Rock Café and Club Pash. A long list of American and international restaurants, bars and pubs located predominantly in central and Tumon, Guam offer a place where visitors can dine, lounge or dance the night away.



**For more information, contact:**

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