

Country Introduction

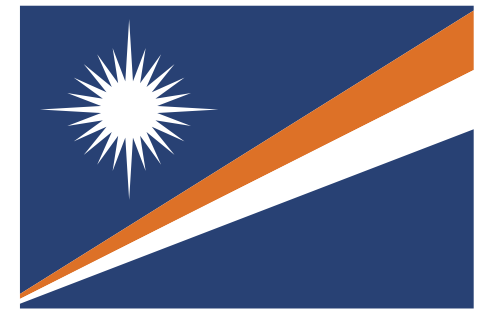
Nestled in the heart of the Pacific Ocean, the Marshall Islands is a tropical paradise made up of 29 atolls and 5 individual islands. With its stunning turquoise lagoons, vibrant coral reefs, and rich marine life, this remote archipelago embodies the beauty of the Pacific. The Marshall Islands boasts a deep cultural heritage, shaped by its Micronesian roots, and is a proud nation that cherishes its traditions while embracing the challenges of the modern world. Its capital, Majuro, serves as the bustling hub of governance and commerce. The Marshall Islands holds a unique position in global affairs, as a nation with a Compact of Free Association with the United States, ensuring a close partnership while also advocating passionately for environmental sustainability, particularly in the face of rising sea levels. Though small in land area, its resilient people and breathtaking landscapes make the Marshall Islands a remarkable and unforgettable part of the world.



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COMMONS-D PAVILION

MARSHALL ISLANDS PAVILION



**What we inherited and
what we want to leave
behind to our future society**

Exhibition Concept

The Marshall Islands Pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka is a captivating showcase of the nation's vibrant culture, resilience, and commitment to environmental sustainability. Reflecting the islands' deep connection to the ocean and its natural wonders, the pavilion highlights the innovative ways in which the Marshall Islands is addressing the challenges of climate change and rising sea levels. Through immersive exhibits, art installations, and interactive experiences, visitors will be transported to this Pacific paradise, gaining insight into the islanders' rich heritage, sustainable practices, and vision for a sustainable future. With a focus on ocean conservation, renewable energy, and global cooperation, the Marshall Islands Pavilion will not only celebrate its beauty but also inspire action towards preserving the environment for generations to come.



Vital Role of the Marshallese Language

The Marshallese language is an essential aspect of the cultural identity of the Marshallese people and is one of the two official languages of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), alongside English. It belongs to the Austronesian language family, specifically the Malayo-Polynesian branch, and is closely related to other Micronesian languages. There are two primary dialects of Marshallese: Ralik (spoken in the

western islands) and Ratak (spoken in the eastern islands). While the dialects are mutually intelligible, there are variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and some grammatical structures. Although English is widely spoken in the Marshall Islands due to the country's political relationship with the United States, Marshallese remains the dominant language in daily life, particularly in rural areas. Efforts to preserve and revitalize the language are ongoing, with initiatives to teach Marshallese in schools and maintain its use in media and cultural practices. Marshallese is integral to the preservation of traditional knowledge, customs, and oral history. Stories, songs, and legends passed down through generations are often conveyed in Marshallese, reinforcing the language's role in maintaining the cultural fabric of the islands. The language is also closely tied to traditional navigation and the knowledge of the stars, ocean, and environment.

The Marshallese Society and Culture

The Marshallese society is organized around matrilineal clans, where lineage and land rights are passed through the mother's side. Land is highly significant, as it is both a source of sustenance and a key part of cultural identity. Extended families often live together and share responsibilities, emphasizing communal living and cooperation. Traditional arts include weaving pandanus leaves into intricate mats, baskets, and handicrafts, which remain vital in daily life and cultural expression. Storytelling, songs, and dances are central to preserving oral history and passing down ancestral knowledge. Christianity, introduced by missionaries in the 19th century, is widely practiced alongside traditional beliefs. Respect for elders, strong family ties, and hospitality are core values of Marshallese culture. Despite modern influences and challenges such as climate change, the Marshallese people continue to honor their heritage and sustain their cultural practices while adapting to contemporary life.

Traditional Seafaring and Navigation

Traditional seafaring and navigation in the Marshall Islands

are vital aspects of Marshallese culture, showcasing remarkable ingenuity and a deep connection to the ocean. For centuries, the Marshallese have been skilled navigators, traveling vast distances between atolls using outrigger canoes and unique navigation techniques. Central to their seafaring tradition is the use of stick charts, intricate maps made from coconut midribs and shells, representing ocean swells, wave patterns, and island locations. These charts are not used during voyages but serve as teaching tools for navigators to memorize the layout of the sea. Marshallese navigators rely on their acute understanding of the environment, including the behavior of waves, currents, stars, winds, and bird movements, to chart their course. Their ability to detect subtle changes in the ocean's surface, such as reflected swells from islands over the horizon, is a hallmark of their expertise. The outrigger canoes, or wa, are masterfully crafted from local materials like breadfruit wood and pandanus, designed for speed, stability, and efficiency in the open ocean. These vessels are integral to transportation, fishing, and maintaining connections between scattered atolls.

Japanese Influence on the Marshall Islands

The Japanese influence is an integral chapter in the Marshall Islands' history, contributing to the islands' cultural and historical tapestry while leaving a mixed legacy of development and hardship. The Japanese era in the Marshall Islands (1914–1944) marked a significant period in the islands' history, shaping their infrastructure, economy, and society. Following Germany's defeat in World War I, Japan took control of the Marshall Islands under a League of Nations mandate. The islands became part of Japan's South Seas Mandate, intended for economic development and governance, though Japan also used the territory for militarization. Although the Japanese era ended with the U.S. capture of the islands in 1944, its influence remains evident in various ways: Japanese loanwords in the Marshallese language, physical remnants of Japanese infrastructure, such as ruins of military installations, and historical memories and oral traditions that reflect this complex period.