

H1, admittedly, is not exactly the Paul Gauguin :) yet we believe will be perfectly suitable if you don't mind "basic" conditions in the quest we'll all be sharing to rendezvous with the moon's shadow!

Right off the bat you can see, from photo on previous page and also below, that H1 has a very "industrial" appearance with no "cruise ship" ambiance at all.

It will be communal with nearly all our participants sleeping on open deckspace, not inside cabins, on air or foam mattresses you'll bring with you on the trip or which we will supply – yet to be determined. Our "AC" deck for up to 50 people will be enclosed and will have air conditioning; the other "GD" general decks for up to 200 people will be sheltered but not enclosed and will not have air conditioning, though intention will be for fans to be present to supplement natural breezes. There will be option for a meal plan on board and/or you can purchase canned, etc. provisions at a supermarket before departure from Yap. At Woleai we expect there will be local foods available including coconuts, breadfruit, bananas, taro, and fresh fish. H1 will provide our accommodations while we're at Woleai and if normal conditions permit, we'll just walk on and off via the front ramp.



H1 will bring its own pair of tenders along on our eclipse trip stowed on the deck. To disembark if the front ramp is unavailable, you'll sit in a tender as the hoist transfers it from deck to the water. Alternatively, if you feel agile you can descend the side of the ship via rope ladder down to the tender as you see in the photo above. There are two vertical bars at the top of the rope ladder you hold onto as you're getting onto the first rung. Then the trip to shore, with a boathand at the till, will take only a minute or so. We expect also there will be option to camp on shore if you prefer, if you would like to bring a mini-tent. We'll arrange for a grassy area to set up the mini-tents...not on the beach because camping on the beach gets sand in everything! 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>

We'll encourage you to pick the camping option because that will mean there's more room on H1 for everyone else, while we're at Woleai.

Cultural festivities coincide

We were astonished to learn, and can now share with you, that by pure luck there are cultural festivities scheduled not only on Yap but also at Woleai which coincide with our desired itinerary for TSE 2016 – 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 pageantry and arts and crafts 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 arrival in H1.

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.

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.

