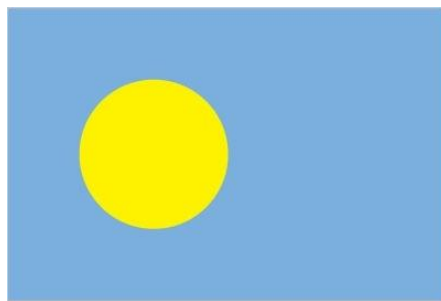




# PALAU



## INTRODUCTION

After three decades as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific under US administration, this westernmost cluster of the Caroline Islands opted for independence in 1978 rather than join the Federated States of Micronesia. A Compact of Free Association with the US was approved in 1986 but not ratified until 1993. It entered into force the following year when the islands gained independence.

## GOVERNMENT

### Chief of State

President Surangel WHIPPS Jr.

### Head of Government

President Surangel WHIPPS Jr.

### Government Type

presidential republic in free association with the US

### Capital

Ngerulmud

### Legislature

bicameral National Congress or Olbiil Era Kelulau consists of the Senate (13 seats) and the House of Delegates (16 seats)

### Ambassador to US

Ambassador Hersey KYOTA

### US Ambassador

Chargé d'Affaires James BOUGHNER

## GEOGRAPHY

### Area

Total: 459 sq km  
Land: 459 sq km  
Water: 0 sq km

### Climate

tropical; hot and humid; wet season May to November

### Natural Resources

forests, minerals (especially gold), marine products, deep-seabed minerals

## ECONOMY

### Economic Overview

high-income Pacific island economy; environmentally fragile; subsistence agriculture and fishing industries; US aid reliance; rebounding post-pandemic tourism industry and services sector; very high living standard and low unemployment

**GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$248.5 million (2021)

**GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$13,800 (2021)

**Industries** - tourism, fishing, subsistence agriculture

**Agricultural products** - coconuts, cassava, sweet potatoes; fish, pigs, chickens, eggs, bananas, papaya, breadfruit, calamansi, soursop, Polynesian chestnuts, Polynesian almonds, mangoes, taro, guava, beans, cucumbers, squash/pumpkins, eggplant, green onions, kangkong (watercress), cabbages, radishes

**Exports** \$12.07 million (2021 est.)

computers, scrap vessels, recreational boats, scrap iron, fish, scrap copper, scrap aluminum (2021)

**partners:** Japan 34%, Taiwan 16%, Turkey 16%, Italy 12%, US 9% (2021)

**Imports** \$180.4 million (2021 est.)

refined petroleum, boat propellers, iron structures, cars, floating docks, broadcasting equipment, prefabricated buildings (2021)

**partners:** China 34%, US 21%, South Korea 12%, Japan 8%, Taiwan 6% (2021)

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

### Population

21,780 (2023 est.)

### Population Growth

0.39% (2023 est.)

### Ethnicity

Palauan (Micronesian with Malayan and Melanesian admixtures) 70.6%, Carolinian 1.2%, Asian 26.5%, other 1.7% (2020 est.)

### Language

Palauan (official on most islands) 65.2%, other Micronesian 1.9%, English (official) 19.1%, Filipino 9.9%, Chinese 1.2%, other 2.8% (2015 est.)

### Religion

Roman Catholic 46.9%, Protestant 30.9%, Modekngai 5.1% (indigenous to Palau), Muslim 4.9%, other 12.3% (2011 est.)