

Bikini Atoll, The Marshall Islands

10, 11, 12 and 13 Nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Ebeye Island around 15:00-16:00 (dependent on ferry schedules)
- **Disembarkation:** Ebeye Island at 07:00 or 10:30*

Arrival and embarkation transfers

As United Airlines' flight schedules can change at short notice, and weight restrictions can mean luggage arriving on the next flight, **we strongly recommend making arrangements to arrive at least 2 days before your liveaboard embarkation date.**

Transfer from Kwajalein to Ebeye Island and vice versa is by ferry which takes approximately 25 minutes from the army base.

As Kwajalein is U.S. military territory, it is a restricted area and visitors are not allowed outside of the airport. Upon arrival, travellers are taken to a holding area while their luggage is searched by sniffer dogs and will remain there until the shuttle bus arrives for transfer to where the Army ferry departs for Ebeye Island.

Please ensure you have a printed copy of your **Master Liveaboards Sponsor Letter** on hand when arriving in Kwajalein as it is a declaration of why you are travelling to/through Kwajalein.

Guests who choose to arrive on embarkation day will be met at the pier in Kwajalein by a representative from Master Liveaboards who will accompany them on the ferry to Ebeye. Upon arrival in Ebeye transfer to the liveaboard vessel will be from the pier on one of the dive tenders.

Guests staying in Ebeye before the start of their liveaboard itinerary will be picked up from the hotel between 15:30 and 16:00.

*Disembarkation arrangements

We aim to arrive in Ebeye in the early hours of the morning on departure day. Disembarkation time will be 07:00 or 10:30 when our crew will accompany guests from the vessel to the army ferry in Ebeye for their transfer to Kwajalein.

Disembarkation time is partly based on the United Airlines flight check-in times and ferry schedules.

Diving Information

The average maximum depth of the wrecks in Bikini Atoll is around 50 metres* (150ft). Therefore, Bikini Atoll itineraries are only suitable for divers with **technical diving training and experience**.

All guests must have diving-specific insurance which covers technical and extended range diving, emergency evacuation, medical and recompression chamber costs.

Mandatory minimum certification and experience requirements

All divers are required to have a minimum of 100 logged dives and wreck diving experience.

- **Open Circuit Divers** - minimum **TDI Advanced Nitrox and Decompression Procedures*** certifications or equivalent, e.g. PADI Tec. 45
- **Rebreather Divers** - minimum **TDI CCR Air Diluent Decompression and CCR Helitrox Diver - 45 metres*** certification, or equivalent.

*To experience the wrecks of Bikini Atoll to their fullest extent, we recommend technical certifications that exceed 45 metres depth limits. e.g. TDI Extended Range Diver.

All divers who wish to penetrate any of the wrecks MUST provide proof of technical overhead environment training and experience.

We are unable to offer any diver training courses on Bikini Atoll itineraries.

PLEASE NOTE: *Any guests who do not meet the minimum mandatory certification and experience requirements will not be allowed to dive. Additionally, any divers who our crew feel lack sufficient skills or experience to dive the wrecks safely may be denied participation in some or all dives.*

Dive Plans

While the Cruise Director will provide a thorough briefing well in advance of each dive with information about depths, hazards, and points of interest including penetration possibilities, and maximum bottom times, *all guests are responsible for planning and adhering to their own dive profiles.*

Many of the dives are unguided but **all divers are required to dive in buddy teams**. However, some of the wreck penetrations can be extremely challenging and hazardous, especially on the Saratoga, and therefore not allowed without a guide; For safety reasons, these dives will be done in small groups of 2-3 divers per guide over several dives.

Solo diving is NOT permitted in any circumstances.

We will not allow any guests to do wreck penetrations unless they can provide proof of technical overhead environment diver training and experience.

All divers are expected to stay well within the bounds of their training and experience, follow their dive plans and computer guidelines and fulfil all decompression stop obligations on every dive. They must also follow any instructions given by the dive crew aboard the vessel.

Please bear in mind that medical and recompression facilities in the region are extremely limited and remote. In the event of a diving accident in Bikini Atoll, the trip will be curtailed for the vessel to return to Kwajalein to facilitate evacuation to the nearest available hyperbaric chamber. ***We DO NOT support in-water recompression.***

It is your responsibility to ensure your insurance will fully cover and reimburse all evacuation costs as well as recompression chamber and/or hospital treatment.

We also strongly recommend insurance that provides cover for missed dives and additional costs which could arise as a result of any situation that may require the vessel to return to Kwajalein early.

Itinerary details

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions.

Marine & Port Fees: (to be paid on board)

- 10 & 11 nights: 550 USD
- 12 nights: 600 USD
- 13 nights: 650 USD

PLEASE NOTE: *Marine & Port fees are subject to change without notice. The applicable amount at the time of departure will be added to your onboard extras to be paid before disembarkation.*

Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or understand English, please contact us.

Number of scheduled dives:

- 10 nights: up to 13
- 11 nights: up to 15
- 12 nights: up to 17
- 13 nights: up to 19

Whilst we endeavour to ensure the number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, bad weather and sea conditions can hinder the vessel's crossing time to and from Bikini Atoll and therefore play a part in the Cruise Director's planning and number of dives.

Dive scheduling

Your cruise director will schedule a maximum of two dives each day in Bikini Atoll, with a standard, minimum surface interval of 4 hours between dives.

Depending on which wreck is being dived, total dive time is usually no more than 2 hours: 30-40 minutes bottom time with 1-1^{1/2} hrs ascent and decompression followed by at least 4

hours surface interval during which time lunch will be served. In some cases, longer dives may be allowed but this will limit the number of dives on that day to one (1).

It is mandatory for guests to take an afternoon off from diving mid-trip. An optional [land tour on Bikini Island](#) and beach BBQ will be organised on this day but there will be **no alternative shallow diving** offered for guests who do not want to visit the island.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Embarkation between 15:30 and 16:00 is followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and dinner. ***There is no diving on embarkation day.***

Day 2: If possible, the cruise director will schedule a morning dive on Prinz Eugen in Kwajalein Atoll before commencing the crossing to Bikini Atoll. ***The total distance from Ebeye to Bikini Atoll is 406 kilometres which is 25-34 hours of cruising depending on weather conditions.***

Day 3: Afternoon arrival at Bikini Atoll. Diving on this day is dependent on how long the crossing from Ebeye takes and the arrival time in Bikini.

Subsequent diving days are scheduled as follows:

- Breakfast, followed by a briefing and dive 1
- Lunch and relaxation followed by briefing and dive 2
- Snacks and relaxation
- Dinner

Mid-trip (Day 6, 7 or 9, depending on itinerary duration): 1 morning dive only.

After lunch, guests will have the opportunity to take a [land tour on Bikini Island](#) followed by beach barbeque, or guests can remain on board and relax. ***No alternative diving will be offered.***

Day before disembarkation: Departure from Bikini Atoll in the early hours for crossing back to Ebeye.

Disembarkation day: Arrival in Ebeye early morning. Disembarkation time will be 07:00 or 10:30 at the latest.

The story behind the wrecks of Bikini Atoll

After the Second World War, the USA collected a 'mock' naval fleet for the purpose of testing the impact of different atomic bombs on a large fleet. The tests were performed in several remote locations across the Pacific Ocean, known as the Pacific Proving Grounds. Bikini Atoll and Enewetak Atoll were appointed as testing areas within the Marshall Islands where a total of 67 nuclear bombs were detonated within the framework of various operations between 1946 and 1958.

On March 1st 1954, the notorious dry fuel hydrogen bomb 'Castle Bravo' was detonated in Bikini Atoll. The 15 Megaton bomb was roughly 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic

bomb dropped on Hiroshima and the US' most powerful nuclear device ever. It left a 2 km (1¼ mile) wide, 76 metre (250 ft) deep crater in the northwestern corner of the lagoon.

In total, 23 nuclear blasts befell Bikini Atoll, including those of [Operation Crossroads](#) in 1946 which resulted in a unique collection of shipwrecks comprising mostly US battleships, cruisers, and an aircraft carrier. More than 70 years later, the shipwrecks of Bikini Atoll remain equally as impressive while having become home to a variety of corals and fish species.

The following is an overview of the wrecks that we may visit during your liveaboard.

Bikini Atoll

[USS Saratoga](#)

The signature dive of Bikini Lagoon: the USS Saratoga CV-3 Aircraft carrier. This 270 metres (888 ft) long, 29 metres (95ft) wide ship weighs 39,000 tons and rests upright in Bikini Lagoon at a **depth of 51 metres (167 ft)** with her bridge easily accessible at 18 metres and her **flight deck at 27 metres**. The majority of the Helldiver planes were swept off the flight deck during the [Baker test](#) and the remains of them are scattered across the seabed around the Saratoga, although there are also a few still inside the hangar which is no longer accessible. On the deck though, 350lb and 500lb bombs, airdrop torpedoes and depth charges can all still be found.

Remarkable detail: the Japanese reported the USS Saratoga sunk 7 times during World War II. She did, however, suffer damage on multiple occasions during the war and was therefore chosen to be used as a testing target in Bikini Atoll.

[IJN Nagato](#)

Built for the Imperial Japanese Navy, the Nagato was the first super-dreadnought battleship to mount 16-inch (406 mm) guns. Together with a cruising speed of 26.5 knots, this made her the Imperial Japanese Navy's flagship as well as one of the most powerful and versatile warships in the world at that time. She is also the most (in)famous Japanese ship being the one from which Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto gave the final order to start the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7th, 1941.

After the Japanese surrender, the already war damaged Nagato was seized by US forces on 30th August 1945 and subsequently selected as target ship for Operation Crossroads. She was positioned 870 metres (½ mile) from the hypocentre of Test Baker and landed completely upside down **on the seabed at 52 metres (170ft)**. Her most prominent features are the four propellers at a depth of 33.5 metres (110ft), the 16" guns in the stern and bow areas suspended from her hull at 50 metres (164ft), and her unmistakable Pagoda mast from where history was made.

USS Arkansas

An American dreadnought, measuring 171 metres (562 ft) long and armed with twelve 12-inch guns and capable of a top speed of 20.5 knots. The Arkansas served in World War I and World War II escorting convoys in the Atlantic and bombarding shore targets during the invasions of Normandy, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

She was moored 205 metres (675 ft.) away from the underwater detonation of Test Baker and sank only 19 seconds after the blast, settling almost completely upside down on the sandy bottom at **55 m (180 ft) deep**.

[USS Lamson](#)

The American Mahan-class Destroyer ship was sunk very early on during the tests in Bikini Atoll and appears almost like a pirate ship underwater. With her length of 104 metres (341 ft), she might not be the biggest of the Bikini wrecks but that makes her perfect as you can take your time to explore. Sitting upright at about **51 metres (167 ft) depth**, the shallowest section is at 36 metres and her main deck is between 45-49 metres. She features several guns, torpedoes and bombs and generally provides good access to divers along with great visibility making her an exceptional dive.

USS Anderson

The 106 metres (348ft) long by 11 metres (36ft) wide Sims-class destroyer was built in 1939 and served at different locations during World War II, fighting battles in the Atlantic and the Pacific using her machine guns, anti-aircraft missiles and torpedoes, taking down many enemy aircraft as well as assisting in anti-submarine warfare.

The Anderson now rests mostly intact on her starboard side at a **maximum depth of 51 metres (170 ft)**. At the stern you can see the depth charge racks and propellers and, past the gun turrets and torpedo tubes, amidst the debris on the forward superstructure, there is a compass as well as an interesting collection of artefacts such as a clock which stopped forever at 8:21.

[USS Apogon](#)

The Apogon is a Balao-class submarine that headed straight for Hawaii after her launch in 1943 to join the Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour. For the following 2 years, she patrolled various areas in the Pacific seeking out and attacking enemy (i.e. Japanese) ships. The Apogon lies completely intact at a **maximum depth of 50 metres** (164 ft) with an **average depth of 43 metres** and is the only submarine that can be dived in Bikini Atoll. Divers can easily explore the conning tower, viewing binoculars on the bridge, and propellers which are covered by red sponges.

USS Carlisle

The 130 metres (426 ft) long, 18 metres (58 ft) wide Carlisle is a Gilliam-class attack support boat that served as merchant vessel transporter within the US Navy in the Second World War. Finished and acquired by the Navy in 1944, she arrived late into the war and was assigned to transport operations, of which she only performed 3. Hence, she never participated in any combat situations. She sank in 1946 as a result of Operation Crossroads' [Able Test](#), and now rests upright in the sand at **51 metres (167 ft) depth**, with her **deck at 40 metres** (131 ft).

USS Pilotfish

An American Balao-class submarine, the Pilotfish measures 95 metres (311 ft) in length and

8.3 metres (27 ft) wide and was previously used to perform lifeguard and offensive patrolling duties all over the Pacific. In 1946, the Baker underwater atomic bomb test compressed her hull and forced all the hatches and valves to open causing her to completely flood and sink. She now lies at a **maximum depth of 51 metres (167 ft)** with the conning tower at 40m.

Kwajalein Atoll

[Prinz Eugen](#)

Being a war prize awarded to the USA by Britain after WWII resulted in the atomic fate of this German heavy cruiser. She survived both blasts of Operation Crossroads, even though she was already damaged, and she was subsequently towed to Kwajalein for decontamination. Here, in December 1946, she ultimately capsized and sank to her final resting place, upside down at 36 metres (118 ft). Nowadays, the outline of a large part of the ship is visible from above water and, at low tide, her rudder and two remaining propellers break the surface.

Should you have any questions concerning the diving in Bikini Atoll, or whether this itinerary is suitable for you, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveboards.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.