

Republic of Palau



earliest record of inhabitants	1000 BC
English ship wrecked – 1 st contact with Europeans	1783
governed by Spain; Palauan language written down	1885-1899
sold to Germany	1899
control given to Japan (shift from subsistence economy to market economy; ship in ownership of land from clan to individuals)	post-WWI
Koror becomes administrative center	1922
made UN Trust Territory under US administration; US destroyed Japanese built infrastructure	post-WW2
Constitution called for no chemical or nuclear weapons; 75% vote needed to alter it; this was changed in a majority vote referendum under pressure from the US	1979
gains independence under Compact of Free Association with US	1994

Traditional Social Organization

- men fished in open ocean; women grew taro (the staple food) on land
- organized around 10 clans reckoned *matrilineally*
- land (called “mother”) and traditional rank are inherited through women (women chose chiefs and could remove them)
- council of chiefs from 10 ranking clans governed the village
- parallel council of their female counterparts held a significant advisory role in the division and control of land and money
- hierachical society
- the female counterpart to the High Chief of Koror is usually referred to as the “Queen”

Palau at Present

- **population:** 19,000 approx. (nearly 30% are foreign workers; source: US State Department, 2002)
- **economy:** tourism, marine resources (tuna), agriculture; sustained largely by transfer payments from the US; nearly half the population works for the government
- **government structure:** democratically elected constitutional government in free association with the United States (US is responsible for defense); three branches of government; President is directly-elected and serves a four year term; President and Vice-President run on separate tickets; Council of Chiefs, comprised of the highest traditional chiefs from each state, acts in an advisory capacity to the President on traditional laws and customs; each of Palau's 16 states also elects its own governor and legislature
- **President:** Tommy E. Remegesau, Jr., since 2001 (father was Vice President and President; he was the youngest Senator ever elected and the Vice President)
- **Vice President:** in 2001, Senator Sandra S. Pierantozzi became the first woman Vice President
- **discrimination:** there is little if any discrimination against women -- there are no reports of unequal pay for equal work and no reports of sex-related job discrimination; however, there are reports of discrimination against foreign workers (source: US Department of State)
- **education:** free and mandatory for ages 6 to 17; 94% of children attend school and of those 78% complete high school\

