**Aranda**

**Aka Northern Aranda**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** A Curious restriction applying to women during the time of pregnancy, and also during the menstrual period, is that they may not, during the continuance of either of these, gather Irriakura, the bulb which forms, together with Munyeru ( Portulaca sp.), a staple vegetable food; the breaking of this rule would result in the failure of the supply of Irriakura.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1929

**Focal Year:** 1860 – 1920

**Citation:** Penniman, T. K. (1929). The Arunta religion. The Sociological Review, Vol. 21, 10–37. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oi08-019

**Description:** Strehlow, for instance, tells us that menstruation is very irregular and the flow is much less than that of the white women. Therefore they regard it as a sort of disease, and attribute it to the fact that the woman has been walking about in a cold wind or that she has been drinking very cold water. According to the belief of the Yumu and Pindupi a demon called Inyutalu (Hair big) is the cause of menstruation. He is covered all over with long hair [234] and he goes into the vagina which he scratches and pulls with his nail to make it bleed. The piri (nail) of the mamu makes the women menstruate.”. The ‘Luritja’ group of tribes do not seclude the women in this way but a man should not have intercourse with a woman in this state (Ngatatara). If he did he might get thin and die. If the blood touches a man he cannot spear the kangaroo or euro. When the women of the mythical times menstruated they put a wallupanpa (head-ring) on their head to stop it and this is still done if there is too much blood.”.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1933

**Focal Year:** 1891 – 1930

**Citation:** Róheim, G. (1933). Women and their life in central Australia. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol 63, 207–265. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oi08-028

**Description:** Women are automatically cleaned by the process of menstruation but men, in order to guard against disease, have periodically to incise the penis and to allow a quantity of blood to flow. This operation is often referred to as men's menstruation. . . . All contact with a man or woman who is “menstruating” has to be avoided and they themselves have to take a number of precautions. Thus they may not touch their own skin with their fingernails and for a couple of days they have to eat with a fork. The penalty for touching a menstruating woman is death by a wasting disease, against which there is no remedy whatsoever. The “menstruating” man has also to avoid sexual intercourse until his wounds are healed, at least two months being allowed for this. Should this prohibition be broken, both parties are liable to die though they may save themselves by confessing their guilt and carrying out a magical rite.’. According to the Karadjeri, menstrual blood ( bala ) is very dangerous to men, a belief embodied in several myths in which men are killed or made sick by contact with it. On the other hand, menstrual blood is valuable to women.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1945

**Focal Year:** 1891 – 1940

**Citation:** Róheim, G. (1945). The eternal ones of the dream: a psychoanalytic interpretation of Australian myth and ritual. In IUP paperback library (pp. xiii, 270 , 4 plates). International Universities Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oi08-009

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Chuuk**

**Aka Trukese**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Menstruating women, and most older women, wore a skirt of plain undyed hibiscus fibers, toonóm. Menstrual huts (imwen irä) , located in the vicinity of most lineage houses, were used by lineage women during the menses and also during childbirth. These buildings are no longer in evidence, but are stated to have been built along the same lines as the wuut and iim , although on a less elaborate scale. Men and women eat together, with the exception that a menstruating woman eats by herself apart from her fellows (in former times menstruating women ate in a special hut erected outside the lineage house).  
**Date of Ethnography:** Not Specified

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1948

**Citation:** LeBar, F. M. ({n.d.}//). The material culture of Truk. {s.n.}. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or19-003

**Description:** During her first menstruation itself, however, she wore a completely plain one (also worn in subsequent menstruations and when pregnant and nursing) and usually retired to a separate hut where she was given small presents by her closest relatives to signify her new status. There is some conflict among our informants on the subject of a separate hut (which is, however, still used in the western islands) and this makes it appear likely that the early sources are correct in stating that its use was not universal on Truk. Formerly, they had to keep out of the way of their “brothers,” for this again was a reminder of the genital area, but this is no longer observed. To the present, however, they usually eat food prepared by their husbands or someone other than their “fathers” or “brothers” when they are menstruating, and eat separately from their “brothers.” But they continue to work in a normal fashion and there is no suggestion of isolation at present.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1953

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1951

**Citation:** Gladwin, T., & Sarason, S. B. (1953). Truk: man in paradise. In Viking Fund publications in anthropology (Issue 20, p. 655). Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or19-002

**Description:** Each jimw used to have associated with it a menstrual hut ( jimwerä ). It was built in the same manner as a small jimw , but on a very small scale. Here women of the lineage were isolated during their first menstruation, and here they prepared and ate their meals apart during subsequent menstruations. At childbirth, an expectant mother retired to the jimwerä at the onset of labor pains and remained there until after delivery. Menstrual huts are no longer built or used.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1951

**Focal Years:** 1947 – 1948

**Citation:** Goodenough, W. H. (1951). Property, kin, and community on Truk. In Yale University publications in anthropology (Issue 46, p. 192). Published for Dept. of Anthropology, Yale University, Yale University Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or19-001

**Description:** One informant professed a taboo on contact or near contact with men if one is menstruating, but this was contradicted by many reports of intercourse during menstruation from others. According to Aryko, menstrual blood on the dress keeps men away from women. Menstruation was considered contaminating, and the husband’s food was not cooked on the same fire with that of his menstruating wife. The behavior reported by Krämer is not practiced in Truk today. Taboos on cooking for men, touching sacred objects, and attending manufacturing processes while menstruating, as well as the custom of remaining in isolation while menstruating, are traits which were probably present in Truk in the past. They are all probably absent at present. Trukese women were cooking for the anthropologist’s family at all times, and abstinence from cooking was not noted in other cases.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1963

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1955

**Citation:** Fischer, A. (1963). Reproduction in Truk. Ethnology, Vol. 2, 526–540. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or19-023

**Description:** Women in confinement or menstruating are an abomination to the ida[unknown] . No ida[unknown] or ida[unknown] pupil may prepare or touch the food of such women, or even enter their dwelling. Sexual intercourse with them would be even more harmful. It is told that an ida[unknown] of the Matenlap /Mateulap/ (war party) had an affair with a Fefan woman who was menstruating. As a consequence of this the ida[unknown] became weak and morose (red), and the /48/ war was lost for Meteulap . The island of Fefan is supposed to have received its name ( fefin = woman) from this event. The woman who is menstruating or pregnant has something unclean, contemptible, about her. She is isolated from the others; no one who holds a “religious position” as ida[unknown] may enter the little dwelling, prepare her food, or eat anything intended for her. The prohibition ends when the condition does.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1927

**Focal Year:** 1912 – 1920

**Citation:** Bollig, L. (1927). The inhabitants of the Truk Islands: religion, life and a short grammar of a Micronesian people. Aschendorff. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or19-022

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes, Menstrual huts (imwen irä). These buildings are no longer in evidence, but are stated to have been built along the same lines as the wuut and iim , although on a less elaborate scale. Formerly, they had to keep out of the way of their “brothers,” for this again was a reminder of the genital area, but this is no longer observed. To the present, however, they usually eat food prepared by their husbands or someone other than their “fathers” or “brothers” when they are menstruating, and eat separately from their “brothers.” But they continue to work in a normal fashion and there is no suggestion of isolation at present. Menstruation was considered contaminating, and the husband’s food was not cooked on the same fire with that of his menstruating wife. The behavior reported by Krämer is not practiced in Truk today. Taboos on cooking for men, touching sacred objects, and attending manufacturing processes while menstruating, as well as the custom of remaining in isolation while menstruating, are traits which were probably present in Truk in the past. They are all probably absent at present. Trukese women were cooking for the anthropologist’s family at all times, and abstinence from cooking was not noted in other cases.

**Hawaiians**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** A gourd vine should not be planted where the shadows of people walking back and forth will strike the flower, because the gourd is the body ( kino lau ) of Lono, the rain god. For the same reason a gourd vine should never be touched by a menstruating woman. Hence in old Hawaii gourds were not planted near the house. For women at the time of menstruation there was an isolated little house called the hale pe`a or house of impurity. FIGURE 15.—Canoe house ( halau wa`a ), Hana, Maui, in 1931. Here a woman retired when she was “contaminated” by her menses, and here she must remain, out of contact with menfolk. Her food was brought to her, and she was fed by another woman who was not menstruating. Under the system of strict kapu where the sanctity of the male was concerned, it was necessary that men of the household be guarded against contamination of their food and working gear by women, who were periodically “unclean.”  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1972

**Focal Year:** 1890s – 1950s

**Citation:** Handy, E. S. C. (Edward S. C., Handy, E. G., & Pukui, M. K. (1972). Native planters in old Hawaii: their life, lore, and environment. In Bernice P. Bishop Museum bulletin (pp. xviii, 641). Bishop Museum Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-005

**Description:** The women had another house that was built near but not too close to the other houses of the kauhale. This was the hale pe`a, a small comfortable thatched house where the women of the family retired when menstruating and remained until the period was completely over. The woman was restricted by the kapu from taking part in any outside activities, thus forcing her to take care of herself during that period. But it did not restrict her from repairing the mats in the hale pe`a or making new ones in there for her own comfort during the time of retirement. Men were not allowed to set foot on the area around it or on the paepae or raised platform on which the house was built, nor to enter under penalty of death. Food was brought to the door by a woman relative, so that the person or persons within did not lack nourishment. This woman wore a green ti (Cordyline terminalis) leaf lei to protect her from the result of defilement. During retirement in the hale pe`a, the menstruating woman used only her own worn-out skirts for pads. Clothing worn around the hips only, could be used for such pads but not those worn above the waist. Every girl or woman saved only her own old clothing for her period of retirement and never anyone else's, not even her husband's cast-off malo nor her sister's old pa`u. Thus the daughters of the kahuna and the ali`i upheld the personal kapu.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1972

**Focal Year:** 1890s – 1950s

**Citation:** Handy, E. S. C. (Edward S. C., & Pukui, M. K. (1972). The Polynesian family system in Ka-’U, Hawai’i. C. E. Tuttle Co. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-004

**Description:** It was tabu for menstruating women to walk on the kuapa walls lest the walls be defiled. After five or six months fish would begin to be seen in the loko kuapa.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1976

**Focal Year:** 1890s – 1950s

**Citation:** Kamakau, S. M., Barrère, D. B., & Pukui, M. K. (1976). The works of the people of old =: Na hana a ka po’e kahiko. In Bernice P. Bishop Museum special publication (pp. viii, 170). Bishop Museum Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-010

**Description:** Bodily discharges—feces, urine, spittle, discharges from the nose, and menses—are all considered polluting. Traditional Hawaiian culture placed a wide range of restrictions on a menstruating woman and many women in `Aina Pumehana still observe such customs as not going near a heiau (religious stone structure) or volcano.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1974

**Focal Year:** 1959 – 1968

**Citation:** Howard, A. (1974). Ain’t no big thing: coping strategies in a Hawaiian-American community. Universtiy Press of Hawaii. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-006

**Description:** Certain it is that the keeping of tapu nights and food tapus would necessitate the building of separate houses and the cooking in separate ovens of food for men and women, as the tapu upon intercourse during the period of menstruation led to the women's occupying at such times a separate house called the pe`a. The dedication of the tapu nights to the gods necessitated a strict calendar system based upon the phases of the moon, and as the priests alone kept these calculations, their influence was greatly increased at this time.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1970

**Focal Year:** Not Specified

**Citation:** Beckwith, M. W., & Loumala, K. (1970). Hawaiian mythology. University of Hawaii Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-003

**Description:** a menstruating woman was “both unclean and unlucky” (Malo 1951:29). Kamakau (1961:3) too states that during menses “a woman was then defiled, for the god despised ( ho`o pailua ) all bloody things.” He refers to the hale pe`a as “the defiled spot.” And yet Hawaiians believed that a woman was particularly fertile in the waning days of her menses. Kamakau (1961:3) states that the tabu period lasted three to five days. A woman then ritually cleansed herself and could again sleep with her husband. This implies that sexual intercourse with a woman who might still be bleeding did not necessarily defile the man and was even thought most conducive to conception. Leaving the hale pe`a and ritually bathing appear to be the significant points in determining the woman's ritual state, not the presence or absence of blood per se. The paradigmatic legend of `Umi, the famed ancestor of the Kamehameha line, is significant for the thesis of female pollution, for the narrative indicates that menstrual blood is not always dangerous and polluting to men. Menstruating women were secluded in a separate house, the hale pe`a . A man was also prohibited from consorting with any other woman during his wife's menses, on pain of death (Malo 1951:29).

**Date of Ethnography:** 1990

**Focal Year:** 1890s – 1950s

**Citation:** Linnekin, J. (1990). Sacred queens and women of consequence: rank, gender, and colonialism in the Hawaiian Islands. In Women and culture series (pp. xxiv, 276). University of Michigan Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ov05-013

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Kapauku**

**Aka Mee**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Menstrual blood is considered a symbol of fertility and is not contaminating. Men have an aversion to it, feeling ashamed and even sick should they see it. The Kapauku believe menstruation has nothing to do with lunation “because women get it at different times and their periods vary in length.”  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1958

**Focal Year:** 1948 – 1955

**Citation:** Pospisil, L. J. (1958). Kapauku Papuans and their law. In Yale University publications in anthropology (Issue 54, pp. 296, plates). Published for the Dept. Anthropology, Yale University. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj29-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Kimam**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Mothers instruct their daughters that menstrual blood is harmful to males and to growing crops. Some western villages have menstrual huts, but in other villages a menstruating woman just moves to separate corner of the house.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 2020

**Focal Year:** 1930 – 1990

**Citation:** Gray, J. P. (2020). Culture Summary: Kimam. Human Relations Area Files. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj82-000

**Description:** The danger that women represent, in this respect, culminates the men's fear of menstrual blood. Women are especially dangerous during menstruation. In the western part of the island, women still reside in a separate menstrual hut during their periods. They are also instructed to stay away from the yam fields, for their presence might have an unfavorable influence upon the growth of the crop. During the planting season, moreover, a menstruating woman should be generally avoided at all costs.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1984

**Focal Year:** 1955 – 1962

**Citation:** Serpenti, L. M. (1984). The ritual meaning of homosexuality and pedophelia among the Kimam-Papuans of South Irian Jaya. In ritualized homosexuality in melanesia (pp. 292–317). University of California Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj82-002

**Description:** Her mother tells her that menstrual blood is very dangerous for boys and men and for the growing crops. During her periods she must from now on keep away from men. In the western villages the women usually go to stay at the maternity-hut, elsewhere they sleep in a different corner of the house during this time. Sexual intercourse is strictly prohibited. The woman is not allowed to prepare food for her husband or even hand it to him. In the Kimaghama villages she is even prohibited from carrying out her normal duties. She is not allowed to fish, to fetch firewood or to pound mapiè. A woman will never actually tell her husband when she is menstruating. The fear is so great that it is better not to talk about the subject at all. When the woman goes to the maternity-hut, or puts on a new apron of rushes, the man knows that he must not approach her for a few days. The men believe that the touch of a woman during menstruation may cause all sorts of calamities, as well as being disastrous for the crops they are tending.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1965

**Focal Year:** 1960 – 1962

**Citation:** Serpenti, L. M. (1965). Cultivators in the swamp: social structure and horticulture in a New Guinea society (Frederik-Hendrik Island, West New Guinea). In Samenlevingen buiten Europa. Non-European societies (pp. xii, 308). Van Gorcum. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj82-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes, different parts of the island practice menstrual seclusion whereas others are not so restrictive.

**Kiribati**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** During menstruation the women refrain from their normal tasks, remain seated in the house and change the old skirts ( riri ) which are worn during these periods.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1986

**Focal Year:** 1963 – 1965

**Citation:** Koch, G. (1986). The material culture of Kiribati. Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or06-009

**Description:** For three days after menstruation the woman does not wash her body. On the fourth morning at point of dawn she picks a young frond from the opening leaf of the coconut. Entering the shallow water, she draws the frond backward and forward between her thighs to the following incantation: I kere kangkang, I kere kangkang. I kere boiarara, I kere boiarara. Buti rio, buti rake. Ko ria raon—baon—Taokarawa. Ko itau rikaki, ngkoe anne Ten Naena. Ko ki iai, ko ka iai, ko uringa baei. She then bites the leaf along its whole length, twists it into a cord, and binds it on her right ankle, where it remains for three days.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1989

**Focal Year:** 1680 – 1932

**Citation:** Grimble, A., & Maude, H. E. (Henry E. (1989). Tungaru traditions: writings on the atoll culture of the Gilbert Islands. In Pacific Islands monograph series (Issue 7, pp. xxxii, 382). Center for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii : University of Hawaii Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or06-006

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None stated or implied

**Kwoma**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Adolescent girls are warned to dispose of their menstrual blood carefully, so that it cannot be used as sorcery material.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1941

**Focal Year:** 1936 – 1937

**Citation:** Whiting, J. W. M. (1941). Becoming a Kwoma: teaching and learning in a New Guinea tribe. Published for the Institute of Human Relations by Yale University Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj13-001

**Description:** Thus if a man were to eat food cooked by his wife while she was menstruating or immediately after childbirth it is believed that his health would be seriously and permanently affected. However, a man may eat food cooked by his wife on any other occasion without ill effect. In Kwoma belief menstruation and childbirth are directly associated, and both are regarded as direct manifestations of a woman's active reproductive capacities. Adults know that only women who menstruate are capable of conceiving and giving birth to children; and menstrual blood itself is believed to be the substance (along with semen) out of which a child is formed in the womb. Like childbirth, then, menstruation and menstrual blood are expressions of female fertility.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1983

**Focal Year:** 1970 – 1980

**Citation:** Bowden, R. (1983). Yena: art and ceremony in a Sepik society. In Monograph (pp. xii, 179 , [32] of plates). Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj13-003

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Lesu**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** During their first menses they do not wash in the sea, but they do so during the succeeding ones. The attitude towards their monthly illness, in general, is that it is a nuisance. There is also a feeling of shame about it as far as men are concerned. The women would be very much ashamed to have men see their menstruating blood. In the past, when straw aprons were worn, they always inserted extra straw in them, and to-day they wear a black loin-cloth instead of a light-coloured one. There is no other protection. They do not have intercourse while they are menstruating, and regard such a custom as disgusting.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1933

**Focal Year:** 1920 – 1933

**Citation:** Powdermaker, H. (1933). Life in Lesu: the study of a Melanesian Society in New Ireland. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=om24-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Malekula**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Cohabitation occurs only in the wife's house, never in the man's, for fear of pollution by menstrual blood, and never during the woman's menstrual period.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1942

**Focal Year:** 1900s

**Citation:** Layard, J. (John). (1942). Stone men of Malekula. Chatto & Windus. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oo12-001

**Description:** So, too, yam gardens are now the exclusive province of men only in Laus; in Mewun and Seniang today, women will work in yam gardens unless they are menstruating.

**Date of Ethnography:** 2002

**Focal Year:** Not Specified

**Citation:** Larcom, J. C. (2002). Culture summary: Malekula. HRAF. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oo12-000

**Description:** The repugnance common amongst men of most primitive peoples for menstruation is found in this district. They express great disgust at the sight of or proximity to menstrual blood. Should a man and a woman go to a dance some days' journey away and the woman's period come on during the return journey, the man will leave her and go home by another route. Further, a menstruating woman is tabued from entering a garden in which the plants are young and growing, nor may her husband do so while she is in this condition.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1934

**Focal Year:** 1890s – 1925

**Citation:** Deacon, B., & Wedgwood, C. H. (Camilla H. (1934). Malekula: a vanishing people in the New Hebrides. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oo12-004

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes, “So, too, yam gardens are now the exclusive province of men only in Laus; in Mewun and Seniang today, women will work in yam gardens unless they are menstruating.”.

**Manus**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Women are exhorted to have children; abortion is heavily forbidden; and that woman who never menstruates because she is always either pregnant or breast-feeding a child is regarded as most patriotic and virtuous.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1956

**Focal Year:** 1953

**Citation:** Mead, M. (1956). New lives for old: cultural transformation--Manus, 1928-1953. Morrow. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=om06-002

**Description:** Intercourse is not forbidden during menstruation nor during pregnancy. The shamed concealment of menstruation. Menstruation must be kept a secret.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1930

**Focal Year:** 1928 – 1929

**Citation:** Mead, M. (1930). Growing up in New Guinea: a comparative study of primitive education. W. Morrow & company. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=om06-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Maori**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** If parents gave their daughters any instruction, it was to warn them of the taboos they must observe when menstruating: keeping the evidence hidden from males, not pegging underclothes where others would have to walk under them, not riding horses and not working in the gardens or gathering shellfish. Observance of these taboos was reinforced by stressing the disasters (sickness, crop failure, the disappearance of shellfish) that would follow their breach, but there was no mention of the deeper reason for these prohibitions, the polluting tapu associated with menstrual blood.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1995

**Focal Year:** 1940 – 1991

**Citation:** Metge, J. (1995). New growth from old: the Whanau in the modern world. Victoria University Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oz04-011

**Description:** The condition of mate marama (moon or monthly sickness) always rendered women unclean in former days, and we have noted certain disabilities that were attached to that condition. This unclean state is often denoted by the word tapu, as in connection with the above affection, with birth and also with death.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1924

**Focal Year:** 1820 – 1920

**Citation:** Best, E. (1924). The Maori: volume 2. In Memoirs of the Polynesian Society (Vol. 5, pp. x, 638). Printed by H.H. Tombs, limited. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oz04-002

**Description:** The impurity of woman during the menstrual period was much stressed by the Maori, and this led to many restrictions of her liberty of action. She was not allowed to join in many functions at such a time, to enter a cultivation ground, lest the crops fail, to collect shellfish, lest they migrate to other parts. In many places she might not assist in the planting, lifting, or storing crops. She might not step over a man's sleeping place, or recline on it, or step over a male, man or boy; such an act was deemed both dangerous and impertinent. Some ritual feasts she was not allowed to take part in; in some others it was necessary that she should do so. She was not allowed to wear the plumes of the heron, and, in the Taupo district at least, she might not partake of human flesh. In the Rangitaiki valley she was not allowed to eat the tuatara lizard, which fact would not appeal to us as a serious hardship. Women were not allowed within the whare mata, that is to say a place where nets, snares and traps were being made. There were many such restrictions on the liberty of women, all owing to some phase of tapu, and it may be said that tapu was the great disciplinary agent in Maori life.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1924

**Focal Year:** 1820 – 1920

**Citation:** Best, E. (1924). The Maori: volume 1. In Memoirs of the Polynesian Society: Vol. V (pp. xv, 530). Printed by H.H. Tombs, limited. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oz04-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Marquesas**

**Aka Marquesans**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description**: If menstruating women climb breadfruit trees the fruit will be spotted. Since the mission and ardent Christians have firmly opposed tapu restrictions, it is certain that people would hesitate to admit them to me and doubtful that they are widespread, although a few might be maintained in valley or family traditions. The woman who has “monthly sickness”—is menstruating—is not formally limited by well-known and accepted rules. People know, for instance, that the traditional reason why certain breadfruit have splotched skins is that a menstruating woman climbed the tree. Such a tradition may be doubted or mocked, but its double message remains: menstruation may have repercussions if a woman moves outside a limited realm; women have so moved, as many breadfruit attest. Suggs reported no restrictions on women's activities during menstruation on Nuku Hiva in the 1950s except that sexual relations were seen as unfitting and possibly dangerous to men (1966: 21–22). Since the mission and ardent Christians have firmly opposed tapu restrictions, it is certain that people would hesitate to admit them to me and doubtful that they are widespread, although a few might be maintained in valley or family traditions.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1983

**Focal Year:** 1895 – 1977

**Citation:** Kirkpatrick, J. (1983). The Marquesan notion of the person. In Studies in cultural anthropology (Issue 3, pp. xvii, 274). UMI Research Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ox06-014

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes “Since the mission and ardent Christians have firmly opposed tapu restrictions, it is certain that people would hesitate to admit them to me and doubtful that they are widespread, although a few might be maintained in valley or family traditions.”.

**Marshallese**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** After the first menstruation women go into seclusion for only six days during their monthly periods. A permanent menstruation hut ( djoken ) is built on the outskirts of every homestead and is used by the women of that homestead. Sometimes it is occupied by one, sometimes by more women. Each woman has her own special mats which she keeps in this hut and which are burnt when they are worn out, as is everything else that she has used in the hut and which she will not use again. During the six days which she spends in the djoken the woman is regarded as definitely unclean for the first three, and to be returning to a state of cleanness during the last three. Throughout this time she must be careful never to bathe in fresh water, and, moreover, she may only bathe and wash her mats on some part of the beach owned by herself or by her kinship group. This regulation is to prevent trouble arising, for if menstrual blood is carried by the sea to any place where men are fishing they will inevitably catch nothing; the blood will cause the fish to go away. Uncooked food is brought to the woman who cooks it on a fire just outside the hut. The tabu against a menstruating woman cooking for a man, which is so usual among the Pacific Islanders, is somewhat modified in the Marshall Islands. A man can eat of food cooked by his own wife while she is in the menstruating hut, but only if she is the only inmate of it; no man should eat food cooked by any menstruating woman other than his wife or if another menstruating woman is in the hut with her. Precautions are taken that no baby shall come into contact with a menstruating woman. A baby is never brought anywhere near the hut where a girl is being secluded at puberty ( imwin djiroŋ ) nor near a menstruation hut. Even to-day when the old customs are considerably relaxed, a woman during her periods will not touch anything belonging to a baby. For example, if a baby had been eating some food, and some of this were offered to a menstruating woman, she would refuse it, courteously saying that she was not hungry. The true reason of refusal would be understood, but the polite fiction is always observed. The general idea is that if a baby were to come into contact with a menstruating woman, it would be “unlucky,” though in what way is not clearly defined. Probably it would become ill, or suffer some accident.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1943

**Focal Year:** 1935 – 1942

**Citation:** Wedgwood, C. H. (Camilla H. (1943). Notes on the Marshall Islands. Oceania, Vol. 13, 1–23. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or11-019

**Description:** During the menses (E. böd□kdök; St.-G.: b˘od□k˘edăk ), the woman lives in a special little house (Kr.: djuken; Kub.: jukwen; St.-G.: j˘uken; E.: jugin ) which is usually built close to the shore and away from the dwelling. Admission is granted only to her husband and her parents. It is feared that other people might do her harm through magic and render her food inedible. She is also not allowed to eat food prepared in the cookhouse by other people, but has to cook for herself on a small fire or eat raw fruit. Nobody is allowed to pass the west side of her cooking fire (E.: ibikin kijeek ). Her sons are even forbidden to see the smoke, because their eyes would be blinded in war. The woman is not allowed to eat bonito, albacore, swordfish, etc., or fish caught with the net or weir at the outer shore (2) 2. Erdland, 1909, p. 110f., and 1914, p. 135. . Moreover, the woman must avoid places at the beach where schools of fish appear, the chief's hut, and the large boat. If, in exceptional cases, she has to travel during this period, she must follow the large boat in a small one (E.: wa an bil ).

**Date of Ethnography:** 1938

**Focal Year:** 1788 – 1938

**Citation:** Krämer, A., Nevermann, -, Hans, Brant, C., & Armstrong, J. M. (1938). Ralik-Ratak (Marshall Islands). In Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908-1910, II ; Ethnographie: B. Mikronesien (Vol. 11, p. HRAF ms: xii, 1-438). Friederichsen, De Gruyter and Co. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or11-002

**Description:** If a woman has to travel during her catamenial period, she is forbidden to use the common large canoe; she travels on a small one ( wa an bil ) that follows in its wake. Every woman has to board and leave a vessel on the outrigger side. A woman having her period lives in a little low hut away from the dwelling, which only the husband may enter. She must prepare all her food herself and eat alone. No one may 337 cont. pass the west side of the hearth fire ( ikibin kijeek ). Her sons may not catch sight of the smoke from her fire; otherwise their eyes would be blinded in war. It is striking that the islanders, despite their great sensuality, regard menstruation and even sexual intercourse as a bad omen. Indeed, the mere presence of a woman is often disastrous for the success of an ordinary act and all the more so for one involving magic. No woman may be present when a school of fish is encircled; likewise no woman may see the pandanus leaves used for divination. A sick man, his spouse, and the doctor must practice continence during the course of treatment. A sorcerer may have intercourse with his wife after 136 divination only if he has bathed. A woman must stay away from the chief's hut during the menses and board a canoe from the opposite side. The natives do not know of any motive that led to these laws, other than cleanliness. The woman spent the time in a small hut built away from the dwelling. She was prohibited from eating any of the food that was part of the usual cooking. Instead, food that could be eaten raw such as pandanus and coconuts, was brought to her. She herself had to prepare breadfruit, fish, and arrowroot flour at a small fire. She had to be careful, however, that her sons did not catch sight of the smoke from the fire, since otherwise their eyes would be blinded in war. The woman was not permitted to eat certain fish, such as bonito, albacore, swordfish, and any fish caught with net and weir on the outer shore or with the scoop net on the lagoon shore. She also was not permitted to go to places on the shore where there were schools of fish. Women and girls who are menstruating may not enter a chief's hut at all, even though the chief may have sent for them. When they do not appear, the chief readily divines why they stayed away. Moreover, such a woman is not allowed to eat any food from the chief's hut.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1914

**Focal Year:** 1900 – 1914

**Citation:** Erdland, A., & Neuse, R. (1914). The Marshall Islanders: life and customs, thought and religion of a South Seas people. In Anthropos Bibliothek ethnological monographs (Vol. 2, Issue 1, p. HRAF ms: iii, 296 [original: xiv, 376 ]). [s.n.]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or11-003

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes, “Even to-day when the old customs are considerably relaxed, a woman during her periods will not touch anything belonging to a baby.”.

**Samoans**

**Aka Upolu Samoans**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** In many parts of Polynesia, all women, and especially menstruating women, are considered contaminating and dangerous. She cannot make tafolo, a bread-fruit pudding usually made by the young men in any case, nor make the kava while she is menstruating. But she need retire to no special house; she need not eat alone; there is no contamination in her touch or look. No woman can be officially present at a gathering of chiefs unless she is taupo making the kava, but any woman may bring her husband his pipe or come to deliver a message, so long as her presence need not be recognised. They were told not to make kava while menstruating, but the participation in a restriction they'd known about all their lives was unimpressive. Some of them had made kava before puberty, others had not. It depended entirely upon whether there was an available girl or boy about when a chief wished to have some kava made.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1928

**Focal Year:** 1900 – 1928

**Citation:** Mead, M. (1928). Coming of age in Samoa; a psychological study of primitive youth for western civilisation. W. Morrow & Company. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ou08-003

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Santa Cruz Islanders**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Menstruating women may not sit with others. The moon is regarded as the cause of menstruation.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1909

**Focal Year:** Not Specified

**Citation:** Graebner, F., & Schütze, F. (1909). Ethnography of the Santa Cruz Islands. Ethnologica, Vol. 1, HRAF ms: 1-212 [Original: 71-184 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=on13-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None Referenced or Implied

**Siwai**

**Aka Siuai**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** All Siuai females past early childhood feel shame (maijo ) at the sight of menstrual blood and never refer to menstruation except euphemistically. It is the same with Siuai males, who are not embarrassed to state that some woman has “gone to the moon” but who avoid any direct reference to menstrual blood — like “copulate” (ruru) it is too “strong” ( itikai ) a word for polite conversation. Indeed, if a male speaks of a woman's menstrual blood, other males are embarrassed and call him an immoral (kirahao) man, adding that he spends too much of his time with females otherwise he would not know about such things. Yet, Siuai shame of menstrual blood does not extend to the setting aside of special menstrual huts; during their periods women remain inactive in their hamlet houses and try to dry up the flow by holding heated leaves against their abdomen. They try to avoid standing or walking lest the blood run down their legs and be seen, thereby bringing them great embarrassment. Menstrual blood itself is not considered dangerous; the reason most men do not copulate with a menstruating woman is “because of her disagreeable odor, and because some of the blood might get on the man thereby causing him to have shame (maio , which in this context seems better translated as disgust or repugnance ). In Siuai the menstruating woman is somewhat ashamed of her flowing blood and its odor, but she is not segregated or otherwise avoided. Again, sexual intercourse does not disable men from participating in rituals or any other activity, there being no concept of ritual impurity caused by sexual contact. On the other hand, there is some evidence which suggests that the sex act has a deleterious effect upon growth — of infants and of garden crops.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1955

**Focal Year:** 1938 – 1939

**Citation:** Oliver, D. L. (1955). A Solomon Island society: kinship and leadership among the Siuai of Bougainville. Harvard University Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=on19-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Tikopia**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** No special tapu pertains to this time. A girl or woman goes about freely, dances, and performs nearly all her usual pursuits. She is not barred from entering the cooking-house and sitting there, nor from sleeping in the dwelling-house. But she may not go and fill the water-bottles, nor handle food around the oven-side. It is fakakinokino , “disgusting.” Again a woman so situated does not go near a group of men who are seated together. Not that the men object, but it is thought that if she sat by the side of a man the menstrual blood would begin to flow in great quantity. The impression I gained was that they consider it is not the woman but the blood itself that is affected by the proximity of man.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1936

**Focal Year:** Not Specified

**Citation:** Firth, R. (1936). We, the Tikopia: a sociological study of kinship in primitive Polynesia. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ot11-002

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Tiwi**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Although the strict taboos imposed during the first menstrual period no longer apply, a woman must observe several lesser precautions during her monthly periods. The maritji spirits are still something of a problem, and during these times the woman will not go near a small water hole or well, for it might dry up. However, it is all right to approach a large billabong or fresh-water creek. She must avoid a long canoe trip over wide expanses of salt water for fear that the maritji will be angry and cause a big wind to blow. She may not eat any food that a dog has caught or touched, because “next time a stick would lodge in her throat.” If she happens to step over a turtle spear or rope, or over a bundle of throwing sticks, the spear or throwing sticks will not go straight. Fish spears were not mentioned, but the belief would probably also apply to them.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1971

**Focal Year:** 1914 – 1962

**Citation:** Goodale, J. C. (Jane C. (1971). Tiwi wives: a study of the women of Melville Island, North Australia. In Monographs of the American Ethnological Society (pp. xxiv, 368). University of Washington Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oi20-014

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Tongans**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** A menstruating girl neither makes nor drinks kava because of a tapu on cold water at this time. A woman who has given birth to a child, similarly does not make kava for at least a month after the delivery. There are no tapu against intercourse during the menstrual period.   
**Date of Ethnography:** 1941

**Focal Year:** 1938 – 1939

**Citation:** Beaglehole, E., & Beaglehole, P. (1941). Pangai, village in Tonga. In Memoirs of the Polynesian Society: Vol. v. 18 (pp. iii–iv, 3–145, [1]). The Polynesian Society. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ou09-013

**Description:** During menstruation in general, women took care of the flow by means of a piece of tapa rolled up and inserted between the legs, where it was held in place merely by leg pressure. Any piece of old softened tapa would be used for such purpose.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1929

**Focal Year:** 900 – 1921

**Citation:** Gifford, E. W. (1929). Tongan society. In Bulletin (pp. iv, 366). The Museum. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ou09-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Tinputz**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** A woman who is menstruating may not cook taro for the novices, nor may any one else cook it in her hut. If this rule is broken the novices will become very ill, and will waste away till they are reduced to skin and bone. She must not prepare food for any man, including her husband, which means that she has to arrange for some one else to cook his meals. She must not go to work in the taro garden; if she did, pigs would eat the taro plants and the crop would be poor. She must not go in a mon (plank canoe) or a storm would arise and the canoe would capsize. She must not go into the sea, either to fish or to wash, or she would spoil the fishing. Sexual intercourse is forbidden her until she has performed ceremonial ablutions in the sea after the flow has ceased. I think it probable that there are other taboos which have escaped my notice. Neither at Petats nor at Kurtatchi was it necessary for her to retire to a separate hut, but I am informed that this is customary in some parts of Buka.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1935

**Focal Year:** 1929 – 1930

**Citation:** Blackwood, B. (1935). Both sides of Buka Passage: an ethnographic study of social, sexual, and economic questions in the north-western Solomon Islands. Clarendon Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=on26-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes, “Neither at Petats nor at Kurtatchi was it necessary for her to retire to a separate hut, but I am informed that this is customary in some parts of Buka.”.

**Trobriands**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** There is no pronounced masculine dislike or dread of menstruous blood. A man will not cohabit with his wife or sweetheart during her monthly period, but he will remain in the same hut and participate in the same food, and only refrains from sleeping in the same bed. Women, during menstruation, wash themselves daily, for purposes of cleanliness, in the same large water hole from which the whole village draws its drinking water, and in which, also, males occasionally take a bath. There are no special ablutions ceremonially carried out at the end of the period, nor is any rite performed when a girl menstruates for the first time. The women have no special way of dressing during menstruation, except that at times they wear a longer skirt, and there is no particular modesty on the subject between the sexes.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1929

**Focal Year:** 1884 – 1929

**Citation:** Malinowski, B. (1929). The sexual life of savages in northwestern Melanesia: Vol. 1 and 2. Horace Liveright. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ol06-005

**Description:** Kiriwina women do not transmit any polluting qualities. Men are not afraid to have sexual intercourse with menstruating women. If a man appears sluggish at work, other men will tease him about sleeping with a menstruating woman, but such sexual contact is not considered dangerously debilitating.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1976

**Focal Year:** Not Specified

**Citation:** Weiner, A. B. (1976). Women of value, men of renown: new perspectives in Trobriand exchange. University of Texas Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=ol06-025

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Ulithi**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Menstruating women are not allowed to travel in the large canoes. On Ulithi, at least, menstrual houses are always built near the shore and the women go into the water several times daily to bathe. Grown men must keep away from these waters but children may play there, just as they may visit their mothers in the hut. But for a man and a woman to carry on a liaison in the house is unthinkable, although there are reports in the literature that on other islands of the archipelago such things do happen once in a while.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1961

**Focal Year:** 1900 – 1949

**Citation:** Lessa, W. A. (1961). Tales from Ulithi Atoll: a comparative study in oceanic folklore. In University of California publications (pp. x, 493). University of California Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or20-002

**Description:** Women must also observe restraint during their menses, when they are confined to the imől ipől. Sexual congress is prohibited during menstruation, and may be resumed only when a woman has left the menstrual house. The reason assigned for this is that during her period a woman is physically and ritually unclean. Extraordinary precautions are taken to see that the repől does not ritually contaminate magico-religious specialists. She may have no contact whatsoever with adult males. And she must observe a group of taboos designed to prevent her from bringing misfortune to the whole community. Because of this, she has provided for her a special house which segregates her from the rest of the community, and while she is there she must avoid certain activities. While in the house, the women do their own cooking and perform such light work as weaving and plaiting. They are forbidden to eat some foods, namely, certain fish ( főfő, p˝athi, i˝al, langui, hathekh ), as well as taro and other foods which come from the sacred garden. They may not be given water to drink which comes from a source shared by certain males under taboos. Such males consist of diviners, men who address the wind and rain, men who address fish, and canoe-captains. Usually, a special well is reserved for ipől inmates. Women and children visitors are free to come and go in the menstrual house with certain exceptions: women engaged in cooking for the four classes of taboo males mentioned above may not enter the house or speak to the confined women, unless, of course, they themselves are menstruating. But women who have reached the menopause and are doing such cooking may never violate the rule. While men are not allowed to enter the taboo area, they may converse with the women at the boundary and pass uncooked food and tobacco to them. This permission is not allowed to all men, being denied to rebwe, serawi, rethől, and pelű, mentioned above, and to three other categories of men under taboo: those who have ritually addressed a palm toddy tree during the day, those who are being treated with certain medicines, and those who have entered the five-month taboo period which begins when a person undertakes to learn the art of canoe-making. The rules against trespass are relaxed in the case of chai and men who must enter the sacred land to repair or build the menstrual house. Women staying at the menstrual house may not leave it until three days after their period is completed, unless there is danger from a typhoon or tidal wave. In such an event the paramount chief or other chief designates a special path along which they are to make their way to a house which he has selected from the point of view of their safety. She may not leave the house, except to walk down the strip leading to the sea.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1950

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1949

**Citation:** Lessa, W. A. (1950). The ethnography of Ulithi Atoll. In CIMA report (Issue 28, pp. vii, 269 leaves). University of California. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or20-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Wogeo**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Food cooked by women who are menstruating has also to be avoided, though not until after about the eighth year. Children are from this age onwards cautioned, too, against touching their mothers during her periods.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1946

**Focal Year:** 1934

**Citation:** Hogbin, H. I. (1946). Puberty to marriage: a study of the sexual life of the native of Wogeo, New Guinea. Oceania, Vol. 16(3), 185-209 , plate. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj27-008

**Description:** Women are automatically cleansed by the process of menstruation, but men, in order to guard against disease, have periodically to incise the penis and allow a quantity of blood to flow. This operation is often referred to as men's menstruation. All contact with a man or woman who is “menstruating” has to be avoided, and they themselves have to take a number of precautions. Thus they may not touch their own skin with their fingernails, and for a couple of days they have to eat with a fork. The penalty for touching a menstruating woman is death by a wasting disease, against which there is no remedy whatsoever. The “menstruating” man has also to avoid sexual intercourse until his wounds are healed, at least two months being allowed for this. Should this prohibition be broken both parties are liable to die, though they may save themselves by confessing their guilt and carrying out a magical rite.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1935

**Focal Year:** 1934

**Citation:** Hogbin, H. I. (1935). Trading expedition in northern New Guinea. Oceania, Vol. 5(4), 375-407 , plates. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj27-005

**Description:** She also does the everyday cooking—men rarely take an active part except at the time of feasts—preparing the food and serving the bulk of it when the meal is at length ready. An exception is made during her periods, since menstruating women are not allowed to handle anyone else's food. She advertises her condition by donning a dun-coloured petticoat, and the neighbours come to the rescue and offer their supplies  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1945

**Focal Year:** 1934

**Citation:** Hogbin, H. I. (1945). Marriage in Wogeo, New Guinea. Oceania, Vol. 15(4), 324-352 , plate. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj27-007

**Description:** A menstruating woman and a menstruating man are alike rekareka. They go into retirement, keep warm, and observe food taboos. The only significant differences are, first, that the woman remains at home, where she is not permitted to use the door when going outside to answer a call of nature, and has to leave and enter through a hole in the floor or the wall; second, that she fasts only after the blood has appeared and the man does so beforehand as well; and, third, that although touching another person or another person's property always brings about his death, a guilty woman does not seriously jeopardize herself, whereas a guilty man suffers the same fate as his victim. The reason is simple—men are socially more important.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1970

**Focal Year:** 1934 – 1948

**Citation:** Hogbin, H. I. (1970). The island of menstruating men: religion in Wogeo, New Guinea. In Chandler publications in anthropology and sociology (pp. 15, 203). Chandler Pub. Co. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=oj27-015

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Woleai Region**

**Aka Ifaluk**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** The women stay in the menstrual hut im a fatiu for four days. No ceremonies are involved in the first menses nor the attainment of puberty  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1937

**Focal Year:** 1907 – 1910

**Citation:** Krämer, A. (1937). The Central Carolines: part I: the Lamotrek Group, Woleai: Vol. Vol. 10 (pp. 1–291). Friederichsen, De Gruyter und Co. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/cultures/or21/documents/004

**Description:** Women are required to spend these periods in seclusion, in little huts built for the purpose on each homestead. They may not visit the taro patches, nor take part in preparation of food. The little huts used for this seclusion are at all times taboo to men. If a man should enter one of them, the people would all fall sick; or, according to another statement, would starve. On the other hand, if a menstruating woman leaves her seclusion hut, the kind of divination called bwei, described later, will not work. The tree is called rongonax, and is said to be the only one of its kind on the atoll. If a menstruating woman were to come near it, a typhoon would spring up, so severe that sea water would wash all over the atoll.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1949

**Focal Year:** 1900 – 1948

**Citation:** Burrows, E. G. (Edwin G. (1949). The people of Ifalik: a little-disturbed atoll. Pacific Science Board, National Research Council. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/cultures/or21/documents/001

**Description:** Menstruating women on Ifaluk, as in many cultures, were subject to a variety of taboos. There were four special houses on the atoll which served as menstrual huts for each of the four villages into which the households were grouped. A woman, at the onset of menstruation, retired to one of these, removed from the ordinary life of the community until her period was over. The menstrual history of every woman was public knowledge on Ifaluk because of the custom of retiring to the menstrual huts.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1958

**Focal Year:** 1953

**Citation:** Bates, M., & Abbott, D. P. (1958). Coral Island: portrait of an atoll. Scribner. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or21-041

**Description:** During their menstrual period, pungelog, the women and girls stay in a small house for menstruating women. The girls wear a bunch of light green leaves inserted in their grass skirts at that time. They have strict dietary rules; they may not eat anything prepared or even touched by a man.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1904

**Focal Year:** 1903

**Citation:** Born, L. (1904). Some observations of an ethnographic nature concerning the Woleai Islands. In Mitteilungen aus den deutschen schutzgebieten mit benutzung amtlicher quellen …: Vol. Vol. 17 (pp. 175–191). [s.n.]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/cultures/or21/documents/011

**Description:** This public nature of menstruation obtains in adult life, as well. At the onset of her menstrual period the woman retires to the menstrual hut, where she remains until the end of her period (usually four days). She may sit outside the hut, but she may not enter her own house or the house of any other person, nor may she leave the confines of her own courtyard, except for bathing and excretory purposes. Should she violate this taboo, fish would not enter the lagoon, as they fear the menstrual blood. Furthermore, vegetation would die, and the “chief am very angry at that lady”. Should she walk near the southern end of the island of Falārik, where the Rangonax tree grows, a typhoon would ensue. No male, with the exception of her husband and sons, may enter the menstrual hut. Should this taboo be violated the consequences would be the same as those described above; all vegetation would die and the chief “am very angry at that man”. But not even her husband and sons, or even any woman, may enter the hut if they have eaten fish on that day. This taboo applies even to babies. The menstrual woman is subject to a number of taboos. She may engage only in that work which may be performed in the hut. She may not partake of the food prepared by the women of her household, but must prepare her own food in separate untensils. Furthermore, the food must be prepared on a separate fire since the house fire is taboo. Her husband and children, however, may eat the food that she prepares. She may not eat freshly caught fish and she remains subject to this taboo until she has worked in her taro patch on four separate occasions. Sexual intercourse is taboo during this period. Should the taboo be violated the woman would fall ill and perhaps die. At the end of her period the woman must bathe thoroughly before she can resume her normal routine. Unlike other aspects of sexual or bodily functioning, menstruation is not a tabooed subject of conversation; rather, it is spoken of freely and openly. There is no feeling of shame or secrecy attached to it. Everyone knows, of course, when a woman is menstruating because she is in the menstrual hut. When I would ask to see a woman, for example, her husband or children would state in matter-of-fact way that she was menstruating and that she could be found in the menstrual hut. Despite the nonchalance with which menstruation is accepted, the men fear the menstrual blood. When asked the cause of the fear, they answer that some blood might fall on them. At least one man, however, said that should menstrual blood fall on a man, his hair falls out, he receives a perpetual stomach-ache, and he becomes demented.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1953

**Focal Year:** 1678 – 1948

**Citation:** Burrows, E. G. (Edwin G., & Spiro, M. E. (1953). An atoll culture: ethnography of Ifaluk in the central Carolines. In Behavior science monographs (pp. iii, 355). Human Relations Area Files. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or21-042

**Description:** At the onset of her menstrual period the woman retires to the menstrual hut, and remains in it till its end (usually four days). She may sit outside the hut, but may not enter her own house or the house of any other person, nor may she even leave the confines of her own courtyard, except for bathing and excretory purposes. Except for her husband and sons, no male is allowed in the menstrual hut. The menstrual woman, herself, may not eat fresh fish, and she remains subject to the taboo until she has gone to the taro patch on four separate occasions. The menstrual woman may engage only in that work which may be performed in the hut. She may not eat from the food prepared for the household, but must prepare her own food, in separate utensils, and over a separate fire, the house-fire being taboo. Her hasband and children, however, may eat the food that she prepares. Sexual intercourse is completely taboo during this period. Should the taboo be violated the woman would fall ill and perhaps die. Unlike other aspects of sexual or bodily functioning, menstruation is not a tabooed subject for conversation, so that it is spoken of freely and openly. There is no sense of shame or secrecy of any kind attached to it. Every one knows, of course, when a woman is menstruating because she is in the menstrual hut. When I would ask to see a woman, for example, her husband or children would state matter-of-factly that she was menstruating, and I could find her in the menstrual hut. At the end of her period, the woman must bathe thoroughly, after which she resumes her normal routine. “Despite the nonchalance with which menstruation is accepted the men are in fear of the menstrual blood. When asked the cause of the fear, they answer that some blood might fall in their food, or that some might fall on them. These are obviously transparent rationalizations for something which has deep-seated, emotional roots, of which they themselves are not consciously aware. At least one man, however, said that should menstrual blood fall on a man, his hair comes out, he receives a perpetual stomachache, and he becomes demented. Should a man enter the hut, all vegetation would be destroyed, and ‘the chief am very angry at that man.’”. “Again, should the [WPM: menstruating] woman not remain in seclusion, fish would not enter the lagoon, as they fear the menstrual blood. In this case too, vegetation would die, and the ‘chief am very angry at that lady.’ Should she walk near the southern end of the island of Felarik, where the Rangona tree grows, a typhoon would ensue.”

**Date of Ethnography:** 1949

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1948

**Citation:** Spiro, M. E. (1949). Ifaluk: a South Sea culture. Pacific Science Board, National Research Council. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or21-028

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** None referenced or implied

**Yapese**

**Continent:** Oceania

**Description:** Those kān further commanded that a house should be built on the tēd (uninhabited interior) or at some other place where nobody lived, or in a slave village, so that the women might go and stay there at the time of their menses. This house (that is, the whole place) is called dapál (3) 3. The word dapál probably originated from pal, menstruation, and the prefix expressing frequent repetition, ta (da), possibly also from the prefix to, which designates the place, location for something. Even the Jap man does not know any other derivation, in spite of the fact that he always pronounces a soft d, thus: dapal. Concerning the menses, the women are supposed to wash and anoint themselves on the third or fourth day after the blood ceases and return to their house and remain there for two more days in the little house ( p'enifí ). After that they may go into the large dwelling. Such a woman is supposed to stay there four or five more days, and only then may she again cook for the man.  
**Date of Ethnography:** 1913

**Focal Year:** 1910

**Citation:** Walleser, S. (1913). Religious views and customs of the inhabitants of Yap (German South Seas). Anthropos, Vol. 8, HRAF ms: 1, 69 leaves [original: 607-629, 1044-1068 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-021

**Description:** The women, in order to give birth or during the period of the infirmities peculiar to the sex, retire to other isolated dwellings, a kind of hospital which all the villages have for this purpose, in which they are assisted by old women and which the men are prohibited to enter.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1893

**Focal Year:** 1890

**Citation:** Montes de Oca, J. (1893). Western Carolines: the island of Yap. Boletín, Vol. 34, HRAF ms: 1, 30 leaves [original: 251-279 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-015

**Description:** A third structure once found in Yapese villages was the dopal, the village women's menstrual house, to which women previously confined themselves during menses. Dopal were located in more peripheral parts of the village. Upon returning home, a young woman entered the age category of lu kan arow, but she was expected to return to the dopal during all future menses. Though Yapese continue to think of menstruation as extremely taay, the dopal has disappeared as a village institution. Women remain in their homes upon menarche and afterwards. While the dopal has vanished, so too has its male counterpart — the village men's club house called faluw. Yapese menstruation and female status were equally ambivalent. Unlike death and the destructive energies radiating from a corpse, menstrual blood was not solely a negative force. The unrestrained energies it represented could cause harm on account of their magnitude, but they were also the source of female procreative power. Women alone could ensure the continuation of both ganong and tabinaw. Every generation of young women born in Yap reproduced the history of Yapese hierarchy through their deployment of productive energies over the span of their lives.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1998

**Focal Year:** 1850 – 1993

**Citation:** Egan, J. A. (2005). Taro, fish, and funerals: transformations in the Yapese cultural topography of wealth. UMI. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-027

**Description:** The menstrual houses for the women of the high localities are never found in these places, but rather in their milingei villages or villages of lower rank. If a girl 143 is caught on the road by the first menses, she may not sit on the ground, but rather has to ask for an outer shell of a coconut as an underlayer, with a statement of the reason.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1907

**Focal Year:** 1900 – 1905

**Citation:** Senfft, A. (1907). The legal customs of the Yap natives. Globus, Vol. 91, HRAF ms: 1, 39 leaves [original: 139-143, 149-153, 171-175 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-013

**Description:** Menstruating women are regarded as unclean. They must spend the period outside the compound in a special menstruation place ( dāp□l ), which is used by all the women of the village. Distinguished women customarily take along two women companions ( yār□f ) from the m˘il˘in□ village (1) 1. The place is not, however, as Senfft thought, in the slave village. The place may not be entered by men, but formerly, because of frequent abductions, it was under the constant watch of an armed guard in front of it. Since a menstruating woman is unclean, she may not touch either her own or her husband's cooking fire. For five days after her return from the dāp□l, another of his wives or a neighbor woman cooks for the husband in his own cookhouse, while she herself sets up a temporary cooking place with three stones outside of her regular cookhouse. One wife is the rule nowadays; to have two is exceptional, three is very rare, and I know of only one man who had four.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1917

**Focal Year:** 1909 – 1910

**Citation:** Müller, W. (1917). Yap. In Hamburgische Wissenschaftliche Stiftung, Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908-1910, II: Vol. Vol. 2 (p. HRAF ms: xii, 621 [original: xviii, 380 ]). L. Friederichsen & Co. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-006

**Description:** During the period of menstruation she may not even stay in the village, but must seek out one of the “ pals, ” or huts for menstruating women, lying hidden outside in the forest. Any participation in the festivities of the men is strictly forbidden for her, except for the prostitutes. She must step aside for a free man — the slave does not count at all — when they meet.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1906

**Focal Year:** 1900

**Citation:** Salesius, F. (1906). The Carolines Island Yap. Wilhelm Süsserot. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-002

**Description:** The menstrual houses for the women of the high localities are never found in these places, but in the Milingei villages that belong to them or villages of lesser rank. If a girl is overtaken by her first menstruation on the way, she may not sit down on the ground, but must ask for the outer shell of a coconut as a seat, explaining the reason.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1903

**Focal Year:** 1900

**Citation:** Senfft, A. (1903). Ethnographic contributions concerning the Caroline Islands of Yap. Doktor A. Petermann’s Mitteilungen Aus Justus Perthes’ Geographischer Anstalt, Vol. 49, HRAF ms: 1-39 [original: 49-60, 83-87 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-005

**Description:** Menstrual blood was itself called taay and was the subject of the strongest disgust. During menstruation, a woman went to a menstrual area ( dapal ) outside the village proper. She could return only after she had ceased menstruation, had bathed, and had put on a new grass skirt. Even then, before she could reenter the house to cook for her husband she had to wait a few more days, bathe herself, and change her grass skirt several times. Similar constraints were put on a woman after childbirth.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1976

**Focal Year:** 1850

**Citation:** Labby, D. (1976). The demystification of Yap: dialectics of culture on a Micronesian island. University of Chicago Press. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-026

**Description:** The women go to these same huts, a kind of “asylum for women,” during the menses, when they are regarded as unclean and may not let themselves be seen in the village, and the same is done after delivery.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1878

**Focal Year:** 1876

**Citation:** Miklukho-Maklai, N. N., & Honigmann, J. (1878). The island of Yap: anthropological sketches from the diary of N. N. Miklkukha-Maklai. Globus, Vol. 33, HRAF ms: 1, 20 leaves [original: 40-45 ]. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-020

**Description:** Most women only stay in the menstrual area for three days, and intercourse could begin the day a woman got out. Intercourse during menstruation is bad because then the kan or spirit of the menstrual area is angry and the woman is punished—but never the man.

**Date of Ethnography:** 1949

**Focal Year:** 1947 – 1948

**Citation:** of Archaeology, P. M., Ethnology Expedition to Yap Island, M., Hunt, E. E. (Edward E., Schneider, D. M., Kidder, N. R., & Stevens, W. D. (1949). The Micronesians of Yap and their depopulation: report of the Peabody Museum Expedition to Yap Island, Micronesia, 1947-1948. In Coordinated investigation of Micronesian anthropology [CIMA] report (Issue 24, pp. iii, 223). Peabody Museum, Harvard University. https://ehrafworldcultures-yale-edu.uleth.idm.oclc.org/document?id=or22-001

**Change in Menstrual Taboos:** Yes “Though Yapese continue to think of menstruation as extremely taay, the dopal has disappeared as a village institution. Women remain in their homes upon menarche and afterwards. While the dopal has vanished, so too has its male counterpart — the village men's club house called faluw.”. “The menstrual houses for the women of the high localities are never found in these places, but rather in their milingei villages or villages of lower rank.”.