

Bikini Atoll, The Marshall Islands

Itinerary - 10 Nights, 11 Nights, and 13 Nights

The unique shipwrecks 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. These nuclear bomb tests were performed in several remote locations in the South Pacific Ocean, known as the Pacific Proving Grounds. Bikini Atoll was appointed one of the designated testing areas within the Marshall Islands, where a grand total of 67 nuclear bombs have been detonated within the framework of Operation Crossroads and several other Operations.

Between 1946 and 1958, not less than 23 atomic bombs were tested at Bikini Atoll only, which resulted in a unique collection of shipwrecks consisting of war battleships, cruisers, and an aircraft carrier.

In March 1954, the notorious dry fuel hydrogen bomb 'Castle Bravo' was detonated in Bikini. This bomb was the US' most powerful nuclear device ever; 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It left a 2km wide and 76m deep crater in the lagoon of Bikini. More than 60 years later, the shipwrecks remain equally as impressive while they have become home to many kinds of corals and fish species.

Mandatory minimum certification and experience requirements

As the average depth of the wrecks in Bikini Atoll is around 50 metres (150ft), this itinerary is only suitable for technical divers with previous wreck experience.

- **Technical Divers must be certified as at least PADI Tec. 50, or equivalent with a minimum of 100 logged dives and wreck diving experience.**
- **Rebreather Divers must have normoxic trimix certification, with 100 logged dives, and wreck diving experience**

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements will not be allowed to dive.

It is also mandatory for all divers to have insurance which covers the type of diving and depths that they will be participating in, and includes emergency evacuation and recompression chamber treatment costs.

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

Itinerary details

- **Embarkation: Ebeye Island around 15:00-15:30 (dependent on flight schedules)**
- **Disembarkation: Ebeye Island between 10:00 and 12:00 (dependent on flight times)**

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

As Kwajalein is US Army 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 to take guests to where the Army ferry departs for Ebeye Island.

Upon arrival at Ebeye a representative from Truk Master will meet guests for transfer to the M/Y Truk Master.

Marine & Port Fees:

- 10 & 11 nights: 500 USD
- 13 nights: 600 USD

Marine park fees can be paid in advance, or on board.

Number of scheduled dives:

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

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specified point in good time and therefore plays a part in the Cruise Director's planning

Your Cruise Director will schedule 2 dives per day, with a minimum surface interval of 4 hours between dives.

It is mandatory for guests to take an afternoon off from diving mid-trip. We will offer an optional land tour on Bikini Island and beach BBQ. No alternative shallow dive will be offered.

Please note: Guests are responsible for planning and adhering to their own dive profiles and decompression stops, and for obtaining suitable dive insurance for technical diving.

We respectfully request all divers stay within the bounds of their training. When planning deep dives and extended bottom times, please bear in mind that recompression facilities in the region are limited and remote, therefore we recommend you dive conservatively.

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

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

Day 1: Embarkation between 15:00 and 15:30 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 long 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 what time Truk Master arrives in Bikini.

Subsequent diving days are scheduled as follows:

- Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Snack, relaxation,
- Dinner

Mid-trip (Day 6, 7, 9 or 10, depending on length of itinerary): 1 morning dive only. After lunch guests will have the opportunity to take a land tour on Bikini Island followed by beach barbeque, or can relax on board. 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 around 10:00; disembarkation time will be dependent on United Airlines flight departure time and ferry to Kwajalein.

The following is an overview of the wrecks that we may visit during your liveaboard on Truk Master. The safety of everyone on board is paramount and we always do our best to offer alternate dives should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Bikini Atoll

USS Saratoga

The signature dive of Bikini Lagoon: the USS Saratoga CV-3. This 270 metres (888ft) long and 29 metres (95ft) wide American aircraft carrier weighs 39,000 tons and rests in Bikini Lagoon at a depth of 52 metres. Her bridge is easily accessible at 18 metres depth, her flight deck at 28 metres, and the hanger for the Helldivers at 32 metres. The Helldiver planes were all swept

off the deck during the Baker test and the remains of them are scattered around the Saratoga on the seabed. On deck though, 350lb and 500lb bombs, air drop torpedoes and depth charges can all still be found.

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

Nagato

This battleship was built for the Imperial Japanese Navy as the first super-dreadnought to mount 16-inch (406 mm) guns. Together with a cruising speed of 26.5 knots, this made her the Imperial Navy's flagship as well as one of the most powerful and versatile warships in the world at that time. She measures 221 metres (725ft) in length and 29 metres (95ft) wide and her crew used to comprise 1734 men.

After the Japanese surrender, the Nagato was seized, used for testing and sank during Operation Crossroads in July of 1946. She landed upside down; her most prominent features are the four propellers at a depth of 33.5 metres (110ft).

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 USS Arkansas served in both 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 only 500 ft. away from the intended atomic bomb detonation in 1946 and was supposedly lifted up vertically within the blast column. She sank completely only 19 minutes after the blast, ending almost completely upside down on the sandy bottom at 55 metres depth.

USS Lamson

The American Mahan-class Destroyer ship 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 nevertheless very interesting to explore, as she features several guns, torpedoes, bombs and generally provides good access to divers in water with great visibility.

USS Anderson

The Sims-class destroyer of 106 metres (348ft.) long by 11 metres (36ft) wide was built in 1939. She served at different locations in World War II; she participated in fighting battles in the Atlantic and the Pacific using her machine guns, anti-aircraft missiles and torpedoes, taking down many enemy aircraft. USS Anderson also helped in anti-submarine warfare.

USS Apogon

A second submarine of the Balao-class that headed straight for Hawaii and the Marshall Islands after her launch in 1943. Patrolling designated areas in the South Pacific and attacking enemy (i.e. Japanese) ships were her duty. The Apogon lies completely intact at a depth of 48

meters with an average depth of 43 metres. Explore the conning tower, viewing binoculars on the bridge, and propellers covered by red sponges.

USS Carlisle

A Gilliam-class attack support boat, 130 metres (426 ft) long and 18 metres (58 ft) wide 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 during the Operation Crossroad, resting upright in the sand at 51 metres depth and her deck at 40 metres.

Kwajalein Atoll

Prinz Eugen

Being a war prize awarded to the USA by Britain after WWII resulted in the atomic fate for this German heavy cruiser. She survived the blasts of Operation Crossroads, even though she was already damaged, and she was towed to Kwajalein.

Here, she ultimately capsized and sank to her final resting place in December 1946. Nowadays, a part of the ship is still visible above water.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveboards.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.