

# THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MONEY

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We're on the island of Yap in Micronesia – some 500 miles southwest of Guam and 1,200 miles east of Manila in the Western Pacific. The Yapese have lived here for over 2,000 years, and have maintained their culture and traditions to this day.

Phenomenal navigators in their outrigger canoes, in ancient times they began sailing to Palau over 250 miles south to quarry large sections of limestone and return to stone-chisel them into circles with a hole in the middle (through which would put a long pole for carrying them).

Called *Rai*, they have been Yap's currency for two millennia. The ones you see here are typical size but many are much larger, weighing as much as a car. *Rai* are the world's biggest money – used not for day-to-day transactions but large ones like a bride's dowry and wedding party, or a real estate deal.

The Yapese are a proud and peaceful people who live by their code of Respect and Responsibility. They are warm and welcoming to visitors. A 90-minute flight from Guam makes it easy to get here. Spending time with these special people will be life-memorable. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World* #216 photo ©Jack Wheeler)

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