



POHNPEI SURF CLUB

POHNPEI, FSM

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THE POHNPEI SURF BREAKDOWN

P-Pass

It's a perfect right hander. P-Pass is a short for Palikir Pass. Palikir is the name of the area in which this wave is located, a district of Pohnpei.

Palikir Pass is by far the number one wave in the region. Not only perfect but also works under most conditions. The predominant trade winds are always off shore.

Any swell from the NW to NE will make it work, with a straight north being the best for Palikir Pass. Too much E on the swell and it starts missing the pass (Palikir Pass faces a perfect NW and the wave still has to wrap around and into the pass). Too much W and the wave start to close out on the inside. Anyways, most swells that hit Pohnpei during our surf season are from the north with small variations from the east and west which is the best direction for Palikir Pass. Most swells that hit Pohnpei in the winter range from 2 to 6 feet with occasional bigger days.



On most days Palikir can be surfed at any tide and the reef is a lot more user friendly than Indo, Tahiti or Fiji. There is no reef walking unless you might have to retrieve your lost board on a really low tide day. We are located between Honolulu and Manila and a completely different swell window. We do require the same kind of low pressure systems as Hawaii, but from a different location in the Pacific Ocean.



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Under small conditions Palikir Pass is an easy wave for a novice surfer. Once it reaches 5 ft and up you enter a different level of surfing. Even at that size it is a easy and perfect wave to ride with a predictable take off and absolutely perfect wall and sections. On up to a 5 ft day you can ride the wave all the way in until it becomes a 2 ft wave, or you can just ride the first two barrel sections and paddle back for more.

On most days there is no current at Palikir Pass. On some extreme tide days the current can get strong and move towards the channel for 30 minutes to one hour and then stop. The tide variation on Pohnpei goes from 3ft to almost 6 ft on the most extreme tides of the year.

P-Pass holds good all the way to 10 ft (Hawaiian size here!). At this size or bigger, the wave will start doing a double up similar to Shipsterns in Tasmania. Our guest Mark Matthews from Australia called it a tropical Shippies on the biggest day ever surfed.



Well, if you don't like those giant days with lots of pro surfers and photographers around, you won't see any on most days at P-Pass. Those days only happen a few days a year. As we have mentioned before, on most days you will be living the Warm Pacific dream setup with a crew of friendly surfers sharing the line up. Because all waves in Pohnpei are perfect, surfers do take turns.

If you want to be part of the friendly crew of surfers that share these line ups, **DO NOT BACK PADDLE OR PADDLE AROUND, DON'T DROP IN, and DON'T BE SNEAKY.** The wave is perfect and everyone out is polite, so wait your turn, enjoy the ride and come back out for another one.

At Palikir you can surf at any tide meaning no waiting for the tide or winds to come up. Unless we are on some extreme low tides and powerful swells, we just move a little up the reef. The only time you might walk on the reef is if you lose your board, and most of the time the winds will blow it right to the channel, where the boats can go pick it up.



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North Side

The Surf Season on the north side of Pohnpei is from October through April with occasional swells in September and May.

Winds have a tendency to blow very light and variable from August through December. Trade winds will blow from December until around June or July.

Trades winds are offshore. During every winter there will be a time when the trades will blow stronger then suddenly dying out into perfect conditions for surfing. For most of the time you would not find a place on earth with such perfect wind conditions. Palikir Pass can handle trade winds unless they start blowing too strong or with a lot of north in it which is rare.



Boat Rides

The time we leave every day is based on the activity we are doing, location heading, tides and weather.

All boats must leave the pass 10 minutes before sunset. Any guests delaying the boat departure from the pass by not coming in when called will need to find another boat and resort to stay from that day on.

With surfers and up to eight guests, we use only one boat. When we have more than 8 guests, we use a second boat.

On most surf days we have a good breakfast and go. For long days out, we always make sure to pre-order take-out food for a second meal later in the day.

If we have two boats going, the first one leaves early, with or without breakfast, and the second one leaves around one to two hours later. That helps to break the crowd apart. We usually bring some snacks and water on the boat, but you are welcome to bring your own food or order some take-out from the restaurant.



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Boat Rides

Ideally, we want to spend the whole day out, especially if the surf is good. When we do have two boats out, a group that wants to return to the hotel can go back on one of the boats, usually leaving the bigger boat out at the line up for a later return to the hotel.

For diving and tours, all trips are based on location, weather, tides and number of people going. Most of our trips are with small groups. Pohnpei does not have those boats loaded with tourists, and for the most part, you will be lucky to see another tourist around.

The main reason why people love and talk about Palikir Pass is because a regular guy can come out here and ride a wave, which at any other break in the world would have dozens, if not hundreds of locals and pros surfers fighting for that same ride. Here you will have a shot at riding a wave you see mostly in a photos or movies, without the hassle you would find at other well-known spots around the world.

Once the north swells are in and the trades are blowing, no one wants to surf anything but Palikir Pass. But there are options on the right days. On a high tide the Lighthouse can be a fun wave, and the Main Pass always bigger and challenging.

Pohnpei has other good waves and we know when and where to go when the time is right. We do not check the other spots unless conditions are right as all are long boat rides. When the time comes, we go.

As for most of the other waves in Pohnpei, we hardly see any surfers around as most don't know about them, or where and when to go. Leave it to us to get you there. Always make sure to get good travel insurance. 99.9% of our guests have never needed to use it, but for the other 0.1%, it's a way to get home safe and alive. Be safe and smart when you travel. Get travel insurance!

For sure, the ride of your life!

