UMBRATOLL WOLEAI MICRONESIA 2016 MARCH 9

If you think the next "U.S." total solar eclipse isn't until August 2017, think again – it's actually nearly a year and a half sooner than that!

Because the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) are in free association with the United States, even using U.S. currency so we maintain the next TSE in a U.S. territory is actually 2016 March 9 Wednesday!

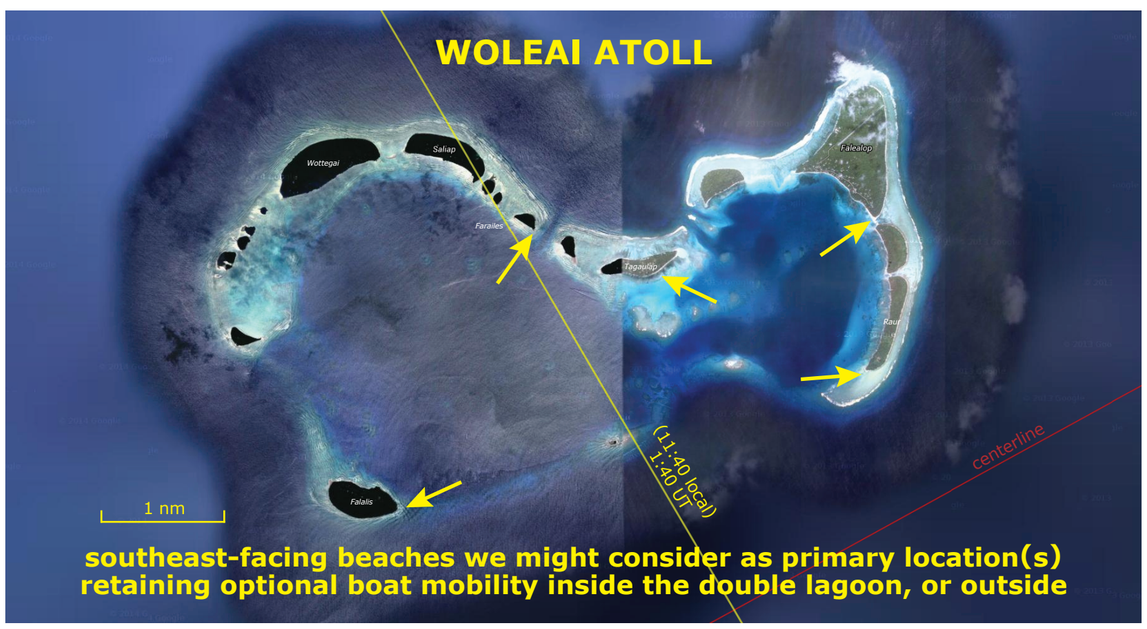
:)

Join us by ship out of Colonia, Yap to Woleai atoll at 7.37n 143.91e for limb-corrected 4 minutes 3 seconds of totality on that date = 45 seconds longer than anywhere in Indonesia and with the sun at 72 degrees elevation = 23 degrees higher than anywhere in Indonesia, viewing from dry land most likely on one of the beaches of the double lagoon.

In honor of passage of the moon's shadow a.k.a. the "umbra", Woleaians will ring their church bell i.e. they will "toll" the bell...therefore this occasion shall be known as Umbratoll 2016.

:)

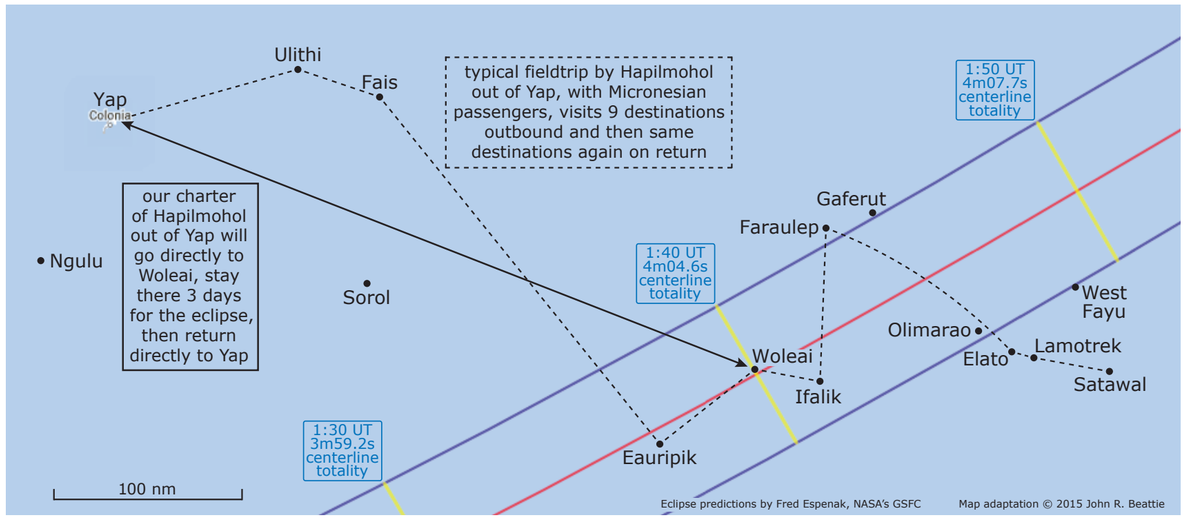
Weather prospects at Woleai (pronounced "WO-lay-eye") are perhaps slightly better than, but overall generally comparable to, Ternate in Indonesia which means some days can be great weather looking like this → but also acknowledging cloudiness is definitely possible in March so, to improve our chances of successful eclipse observation we may be able to arrange mobility by one or more small boats, economics TBD, from our primary chosen southeast-facing beach location to another one of the atoll's beaches or, optionally, to observe from the small boats themselves if we need fully two-dimensional, last-minute zigzag mobility, either from the smooth waters inside the double lagoon (preferably) or from the choppier waves outside if we need to range a further distance.



M/V Hapilmohol 1

Our transportation from Yap to Woleai will be on board M/V Hapilmohol 1, the freighter which serves as passenger and cargo vessel for Yap State of the FSM. When islanders in this part of Micronesia wish to travel from one location to another without venturing to do so in their traditional canoes, Hapilmohol 1 or H1, as we like to call it, is their means of choice.

We are chartering H1 for our exclusive use to travel non-stop from Yap to Woleai, remain there for 3 days until eclipse day, use the ship as our hotel while there and then return directly to Yap. See the map below for the route and the full tour itinerary later for more details.



As you will see from the photos, H1 is a freighter not a cruise ship. It is a working supply ship which, as in many isolated and sparsely populated areas, transports passengers and provisions to and among the remote islands. While somewhat rustic or industrial in nature, it is a good solid ship that will provide us with all the necessary basic essentials, accommodation and food, we need for our voyage to Woleai. If we take this in somewhat of a "backpacker" spirit, it should be a memorable experience and provide us with an idea of what the expeditions of earlier times were like to reach such a remote and fascinating destination.

Onboard the majority of sleeping space is of a communal nature, not inside cabins, using mats or foam padding on the floor. You may wish to bring a hammock or air mattress with you to use in your allotted space. Our "AC" air-conditioned deck for up to 50 people will be a large enclosed space with some minimal privacy partitioning of allocated areas. The other "GD" general decks for up to 200 people will be sheltered but not enclosed and will not have air conditioning, relying rather on natural breezes.

During our three days at Woleai if normal conditions permit, we'll just walk off and on H1 via the front ramp...

woleaian 2007 Trip

woleaian 2007 Trip

...otherwise transfers over the short distance to and from shore will be by tender.

A basic meal plan will be included in the tariff though kitchen facilities and dining areas are somewhat limited on board the ship so it will be a good idea to bring some snacks with you for the journey or purchase some provisions while in Yap prior to boarding. At Woleai we anticipate there will be local foods available including coconuts, breadfruit, bananas, taro, and fresh fish.

We expect it will be possible to camp on shore while at Woleai if you would like to, as long as you bring a mini-tent with you. For instance this style of mini-tent costs $35.99, weighs 3.5 pounds, and can hold 1 or 2 people.

http://www.brookstone.com/xscape-explorer-2-person-dome-tent?bkeid=compare|mercent|googlebaseads|search&mr:trackingCode=5BDCB8AF-A729-E211-BFCC-001B21A69EB0&mr:referralID=NA&mr:device=c&mr:adType=plaonline&mr:ad=66933135684&mr:keyword=&mr:match=&mr:filter=51320962143&gclid=COPEu77jm8YCFdIXHwodO5cA7w

Cultural festivities coincide

We were delighted to learn, and can now share with you, that by pure good fortune there are cultural festivities scheduled not only on Yap but also at Woleai which coincide with our desired itinerary – a remarkable serendipitous treat which will add a whole extra dimension to our plans as an available option.

The annual Yap Days comprising dancing and colorful ceremonial pageantry and cultural skits and arts and crafts and decorations of every variety will take place March 1 Tuesday and March 2 Wednesday, and the annual Woleai Cultural Day along similar lines but with a more outer-island flavor, will take place March 6 Sunday, same day as our 6am arrival in H1.

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Paraphrasing one of the Yap local descriptions:

March 1st and 2nd are Yap Days, the island's days to celebrate everything Yapese – culture, tradition, food, family, and community.

They're the most colorful days of the year with traditional dances, crafts, competitions and demonstrations in ceremonial dress. It's a celebration, and a cultural preservation ceremony, that welcomes visitors to Yap, encouraging them to participate, learn about Yap, meet the people, and take photographs.

During Yap Days, villages compete. Dances, coconut husking and grading, betel nut tree climbing and weaving are a few of the traditional contests.

Demonstrations include traditional attire, canoe building, rope making, net tying, and bamboo raft making as well as grass skirt, kafar, basket and fan weaving.

In two days you can learn a lot about Yap culture, history, people, and the famous stone money. You can eat and drink local food, take plenty of photos, and buy traditional craft souvenirs.

The 2016 program for Yap Days is not yet published but here's the 2015 program.

March 1st, 2015 — 1st Day

A. OPENING CEREMONY: ---------- 9:00 am
(Introduction by Masters of Ceremony)
- Conch Shell blowing to officially open Yap Day 2015
- Municipal Parade
  - Paramount Chief Recognition
  - Historical Billboard Presentation
- Police Presentation of colors & National Anthem
- Local Blessing
- Traditional Carriage of Stone Money, Betelnut & Coconut Presentation
- Local Currency Display
- MC's Opening Remarks
- Tiyor / Tam' (TAMIL):
- Welcoming Remark by Chief of Tamil
- Remark by Council of Pilung
- Remark by Chairman of the Yap Day Committee
- Remark by Governor of Yap State

B. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE): ---------- 11:30 am
(Statement of Program and Activities)
- Raft Making
- Copra husking
- Kiniy Weaving
- Nippa weaving
- Sogom making
- Ball weaving
- Juggling
- Basket (Fanol') weaving
- Stick balancing

C. DANCE PERFORMANCE: ---------- 12:00 pm
- Tamil (Teb & Meerur) Women's Sitting Dance (*Tangin ea Mael*)

D. MARINE RESOURCES/YAP FISHING AUTHORITY---------1:00 pm
- Essay Award prizes
- Drawing contest

E. DANCE PERFORMANCE: ---------- 1:30 pm
- Rumung Municipality, Women's Sitting Dance (*Sirowa Samul*)

F. MUNICIPAL RELAY: ---------- 2:30 pm
- Municipal teams (4 individuals, male and female)

1. Climbing Betelnut Tree
2. Weaving Basket
3. Husking Copra (5 pieces)
4. *Mil Garup +*

G. DANCE PERFORMANCES: ---------- 3:00 pm
- Rull (Milew) Bamboo Dance

H. CULTURAL SKIT PERFORMANCE: ---------- 3:30 pm

I. DANCE PERFORMANCES: ---------- 4:30 pm
- Rumung Women's Sitting Dance (Gal Malal)

J. DANCE PERFORMANCES (Night time by firelight):--------5:30 pm
(MC Statement of activities)
- Conch Shell/Secure of Local Currency
- Tamil (Bugol) Women's Sitting Dance (*Anugmang*)
- Tamil (Teb) Men's Standing Dance *(Night time by firelight)*

On-going demonstrations of traditional techniques and activities (2 days)

First and Second Day:
Begin 10:30 am – 12:30 noon and 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Yap Historical Preservation Office (HPO):
1. Tuba cutting/tasting and demonstration
2. Rope making presentation
3. Tying technique presentation
4. Local fishing net making and repairing presentation
5. Grass Skirt Making
6. Fish Trap making
7. Nippa/Palm leaf weaving

Yap Traditional Navigation Society (TNS)
Demonstrations of canoe carving and traditional navigation

Tamil Nutrition Committee:
Presentation on varieties of local cooking (Bugol village)

Yap Women's Association (YWA)
1. Handicraft making presentation
2. Leis making presentation
3. Coconut oil making Presentation

Yap State Chamber of Commerce
This is a promotion for our local businesses to showcase and promote their products that are made of local materials. The vendors of the Chamber of Commerce will set this up.

March 2nd, 2015 — 2nd Day

A. OPENING CEREMONY: ---------- 9:30 am
- MC's Opening Remarks
- Tiyor/Tam (TAMIL)

B. AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITES: ---------- 10:00 am
- Statement of Activity
- Awards of Local Crops and Produce

C. DANCE PERFORMANCE: ---------- 11:00 am
- Tamil (Dechmur) Women's Sitting Dance (Sudal)

D. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:---------- 12:00 pm
- Skit Performance depicting local attire & tattoos & exchange of traditional currency

E. DANCE PERFORMANCE: ---------- 1:00 pm
- Gagil Women's Sitting Dance

F. LOG PULLING DEMONSTRATION: ---------- 1:30 pm

G. DANCE PERFORMANCES: ---------- 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- Rull Men's Sitting Dance
- Rumung Women's Sitting Dance *(Kan Tay)*
- Tamil (Maaq) Bamboo Dance *(Yibung)*

H. DANCE AWARDS & CLOSING REMARKS of Yap Day 2015-5:00 pm
- Conch Shell/Secure of Local Currency
- Presentation by Council of Pilung
  - Four [4] stone money trophies for municipal dance
  - One [1] stone money trophy for DOE competition
  - Three [3] stone money for municipal grand prize(s)
- Superlative Dance Performance Awards (4 types)
- Municipal Grand Prize
- Municipal Parade Award

J. DANCE PERFORMANCE---------- 6:30 pm
Rumung Men's Standing Dance *(Galdibung)*
Tamil Men's Standing Dance *(Yawur)*
END OF YAP DAY 2015: ---------- 8:30 pm

Then on March 6 after our outbound leg on H1, we'll attend Woleai Cultural Day which will have its own unique appeal in that it is completely "not geared for show to outsiders", it's by and for the islanders themselves with visitors welcome but, some years due to Woleai's isolation, few or no visitors in attendance so, this is going to be truly a special privilege for us to witness.

Frankly from what we've been finding out, Woleai appears to be a lovely place not only in its natural setting of multiple islets around the double lagoon five of which islets are inhabited, but also in the warmth and friendliness of the thousand or so islanders. Note that Woleaians are fully aware of "western culture" and quite a few have lived abroad for long periods, but are consciously, earnestly seeking to preserve traditional Micronesian culture and way of life on Woleai so it's truly an exotic and "unspoiled" destination, the classic "remote atoll" receiving very few "tourists" because it's so inaccessible having no functioning airfield.

[YouTube Woleai photo-"video"] [account recently closed]

Surprisingly, now Woleai does have a small generating station providing electricity 24/7 and, since early 2014, internet access rated as "slow, but usable"...also an air-conditioned dispensary and a general store and a high school where you can stop in at the main office facility → so, as a visitor to Woleai you need not feel entirely cut off from civilization...and don't forget bureaucrats with clipboards, yes there will be a couple of those too, to greet us upon arrival thereby truly assuring everyone we can feel right at home! :)

Daria Friday 2013

PLANNED ITINERARY – subject to revision

29 FEB: Mon. Arrive Yap. Check in at hotel.

01 MAR: Tue. Today is the first day of the annual Yap Day festivities including an opening ceremony and parade.

02 MAR: Wed. The Yap Day festivities continue for a second day of colorful cultural dance performances and demonstrations of local skills.

03 MAR: Thur. Free day in Yap to relax and get ready for the voyage to Woleai. There will be a sightseeing tour of the island today for those who wish.

04 MAR: Fri. Early morning boarding of our exclusively chartered ship M/V Hapilmohol 1 for a scheduled 6:00am departure.

05 MAR: Sat. En route on the 367 nautical miles journey to Woleai.

06 MAR: Sun. Scheduled arrival at Woleai 6:00am. After disembarkation, time for a quick look around before settling in to enjoy the annual Woleai Cultural Day festivities.

07 MAR: Mon. 08 MAR: Tue. Two free days on beautiful Woleai atoll, with Falealop main islet as our base. During this time there will be opportunities to visit some of the other islets including inhabited Tagaulap, Saliap, Wottegai, and Falalis as well as go swimming and snorkeling. We will become acquainted with some of the Woleaians describing to them the eclipse and explaining how to observe it safely and enjoyably. There will also be time to explore options for our preferred viewing locations for Eclipse Day.

While at Woleai we will live on board Hapilmohol 1 or, if the islanders approve, you may camp ashore if you wish – bring your own equipment.

09 MAR: Wed. ECLIPSE DAY – the day we have all been looking forward to! Make final preparations at the viewing location you have selected and get ready for totality. There will be limited availability to move around to avoid potential clouds by using the H1 tenders and also, small boats the Woleaians will provide.

First contact at 10:10am with solar elevation 52 degrees – already higher than TOTALITY in Indonesia! :D

Total solar eclipse 11:38am-11:42am. Subsequently fourth contact 1:14pm.

After third contact we will celebrate with our newfound Woleaian friends before preparing for departure of the ship at 6:00pm.

10 MAR: Thur. En route steaming back to Yap.

11 MAR: Fri. Scheduled arrival time into Yap at 6:00pm.

12 MAR: Sat. Begin your journey home, or extend your stay in this delightful area for optional activities such as a customized trip from Yap to Ulithi atoll for fishing, snorkeling, turtle-watching, experiencing island culture, etc. – can include excursions to seldom-visited sister islets Mogmog, Asor, and Fassarai – inquire.

NOTES:

1. There are limited flight options into and out of Yap, FSM. It may be necessary to add extra days at the beginning or end of this itinerary to connect with international flights. We will be happy to assist you in arranging flights and any extra accommodations needed in such cases.

2. Depending on flight schedules a scaled down version of the tour may be possible for anyone who does not mind missing the Yap Day festivities. A limited number of "deck passage only" fares are available if you are able to get to and from Yap on your own and just wish to purchase ship passage – see opposite.

3. While remote and difficult to reach, the FSM are a fascinating destination offering unspoilt natural beauty, swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving in pristine azure blue waters and friendly locals with distinct Micronesian cultures. There are also a wealth of WW II relics in this region, including quite a few on Woleai itself, as well as wreck diving opportunities, for those interested in the history of the great battles of that period. If you have the time before or after the eclipse we would encourage you to extend the duration of your visit to Micronesia to enjoy more of these experiences. We will be happy to assist with suggestions and arrange any optional activities you would like...remember, you may not have a chance to return to this far-off part of the globe very easily in the future so take full advantage of the opportunity while you are there!

PRICING (not including international airfare or optional extra programs)

On board Hapilmohol 1 you'll sleep on a sheltered deck on an air or foam pad on the floor – feel free to bring along your own pad or air mattress or hammock and/or sheet/pillow etc. for added comfort.

If you purchase "PRIORITY BOARDING" you'll get to pick, in approximate order of booking, your sleeping location ahead of people who purchase "GENERAL BOARDING".

Currently we expect to be boarding the ship between approximately 3:00am and 5:00am on 04 MAR: Fri. for an anticipated 6:00am departure, however these times are subject to change.

TOUR COST PER PERSON

$2995 AC-1 air-cond-deck-1 "PRIORITY BOARDING" 3:00am-4:00am
$2595 AC-2 air-cond-deck-2 "GENERAL BOARDING" 4:00am-5:00am

$2195 GD-1 general-deck-1 "PRIORITY BOARDING" 3:00am-4:00am
$1795 GD-2 general-deck-2 "GENERAL BOARDING" 4:00am-5:00am

$5495 8 places only – in two air-conditioned 4-person bunk cabins

TOUR DEPOSIT: $500 non-refundable. BALANCE DUE: 2015 December 1.

TOUR COST INCLUDES: Hotel accommodation on a room & tax only basis in Yap for 4 nights prior and one night after H1 sailing, introductory tour of Yap by motorcoach, 2-full-days access to Yap Day festivities, voyage to and from Woleai by H1 freighter in selected category with basic meal plan as well as during the time at anchor at Woleai, local activities while on Woleai such as Woleai Cultural Day festivities, visits to islets, eclipse viewing site scouting and selection, meetings with locals and services of guides and escorts and tour preparation and planning expenses etc..

NOT INCLUDED: International flights, sightseeing or meals other than listed, services of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, or other items not specifically mentioned as being included.

***LIMITED AVAILABILITY: "Bare Bones Special".
For those seeking an ultra-budget option we are offering:
$ 995 "GENERAL DECK PASSAGE ONLY". Last to board.
Includes H1 transportation only, no services in Yap.
Must be paid in full at time of booking and is non-refundable.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFERS FOR OUR PRIVILEGED UMBRATOLL 2016 EARLY BOOKING PARTICIPANTS

FOR PAYMENTS OF TOUR COST IN FULL RECEIVED PRIOR TO 2015 August 15:

$300 discount for AC air-cond-deck bookings
$200 discount for GD general-deck bookings
$500 discount for cabin space bookings

To sign up and/or for more information contact Tim Todd at T.E.I. Tours, tei@teiglobal.com, +1 925-825-6104, http://www.teiglobal.com.