

Visiting Family & Friends



Introduction

If you do nothing else when you visit Guam, you should embrace the opportunity to rediscover and connect with the essence of our Chamorro culture.

The Chamorro language is something that we have been striving to preserve and protect throughout the increase of ethnic mixing over the years. Today, the effort to teach Guam's native language is present in our schools, our university, and our community. Learning the language on your home island helps fuel the dream that one day our Chamorro children will once again be able to speak fluently.



The history of our island can be witnessed all around, from structures reminiscent of the Spanish era to WWII monuments that highlight the battles and struggles of Chamorro people to maintain freedom.

Sightseeing, books, and oral accounts of our manamko' (elders) are just a few ways to educate yourself on the events of our island's history and Guam's relationship with the rest of the world.

Besides learning the island's history, one of the most customary efforts to carry on our culture is through old traditions. Fiestas - village-wide celebrations introduced by the Spanish in 1668 - allow residents and visitors the opportunity to experience an activity shared by our ancestors long ago. A weekend at a fiesta will remind you of the island's hospitality and the comfort of family and friends.

You'll find tables covered with tasty Chamorro cuisine, people dancing and singing along to the sounds of talented local artists. Fiestas have been and will always be one of the best ways to celebrate our heritage.

You can still witness families carrying on time-honored customs of christening parties, fandangos (weddings), novenas, funerals, and death-anniversary rosaries, all of which are inspired by our rich Spanish influence.

While fiestas symbolize our Chamorro heritage, the annual Liberation Day Parade held annually on July 21 serves as a symbol of freedom for Chamorro people. Marine Corps Drive, the annual parade site, is where families and friends line the streets to watch floats and marching groups celebrate the island's liberation from Japanese forces in WWII. Accompanied by local food, music, and entertainment, the parade is our sign of the promise of independence. There are also numerous monuments located throughout the island dedicated to depicting the events of WWII on Guam.

Predominantly Catholic, Guam residents celebrate a procession in honor of Santa Marian Kamalen, the island's patron saint, on Dec. 8 each year. The streets of Hagåtña are filled with Catholics celebrating the tradition of a faith and culture that has existed on Guam for decades. Adults and children use this day to honor the faith that continues to unite Chamorros.





Another tradition that has continued to progress over the years is the night market at Chamorro Village, designed to resemble an old Spanish market. Restaurants, shops, and vendors complement the myriad of local cuisine choices at the village, now a popular site for visitors and locals on Wednesday and Friday evenings. People from all over the island travel to Hagåtña

to join in fun and festivities each week. The night market has become so common on Guam that it's grown into a tradition Chamorros enjoy regularly with friends and family.

Some Call It Paradise, We Call It Home

While on Guam, no matter how long your stay, appreciating the island for its natural beauty is an important step to rediscovering your past. As children we can still remember the beauty of exploring the lush green jungle and hiking trails to some of Guam's most beautiful waterfalls and caves, and enjoying local gardens full of tropical plants and fruits. Indulge in the flora and fauna of Guam, including the abundant hibiscus, plumeria, red gingers, ixoras, lantanas, and the territory flower, bougainvillea (puti tai nobio). And if you're craving local fruits, it's easy to find papayas, bananas, coconuts, limes, breadfruits, mangoes, guavas, star apples, and tangerines.

Outdoor events and activities nowadays are more readily available for your adventure needs. Some things that weren't thought of before are right at your fingertips. Embrace your adventurous side with tandem skydiving, jet skiing, parasailing, kite surfing, or scuba diving.

With the richest coral reef marine environment of any United States territory or state, you'll discover more than 950 fish species and more than 300 coral varieties. Shipwrecks also surround Guam's waters as remnants of WWI, WWII, and the gold bearing Manila Galleon trading days.

Water activities are not the only pastime when it comes to

vacationing on Guam. Whether you are seeking a romantic wedding, an experience in the traditional Chamorro culture, an irresistible shopping environment, or 18 holes at one of Guam's seven golf courses designed by legends Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, our island is the perfect holiday destination.

For those who prefer to stay indoors, Guam also offers a variety of activities to experience. Check out the latest luxury fashions at DFS Galleria, Tumon Sands Plaza, or The Plaza in Tumon. Mid-level boutiques are also available at Guam Premier Outlets, Micronesia Mall, Agana Shopping Center, and dozens of local handicraft shops throughout Tumon and villages across the island. Take a break from shopping without breaking a sweat at the Underwater World aquarium in Tumon's Pleasure Island. There you can discover marine life while staying dry.



To discover the ancient Chamorro heritage in a new light, there are several historic and cultural sites you may visit throughout the island. Take an island tour from Two Lovers' Point in the north, to Plaza de España, Angel Santos Memorial Park, and the many World War II memorial sites in the central part of

the island. Venture down south for a Jungle River Cruise, then back up to the island's capital city for a trip to the Chamorro Village Night Market - available on Wednesday and Friday evenings. In addition to the many sites you can see year-round, don't miss the traditional holiday celebrations on Guam. Village fiestas are held almost monthly to honor patron saints throughout the island. They're the best place to meet new and old friends, and enjoy delicious food.

If you're traveling with your significant other, Guam has everything you need to make your wedding one to remember. With a number of serene chapels and five-star hotels complete with honeymoon suites, you'll be hard pressed to find a place more romantic. Guam is currently





increasing in popularity as a honeymoon spot among visitors from Asia and beyond.

When the fiesta and the romantic dinner is over, look no further than Tumon's Pleasure Island or your local village bar for a variety of ways to experience the island's nightlife. You can go from a low-key evening at Chamorro Village to a night of dancing to international club mixes at any of the island's world-renowned dance clubs. Each place offers something different.

There's a number of choices - both indoors and out - to spend quality time with family and friends after the party is over. Try camping with familia (family) along the beach, just like you did when you were younger. Or a guided boonie stomp (hike) around the waterfall valleys, historic sites, and luscious jungle landscapes on the island. Try 18 holes with an old friend at any of Guam's seven golf courses, and get an ocean view in the process. Guam now boasts top level courses designed by legends Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus.

Local, Quality Education

Higher education is becoming increasingly important on Guam, sparking an ongoing effort to develop our institutions of higher learning. Island leaders view crafting Guam's future leaders as an important responsibility. Many students who opt to leave the island for college often return home to enter the work force or pursue master's degrees at the University of Guam.

Many college students choose adventure by spending a semester or a year abroad, away from their families and home colleges. The University of Guam partners with mainland universities in exchange programs and brings to the island a wealth of diversity. Bachelor's degree programs include business, public administration, education, nursing, science, and the arts. UOG is especially known for its quality marine biology research and has gained recognition as administering the number one ROTC program nationwide.

Additionally Guam Community College offers associate's degrees and certificates in more than 50 areas of study. Trades are available in fields such as automotive technology, cosmetology, practical nursing, and much more. Sat-

ellite campuses include the University of Phoenix, the University of Maryland, and Troy University in Alabama.

Our Own Little Strip

Guam may not be Las Vegas, but you'll be surprised at how much our small island has grown. Tumon has evolved into a network of five-star hotels, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and numerous shopping options. It has become a hub for all kinds of entertainment - for visitors and residents - and Hagåtña is picking up the pace too.

Despite our island's small population, a wide array of dining choices offer the international cuisine of your choice. From Chamorro fusion to Japanese, Korean, Italian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, and even Mexican, Guam's dining choices have expanded. Major hotels serve quality meals oftentimes accompanied by dinner shows, including those at SandCastle, Hilton Guam Resort & Spa, and the Pacific Islands Club. Don't forget to stock up on local handicrafts during your stay, from memorabilia to artwork, dishware, clothing, and household items. Small shops in each of the island's 19 villages offer local goods, or you can find them at Chamorro Village. Taking something from Guam with you back home provides a keep-



sake for you to remember your island and helps support local businesses.

Gateway To Asia

Coming home no longer limits your opportunities for exploring other parts of the world. Our island has become a major hub for travel and a haven for visitors from Japan, Micronesia, and other major Asian countries. The island has capitalized on being known as the "America in



Asia.” Whether you live here or are merely visiting family and friends, there’s always a way to discover new lands. With a 4 to 5-hour plane ride, you can explore places like Manila, Tokyo, Osaka, Hong Kong, Taipei, Seoul, and of course our neighbors in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (Saipan, Tinian, Rota), the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, and Kosrae).

Supporting Our Armed Forces

Guam is home to two strategic U.S. bases - Naval Base Guam in Santa Rita and Andersen Air Force Base in Yigo - as well as the Guam Army National Guard. Thousands of sailors, airmen, and soldiers that call our island home significantly contribute to the local economy, making the military the second largest contributor to the island’s gross domestic product behind tourism. Currently Guam is bracing for a possible influx



of about 17,000 U.S. Marines and dependents beginning 2014, pending their relocation from Okinawa, Japan. Details of their move are still ongoing.

Many Chamorros serve proudly in the U.S. Armed Forces, which the island’s people honor greatly. Military bases on Guam give local residents an option to be stationed here. Even if it’s just for a couple of years, you can surround yourself with family, and expose yourself to the island’s growth by joining the Guam Army National Guard, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, or the U.S. Coast Guard.

A Snapshot Of Guam

Guam is home to a tropical climate, with average yearly temperatures of 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Evening temperatures rarely fall below 70; daily highs rarely exceed 90. Chamorro and English are primarily spoken on the island, although many businesses employ multilingual staff.

Guam is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Meridian Time. The local currency is the U.S. dollar and most major credit cards are widely accepted. The electrical current is the same as the U.S. mainland - 120 volts/60 cycles.

Guam has become a state-of-the-art destination with luxuries the rest of the world enjoys. High-speed Internet and cellular service make it easy to stay in touch, and brand name hotels line the island’s shores.



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