

III. Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory

The Bureau of Arts and Culture has registries for most of Palau's historical sites and continues to identify and register new sites. The sites are registered with the U.S. Park and Recreational Services, a U.S. federal fund program for protection of cultural and historical sites. The sites are endorsed by State laws and by that endorsement they are maintained and protected by the State Government. Any development activities are required clearance at the Bureau of Arts and Culture for the protection of cultural and historical sites. In a separate department under the same bureau within the oral history section a National historical advisory committee is created to review and approve of any collection and documentation for publication on Palau's intangible cultural heritage. Membership to the committee is through State government nomination, and as such there are 16 members representing all 16 States. Bureau of arts and Culture continues to identify and document oral history and cultural expressions of Palau on a regular basis and during any cultural events. These are just some of the data collection or information registries that can be utilized in maintaining cultural knowledge in Palau society. Further description of data collection is reflected in below Table 3.

Although there is an increased effort to document the intangible cultural heritage and knowledge, the materials have yet to be electronically digitalized for preservation and easy access for application and promotion by educational mediums or individual users. There are several volumes of complete materials on Palau's intangible cultural heritage available at the Bureau of Arts and Culture as a result of the work and guidance by an expert commission referred to as Palau Society of Historians as an expert advisory group for Bureau of Arts and Culture. The finished volumes include;

1. Rechuodel: Volume I and II
Cultural and traditional practices processes
2. Ethnographic and Oral History surveys for all 16 States of Palau

Every State has a developed oral history booklet with the identified historical and cultural sites as remnants and tangible evidence to the oral history. The project was conducted under the Bureau of Arts and Culture.

3. Various traditional knowledge and practices handbook

Pregnancy and Birth

- Lists the **healthy pregnancy practices** and processes that an expecting mother and the supporting family members must adhere to from the beginning till the end of the pregnancy. The practices include diet, medicine, physical, spiritual, and physiological health maintenance, and the final process of traditional healing of the mother, and the celebration ceremony to commensurate the importance of the new life and the recovery of the mother. This may be including the wedding ceremony of a newlywed if families choose to do so at the time.
- The **ceremonial celebration** of the new life and the mother includes exchange of food and monetary values between the families of the male and female parent of the new child. The male family contributes money for the woman's family and for child support, while the female's family prepares the food and the ceremonial event as a whole.
- **Medicinal treatment** for the mother is provided by a traditional healer for after giving birth. The treatment is either a heritage within their own lineage or owned by an outsider and has to be paid for. Duration of the healing process varies depending on the lineage or clan.
- **Costume and decorative ornaments** to adorn the mother during celebration is also traditionally owned by lineage or clan and specific their use only. This practice is slowly dissipating and has transformed over time. Traditional ornaments ownership is usually imprinted by the colors of the tree fiber skirt, the headdress, and the bead money. Generally, women were topless during the ceremony, a practice that is almost eliminated with
- Modern concerns for discretion that began with the earlier European missionaries.

Below pictures depict the ritual processes of healing to celebration of new life with the cultural materials used.



Source: Edna Raymond

Capture in the picture is the ceremonial celebration of the first child and the mother's health. In the picture are a new mother and the baby's aunts. They are showing off the newborn. The new mother is adorned with the following:

- Fiber skirt made from hibiscus plant tree bark, that has been treated and dyed with turmeric,
- A breast cover up made of coconut shells, a transformation from the traditional bare chest practice
- A belt to cover the belly button and hold the stomach made from turtle shells
- A bracelet made from turtle shell
- A Palauan bead money as a necklace
- Earrings from turtle shell

- A headdress of flowers laced with coconut fronds
- Her skin is anointed with yellow medicinal blend of turmeric and coconut oil
- Finally a leaf from the herbal bath is placed on her right hand also used to wipe sweat or oil from her eyes
- She walks and stands on a coconut leaf woven mat



Source: Edna Raymond

And placed in front of her in a basin are steaming fragrant herbs for the guest to use for bathing her feet while dancing, can be seen in the above right photograph. The dancers are female members of the husband's family. A transformation of the ceremony is while the dancers are usually the husband's family, many Palauan women are participating in interracial marriages and at such times where the husband's family may not be available the family of the woman's father will celebrate with the new mother.

Other finished booklet on culture from the Bureau of arts and Culture are listed below.

4. Death Funeral and Related Responsibilities
5. Traditional Leadership in Palau
6. Hereditary Status and Strength
7. Economy and Trade
8. Medicine and Therapy
9. Traditional Items of a Household
10. Entertainment
11. Relationship Between Villages
12. Traditional Laws and Principles
13. Settlement of a Deceased Person's Estate
14. The Traditional Education
15. Proverbs of Palau
16. Stories with Moral Lessons
17. Clubs

All finished documents listed above are available in English and the local Palauan language.

The Belau National Museum is one of the oldest and most developed museums in the Pacific region and is comparable with the Vanuatu Cultural Center, and the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Museum in New Caledonia. It has a well represented artifact collection, oral history and ethnographic collection, natural history, and research center. Additionally it is well represented academically and has provided an avenue for university level research from its establishment. The Belau National Museum is well connected with internationally acclaimed institutions of culture like the British Museum and continually participates at such levels of international exhibitions such as the Spanish Exhibition, Palau Spanish Agreement Cooperation 2004-2005 (Kloulechad-Singeo 2011).

Table4. Data Collection

	Contributor	Data Collected	Reporting Capability
1	Bureau of Arts & Culture <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Palau Historical Advisory Board</i>	Archeology of all surveyed and registered historical sites	Raw Data
2	Bureau of Arts & Culture <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Palau Historical Advisory Board</i>	Intangible Heritage; Oral History, Individual Elderly registry of traditional skills	Raw Data
3	Bureau of Arts & Culture <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Palau Historical Advisory Board</i>	Photographs of Palau	Collection deposit
4	Bureau of Arts & Culture Research Library <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Palau Historical Advisory Board</i>	Finished Materials	Collection deposit
5	Belau National Museum <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Belau National Museum Board of Trustee</i>	Computer based registries for cultural artifacts, birds, insects, plants, audio, and media	Raw Data
6	Belau National Museum Research Library <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel: Belau National Museum Board of Trustee</i>	Finished Materials Electronic catalogue	Reporting Capabilities Available
7	Archives <i>Most recent update:</i> <i>Expert advisory panel:</i>	Computer Based Registry	Raw Data

Non-governmental inventory

The only two museums in Palau are under the management of Belau National Museum a non governmental organization as a line agency under the Ministry of Community and Culture and the Etpison's Museum.

1. Belau National Museum
 - Cultural Materials
Over 6000 collection, displayed throughout the year according to cultural themes
 - Pottery training-
Training facilities in Koror and Ngaremlengui State and display of finished materials at the Museum
 - Library
Major collection of finished documents and access point for academic research
 - Natural History
Herbarium, botanical garden, display of insect, native and endemic birds, and endemic and native plants
 - Gift shop for arts and craft

2. Etpison's Museum
 - All cultural materials displayed are purchased from private individuals and owned by the Museum.
 - Cultural Materials
 - Palauan bead money
 - Wood carvings
 - War relics
 - Books
 - Other Pacific Island materials
 - Gift shop for arts and craft
 - Story Board
 - Handy crafts from other countries
 - Books