

Tutuila

The serpentine island of Tutuila has some of the most dramatic scenery in the Samoan islands, if not the Pacific. It's impossible not to be impressed by the magnificent harbour at Pago Pago – a bowl of water dotted with supply ships and yachts, and surrounded by towering peaks and sheer cliffs. Many of the bays that indent the coastline make superb spectacles with their combinations of aquamarine water, bleached sand or rock-stubbed foreshores, nodding palms, and snoozing village houses and *fale* (traditional thatched houses). Forested mountains rise steeply up behind it all to converge on a jagged central ridge that gives willing hikers an inspiring perspective on the island's wild geography.

Don't believe all the bad press that the main island of American Samoa tends to attract. True, it does rain a lot, but there are also abundant blue-sky days when everyone makes a beeline for Alega Beach or one of the beachside parks around Utulei and Tafuna. Yes, much of the food is super-rich, meat-based fare that will scare the intestines out of anyone committed to healthy eating (or vegetables). But there are still plenty of good meals to be had, particularly if you are lucky enough to enjoy the hospitality of locals on a market day or when fresh seafood catches are around. And OK, the territory's capital and other urban areas can be infested with litter. But only a short drive away are bewitching switchbacks through mountain passes, pristine marine sanctuaries, and a small offshore island where rocky coves give way to quicksand lakes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking along a rocky ridge towards the summit of **Mount Alava** (p108) on a crisp, sunny morning
- Wading through knee-high grass to get a close-up of red quicksand on **Aunu'u** (p121)
- Motoring up the switchback to Rainmaker Pass and then winding down through the lovely **National Park of American Samoa** (p115) to friendly **Vatia** (p116) and the superb **Pola Tai** (p116)
- Swimming at gorgeous **Alega Beach** (p116), then being spoiled rotten at **Tisa's Barefoot Bar** (p117)
- Exploring coastal rainforest and snorkelling among the fish and coral at sublime **Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary** (p118)



■ POPULATION: 55,000

■ AREA: 1813 SQ KM

INFORMATION	Treadwinds Hotel.....15	C3
American Samoa Historic Preservation Office.....(see 8)	Turtle & Shark Lodge.....16	C4
Island Boutique.....(see 23)	EATING	
LB1 Tropical Medical Center.....1	A & A's Pizzeria.....17	C3
Office of Tourism.....2	Cost U Less.....18	C3
Q Laundromat.....3	Deluxe Cafe.....(see 22)	C2
The Drug Store.....(see 1)	Equator Restaurant.....(see 15)	C3
The Wave Internet Cafe.....(see 22)	Hong Kong House.....19	C3
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	Island Pizza.....(see 23)	
'Ili'i Golf Course.....4	Reef Bar & Grill.....(see 18)	C3
John Williams Church.....5	Rubbles Tavern.....20	C2
Star Restaurant.....(see 10)	Sunny's.....21	C3
Tia Seu Lupe.....7	ENTERTAINMENT	
SLEEPING	Nu'uuli Place Cinemas.....22	C2
Le Falepule.....8	D2	
Malu Mai Beach Resort.....9	C3	
Pago Airport Inn.....10	SHOPPING	
Sliding Rock Lodge.....11	Lairou Center.....23	C3
Ta'alofo Looe & Golf Resort.....12	TRANSPORT	
Tessara's Vallegi Inn.....13	Boats to Aunu'u.....24	E2
Tisa's Barefoot Bar.....14	Friendly Car Rental.....25	C3

TUTUILA

TUTUILA

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **Gallon of unleaded petrol** US\$2.96
- **1L of bottled water** US\$1.50
- **355ml bottle of Vailima beer** US\$2.50
- **Souvenir T-shirt** US\$5 to US\$7
- **Street treat (Samoan pancakes)** US\$1

HISTORY

The Samoans believe that Tutuila was the last island of the archipelago to be created by the god Tagaloa, and once it came into existence, he asked Tutu and Ila (the children of Fua, who was the son of Tagaloa) to populate it. Archaeological finds near the villages of Tula and Aoa, and at To'aga on the island of Ofu, reveal that the islands have been inhabited for more than 3000 years. It's believed that early Samoan authorities used Tutuila as a place of exile for wrongdoers banished from 'Upolu. Studies made following the discovery of ancient stone quarries on Tutuila suggest that, up until the time of European contact, the island was the centre of a vast trade network that stretched as far as the Solomons.

Tutuila is a far sight different today from when Dutch explorers first laid eyes on the island in the early 18th century. American Samoa became a territory of the USA in 1900 and Pago Pago Harbor found itself hosting US Marines for most of WWII. US President Kennedy decided the islands' traditional ways needed updating in 1960, and there began a period of intensive Americanisation. The reliance of the islands on US assistance became a daily reality after cyclone Val devastated the islands in 1991.

GETTING AROUND

You can get to most places on Tutuila by bus. But it's worth considering hiring a car for a few days to explore some of the more isolated sections of coastline.

See Aunu'u (p123) for details of transport to that island. See the Samoan Islands Directory for info on travelling from Tutuila to the Manu'a Islands by air (p147) and by boat (p148).

Bus

Riding Tutuila's squat, colourful 'aiga buses – small, individually owned pick-up trucks

modified for public transport and equipped with ear-busting sound systems – is a real highlight of a visit to American Samoa. These buses do unscheduled runs around Pago Pago Harbor and the more remote areas of the island from the main terminal at the market in Fagatogo.

To stop a bus, wave your hand and arm, palm down, as the bus approaches. To signal that you'd like to get off the bus, either knock on the ceiling or clap loudly. Pay the fare to the driver (try to have the exact change) or leave the money on the dashboard as you hop off. If you're travelling to the outskirts of the island, be at the market first thing in the morning and start heading back to town by 4pm at the very latest. You'll be lucky to catch a bus after 2pm on Saturday, and on Sunday the only buses running will be those taking people to church.

Buses regularly head east to Aua (US\$0.75) and Tula (US\$1.25), and west to Tafuna (US\$1) and Leone (US\$1). Less frequently, buses go to Fagasa (US\$0.75), A'oloaufu on the central ridge (US\$1), Amanave

MAN'S BEST FRIEND?

Aggressive dogs are more than a passing nuisance on Tutuila. They are often frightening and sometimes downright dangerous, particularly when in a large pack. We were given conflicting advice by locals on how to deal with menacing dogs. When we were bailed up by two canines outside a house, we were advised not to stop or to wave anything at them, but to just slowly and calmly walk on our way. Other locals told us never to turn our back on any dog and to wave a big stick at them if they approached.

The best advice we received was to imitate the behaviour through which dogs have been conditioned by locals to be afraid. Sometimes this involves pretending to throw a rock at the dog (or actually throwing it if the animal doesn't get the message). Samoans also make a clucking noise with their tongues or a shhhh noise out of the corners of their mouths to tell dogs to move on.

At the time of research, the local Humane Society was planning to launch an initiative to license all dogs on Tutuila and round up any strays.

(US\$1.25), and Fagamalo in the far northwest (US\$1.50); a trip to the northwest villages often means disembarking at Leone and catching another bus from there. Buses also head over Rainmaker Pass to Vatia; bus fares range from US\$0.75 to US\$1.50.

Car

Tutuila's one main road (signposted Route 1) follows the twisty coastline from Fagamalo in the northwest of the island to Onenoa in the far northeast, a distance of around 50km. Several narrower paved roads connect this road with outlying villages, particularly those along the heavily eroded north coast. The main road between Pago Pago and Tafuna has been shored up with a sea wall to protect it against the big waves generated during storms.

A 2WD is fine for motoring around Tutuila and petrol stations are scattered around the island. Car-hire agencies charge between US\$60 and US\$100 per day, with discounts offered for longer rentals; shop around for the best price.

Several local car-hire firms offered us contracts where there was no option of accepting a CDW (collision/damage waiver). Staff tried to reassure us that only a maximum excess of US\$1000 would apply if there was an accident, and then only if it was our fault. But according to the fine print on these contracts, the lack of a CDW technically means that the car hirer is liable for *all* costs resulting from an accident, regardless of whose fault it is. Sign such contracts at your peril. You should insist on a CDW, for which you pay an extra fee of around US\$8 to US\$10 per day.

Some recommended companies:

Aviss Car Rental (Map p103; ☎ 699 2746; res@avissamoa.com; Tafuna International Airport)

Friendly Car Rental (Map p107; ☎ 699 7186; Tafuna)

Kokonut Car Rentals (Map p107; ☎ 633 7855; kokonutrentals@yahoo.com; Pago Pago)

Sadie's Car Rentals (Map p107; ☎ 633 5981; sadies@samoatelco.com; Sadie Thompson Inn, Pago Pago)

Taxi

Taxis are plentiful in Pago Pago, Nu'uuli and Tafuna, but are prohibitively expensive for island touring if you're travelling alone. Just to get from Fagatogo to Tafuna can cost up to US\$15, while a trip out to Leone will cost at least US\$18.

PAGO PAGO

pop 5500

Pago Pago (it's pronounced pango pango; neighbouring Samoa refers to it as 'pungo pungo') is a place with a strong reputation for seediness, yet an equally strong reputation for beauty. When you arrive in town and see Pago Pago's ragged main street and its hulking tuna canneries framed by a rippling harbour and stunning jagged cliffs, you'll probably agree on both counts.

This truly is one of the most spectacular harbours in the world, all that remains of the volcanic crater that created Tutuila. There are times when it looks extraordinarily beautiful, such as when mist rolls across its steep forested peaks in a way that makes it look like it's seeping up from between the trees. The harbour waters used to be regarded as a cesspool, but have been dramatically cleaned up in recent years with the removal of shipwrecks and improved handling of cannery waste.

There is not much to the town itself, which has been subject to low standards of maintenance and at times appears to be populated by nothing but pick-up trucks. Also, on a 'bad tuna day', it won't just be the surrounding views that take your breath away. But look beyond the traffic and the monotony of the main strip (not to mention the abundant rain) to the serene summit of Mt Alava, the vitality of the Friday night market and the infectious indolence of the locals.

ORIENTATION

The several small villages around the harbour area that contain the territorial government and most of the industry and commerce in American Samoa are known collectively as Pago Pago, after the small settlement at the harbour's western end – the territory's actual capital is the village of Fagatogo, on the southern side of the harbour. Utulei is where the government offices are located, while Anua hosts the tuna canneries. Fagatogo contains the post office, central market and bus station, as well as the newish Fagatogo Sq shopping complex and the *Malae o Le Talu* (Town Square), a semi-circular slice of lawn with a *fale*-style bandstand at one end.

Maps

The Office of Tourism distributes a small, fold-out *American Samoa* map (free) which has a plan of Pago Pago on one side. The map was last published in August 2004 and so is reasonably up-to-date.

INFORMATION

This section includes details of facilities located in nearby Nu'uuli and Tafuna.

Bookshops

Iupeli Siliva Wesley Bookshop (Map p107; ☎ 633 2201) Sells mainly Christian and educational books, but also has a small selection of Samoa history and culture titles, plus some mass-market paperbacks.

Transpac Store (Map p103; ☎ 699 9589; Nu'uuli) Stocks a decent range of Samoa-focused books, including some local publications.

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 911)

Fire (☎ 911, 633 5000)

Police (☎ 911, 633 1111)

Internet Access

Internet access usually costs US\$2 to US\$3 per 15 minutes.

DDW (Don't Drink the Water; Map p107; ☎ 633 5297;

☎ 6.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 6.30am-noon Sat)

Feleti Barstow Public Library (Map p107; ☎ 633 5816; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 9am-7pm Tue & Thu, 10am-2pm Sat) By obtaining a temporary library card (for details, see right) you can use this library's Internet-

connected machines in the 2nd-floor Computer Lab.

Alternatively, you can pay US\$5 to access the computers for a single day.

Wave Internet Cafe (Map p103; ☎ 699 7077; Nu'uuli Place Shopping Center; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat) It's beside the cinemas.

Laundry

Laundries commonly charge US\$0.75/1 to wash/dry one load.

Bayview Wash & Dry (Map p107; ☎ 633 4901; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat)

IBM Laundromat (☎ 633 5963; ☎ 5.30am-8pm)

Q Laundromat (Map p103; ☎ 699 4934; Nu'uuli; ☎ 9am-10pm)

Libraries

Feleti Barstow Public Library (Map p107; ☎ 633 5816; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 9am-7pm Tue & Thu, 10am-2pm Sat) This library has a good Pacific collection. Visitors can get a temporary library card – you need to produce a photo ID and pay US\$25 (refundable) – which allows them to loan up to two books at one time.

Medical Services

Drug Store (Map p103; ☎ 633 4630; Faga'alau; ☎ 7.45am-5pm Mon-Fri, 7.45am-2pm Sat) This well-stocked pharmacy is on the road to the LBJ Tropical Medical Center.

Island Boutique (Map p103; ☎ 699 5335; Laufou Center, Nu'uuli; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat) This generic gift store has a well-stocked pharmacy in one corner.

LBJ Tropical Medical Center (Map p103; ☎ 633 1222-29; Faga'alau; ☎ emergency 24hr) This centre can

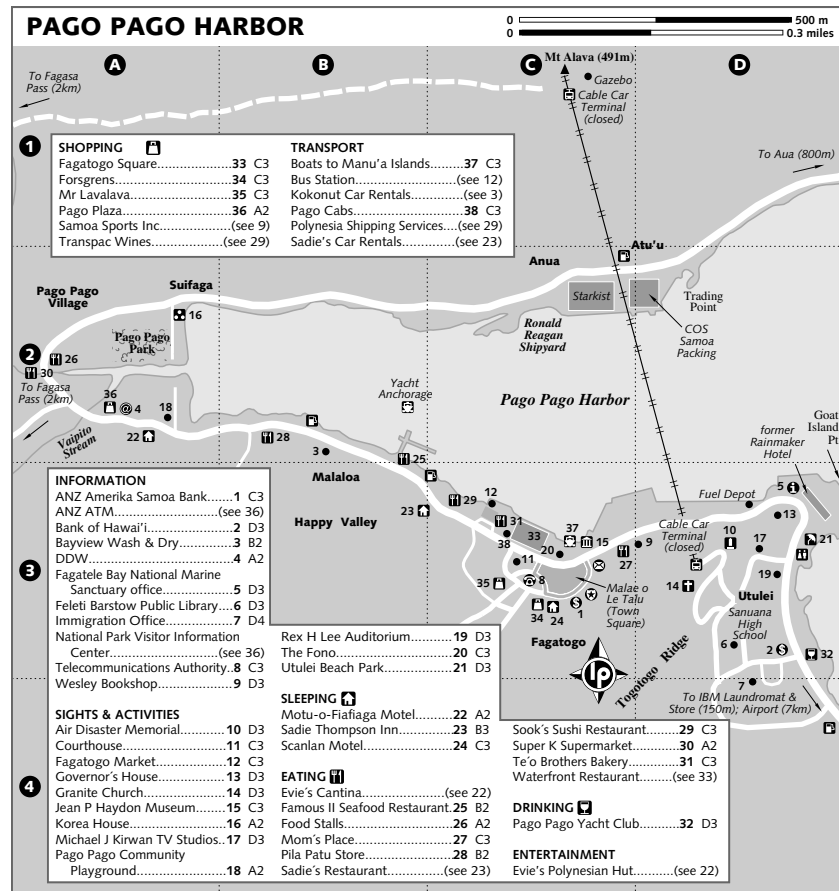
PAGO PAGO IN...

One Day

Fuel up early in the morning with a big breakfast at **DDW** (p112) and then hike up along the ridge to the summit of **Mount Alava** (p108). For a full day of hiking, continue down the other side of the mountain to Vatia. Return to Pago Pago and wander through Fagatogo, stopping off at the **Jean P Haydon Museum** (p109) and the **Fono** (p110), then head east of town for an afternoon of swimming at **Alega Beach** (p116), followed by drinks and possibly an overnight stay at **Tisa's Barefoot Bar** (p117).

Two Days

You won't know you're really in American Samoa unless you eat Samoan pancakes, eggs and steak at **Mom's Place** (p112) for breakfast. If you haven't already organised a tour of the **Michael J Kirwan TV Studios** (p109), consider visiting the **old cable car terminal** (p108) on Solo Hill. Have an afternoon drink on the outside deck of the **Pago Pago Yacht Club** (p113). If it's a Friday evening, head to the **market** (p108) to soak up the social atmosphere. If it's a Thursday, catch the **fiafia** (time of celebration; p114) at Sadie Thompson Inn. On any other night, have a Mexican dinner at **Evie's Cantina** (p113).



provide basic medical services, but anyone suffering serious medical problems is advised to go to Hawai'i or New Zealand.

Money

Note that there are no banks or money-changers at Tafuna International Airport, so bring some US dollars with you.

ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank (Map p107; ☎ 633 1151; ☎ 8.30am-3pm Mon-Fri, walk-up window 3-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Has an ATM. There are other ANZ ATMs at Pago Plaza and inside the Tradewinds Hotel (p120) and Cost U Less (p121).

Bank of Hawai'i (Map p107; ☎ 633 4226; Centennial Office Bldg; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri) This branch has an ATM. There's another Bank of Hawai'i ATM off the main road to the airport, about a 20-minute walk from the terminal.

Post

Post office (Map p107; ☎ 9am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Travellers should have mail addressed to themselves care of General Delivery, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799.

Telephone

Telecommunications Authority (Map p107; ☎ 633 1121; ☎ 24hr) There's a choice of phonecard or operator-assisted calls for international connections. Phonecards are usually cheaper for short calls to Australia, New Zealand and the US.

Toilets

You'll find clean public toilets inside Pago Plaza, but these are locked away behind a security grill outside normal shopping

hours. There's another toilet block at Utulei Beach Park.

Tourist Information

American Samoa Historic Preservation Office (Map p103; Ashpo; ☎ 633 2384; www.ashpo.org; Matafao) This is an excellent contact for history buffs and, given reasonable notice, may be able to take interested people on tours to isolated star mounds (p116); tours are free but you'll probably need your own vehicle. The office is about 400m north of the turn-off to the LBJ Tropical Medical Center, in the blue timber building opposite Matafao Elementary School; look for the black sign with gold lettering.

National Park Visitor Information Center (Map p107; ☎ 633 7082; www.nps.gov/npsa/home.htm; Pago Plaza; ☎ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) This is a very helpful place, with info on the National Park of American Samoa and the general environments of Tutuila and the Manu'a Islands, including walking trails. Pick up the free *National Park of American Samoa* leaflet, and check out the seashell exhibit. The National Park Service (NPS) runs a homestay programme (www.nps.gov/npsa/homestay/index.htm) where visitors are put in touch with villagers who offer accommodation and an opportunity to learn about local customs and crafts. Options have become much more limited in recent years, but at the time of research there were still a couple of possibilities around Vatia on Tutuila, and on Ofu and Ta'u. The cost averages around US\$40 per day, including food.

Office of Tourism (Map p103; ☎ 699 9411; www.am.samoan.com/tourism; Tafuna; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) Along with the brochures and maps the office can supply, make sure you pick up a copy of *A Walking Tour of Historic Fagatogo*, an excellent free booklet published by the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office.

SIGHTS

It's not hard to locate the attractions of Pago Pago as they're all either on or not far off the main road that loops around the harbour. The exception is the walking track to Mt Alava, which necessitates a trip up to Fagasa Pass to the west of town.

Mount Alava & Old Cable Car Terminals

Towering above Pago Pago Harbor is 491m Mt Alava, part of the mountain ridge marking the southern boundary of the Tutuila section of the National Park of American Samoa. The NPS maintains the 5.5km **trail** (1½ to two hours) that follows the ridge to the top of Mt Alava. It's an excellent walk, with spectacular views from the summit. You'll see birds and possibly bats, and may even be lucky enough to see whales out to

sea to the northwest of the island (the best time of year for whale spotting is October/November).

The trail begins at a small car park (look for the national park sign) at Fagasa Pass, 2km from Pago Pago village. It's an often steep, rocky 4WD track (no unauthorised vehicles allowed) that has significant muddy stretches, even if it hasn't rained for a while. After the first section of the climb you look down on the lovely sweep of Fagasa Bay, where dolphins take shelter on their annual migrations. About two-thirds of the way along, after the track levels out, look for a track heading uphill to your right – a lookout treats you to terrific views on both sides of the ridge. On the summit, a metal stairway leads up to the rusted remains of a cable car terminal (see below) and a TV transmission tower. The views from here down over the harbour, reefs and open sea, west back down the ridge, and east to Rainmaker Mountain are awesome. A concrete path heads around the tower to a sheltered rest *fale*. Directly behind the *fale*, a newer, very steep trail (with ladders in some sections) leads a further 4km down to Vaita. It takes about an hour to descend, but at least twice that to return.

A **cable car** once ran 1.8km across Pago Pago Harbor from Solo Hill to the top of Mt Alava. It was constructed in 1965 as a service access to the TV transmission equipment on the mountain and was one of the world's longest single-span cable-car routes. Operations stopped many years ago, however, and the NPS trail became the access route to the TV antenna. The cable car terminals are still in place, as is a cable, which plunges dramatically towards the harbour.

During a Flag Day military demonstration in 1980, a US Navy plane hit the cables and crashed into the Rainmaker Hotel below. All six naval personnel aboard were killed, as were two hotel guests. A small white **monument** near the Solo Hill terminal commemorates those who died in the disaster. You can walk to it in 10 minutes by following the side road that branches off near the TV studios, but we came across a large pack of dogs on this road and recommend caution.

Market

For the majority of the week, the central market contains only a few scattered fruit

stalls. But it comes to life on Friday night, when local growers sell bananas, coconuts, breadfruit and other fresh produce, and Tutuilans arrive to shop, socialise and scoff cheap meals. Sometimes it seems that half of Pago Pago is packed into the marketplace. Trading usually continues until early on Saturday morning – by the time the market reopens later that morning, all the best stuff is gone. On special occasions, such as national holidays, the market serves as a bingo hall and the turnout is phenomenal.

Michael J Kirwan TV Studios

The pioneer programme of broadcasting school lessons to elementary and secondary students began at the **Michael J Kirwan TV Studios** (☎ 633 4191) during the modernisation rush of the Governor Lee era. Nowadays, since schools started relying more on Web broadcasting, the facility's two studios are used exclusively to produce programmes for KVZK, the territory's government-run TV station.

Call to make an appointment if you'd like a free guided tour of the studio. The informal tours only take 20 to 30 minutes but are interesting, if only to see how a modern TV

studio can be run on a shoestring. When you arrive for the tour, walk in through the doors facing the road and enter the first office on the right.

Jean P Haydon Museum

This interesting **museum** (☎ 633 4347; admission free; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri) was named after its founder, the wife of Governor John Haydon. It is set in a building that was constructed in 1917 to house the original naval commissary, after which it served as the main post office.

The museum displays artefacts of early Samoa, including the *va'u* (bonito canoes) and *alia* (war canoes) that inspired the first European name for Samoa, the Navigator Islands. There are also other items that were in common use in early island life, such as coconut-shell combs, seashell and whales' teeth necklaces, fruit and seed jewellery, pigs' tusk armlets, fly whisks, bamboo panpipes, *siapo* (bark cloth made from the paper mulberry tree), stone tools and an impressive array of weapons. Especially fascinating is the display of native pharmacopoeia used by the early Polynesians, and the exhibit on traditional tattooing.

SADIE THOMPSON

American Samoans will assure you that Sadie Thompson is a historical figure, and the account they provide of her antics is far more comprehensive than the one Somerset Maugham gave in his classic novel *Rain*.

The tale of Sadie Thompson was written after Maugham was delayed in rainy Pago Pago by an outbreak of measles while en route between Honolulu and Papeete on the steamship *Sonoma*. It is assumed that he stayed at the Rainmaker Boarding House with his US lover Gerald Haxton. There is some dispute over just where the boarding house was located, but it's generally agreed it stood on the main street in Fagatogo. Some locals believe it was the building currently housing the Sadie Thompson Inn – it would be nice to believe this, considering the building's style and atmosphere.

Samoans say that the historical Sadie Thompson, who lived upstairs in this building, was a laundress by day and practised her trade by night. We may never know her real name, but the woman Maugham called Sadie Thompson had been evicted from Honolulu's red-light district and travelled south in hope of finding a new market for her goods. While Maugham's ship and its passengers were detained in Pago Pago, the Reverend Davidson, a holier-than-thou missionary who also happened to be holed up in the same hotel, developed more than a passing concern for Miss Thompson's immortal soul. He set about changing her ways and persuaded her to repent. In the end, however, it was she who changed *his* ways (or at least brought out the human and humane in him).

Maugham's story more or less ends there, but Samoans go on to say that Sadie stayed on in Pago Pago and continued her chosen profession until one night she was found drunk in the rain somewhere in Fagatogo. A police officer allegedly gathered her up and placed her, unconscious, on an Australia-bound steamer.

'Ava (traditional, mildly intoxicating drink, also called *kava*) ceremonies and weaving and wood carving demonstrations sometimes take place in the *fale* beside the museum.

Fono

The Fono (legislature) comprises a large and impressive group of buildings down on the waterfront, and is where American Samoan law-makers convene and legislate during the months of January and July. Traditional Samoan architecture and building styles were integrated into the structure, built in 1973 at a cost of US\$1 million, including the *fale afolau* style, which may be seen as the primary home design in Samoa, and the *fale tele* (meeting house) design.

Those interested in attending a session should drop by or call the **Office of the Senate Legislature** (☎ 633 5231) to confirm the date of the next sitting.

Governor's House

In 1903 a two-storey wooden colonial mansion was built atop *Mauga o Ali'i* (Chief's Hill). It served as the home for all of American Samoa's naval commanders until the Department of the Interior took control of it in 1951, after which it was used by territorial governors as their residence. When we visited the house, it looked like it had been hit by a cyclone and the governor was occupying a new residence at the foot of the hill. It turned out that the original building was being completely renovated, a process that may take several years. You can walk up to the site via the stone staircase that starts opposite the Fuel Dock.

Flower Pot Rock

Pretty Flower Pot Rock, or Fatumafuti, is planted in the sea near the village of Faga'alu. Legend says that Fatu and Futi were lovers living on the Manu'a Islands who wanted to marry but were forbidden to because they were members of the same *'aiga* (family). Fatu, the woman, built a coconut raft and set off for Tutuila. When Futi learned that she had gone, he was distraught and set out after her. Both their boats were destroyed by a tsunami as they approached Tutuila and the two lovers were stranded on the reef near Fatumafuti where they have remained to this day. The area near the rock is a good spot for picnics.

Tuna Canneries

American Samoa's two big tuna canneries are found in the kilometre-long industrial complex on the northern side of the harbour. One company is Starkist, the home of 'Charlie Tuna' and the largest tuna processing plant in the world. The other is COS Samoa Packing, which strangely markets tuna as 'Chicken of the Sea'. The olfactory assault of these canneries when you get near them is unbelievable. They also seem weirdly threatening at night when they're ablaze in spotlights and emitting the muffled drone of machinery.

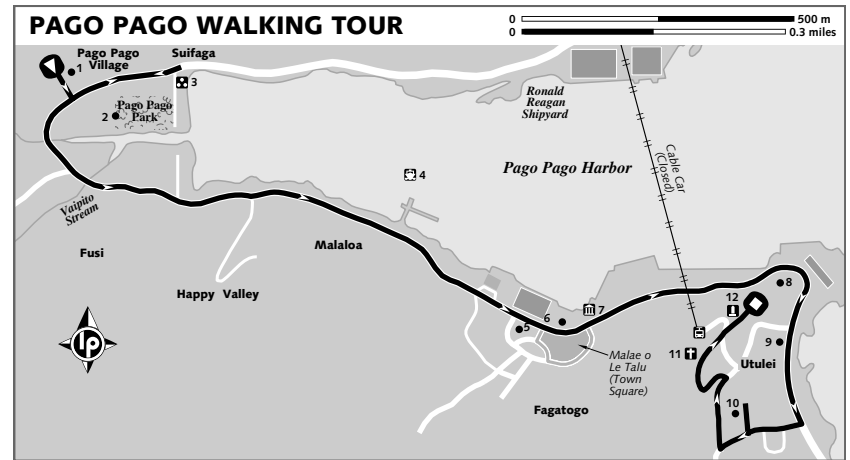
Charlie probably wouldn't want to be 'Starkist' if he knew what went on at the cannery. It's estimated that US\$250 million worth of tuna is processed each year in American Samoa, amounting to 9.7 million cases (at 48 cans to a case). Most of the workers relegated to the unpleasant task of cutting and cleaning the fish are Samoans and Tongans earning around US\$3.30 per hour. Though the wage is meagre by American standards, it would be unheard of in the workers' home countries.

Both **Starkist** (☎ 644 4231) and **COS** (☎ 644 5272) conduct free guided tours lasting between 30 minutes and one hour. Tours need to be organised at least 48 hours in advance. You'll need to wear long trousers and enclosed shoes to take part.

WALKING TOUR

Start your tour in **Pago Pago village (1)**. The village that's given its name to the entire harbour area may be labelled 'low rent' by expats, but it looks no more dishevelled than the rest of town. At the head of the harbour is a large reclaimed area called **Pago Pago Park (2)**, where there's a football field and basketball and tennis courts. **Korea House (3)** was built as a social centre for Korean fishermen but was gutted by fire in 1997 and is now just an eerie husk sitting beside the concrete skeleton of a derelict grandstand.

Double back around the head of the harbour and head down past the town's **yacht anchorage (4)** and into the heart of Fagatogo. The attractive two-storey, colonial-style **courthouse (5)** here was built at the minuscule cost of US\$46,000 between 1900 and 1904 and now houses the territory's High Court. The featureless grey block next door is the new District Court building.



WALK FACTS

Start Pago Pago Village
Finish US Navy Plane Crash Monument
Distance 3km
Duration 1½ hours

Continue walking east past the **Fono (6)**; opposite) and the **Jean P Haydon Museum (7)**; p109) until you're almost opposite the old Rainmaker Hotel, where you can climb up a ragged stone staircase to see how work on the **Governor's House (8)**; opposite) is progressing. Climb back down and continue around the point to the **Rex Lee Auditorium (9)**, where concerts and other events are regularly held, and then poke your head into the **Feleti Barstow Public Library (10)**; p106). If you want to take a closer look at the strikingly odd **granite church (11)** with the iron bell and cross that sits halfway up the hill behind the library, follow the road around the back of the Office of Samoan Affairs, climb up one of the stone stairs and wind your way up the narrow streets. The view down over Utulei from out the front of the church is impressive. Continue north along this road to the plane crash **monument (12)**; p108) on Solo Hill.

PAGO PAGO FOR CHILDREN

The American Samoan capital is not exactly Eden for children, but it's not bereft of activities for youthful bodies and imaginations either. **Pago Pago Community Play-**

ground (☎ 6am-6pm Mon-Sat) is a small open-air compound with plenty of play equipment to keep kids occupied for an hour or two. It's only open to children between the ages of one and 10. When the urge for a picnic strikes, take the family down to **Utulei Beach Park** (☎ 6am-10pm), a pleasant strip of foreshore with several day-*fale* and nice views of the harbour mouth. Another good foreshore picnicking option is **Lion's Park** (☎ 6am-10pm) in Tafuna, which is dotted with tables and has some playground equipment at its southern end. The **Jean P Haydon Museum** (p109) reveals fascinating artefacts such as war canoes – call ahead to check if any demonstrations of traditional crafts (like weaving) are being held soon. Kids will also enjoy the **fiafia** (p114) put on by Sadie Thompson Inn. And don't forget that the sandy charms of **Alega Beach** (p116) are only a short drive or bus trip away.

TOURS

You'll find that organised tour offerings for American Samoa are extremely limited and fairly expensive.

Ecotour Samoa (Map pp62-3; ☎ 22144; www.ecotoursamoa.com) This Samoa-based company does a seven-day guided tour of American Samoa – including all transfers, meals, accommodation and transport – that costs US\$300 per person per day.

Oceania Travel & Tours (☎ 633 1172; oceania@bluesky.net.as; 1st fl, Post Office Bldg) Conducts half-/full-day tours (US\$60/95) of Tutuila; itineraries are negotiable.

SLEEPING

Pago Pago's handful of places to stay lie mainly on or near the southern edge of the harbour. Most of the island's other, generally more-expensive accommodation options are clustered to the southwest of the airport; for details of these places, see p119.

Le Falepule (Map p103; ☎ 633 5264; lefalepule@samoatelco.com; s/d from US\$125/135, ste US\$145; 🏠 📺 🚿) This excellent place, decorated with lots of Samoan arts and crafts, sits atop a hill overlooking Faga'alū Bay – the driveway is about 200m north of the turn-off to the LBJ Tropical Medical Center. Guests lucky enough to install themselves in one of the five rooms here get breakfast, a complimentary laundry service and wireless Internet access.

Sadie Thompson Inn (☎ 633 5981; www.sadie-thompsoninn.com; r US\$95-150; 🏠 📺 🚿) This inn is set in an appealing timber villa backed by tree-cloaked cliffs. There are a dozen rooms and two self-contained apartments here, all modern, spacious and well-appointed. The more expensive rooms have a spa bath and face the harbour; one of these has wheelchair access. The inn has a good restaurant (Sadie's Restaurant; see opposite).

Scanlan Motel (☎ 633 4451; s & d US\$30-60; 🏠 📺) This dingy option for shoestringers is accessed via a rickety staircase to the left of the 'Golden Bell' sign. Rooms costing US\$45 and higher come with air-con and a basic shower and toilet. Many rooms lack windows and are tainted by disrepair, so inspect them first.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Motu-o-Fiafiaga Motel (Evalani's; ☎ 633 7777; www.amsamoa.com/evie; r US\$60; 🏠 📺 🚿) Evalani's is the best value place in town. It offers clean, comfortable rooms with air-con, TV, a fridge and shared bathrooms; try for a room looking toward the harbour. There's also some merrily quirky décor – the hallway sports bright red carpet and prints devoted to old Hollywood icons, particularly Monroe – and a rather redundant sauna. Attached to the motel is Evie's Cantina (opposite), which doubles as a bar-nightclub called Evie's Polynesian Hut (p114). The overnight rate drops to US\$50 if you stay for two nights or more.

The Rainmaker Hotel on Goat Island Point was a landmark building that worked hard over four decades to earn a reputation as one of the South Pacific's worst hotels. It's now closed and rather derelict (the deserted lobby wouldn't look out of place in a remake of *The Shining*). But at the time of research, half the site was being redeveloped into a new upmarket hotel.

Until relatively recently, one of the few other accommodation options in town was Herb & Sia's Motel, which was located to the south of the Town Square, but it closed after being damaged in a cyclone. The owners told us they were just about to rebuild on the same site, so ask around when you visit to see if this has happened.

EATING

Fortunately for visitors who don't want to chew spam and eggs, bacon and eggs, steak, hamburgers, fried chicken and pizza morning, noon and night, there are a couple of places in Pago Pago that don't specialise in US-style fast foods – only a couple though. The majority of eateries are in Fagatogo.

For details of eateries in nearby Nu'uuli and Tafuna, see p120.

Cafés & Quick Eats

DDW (Don't Drink the Water; ☎ 633 5297; meals US\$7-14; 🍳 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat; 🏠 📺) This uncluttered café is kept cool by a flotilla of ceiling fans. It prepares quick and easy diner-style meals, including burgers, steaks, lasagne and the usual suspects for breakfast. It also does fantastic cakes and pies.

Pago Pago Yacht Club (☎ 633 2465; meals US\$4-8; 🍳 lunch) The town's convivial yacht club not only serves simple burgers and sandwiches at lunchtime, but also great-value meals of freshly caught fish (like yellowfin) accompanied with vegetables and rice.

Mom's Place (☎ 633 1414; meals US\$4-7; 🍳 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat; 🏠 📺) This friendly little diner whips up an assortment of breakfasts and fried foods, including Pago Pago's best burgers. If you're tired of starting your day staring at a plate of eggs, try the Samoan pancakes.

Te'o Brothers Bakery (☎ 633 2250; plates US\$2-3.50; 🍳 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) This is one of the cheap, canteen-style eateries on the eastern side of the market. It ladles out various curries and stews, and also sells

sandwiches. For a cooler treat, head for the popular ice-cream shop on the western side of the market.

Waterfront Restaurant (☎ 633 1199; Fagatogo Sq; meals US\$3-7; 🍳 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat; 🏠 📺) The Waterfront Restaurant is a garishly coloured fast-food place, specialising in anything fried in oil or smothered in cheese – namely food-stuffs such as burgers, nachos, fried chicken and hot dogs. It can be insanely busy at lunchtime.

At the western end of Pago Pago Park is a cluster of **food stalls** (meals US\$1-3; 🍳 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) selling all sorts of Korean, Chinese and pseudo-Samoan dishes. Dirt-cheap feeds available here include potato salad, *oka* (marinated raw fish) and fish patties.

Restaurants

Sook's Sushi Restaurant (☎ 633 5525; GHC Reid New Bldg; mains US\$8-25; 🍳 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; 🏠 📺) Tucked away behind Transpac Wines is this humble Japanese restaurant. It serves up tasty sushi, sashimi and tempura dishes, plus Korean *kalbi* (ribs). It offers one of the few healthy eating options in this land of the deep-fried.

Famous II Seafood Restaurant (☎ 633 1159; meals US\$8-17; 🍳 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; 🏠 📺) This is one of three Famous Seafood restaurants on Tutuila (the others are at Nu'uuli and Faga'alū). It prepares very good Chinese soups and seafood dishes, plus a variety of land-based meats and vegetarian options. There's a great-value seafood buffet on Saturday night (US\$20). All meals are available for takeaway.

Evie's Cantina (☎ 633 4776; mains US\$8-16; 🍳 lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, dinner Sat & Sun) This restaurant is lined with snug booths and is a shrine to fairy lights and plastic foliage. The menu is divided between Mexican food and 'specialities', the latter devoted to carnivore delights like rib-eye steak and the eerie-sounding 'chicken fingers'.

Gourmet dinners can be organised for groups of six people or more at the hilltop Le Falepule (opposite) with at least 48 hours notice. Bookings are not possible on Thursday or Sunday.

Self-Catering

One of the town's better-stocked supermarkets is **Super K Supermarket** (🕒 7am-9pm Mon-Sat). The **Pila Patu Store** (🕒 24hr) sells a small

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Sadie's Restaurant (☎ 633 5981; www.sadie-thompsoninn.com; Sadie Thompson Inn; lunch US\$11-20, dinner US\$15-30; 🍳 breakfast, lunch & dinner; 🏠 📺) Squeeze yourself into a comfy, burgundy-coloured booth in the cosy dining room of Sadie Thompson Inn. There's lots of space between tables and the décor is understated, except perhaps for the Samoan war clubs hanging on the walls. Catch-of-the-day specials are always worth trying, particularly the swordfish, and there's usually a vegetarian offering. The wine list is also reasonable.

range of canned goods, snacks and drinks (including beer), but its real selling point is that it's open around the clock – perfect for that 3am snack attack. Friday night and early Saturday morning are the only worthwhile times for browsing fresh produce at the market (p108) in Fagatogo.

DRINKING

There are only a couple of drinking options in town, all of which operate according to their own preferred opening hours.

Pago Pago Yacht Club (☎ 633 2465; 🕒 from 11am) Expat yachties love to gather here and gab while clutching cold beers and cigarettes. From the outside deck there's a magnificent sea-level view of Rainmaker Mountain directly across the harbour. Closing times often depend on how keen patrons are to keep drinking.

Evie's Polynesian Hut (☎ 633 4776; 🕒 noon-2.30pm & from 6pm Tue-Fri, from 6pm Sat & Sun) The bar at Evie's is a good place to relax over a drink. Night owls in particular will appreciate the fact that sunlight is not permitted to enter here. While sipping a cocktail (US\$4), allow yourself to be regaled by the cheesy 'live band' (one guy playing guitar, another on a synthesiser) that plays from Thursday to Saturday nights.

Sadie Thompson Inn (☎ 633 5981; www.sadie-thompsoninn.com; 🕒 2pm-midnight) The mellow though generic hotel bar at Sadie Thompson's is mostly frequented by expats and tourists. It has a well-polished counter running the length of the room and a TV that's almost always tuned to a football or baseball game.

ENTERTAINMENT

Besides drinking, local entertainment is confined to a single nightclub, a night of traditional dancing and hit-and-miss movie screenings.

Nightclubs

Evie's Polynesian Hut (☎ 633 4776; admission before 10pm free, after 10pm US\$3; 🕒 10pm-2am Fri & Sat) At one end of this long-standing restaurant-bar is a big-screen TV that blares sports early in the night, then screens video hits when the DJ gets fired up at the end of the week. It's sometimes booked out for functions.

The disreputable 'nightclubs' that used to exist on the northern bank of the harbour around the tuna canneries are apparently now a thing of the past, but you'll still find a ragtag collection of Chinese- and Korean-run bars and pool halls here.

Fiafia

Sadie Thompson Inn (☎ 633 5981; www.sadiethompsoninn.com; US\$20) The town's one and only *fiafia* is held on Thursday night. It's very popular so you may want to book ahead for a place at the buffet.

Cinemas

Evie's Polynesian Hut (☎ 633 4776; admission free) It's not a cinema, but this place does screen a movie every Sunday night. The quality of the flick (and of the DVD player they use) is not always high.

The island's only fully fledged cinema is in Nu'uuli (p121).

SHOPPING

High-quality crafts are hard to come by in town, though there are plenty of *lava-lava* (wraparound sarongs) on offer. One of Pago Pago's newest developments is the Fagatogo Sq complex, which contains the local version of a department store, but it doesn't have much of interest to travellers.

Mr Lavalava (☎ 633 7061) This shop sells numerous handicrafts but is distinguished from other craft shops by its selection of Samoan CDs. Staff recommend the greatest hits of Anisetu (Seto) Falemoe.

Samoa Sports Inc (☎ 633 4075) You'll find a large selection of sporting goods here, including snorkel and mask packs (from US\$25), fishing gear and golfing paraphernalia. It also sells reasonably priced T-shirts.

Forsgrens (☎ 633 5431) The cool interior of this big, white-washed barn of a place is filled with reasonably priced T-shirts, shirts, *lava-lava* and a small range of toiletries. In the late afternoon it's invariably overrun by Samoan shoppers.

Transpac Wines (☎ 633 2345; GHC Reid New Bldg) Transpac has a large selection of Australian, New Zealand and Californian wines, and plenty of spirits and liqueurs. Don't fret, beer swillers – you can stock up here too.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

For details of transport between Pago Pago and other parts of Tutuila, see the Getting Around section (p104) at the start of this chapter. For information on ferry services between Pago Pago and Apia (Samoa), see p294. Information on international flights to Pago Pago can be found on p290.

GETTING AROUND

International flights to American Samoa arrive at Tafuna International Airport, approximately 15km from Pago Pago Harbor. Buses between the harbour and here (marked 'Tafuna') are frequent during the day and cost US\$1 one way. If arriving at night you'll probably need to get a cab into Pago Pago, which will cost between US\$12 and US\$15. There's a taxi stand just outside the entrance to the airport.

To travel from Pago Plaza to Utulei on one of the 'aiga buses that constantly zip around the harbour will cost about US\$0.50.

Taxis congregate at several points around the harbour, including opposite the market. **Pago Cabs** (☎ 633 5545) operates around the clock from a kiosk on the eastern side of the market.

EASTERN TUTUILA

The eastern district of Tutuila is dominated by the aptly named Rainmaker Mountain. The side road that skirts around the mountain to the west leads down into the beautiful valleys and bays of the National Park of American Samoa. Meanwhile, the main road that hugs Tutuila's southern shore heads east past the superb Alega Beach before curving around beneath Cape Matatula – along the way, it branches off towards remote, serene villages on the island's rugged north coast.

RAINMAKER MOUNTAIN

Also known as Mt Pioa, this 523m mountain is the culprit that traps rain clouds and gives Pago Pago Harbor the highest annual rainfall of any harbour in the world. It's Tutuila's best example of a volcanic plug associated with the major fissure zone that created the island. While it appears as one peak from below, the summit is actually three-pronged. The separate peaks are known as North Pioa, South Pioa and Sinapioa. Rainmaker Mountain and its base area has been designated a national landmark site due to the pristine tropical vegetation on the slopes.

The long rain shadow that the mountain casts over the harbour is best appreciated from the outside deck of the Pago Pago Yacht Club (p113). If you're seated out there just as water-swollen clouds blow in from the northeast, you'll actually see the rain drops marching across the surface of the harbour and climbing up the foreshore to smack down on the Yacht Club roof.

NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

On 1 November 1988, then US president Ronald Reagan signed a bill creating the National Park of American Samoa, which includes much of the island of Ta'u and part of Ofu, both in the Manu'a Group, along with a sizeable portion of the northern slopes of Tutuila. The park, which protects areas of coral reef as well as significant areas of mixed species old-world rainforest, offers spectacular snorkelling and some great hiking.

WINGED GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST

Flying foxes are the source of many traditional Samoan stories. In Samoan legends, flying foxes are regarded as guardians of the forest and rescuers of people in distress. Flying foxes also play an essential role as pollinators and seed dispersers of a significant portion of tropical forest plants.

There are two species of flying foxes in Samoa: *Pteropus samoensis*, known as *pe'a vao* in Samoan, and *Pteropus tonganus*, called *pe'a fanua*. The former translates as 'fruit bat of the forest' and the latter as 'fruit bat of settled lands'.

P. samoensis roosts alone or in small groups in the canopy of ridge-top trees. This species is unique in that it is active during the day, with two feeding peaks – one in the morning and the other in the late afternoon.

P. tonganus often roosts in groups of up to several hundred. Although found in the primary forest, it also exists in secondary forest growth, sometimes close to villages.

Adult members of both species have a wingspan of just under 1m and weigh about 500g. *P. samoensis* has a distinct light-coloured face, a brown body sprinkled with greyish white and broad wings. *P. tonganus* has a black face, a seal-brown body with a mantle that varies from buff to pale cream, and narrower wings.

The Tutuila section of the national park is in the north-central part of the island between the villages of Fagasa to the west and Afono to the east, and is bounded by the Maugaloa Ridge to the south. It comprises 1000 hectares of land (most of which is covered in lowland and montane rainforest) as well as 480 hectares of offshore waters. Even though the NPS manages the land, it belongs to traditional Samoan landowners, who continue to grow subsistence crops around the villages of Vatia and Afono and in the Amalau Valley.

A 5.5km hiking trail leads from Fagasa Pass to Mt Alava. From the summit of Mt Alava, the trail continues another 2km along the crest of Maugaloa Ridge before working its way down over another 2km of steep terrain to the village of Vatia. For details of this walk, see p108.

Before exploring the national park, visit the helpful **National Park Visitor Information Center** (☎ 633 7082; www.nps.gov/npsa/home.htm; Pago Plaza, Pago Pago; 🕒 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri).

Amalau Valley

From the village of Aua on the northern side of the harbour, a surfaced road switchbacks steeply up to Rainmaker Pass and continues equally steeply down to Afono and beautiful Vatia. The views from the pass down to either side of the island are spectacular. Between Afono and Vatia is the secluded Amalau Valley, home to many forest bird species and to Samoa's two rare species of flying fox, or fruit bat. Look for

flying foxes early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

The NPS has erected a *fale* at a lookout point just past the western side of Amalau Bay. Stop here for a wonderful view of Pola Tai (see below).

Vatia

Vaita is a peaceful village situated on the edge of a lovely, coral-fringed bay. From Vatia you can view **Pola Tai** (Cock's Comb), a tiny uninhabited island just offshore, whose magnificent sheer cliffs rise more than 120m straight out of the ocean. The craggy cliffs are home to numerous seabirds including frigates, boobies, white terns and noddy terns. To get there, drive through

the village and park at the school, then walk 300m to reach a wonderfully isolated, rocky beach – you can also drive this last stretch and park just behind the beach. Walk to the end of the beach to see a small sea arch, and don't forget to look up to see all the birds wheeling overhead.

BEACHES

Just 10km east of Pago Pago is **Alega Beach**, one of Tutuila's finest beaches. It's not only a great place to swim and snorkel (check currents and conditions with locals first), but is also overlooked by Tisa's Barefoot Bar (opposite), the perfect spot for a cold beer or three. You can waive the access fee for the beach (US\$5) by simply buying a

drink at Tisa's. On the weekend this beach is inundated by day-tripping locals.

Just east of Alega Beach is **2-Dollar Beach**, which is shallow but also good for a swim. Guess what the access fee here is.

MASEFAU & SA'ILELE

A cross-island road leads from the village of Faga'itua up over a pass before winding slowly down to Masefau, which is one of those villages that looks too idyllic to really exist. It's nestled in the curve of a gorgeous little bay, the westernmost point of which reaches out towards a small island lodged in the bay's mouth.

Back at the pass, a turn-off to the right takes you down a narrow, potholed road to the town of Masa'usi, which is dominated by a beachside church fronted by colourful stained-glass windows. The road then leads through dense forest to Sai'ilele, which has one of the island's most lovely beaches – coconut palms are anchored in the sand by mounds of rocks and coral fragments, and the water is placid. The sandy area below the large rock outcrop at the beach's western end provides an excellent place for a picnic, but seek permission from a villager before unrolling the picnic blanket.

TULA & ONENOA

Tula, the easternmost village on Tutuila, is a quiet, laidback place with a pleasant white beach and apparently some good right and left reef breaks. It is the end of the bus line east, but you can continue driving or walking around the end of the island to Cape Matatula and Onenoa, a serene area of high cliffs, small plantations and forested slopes.

SLEEPING & EATING

Tisa's Barefoot Bar (☎ 622 7447; www.tisasbarefootbar.com; meals US\$12-18; ☎ 11am-7pm, by reservation after 7pm) This wonderful, environmentally friendly place is run by Tisa and the 'Candyman'. It's not just a sleeping, eating and drinking option, but ranks as one of the highlights of a visit to Tutuila. The idiosyncratic driftwood bar is fronted by a deck that looks out over lovely Alega Beach. Just off the decking are two *fale* beach-huts (US\$50 per person), each gazing toward the ocean and with super-comfortable beds; the price includes breakfast and dinner. More accommodation is being planned, including

a place secreted in the nearby hills where you'll be dropped off with supplies. The food here is superb, with vegetarians easily catered for. You must book ahead for diners (two days in advance to guarantee the freshest produce is used). On Wednesday night a mightily popular *umu* (feast cooked in a traditional underground oven) is held (US\$30) where traditional Samoan fare is given an international twist. The Candyman can also take you on hikes that take full advantage of the unexplored nature of the surrounding property. Tisa's Tattoo Festival was held here in October 2005 and may become an annual event.

You may be able to arrange accommodation in Vatia through the National Park of American Samoa's homestay programme; for details, see p108.

WESTERN TUTUILA

Heading southwest from Pago Pago, you first reach Nu'uuli, a loosely defined commercial area along the main road between Coconut Point and the airport turn-offs. For information on facilities in this area and to the south near the airport in Tafuna, including details of American Samoa's Office of Tourism, see p106.

Beyond the low-profile strip malls and small local shops of Nu'uuli and Tafuna, the wild side of Tutuila takes over again. Spend at least a day or two listening to the surf at the Turtle & Shark Site, visiting star mounds, and weaving through remote, forested coastal valleys beyond Cape Taputapu. Those seeking true wilderness experiences can consider hiking down to Massacre Bay, climbing Matafao Peak, or exploring the remarkable Fagatele Bay.

MATAFAO PEAK

At 653m, Matafao Peak is the highest point on Tutuila. The peak itself, like Rainmaker Mountain across the harbour, is a remnant of the great volcanic plug. Above the 350m level, the peak area has been designated a national landmark site. A narrow, unrelentingly steep and very rough trail starts opposite the beginning of the Mt Alava walk (look for the metal ladder) and leads up the peak. The NPS estimates that the hike takes three to four hours one way, but can't vouch

STAR MOUNDS

More than 140 distinctive earthen, and sometimes stone, mounds, dating back to late prehistoric times, have been found scattered across the Samoan archipelago. Dubbed star mounds, the structures range from 6m to 30m in length, are up to 3m high and have from one to 11 raylike projections radiating from their base. Forty of these star mounds have been discovered (though not yet excavated) on the road between Amouli and Aoa alone. Polynesian plainware (a type of undecorated pottery) dating from between 1000 BC and 500 BC has also been found in the Aoa area, though its exact origin is a mystery.

The main theory regarding the star mounds is that they were used for pigeon-catching, an extremely important sport of chiefs that was pursued from June through September. People would follow their *matai* (chiefs) into the forest to observe and support competitions.

In 1887 William B Churchward, the British Consul in Samoa, wrote:

Pigeon-snaring is the oldest and most cherished sport in all Samoa, and until lately, partook much more of the nature of a fixed ceremony than a mere amusement. It was made the occasion for feasting and junketing in a high degree, and whilst it lasted all sorts of irregularities could be indulged in without comment.

However, American archaeologists David Herdrich and Jeffrey Clark believe there is very strong evidence to suggest that star mounds also served a much more complex function in Samoan society. There is evidence that they were used as sites for ritual activity related to marriage, healing and warfare. The archaeologists also believe the star mounds came to reflect the position of the *matai* and the field in which personal ability and *mana* (supernatural power) could be expressed. Star mounds therefore would have become places of power in their own right.

In an interview with an American PhD student, C. Forsyth, in 1983, a Samoan *ali'i* (high chief) commented:

Do you know the star mounds? Well, they had to do with the *taulasea* (traditional healer) and energy and with special powers. The ancient Samoans did not build those just to catch pigeons. No Sir! They were part of our ancient religion, and so were the *taulasea* and the *taulaitu* (spirit medium). Look into the archaeology data on the mounds. The energy is still so strong on those mounds that it raises the hair on your body to visit them.

If you're interested in such a hair-raising experience, contact the **American Samoan Historic Preservation Office** (☎ 633 2384) to arrange a tour to any one of several star mounds on Tutuila.

for its condition because it's on land owned by Fagasa village rather than lying within the national park. Only tackle this trail if you're a very experienced hiker/climber. It's strongly recommended that you organise a guide in Fagasa village.

TIA SEU LUPE

The **American Samoa Historic Preservation Office** (Ashpo; ☎ 633 2384; www.ashpo.org; Matafao) maintains a well-preserved ancient Polynesian star mound, *tia seu lupe* (literally 'earthen mound to catch pigeons'), near the Catholic cathedral at Tafuna. The mound has a unique connecting platform and fine views of Matafao Peak. Call Ashpo to ask about a personalised tour of the site.

Adjoining the site is a small rainforest reserve. The nearby cathedral contains some beautiful woodcarving and a fabulous photo-realist painting of a traditional Samoan family by Duffy Sheridan.

TURTLE & SHARK SITE

The most famous of Tutuila's legends is set in the picturesque village of Vaitogi, along a scenic stretch of black lava coast. Confusingly, there are a myriad versions of this legend. The two that follow are the ones that most often surface, but you could ask five Samoans to relate the legend and get five completely different tales!

According to one explanation, a young husband on 'Upolu was selected as the 'guest of honour' at a cannibalistic feast to be given by Malietoa Faiga. He chose, understandably, to decline the invitation. The man and his wife set out in a canoe, but while attempting to escape there was a storm and they were blown to Tutuila, where they were put up by Letuli, the *pulenu'u* (village mayor) of 'Ili'ili. When the practice of cannibalism fell into disfavour, Letuli offered them a free trip home, but they refused. Instead, as repayment for his kindness, they jumped into the sea. The husband became a shark and his wife a turtle. The husband told the chief that any time a gathering of children sang from the shore at Vaitogi, a turtle and a shark would appear to greet them.

Another version relates that the turtle and shark are an old blind lady and her granddaughter who jumped into the sea after being turned out of their village on Savai'i.

It was during a time of famine and the two were incapable of providing for themselves. When their family learned what they'd done, they went to the shore, guilt-ridden, and called the pair by name. When the turtle and shark appeared, they knew that their family members were all right.

Even if the turtle and shark have taken the day off, you'll enjoy the solitude of the place, with its black lava cliffs, heavy surf, tide pools, blowholes and sandy beach. There's no swimming here though – the currents are treacherous, but more importantly this is a sacred site. There's a pleasant walk west along the road to Sail Rock Point, through pandanus and coconut groves.

FAGATELE BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Fagatele Bay is a submerged volcanic crater surrounded by steep cliffs. The area contains the last remaining stretch of coastal rainforest on the island. In 1986 the fringing coral reef in the bay was designated a national marine sanctuary.

Nearly 200 species of coral are still recovering from a crown-of-thorns starfish attack in the late 1970s, which destroyed more than 90% of the coral. Scientists remain undecided as to whether the boom-and-bust cycle of the crown-of-thorns is natural or the outcome of human activity. It may be the result of increased erosion, which provides an unnaturally high volume of nutrients that nourish the plankton and, in turn, support the young starfish. However, the coral is slowly recovering and the fish population remains vibrant.

Southern humpback whales winter in the bay from August to November, while several varieties of porpoise and sperm whales have also been seen. Threatened and endangered species of marine turtles such as hawksbill and green sea turtles also use the bay. Other less frequent visitors include the leatherback, the loggerhead and the olive Ridley sea turtle. The rocky cliffs surrounding the bay are home to numerous seabirds.

All but traditional fishing methods are prohibited in the inner bay, the taking of invertebrates is prohibited (as is the removal of live coral) and historical artefacts found in the bay are protected.

It is permissible to dive, snorkel and swim in the bay, but it's very difficult to get out

there – there's currently no dive operator on Tutuila, so your only option would be an expensive boat charter. Contact the **Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary office** (☎ 633 7354; www.fbnms.nos.noaa.gov; ☎ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) for the latest information on access to the bay. The office is wedged up against the western side of the old Rainmaker Hotel.

LEONE

pop 4000

The village of Leone is the second-largest settlement on Tutuila and once served as the Polynesian capital of the island. It was also the landing site of the first missionary, John Williams, who arrived on 18 October 1832 after spending two years in Samoa. One result of his work is an imposing church, the first in American Samoa (Leone actually has two imposing churches – head for the one with three towers and facing the sea). It's well maintained and has lovely stained-glass windows and some beautiful woodwork on the ceiling. There's a monument to Williams' efforts in front of the church.

When heading west from Leone, look for the tiny rocky islet across the bay that supports just a single coconut tree – the stuff of desert island cartoons!

MASSACRE BAY

A marvellous 4km hiking trail (four hours return) leads from the scenic village of A'oloaoufou, high up on the rocky spine of Tutuila, down to A'asu on Massacre Bay. Massacre Bay is the site where, on 11 December 1787, 12 men from the crew of La Pérouse's ships *La Boussole* and *Astrolabe*, as well as 39 Samoans, were killed in a skirmish. There is an obscure **monument** in A'asu commemorating the European crew members who died there.

This track is apparently maintained (or not, as the case may be) by the sole family residing in A'asu. Needless to say, it's often overgrown, extremely muddy and difficult to navigate – getting down to A'asu isn't so bad, but a number of hikers have become disoriented climbing back up. It probably pays to hire a guide in A'oloaoufou, which will cost between US\$5 and US\$10.

Across from the large park in A'oloaoufou is a colourful garden that began life as an attempt by the Office of Tourism to create sites of interest on Tutuila. The trail to

A'asu takes off downhill just east of this garden. Once in A'asu, introduce yourself to the local family and ask for permission to use their beach. From Massacre Bay, you can also walk upstream for about 800m to a lovely waterfall, though note there's no real 'track' as such. The worn-out admonition not to go on Sunday holds. Wear long trousers since trail-side thorns and sharp grasses will slice unprotected skin.

If driving to A'oloaoufou, take the turn-off in Pava'ia'i opposite the Gold Star Mart. To get to A'oloaoufou by bus, take a Leone-bound vehicle from the market in Fagatogo to Pava'ia'i (US\$0.75) and wait on the corner there for one headed up the hill.

CAPE TAPUTAPU

Cape Taputapu is Tutuila's most westerly point and a national natural landmark. The word *taputapu* means 'forbidden', and the cape was so named because it was the only source of paper mulberry trees on the island. The discoverers wanted to keep the bark for themselves in order to sell it to folks on other parts of the island. No doubt they related fearful tales and a taboo was placed on it.

Just shy of the cape, beyond the village of Amanave, is a lovely white-sand beach generally known as **Palagi Beach**. If you're in a rental vehicle, leave it by the Amanave store and ask for a guide to take you to the beach. Access is via the track above the shoreline, or by walking/wading along the reef at low tide. Allow about 10 or 15 minutes to get to the beach. You can paddle and snorkel in the small pool of the offshore island, on which sea birds nest, but be mindful of strong currents and a nearby *ava* (passage through the reef to the open ocean).

Beyond Amanave, the road climbs steeply and winds through valleys and over ridges to the small villages of Poloa, Fagali'i, Maloata and Fagamalo. There are some spectacular views of Tutuila's wild and trackless north coast along this stretch.

SLEEPING

Turtle & Shark Lodge (☎ 688 1212, 699 1212; www.turtleandshark.com; Vaitogi; r incl breakfast US\$75-125; 📶 📺 📷 🚰) This fine, secluded 10-room guesthouse is located at the end of the trail running west along the coast from Vaitogi. It's surrounded by a beautifully landscaped property overlooking Fogama'a Cove, and

has tennis courts, a laundry and a BBQ area. Rates include continental breakfast, but guests also have access to a kitchen.

Ta'alolo Lodge & Golf Resort (☎ 699 7201; taalolo@samoatelco.com; 'Ili'ili; r ind breakfast & dinner US\$80-135; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Golf aficionados will adore this lovely split-level home, located a mere chip shot from the 'Ili'ili Golf Course. It has five rooms, including a huge master bedroom, which all have en suites, DVD players, fridges and tasteful Samoan touches. The lodge is well off the main road, so there's nothing to disturb your dreams of a perfect round.

Sliding Rock Lodge (☎ 688 7553; www.slidingrockresort.com; Vailoa; r ind breakfast US\$65-85; ☎ ☎ ☎) This five-unit lodge is outstandingly positioned atop a hill overlooking a surf-pounded section of coast, including a feature called Sliding Rock where there's a sizeable tidal pool. The units are clean and comfortable and have windows looking to the sea. There's also an outside deck that's perfect for meals or drinks on sunny days.

Maliu Mai Beach Resort (☎ 699 7232; Tafuna; s/d US\$65/85; ☎ ☎ ☎) This low-key resort sits on a rough-and-tumble beach fringed by low cliffs. Upstairs in the main building are four large, private rooms, each with en suite, cable TV and access to a communal balcony. Several more rooms are available in a nearby house. There's an onsite restaurant. The bar can get busy at weekends (see opposite).

Tradewinds Hotel (☎ 699 1000; www.tradewinds.as; Tafuna; r & ste US\$135-240; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) The five-star Tradewinds is only a few years old and has over 100 rooms, half of them suites. Teak beds and furnishings lend the rooms a warm feel, but there's not much in the way of a view as the hotel is located well inland. It also lacks individual character outside the rooms – the only notable design feature is that the hallways are big enough to drive cars down them. The excellent facilities include the Equator Restaurant (opposite), an Internet café (guests only), wheelchair-accessible rooms and an ANZ ATM in the foyer. Baby cots are also available.

Tessarea's Vaitogi Inn (☎ 699 7793; tessarea99@yahoo.com; Vaitogi; r US\$95; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Tessarea's is located off a paved road that runs between Vaitogi village and the road that skirts the nearby golf course. It offers guests decent-standard rooms and access to a kitchen. It can be tricky to find, so email or call ahead for directions.

Pago Airport Inn (☎ 699 6333; www.pagoairport.inn.com; Tafuna; s/d US\$75/100; ☎ ☎ ☎) This place is conveniently near the airport and contains the interestingly designed Star Restaurant (opposite). But its rooms are overpriced considering the state of some furnishings and fittings: in ours the bed sagged dramatically and the TV was on the fritz.

EATING Cafés & Quick Eats

Rubble's Tavern (☎ 699 4400; Nu'uuli; mains US\$6-24; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) Rubble's is an easygoing combination of American diner and sports bar that's dressed up in Polynesian decor. Its menu 'specialties' are things like hamburger steak, meatloaf and fried chicken – vegetarians will die of fright if they walk in here. True to its name, the 'U' in its signage has fallen off.

Good Food Bakery (☎ 699 6233; Nu'uuli; ☎ 6am-6pm Mon-Sat, 6am-3pm Sun) A few doors down from Rubble's is this basic little bakery selling bread, pies and sandwiches.

Deluxe Cafe (☎ 699 4000; Nu'uuli; meals US\$6-13; ☎ breakfast & lunch; ☎) Set in a strange-looking green timber building, this cheerful café has plenty of tables and booths to accommodate hungry hordes. The menu is full of American Samoan favourites, from toasted sandwiches and burgers to steaks and chicken wings, plus several basic salads.

A & A's Pizza (☎ 699 9428; Nu'uuli; pizzas from US\$12, meals US\$2-5; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Such is the Samoan appetite that they don't bother serving 'small' or 'regular' pizzas here – sizes start at 'medium'. This business has merged with a Filipino eatery called Pinoy's, which is why some Asian noodle dishes and stews are also served at the front counter, as well as tacos and burgers. There's also a busy bakery. You'll find A & A's hidden behind the LYC Inc Store. It's near a colourful old playground that will keep kids occupied.

Island Pizza (☎ 699 1300; Laufo Center, Nu'uuli; meals US\$5-18; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, closes 8pm) This speedy pizza dispenser is on the western side of the Laufo Center car park. It serves pizza by the slice and by the platter, and also produces hot dogs, BBQ chicken and other fast-food choices.

Restaurants

Reef Bar & Grill (☎ 699 7717; Tafuna; meals US\$7-20; ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎) The Reef is a nice clean,

bright, white-tiled place across the car park from Cost U Less. It cooks up lots of seafood, including Samoan *oka*, some pasta such as spaghetti and meatballs, burgers (including a strange-tasting vegetarian burger), and ribs and steak – try the New York strip steak, all 10oz of it.

Hong Kong House (☎ 699 8983; Nu'uuli; mains US\$7-15; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎) Very good Chinese food is on offer in this open-plan restaurant (eat in or takeaway), including soups and beef, chicken and seafood dishes. There are several tofu-based choices and a small separate list of other vegetarian selections.

Sunny's (☎ 699 5238; mains US\$6-13; ☎ lunch & dinner) A short distance west of Hong Kong House, this is another decent Chinese eatery with some good hot and spicy meals.

Equator Restaurant (☎ 699 1008; Tradewinds Hotel, Tafuna; meals US\$6-22; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner; ☎) This enormous restaurant, in a building adjacent to (and part of) the Tradewinds Hotel, has inherited the hotel's lack of character. But it's open all day and serves decent burgers, pasta, seafood and several vegetarian options. A house speciality is oven-roasted pig.

Star Restaurant (☎ 699 6333; Pago Airport Inn, Tafuna; meals US\$8-18; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat; ☎) It's not worth coming out from Pago just to eat here, but this family restaurant is a good option for a hearty breakfast or lunch if you happen to be in the Tafuna area. It's set on an upstairs terrace at Pago Airport Inn and sports attractive tile-work and wrought-iron railings, and is encircled by glass shutters.

Self-Catering

Cost U Less (☎ 699 5975; Tafuna; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Self-caterers can stock up on imported groceries and some canned goodies in this enormous bulk-buying store. If you have enough money left over, pick up a spare DVD player while you're there.

DRINKING

Maliu Mai Beach Resort (☎ 699 7232; Tafuna; s/d US\$65/85; ☎ ☎ ☎) The bar at Maliu Mai is a good place for a drink. Drag a chair onto the sand and quench your thirst to the sound of the surf. On clear nights, look to the northeast to see Matafao Peak silhouetted by the glow of Pago Pago's lights.

Rubble's Tavern (☎ 699 4400; Nu'uuli; mains US\$6-24; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) If you

fancy a cold beer, perch yourself on one of the coconut tree stump bar stools here.

ENTERTAINMENT

Nu'uuli Place Cinemas (☎ 699 9334; Nu'uuli Place Shopping Center; adult/child US\$6.50/4, adult US\$4.50 for Tue & pre-6pm sessions) This two-screen cinema hosts the latest-release commercial movies, predominantly those from the US.

AUNU'U

area 3 sq km / pop 600

Tiny Aunu'u is a tranquil and pristine plot of nature. Its wild, thickly foliated hinterland rises up the sides of an extinct volcano, and the surrounding waters are clear and blue. What's more, the lack of vehicles on the island means you can fully appreciate the silence and solitude. Since it's only a couple of kilometres from end to end, Aunu'u can easily be explored in a day, with plenty of time left over for a picnic at churning Ma'ama'a Cove.

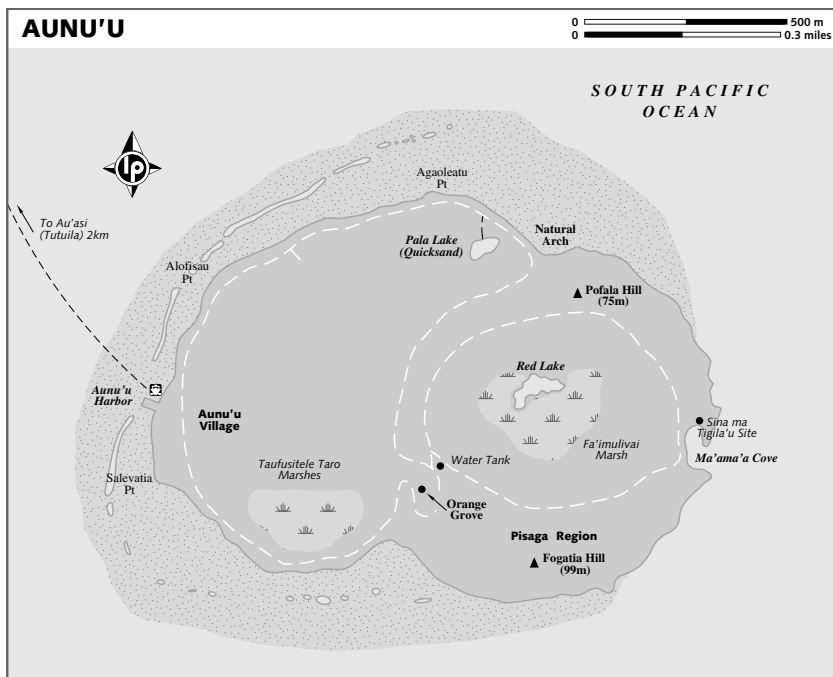
Tracks on the island aren't always well maintained. They quickly become overgrown and sites may be difficult to find. It's worth asking around in the village for a guide; US\$5 is a reasonable fee for a tour of the island. Wear full-length trousers and good walking shoes for your explorations.

PALA LAKE

After walking about 700m north from Aunu'u village, you'll arrive at the sizeable clearing in the undergrowth where the short side-trail to Pala Lake begins. The lake is a beautiful and deadly looking expanse of fiery red quicksand – its amazing colour is best appreciated at low tide. During the rainy season, the sand thins out and is inhabited by grey ducks. All birds and bats are now protected in American Samoa, but once upon a time locals would shoot the ducks and then swim out to retrieve the carcasses. To avoid being sucked down into sandy doom, swimmers had to remain horizontal at all times and propel themselves only using their arms.

RED LAKE

Red Lake lies in the middle of Fa'imulivai Marsh, which, in turn, lies in the middle of Aunu'u's volcanic crater. It is filled with eels and tilapia fish. They are sometimes



caught with a hook, but, thanks to the lake's frequent level changes, there's an easier method. When the water is high, the eels move to the lake's margins in search of food in the newly flooded areas. When the water drains, it does so quickly, leaving the eels stranded around the edges, so that all the villagers have to do is gather them up.

The water of Red Lake really is reddish, the colour of weak tea. To look at it and the eels, walk out to the edge on the sedges surrounding the marsh; just be careful not to go too far in or you'll sink. To get there, follow the track past Pala Lake and up the hill to the crater. There's usually a decent track around the crater, but access to the lake is tricky, since it will necessitate a bit of bushwhacking on the approach. The best place to try is from the western side of the crater north of the intersection of the village trails.

MA'AMA'A COVE

This is a less a cove, with its connotations of placidity, and more a cauldron of surf that pounds, sprays and boils over the surrounding rocks. Don't get too close to the intense

water action as large, unexpected waves can knock you off the rocks; a drowning occurred here only a few months before we visited. Check out the vertical ripples in the cliff face on the south side of the cove.

Legend says that this is the site of Sina ma Tigila'u (Sina and Tigila'u), two lovers who were shipwrecked here. You can make out bits of crossed 'rope' and broken 'planks' embedded in the rocks around the cove.

PISAGA

The Pisaga is a region near the crater, below Fogatia Hill, where people are forbidden to call out or make loud noises lest they disturb the *aitu* (spirits) that inhabit this place. When Gavin Bell (author of *In Search of Tusitala: Travels in the Pacific after Robert Louis Stevenson*) visited, he felt that all he needed was 'a bit of swirling mist to imagine that around the next corner I would find a wicked witch in a gingerbread house, with a soul as black as her cooking pot'. For a superb view over Red Lake, as well as Aunu'u village, climb up past the water tank on the slopes of Fogatia Hill.

OTHER SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The western slope of the crater is planted with an **orange grove**, a relatively new crop-diversification project in American Samoa. Below this are the **Taufusitele Taro Marshes**, which are planted Hawai'ian-style with swamp taro, a rarity in this part of Polynesia. The harbour in the village is safe, calm and great for a refreshing swim. There is also some good coral nearby and excellent underwater visibility, making for good **snorkelling**.

SLEEPING & EATING

There is no formal accommodation available on Aunu'u. If you'd like to stay with a family, you'll need to have a Tutuila connection beforehand – a 'sponsor' if you will – who can ensure that your activities on the island won't be disruptive. There is a bush store in the village where you can buy soft drinks and basic supplies.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Small launches head over to Aunu'u from the dock at Au'asi. If you catch a boat with other villagers (these depart when enough people are on board), you should only have to pay US\$1 each way. If you have to charter a boat – either because you're the only passenger or because you have specific drop-off/pick-up times in mind – then be prepared to pay around US\$10 for the return trip. Boats don't run on Sunday. The crossing takes about 15 minutes and can get a little rough.

If there's no one at the dock, try asking at the store across the road, where you can also pick up drinks and snacks for your trip.

SWAINS ISLAND

Swains Island is not geologically part of the ridge that forms the other Samoan islands. Situated about 350km north-northwest of Tutuila, it consists of a 3.25 sq km ring of land surrounding a brackish lagoon with no entrance from the sea. Both culturally and geographically it belongs to Tokelau (a New Zealand territory north of the Samoas).

Swains Island was 'discovered' in 1841 by an American, WL Hudson, who learned of its existence from a whaler by the name of Swain. Soon afterwards it was settled by Tokelauans, who had long known it as Olohega, and some French entrepreneurs who

saw its potential as a copra plantation. The operation was taken over by Eli Jennings, an American, and his Samoan wife in 1856 and has been the private property of the Jennings family ever since. In 1925, the Jennings family persuaded the USA to annex the island as part of American Samoa. This became more official in 1983 with the Treaty of Tokehega, which gave sovereignty over the island to the USA in exchange for US recognition of Tokelauan fishing rights.

To visit Swains Island you need permission from the Jennings family – ask at the **National Park Visitor Information Center** (☎ 633 7082; www.nps.gov/npsa/home.htm; Pago Plaza, Pago Pago; ☎ 7:30am-4:30pm Mon-Fri) about how to go about contacting them. Unless you have your own boat, you'll need to prepare yourself for either a very short or very long stay – a supply ship only visits Swains once a month.

ROSE ATOLL

Rose Atoll, 100km east of the Manu'a Islands, is composed of two tiny specks of land and the surrounding reef. Rose Islet, only 3m above sea level at its highest point, has an area of 5 hectares. Sand Islet, soaring to an elevation of 5m, is only 2.5 hectares in area. The atoll is probably a shield volcano, but one that has been completely eroded since the Pleistocene era. Coral reefs have built up on the remnants, making the atoll visible today.

Rose Atoll is a designated US national wildlife refuge. The refuge exists primarily to protect the green turtle, which lays its eggs in the sand here, as well as the extremely rare hawksbill turtle. Numerous species of seabirds nest on the atoll, including the sooty tern (whose numbers on Rose Atoll represent 85% of the total seabird population of American Samoa), and a variety of other terns, tropicbirds, noddies and boobies. These bird populations were recently threatened by resident rats, but the rats have been removed and the birds are re-establishing themselves. Unfortunately, the atoll's coral has not been doing so well due to a shipwreck that, although removed, has left damaging levels of poisonous metals in the surrounding water. This is one of the reasons why visits are currently only allowed for scientific research purposes.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'