

Living in Paradise

By Carla Caldwell

Photo above, courtesy HVCB; below, Guam Visitors Bureau

Lucky you.

You get to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world! Be sure to take in the culture, try the food and meet new friends. Here are a few things to know about your new home in Guam, Hawaii, Japan, Okinawa or South Korea.

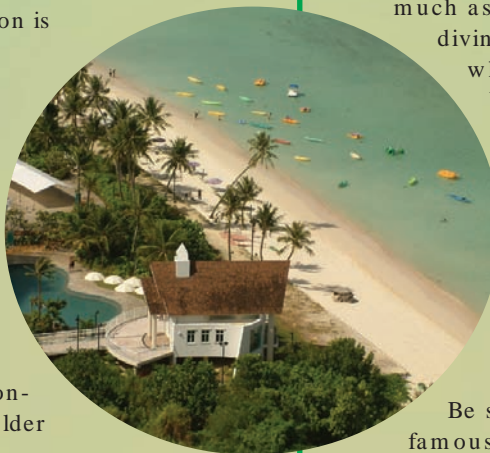
Guam

First, a little about the people. Guamanians are U.S. residents, but they do not vote in U.S. elections. Roughly 50 percent of the population is Chamorro, 25 percent Filipino and about 25 percent Caucasian. The rest are Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other national origins. Most people on the small island speak Chamorro, followed by English and Japanese.

The island's economy depends primarily on U.S. federal and military spending followed by tourism. A surge in tourists has created a construction boom that has replaced older structures with luxury hotels.

This beautiful island was almost destroyed during World War II. Since then, the island has become one of the most progressive in the Pacific Rim. The people elected their first government in the 1970.

Don't be surprised to see people chewing on hard nuts called betelnuts—the tradition of chewing the betelnut is part of the cultural, going back thousands of years. The habit is usually passed down by a person's grandparents. The nut is sometimes wrapped in the peppery-tasting betelnut leaf. Some say the population may have started chewing the concoction because of its benefit to teeth. While the nuts and leaves stain the teeth, the substance protects teeth from cavities.



While in Guam, be sure to take in the island's famous fishing, diving and other water activities. The warm water is extremely clear with visibility sometimes as much as 150 feet. Guam offers some of the best diving in the world and is the only place where divers can see shipwrecks from WWI and WWII—the Tokai Maru and the SMS Cormoran.

When diving, be sure to see the area's impressive live coral—just don't take any. There are stiff penalties for removing coral. Kayak tours of lagoons are popular, and it is also possible to rent a kayak and take off on your own.

Be sure to also see some of the sites made famous by the war waged on the island. In 1944, Guam was the site of a bloody battle as U.S. troops reclaimed the island from the Japanese. After the war, U.S. troops cleaned up the massive amount of debris left behind and set up bases. To learn more about the island's military history, visit the War in the Pacific National Historical Park-Guam. The park honors those who participated in the campaigns of the Pacific Theater. For more information, visit www.visitguam.org

Hawaii

Our 50th state is one of our most beautiful, with breath-taking waterfalls, expansive lush gardens and volcanoes. And the ocean water all around is warm and clear.



Photos this page by Bill Sciotti, Jr.

Kayak in the ocean, learn to surf and ride horses along the shore. Be sure to see the miles of pineapple farms and enormous cattle farms while you are there. Take in Hawaii's black sand beaches. One of the largest is on the Big Island. The beaches evolve from ground lava and are located mostly on the southeast part of the island, which is most volcanically active.

No stay in Hawaii is complete without a tour of Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial. On Dec. 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked the large Navy base at Pearl Harbor, on the island of Oahu, as most members of the military slept. Wheeler Army Airfield at the center of the island was also attacked. The attacks resulted in 2,390 dead and hundreds wounded, and catapulted the U.S. into World War II.

Early that morning, the USS Arizona was hit by a 1,760-pound, armor-piercing bomb. The battleship sank in nine minutes. Today, visitors can visit the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center to see artifacts and a film about the war. A boat shuttle takes visitors to the USS Arizona Memorial, a floating memorial built over the sunken hull of the sunken battleship.

For more information about Hawaii, visit www.gohawaii.com.

Japan

Japan is slightly smaller than California and consists of four major islands surrounded by more than 4,000 smaller islands. There are towering mountains and volcanoes and lush, twisting valleys.

There are more than 126 million people and most of them live in densely populated urban areas. The largest urban area is Tokyo. Japanese is the official language, but many people speak English.

While in Japan, try to take in one of the country's famous tea ceremonies. The ceremony was brought to Japan from China in the 16th Century based on the spirit of Zen. If you attend a tea ceremony, never take the tea cup or bowl before a more senior guest—it is considered bad manners. Also be sure to wipe the rim of the cup or bowl before returning it to the host.

Be sure to visit some of the country's palaces, which are owned by the government and serve as homes and offices for the royal family. Tours are offered, but reservations are usually required.

A trip to the Japanese city of Hiroshima is a must. Hiroshima City is the first place to know the terrible effects of an atomic bomb. The Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome symbolizes the importance of world peace, emphasized again at the Peace Memorial Park, just next to the dome.

Celebrate life at one of the country's colorful and elaborate festivals that focus on flowers, the seasons of the year or ancestors, among other topics. For a list of festivals and dates, or for information on other things to do in Japan, visit the Japan National Tourist Organization's web site at www.jnto.go.jp



Okinawa

Okinawa is Japan's southernmost prefecture, or regional district. It is made up of several small islands.

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Photos: left, courtesy Akita Prefecture/JNTO, right, courtesy JNTO, below, courtesy KJNTO

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The islands and surrounding waters are some of the most beautiful in the world. The marine life is extensive and there are numerous coral reefs, so snorkeling and scuba diving are extremely popular. The beauty belies the horrific battle that was fought there toward the end of World War II.

The largest amphibious invasion of the Pacific campaign was fought here. There were 38,000 Americans wounded and 12,000 killed or missing. Some 107,000 Japanese and Okinawan soldiers were killed and as many as 100,000 Okinawan civilians were killed. The U.S. military wanted Okinawa for several reasons, among them was that American bombers could reach the Japanese home islands from here. The continued presence of U.S. troops is somewhat contentious among some locals, but most residents are friendly to Americans, including American soldiers.

For more information about Okinawa, visit www.japan-guide.com

South Korea

If you set out to learn about Korea's history, it's best to set aside some time. With 5,000 years to study, you'll certainly have your hands full.

Korea was liberated from the Japanese in 1945, but was tragically split at the 38th parallel. Both regions were under temporary military rule by the U.S. and Soviet armies. South Korea was able to hold a demo-



cratic election. North Korea chose a communist leader. In 1950, North Korea aided by the Soviet Union and China later tried to invade South Korea, which was aided by 16 nations. The war continued for three years.

You'll want to see South Korea's capital city, Seoul, which is home to 10.3 million people. The city is famous for its shopping, restaurants and nightlife.

The city's history goes back 600 years, and there are plenty of historic sites to take in. But, if something more modern is in order try Lotte World theme park. There are thrill rides, an ice rink and parades. If you need a break, there is a lake and walking trail. Some six million people visit the site each year.

Busan, the second largest city in South Korea, also warrants a visit. It is a great place to go for activities on the water. The area is known for its beautiful beaches and tall mountains. The city hosts the Pusan International Film Festival, which attracts movie fans from all over the world each year.

For more information about South Korea, visit <http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto>

Try our suggestions, but by all means get out there and explore on your own. You just might discover a new favorite place! ●

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