

# Tongan Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Unless you're on a package holiday, don't trust accommodation bookings made by airlines or travel agents, since there are often weak or missing links in the system. You may like to confirm the booking directly with the hotel. Many hotels and guesthouses now have email, so make bookings yourself,

### BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

particularly between May and September and over Christmas. You can often just turn up to places of accommodation without a booking, particularly guesthouses on outer islands, but then you may run the risk of there being no bed. Room rates generally stay the same throughout the year.

The accommodation options listed in this guidebook are given in order of author preference – leading each section are the places our author recommends the most. We generally treat any place that charges up to T\$80 as budget accommodation. Mid-range places usually cost between T\$80 and T\$120, while we regard anywhere charging over T\$120 as top-end accommodation.

Most accommodation options offer laundry service or a place to wash your own clothes (generally cold water). Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu) and Neiafu (Vava'u) have commercial laundries.

### Camping

Camping is often discouraged in Tonga and is illegal in both the Ha'apai and Vava'u Groups, unless as part of a guided trip. In practice, seeking permission from the landowner or local community will suffice or check in with the main police station for the island.

It's possible to 'bush camp' on 'Eua, and a few accommodation places on 'Eua and Tongatapu will allow you to pitch a tent.

Camping next to a village, though, may be seen as an impolite rejection of Tongan hospitality.

### Guesthouses

Guesthouses are found throughout the islands and take the place of hostels (of which

## PRACTICALITIES

- The *Tonga Chronicle* is the official paper of the Tongan government and runs a couple of articles and job ads in English.
- The only English-language newspaper for sale is the *New Zealander*, a weekly published in Australia for New Zealanders. Other English-language periodicals include gossip magazines, the *Economist* (a weekly international business magazine) and the international edition of *Time*.
- The English-language *Matangi Tonga* (Wind of Tonga; www.matangitonga.to) website has the best coverage of Tongan issues at home and abroad and addresses some sensitive topics.
- Tune into Radio New Zealand International (www.rnzi.com; 15720kHz, 9885kHz, 9870kHz and 17675kHz); Radio Australia (www.abc.net.au/ra; shortwave frequencies include 5995kHz, 12080kHz, 15515kHz), broadcast at Nuku'alofa 103FM and 101.7FM; and BBC World Service (www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice; no direct service, refer to the East Asia schedule online). See each website for details on shortwave and satellite radio frequencies and listening via the Internet.
- Tonga has both the PAL video format system, used in Australasia and most of Western Europe, and the NTSC system, used in North America and Japan.
- Power in Tonga is 240V, 50Hz AC. Three-pronged plugs used in New Zealand and Australia are OK here. European appliances require a plug adaptor. US appliances require a plug adaptor plus a voltage converter. Bring a 'surge breaker' or 'spike buster' to protect sensitive appliances from Tonga's erratic power supply.
- Tonga uses the standard metric system for everything except land area, which is mostly measured in acres. See the table inside the front cover of this book for metric and imperial unit conversions.

there is only one, Adventure Backpackers on Vava'u). They usually have large, homey communal lounge areas with plenty of islander style – an explosion of colour, doilies, fluoro plastic flowers and beads.

Most guesthouses are clean, can provide good-value home-cooked meals and allow guests to use the cooking facilities for a few extra *pa'anga*. Nightly rates range from T\$11 to T\$25 per person. Bathroom facilities are generally communal and outside Tongatapu often have only cold showers.

## Homestays

Frequently, foreigners will be invited by Tongans to stay in their homes. There could be no better way to learn about the culture and lifestyle of the country, and the hospitality of the Tongan people is abundant and genuine. Keep in mind, though, that their means are limited and although they might proudly refuse any monetary compensation, simple gifts such as *kava* (an intoxicating drink made from the root of the pepper shrub) or tinned corned beef will be greatly appreciated.

Bear in mind that 'borrowing' may occur (see Security, p278). Look after your valu-

ables and don't leave anything of obvious value lying around within view.

## Hotels & Resorts

Tonga is not a destination for the precious traveller seeking pampering, but will reward the more adventurous soul with unique experiences and plenty of comforts. 'Resort' is a loose term here and seems to apply more to location – generally on an idyllic, uninhabited coral island or strip of perfect beach – than particular services or facilities offered. Larger hotels often disappoint, while a handful of boutique-style hotels in Nuku'alofa and Vava'u, and resorts on the outer islands, offer the most atmospheric and luxurious accommodation in unique surrounds. If all you want is a good bed in an eclectic bungalow with million-dollar beach views, fresh food plucked from the sea, a decent coffee and water to slip into a few steps away, you'll love what's on offer.

## Rental Accommodation

Self-contained, furnished apartments are available in Nuku'alofa and some long-term residents may rent out their private homes

in Vava'u. Refer to the Sleeping sections in individual chapters for details.

## ACTIVITIES

You could easily pass a couple of weeks on the beach or in a hammock, but Tonga is also an excellent active holiday destination, with a diverse range of activities – both organised and self-propelled. The website www.tongaholiday.com has links to operators of diving, surfing, sailing, kayaking, cruising, fishing and whale-watching trips.

Vava'u reigns supreme as activity king of the island groups, but don't overlook the charms of other island groups. Tongatapu Island offers easily accessible snorkelling; 'Eua is the spot for rock climbing, bird-watching, bushwalking and caving; and Ha'apai has heaps of sand, some incredible diving and the volcanic island of Tofua for adventurous exploring.

Horse-riding is an option throughout the islands. There are no ranches (and very few saddles – blanket padding is often supplied), so horse hire will need to be arranged directly with the horse's owner. Guesthouse owners will generally help out.

See each destination chapter for details of local operators.

## Bird-Watching

Tonga is not renowned for its birdlife, but there are sea-bird colonies of noddies, terns, great frigate birds and tropic birds (white-tailed and the rare red-tailed variety) on all of the main islands. Possible twitching spots include Hufangalupe on Tongatapu, Maninita in Vava'u, Luahoko in Ha'apai and Lakufa'anga on 'Eua, along with its entire forest and cliff-top viewpoints.

The purple-crowned and many-coloured fruit doves are the most exotic species found on Tongatapu. The red shining parrot can be seen in the 'Eua Plantation Forest and National Park. Mt Talau (p252) on Vava'u is home to a number of bird species and boat trips can be arranged to the breeding grounds on remote Maninita. Most twitchers will be more interested in seeing the Niuafou'ou megapode around Niuafou'ou's central lakes, though the logistics of this are problematic (see p270).

For further reference, pick up a copy of *Field Guide to Landbirds of Tonga* by Claudia Matavalea.

## Bushwalking

And beach walking! With hundreds of kilometres of sandy beaches (especially in Ha'apai and on Niuaotuputu) it would almost be a sin not to circle at least a few islands. The only potentially hazardous creepy-crawlies you might meet on land are centipedes.

'Eua offers the best, most accessible areas for bushwalking (mostly over forested terrain), while the Niua (p265) and Tofua in Ha'apai (p240) both have a combination of volcanic landscapes, ash fields and dense forest. Kao (p240, 1046m), Tonga's highest peak, can also be climbed. Vava'u Island (p248) is a maze of trails and 4WD tracks, while its uninhabited islands offer peaceful explorations.

Trails in Tonga quickly become overgrown, replacing bushwalking with bushwhacking in many areas (particularly 'Eua's rainforest, see p220), and signs and markers tend to disappear – making bushwalking here all the more tempting to trailblazers.

To get the most out of extended bushwalking in Tonga bring a tent, good strong boots, tough trousers, mosquito repellent, cooking equipment (camping gas is not available), a compass and plenty of water containers – finding fresh water can be a problem and sometimes several days' supply must be carried. See the boxed text Responsible Walking, p274. In Vava'u and Ha'apai camping is illegal, but in practice as long as you have permission from the property owner you should have no problems. See p271 for further details.

## Caving

With dozens of limestone caves, caverns and tunnels, 'Eua (p218) is the best place for caving in Tonga, though it's a do-it-yourself affair for those already experienced underground and totally self-sufficient in terms of equipment and emergency support.

Smaller land caves can be explored on other islands, while scuba diving outfits continue to discover amazing sea caves, caverns and 'cathedrals' off 'Eua, Vava'u and the Ha'apai Group that experienced divers can explore.

## Diving & Snorkelling

Tonga's reefs are among the richest and most diverse ecosystems in the world. Many can be accessed straight from the shore, but

## RESPONSIBLE WALKING

### Rubbish

- If you've carried it in, you can carry it back out – everything, including empty packaging, citrus peel and cigarette butts, can be stowed in a dedicated rubbish bag. Make an effort to pick up rubbish left by others.
- Sanitary napkins, tampons and condoms don't burn or decompose readily, so carry them out, whatever the inconvenience.
- Burying rubbish disturbs soil and ground cover and encourages erosion and weed growth. Buried rubbish takes years to decompose and will probably be dug up by wild animals who may be injured or poisoned by it.
- Before you go on your walk remove all surplus food packaging and put small-portion packages in a single container to minimise waste.

### Human Waste Disposal

- If a toilet is provided at a campsite, please use it.
- Where there isn't one, bury your waste. Dig a small hole 15cm deep and at least 30m from any stream, 50m from paths and 200m from any buildings. Take a lightweight trowel or a large tent peg for the purpose. Cover the waste with a good layer of soil. Toilet paper should be burnt, although this is not recommended in a forest, above the tree line or in dry grassland; otherwise, carry it out – burying is a last resort. Ideally, use biodegradable paper.
- Contamination of water sources by human faeces can lead to the transmission of giardia, a human bacterial parasite.

### Camping

- In remote areas, use a recognised site rather than creating a new one. Keep at least 30m away from watercourses and paths. Move on after a night or two.
- Pitch your tent away from hollows where water is likely to accumulate so that it won't be necessary to dig damaging trenches if it rains heavily.
- Leave your site as you found it – with minimal or no trace of your use.

### Washing

- Don't use detergents or toothpaste in or near streams or lakes; even if they are biodegradable they can harm fish and wildlife.
- To wash yourself, use biodegradable soap and a water container at least 50m from the watercourse. Disperse the waste water widely so it filters through the soil before returning to the stream.
- Wash cooking utensils 50m from watercourses using a scourer or gritty sand instead of detergent.

### Fires

- Use a safe existing fireplace rather than making a new one. Don't surround it with rocks – they're just another visual scar – but clear away all flammable material within at least 2m. Keep the fire small (under 1 sq metre) and use a minimum of dead, fallen wood.
- Be absolutely certain the fire is extinguished. Spread the embers and drown them with water. Turn the embers over to check the fire is extinguished throughout. Scatter the charcoal and cover the fire site with soil and leaves.

### Access

- Many of the walks in this book pass through private property, although it may not be obvious at the time, along recognised routes where access is freely permitted. If there seems to be some doubt about this, ask someone nearby if it's OK to walk through.

reef quality generally improves the further you are from a population centre, and you may need a boat to see the best reefs. Tonga has a great variety of scuba dive sites – soft and hard coral teeming with tropical fish, vertigo-inducing drop-offs, huge caverns (some tunnelling into islands of the Vava'u Group!), channels, magnificent geological formations (some volcanic), tunnels and wrecks are all found in Tonga's waters.

Between June and November dives are accompanied by the mesmerising murmur of humpback whalesong. Dolphins, sea turtles and rays are present year-round.

Visibility is outstanding and averages 30m to 50m on the barrier reefs around Tongatapu and Vava'u, reaching up to 70m in winter. Visibility is slightly lower in Ha'apai during summer as the island group is more exposed. Water temperatures range between 23°C and 29°C, with the sheltered waters of Vava'u seeming to stay warmer longer. Still, a 3mm wet suit is still a good idea.

Snorkellers can often tag along with a dive group in order to access coral gardens off the beaten track. A collection of marine reserves and beautiful reefs provide accessible snorkelling north of Tongatapu (p213). In Ha'apai (p227) you're never too far from a reef with excellent coral gardens, and in Vava'u (p246) most boat/snorkelling trips visit beautiful coral gardens.

You'll need diving certification to dive in Tonga. Make sure you explain your level of experience before planning any dive and don't be tempted to dive beyond your ability. Carefully inspect all rental gear before heading out for a dive, as we have received reports that some divers have found these not up to scratch. Tonga's dive operators are affiliated either with PADI, NAUI, SSI or CMAS. Expect to pay between US\$65 and US\$90 for a two-tank dive (that's two separate dives on a single trip) inclusive of equipment. Booking packages will get you a discount.

There is no decompression chamber in Tonga – Suva (Fiji) has one, but patients are usually transferred to New Zealand. See p301 for details regarding the bends.

### Fishing

Anglers are lured to Tonga from around the world for its sport fishing and big game fishing, thanks to the plummeting depths of the Tongan Trench not far offshore. The

main game includes yellowfin and skipjack tuna, wahoo, barracuda, sailfish, mahi mahi and blue, black and striped marlin. Marlin can be caught year-round, though most are caught between July and November (August and September are the peak months).

Vava'u (p246) is the base of much game fishing in Tonga, but there are a number of fine boats available for charter in Tongatapu (p181).

Trawling (towing a number of lures on long lines behind a boat) takes place in the very deep waters surrounding Tonga. Some of it – in Vava'u and Tongatapu – is focused around Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). Bottom fishing and salt-water fly fishing can be catered for and equipment is usually provided, though quality is variable. Salt-water fly fisherfolk should bring their own tackle.

Tonga International Game Fishing Association (Tigfa) holds an international competition in Vava'u in September – temporary membership allows you to enter competitions. Tag and release earns higher points.

For Tongan-style fishing trips (with hand lines) ask around at the various wharfs in Tonga or at the place you're staying. In the more remote areas, you may even see octopus ensnared by locals using intriguing cowry shell lures.

### Rock Climbing

The sheer, 150m limestone cliffs on the east coast of 'Eua and caves running off sinkholes offer Tonga's best climbing. There are some great, largely unclimbed routes, though there's always a strong easterly wind off the ocean. The rock is pretty sharp, but there are plenty of holds. The best places to anchor off are around or on Lokupo and Lauua lookouts. Bring all your own gear.

Many of the islands in Vava'u have squat but promising 40m sea cliffs, most of them untried and untested. Vava'u Surf & Adventure Tours (p247) takes people abseiling into Swallow's Cave.

See also Caving on p273.

### Sailing

Tonga is well known for some of the best sailing in the South Pacific. Yacht charter activity in the kingdom is based in Vava'u (p246). Easterly trade winds blow at a steady 15 to 18 knots across this group of idyllic, sheltered islands between May and

November (the most popular sailing time), and there are many excellent anchorages and a couple of island resorts that welcome yachting into their restaurants. During the cyclone season – you'll be warned in plenty of time – cheap charters are sometimes available.

Ha'apai is just as picturesque, though you'll probably need your own vessel, as Vava'u-based charter companies don't allow their boats out of Vava'u. Ha'apai's anchorages offer protection from rough seas, but not from unexpected gales. Tongatapu is more limited for cruising yachts, but 'Eua, 'Ata and the beautiful coral islands north of Tongatapu can be explored.

Sailors should be aware that Tongan sea charts are not 100% accurate and are thus inappropriate for GPS navigation. However, due to the great visibility, navigating around Tonga's reef systems is not difficult – though a moderate level of experience is required. See p294 for more information on sailing to and from Tonga.

See p295 for listings of cruising guides.

### Sea-Kayaking

Sea-kayaking in Tonga was recently voted amongst the top 50 adventure activities in the world. With its myriad islands, lagoons and beaches, Tonga offers great scope for sea kayakers – including the clear, sheltered waters of the Vava'u Group and the remote, traditional (and sometimes uninhabited) islands of the Ha'apai Group. Island resorts generally have a few kayaks for guest use. See p228 and p247 for details on rental gear and companies offering 'trip of a lifetime' kayaking/camping paddles through the islands in Ha'apai and Vava'u, respectively.

The islands and reefs north and northeast of Nuku'alofa (see p213) have good potential for sea-kayaking and the island resorts have some equipment for guest use, though there's no equipment available for hire in Nuku'alofa.

A 3mm wet suit is a good idea. If you bring your own kayak to Tonga you'll have to transport it around the islands by ferry.

### Surfing

Tonga's winter south swell season runs from April to October when surfing is reliant on storm activity around Australia and New Zealand. The summer north swell season

runs from November to March, with prevailing swells originating both in the North Pacific (the same swells that hit Hawai'i) and from cyclones in the South Pacific.

There are no beach breaks in Tonga. All surf is over shallow coral reefs, demanding an intermediate to advanced skill level. You'll definitely need booties, and you may want to consider a helmet and a basic first-aid kit – to deal with the inevitable cuts and grazes.

Great surf can be found throughout Tonga, but accessibility is the key. On Tongatapu, namely at Ha'atafu Beach, a number of surf spots are only a short paddle (100m) across the lagoon. Other breaks around Tongatapu and Vava'u are reached via boat.

Check the website of **Tonga Surfriders Association** ([www.surfingtonga.com](http://www.surfingtonga.com)), which operates from Ha'atafu Beach Resort (see p212). It features a sample of Tongatapu's breaks and lists recommended travel agencies to book surfing holidays through. Lessons for beginners and reef novices are available.

**Vava'u Surf & Adventure Tours** (☎ 71283, 12515; <http://groups.msn.com/cafetropicavavautonga/>; Private Bag 34, Neiafu) drops surfers on Vava'u's best breaks and organises trips. Surf information on Ha'apai is hard to get. No doubt good waves await, but they take some finding.

### Whale-Watching

Nothing compares with the experience of dangling midwater, staring into an azure abyss, with a massive humpback whale nearby – a mother keeping a watchful eye and fin over its playful and curious calf, or a lone singing male sending vibrating soundwaves through your chest... Some get very 'hippy' about it, with exclamations of 'it changed my life...it looked right into my eye...it looked into my soul'. Others grow very quiet. Many men even shed tears. It's mesmerising, it's exhilarating, and to be honest, it's a bit scary too.

Tonga is an important breeding ground for humpback whales, and one of the best places in the world to see these magnificent creatures. They can be seen bearing young in the calm reef-protected ocean, caring for new calves (conceived here 11 months earlier), and engaging in elaborate mating rituals.

The whale-watching season is from June to November in Tongatapu and Ha'apai (p228), and July to November in Vava'u,

which is the centre for whale-watching in Tonga (p248).

Whales can also be spotted in the deep-water channel between Tongatapu and 'Eua – often on the crossing to/from 'Eua (p222), and often so close to 'Eua they can be seen from the shore. This short trip from Tongatapu offers the most economical means of an encounter; small boat trips can be organised here also.

Tonga is one of the few places in the world where swimming with whales is possible. Most whale-watching trips provide snorkelling gear so you can swim with the whales, and some provide underwater microphones and DVD footage of your encounter (at an extra cost, of course).

Subsistence whaling in Tonga (where perhaps 10 whales were taken per year by primitive methods) occurred until 1979 when the king banned all whaling. Pressure from Japan for permission to begin whaling 'for scientific purposes' has been resisted, but 2006 will be a defining year.

See the boxed text on p171 for further information.

### BUSINESS HOURS

Business hours are flexible, but are usually from 9am until 4.30pm, with most shops open from 8.30am to 5pm on weekdays (some close for an hour at lunch), and 9am to noon on Saturday. *Fale koloa* (small grocery kiosks) have the longest hours, from around 6am to 10pm Monday to Saturday.

Restaurants usually operate from 8am to 10am for breakfast, noon to 2pm for lunch, and 6pm to 10pm if they serve evening meals. Larger hotels and a few Chinese restaurants open to the public on Sunday, but most restaurants are closed. Produce markets generally operate from 6am to 4pm on weekdays and are busiest from 6am to noon on Saturday.

Bakeries become the social hub on Sunday afternoon, with wafts of freshly baked bread, pastries and pies drawing customers in. They open from about noon (around 4pm on smaller islands) to anywhere between 8pm and 11pm. Note, however, that time in Tonga is tolerated rather than obeyed. Be prepared for prearranged meeting times and standard opening hours to regularly be ignored without a hint of remorse or social consequence.

### CHILDREN

Some hotels in Tonga allow children to stay free of charge, others have a reduced children's rate, and a few do not accept children at all.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* is a useful resource with plenty of pre-trip and on-the-road tips.

### Practicalities

Children aged under two travel for 10% of the standard fare (or free) on airlines; however, they don't get a seat or baggage allowance. Children aged between two and 12 can usually occupy a seat for half to two-thirds of the full fare and will be eligible for a baggage allowance.

Hire cars rarely have child seats, so you'll need to bring your own and check that it clips into seat belts.

The larger supermarkets in Nuku'alofa and Neiafu are well stocked and will probably have everything you need, but at a price. Bring as much as possible from home, including any special foods required. Disposable nappies (diapers), cartons of fruit juice, and UHT and powdered milk are widely available, but out of Nuku'alofa, sunscreen and insect repellent can be hard, if not impossible, to find.

See p177 for tips on dining.

### Sights & Activities

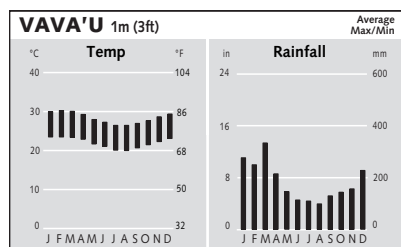
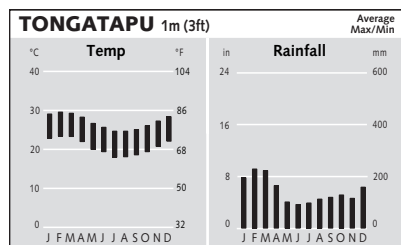
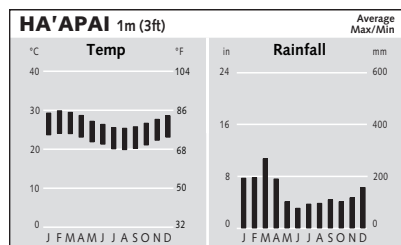
Tonga is a great place to travel with children and there's plenty to keep them happy – swimming, snorkelling, beachcombing, bicycling, kayaking, short boat trips, visits to interesting places and cultural events (especially the Tongan feasts). Other travellers with children can be an excellent resource for local information.

Accommodation with a beach or swimming pool may be all the entertainment you need. Nuku'alofa has a couple of fenced-off parks with children's playground equipment and 'pay for use' pools.

It's worth picking up some children's snorkelling gear before arriving in Tonga in order to get a good, leak-free fit. The range in Tonga is very limited.

### CLIMATE CHARTS

Despite its great latitudinal range, Tonga does not experience dramatically diverse climatic conditions. Vava'u and the Niua



are noticeably warmer than Tongatapu, and 'Eua is noticeably cooler.

## CUSTOMS

Travellers aged 18 and older may import up to 500 cigarettes, 2.25L of spirits and 4.5L of wine duty-free. Animals, fruit and plant products require a quarantine certificate. The import of firearms, ammunition, drugs and pornographic material is prohibited.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

### Animals

There are a lot of dogs roaming around Tonga. Most are either friendly or will keep their distance, but a few (especially when they're in packs) are aggressive. Pretending to throw a stone often discourages them.

### Sea Creatures

Tonga is surrounded by a lot of open ocean inhabited by an impressive range of marine

species, from colourful, tropical coral dwellers to large pelagics. Tropical marine creatures encountered can sting, bite or stun, including jellyfish, cone shells, stinging corals or cone fish – see *Venomous Marine Life* boxed text, p301. Shark incidents rarely occur, though they are known to hang around the calving humpback whales, for obvious reasons. If you're concerned, seek local advice.

## Security

Tonga is one of the safest destinations in the South Pacific and theft from the individual is rarely a problem; however, items left lying around can wander.

'Borrowing' is rife. By Tongan reckoning, all property is effectively communal. If one person has something another needs, the latter either asks for it or surreptitiously 'borrows' it. Of course, it can be 'borrowed' back if needed, but it will otherwise never again see its rightful owner. Unattended items are considered ripe for 'borrowing', so watch your possessions. Unfortunately most long-term residents experience a 'break and enter' and theft of property.

The threat of rape does exist, but you can easily protect yourself by using common sense and avoiding drinking alcohol alone with Tongan men (see p284).

Travellers cheques are one of the safest ways to carry money (be sure to keep the receipts separate). Keep a handful of small denomination notes handy for day-to-day transactions but put the rest in a moneybelt or another safe place.

## DISABLED TRAVELLERS

Tonga is not out of bounds for those with a physical disability and a sense of adventure despite its lack of suitable facilities. Tongans are friendly and helpful people who will do their best to accommodate you. Places of accommodation with the easiest access (though no purpose-built facilities) include The Villa Guest Lodge, The Black Pearl Suites, Papiloa's Friendly Islander Hotel and Seaview Lodge in Nuku'alofa (p191); Fonongava'inga Guesthouse in Ha'apai (p232) and Sandy Beach Resort in Foa (p236); Adventure Backpackers and Paradise International Hotel in Vava'u (p253); and The Hideaway on 'Eua (p223).

Get in touch with your national support organisation before leaving home for recom-

mendations on travel literature and specialist travel agents to help with holiday planning.

Warn airlines at the time of booking if you require special arrangements for wheelchair assistance at airports, visual or audio notification of airport announcements or special meals on the flight. Disability-friendly website **Allgohere** ([www.everybody.co.uk](http://www.everybody.co.uk)) has an invaluable airline accessibility guide.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Tongan Embassies & Consulates

Tonga has diplomatic representatives in the following countries:

**UK** (☎ 020-7724 5828; fax 020-7723 9074; 36 Molyneux St, London W1H 6AB)

**USA** Hawai'i (☎ 808-953 2449; fax 808-955 1447; Suite 306B, 738 Kaheka St, Honolulu, HI 96814); CA (☎ 415-781 0365; [www.tongaconsulate.us](http://www.tongaconsulate.us); Suite 604, 360 Post St, San Francisco, CA 94108)

### Embassies & Consulates in Tonga

It's important to realise what your own embassy – the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen – can and can't do to help you if you get into trouble. Generally speaking, it won't be much help in emergencies if the trouble you're in is remotely your own fault. Remember that while in Tonga you are bound by Tongan laws. Your embassy won't be sympathetic if you end up in jail after committing an offence locally, even if such an action is legal in your own country.

The following foreign diplomatic representatives are found in Nuku'alofa:

**Australia** (☎ 23244; fax 23243; [www.embassy.gov.au/to.html](http://www.embassy.gov.au/to.html); Salote Rd; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri) High Commission. Limited Canadian consular services available here.

**China** (☎ 24554; fax 24596; Vuna Rd) Embassy.

**European Union** (☎ 23820; [eutonga@kalianet.to](mailto:eutonga@kalianet.to); Taufa'ahau Rd) European Commission.

**Germany** (☎ 23477; fax 23154; Taufa'ahau Rd) Honorary Consulate.

**New Zealand** (☎ 23122; [zhcnuk@kalianet.to](mailto:zhcnuk@kalianet.to); Taufa'ahau Rd; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1-4pm Mon-Fri) High Commission.

**UK** (☎ 24395; fax 24109; Vuna Rd) High Commission.

**USA** (Peace Corps; ☎ 25466, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 23600) National Reserve Bank.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Tongan families need little excuse for a feast: a birthday, a visitor, an academic accomplishment, a birth, a marriage or just

a sunny Sunday are all good reasons. University graduations, religious holidays, children's first birthdays and royal birthdays invite celebration on an even larger scale, often with several days of feasting, dancing and organised entertainment. Instead of fireworks, youngsters detonate homemade bamboo and kerosene bazookas that explode with the same impact as heavy artillery.

Some of Tonga's organised annual festivals are listed below.

### February

**Vava'u Tuna Fest** A one-week tuna festival with plenty of cultural land action too.

### March/April

**Easter Festival** A week-long festival featuring youth choirs, passion plays, band concerts and cultural performances.

### May

**Vava'u Festival** The Crown Prince's birthday sets the stage for the Vava'u Festival, a popular week of partying.

**'Eua Festival** Starting on 28 May this is a two-week festival based around the national park.

**Red Cross Festival** A major event in Tonga which is capped off with the Red Cross Grand Ball in Nuku'alofa.

### June

**Ha'apai Festival** The most prominent annual event in the Ha'apai Group, this week-long festival in early June precedes Emancipation Day festivities.

### July

**Heilala Festival** The king's birthday is celebrated on Tongatapu with this festival named after the country's national flower. It's a week-long bash featuring parades and processions, music festivals and competitions, cultural events and dance, art, craft, beauty and sports competitions. Coinciding with this festival is the torch-lighting ceremony *Tupakapanava* in which people line the northern coastline of Tongatapu carrying flaming torches of dry reeds.

**Miss Galaxy Pageant** Held in Nuku'alofa, this international *fakaleiti* (see the boxed text, p161) competition is always sold out. It's great fun.

**Kalia Cup Regatta** A 10-day event around Vava'u's islands with plenty of onshore revelling at the end of each race.

### August-October

**Agricultural Fairs** Derived from the ancient *'inasi* festivals, agricultural fairs take place in all the major island groups and are presided over by the king. The first is normally on Vava'u, followed by Ha'apai, Tongatapu and 'Eua.

## September

**Tonga International Billfish Tournament** Local and international anglers are lured to Vava'u in late September to compete in this fishing tournament. Fish tagged and released get higher points.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is an accepted fact of life in Tonga and you'll see plenty of gay men around. There are also *fakaleiti* – men who dress and behave as women. Whatever lesbian population exists is much more undercover and not at all vocal.

While there's no need for gay or lesbian travellers to hide their sexuality in Tonga, public displays of sexual affection are frowned upon, whether gay or straight.

## HOLIDAYS

Primary and secondary school holidays include two weeks beginning the second week of May, two weeks beginning the third week of August and six weeks beginning the first week of December. You may get the feeling that '4' is the royal lucky number for public holidays.

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Good Friday, Easter Sunday & Easter Monday**

March/April

**Anzac Day** 25 April

**HRH Crown Prince Tupouto'a's Birthday** 4 May

**Emancipation Day** 4 June

**King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV's Birthday** 4 July

**Constitution Day** 4 November

**King George I's Birthday** 4 December

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**Boxing Day** 26 December

## INSURANCE

Always take out travel insurance. You should be covered for the worst-case scenario (eg an accident that requires medical evacuation and repatriation). Check the small print to ensure the policy you take out covers the endeavours you intend to partake in, which may be deemed 'dangerous activities', such as diving and even trekking.

If you are planning long-term travel, insurance may seem very expensive – but if you can't afford it, you certainly won't be able to afford a serious medical emergency overseas.

Worldwide cover for travellers from more than 44 countries is available online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

## INTERNET ACCESS

Internet access is expensive (expect to pay T\$6 to T\$8 per hour, though some will try to slug you for more) anywhere except Tongatapu, where you can find places charging T\$2 per hour. Outside Nuku'alofa, the best value access is through high schools, which also offer the only access on 'Eua and Niuaotuputu.

## LEGAL MATTERS

Police and government officials in Tonga seem friendly, helpful and straightforward, but don't overstay your visa, get caught with illegal substances or offend a member of the nobility. For legal information or representation, see 'Law Practitioners' in the Yellow Pages of the *Tonga Telephone Directory*.

## MAPS

Maps in this guidebook are ample for a traveller's needs, and give the most detail you will find on maps generally available.

The Tonga Visitors Bureau dispenses a simple map of Tonga's major islands and island groups, plus street maps of Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu) and Neiafu (Vava'u), while a sketchy map of the island groups is available at the Friendly Islands Bookshop. It's handy to mark up an 'Eua map (small and lacking much detail) with greater detail before heading out for a hike.

The **Ministry of Lands, Survey & Natural Resources** (Map pp184-5; ☎ 23611; [www.lands.gov.to](http://www.lands.gov.to); P.O. Box 5, Vuna Rd, Nuku'alofa) sells topographic dye-line prints (most scaled 1:50,000) of individual island groups. Unfortunately, however they don't give much detail or labelling. Download them at [www.lands.gov.to/tiki/tiki-index.php](http://www.lands.gov.to/tiki/tiki-index.php).

The **Hydrographic Unit** (☎ 24696; fax 23150; P.O. Box 72, Toulili Naval Base, Nuku'alofa) has navigational sea charts of individual island groups and their harbours. At 1:72,600, these charts aren't accurate enough for GPS navigation.

New Zealand-based **Trans Pacific Marine** ([www.transpacific.co.nz](http://www.transpacific.co.nz)) sells a chart folio called *Tonga and the Niue Islands* (NZ\$250) including charts, approaches, landings and anchorages, and also sells them separately for NZ\$22.

A reduced-size sea chart of the Vava'u Group (around T\$16) is available from various places in Neiafu.

## MONEY

Tongan banknotes come in denominations of one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 *pa'anga* (written T\$1, T\$2 etc). One hundred *seniti* make up T\$1 and these coins come in denominations of one, five, 10, 20 and 50 *seniti*.

The banks are open from at least 9am to 3.30pm or 4pm weekdays; in Nuku'alofa and Neiafu some open from 8.30am to noon on Saturday as well. Money can be changed at the Treasury offices on the more remote islands of Niuaotuputu and Niuafo'ou.

A currency exchange window at the airport on Tongatapu is open for all international arrivals and departures.

For information about taxes in Tonga, see p16.

## ATMs

Both ANZ and Westpac Bank of Tonga have ATMs in Nuku'alofa which accept credit and debit cards from Visa, MasterCard and Cirrus. ANZ's Neiafu branch has an ATM inside the bank, available during business hours. Don't leave it until your last *seniti* to access money – ATMs can be fickle.

## Cash

Currency exchange is relatively straightforward. Australian, Fijian, New Zealand

and US dollars and pounds sterling are the most easily exchanged currencies (both cash and travellers cheques), but euros and yen are also widely accepted in Tonga. Surprisingly few businesses accept payment in anything but Tongan *pa'anga*.

## Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted at many tourist facilities (attracting a 5% fee), with MasterCard, Visa and American Express the most common; JCB is also accepted. There are ATMs with Visa, MasterCard and Cirrus facilities in Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu) and Neiafu (Vava'u).

Cash advances using MasterCard and Visa can be obtained at the Westpac Bank of Tonga in Nuku'alofa, 'Ohonua ('Eua), Pangai (Ha'apai) and Neiafu. In Neiafu and Nuku'alofa you can also get cash advances at the ANZ bank should you not be able to use the ATM. MBF only gives advances on MasterCard.

EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale) credit/debit is less widespread in Tonga.

## International Transfers

Given the amount of money sent home by Tongans overseas, it's no surprise that two

### MONEY IN TONGA

In the early 1800s, when the young William Mariner explained the monetary system used by Europeans to the Tongan chief Finau, the chief immediately grasped its advantages over Tonga's traditional barter system. He also perceived a potential drawback of such a system and deemed it unsuitable for Tonga. From Mariner's book:

If money were made of iron and could be converted into knives, axes and chisels there would be some sense in placing a value on it; but as it is, I see none. If a man has more yams than he wants, let him exchange some of them away for pork... Certainly money is much handier and more convenient but then, as it will not spoil by being kept, people will store it up instead of sharing it out as a chief ought to do, and thus become selfish... I understand now very well what it is that makes the *papalangis* (foreigners) so selfish – it is this money!

Chief Finau had been disappointed to find so little of value to him on the Port-au-Prince. Unlike Captain Cook's ships, which had carried all sorts of valuables, the ship Mariner had travelled in contained only whale oil, bits of iron and 10,000 pieces of metal resembling *pa'anga* (bean-shaped playing pieces used in the game called *lafa*).

Finau had taken the pieces of metal to be worthless and assumed that the ship belonged to a very poor man indeed (King George's cook, perhaps – a cook being the lowest rank in Tongan society at the time). Having ordered the ship to be burned, the chief later realised with regret that he had burned the ship of an extremely rich man without first securing its *pa'anga*. Not surprisingly, the Tongan unit of currency is now called the *pa'anga*.

multinational money-transfer companies are heavily represented in Tonga. **Western Union** (www.westernunion.com) has dozens of offices, while **MoneyGram** (www.moneygram.com) is represented by the Bank of Tonga. Check their websites for contact details in your home country. Services are quick (a matter of minutes) and straightforward.

### Tipping

Tipping and bargaining are not the usual custom in Tonga, though in some tourist facilities they do occur. Dances (see p165) are an exception; take plenty of T\$1 and T\$2 notes to stick on the oiled arms of dancers. While tipping is an excellent way to show your appreciation (many Tongans put tips towards paying school fees), a few *palangi-run* businesses attempt to guilt-trip tourists into tipping staff to supplement measly wages, while the management charges top dollar for services.

### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are the best way to carry your travel funds in Tonga. They fetch 4% to 5% more than cash, with a nominal transaction charge of only 10 *seniti* per cheque (compared to the 4% to 5% charged for credit card transactions). All brands of travellers cheques are acceptable.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Film is expensive and limited in range and good quality camera equipment is very difficult to get in Tonga, so bring everything from home. In the shops of Nuku'alofa the average cost of 100ASA 35mm colour print film is T\$11/15 for a roll of 24/36 exposures (200ASA and 400ASA film is also available). APS film is available in Nuku'alofa and Neiafu. Colour slide film is harder to find. Film in Vava'u and Ha'apai is more expensive and the range is smaller.

Colour print processing can be done in Nuku'alofa (T\$7/8 to T\$16/24 for 24/36 prints). CD burning is available in Vava'u and Nuku'alofa, which also has a digital imaging centre.

If you think that the quest for the perfect 'people shot' is a photographer's greatest challenge, go to Tonga; it would be safe to say that nowhere else in the world will you find so many willing and photogenic subjects. In fact, if you're not quick about it, your

perfect 'people shot' could easily turn into a crowd scene featuring plenty of complicated (rap-style) hand gestures! Having said that, ask permission before photographing anyone and always respect their wishes if they decline. If you agree to send people a copy of the photo you've taken of them, do so.

Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography* includes plenty of professional tips to make the most of your holiday snaps.

### POST

Every major island has a post office, generally open from 8.30am or 9am to 12.30pm, and from 1.30pm to 4pm weekdays, except holidays.

Postage rates for letters up to 200g are 90 *seniti* to the South Pacific region (including New Zealand), T\$1 to Australia, T\$1.20 to the Americas and Southeast Asia, and T\$1.40 to the rest of the world. Postcard stamps cost 70 *seniti* to anywhere in the world. Postal services are sometimes slow, but usually reliable, though if possible, avoid posting anything from the Niuaus, particularly Niuafo'ou, since communications are limited and weeks can go by without mail service.

Parcels posted to you in Tonga may, upon collection, incur import duty to the value of the goods enclosed. See individual island information sections for poste restante addresses.

International freighting companies have representations in Nuku'alofa (see p186).

First-day covers of Tonga's collectible postage stamps depict colourful shells and birds or commemorate such events as royal birthdays, exhibitions and visits by foreign heads of state; the island of Niuafo'ou has its own unique stamps. The **Philatelic Bureau** (Map pp184-5; ☎ 22455; GPO, Nuku'alofa) displays and sells old and unusual stamps.

### SHOPPING

You won't find much by way of tourist tat and tacky-placky souvenirs in Tonga. Even finding a postcard can be difficult. With the exception of Polynesian carvings, Tongans themselves use the products they design and make. Perhaps the most distinctive of Tongan handicrafts are the *tapa* (mulberry bark cloths; see p167), which you can pick up in markets, craft cooperatives and through some guesthouses (ask your host). Despite the skill, care and time required to

create the expert carvings, woven baskets, carved jewellery and *tapa*, Tongan handicrafts are quite reasonably priced.

The methods used in producing handicrafts are the same today as they were in ancient times and only natural materials are used, including bone, *ahi* (sandalwood), *pueki* (shells), mulberry bark, pandanus fronds and coral. Some of these materials are protected or restricted overseas (including black coral, which most countries prohibit the importation of, sandalwood, whalebone and tortoiseshell) and the purchase of products made from them is discouraged for ecological reasons.

Locally grown vanilla pods, Royal Coffee and coconut oils – scented with *ahi* and *tuitui* (candlenut), which is great for the skin and hair – are also worth buying. Tongan *kava* is highly regarded (particularly that produced on Tafahi in the Niuaus) and nono juice (bottled in Vava'u) is believed to be a panacea to many ills.

Quality hand-designed T-shirts available in Tongatapu and Vava'u feature stylised Tongan designs, *kava*- and 'Vava'u mud-' dyes, and logos such as 'Kava-Cola' and 'Tongan Surfrider's Association'.

For local details, see the shopping sections in each chapter.

### TELEPHONE & FAX

A rather unorthodox, yet surprisingly effective means of communication used throughout the islands is the 'coconut wireless'. All over Tonga, especially in Tongatapu, people somehow know what's going on in government, what each foreigner is up to (they're watching you), who is sleeping with whom, what the king is doing at the moment and so on – while it's happening or immediately thereafter.

**Tonga Communications Corporation** (TCC; www.tcc.to) has offices in Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), 'Ohonua ('Eua), Pangai (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), Hihifo (Niuatoputapu) and also on Niuafo'ou. International telephone and fax services are available. Prepaid phone-cards, which can be used in both public and private telephones, are also available.

Calls to remote islands with radio or community telephones can be booked through **National Directory Assistance** (☎ 915). Give the operator the name of the required person, and the telephone number and island, in

addition to your name and contact number. The operator will contact you regarding your telephone booking.

In order to make an international call from Tonga, dial 00, your destination country code, the area code and phone number.

For directory information, refer to the *Tongan White Pages* (www.tcc.to/directory.htm). Useful (free) service numbers:

**Directory Enquiry** ☎ 910

**Emergency Number** ☎ 911

**International Directory Assistance** ☎ 913

### Fax

Facsimile services are available at post offices and the TCC (T\$1.50/3 per sent page to the South Pacific/elsewhere; 50 *seniti* per page received). Many private businesses have fax machines and some will fax documents for a fee.

### Mobile Phones

Simcards are available through **UCall** (☎ 0800 222; www.tcc.to/ucall\_main.htm) or through **Tonfön** (☎ 875 1000; www.tonfon.to). UCall's service is more reliable and has simcards for T\$45 including T\$10 credit, and a minimum recharge of T\$10; Tonfön has simcards for T\$10 including T\$5 credit, and a minimum recharge of T\$5. Mobiles need to be GSM 900 compatible and must be unlocked from your local operator.

### Phone Codes

Tonga's international telephone code is ☎ 676; there are no local area codes.

### Phonecards

TCC's Malo e Lelei cards, available at TCC shops, some banks and *fale koloa*, come in denominations of T\$5, T\$10, T\$20 and T\$50. Visa and MasterCard are accepted at all TCC offices. Check the compatibility of telephone calling cards from international systems before leaving home.

### TIME

Your whole concept of time will be given a good shaking in Tonga. The kingdom promotes itself as the 'land where time begins'; along with the Chukotka Peninsula in far eastern Russia, Tonga is the first place to see a new day. Though it could also be said that it is the 'land where time has stood still'.

Due to an odd kink in the International Date Line, Tonga is 20 minutes east of the 180th meridian, placing it 13 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Noon in Tonga is 3pm the previous day in Los Angeles, 11pm the previous day in London and 9am the same day in Sydney. In the Samoan islands, north of Tonga, the time would be noon the previous day! When New Zealand is on summer daylight-saving time, Tonga and New Zealand share the same time; the rest of the year New Zealand is one hour behind. Refer to the World Time Zones map on p319.

## TOILETS

Tonga has flush toilets, though in remote areas pit toilets are used. Very few public toilets exist.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

### Local Tourist Information

**Tonga Visitors Bureau** Nuku'alofa (TVB; Map pp184-5; ☎ 25334; www.tongaholiday.com; PO Box 37, Nuku'alofa); Pangai (Map p230; ☎ /fax 60733; www.tongaholiday.com; Holopeka Rd; 🕒 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri); Neiafu (Map p250; ☎ 70115; fax 70666; VHF Channel 16; Fatafehi Rd; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri)

### Tourist Information Abroad

For advance information and pre-trip planning, a web trawl of the listings in this guide will net the most up-to-date results. PDF brochures can be downloaded from the **Tonga Visitors Bureau** website (www.tongaholiday.com); if you email them a query you've probably got more chance of winning the lottery before getting a response.

## VISAS

Most country's citizens are granted a 31-day visitor's visa on arrival upon presentation of a passport with at least six months' validity and an onward ticket. Those intending to fly in and depart Tongan waters by yacht require a letter of authority from one of Tonga's diplomatic missions overseas or the Immigration Division (see below).

For information on arriving in Tonga by yacht, see p295.

You can extend your stay for up to six months at any immigration office; each island group has one, usually located next to the police station in the main town. In Nuku'alofa, this is handled by the visa and naturalisation section of the **Immigration Division** (☎ 26969; fax

26971; Salote Rd; 🕒 9am-12.30pm Mon-Fri, 1.30-3pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri), opposite Cowley's Bakery. You'll need one passport photo for each extension (T\$46) and a photocopy of your onward ticket. You'll need to show evidence of sufficient funds for your stay in Tonga, though a credit card is often enough.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Most of the time women travellers have no special problems in Tonga, but the closer you are to the culture and people, the more aware you'll need to be of Tongan traditional values.

Don't be paranoid about relating to people of the opposite sex but keep in mind that in traditional Tongan culture, women aren't permitted to freely associate with men on their own – they must be chaperoned. In Nuku'alofa and other large towns, being a solo woman traveller will scarcely be an issue. Elsewhere you may feel more comfortable with other travellers or a child of the family you're staying with. If, for example, you go to an isolated place alone with a man, or have a drink with him, you are giving him the signal that you are available for sex.

The way you dress will have a lot to do with how people perceive and treat you in Tonga. This is a deeply Christian culture (see p164) and Tongans expect both women and men to dress modestly – despite what you might see in Nuku'alofa.

Alcohol is an important issue and if you drink with Tongan men, you may be putting yourself at risk. Don't expect much peace when visiting nightclubs even when you're accompanied by your partner/husband – Tongan men can be incredibly persistent in their requests that you dance with them. Use common sense when going out at night and head for a larger hotel or tourist place rather than a small male-dominated bar, and consider arranging a taxi rather than walking.

As a general rule, avoid walking alone on a deserted beach, bush track or back road, but enquire about this on individual islands. While hitchhiking is fairly common on the islands, be careful and try to have somebody with you. See p289.

## WORK

Tourist permits specifically prohibit working in Tonga. Many foreigners have set up small businesses considered beneficial for

Tonga, such as tourist resorts, though before you snap up that slice of paradise on the Internet, it pays to get sound local advice. It has been said that 'for every beach in Tonga, a *palangi's* dreams lay buried in the sand'.

Officially, you must get a work permit from the immigration office. This requires a specific offer of employment, filing an application with the immigration office (see opposite) and a lengthy wait for processing.

Volunteering is a great way of gaining a rare and privileged insight into another world, one beyond the irresistible lure of unspoilt beaches, palm trees and balmy evenings. It's not, though, an option for the casual tourist: volunteer programmes require a serious and long-term commitment. Most organisations require volunteers to have tertiary qualifications or work experience in their particular field, and to hold residency in the organisation's base country. Foreign aid organisations operating in Tonga:

**AusAID** (www.ausaid.gov.au)

**Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers** (www.jica.go.jp)

**US Peace Corps** (☎ 25467; www.peacecorps.gov)

## Long-Term Residency

Unless you possess highly transferable and beneficial skills or marry a Tongan citizen, nonbusiness immigration is difficult. Business immigrants are normally permitted to remain, but only as long as they retain their jobs. Those intent upon setting up a business will be required to place controlling interest in the hands of a Tongan partner.

For more information on business investments in Tonga, contact the **Ministry of Labour, Commerce & Industries** (☎ 23365; fax 23887; PO Box 110, Nuku'alofa).

# TRANSPORT IN TONGA

All travel through Tonga's islands requires a degree of faith and fluidity, and comes with a dose of uncertainty and unreliability, dependent on tides, strong winds, holidays, church events, weddings, funerals, or a late-night *kava* drinking session.

## AIR

Flying is the easiest and fastest way to get around Tonga, and the good news is that there are now two options: Airlines Tonga Air Fiji and Peau Vava'u. Unreliability is still a problem and flights are cancelled or rescheduled at short notice, making delays and missed connections common. Get used to it now and it won't ruin your holiday.

Flights can be delayed or cancelled in extreme weather; this is more common in the cyclone season. There are good lead warnings for cyclones and severe storm activity; your best bet is to be aware of the possibility and stay informed.

Reconfirm your flight 72 hours before departure (leaving a contact phone number) and then reconfirm again 24 hours before flying. If you have an international connection you *must* catch, return to Tongatapu two days beforehand, to be safe.

## Airlines in Tonga

One-way fares and flight durations are given in the following table, though check the website for updates. There are no flights in Tonga on Sunday. Flights are valid for 12 months from the date of issue and demand no restrictions on changes, though a T\$20 fee is charged for reimbursement. Children under

### DOMESTIC FLIGHTS & FARES

Flight	Peau Vava'u Adult/Child	Airlines Tonga Adult	Duration
Tongatapu–Eua	T\$45/30	T\$45	10min
Tongatapu–Ha'apai	T\$154/122	T\$87	50min
Tongatapu–Vava'u	T\$209/153	T\$145	1¼hr
Ha'apai–Vava'u	T\$99/71		40min
Vava'u–Ha'apai	T\$99/71	T\$77	40min
Vava'u–Niuatoputapu	T\$166/121	T\$244	1¼hr
Vava'u–Niuafu'ou	\$207/152	T\$284	1½hr

\* Daily flights Monday to Saturday with second services daily on demand only



two are charged 10% of the full fare; children aged two to 11 pay 50%.

Bookings are confirmed only upon full payment (cash, Visa, Mastercard or Amex). Check-in time at the terminal is 1¼ hours prior to departure.

**Airlines Tonga Air Fiji** (Airlines Tonga; ☎ 23690; www.airlinestonga.com; Teta Tours, cnr Railway & Wellington Rds, Nuku'alofa) flies between Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u daily, between Tongatapu and 'Eua twice daily, and from Tongatapu to the Niuaus via Vava'u twice weekly. The baggage allowance is 10kg, with a per kilo excess charge of T\$0.70 to 'Eua, T\$1.35/2.20 to Ha'apai/Vava'u, and up to T\$6.45 per kilo to the Niuaus.

**Peau Vava'u** (www.peauvavau.to) flights from Tongatapu follow a circular route via Vava'u and Ha'apai, alternating in order of first stops. Normal fares have a baggage allowance of 20kg, while a slightly discounted resident's fare (often granted on request where possible and if the staff decide they like you) allows 10kg. Excess baggage is theoretically charged at T\$6 for the first kilogram and then T\$3 for every extra kilogram.

## BICYCLE

Cycling is a great way to get around the kingdom. Distances aren't great, the islands are reasonably flat (though Vava'u and 'Eua are hilly in places) and a bike allows you to see the islands at island pace.

Transporting your own bike into Tonga should be no problem (check carriage details with the airline before purchasing your ticket). You can transport your bike on inter-island ferries, or internal flights (see p285 for details of baggage allowances), though you'll need to deflate the tyres.

A few notes of caution: before you leave home, go over your bike with a fine-tooth

comb and fill your repair kit with every imaginable spare as they may be difficult to find in Tonga. Care should be taken around towns (Nuku'alofa especially) where vehicle numbers are high and driving skills poor. And watch out for crazed canines and wandering pigs.

## Hire

Bicycles are available for hire on all major islands (T\$8 to T\$15 per day; see specific chapters for details), mostly of the foot-brake variety as there's a lot less that can go wrong with them.

## Purchase

A couple of department/variety stores near Talamahu Market in Nuku'alofa sell bicycles of Chinese descent, and of varying quality and price – you're unlikely to find them boasting 'Shimano' anything.

## BOAT

### Inter-Island Ferry

Islands near Tongatapu can be reached by small boats which generally depart from Queen Salote Domestic Wharf. See p213 for details on boat transfers run by island resorts for their guests and day visitors. A couple of passenger ferries operate services between the main island groups, in addition to church-run boats.

Ferry rides in Tonga range from almost pleasurable cruising with sightseeing and whale-watching (in season), to barfing hell-rides kept afloat with midnight prayers. In either event, taking one is a major cultural experience, particularly while witnessing a ferry hovering mid-sea off an outer island as a flotilla of boats descends on it to load myriad cargo, including livestock and fish.

### INTER-ISLAND FARES

Route	MV 'Olovaha	MV Pulupaki
Tongatapu–Ha'apai (Lifuka)	T\$43	T\$45
Tongatapu–Vava'u	T\$63	T\$60
Tongatapu–Niuaus	T\$93	
Ha'apai–Vava'u	T\$39	T\$38
Vava'u–Niuaus	T\$55	
Niuatoputapu–Niuafu'ou	T\$40	

Fares listed are one-way

### INTER-ISLAND FERRY TIMETABLE

	Port	MV 'Olovaha	MV Pulupaki
Dep	Nuku'alofa	noon Tue	6pm Tue
Arr	Ha'afeva (Ha'apai)	9pm Tue	-
Dep	Ha'afeva	9.30pm Tue	-
Arr	Lifuka (Ha'apai)	11.30pm Tue	11.59pm Tue
Dep	Lifuka	2am Wed	2.30am Wed
Arr	Neiafu (Vava'u)	10am Wed	9am Wed
Dep	Neiafu	2pm Wed	10.30pm Wed
Arr	Lifuka	10pm Wed	4.30am Thu
Dep	Lifuka	1am Thu	6.30am Thu
Arr	Ha'afeva	3.30am Thu	-
Dep	Ha'afeva	4am Thu	-
Arr	Nuku'alofa	noon Thu	12.30pm Thu

Most passengers travel deck class as indoor spaces are stuffy, cramped and claustrophobic, while outdoor spaces can be wet and/or cold and difficult to find sleeping space. There's no denying the toilets are truly awful – overflowing and sloshing around – and vomiting fellow passengers don't enhance the experience either. Though a seafaring people, Tongans tend to get seasick as soon as the boat leaves the harbour if the sea is rough. Also, the boats are always running late.

### NORTHERN ISLAND GROUPS

Both inter-island ferries (see following) depart from Queen Salote Wharf in Nuku'alofa. Their schedules are very prone to delay and change, so must be checked prior to intended travel, though we have included an inter-island ferry timetable (above) to provide an idea of travel times. It's possible to arrange a cabin (sometimes the captain's quarters) though most people travel deck class.

MV 'Olovaha is a squat, German-built flat-bottomed boat (which tends to bob like a cork in rough seas). It's operated by the **Shipping Corporation of Polynesia** (Nuku'alofa Map pp184-5; ☎ 23853; scp@tonfon.to; Queen Salote Wharf; Vava'u Map p250; ☎ 70128; Ha'apai Map p230; ☎ 60699) and runs weekly between Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa), Ha'apai (Ha'afeva and Lifuka Islands) and Vava'u (Neiafu).

MV 'Olovaha currently services the Niuaus every two months (or so) – as it relies on government subsidies for the trip, it may run more or less frequently to these remote islands. From Vava'u to Niuatoputapu it

takes about 24 hours, then 12 to 15 hours to Niuafu'ou. Occasionally rough conditions make it impossible to unload or load cargo (and passengers) at Niuafu'ou.

MV *Pulupaki*, operated by **Uata Shipping Line** (Walter Line; Map pp184-5; ☎ 23855; uateline@kalianet.to; Queen Salote Wharf), does the inter-island run between Tongatapu and Vava'u. It was the preferred ferry at the time of writing and has a keel, which some travellers maintain gives a smoother journey. Economy (deck class) fares are listed in the table on p286 (children aged under 12 pay about 50%).

### 'EUA

The trip across to 'Eua is generally a simple crossing, though usually choppy when the ferries pass out into the open sea. The journey takes two to three hours. The return leg from 'Eua to Nuku'alofa is usually a little quicker and smoother as the boat travels with the prevailing swell, not against it. Locals travelling to/from 'Eua are generally more used to sea travel, so there's less seasickness. Ferrying to 'Eua can be quicker than flying (when this is actually an option) when you add on taking a taxi to the airport, check in, delays etc. The one-way fare is T\$20; tickets are sold on board the ferries.

**Uata Shipping Line** (Walter Line; Map pp184-5; ☎ 23855; uateline@kalianet.to; Queen Salote Wharf, Nuku'alofa) operates the MV *Ikale*, the quickest ferry between Tongatapu and 'Eua. The ferry leaves Nuku'alofa at 12.30pm, returning from 'Eua's Nafanua Wharf about 5am the next morning. There's one service every day except Sunday.

MV *Otu Tonga*, run by **Tofa Shipping** (Map pp184-5; ☎ 21326), also does the Nuku'alofa to 'Eua run, departing around noon on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. It is sometimes replaced by MV *Alaimoana*.

## Yacht

October and November are the best months for yacht hitchhiking around Tonga, though once yachties have arrived here they're usually content to cruise around the islands leisurely and don't need extra crew. Details of yachting, crewing, permits and charges are on p294. Yacht and sailing charters are available in Tongatapu and Vava'u.

Minerva Reef, which is awash most of the time, is at Tonga's southernmost extreme, 350km (about two days' sailing) southwest of Tongatapu. With breaking waves in the vast ocean at high tide and two feet of reef at low tide, Minerva Reef serves as a rest point for yachts waiting for clearer conditions on the five-day (or so) crossing to New Zealand.

## Other Vessels

Most island resorts offer boat transfers to their overnight guests and day visitors. The most economical way to get around is on local boats, but you'll be at the mercy of a very fluid schedule which requires time and flexibility. If you've got the cash, skippered boats can be organised on just about any island, while aluminium boats can be hired in Neiafu. Bear in mind the high fuel costs when quoted a price. See p246 for details.

The Church of Tonga's boat, **MV Siu Pele** (☎ contact Tiukala 25555; one-way fare T\$42) departs from Nuku'alofa's Domestic Wharf at 9pm Monday for Pangai (in the Ha'apai Group) via Nomuka, Ha'afeva and 'Uiha, returning from 'Uiha some time on Thursday.

You could try your luck hitchhiking on fishing boats, freighters and launches. Ask around port and landing areas and contact the shipping companies.

## BUS

Culture vultures hear this: travelling on a local bus on Tongatapu is a must – at least once. As passengers squeeze into painted mini-buses and catch the breeze while dangling out of the open doorway, you'll marvel at how much volume the driver can get out of such tiny speakers. Tongatapu's fairly decent bus network covers the island. Else-

where, transport is limited to Lifuka and Foa in Ha'apai, and Vava'u Island, with services running infrequently or only if enough passengers accumulate for a trip; some buses in outlying districts exist only to ferry students and villagers to and from town in the morning and afternoon. Don't rely on catching a bus after about 3pm.

In the urban areas of Tongatapu, the bus stops are marked with a sign reading '*Pasi*'. Elsewhere, flag down buses by waving your outstretched arm.

## Costs

Fares range from 50 *seniti* to T\$2 depending upon the island and the distance travelled. Pay the fare on exiting the bus.

## CAR

In Tonga, traffic moves on the left. Tonga is a harsh environment for cars, with little protection from the salt-laden elements and scant preventative servicing. Some vehicles are only held together by the sheer will of the occupants, though the ubiquitous 'Western Union' stickers seem to help.

On Tongatapu, if you see a motorcade flanked by police motorcyclists and containing a large blue Dodge van with blacked-out windows, pull off the road and wait for it to pass. It's the king. Smaller motorcades containing the queen, the princess or one of the princes occasionally crawl through town and demand similar respect.

## Driving Licence

International and home country driving licences are not valid in Tonga. You need a Tongan driving licence from the police station in Nuku'alofa or Neiafu, for which your only test will be to simultaneously produce your home driving licence, your passport and T\$17 cash.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol stations are easy to locate. They're fully serviced on Tongatapu and in Neiafu, though filling up often requires hand siphoning from 40-gallon drums on other islands. Fuel prices were pushing T\$2.20 per litre on outer islands in 2005. The slim availability of spare parts may explain the seeming trend to go without them – particularly away from Tongatapu, where most spare parts need to be sourced, if not imported into Tonga.

## Hire

Hire cars – ranging from the zippy with remnants of suspension to the completely 'Tonganified' and probably unroadworthy – are available on both Tongatapu and Vava'u, and can be arranged with private owners on other islands (this author hired the taxi, while the taxi driver happily slept the day away in the cab rank). Alternatively, negotiate hiring a taxi with its driver for the day. Those choosing to drive will need to buy a Tongan driving licence (opposite).

## Insurance

Insurance is only available in Nuku'alofa, see p198.

## Road Conditions

The sealing of main roads, a project recently funded by the EU, will no doubt extend the lives of Tonga's rattled cars along with their occupants' teeth. Tongan driving skills are not the sharpest in the world (you only need to pass a simple theory test to get a licence), and many people drive everywhere at under 40km/h. Expect the unexpected.

## Road Rules

Drinking and driving is strictly forbidden in Tonga, even though it's apparent that the practice is widespread. If there's an accident and you have alcohol on your breath, you'll be sent to prison whether or not you were at fault.

Drivers should keep their speed down to 40km/h in villages and towns and 65km/h elsewhere, especially now that the police have radar guns. If you're caught speeding, you'll have to pay a fine (T\$2 for each kilometre per hour you're over the limit).

## HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

However, hitching is fairly common in Tonga, especially where public transport is rare. Flag down vehicles by waving palm down rather than sticking out your thumb. Only occasionally will you be asked to pay.

## HORSE

Horses can be hired on all inhabited islands directly from their owners. Expect to pay around T\$30 per day. Horses rarely have saddles (a few blankets for padding, maybe) but generally have bridles and reins, and stirrups aren't totally out of the question. Tongan horses seem adept at shedding unwanted objects from their backs!

## TAXI

Taxis throughout Tonga can be recognised by a 'T' at the beginning of the vehicle's licence plate (if it has a licence plate). There are plenty of taxis on Tongatapu, Vava'u and Lifuka (Ha'apai), and one on 'Eua. Though the taxis are not metered, government maximum rates are vaguely followed. Always agree on the fare before you climb in. The Tonga Visitors Bureau representative at Fua'amotu International Airport can give you an indication of current taxi prices. Taxis in Ha'apai have a printed rate card priced by destination.

Some taxis charge according to the destination, and allow you to make a couple of stops and do some shopping without additional waiting fees.

Taxi drivers will often claim to be out of change, so either have a fistful of dollars or be prepared to change larger notes at your destination.

If your airport taxi driver insists that your selected hotel is closed, fully booked or no good, don't take it too seriously. Chances are you've chosen an establishment that doesn't pay commission to taxi drivers.

## TOURS

Organised tours can give a good introduction to an island and offer an easy way to visit major sights. Commercial tour operators circle Tongatapu and its sights in little over half a day while minibus tours cover a selection of land sights in Vava'u. Small-group 4WD tours with a combination of walking, exploring, caving and sightseeing can be arranged on 'Eua, while boat tours to outer islands can be negotiated in Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuaus. Whale-watching and fishing tours operate from each island group, while organised diving excursions are possible in all groups bar the Niuaus. Vava'u also boasts guided 'surfaris', where surfers are dropped on breaks by boat.

# Transport

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### THINGS CHANGE ...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and to be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

The physical isolation of the Samoan islands and Tonga means you need to give careful consideration to the best way of getting out there. Flying direct to/from each island grouping, for instance, probably won't represent the greatest value for money. It might make more sense to engage in some careful route planning that may enable further exploration of the South Pacific or even Australasia.

For information on travelling within either Samoa or American Samoa, see p146. For information on travelling within Tonga, see p285.

Flights and tours can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### Entering Samoa

To be issued a visa on arrival in Samoa, you must have an onward ticket, a passport valid for at least another six months, and a contact address within the country (have the name of a hotel handy). An international yellow fever vaccination certificate will also be required if you've visited a high-risk country in the six days prior to your arrival in Samoa (see p296).

### Entering American Samoa

A passport valid for at least six months beyond your arrival date and an onward ticket will allow nationals of 25 countries to obtain a visa on arrival. Nationals of other countries will need to apply for a visa in advance. For full details, see p146.

The yellow fever regulations that apply to Samoa also apply to American Samoa.

### Entering Tonga

Citizens of most countries are granted a 31-day visitors visa on arrival in Tonga upon presentation of a passport with at least six months' validity and an onward ticket. An international yellow fever vaccination certificate will be necessary if you've been to a high-risk area in the past six days.

## AIR

While the Samoan islands and Tonga aren't exactly as remote or obscure a destination as Tuvalu or Kiribati, they are not as popular as Fiji or Tahiti either (not yet anyway), and airfares often reflect this. Access to either island group is fairly straightforward from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Hawai'i or Los Angeles. From anywhere else, however, travelling there will almost always entail reaching one of these connecting points first. Auckland and Nadi/Suva are the most convenient and best-served runs, and there are often some good discount fares on these routes. Tonga and the Samoas are also popular as a stop-over or cheap 'optional extra' on some tickets and round-the-world fares between Europe or North America and New Zealand.

Visitors to Samoa will arrive near Apia on 'Upolu, those visiting American Samoa will arrive near Pago Pago on Tutuila, and the majority of those visiting Tonga will arrive at Nuku'alofa.

### Airlines

Airlines that service the region include the following (note all phone numbers mentioned here are for dialling from within Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga):

**Air New Zealand** (airline code NZ; Apia ☎ 20825, Nuku'alofa 23192; [www.airnz.com](http://www.airnz.com); hub Auckland International Airport)

**Air Pacific** (airline code FJ; Apia ☎ 22738, Nuku'alofa 23422; [www.airpacific.com](http://www.airpacific.com); hub Nadi International Airport)

**Hawaiian Airlines** (airline code HA; [www.hawaiianairlines.com](http://www.hawaiianairlines.com); hub Honolulu International Airport, Hawai'i)

**Inter-Island Airways** (Pago Pago ☎ 699 7100; [www.terislandair.com](http://www.terislandair.com); hub Tafuna International Airport, Tutuila)

**Pacific Blue** (airline code DJ; [www.flypacificblue.com](http://www.flypacificblue.com); hub Brisbane International Airport)

**Polynesian Airlines** (airline code PH; Apia ☎ 22737, Pago Pago 699 9126, Nuku'alofa 24566, Neiafu 70644; [www.polynesianairlines.com](http://www.polynesianairlines.com); hub Faleolo Airport, 'Upolu)

**Polynesian Blue** (airline code DJ; [www.polynesianblue.com](http://www.polynesianblue.com); hub Brisbane International Airport)

**Qantas** (airline code QF; Apia ☎ 21261; [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au); hub Kingsford-Smith Airport, Sydney)

**Royal Tongan Airlines** (airline code WR; Nuku'alofa ☎ 23414; [www.tongatapu.net.to/tonga/islands/royalt/default.htm](http://www.tongatapu.net.to/tonga/islands/royalt/default.htm); hub Fua'amotu International Airport, Tongatapu)

### Tickets

Automated online ticket sales work well if you're doing a simple one-way or return trip on specified dates, but are no substitute for a travel agent with the lowdown on special deals, strategies for avoiding stopovers and other useful advice.

Paying by credit card offers some protection if you unwittingly end up dealing with a rogue fly-by-night agency, as most card issuers provide refunds if you can prove you didn't get what you paid for. Alternatively, buy a ticket from a bonded agent, such as one covered by the **Air Travel Organiser's Licence** (ATOL; [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk)) scheme in the UK. If you have doubts about the service provider, at the very least call the airline and confirm that your booking has been made.

### INTERCONTINENTAL (RTW) TICKETS

Round-the-world (RTW) tickets are generally put together by the three biggest airline alliances – **Star Alliance** ([www.staralliance.com](http://www.staralliance.com)), **Oneworld** ([www.oneworldalliance.com](http://www.oneworldalliance.com)) and **Skyteam** ([www.skyteam.com](http://www.skyteam.com)). They give you a limited time (usually a year) in which to circumnavigate the globe. You can go anywhere the participating airlines go, as long as you stay within the prescribed kilometre extents or number of stops and don't backtrack when flying between continents. Backtracking is generally permitted within a single continent, though with certain restrictions; see the relevant websites for details.

An alternative type of RTW ticket is one put together by a travel agent. These are usually more expensive than airline RTW fares but allow you to devise your own itinerary.

RTW tickets start at around UK£900 from the UK and US\$1800 from the USA.

### CIRCLE PACIFIC TICKETS

A Circle Pacific ticket is similar to a RTW ticket but covers a more limited region, using a combination of airlines to connect Australia, New Zealand, North America and Asia, with stopover options in the Pacific Islands. As with RTW tickets, there are restrictions and limits as to how many stopovers you can take.

### INTERNATIONAL AIR PASSES

Polynesian Airlines' Polypass is good for 45 days (excluding the Christmas holiday period) and allows five stops in the Pacific, which may include Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji. In the USA, this is sometimes called the Pacific Explorer Air Pass and costs from US\$1100. The airline also offers various Polypacks, where travellers have up to two months to complete an itinerary that includes several Pacific destinations (these cost from NZ\$1400); see the Polynesian Airlines website for details. Note, however, that at the time of writing the future of these passes was in doubt due to the launch of the Polynesian Blue airline (a joint venture between Virgin Blue and the Samoan government), which is slated to take over most of Polynesian Airlines' international routes.

The Visit South Pacific Pass offers discounted airfares on a variety of South Pacific routes. The options are many and varied – altogether the pass covers 45 possible routes and involves nine Pacific carriers. The pass must be purchased in conjunction with an international air ticket from outside the Pacific region, but can offer fare savings of up to 50%. All passes are basically tailor-made; discuss the options with a travel agent.

### ONLINE TICKET SITES

For online ticket bookings, including RTW fares, start with the following websites:  
**Air Brokers** ([www.airbrokers.com](http://www.airbrokers.com)) This US company specialises in cheap tickets.  
**Cheap Flights** ([www.cheapflight.com](http://www.cheapflight.com)) Informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches from the USA, the UK and other regions.

**FLYING WITHIN THE REGION**

You can fly direct between Samoa and American Samoa with Inter-Island Airways and Polynesian Airlines for about US\$180 one way.

The principal airlines that fly between Samoa and Tonga are Air New Zealand (from NZ\$250 one way) and Polynesian Airlines (from ST1000 one way). At the time of research, the only airline between Tonga and American Samoa was Polynesian Airlines (T\$470 one way); in Tonga, you embark or disembark in Vava'u, not Tongatapu.

For more info on travel within the South Pacific region, see opposite.

**Flight Centre International** (www.flightcentre.com) Respected operator handling direct flights.

**Flights.com** (www.tiss.com) International site for flight tickets; offers cheap fares and an easy-to-search database.

**Roundtheworld.com** (www.roundtheworldflights.com) This excellent site allows you to build your own trips from the UK with up to six stops.

**STA** (www.statravel.com) Prominent in international student travel but you don't have to be a student; site linked to worldwide STA sites.

**Travelocity** (www.travelocity.com) US site that allows you to search fares (in US\$) from/to practically anywhere.

**Travel Online** (www.travelonline.co.nz) Good place to check worldwide flights from New Zealand.

**Asia**

Air Pacific has direct flights from Tokyo to Nadi, which connect with flights to Samoa (Apia) and Tonga (Nuku'alofa). Air New Zealand has a number of flights from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka to Auckland, where there are many onward flights to the Samoas. Most flights from other parts of Asia are also routed through Auckland and Nadi.

Qantas flights from countries in the Asian region touch down in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne before flying towards South Pacific islands via Nadi. The exception is the direct flight to Apia from Sydney.

Excellent bargains are often available in Hong Kong. Recommended local agents in Southeast Asia:

**Phoenix Services** Hong Kong (☎ 852-2722 7378)

**STA Travel** Bangkok (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th); Singapore (☎ 65-6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg); Tokyo (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

**Australia**

From Australia, flights to Samoa and Tonga are available from Sydney with new carrier Polynesian Blue and with Qantas. Pacific Blue also flies to both Samoa and Tonga from Brisbane as well as Sydney. Flights are often routed through Nadi or Auckland.

Polynesian Blue fares to Apia from Sydney start at around A\$450, though keep in mind that this was an introductory fare at the time of writing and prices may rise (probably not by much though) if the route proves popular. The average fare from Sydney to Nuku'alofa is around A\$650, although we did come across promotional fares as low as A\$300.

There are no direct flights to Pago Pago in American Samoa from Australia. You need to get to Apia (Samoa) first to hook up with a regional route.

Bear in mind that the Australian Christmas holiday season (December to January) is the busiest and most expensive time to fly. Standard fares increase by up to 25%, though 'holiday specials' are occasionally offered. Travellers should also be aware that ever-increasing code-share agreements mean that it should be easy to arrange a through-ticket from destinations across Australia.

**STA Travel** (☎ 1300 360 960; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) have offices throughout Australia. **Hide-away Holidays** (☎ 02-8799 2500; www.hideawayholidays.com.au) is a South Pacific specialist offering a range of flight/accommodation deals to the Samoan islands. Packages start at approximately A\$1300 (for five nights) and, once your five nights are up, there's nothing to stop you moving somewhere else and staying on a bit longer.

**New Zealand**

From New Zealand there are a number of flight options to Samoa and Tonga with Air New Zealand, Qantas, Royal Tongan Airlines, Polynesian Blue and Pacific Blue. One-way fares from Auckland to Apia start at NZ\$570; one-way fares for the 2½- to three-hour flight from Auckland to Nuku'alofa start around NZ\$450.

Flight/accommodation packages from New Zealand can be excellent value; such packages can sometimes work out cheaper than the flight alone. Air New Zealand is a good starting point for such deals.

For reasonably priced fares, try one of the numerous branches of **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz). Another good option is **House of Travel** (www.houseoftravel.co.nz); see its website for contact telephone numbers for its dozens of New Zealand offices.

**South Pacific**

While island-hopping around the Pacific isn't difficult, some flights operate only once or twice per week from the Samoan islands and Tonga and you might face more than a few scheduling problems on some routes. There are direct flights from both of the island groups to Fiji and Hawai'i, but if you are travelling on to other Pacific islands you'll probably need to either fly back to New Zealand to make connections, or travel via Fiji. Check out one of the regional air passes (see p291) if you want to see a host of other Pacific islands.

Air Pacific and Royal Tongan Airlines both fly between Nuku'alofa (Tonga) and Nadi (Fiji) three times a week. Air Pacific also flies between Nadi and Apia (Samoa), as does Polynesian Airlines. One-way fares from Fiji to Apia usually start at F\$300, while fares to Nuku'alofa cost from F\$220.

Royal Tongan Airlines also puts on a weekly Tongatapu to Niue flight via Vava'u (a two-hour trip). Royal Tongan is the only international airline serving Niue.

**UK & Continental Europe**

An Air New Zealand flight from London to Apia (Samoa), via Los Angeles, is the most straightforward option for travel from Europe to the Samoan islands. High-season return fares from London start at UK£1500. There are also a number of flights from Frankfurt to Los Angeles, where passengers can connect with onward flights to the Samoas or other South Pacific countries. Other cheap fares from Europe generally go via Sydney, Australia.

The best fares from Europe to Nuku'alofa (Tonga) are generally with Air New Zealand from London via Los Angeles, then Auckland or Nadi. However, various code-sharing agreements mean that other stopovers and routings through the South Pacific are possible. Air New Zealand's return fares from London to Tonga, via Los Angeles and Auckland, start from UK£1100. You are usually allowed one free stopover in each

direction. Air New Zealand's flights via Fiji are often at least 10% more expensive.

Popular agencies in the UK include the ubiquitous **STA Travel** (☎ 0870-1630 026; www.statravel.co.uk), **Traifinders** (☎ 020-7938 3939; www.traifinders.co.uk) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 0870-499 0040; www.flightcentre.co.uk).

A good option in the Dutch travel industry is **Holland International** (☎ 0900-8858; www.hollandinternational.nl). From Amsterdam, return fares start at around €1500. Another recommended agency in the Netherlands is **NBBS Reizen** (☎ 0900-102 0300; www.nbbs.nl). Recommended German agencies include the Berlin branch of **STA Travel** (☎ 069-743 032 92; www.statravel.de).

In France (more specifically, Paris), try **Odysia** (☎ 01 43 29 69 50; www.odysia.fr) or **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 40 29 12 22; www.otu.fr) – both are student/youth specialists and have offices in many French cities. Other recommendations include **Voyageurs du Monde** (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; www.vdm.com/vdm) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 08 25; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr/nf); the details given are for offices in Paris, but again both companies have branches elsewhere.

**USA & Canada**

Los Angeles and Honolulu are the two main gateway cities for travel between North America and the South Pacific. Although a huge amount of Pacific traffic passes through Los Angeles, there are also direct flights to Honolulu from nearly every major city in the USA. In Honolulu you can connect with Air New Zealand flights going direct to Samoa and Tonga.

Air New Zealand operates direct Los Angeles–Apia flights (about US\$620 one way) and direct Los Angeles–Nuku'alofa flights (around US\$650 one way). Return flights to Pago Pago start from about US\$580 from Honolulu with Hawaiian Airlines.

Discount travel agents in the USA are known as consolidators (though you won't see a sign on the door saying 'Consolidator'). San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities.

**STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices all over the USA.

Canadians will find the best South Pacific deals are via Honolulu. Like travellers from the USA, you'll probably fly with at least

two different code-sharing carriers. From Canada, flights to the Samoas are through Los Angeles/San Francisco and Honolulu. Return fares from Vancouver to Apia are around C\$2220, while return flights from Vancouver to Nuku'alofa are about C\$2500.

The airfares sold by Canadian discount air ticket sellers (consolidators) tend to be about 10% higher than those sold in the USA. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 866-246 9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and has offices in all major cities.

## SEA

### Cargo Ships

As a transport option, cargo ships are not opportunities for stowaways or free berths, but involve paid tickets to ride aboard willing supply vessels. If you're interested in this unusual option, check out the website of California-based **Freighterworld** (☎ 800-5317774; www.freighterworld.com), which has lots of relatively up-to-date information on container ships that offer berths on trips through the South Pacific. Prices obviously vary considerably according to the itinerary, but US\$2000 for two weeks of travel is not uncommon.

Three cargo ships sail between Apia in Samoa and the remote Tokelau Islands. Bookings for the 20-hour trip can be made in Apia at the **Tokelau Apia Liaison Office** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 20822; Fugalei St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri). You must obtain a permit to visit Tokelau before booking. Sailings are usually fortnightly but occasionally more frequent. Return deck fares are NZ\$290/145 per adult/child; return cabin fares are NZ\$530/270.

### Cruise Ships

A number of cruise ships make their way (very slowly) into the ports at Apia (Samoa), Pago Pago (American Samoa) and Nuku'alofa (Tonga), disgorging passengers keen to have a fully catered and organised South Pacific experience. Itineraries vary from two weeks to a month, and the routes are limited only by the imaginations of the tour providers. While Tahiti is the favoured main destination for such cruises, the Samoan islands and Tonga tend to be included in many such leisurely South Pacific voyages.

A good place to start your research into what sort of cruise suits you is the website of **Travel Wizard** (www.travelwizard.com), which provides oodles of information on international

cruise lines and options. Also have a look at the website of the **Cruise Lines International Association** (www.cruising.org) – it focuses on North American-based lines, but this is where most Pacific cruises will be coming from.

Fares vary widely depending on the length of the trip, the luxuriousness of the boat and its facilities, the number of stopovers, and the embarkation/disembarkation points. A typical itinerary for a one-month voyage starting from Los Angeles takes in Hawai'i, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand. Fares for such a voyage often hover around US\$3500 per person (double occupancy).

## Ferries

**Samoa Shipping Corporation** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 20935/6; reservations@samoashipping.com; Beach Rd, Apia) runs a car ferry called *Lady Naomi* between Apia and Pago Pago once a week. It departs Apia on Wednesday at midnight and returns on Thursday at 4.30pm. The trip takes seven hours each way. The return deck/cabin fare from Apia to Pago Pago is ST100/140. Note that American passport holders can only buy one-way tickets from Apia.

In Pago Pago, the ferry runs every Thursday at 3.30pm and tickets must be purchased at least one day in advance from **Polynesia Shipping Services** (Map p107; ☎ 633 1211). The return deck/cabin fare from American Samoa is US\$75/100.

## Yachts

Yacht charters are practically impossible to track down in the Samoan islands, whereas the myriad scattered islands and enigmatic sailing passages of Tonga seem to have been custom-designed for those wanting to undertake a lengthy island-hop.

Between May and October (outside the cyclone season) the harbours of the South Pacific swarm with cruising yachts from around the world, many following the favourable winds west from the Americas, while others come north from New Zealand.

The yachting community is quite friendly, especially towards those who display an interest in yachts and other things nautical. Sometimes they are looking for crew, and for those who'd like a bit of low-key adventure, this can be the way to go. Most of the time, crew members will only be asked to take a turn on watch – that is, scan the horizon for cargo ships, hazardous objects

and the odd reef – and possibly to cook or clean. In port, crew may be required to dive and scrape the bottom, paint or make repairs. Sailing experience is usually not necessary; 'green' crew members learn as they go. Most yachties charge crew upwards of US\$15 per day for food and supplies.

All that aside, bear in mind that the conditions of a long ocean voyage greatly magnify rivalries and petty concerns. Only set out on a long passage with someone with whom you feel relatively compatible and remember that, on board, skipper's rule is law.

## INFORMATION

Private yacht owners who intend to visit Samoa's islands aer required to apply for clearance from the **Prime Minister's Department** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21339; 5th fl, Government Office Bldg, Beach Rd) in Apia – bear left as you exit the elevator and take the unmarked door straight through the archway. The captain will need to present crew passports and the boat's registration papers.

On Tongatapu in Tonga, the boarding officers are in the **One Stop Shop** (☎ 23967; Queen Salote Wharf; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri) in Nuku'alofa. Check-in is possible on weekends but will incur a fee. There's a charge for anchoring anywhere in Tongan waters, payable upon departure at the **Ports Authority** (Map pp184-5; ☎ 23168; marports@kalianet.to; Queen Salote Wharf; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri) in Nuku'alofa, or whichever port you're using. Anchoring fees/charges in Tongatapu are calculated by multiplying T\$1.80 by gross tonnage of the yacht. Pay the harbour dues and then take the receipt to Customs.

In Vava'u, pull up at the southern end of Neiafu Wharf and contact the **boarding officers** (☎ 70053; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri).

To summon the harbour master and for emergencies in Tonga use VHF channel 16. However, there's only a slight chance that any Tongan government or navy vessel will come to your assistance (they rarely have fuel); your best bet is the local sailing and fishing community. If you're in VHF range of Vava'u, contact the charter yacht company **The Moorings** (VHF channel 72) which can coordinate rescue efforts. Any response to a triggered EPERB (an emergency beacon that sends SOS messages via satellite) will come from, or be coordinated by, the New Zealand navy. It may take days before help arrives.

## BOOKS

If you're travelling by yacht in Tonga or elsewhere in the Pacific, *Landfalls of Paradise: Cruising Guide to the Pacific Islands* by Earl R Hinz is highly recommended. The experienced Pacific yachtie author provides all the nitty-gritty on anchorages, navigation, marinas, fees and officialdom throughout the South and central Pacific region. *Sailingbird's Guide to the Kingdom of Tonga*, by Charles Paul and Katherine Pham-Paul, is a staple cruising guide that doubles as a coffee table book and also includes plenty of land sights. *Cruising Guide for the Kingdom of Tonga* by Ken Hellewell, is a comprehensive, spiral-bound guide covering the entire kingdom, including charts, over 90 anchorages, GPS waypoints and port practicalities. If you're planning to charter a yacht in Vava'u and cruise around its islands, *A Cruising Guide to the Kingdom of Tonga*, produced by charter company **The Moorings**, is probably ample.

## CHARTER VESSELS

To begin getting your mind around the possibility of chartering a yacht, see p275. To charter a vessel for a leisurely exploration of South Pacific waterways can roughly cost anywhere between US\$280 and US\$450 per person per night for two people; between US\$250 and US\$300 per person per night for three people; and around US\$240 per person per night for four people. One such option is **Impetuous** (www.sailingtonga.com), a fully crewed charter yacht operating mostly around Vava'u (Tonga), but which may be willing to pick up/drop off guests in Ha'apai, Nuku'alofa, Fiji or even Samoa. Another option worth checking out is chartering a yacht called **Melinda** (www.sailtonga.com).

## SAMOAN PORTS

Apia in Samoa and Pago Pago in American Samoa are the main ports in these countries, and serve as the official entry points for private yacht owners. On Savai'i (Samoa), there are also anchorages at Fagamalo, Salelologa Wharf and Asau Harbour.

## TONGAN PORTS

Ports of entry for cruising yachts in Tonga are Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), Pangai on Lifuka (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), Falehu (Niuatoputapu) and Futu (Niuafu'ou).

# Health

Dr Michael Sorokin

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Fortunately for visitors to the Samoan islands and Tonga, there is no malaria in the region. Nor is rabies a danger in any of the islands. And there are no crocodiles. Mosquitoes do exist, however, and the main danger from them is dengue fever. Health facilities vary from good in American Samoa to reasonable in Samoa and Tonga. These are all small governments with limited budgets so even 'good' does not necessarily equate with the facilities you could expect in a well-developed country.

### REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

If you have been in a designated yellow fever country within the previous six days, you need an International Certificate of Vaccination against yellow fever for entry into American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga. For all countries in the region, vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever.

### Side-Effects of Vaccinations

All injected vaccinations can produce slight soreness and redness at the inoculation site, and a mild fever with muscle aches over the first 24 hours. These are least likely with hepatitis A and a little more common with hepatitis B and typhoid inoculations. Typhoid inoculation can cause a sensation of nausea within 24 hours and hepatitis B vaccine can produce temporary joint pains.

Allergy to eggs or poultry is a condition that makes the yellow fever vaccination inadvisable; an exemption certificate can be issued. Very rarely an acute allergic (anaphylactic shock) reaction can occur within minutes of vaccination. More commonly a flu-like illness of varying severity may occur at any time up to 10 days from vaccination. In the elderly, encephalitis has been recorded.

## BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

### INSURANCE

If your health insurance does not cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider supplemental insurance. (Check the Travel Links section of the Lonely Planet website at [www.lonelyplanet.com.au/travel\\_links](http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au/travel_links) for more information.) Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. (In many countries doctors expect payment in cash.)

For Americans, be sure to check whether your health plan covers expenses in American Samoa. Serious illness or injury may

require an evacuation, eg to Apia or Pago Pago, or even to a major regional centre such as Los Angeles or Auckland; make sure that health insurance has provision for evacuation. Under these circumstances hospitals will accept direct payment from major international insurers but for all other health costs cash up front is the usual requirement.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, you will need to visit a physician approximately six weeks before departure. A recent influenza vaccination is always a good idea when travelling. If you have not had chicken pox (varicella), consider being vaccinated.

### MEDICAL CHECKLIST

It is a very good idea to carry a medical and first-aid kit with you, to help yourself in the case of minor illness or injury. Following is a list of items you should consider packing.

- acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- adhesive or paper tape
- antibacterial ointment, eg Bactroban for cuts and abrasions (prescription only)
- antibiotics (by prescription only), eg ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor; Noroxin)
- antibiotic as well as steroid eardrops (by prescription only), eg Sofradex, Kenacort Otic
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs, eg loperamide
- anti-inflammatory drugs, eg ibuprofen
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- anti-giardia tablets, eg tinidazole (by prescription only)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls, waterproof dressings
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- iodine tablets (for water purification)
- oral rehydration salts, eg Gastrolyte, Diarolyte, Repllyte
- Permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents, and bed nets

- pocket knife
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- steroid cream or hydrocortisone cream (for allergic rashes)
- sun block (30+)
- syringes and sterile needles, and intravenous fluids if travelling in very remote areas
- thermometer (digital)

Note that aspirin should not be used for fever – it can cause bleeding in dengue fever. Remember, don't take your scissors, tweezers or pocket knife in your carry-on luggage.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the Internet. For further information, the Lonely Planet website ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) is a good place to start. The WHO produces a superb text entitled *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually. It is no longer published in book form but is available online at no cost at [www.who.int/ith/](http://www.who.int/ith/). Other websites of general interest are MD Travel Health at [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily and also at no cost; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); Fit for Travel at [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk), which has up-to-date information about outbreaks and is very user-friendly; and [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au), a similar Australasian site.

It's also a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure:

- Australia** ([www.dfat.gov.au/travel/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/travel/))
- Canada** ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/travel-voyage/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/travel-voyage/index_e.html))
- New Zealand** ([www.mfat.govt.nz/travel](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/travel))
- UK** ([www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en))
- USA** ([www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/))

### FURTHER READING

Good options for further reading include *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan; *Healthy Travel Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* by Dr Isabelle Young; and, *Your Child's Health Abroad: A Manual for Travelling Parents* by Dr Jane Wilson-Howarth and Matthew Ellis.

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

## IN THE SAMOAN ISLANDS & TONGA

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

American Samoa has readily available doctors in private practice, and standard hospital and laboratory facilities with consultants in the major specialties – internal medicine, obstetrics/gynaecology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, paediatrics, pathology, psychiatry and general surgery. Private dentists, opticians and pharmacies are also available.

In Samoa and Tonga, specialised services may be limited or available periodically, but private general practitioners, dentists and pharmacies are present.

Not surprisingly, the further you get from main centres, the more basic are the services.

Private consultation and private hospital fees are approximately equivalent to Australian costs, and particularly less expensive in Tonga. Government-provided service fees vary from modest to negligible but waiting times can be very long. Direct payment is required everywhere except where a specific arrangement is made, eg in the case of evacuation or where prolonged hospital stay is necessary; your insurer will need to be contacted by you. Although large hospitals are coming into line in accepting credit cards, there will be difficulty with the more remote, small hospitals and most private practitioners are reluctant to accept this form of payment except for the larger private doctor groups in American Samoa. Even they still prefer cash and not all credit cards are acceptable – check with the relevant company beforehand. If a credit card is not accepted you should be able to arrange cash on credit through the local banking system.

Most commonly used medications are available in countries with good or reasonable health care. Where only basic care is available, even aspirin and antiseptics may be hard to come by. Private pharmacies are not allowed by law to dispense listed drugs without prescription from a locally registered practitioner, but many will do so for travellers if shown the container. While the container should preferably specify the generic name of the drug, this has become much less of a problem with the use of Internet search engines. Asthma inhalers and most anti-inflammatories are over-the-counter preparations in the Samoan islands. It is best to have a sufficient supply of a regularly taken drug as a particular brand may not be available and sometimes quantities can be limited. This applies particularly to psychotropic drugs like antidepressants, antipsychotics, anti-epileptics or mood elevators. Insulin is available even in smaller centres, but you cannot guarantee getting a particular brand, combination or preferred administration method. If you have been prescribed ‘the very latest’ oral antidiabetic or antihypertensive, make sure you have enough for the duration of your travel.

Except in the remote, poorly staffed clinics, the standard of medical and dental care is generally quite good even if facilities are not sophisticated. The overall risk of illness for a normally healthy person is low, the

most common problems being diarrhoeal upsets, viral sore throats, and ear and skin infections, all of which can mostly be treated with self-medication. For serious symptoms, eg sustained fever, or chest or abdominal pains, it is best to go to the nearest clinic or private practitioner in the first instance.

Tampons and pads are readily available in main centres. Dengue fever, especially in the first three months of pregnancy, poses a hazard because of fever but otherwise there is no reason why a normal pregnancy should prevent travel to the region. However, on general principles immunisation in the first three months of pregnancy is not recommended and yellow fever vaccines should not be given.

For young children, it is again dengue fever that could be a problem. The disease tends to come in epidemics mainly in the hotter, wetter months so it should be possible to plan holidays accordingly.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Despite the long list, the realistic risks to visitors to the region from infectious diseases are very low with the exception of dengue fever.

#### Dengue

**Risk** All countries

Dengue fever is a virus disease spread by the bite of a day-biting mosquito. It causes a feverish illness with headache and severe muscle pains similar to those experienced with a bad, prolonged attack of influenza. Another name is ‘break bone fever’ and that’s what it feels like. Danger signs include prolonged vomiting, blood in the vomit and a blotchy rash. There is no preventive vaccine and mosquito bites should be avoided whenever possible. Self-treatment involves paracetamol, fluids and rest. Do not use aspirin, as this can cause bleeding. Haemorrhagic dengue has been reported only occasionally, manifested by signs of bleeding and shock and requires medical care.

#### Eosinophilic Meningitis

**Risk** Tonga

This is a strange illness manifested by scattered abnormal skin sensations, fever and sometimes by the meningitis (headache, vomiting, confusion, neck and spine stiffness), which gives it its name. Eosinophilic

meningitis is caused by a microscopic-size parasite – the rat lungworm – which contaminates raw food. There is no proven specific treatment, but symptoms may require hospitalisation. For prevention pay strict attention to advice on food and drink.

#### Filariasis

**Risks** All countries

Also known as elephantiasis, this disease is spread by mosquitoes. It can cause a fever with lymph gland enlargement and later chronic leg swelling. It is now rare and requires prolonged exposure. Antimosquito precautions are essential. Specific treatment is available.

#### Hepatitis A

**Risk** All countries

Hepatitis A is a virus disease causing liver inflammation and is spread by contaminated food or water. Fever, nausea, debility and jaundice (yellow colouration of the skin, eyes and urine) occur and recovery is slow. Most people recover completely but it can be dangerous to people with other forms of liver disease, the elderly and sometimes to pregnant women towards the end of pregnancy. Food is easily contaminated by food preparers, handlers or servers, and by flies. There is no specific treatment. The vaccine is close to 100% protective.

#### Hepatitis B

**Risk** All countries

This virus disease causes liver inflammation but the problem is much more serious than hepatitis A and frequently goes on to cause chronic liver disease and even cancer. It is spread, like HIV, by mixing body fluids, ie sexual intercourse, contaminated needles and accidental blood contamination. Treatment is complex and specialised but vaccination is highly effective.

#### Hepatitis C

**Risk** Incidence is uncertain within the region but must be assumed to be present

This virus disease is similar to hepatitis B, causing liver inflammation which can go on to chronic liver disease or result in a symptomless carrier state. It’s spread almost entirely by blood contamination from shared needles or contaminated needles used for tattooing or body piercing. Treatment is

complex and specialised. There is no vaccine available.

## HIV/AIDS

### Risk All countries

The incidence of HIV infection is on the rise in the whole region. Safe sex practices are essential at all times. If an injection is needed in a smaller clinic it is best to provide your own needles. Blood transfusion laboratories do tests for HIV.

## Japanese B Encephalitis

**Reported outbreaks** No outbreaks in region, but potential exists for this to happen

This is a serious, but quite rare, virus disease spread by mosquitoes. It can cause brain fever (encephalitis) with an approximate death rate of 30%. There is no specific treatment. An effective vaccine is available but is expensive and involves a course of three injections over a month. Allergic reactions to the vaccine, though rare, can occur. Vaccination is only recommended for anyone staying more than a month and going to work in village situations, and certainly if there has been a reported recent outbreak.

## Leptospirosis

### Risk American Samoa

Also known as Weil's disease, leptospirosis produces fever, headache, jaundice and, later, kidney failure. It is caused by a spirochaete organism found in water contaminated by rat urine. The organism penetrates skin, so swimming in flooded areas is a risk practice. If diagnosed early it is cured with penicillin.

## Typhoid fever

### Risk All countries

This is a bacterial infection acquired from contaminated food or water. The germ can be transmitted by food handlers or flies, and can be present in inadequately cooked shellfish. It causes fever, debility and late onset diarrhoea. Untreated it can produce delirium and is occasionally fatal, but the infection is curable with antibiotics. Vaccination is moderately effective, but care with eating and drinking is equally important.

## TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea is caused by viruses, bacteria or parasites present in contaminated food or water. In temperate climates the cause

is usually viral, but in the tropics bacteria or parasites are more usual. If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution (eg Dioralyte, Gastrolyte, Replyte). A few loose stools don't require treatment, but if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (such as Loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention. Giardiasis is a particular form of persistent, although not 'explosive', diarrhoea caused by a parasite present in contaminated water. One dose (four tablets) of tinidazole usually cures the infection.

To prevent diarrhoea pay strict attention to the precautions regarding food and water as described in the section on environmental hazards.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Threats to health from animals and insects (including wasps) are rare indeed but you need to be aware of them.

## Bites & Stings

### JELLYFISH

The notorious box jellyfish (seawasp) has not been recorded in these waters, but the blue-coloured Indo-Pacific 'Man o' War' is found in all waters. If you see these floating in the water or stranded on the beach it is wiser not to go in. The sting is very painful. Treatment involves ice packs and vinegar; do not use alcohol. Smaller cubo-medusae are abundant and are found particularly on still, overcast days. They usually produce only uncomfortably irritating stings but can cause generalised symptoms (although this is rare), especially in someone with poorly controlled heart disease.

### POISONOUS CONE SHELLS

Poisonous cone shells abound along shallow coral reefs. Stings mainly cause local reactions but nausea, faintness, palpitations or difficulty in breathing are signs flagging the need for medical attention.

### SEA SNAKES

As in all tropical waters, sea snakes may be seen around coral reefs. Unprovoked, sea

## VENOMOUS MARINE LIFE

Various fish and other sea creatures can sting or bite dangerously, or are dangerous to eat. Listen to local advice on how to avoid them.

Certain cone shells found in the Pacific can sting dangerously or even fatally. Do not touch any cone-shaped shell.

Several species of jellyfish are found in these waters (blue-bottle jellyfish are the most common) and can deliver a painful sting. Dousing in vinegar will deactivate any stingers which have not 'fired', while calamine lotion, antihistamines and analgesics may reduce the reaction and relieve the pain.

Stonefish have poisonous dorsal spines which deliver a very painful sting requiring medical treatment. As the name suggests, they are very well camouflaged and inhabit coral or rocky areas. You'll also need medical treatment if you get stung by lionfish or stingrays.

As a rule, don't touch anything unfamiliar while snorkelling or diving and wear reef sandals, wet-boots or old trainers while paddling or exploring rock pools.

More commonly encountered is stinging coral – it's the bright, sulphur-yellow-coloured coral with a smooth surface. The sting is only bothersome, not dangerous, and can be neutralised by applying vinegar or fresh urine.

snakes are extremely unlikely to attack and their fangs will not penetrate a wet suit. First-aid treatment consists of compression bandaging and splinting of the affected limb. Antivenin is effective, but may have to be flown in. Only about 10% of sea snake bites cause serious poisoning.

## Coral Cuts

Cuts and abrasions from dead coral cause no more trouble than similar injuries from any other sort of rock, but live coral can cause prolonged infection. If you injure yourself on live coral don't wait until later to treat it. Get out of the water as soon as possible, cleanse the wound thoroughly (getting out all the little bits of coral), apply an antiseptic and cover with a waterproof dressing. Then get back in the water if you want to.

## Coral Ear

This is a commonly used name for inflammation of the ear canal. It has nothing to do with coral but is caused by water entering the canal, activating fungal spores resulting in secondary bacterial infection and inflammation. It usually starts after swimming, but can be reactivated by water dripping into the ear canal after a shower, especially if long, wet hair lies over the ear opening. Apparently trivial, it can be very, very painful and can spoil a holiday. Apart from diarrhoea it is the most common reason for tourists to consult a doctor. Self-treatment using an antibiotic-plus-steroid eardrop

preparation (eg Sofradex, Kenacort Otic) is very effective. Stay out of the water until the pain and itch have gone.

## Diving Hazards

Because the region has wonderful opportunities for scuba diving, it is easy to get overexcited and neglect strict depth and time precautions. Diving on old shipwrecks is fascinating and some of these dives can be up to or beyond 30m. Coral-viewing dives are not so deep but the temptation to spend longer than safe times at relatively shallow depths is great and is probably the main cause of decompression illness (the 'bends') in the region. Early pains may not be severe and attributed to other causes but any muscle or joint pain after scuba diving must be suspect. There are no compression chambers in the Samoan islands or Tonga. Even experienced divers should check with organisations like DAN (Divers' Alert Network) about the current site and status of compression chambers in the region, and insurance to cover costs both for local treatment and evacuation. Novice divers must be especially careful. If you have not taken out insurance before leaving home you may be able to do so online with DAN.

## Food & Water

The municipal water supply in Apia, Pago Pago and Nuku'alofa can be trusted, but elsewhere avoid untreated tap water. In some areas the only fresh water available



may be rain water collected in tanks, and this should be boiled. Steer clear of ice. Only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Eat food which is hot right through and avoid buffet-style meals. Food in restaurants frequented by locals is not necessarily safe, but most resort hotels have good standards of hygiene, although individual food-handlers can carry infection. Food which comes to you piping hot is likely to be safe. Be wary of salads. If you are preparing your own salads from market produce, make sure that each piece and leaf is thoroughly washed with water that is safe. Be adventurous by all means but expect to suffer the consequences if you succumb to adventurous temptation by trying raw fish or crustaceans as eaten by some locals.

#### **FISH POISONING**

Ciguatera is a form of poisoning that affects otherwise safe and edible fish unpredictably. Poisoning is characterised by stomach upsets, itching, faintness, slow pulse and bizarre inverted sensations, eg cold feeling hot and vice versa. Ciguatera has been reported in many carnivorous reef fish, especially barracuda but also red snapper, Spanish mackerel and moray eels. There is no safe test to determine whether a fish is poisonous or not. Although local knowledge is not entirely reliable, it is reasonable to eat what the locals are eating. However, fish caught after times of reef destruction, eg after a major hurricane, are more likely to be poisonous. Treatment consists of rehydration and if the pulse is very slow, medication may be needed. Healthy adults will make a complete recovery, although disturbed sensation may persist for some weeks.

#### **Heat Exhaustion**

The region lies within the tropics so it is hot and frequently humid. Heat exhaustion is actually a state of dehydration associated to a greater or lesser extent with salt loss. Nat-

ural heat loss is through sweating, making it easy to become dehydrated without realising it. Thirst is a late sign. Small children and old people are especially vulnerable. For adults, heat exhaustion is prevented by drinking at least 3L of water per day and more if actively exercising. Children need about 1½L to 2½L per day. Salt replacement solutions are useful since muscle weakness and cramps are due to salt as well as water loss and can be made worse by drinking water alone. The powders used for treating dehydration due to diarrhoea are just as effective when it is due to heat exhaustion. Apart from commercial solutions, a reasonable drink consists of a good pinch of salt to a pint (½L) of water. Salt tablets can result in too much salt being taken in, causing headaches and confusion.

#### **Heatstroke**

When the cooling effect of sweating fails, heat stroke ensues. This is a dangerous and emergency condition characterised not only by muscle weakness and exhaustion, but by mental confusion. Skin will be hot and dry. If this occurs 'put the fire out' by cooling the body with water on the outside and if possible with cold drinks for the inside. Seek medical help as a follow-up anyway, but urgently if the person can't drink.

#### **Sunburn**

It should go without saying that exposure to the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun causes burning of the skin with accompanying pain, dehydration and misery (together with the long-term danger of skin cancer) but experience shows that reminders are necessary. The time of highest risk is between 11am and 3pm and remember that cloud cover does not block out UV rays. The Australian *Slip, slop, slap* slogan is a useful 'mantra' – slip on a T-shirt or blouse, slop on a sunscreen lotion of at least 15+ rating, and slap on a hat. Treat sunburn like any other burn – cool, wet dressings are best. Severe swelling may respond to a cortisone cream.

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# Language

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## SAMOAN

The main language spoken in the Samoan islands is Samoan, a Polynesian language similar to Maori, Tongan, Hawaiian and Tahitian. All of these belong to the Austronesian family of languages, which also includes Malay, Malagasy and Melanesian languages. The similarity between Samoan and Malay reflects ancient migrations to Polynesia from southeast Asia.

Nearly everyone in Samoa speaks English as a second language, so unless you're travelling to some of the more remote villages on Savai'i, you're not likely to have any major communication problems.

Having said that, it's worth the effort to try and speak a little Samoan and people are delighted when foreigners make any attempt to use it – whether it's a simple *malo* (hello) in greeting or *tasi pia fa'amolemole* when you're asking for a beer.

Pacific languages do not use an 's' to denote plurals (as the English language does). Although this rule is happily broken almost everywhere – a Samoan hotel owner will offer to show you around their *fales* (huts). We have stuck to the rules in this book and relied on the context to make the meaning clear.

There are a few shops in Apia and Pago Pago that sell Samoan dictionaries. The Wesley Bookshop in Pago Pago carries a good one, compiled by GB Milner and pub-

lished by Polynesian Press; a less comprehensive publication is available at the la Malamalama Bookshop in Apia.

## PRONUNCIATION

The Samoan alphabet consists of only 14 letters – five vowels and nine consonants. Stress is normally placed on the next-to-last syllable.

## Vowels

The five vowels may be long or short, depending on whether or not they are stressed, but the actual difference in sound between them is very slight to the untrained ear. A long vowel is conventionally indicated by a line above it (a macron) and is pronounced as a long version of its short counterpart.

Diphthongs (combinations of vowels) are also common in Samoan, and are pronounced as they would be in English (eg in the word 'ear').

The main thing to remember is that all vowels are pronounced (you'd be amazed how many travellers pronounce *fale* as the English word 'fail' rather than the correct 'fa-leh').

<b>a</b>	as in 'father'
<b>e</b>	as in 'set'
<b>i</b>	as in 'sit'
<b>o</b>	as in 'hot'
<b>u</b>	as in 'full'

## Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced the same as their English counterparts. The letter **g** is pronounced as a soft 'ng' – so that *palagi* is pronounced 'pa-lung-i'. The glottal stop (represented by an apostrophe) is the sound you hear between the vowels in the expression 'oh-oh' – it's produced by a momentary closing of the throat. In Samoan, the glottal stop replaces the 'k' of other Polynesian languages.

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

<b>Hello/Hi.</b>	<i>Malo.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Tofa.</i>
<b>Bye.</b> (informal)	<i>Fa.</i>
<b>Goodbye/Farewell.</b>	<i>Tofa soifua.</i>

<b>Good morning.</b>	<i>Talofa.</i>
<b>Good evening.</b>	<i>Talofa.</i>
<b>Good night.</b>	<i>Manuia le po.</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>loe.</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Leai.</i>
<b>Maybe.</b>	<i>Masalo.</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Fa'amolemole.</i>
<b>Thank you (very much).</b>	<i>Fa'afetai (tele).</i>
<b>Welcome.</b>	<i>Afio mai.</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Tulou.</i>
<b>I'm sorry.</b>	<i>Ua ou sese.</i>
<b>Forgive me.</b>	<i>Malie.</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>O a mai 'oe?</i>
<b>I'm fine, thanks.</b>	<i>Manuia, faafetai.</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>O ai lou igoa?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>O lo'u igoa o ...</i>
<b>Where are you from?</b>	<i>Fea lou atunu'u?</i>
<b>Where are you going?</b>	<i>Alu i fea? (often used as a pleasantry)</i>

<b>Are you married?</b>	<i>Ua fai se aiga?</i>
<b>How many children do you have?</b>	<i>E to'afia tama'iti?</i>
<b>How old are you?</b>	<i>Fia ou tausaga?</i>
<b>I'm ... years old.</b>	<i>Ua ... o'u tausaga.</i>
<b>Do you like ...?</b>	<i>E te manao i le ...?</i>
<b>I like it very much.</b>	<i>O lo'u vaisu.</i>
<b>May I?</b>	<i>E mafai?</i>
<b>It's all right/No problem.</b>	<i>Ua lelei.</i>

<b>girl</b>	<i>teine</i>
<b>little girl</b>	<i>teine'iti'iti</i>
<b>woman</b>	<i>fafine</i>
<b>mother</b>	<i>tina</i>
<b>boy</b>	<i>tama</i>
<b>little boy</b>	<i>tama'iti'iti</i>
<b>man</b>	<i>tamaloa</i>
<b>father</b>	<i>tama</i>
<b>family</b>	<i>'aiga</i>
<b>boyfriend</b>	<i>uo tama</i>
<b>girlfriend</b>	<i>uo teine</i>
<b>white person</b>	<i>palagi</i>

<b>bad</b>	<i>leaga</i>
<b>beautiful</b>	<i>manaia</i>
<b>fine</b>	<i>manuia</i>
<b>good</b>	<i>lelei</i>
<b>happy</b>	<i>fiafia</i>
<b>journey</b>	<i>malaga</i>
<b>love</b>	<i>alofa</i>
<b>How much is it?</b>	<i>E fia le ta'u?</i>
<b>I'd like to buy it.</b>	<i>Ou te fia fa'atauina.</i>
<b>It's too expensive.</b>	<i>Taugata mo a'u.</i>

## LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

<b>I understand.</b>	<i>Ua ou Malamalama.</i>
<b>I don't understand.</b>	<i>Ou te le mala-malama.</i>
<b>I don't speak ...</b>	<i>Ou te le tautala ...</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>Ete iloa Nanu?</i>
<b>How do you say ...?</b>	<i>E faapefea ona ...?</i>
<b>Please write it down.</b>	<i>Fa'amolemole tusi i lalo.</i>

## OUT & ABOUT

<b>Where is (the/a) ...?</b>	<i>O fea (le/se) ...?</i>
<b>church</b>	<i>faleasa</i>
<b>city centre</b>	<i>nofoaaga autu o le a'ai</i>
<b>hospital</b>	<i>falemai</i>
<b>market</b>	<i>maketi</i>
<b>store</b>	<i>faleolao</i>

<b>beach</b>	<i>matafaga</i>
<b>bird</b>	<i>manulele</i>
<b>chicken</b>	<i>moa</i>
<b>entrance/exit</b>	<i>ulufale/ulufafo</i>
<b>fish</b>	<i>i'a</i>
<b>flower</b>	<i>fuamatala</i>
<b>house</b>	<i>fale</i>
<b>island</b>	<i>motu</i>
<b>lake</b>	<i>vaituloto</i>
<b>mosquito</b>	<i>namu</i>
<b>pig</b>	<i>pua'a</i>
<b>rain</b>	<i>timu</i>
<b>sea</b>	<i>sami</i>
<b>sun</b>	<i>la</i>
<b>village</b>	<i>nu'u</i>
<b>wind</b>	<i>savili</i>

## TONGAN

Tongan is a Polynesian language belonging to the Austronesian language family. Its closest relatives are the other Polynesian languages like Samoan, Hawaiian, Maori and Tahitian. More distant cousins are Malay, Malagasy and Melanesian languages, a connection that adds weight to the widely accepted theory that the Polynesian peoples originated in South-East Asia.

The same Tongan language is spoken on all the islands in Tonga, with the exception of Niuafo'ou, the most north-westerly island, where a dialect that's closer to Samoan is spoken.

Both Tongan and English are used in the schools throughout Tonga, so you shouldn't encounter any problems communicating in

English. On major islands (Tongatapu, Vava'u), almost everyone speaks English as a second language. On smaller, more remote islands people may speak less English, but communication can always be achieved somehow. Tongans are often surprised when foreigners make an attempt to speak their language, and will be very helpful and encouraging.

## PRONUNCIATION

The Tongan alphabet has only 16 letters, with five vowels and 11 consonants.

It's worth listening to the way native speakers pronounce vowels because vowel length can affect the meaning of some words. You may see vowels written with a macron or *toloi* (eg ā), which indicates that they are long. The long sound is simply an extended and accented (stressed) version of the short vowel. Stress is placed on the next to last syllable in most Tongan words, unless there's a long vowel, in which case that syllable receives the stress.

Another important element of Tongan language is the glottal stop, represented by an apostrophe ('). It signals a momentary halt in the flow of air through the vocal cords, similar to the non-voice between the syllables of 'oh-oh'.

Diphthongs, or combinations of vowels, are pronounced by enunciating each of the component sounds individually. When a glottal stop is inserted between two vowels, a stop must be made in the pronunciation. This, too, is a significant element of Tongan language that changes not only the pronunciation but also the meaning of words: for example, *tae* means 'cough', but *ta'e* means 'faeces'. The word *hau* means 'earring', but *ha'u* means 'come here'.

Even if you do make mistakes with the pronunciation of glottal stops, and long and short vowels, Tongan people are usually very helpful, and they'll still try to understand what you're saying.

The letters used in the Tongan alphabet are pronounced more or less as follows:

## Vowels

<b>a</b>	as in 'far' or as in 'ball'
<b>e</b>	as in 'end'
<b>i</b>	as in 'Fifi'
<b>o</b>	as in 'go'
<b>u</b>	as in 'tune'

## Consonants

<b>f</b>	as in 'far'
<b>h</b>	as in 'here'
<b>k</b>	as the 'c' in 'curd'
<b>l</b>	as in 'love', with a slap of the tongue
<b>m</b>	as in 'me'
<b>n</b>	as in 'no'
<b>ng</b>	as in 'singer', not as in 'finger'
<b>p</b>	midway between the 'p' in 'park' and the 'b' in 'bark'
<b>s</b>	as in 'sand'
<b>t</b>	midway between the 't' in 'tip' and the 'd' in 'dip'
<b>v</b>	as in 'very'

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Malo e lelei.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>'Alu a. (to someone leaving)</i> <i>Nofo a. (response to someone staying)</i>
<b>Good morning.</b>	<i>Malo e lelei ki he pongipongini.</i>
<b>Good evening.</b>	<i>Malo e lelei ki he efiadini.</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>'lo.</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>'ikai.</i>
<b>Maybe.</b>	<i>Mahalo pe.</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Faka molemole.</i>
<b>Thank you (very much).</b>	<i>Malo ('aupito).</i>

<b>You're welcome.</b>	<i>'lo malo.</i>
<b>Welcome.</b>	<i>Talitali fiefia.</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Kataki.</i>
<b>I'm sorry.</b>	<i>Faka molemole'iau.</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>Fefe hake?</i>
<b>Fine, thank you.</b>	<i>Sai pe, malo.</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>Ko hai ho hingoa?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>Ko hoku hingoa ko ...</i>
<b>Where are you from?</b>	<i>Ko ho'o ha'u mei fe fonua?</i>
<b>I'm from ...</b>	<i>Ko'eku ha'u mei ...</i>
<b>Are you married?</b>	<i>Kuo ke'osi mali?</i>
<b>How old are you?</b>	<i>Koe ha ho ta'u motua?</i>
<b>I'm ... years old.</b>	<i>'Oku 'ou ta'u ... ta'u motua.</i>
<b>I'm a tourist/student.</b>	<i>Ko'eku ha'u (eve'eva/taha ako).</i>
<b>Do you like ...?</b>	<i>'Oku ke sai'ia 'ihe ...?</i>
<b>I like it very much.</b>	<i>'Oku 'ou sai'ia 'aupito.</i>
<b>I don't like ...</b>	<i>'Oku ikai teu sai'ia ...</i>
<b>Just a minute.</b>	<i>Tali si'i.</i>
<b>May I?</b>	<i>Faka molemole kau?</i>
<b>It's all right/no problem.</b>	<i>'lo 'oku sai/sai pe ia.</i>

<b>girl</b>	<i>ta'ahine</i>
<b>woman</b>	<i>fefine</i>
<b>boy</b>	<i>tamasi'i</i>

<b>man</b>	<i>tangata</i>
<b>big/bigger</b>	<i>lahi/lahi ange</i>
<b>small/smaller</b>	<i>si'i si'i/si'i si'i ange</i>
<b>more</b>	<i>lahi</i>
<b>less</b>	<i>si'i</i>
<b>expensive</b>	<i>mamafa</i>
<b>cheap/cheaper</b>	<i>ma'ama'a/ma'a ma'a ange</i>
<b>good</b>	<i>lelei</i>
<b>bad</b>	<i>kovi</i>
<b>pretty</b>	<i>faka 'ofa 'ofa</i>

<b>Where is ...?</b>	<i>Ko fe'ia a'e ...?</i>
<b>How much is it?</b>	<i>Fiha hono totongi?</i>
<b>I'd like to buy it.</b>	<i>'Oku ou fie fakatau ia.</i>
<b>It's too expensive for me.</b>	<i>Fu'u mamafa kiate au.</i>

## LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

<b>I understand.</b>	<i>'Oku mahino kiate 'au.</i>
<b>I don't understand.</b>	<i>'Oku ikai ke mahino kiate 'au.</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>'Oku ke lava 'o lea faka palangi?</i>
<b>Does anyone speak English?</b>	<i>'Oku 'iai ha taha'oku lea faka palangi?</i>
<b>How do you say ...?</b>	<i>Koe ha ho lea ...?</i>
<b>What is this called?</b>	<i>Ko 'e ha hono hingoa 'o 'e me'a ko 'eni?</i>

## OUT & ABOUT

<b>bank</b>	<i>pangike</i>
<b>beach</b>	<i>matatahi</i>
<b>bridge</b>	<i>hala kavakava</i>
<b>church</b>	<i>fale lotu</i>
<b>city centre</b>	<i>i loto kolo</i>
<b>embassy</b>	<i>'api 'oe 'amipasitoo</i>
<b>hospital</b>	<i>fale mahaki</i>
<b>island</b>	<i>motu</i>
<b>lake</b>	<i>ano vai</i>
<b>market</b>	<i>maketi</i>
<b>ocean (deep)</b>	<i>moana</i>
<b>palace</b>	<i>palasi</i>
<b>post office</b>	<i>positi 'ofisi</i>
<b>rain</b>	<i>'uha</i>
<b>restaurant</b>	<i>fale kai</i>
<b>ruins</b>	<i>maumau</i>
<b>sea</b>	<i>tahi</i>
<b>street/road</b>	<i>hala</i>
<b>suburb</b>	<i>lotokolo</i>
<b>sun</b>	<i>la'a</i>
<b>telephone office</b>	<i>fale telefoni</i>
<b>tourist office</b>	<i>'ofisi taki mamata</i>
<b>tower</b>	<i>taua</i>
<b>village</b>	<i>kolo si'i si'i</i>
<b>wind</b>	<i>matangi</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:  
*South Pacific Phrasebook*

# Glossary

## SAMOAN ISLANDS

**'aiga** – family, descent group

**aitu** – spirit, ghost

**alia** – war canoe

**ali'i** – one of two orders of high chief (*matai*)

**alofa** – love

**aoa** – banyan tree

**ava** – passage through a reef

**'ava** – traditional, mildly intoxicating drink (also called *kava*) produced from the root of the *Piper methysticum* (pepper plant)

**esi** – papaya, pawpaw

**fa'aaloalo** – respect for elders

**fa'afafine** – effeminate men who sometimes dress as a woman

**fa'afetai** – thank you

**fa'alavelave** – occasion, such as a wedding or funeral, when family assistance should be given; literally, 'distraction from normal life'

**fa'a Samoa** – according to Samoan customs and tradition

**fai** – banana

**fale** – a traditional thatched house

**fale talimalo** – traditional Samoan guesthouse or hotel

**faleaitu** – traditional entertainment by Samoan youth

**faletua** – wife of the high chief or *ali'i*

**fautasi** – Samoan longboat, made from the *fau* tree

**fiafia** – time of celebration; presentation of singing and dancing

**fofo** – traditional Samoan healer

**fono** – governing council of a village made up of its *matai*

**Fono, the** – the national parliament

**ie faitaga** – man's undecorated formal *lava-lava*

**ie toga** – finely woven mat made from pandanus fibres

**ifilele** – large tree used for timber and 'ava bowls

**ifoga** – traditional apology

**kava** – see 'ava

**kirikiti** – Samoan cricket

**koko Samoa** – drink made with locally grown roasted cocoa beans, sugar and water

**lalaga** – weaving

**laumei** – sea turtle

**lava-lava** – wraparound sarong

**lotu** – religious observance

**malae** – village green; sacred site in pre-Christian times

**malu** – female tattoo

**mana** – supernatural power

**matai** – chief of an 'aiga

**mea alofa** – gift

**mo'o** – gecko

**musu** – moodiness, silence as form of protest

**oka** – Samoan dish of marinated raw fish

**palagi** – white-skinned person; literally, 'those who burst from the sky' (*pa* = burst; *lagi* = sky)

**paopao** – traditional outrigger canoe

**pe'a** – male tattoo

**pili** – skink

**pisupo** – corned beef

**pola** – coconut-leaf blinds

**popo** – mature coconut; also a spongy, white substance in a sprouting coconut known as Samoan ice cream

**puaa** – pig

**pulenu'u** – village mayor

**puletasi** – long skirt and tunic worn by Samoan women

**sa** – sacred, forbidden; time set aside for prayer

**sene** – currency unit; 100 *sene* equals ST1

**siapo** – bark cloth made from the paper mulberry tree

**ta'amu** – large edible tuber, 'big taro'

**tala** – Samoan unit of currency (ST)

**talking chief** – see *tulafale*

**tamaiti** – children

**tanoa** – 'ava bowl

**taulaitu** – spirit medium

**taulasea** – traditional healer

**taupou** – title of office bestowed by high-ranking *ali'i* upon a young (virgin) woman of his 'aiga

**teuila** – red ginger; Samoa's national floral emblem

**to'ona'i** – Sunday lunch

**tufuga** – tattoo artist

**tulafale** – an orator who liaises between the *ali'i* (high chief) and outside entities, carries out ceremonial duties, engages in ritual debates and, traditionally, protects the *ali'i*

**u'a** – mulberry tree

**ula** – flower garland; also lobster

**umu** – traditional underground oven

**umukuka** – cooking house

**vai Samoa** – traditional medicines

## TONGA

**ahi** – sandalwood

**'api** – plantation of 3.34 hectares

**'esi** – resting site or mound

**faikakai** – breadfruit pudding

**faito'o** – traditional Tongan medicine

**faka Tonga** – the 'Tongan way'

**fakaleiti** – men who dress and behave as women

**fakapale** – custom of rewarding Tongan dancer with money; literally 'to award a prize'

**fala** – everyday mats

**fale koloa** – small grocery kiosks

**falekai** – restaurant

**fatongia** – duties and obligations

**feke** – octopus

**feta'aki** – single piece of *tapa* cloth

**fihu** – valuable, silk-like pandanus mat

**fingota** – shellfish

**hala** – road

**heilala** – Tonga's national flower

**'ika** – fish

**'inasi** – traditional Tongan agricultural fair or festival

**kailao** – war dance

**kalia** – large seafaring canoes, also war canoes

**kapa pulu** – tinned beef

**kava** – intoxicating drink made from the root of the pepper shrub; also see *ava*

**kava kalapu** – *kava* club

**kilikili** – pumice-like volcanic gravel

**koloa** – wealth; offerings given out of respect and to mark important occasions

**kumala** – sweet potato

**kupesi** – relief of *tapa* pattern

**lafo** – Tongan game played with pieces called *pa'anga*

**lakalaka** – a traditional dance

**langanga** – strips of *tapa*

**langi** – pyramidal stone tomb

**mala'e** – sacred area/field

**malau** – local name for the Niuafu'ou megapode, a bird native only to Niuafu'ou

**mali** – spouse

**malo** – thank you

**matapule** – 'talking chief' involved in ceremonies and burial rituals of the nobility

**Maui** – demigod who, according to one myth, fished Tonga out of the sea

**ma'ulu'ulu** – dance performed at feasts and on public holidays

**motu** – coral islet

**ngatu** – decorated/finished *tapa* product

**pa'anga** – Tongan unit of currency (T\$)

**palangi** – foreigner (originally *papalangi*)

**pasi** – bus stop

**peka** – flying fox or fruit bat

**pekepekatae** – white-rumped swiftlets

**popao** – outrigger canoe

**RTA** – Royal Tongan Airlines

**seniti** – currency unit; 100 *seniti* equals T\$1

**sipi** – mutton flaps

**ta'ovala** – pandanus mat tied around the waist; worn on formal occasions

**tapa** – mulberry bark cloth

**tapu** – sacred

**tau'olunga** – graceful traditional dance performed by a solo woman at ceremonies

**TCC** – Tonga Communications Corporation

**TCF** – Tonga Cooperative Federation (supermarket)

**tevolo** – devil spirit

**tiki** – wooden statue representing old Polynesian god

**toa** – ironwood tree

**Tu'i Tonga** – royal title

**tuitui** – candlenut

**tupenu** – men's wraparound skirt

**TVB** – Tongan Visitors Bureau

**u'a** – inside bark of the mulberry tree, used for making *siapo*

**'umu** – stone oven in the ground