

we all eat



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Micronesia Snacking on Sugarcane

The Borja family were my next-door neighbors in the Carolinian village of Oleai on Saipan. Jesusa, Rosalia and Bernadetta, the youngest of Carlos and Olympia Borja's five daughters, are enjoying a sweet, juicy, hand held sugar snack. A small clump of sugar cane grew in their backyard. Older brother, William, would use a machete to hack off a piece of inch-thick stalk for his sisters. Often they would remove the tough outer husk with their teeth. For the soft-toothed "peace-corps" like me, the husk could be easily peeled off with the machete. Eating fresh-cut sugar cane is like chewing a wad of sugar-soaked hay: you bite, chew hard to release the sugar, then spit out the hay.

During the period of Japanese occupation of Saipan (1914-44) sugar cane was the mainstay of the island's colonial economy. Large tracts of land were planted in sugar cane and small narrow-gauge trains hauled the crop to the docks for shipment to Japan.

—Tom Zink, *Peace Corps/Micronesia, 1968-70*

Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia)

Capital Palikir

Population 107,434 (2009 est.)

Life Expectancy 70.94 years

Literacy 89% (age 15 and over can read and write)

Languages English (official), Chuukese, Kosrean, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Ulithian, others

Religions Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 47%, other 3%

Government constitutional government in free association with the US

Source: *The World Factbook, 2009*

Micronesia

