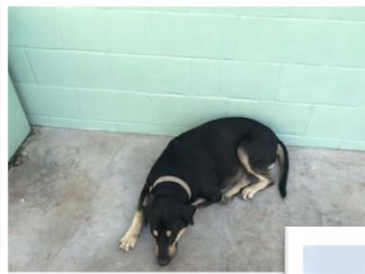


Majuro Cooperative School



Majuro,
Marshall Islands

Prospective Teacher Handbook



Life in Majuro

You're thinking about teaching at Majuro Cooperative School in the Marshall Islands, but you have so many questions running through your head. What is everyday life like in Majuro? What's the weather like? What do people do for fun? Just how isolated is this country in the middle of the Pacific? We hope to answer some, or all, of these questions.

Where is Majuro located?

Majuro is the Capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). RMI is located halfway between Hawaii and Australia, a couple hundred miles north of the equator.

What's the weather like?

The mornings and evenings here are some of the most beautiful you will ever experience. The temperature at these times is perfect - in the high 70s. Midday can be quite hot (into the 80s and 90s), but often there is cloud covering because it rains frequently here. You can leave your long pants and long-sleeved shirts at home if you wish!

How do I get to Majuro?

United Airlines runs an "island hopper" flight. The flight takes off from Honolulu and the first stop is Majuro. Flights to Majuro are expensive, but your arrival and return flight (upon completion of your employment) is covered by Co-op School.

Where can I travel?

If you feel like getting away for a bit, there are several popular destinations. United's "island hopper" flight goes from Majuro to Kosrae located in the Federated States of Micronesia. Then on to Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Guam (from Guam, all of Asia is at your disposal). Nauru Airlines is an alternative to United and flies to Fiji and Australia. Another option is to stay in RMI and visit an outer island (Arno, the closest, has boats every weekend and is about 45 minutes boat ride away) or take a 20 minutes boat ride across the lagoon to Enemanit, Eneko or 3 Bag Island for the day or a few nights. If you're just hoping to get out of the city, hop on a bus for \$2.00 and travel all the way to the end of the island to Laura Beach to soak up the sun. There are rental cars on the island if you prefer to travel without all the stops.

How isolated is RMI?

RMI is one of the least visited countries in the world, and that is part of the appeal of living out here! It has some of the most beautiful diving in the world and is not heavily trafficked.

What is there to do in Majuro?

You have so many outdoor activities at your disposal. Teachers bike, join tennis, basketball & volleyball leagues, run, practice yoga, Zumba, spearfish, scuba dive, kayak, sail, paddle board, snorkel, and line fish. Surfing is limited due to the hazards of the coral, but one of the outer islands, Ailinglaplap, attracts professional surfers December through March.

You can also join the different social clubs on island and attend their events throughout the year. There is the Mieco Yacht Club, Bill Fishing Club and JamboArts to name a few. If your adventurous you can join the locals (and expats) for karaoke and quesadillas' at Jittak. There are at least two to three walk-a-thons a year, and the RMI loves celebrating holidays with activities and entertainment. The US Embassy brings bands from the US to Majuro and sponsors concerts yearly.

What does city life look like?

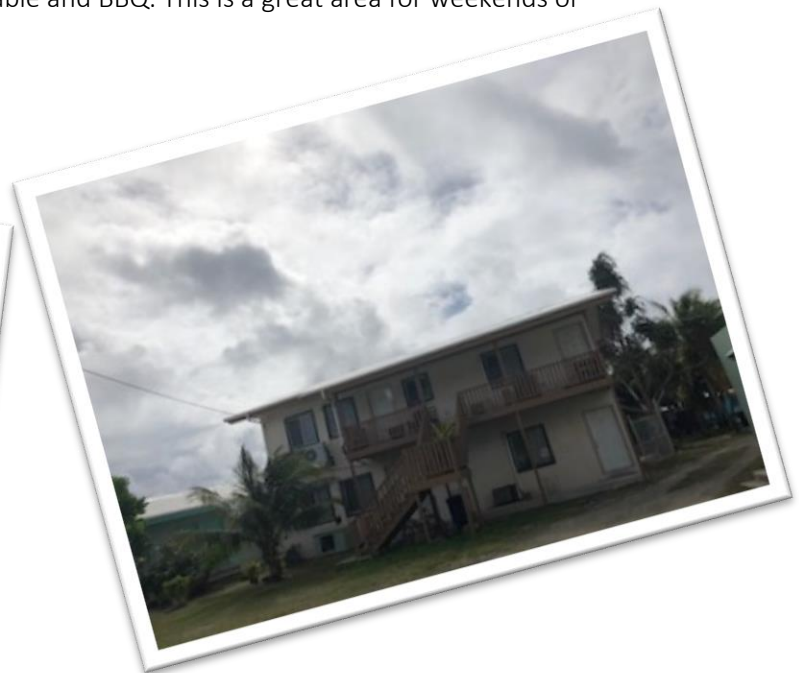
In the last 30 years, Majuro has seen a population explosion due to a combination of people moving here from the outer islands and the birth rate being one of the highest in the world. About 55,000 people live in RMI with Majuro being the most populous atoll at 30,000. Like many islands, Majuro has a problem with waste management. Littering is a common practice among many islanders, since not too long ago, their trash (fish and coconuts) were biodegradable. Many buildings have fallen into disrepair and been abandoned due to both lack of funds for maintenance and the proximity of the harsh sea. Although dilapidation is more prevalent than you would hope, many parts of Majuro are clean and well-maintained.

How rustic is it?

Living in Majuro is NOT resort living. There are no golf courses and only one private swimming pool on the whole atoll. It is also not touristy, so you get a very "local" experience. It is a poor country (over half the adult population is unemployed), but violent crime is very uncommon. There are no movie theaters, bowling alleys, or upscale restaurants, but there are local restaurants, bars and two "American style" grocery stores as well as a local market all within walking distance from the school.

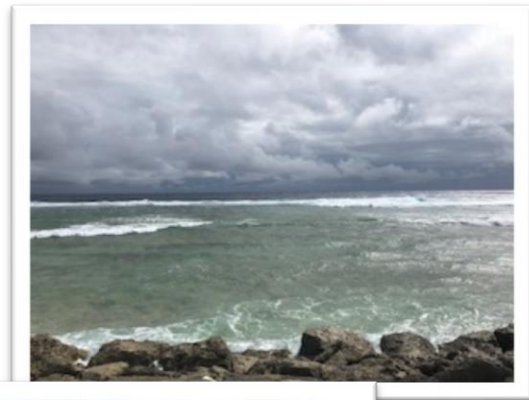
What is teacher housing like?

The ocean is your backyard. Majuro is an atoll which means it's U-shaped and narrow, in some places you can throw a rock across the width of it. The teachers live in apartment style housing adjacent to the school campus right beside the ocean. The "compound" housing has one-bedroom apartments with a kitchen and a bathroom, around 400 to 500 square feet. Some apartments are two-bedroom units for families. Each apartment has its own CashPower meter. CashPower can be bought online or at the local office for your electricity each month. (The school gives each teacher a \$120 for electricity monthly). There's no dishwasher or laundry in unit, but there are several laundry facilities within walking distance. Each apartment has air conditioning and access to the school's internet. The school recently upgraded the outside area building a gazebo, adding a picnic table and BBQ. This is a great area for weekends or just to enjoy the sunset after school.



Is it sandy or rocky by the apartments?

Although there are sandy beaches, it is rocky by the apartments. The ocean is about 15 feet from your apartment, and you can swim everyday if you'd like. There's some boulders you climb down to get to the reef. At high tide, you can swim right on the reef (just be careful of getting in and out as the waves hit the rocks). At low tide, a tide pool nearby is your best bet. You can even grab your snorkel. You will see clown fish, angelfish, puffer fish and more in there! You can go past the reef into the ocean at your own risk... just be careful of the coral... and sharks.



What is my commute like?

It takes about 20 seconds to walk from your apartment to your classroom.

Can I drink the tap water?

No. Teachers either buy a few five-gallon water jugs and refill at local shops or some buy a water filtration system. The tap water is not drinkable since it is rainwater that is collected in catchments.

What do I have for transportation options on island?

The school has a van for school use and if available, can transport teachers to and from the airport. Since laundromats, the hospital, grocery stores and restaurants are all close to the school, many teachers walk. The most popular mode of transportation on island is taxi. You can get to most places in Majuro for \$1.00 per taxi ride. Taxis run like buses. They stop and collect passengers continuously during your journey. As there is only one main road on the island, the taxi drivers tend to know where all destinations are located.

What is healthcare like?

RMI has a public healthcare program. Healthcare here is basic with limited options for surgical procedures. It is also inexpensive: a doctor's visit costs about \$20, emergency service \$35, and an overnight hospital stay \$120. Those prices can go down even further if you choose to pay into a monthly program. You can see an optometrist, dentist, general practitioner, OBGYN, or pediatrician depending on your needs. Birth control is given out for free at a women's clinic. Any additional health coverage you would desire outside of RMI would need to be covered by your own supplemental plan.

What do things cost?

Here are some examples as of 2019. Anything imported is generally expensive, anything local or service oriented is inexpensive relative to America.

- Taxi \$1.00
- Doctor visit: \$20
- 5 gallons of drinking water: \$1
- Massage 1 hour: \$30
- Coconut: \$0.75
- Bunch of bananas: \$2.00
- 1 bottle of Heineken: \$2.00
- Box of Cheerios: \$7
- Haircut \$10
- Cell card for mobile phone \$1 - \$5 (can last a month)
- 1 Gallon ice cream: \$9
- Zoris (flip flops): \$7
- Boat ride to Eneko (private island): \$30 round trip
- Boat ride to Enemanit (private island): free on Sundays
- Scuba diving day excursion including gear rental: \$100
- Dinner at local restaurants range from \$10 - \$20.

What is the food like?

CO-OP provides lunch for teachers on school days for free. The menu varies but fish or chicken and rice is a staple. Pasta, hamburgers, and pizza to name a few are also served. There is a vegetarian option if you prefer. Breakfast is available in the school cafeteria for \$1. The locals eat a lot of fish, chicken, and pork and many variations of rice (coconut and pumpkin rice being a few favorites). Pandanus and breadfruit are local fruits you will see a lot of, as well as taro, bananas and of course coconuts. The restaurants here vary from Japanese, Chinese and Filipino cuisine to American and local Marshallese staples.

What do people wear?

The local women wear Muumuus (also called Guams) which are colorful dresses that hit just below the knee. Missionary influence is still felt here in RMI - dress is very conservative. Women are expected to cover their shoulders and knees. Flip flops (called "zori" in Marshallese) are a staple among men and women... expect to wear them every day for work, play, and even basketball if you are brave enough. Swim shirts and shorts are recommended to be worn by both men and women.

Somethings to always remember when you come the Marshall Islands? Sunscreen, a hat, and bug spray.

What type of ex-pat thrives in the Marshall Islands?

If you are an adventurous person who loves outdoor activities, you will be the best fit for RMI. You must be a flexible person who can get used to "island time" (i.e. laid-back culture). The people that have stayed here the longest get involved in the local culture and enjoy participating in ocean activities. It is guaranteed you will see more than one cockroach during your stay here in Majuro. The ants will seem innumerable at times. But if you have an open mind and an island attitude, you may just become a Marshall Islands lifer.

Recommended resources:

Books:

[Don't Ever Whisper](#) by Giff Johnson

[For the Good of Mankind](#) by Jack Niedenthal

[Surviving Paradise](#) by Peter Rudiak-Gould

Websites:

www.majurocooperativeschool.org

<https://www.infomarshallislands.com>

www.visitmarshallislands.com

www.marshallislandsjournal.com

www.raycrewdiving.com

Facebook pages to check out:

US Embassy Majuro

MIVA (Marshall Islands Visitors Authority)

Majuro buys and sells