

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 time at Woleai we will use H1 as our accommodations and if normal conditions permit, we'll just walk off and on via the front ramp...



...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>

(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 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 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 6am 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.

March 1st, 2015 1st Day	March 2nd, 2015 2nd Day
<p>A. OPENING CEREMONY: 9:00 am (Introduction by Masters of Ceremony)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conch Shell blowing to officially open Yap Day 2015 Municipal Parade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>B. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE): 11:30 am (Statement of Program and Activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raft Making Copra husking Kinny Weaving Nipa weaving Sogom making Ball weaving Juggling Basket (Fanol') weaving Stick balancing <p>C. DANCE PERFORMANCE: 12:00 pm Tamil (Teb & Meeru) Women's Sitting Dance (Tangin ea Maai)</p> <p>D. MARINE RESOURCES/YAP FISHING AUTHORITY: 1:00 pm Essay Award prizes Drawing contest</p> <p>E. DANCE PERFORMANCE: 1:30 pm Rumung Municipality, Women's Sitting Dance (Sirowa Samul)</p> <p>F. MUNICIPAL RELAY: 2:30 pm Municipal teams (4 individuals, male and female) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climbing Betelnut Tree Weaving Basket Husking Copra (5 pieces) Mil Garup + </p> <p>G. DANCE PERFORMANCES: 3:00 pm Rull (Milew) Bamboo Dance</p> <p>H. CULTURAL SKIT PERFORMANCE: 3:30 pm</p> <p>I. DANCE PERFORMANCES: 4:30 pm Rumung Women's Sitting Dance (Gal Malal)</p> <p>J. DANCE PERFORMANCES (Night time by firelight): 5:30 pm (MC Statement of activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conch Shell/Secure of Local Currency Tamil (Bugo) Women's Sitting Dance (Anugmang) Tamil (Teb) Men's Standing Dance (Night time by firelight) <p>On-going demonstrations of traditional techniques and activities (2 days)</p> <p>First and Second Day: Begin 10:30 am – 12:30 noon and 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm</p> <p>Yap Historical Preservation Office (HPO): 1. Tuba cutting/lasting 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. Nipa/Palm leaf weaving</p> <p>Yap Traditional Navigation Society (TNS): Demonstrations of canoe carving and traditional navigation</p> <p>Tamil Nutrition Committee: Presentation on varieties of local cooking (Bugol village)</p> <p>Yap Women's Association (YWA): 1. Handcraft making presentation 2. Leis making presentation 3. Coconut oil making Presentation</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>A. OPENING CEREMONY: 9:30 am MC's Opening Remarks Tiyor/Tam (TAMIL)</p> <p>B. AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES: 10:00 am Statement of Activity Awards of Local Crops and Produce</p> <p>C. DANCE PERFORMANCE: 11:00 am Tamil (Dechomur) Women's Sitting Dance (Sudal)</p> <p>D. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES: 12:00 pm Skit Performance depicting local attire & tattoos & exchange of traditional currency</p> <p>E. DANCE PERFORMANCE: 1:00 pm Gagil Women's Sitting Dance</p> <p>F. LOG PULLING DEMONSTRATION: 1:30 pm</p> <p>G. DANCE PERFORMANCES: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm Rull Men's Sitting Dance Rumung Women's Sitting Dance (Kan Tay) Tamil (Maag) Bamboo Dance (Yibung)</p> <p>H. DANCE AWARDS & CLOSING REMARKS of Yap Day 2015: 5:00 pm Conch Shell/Secure of Local Currency Presentation by Council of Pilung <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 </p> <p>J. DANCE PERFORMANCE: 6:30 pm Rumung Men's Standing Dance (Galdibung) Tamil Men's Standing Dance (Yawur)</p> <p>END OF YAP DAY 2015: 8:30 pm</p>

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.

