

New Caledonia Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Places to stay are usually listed in price order ranging from the cheapest option to the most expensive. For midrange to top-end places, package deals organised before you leave home are often cheaper than booking your accommodation once you arrive. Useful websites for booking accommodation:

PRACTICALITIES

- Pick up one of the local papers to catch up on what's happening in the local scene. New Caledonia's main news and current affairs publications include: *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes* (www.info.lnc.nc), the sole daily newspaper; *Le Chien Bleu*, a monthly satirical paper; *Mwà Vée*, a quarterly publication addressing Kanak cultural issues.
- For local news and French TV programmes switch on the public TV station, Télé Nouvelle-Calédonie, part of the French territories broadcasting service (RFO). All programmes are in French or dubbed into French. Canal Satellite, a network of pay channels, has more choice.
- Tune into one of the local radio stations for a spot of music or current affairs. Radio stations include: Radio Nouvelle-Calédonie (RNC); the national radio service; Radio Djiido, the pro-independence network; Radio Rythme Bleu (RRB), the loyalist Rassemblement station broadcasting a lot of party propaganda; NRJ, aimed at young people and broadcasting mainly music; Radio Océane, a more moderate loyalist station.
- As in France plugs have two round pins (220V to 240V AC, 50Hz).
- New Caledonia follows the metric system. Basic conversion charts are given on the inside front cover of this book.
- In New Caledonia, as in France, decimals are indicated with commas (eg 1.25 as 1,25) and thousands with points or spaces (10,000 would be either 10.000 or 10 000).
- Videos you buy or watch will usually be based on the PAL system.

Official site (www.nctps.com, in French, English & Japanese) For New Caledonia's southern province.

Portal site (www.kaledonie.com) A portal to numerous New Caledonian websites.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at 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.

Camping

There are numerous campsites everywhere except Noumea. Most of them have only cold showers. There is usually electricity in the shower blocks but not to the rest of the campsite. Most *gîtes* and homestays also have camping grounds. Camping is the cheapest accommodation option. It usually costs around 1000CFP to pitch your tent, and sometimes you pay an extra 100CFP per person.

Gîtes

Away from Noumea, *gîtes* (small, very modest hotels) are one of the most common types of accommodation. They have bungalows (small chalets or huts, usually with private bathrooms) that sleep between two and six people. Standards range from rustic to very comfortable. There is usually a restaurant or, in the absence of one, a communal kitchen attached to the *gîte*. Depending on standards, prices range from around 4000CFP to 9000CFP for one or two people. Extra people pay between 1000CFP and 2000CFP each. Bungalows should be booked in advance and you also need to order your meals 24 hours in advance in most *gîtes*.

Homestays & Farmstays

Homestays, called *accueil en tribu* or *accueil chez l'habitant* in French, are becoming increasingly popular in *tribus* (Kanak settlements) throughout New Caledonia. They are usually within a family compound or set apart slightly within a *tribu*. They are the best way to meet Kanak people and learn about their culture. Most homestays offer accommodation in *cases* or bungalows. In *cases* (traditional Kanak houses) guests usually sleep on mattresses if the floor is tiled or, in the case of more traditional homestays where the floor is padded with dried leaves, on mats. Bungalows usually have beds.

Homestays will usually cost 800CFP to 1500CFP per person per night. Meals can be arranged. They cost from 1000CFP to 1800CFP for three courses. Most homestays can prepare *bougnas* (the traditional Kanak earth oven-baked meals) for around 1500CFP to 2500CFP per person. Seafood *bougnas* are more expensive. On the islands lobster or coconut crab is another speciality costing around 3000CFP or more.

Similarly to homestays, farmstays (*bien-venu à la ferme*) are the best way to meet rural Caledonians, or Broussards as they're commonly called. They reserve a warm welcome, copious meals and laughter-filled anecdotes for guests, who are welcome to join in farm activities such as feeding the animals, rounding up cattle or, at night, deer hunting. Hunting is an important aspect of Broussard and rural Kanak life since it is one of the main sources of meat for the family. Farmstays usually offer accommodation in rooms in the family home or in bungalows. Rates start at around 2500CFP per person with meals extra.

You will need to order your meals 24 hours in advance in most homestays and farmstays.

Hostels

New Caledonia's sole Hostelling International (HI) hostel is the Auberge de Jeunesse (p238) in Noumea. It is the cheapest place to stay in the capital.

Hotels

There is a wide range of midrange and top-end hotel accommodation in Noumea. The only other place with a top-end hotel is Île des Pins. In Grande Terre's larger towns and tourist areas there is usually a midrange hotel or two and there is one on each of the Loyalty Islands.

In Noumea the cheapest hotel rates start at about 5000CFP for a single or double room, possibly with a kitchenette. Midrange hotel rates generally start at 7000CFP and go up to about 12,000CFP. Most Noumea hotels in this category (and of course in the top end) have coffee- and tea-making facilities in each room, TV, private facilities, air-con etc.

At the top end, rates start at 12,000CFP for a double and go up to 40,000CFP – higher if you want a suite.

ACTIVITIES

There are many activity opportunities in New Caledonia both on land and on the lagoon.

Abseiling

New Caledonia has many high waterfalls that are ideal for abseiling. Guy Quer runs abseiling trips to Cascade de Ciu (p269) in Canala, Cascade de Bâ (p273) and Cascade de Tao (p281), north of Hienghène.

Diving

See the Diving in New Caledonia chapter, p219.

Fishing Safaris

Air Mer Loisir and Pacific Charter in Noumea run fishing tours. Lifou Marine runs fishing tours in the Loyalty Islands. **New Caledonia Fishing Safaris** (☎ 25 19 40; www.newcaledoniafishingsafaris.nc) based in Noumea runs sport fishing safaris, has a fishing camp in Poin-gam and also runs safaris around the rest of the country.

Golf

There are three 18-hole, par-72 golf courses in the country: an upmarket golf course at Tina (www.golftina.nc) in Noumea, a golf course by the river at Dumbéa (www.golf.dumbea.net), and a course at Les Paillotes de La Ouenghi (p259) in Boulouparis.

Hiking

New Caledonia is one of the largest islands in the South Pacific with diverse landscapes to go hiking. An excellent hiking reference is *Nouvelle Calédonie Sauvage* by Jean François Clair. This comprehensive guide (in French only) for outdoor enthusiasts describes 100 circuits or routes for hikers, cyclists or those in canoes or 4WDs, and includes a topographic map. The current edition (1997) is slightly outdated but much of the information is still relevant and a new edition is in the pipeline.

Many *tribus* offer guided walks with local guides trained by the provincial environmental departments. Hiking is best during the cooler midyear months. Be aware that it gets dark relatively quickly and quite early year-round.

A few great hiking areas not far from Noumea are the Monts Koghis, Parc Pro-

vincial de la Rivière Bleue and the GR1 walking track (see the boxed text, p251).

Along the northeastern coast, many walking paths wind up to waterfalls or lead into the mountains. An easily accessible one is at Cascade de Tao north of Hienghène.

Hikers should visit the **Direction des Ressources Naturelles** (☎ 24 32 55; drn@province-sud.nc; 19 ave du Maréchal Foch, Noumea) to pick up free brochures (mainly in French) detailing a selection of hikes on Grande Terre.

Also see p331 for information on adventure treks.

Horse Riding

Horse riding on Grande Terre brings to mind images of cowboys rounding up cattle on a Caldoche ranch or Kanak customary grazing grounds. Rodeos are always the main highlight at rural agricultural fairs (see p264).

Many ranches and *tribus* offer one- or multiple-day horse-riding trips into the central mountain ranges of Grande Terre. Tribu de Oui Poin in La Foa, tribu d'Ateu in Kone and Ranch du Carré 9 in Voh all run horse treks.

Over 110 horse-riding options are outlined in a local guidebook, *Tourisme Equestre en Nouvelle-Calédonie* by Marie Le Corre.

Island Tours & Safaris

Several tour companies arrange safaris into the interior of Grande Terre. For more information see p331. However, it is very easy to go off exploring on your own. With the country's wide empty spaces there is so much to discover. It has an excellent road network, reasonably priced car hire rates and a good range of accommodation options.

Parapenting

Parapenting involves jumping off the edge of a hill or mountain with a parachute. **École Plein Vent** (☎ 26 48 79, 79 40 82; hei@lagoon.nc) organises parapenting. One of its takeoff points is Ouen Toro in Noumea. Introductory jumps cost 7000CFP; you can take a five-day course for 50,000CFP.

Snorkelling

New Caledonia has the world's second-largest reef and you should not miss the opportunity to take a look for yourself. Some of the best sites are the reefs around the Loyalty Islands and Île des Pins. Anywhere

out on the reef and the islets around Noumea are also good places to snorkel.

When snorkelling, there are a few things you should remember in order not to harm the reef's delicate ecosystem – for details see the boxed text, p222.

When swimming and snorkelling stay close to the shore as New Caledonia has notorious currents. Also, avoid touching anything, especially soft corals, cone shells and stonefish (for more information on bites and stings, see p340).

Ultralight Flying

Ultra-Light Aircraft (known as ULM) are popular in New Caledonia. A flight in one of these is exhilarating. It is possible to fly over Coeur de Voh, north of Kone.

ULM Blue Travel (☎ 77 88 42; gilbulm@lagoon.nc) offers courses and introductory flights (ULM per 15/30 minutes 3000/5000CFP, water-planes per hour 10,000CFP). ULM flights departing from Nakutakoin on the main road to Tontouta airport in Dumbéa and waterplanes depart from Kuendu Beach at Nouville in Noumea.

For helicopter tours see p328.

Water Sports

Wind- and kite-surfing are extremely popular on Noumea's bays. Sailboards, kayaks and catamarans can be rented at Anse Vata, from Plage Loisir. Glisse Attitude in Noumea organises kite-surfing trips.

Popular spots for kayaking are Dumbéa river, just north of Noumea, and Parc Provincial de la Rivière Bleue in the far south. Water sport equipment can also be hired at Poé beach near Bourail.

Jet-skiing is a thrilling way to discover the lagoon around Noumea. Nèkwéta in Bourail and Bouts-d'Brousse in Boulouparis run surfing trips to the reef.

Whale-Watching

Between July and September humpback whales frequent New Caledonian waters. Whale-watching excursions are run off the far south coast of New Caledonia and on Lifou in the Loyalty Islands.

Yachting

The **Cercle Nautique Calédonien** (CNC; ☎ 26 27 27; 2 rue du Capitaine Desmier) yacht club in Noumea's baie de l'Orphelinat is a good place to in-

quire about yachting and sailing. Some yacht charters:

Air Mer Loisir (☎ 28 29 01; www.aml.nc; Port Moselle, Noumea) One-week catamaran excursions on 12m to 23m catamarans from 300,000CFP.

Pacific Charter (☎ /fax 26 10 55; www.pa.nc/charter; Port Moselle, Noumea) Has speedboats available for hire from 15,000CFP per day. It also hires out yachts such as a catamaran (maximum 10 people) for 85,000CFP per day.

Raid NGATAHI (☎ /fax 77 24 40; www.raid-ngatahi.nc; Noumea) Runs tailored speedboat excursions to islets in the southern lagoon for 18,500CFP per day.

BUSINESS HOURS

Government offices and most private businesses are open Monday to Friday from 7.30am or 8am to 4pm or 5pm but close between 11.30am and 1.30pm. The exceptions are the banks in Noumea and most post offices around New Caledonia, which remain open at lunchtime.

In general, shops are open weekdays from around 7.30am to 11am and 2pm to 6pm, and Saturday from 8am or 9am to noon. However, some supermarkets and small convenience stores often don't close for lunch and are open all day Saturday and Sunday morning. Sunday is very quiet throughout New Caledonia.

Government offices and most private businesses are open 7.30am or 8am to 4pm or 5pm weekdays, but close for one or two-hours between 11.30am and 1.30pm.

CHILDREN

Parents will find useful tips in Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan. In Noumea there are plenty of interesting activities for children (see p238). Infants under three can stay at most places for free; sometimes there is a charge if you require a cot. For children under 12, you usually pay about half the adult rate for accommodation and activities, and in some cases they stay for free. New Caledonians love children and locals are more likely to stop and chat if you are travelling with children.

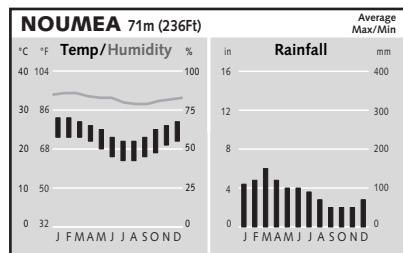
Very few places have change tables for infants so it's handy to travel with a foldout change bag or a mat in case you have to change your child on the floor. If you are hiring a car in Noumea or on Île des Pins you can request a car safety seat. There is usually no extra charge. On the Loyalty Islands not all hire companies have them.

CLIMATE CHART

Average maximum temperatures vary between 22°C and 28°C, and minimums between 11°C and 17°C. February is the hottest month, with the temperature sometimes rising to 35°C in Noumea. The coolest months are July and August when water temperatures drop to around 21°C. The temperatures in the Grande Terre mountains and the plateaus of Maré, Lifou and Île des Pins can drop to between 5°C and 8°C. Humidity peaks in between February and April, when it can rise to 80%. The cyclone season is between January and April.

There is a short dry season during the months of October and November when there are usually major bush fires around the country. Rain is abundant from February to late April – this is when the mosquitoes rage. From May it's drier and gradually becomes cooler, with clearer days. In mid-September temperatures start to rise.

Rainfall is not uniform throughout Grande Terre, and is largely determined by the central mountain chain. The windward east coast receives more rain (up to 3000mm a year) than the west coast, which lies in a 'rain shadow' and receives less than 1000mm. Average rainfall is 1413mm per year. To find information on the best time to go to New Caledonia see p15. A useful website is www.meteo.nc, the official met office site.



COURSES

French courses are organised by the Centre of International Cultural & Linguistic Exchanges in the Pacific (Creipac). For more information contact **Creipac** (☎ 25 41 24; creipac.nc; 100 ave James Cook) in Nouville.

CUSTOMS

For inquiries about customs regulations contact the **Office des Douanes** (Customs Office;

☎ 26 53 87; www.douanes.gouv.nc; 4 rue Félix Ruseil, Noumea) just near the Musée de l'Histoire Maritime.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

In general, New Caledonia is a very safe place to travel. One place where there have been violent incidents in recent years is St Louis in Mont-Dore area. This has not been aimed at tourists, but it is better to keep your distance if there have been recent violent protests when you visit. On the roads, be wary of drunk drivers especially at the weekend – New Caledonia has a high death toll from alcohol-related road accidents.

Along the coast or in the water, be aware of the various venomous sea creatures (for more information see p340). When swimming, snorkelling or diving, don't underestimate the sea's current.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

New Caledonia is not particularly well equipped for people with disabilities. Kerb ramps are few and far between. There are toilets for disabled people in most hotels, airports and in some restaurants.

The **Association Calédonienne des Handicapés** (☎ 27 60 65; 8 rue J Bernard, Nouville, Noumea) is an organisation working with disabled people. It provides an adapted transport service called **Handicar** (☎ 77 15 50), which operates in and around Noumea.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Senior or student discount cards are accepted at some museums, at the Tjibou Cultural Centre, and also at Ciné City, the movie theatre in Noumea.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

French Embassies & Consulates

Some diplomatic representation abroad:
Australia Consulate (☎ 03-926 157 79; www.consulfrance-sydney.org; St-Martins Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000); Embassy (☎ 02-621 601 00; www.ambafrance-au.org; 6 Perth Ave, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)
Canada Embassy (☎ 613-789 1795; fax 562 3735; www.ambafrance-ca.org; 42 Sussex Dr, Ottawa, Ont K1M 2C9)
France Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (☎ 01 43 17 53 53; www.diplomatie.gouv.fr; 37 Quai d'Orsay, 75351 Paris)
Germany Embassy (☎ 30-590 03 90 00; www.botschaft-frankreich.de; Parizer Platz 5, 10117 Berlin)
Ireland Embassy (☎ 01-277 5000; www.ambafrance-ie.org; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

FESTIVAL OF THE YAM

The Festival of the Yam takes place about six months after the yams are planted. However, unlike harvest festivities in many other countries, this is a low-key affair. It is a calm gathering of the clan and a sharing of the blessed yam (*igname*), which is treated with the reverence normally reserved for a grandfather or ancestor. Many Kanaks living in Noumea return to their villages for this event.

The elders decide when it is time for the harvest, and traditionally watch nature for signs indicating that the yam is ready. The official start of the harvest comes when the first yams are pulled from a sacred field and presented to the older clansmen and the chief. The next day, everyone gathers in the local church (this part, of course, has occurred only since the missionaries arrived) and the pile of yams is blessed by the priest. The yams are then carried in a procession to the *grande case* (conical-shaped hut where the tribal chiefs meet), from where they are distributed among the tribe. Out of respect, the yam is never cut, but instead it is broken like bread.

Japan Embassy (☎ 03-5420 8800; www.ambafrance-jp.org; 11/44 Chome Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8514)

Netherlands Embassy (☎ 70-312 58 00; www.ambafrance-nl.org; 1 Smidsplein, The Hague 2514 BT)

New Zealand Embassy (☎ 04-384 2555; www.ambafrance-nz.org; Rural Bank Bldg, 13th fl, 11-34/42 Manners St, Wellington)

UK Embassy (☎ 020-07 31 000; www.ambafrance-uk.org; 58 Knightsbridge, London SW1X7JT)

USA Consulate Los Angeles (☎ 310-235 32 00; www.consulfrance-losangeles.org; 10990 Wilshire Blvd, ste 300, Los Angeles CA 90024); Consulate New York (☎ 212-606 3600; www.consulfrance-newyork.org; 934 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10021); Embassy (☎ 202-944 6000; <http://ambafrance-us.org>; 4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007)

Vanuatu Embassy (☎ 678 223 53; fax 678-226; Kumul Hwy, BP 60 Port Vila)

Embassies & Consulates in New Caledonia

Nations which are represented in New Caledonia have their offices in Noumea. They include the following:

Australia (☎ 27 24 14; 7th fl, Immeuble Foch, 19 ave du Maréchal Foch)

Indonesia (☎ 23 28 80; 2 rue Lamartine, baie de l'Orphelinat)

Japan (☎ 27 83 03; BP 2009 Nouméa)

Netherlands (☎ 28 48 58; 1st fl, 33 rue de Sébastopol) Above Hôtel Lapérouse.

New Zealand (☎ 27 25 43; 2nd fl, 4 blvd Vauban)

Switzerland (☎ 26 11 59; 18 rue Jim Daly, Val Plaisance)

UK (☎ 28 21 53; 33 rue de Sébastopol)

Vanuatu (☎ 27 76 21; 1st fl, 53 rue de Sébastopol)

Above Hôtel San Francisco.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

New Caledonia's national day is referred to as *le 24 Septembre*. Until recently it commemorated the day in 1853 when France

claimed New Caledonia. Since the Noumea Accord it has taken on a new significance and is regarded as a day of cultural celebration by Kanaks too (see p233).

Other events held around New Caledonia:

March

Festival of the Yam The most important Kanak festival, marking the beginning of the harvest around mid-March. Festivities are generally low-key. For more information see the boxed text, above.

April

Giant Omelette Festival At Dumbéa, a dozen chefs, a huge skillet, 7000 eggs and many hands are used to make a free-for-all 3.5m-diameter omelette. It's held close to Easter at Parc Fayard.

May

Fête de l'Avocat (Avocado Festival) Held at Nece, on Maré, in early May; the island's biggest fair celebrates the end of the harvest.

June

La Foa Film Festival A weeklong film festival held in La Foa and Noumea. A chance to see an excellent selection of international movies in their original languages.

July

Bastille Day France's national day, 14 July. In the evening on the 13th there are fireworks and there's a military parade in Noumea on the morning of the 14th.

August

Live en Août A 10-day music festival in Noumea in mid-August featuring local and international (mainly Australian) bands.

Foire de Bourail Three-day, country-style agricultural fair featuring a rodeo, cattle show and sales, horse racing and a beauty pageant; held in mid-August.

September

Journées du Patrimoine (Heritage Days) In mid-September, displays and tours on a heritage theme are held around the Southern Province.

October

Foire Agricole et Artisanale de Koumac Similar to Bourail's fair, this three-day event in early October involves horse racing, a rodeo and competitions for the biggest and best home-grown vegetables.

Biennale d'Art contemporain de Noumea Noumea's biennial exhibition of contemporary art.

Late October/Early November

Équinoxe A biennial festival of contemporary theatre, dance and music featuring local and international artists. Usually held at the end of October or the start of November.

Fête du bœuf Païta An agricultural show with a rodeo.

Sound & Light Show Extremely successful light shows are staged at Fort Téremba, near La Foa, over a fortnight before the mosquito invasion begins.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

For information see p238.

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

New Caledonia follows France in all its major public holidays.

New Year's Day 1 January

Easter Monday March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Ascension Day (40 days after Easter Sunday) May/June

Whit Monday (The eighth Monday after Easter) May/June

Bastille Day 14 July

Assumption Day 15 August

New Caledonia Day 24 September

All Saints' Day 1 November

Armistice Day 11 November

Christmas Day 25 December

School Holidays

Some accommodation fills up quickly during the New Caledonian school holidays (Easter – one week; June – first two weeks; July – last week; September – two weeks in mid-September; November – second week) especially in the Far South, Île des Pins, and Club Med in Hienghène. During Christmas many people head overseas leaving accommodation in New Caledonia free.

INSURANCE

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. Check

that the policy covers ambulances and emergency flights home. For more information see p337.

Worldwide cover to travellers from over 44 countries is available on the Web at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

INTERNET ACCESS

Away from Noumea Internet cafés are few and far between. La Foa, Bourail, Koné and Lifou have at least one Internet café each. Prices vary between 250CFP and 400CFP to surf for 30 minutes. Connection can be slow unless ADSL is available.

Internet access in hotel rooms is restricted to top-end hotels though some midrange hotels in Noumea have access.

The three main Internet Service Providers are Lagoon (www.lagoon.nc), Canl (www.canl.nc) and MLS (www.mls.nc). You can contact them to set up an account.

MONEY

The currency in New Caledonia is the CFP (Cour de Franc Pacifique) or Pacific franc. The CFP is tied to the Euro at a fixed rate. A current topic of debate in the political sphere is whether to adopt the Euro. The CFP is used in French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna and, although the money may have the mintmark of Noumea or Papeete, the two are interchangeable. The CFP is sometimes abbreviated to an 'F' written after the numeral, and in banking circles it's written as 'XPF'. The CFP is fixed to the Euro (€1 = 119.33CFP).

For exchange rates, see inside the front cover, and for an idea of costs, see p15.

ATMs

Most banks in Noumea and in main towns around New Caledonia have ATMs. They accept credit cards and cash cards that access the Cirrus network – MasterCard, Visa, Eurocard, Carte Bleue and Carte Jade.

Cash

Banknotes are printed in denominations of 500CFP, 1000CFP, 5000CFP and 10,000CFP. Coins come in units of 1CFP, 2CFP and 5CFP, 10CFP, 20CFP, 50CFP and 100CFP.

Credit Cards

Major credit cards are widely accepted in hotels, restaurants, shops and airline offices

in New Caledonia. The exceptions to this are camping grounds and homestays on the islands and around Grande Terre.

Moneychangers

All banks change money and travellers cheques. All major currencies are accepted including US, Australian and New Zealand dollars, and Euros. You can also change Vanuatu vatu.

Tipping

A tip is always accepted but tipping is not common.

Travellers Cheques

You can change travellers cheques at banks in Noumea. Elsewhere they are not usually accepted as payment.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Film, developing services and photographic accessories are all available in Noumea, but are rare once you head out of the capital. Slides are very rare and it is better to develop them when you get home. For digital cameras, memory cards are expensive (eg 8500CFP for a 256K memory card). A 36-exposure print film costs around 750CFP and it is around 2200CFP to develop it. Digital photos cost around 50CFP per photo to print.

It's difficult to find a place to upload photos to the web or burn them on a CD-ROM. In Noumea try Micropolis (p231). A well-equipped shop specialising in digital images with good prices is **Photo Discount** (☎ 27 21 32; www.photodiscount.nc; 107 route de l'Anse Vata). You can upload your files to its website.

To help get the best out of your camera, get hold of LP's *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures*. Written by internationally renowned travel photographer Richard I'Anson, it's full colour and is designed to take on the road.

POST

Post restante is available at the main post office in Noumea. To have mail sent to you there, use the following address: Poste Restante, Noumea RP, 9 rue Eugène Porcheron, Noumea, New Caledonia.

Most post offices are open 7.45am to 3pm weekdays.

Postal Rates

Airmail letters up to 20g cost 110CFP to Australia and New Zealand, 135CFP to North America and Asia, 155CFP to the UK and Europe, and 100CFP to France. Postcards cost 100CFP to any destination.

SHOPPING

When shopping for local arts and crafts be aware that many souvenir shops in Noumea sell copies of local products made cheaply in Asian countries. To buy authentic products, see p243. You can also buy crafts from roadside stalls on the east coast of Grande Terre and directly from sculptors' workshops on the Loyalty Islands and Île des Pins. Local arts and crafts include wood and soapstone sculptures, woven baskets and paintings.

TELEPHONE & FAX

For directory assistance dial ☎ 1012. In an emergency dial ☎ 17. New Caledonia's international telephone code is ☎ 687.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phone numbers begin with a 7, 8 or 9. If you want to use your mobile phone in New Caledonia you need to first make sure it is compatible with the country's network (GSM 900/1800). You can purchase a rechargeable Liberté phone card (6136CFP with 3000CFP credit) in New Caledonia. For assistance dial ☎ 1014 freecall.

Fax

You can send faxes from the **main post office** (9 rue Eugène Porcheron) in Noumea.

Phone Codes

The country code for calling New Caledonia is ☎ 687. To make an international call, dial the international access code (☎ 00), then the country code, city code and your number. To phone Australia or New Zealand you'll be looking at 60/72CFP per minute in off-peak/peak time. To the UK, USA, Canada and Japan it costs 100/130CFP. To France it costs 80/96CFP.

To make a reverse-charge call (*en PCV*) dial ☎ 1050. Some useful country codes:

Australia (☎ 61)

Canada (☎ 1)

France (☎ 33)

Germany (☎ 49)

Japan (☎ 81)

New Zealand (☎ 64)

UK (☎ 44)

USA (☎ 1)

Phonecards

To make a phone call you can buy either a *télécarte* (telephone card) and use a public box, or an IZI card and use a fixed phone. *Télécartes* cost 1000CFP (25 units), 3000CFP (80 units) or 5000CFP (140 units) while IZI cards cost 1040CFP, 3120CFP or 5200CFP. They're both available from post offices and some tobacconists' shops in Noumea.

To make an international phone call you can use either card. The international access code is ☎ 00. You can also dial ☎ 19 for a cheaper call to certain destinations including France, Australia, UK, and Japan and New Zealand for 33/38/70/60CFP a minute.

TIME

New Caledonia is 11 hours ahead of GMT/UTC (Greenwich Mean Time/Universal Time Coordinated), which makes it one hour ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time (Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne) and one hour behind New Zealand and Fiji. Local time is the same as in Vanuatu. It is 11 hours ahead of London, 10 hours ahead of Paris and 16 hours ahead of New York. Thus, at noon Sunday in New Caledonia it is 1am Sunday in London, 2am Sunday in Paris and 8pm Saturday in New York. See p367 for more information.

New Caledonia uses the 24-hour clock, with the hours separated from the minutes by a lower-case letter 'h'. Thus, 13h30 is 1.30pm, 20h15 is 8.15pm and 00h45 is 12.45am.

TOILETS

Public toilets, signposted as *toilettes* or WC, are few and far between. In Noumea, you'll find a couple of toilet cubicles (50CFP) on the beachfront at Anse Vata and several in Place des Cocotiers. There are also public toilets at the *gare maritime* (boat terminal). *Snacks* (inexpensive cafés), restaurants, (most) shops and supermarkets have toilets.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local Tourist Offices

The main tourist office in Noumea is the Office du Tourisme de Nouméa et de la Province Sud, which caters predominantly to visitors to the capital and the South Prov-

ince, although it also has information on the rest of the country. The Office du Tourisme de la Province Nord, also in Noumea, can assist with general information and accommodation lists for northern Grande Terre. Destination Îles Loyauté is the office promoting the Loyalty Islands and it has two offices in the capital. Contact details for these offices are provided under Information in the Noumea chapter.

You will also find more limited tourist information at *syndicats d'initiative* or *points d'information*, small tourist offices around the country.

Tourist Offices Abroad

New Caledonia Tourism Point Sud (NCTPS) is represented in a few countries abroad. You can also consult the NCTPS website (www.nctps.com) for information on the major attractions and to find tour operators specialising in New Caledonia. Another useful website is www.kaori.nc, which contains links to New Caledonian websites, news and upcoming events. You will find links to most of the countries' websites at (www.kaledonie.com).

Australia (☎ 02-9360 3933; info-syd@nctps.com; NCTPS, Olivetti House Suite 5A, Level 5, 140 William St, East Sydney, NSW 2011)

France (☎ 01-42 736 980; info-par@nctps.com; NCTPS, 4, Rue Ventadour, 75001 Paris)

Japan (☎ 03-3583 3280; info-tyo@nctps.com; NCTPS, Landic Nr 2, Akasaka Bldg 2-10-9 Akasaka, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 107)

New Zealand (☎ 09-307 5257; info-akl@nctps.com; level 3, General Buildings, 33 Shortland St, Auckland)

VISAS

Passport holders from certain countries including EU member countries, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, are allowed entry into New Caledonia for three months without a visa. Some visitors including citizens of Japan, Canada and the USA are allowed entry into the country for one month without a visa. To check the latest visa requirements inquire through a French embassy (see p322) or check the French government website for New Caledonia at (www.etat.nc).

Those travelling from New Caledonia on to other French territories – eg Tahiti or Wallis and Futuna – will need to obtain a visa. For details, contact the Bureau des Étrangers (Passport Office; opposite) in Noumea.

Visa Extensions

Only in exceptional circumstances, such as cyclone season for yachties, when weather conditions impede departure, or if you have an accident, will visas be extended for more than three months. For all inquiries contact the Haut Commissariat, **Bureau des Étrangers** (☎ 26 65 00; 11 bis rue Paul Doumer, BP C5, Noumea; ☎ 7.45am-12.15pm Mon-Fri).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Generally, women travellers should have few problems getting around solo in New Caledonia. As in any place, it is best to be cautious if you are on your own.

WORK

Non-French citizens need a residence permit and a work permit to work legally in New Caledonia. There is a lot of paperwork involved in getting these permits. You can inquire through the Bureau des Étrangers (above) in Noumea.

French citizens may also find it hard, as New Caledonia's employee unions are very protective about local jobs. The main

body that can help in the search for a job is the **Service Emploi et Formation** (☎ 28 10 72; sef@province-sud.nc; 30 route baie des Dames, Ducos le Centre) in Noumea. It assists only those in possession of the aforementioned documents.

TRANSPORT AROUND NEW CALEDONIA

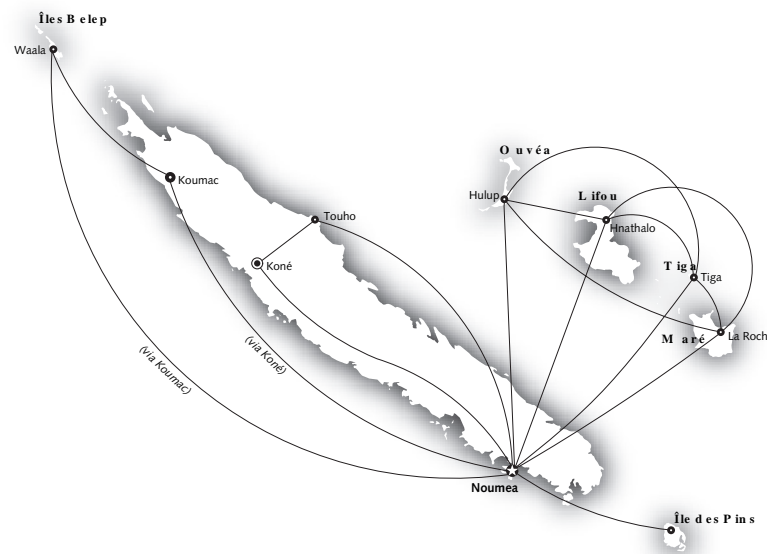
Flights and tours can be booked online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR

Domestic Airlines

New Caledonia's domestic airline is Air Calédonie (Aircal), not to be confused with Air Calédonie International (Aircalin), the international airline. **Air Calédonie** (☎ 28 78 88; vente@air-caledonie.nc; www.air-caledonie.nc; Immeuble Manhattan, 39 rue de Verdun, Noumea; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 11am Sat) also books accommodation. Air Calédonie agencies exist at all flight destinations, and there's a **ticket office** (☎ 25 21 77) at Magenta airport.

NEW CALEDONIA AIR ROUTES



It is recommended to book in advance. The company requires passengers to produce photo identification at check-in. You must check in an hour ahead of your departure time. The check-in counters close 35 minutes prior to departure. There's a 10kg limit for luggage going in the hold or 20kg for visitors – you must produce an onward international air ticket.

Air Calédonie operates out of Magenta airport in Noumea and flies to Koné, Touho and Koumac on Grande Terre, to each of the four Loyalty Islands, and to Île des Pins. There are no direct flights between the Loyalty Islands. All 'interisland' flights touch down in Noumea except for flights between Maré or Lifou and the tiny island of Tiga.

Many one-way fares around New Caledonia cost around 10,000CFP at peak rates. Shorter flights can cost as little as 4500CFP, and the longest flight, between Noumea and Îles Belep, costs around 1700CFP via Koumac. Return fares are double the one-way fare. For flight schedule information see Getting There & Away in each of the Koné, Koumac, Touho, Île des Pins and Loyalty Islands sections. If you intend to visit all of the Loyalty Islands, consider the Air Calédonie Pass (26,900CFP, plus tax 4200CFP) which gives you four coupons for use on any flight to or between the islands.

Buses and taxis run to and from Magenta airport.

Charter & Private Flights

A flight in a private helicopter is an exhilarating way to discover the world's biggest lagoon. Flights leave from Magenta airport and fly over Noumea's bays, Amédée islet and the other islets sprinkled over the lagoon, the barrier reef and baie de Prony in the Far South. Some operators:

Helicocean (☎ 25 39 49; helicocean.dir@mls.nc; 30mins per 3 people 27300CFP)

Helitourisme (☎ 26 96 62, helitourisme@mls.nc; 30mins per 3 people 32500CFP)

BICYCLE

A great way to take in New Caledonia's diverse scenery is by bike especially if you enjoy cycling and have enough time to spare. While it's not necessarily a popular means of travel, those travellers who

do cycle through New Caledonia are always given a warm welcome by the locals wherever they go. Another option is to do a short bike tour. Each of the Loyalty Islands, in particular Ouvéa, and Île des Pins are ideal for cycling. Bikes can be transported on the *Betico* and *Havannah* ferries.

There are very few bike lanes in Noumea and drivers both in the capital and elsewhere are not necessarily courteous to cyclists, so you need to be vigilant. Bike helmets are not compulsory but it's best to wear one. Bike-rental places do not always provide helmets. Most petrol stations can do basic repairs.

Hire

There are a couple of bicycle-rental outlets in the capital (see p245) and on some of the islands. As well as conventional cycles, some places have VTT (*vélo tout-terrain*) or mountain bikes. Some top-end hotels around Grande Terre and on the islands have bikes for the use of their guests.

BOAT

There is a single passenger fast ferry, the *Betico*, which operates between Noumea and the Loyalty Islands, and Île des Pins. A slower cargo boat, *Havannah*, also carries passengers.

Cargo Ships

The *Havannah* is operated by **Compagnie Maritime des Îles** (☎ 27 36 73; cmisa@lagoon.nc), which has an office at the dock on Quai des Caboteurs at baie de la Moselle. *Havannah* operates once a week on Mondays between Noumea and Maré and Lifou in the Loyalty Islands (one way 5120CFP). Once a month it travels between Noumea and Vanuatu (10,820CFP).

Charter Boats

For details on boat charters see p321 and p336.

Passenger Boats

The *Betico* is a modern vessel that can carry 366 passengers and has two onboard snack bars. There are three ticket classes (in ascending order of price): *economique* (economy class, which equates to the downstairs deck), *confort* (upstairs)

and VIP (upstairs front). Tickets can be bought at the ticket/information office at the **Gare Maritime des Îles** (☎ 26 01 00; commercial .betico@mls.nc; 1 ave James Cook; ☎ 7.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-10am Sat) on the way to Nouville, opposite the red Bingo sign on rue Jules Ferry.

From Noumea, *Betico* sails twice weekly to the Loyalty Islands (one way *economique/confort*/VIP 6200/6900/8800CFP), stopping first at Maré (3½ hours) then Lifou (five hours), and lastly Ouvéa (nine hours). You can also hop from one Loyalty Island to another, which costs *economique/confort*/VIP 3300/3700/5200CFP. There are also three voyages per week to Île des Pins (*economique/confort*/VIP 4700/5600/7800CFP, 2¼ hours). As Île des Pins is relatively close, the *Betico* goes over in the morning and returns in the late afternoon, making a day-trip excursion possible. Day trips are cheaper than a return fare, which are double the one-way fare. Fares for children (aged two to 12 years) are roughly 50% less.

Even in relatively fine weather, the trips can be rough. Those prone to motion sickness may want to take precautions (see p338).

Tourist Boats

From Noumea tours to nearby islets and the barrier reef leave from Port Moselle. For more information see p245.

BUS

Public buses are a popular means of transport for local people on Grande Terre but there are virtually no services operating on the outer islands.

Buses will drop off and pick up passengers in every main town or large village that they pass through. Major bus junctions include Bourail in Central Grande Terre, Koumac on the northwest coast and Poindimié on the northeast coast.

Carsud operates buses between Noumea and the greater Noumea region. Buses operate roughly between 6am and 6pm and go as far north as Tontouta (400CFP), past Dumbéa (320CFP) and Païta (360CFP), and south to Plum in Mont-Dore (400CFP).

Costs

Following is a list of fares and schedules between Noumea and other destinations.

Destination	Fare	Duration	Frequency
Bourail	1100CFP	2½hr	Mon-Sat
Canala	1100CFP	3½hr	daily
Hienghène	1650CFP	6½hr	Mon-Sat
Koné	1300CFP	4hr	daily
Koumac	1650CFP	5½hr	daily
La Foa	900CFP	1½hr	Mon-Sat
Poindimié	1450CFP	5hr	daily
Pouébo	1850CFP	6½hr	Wed & Fri
Thio	1000CFP	2hr	daily
Yaté	600CFP	2hr	Mon-Sat

Buses from Noumea passing through any of these destinations also drop off and pick up passengers. Some have twice-daily services except on Sunday. Services are generally less frequent on weekends than on weekdays. This information is liable to change – make sure you get an update when you arrive in the country.

Reservations

Nearly every town on Grande Terre is connected to the capital by bus, all leaving from Noumea's old **gare routière** (bus station; ☎ 24 90 26; 36 rue d'Austerlitz; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 1.30-4pm) next to Ciné City. It is best to book in advance especially if you are travelling on Friday or Sunday. Many students at boarding school in Noumea go home for the weekend on Friday afternoon and return to Noumea on Sunday afternoon.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travelling New Caledonia by car or campervan allows you to explore more off-the-beaten-track places that are not easy to reach by bus or that require a significant amount of time to reach by bicycle. Car-hire rates are reasonable. New Caledonia's major roads and most of its minor ones are all sealed and in good condition. Occasionally, road signs are missing so a good map is essential. The main road hazards in New Caledonia are speeding and drink driving. At night (and during the day) livestock sometimes wander onto the road in rural areas. Drive defensively and avoid driving at night when visibility is poor.

There are two *péage* (toll) roads in the country – one is just north of Noumea (150CFP) and the other (100CFP) connects Noumea with Boulari in Mont-Dore to the east.

Driving Licence

You need to show a valid driving licence when hiring a car or motorcycle. An International Driving Permit (IDP) is not required – your valid licence from home will suffice. Many rental companies require drivers to be over 21 and to have held their licence for at least three years.

Fuel & Spare Parts

There is no shortage of petrol stations and most have a garage attached. On the north-east coast they can be far apart so make sure you have enough fuel to get you to the next major town. If you are heading to the Far South, the only place south of Mont-Dore with a petrol pump is Yaté. Most petrol stations are open between 6am and 6pm or later. On Saturdays and Sundays outside Noumea, they may only be open for a few hours.

Hire

Car-rental companies abound in Noumea and the larger ones also have desks at the airport. The tourist office in Noumea has a list of rental companies.

Most companies charge in two ways; either excluding the rate per kilometre or including 150km per day for free. In the former case, it is about 1200CFP to 1800CFP per day for a small sedan with an additional charge of 20CFP to 36CFP per kilometre, plus daily insurance and petrol. In the latter case, the same car will cost between 3500CFP to 5000CFP per day plus insurance and petrol. Some companies offer good deals such as one week's all-inclusive rental from 20,000CFP excluding petrol.

In the Loyalty Islands and Île des Pins transport arranged through *gîtes* and hotels is expensive. Although prices are much less competitive than in the capital, it might be worth hiring a car if you're in a group. Rates range from 5000CFP (Lifou) to 8000CFP (Île des Pins, including petrol) with unlimited kilometres. A security deposit of 100,000CFP is often required.

For car-rental companies on the Loyalty Islands and Île des Pins see the Getting There & Around sections in each of those chapters. Scooters and scooters (miniature cars) can be hired on Île des Pins.

Some car-rental companies in Noumea:
ADA (☎ 28 85 02; www.ada.nc; 49 rue Georges Clemence)

Budget/Pacific Car (☎ 27 60 60; www.pacific-car.nc; Centre Commercial Baie des Citrons, route de la baie des Citrons)

Discount Location (☎ 27 26 99, 77 54 42; discountloc@lagoon.nc; 135 route de l'Anse Vata; 2/5/7-person vehicles for 3 days incl 600km 45,000/55,000/60,000CFP) Rents camping cars. There's also a branch at Tontouta airport (☎ 35 39 28).

Hertz Anse Vata (☎ 26 18 22; hertz@canl.nc; 113 route de l'Anse Vata) Tontouta airport (☎ 35 12 77)

Location Camping Remorque (☎ 46 93 42; www.camping-remorque.nc; route de la Roche Blanche, Mont Mou; per day/Sat & Sun/Mon-Fri 4500/9500/25,000CFP) In Païta; rents camping trailers. The trailers are fully equipped including cooking facilities, bed linen and even a shower and toilet. It also offers free airport transfers and you can stay in your trailer on the owner's secluded rural property for free the first night. The owner can also help you organise car hire.
Nouméa Fun Ride (see p245) Hires scooters and scooters.
Point Rouge (☎ 28 59 20; www.pointrouge.nc; 75 ave du Maréchal Foch) Also rents scooters for 1800CFP a day.

Insurance

No extra insurance is required when hiring a car as vehicles are already insured. If you are hiring a sedan car some companies may restrict you from driving on unsealed roads. Some companies charge a security deposit of 100,000CFP.

Road Conditions

Main roads throughout New Caledonia are sealed and are generally very well maintained. During heavy rains however, some roads, especially in the north of Grande Terre, are prone to flooding.

Road Rules

As in France, driving in New Caledonia is on the right-hand side of the road and, except when you are on a major road, you must give way to the right (*priorité à droite*). The maximum speed limit on a main road is 110km/h and in residential areas 50km/h. Seat belts are compulsory. Helmets must be worn on motorcycles and scooters.

The maximum permissible blood alcohol concentration is 0.05%, and random breath-testing is carried out.

Also, be wary at creek crossings, as they're prone to flash flooding in the wet season.

HITCHING

In New Caledonia hitching is relatively safe and in certain areas, such as on the Loyalty

Islands, it is one of the best ways to get around if you don't have your own transport. The main hazard is that a drunk driver may stop for you. You can try and minimise this risk by avoiding hitchhiking during the weekend when people are more likely to be partying. Hitchhiking is free, unless you happen to flag down the local bus.

TAXI

Only in Noumea, large towns on Grande Terre and on Île des Pins are taxis available. They use a meter and there are three tariffs: tariff A operates from 6am to 6pm and costs 111CFP per kilometre; tariff B kicks in from 6pm to 6am and is 148CFP per kilometre; tariff C works on public holidays and for trips outside Noumea and amounts to 171CFP per kilometre. In addition there's a 300CFP fee for 'jumping in' and it's 125CFP extra if you book by phone. In Noumea, taxis are the only means of travel in the evenings, as buses stop running at 6.30pm to 7pm.

In Noumea (☎ 28 35 12) you'll pay 1100CFP from Place des Cocotiers to Anse Vata, around 1200CFP for a ride from central Noumea to Magenta airport, and 8600CFP to Tontouta airport.

TOURS

There is no shortage of tours and activities to choose from in Noumea and throughout

New Caledonia. Tour operators in Noumea organise trips in and around the city as well as further afield. The tourist office in Noumea has details about tours. Some operators that get good reviews:

Arc en Ciel Voyages (☎ 27 19 80; www.arcenciel-voyages.nc; 59 ave du Maréchal Foch) A major company which covers the entire country.

Adventure Pulsion (see boxed text, p253) Organises off-the-beaten-track tours by 4WD in the Far South.

Caledonia Tour (see the boxed text, p253) Runs tours around Grande Terre.

Caltours (☎ 41 10 92, 81 20 01; 7 rue Charles de Verneilh) Organises half-day tours to Monts Koghiis, full-day tours to Bourail including a *bougna* lunch in a *tribu*, and tours to the Far South. It also offers a weeklong tour of Grande Terre.

VIP Tours (☎ 43 53 08, 79 27 89; j.brighton@lagoon.nc) Run by John Brighton specialises in tours for English speakers. It runs a popular day trip called the 'once upon a time tour'.

For more options see the boxed text, p253, and tours listed by activity, p320.

Outside Noumea, much of the accommodation, especially *gîtes*, homestays and farmstays, offer tours such as guided walks or horse treks in the surrounding area. The cost is usually additional to the accommodation rate. These tours enable you to interact with your Kanak or Caldoche hosts and discover hidden gems that are not accessible to the general public since they are usually on private or customary land.

Transport

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Every visitor to Vanuatu and New Caledonia must have a passport valid for at least four months from the arrival date and must also show a return or onward ticket. Occasionally travellers are asked to prove they have sufficient funds to support themselves while in the country. Passport holders from certain countries including European Union member countries, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand are allowed entry into either country for three months without a visa.

For details about visas, which visitors need them, and visa extensions, see p182 for Vanuatu and p326 for New Caledonia.

All international flights to Vanuatu land at Bauerfield International Airport, 6km out of Port Vila (p76).

All international flights to New Caledonia land at Tontouta International Airport, 45km northwest of Noumea. For details on travelling between Tontouta and Noumea see p244.

Flights and tours can be booked online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR

It's a short air trip from Australia or New Zealand to a tropical paradise. From other

parts of the world you may need to fly in to Australia or New Zealand before going on to Vanuatu or New Caledonia.

Airlines VANUATU

Air Vanuatu, Pacific Blue, Air Pacific and the New Caledonian airline Aircalin have regular scheduled flights to Vanuatu. Getting there from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji or New Caledonia is straightforward. You can book online and fares are remarkably low. Check them on the websites. The airlines' contact details are as follows:

Aircalin (www.aircalin.com; airline code SB; hub Noumea; ☎ 22019; Lini Hwy, Port Vila)

Air Pacific (www.airpacific.com; airline code FJ; hub Nadi; ☎ 22836; spts@vanuatu.com.vu; South Pacific Travel, Lini Hwy, Port Vila; PO Box 1534)

Air Vanuatu (www.airvanuatu.com; airline code NF; hub Port Vila; ☎ 23848; Rue de Paris, Port Vila)

Pacific Blue (www.flypacificblue.com; airline code DJ; hub Brisbane; Brisbane ☎ 617 3295 2284)

If you are travelling from further afield than Australia or New Zealand, the sales agent for Air Vanuatu is **Qantas Airways** (www.qantas.com.au). You need to fly to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji or New Caledonia first, probably stop overnight, then on to Port Vila; make sure you look into visa requirements in these connecting countries.

NEW CALEDONIA

The major airlines flying into New Caledonia are Qantas, Air New Zealand, Air Vanuatu and Aircalin (Air Calédonie Inter-

WARNING

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. We've included a number of websites as a way of keeping the information as fresh as possible. If you're travelling from Europe or America, check with the airline or a travel agent to make sure how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works. Make sure you are fully informed about documents you need to have at each leg and the security measures involved.

The details given in this chapter are only pointers, and not a substitute for your own research.

national). Air France flies code-share with Aircalin.

Aircalin (www.aircalin.com; airline code SB; hub Noumea; ☎ 26 55 00; 8 rue Frédéric Surleau, Noumea)

Air France (www.airfrance.com; airline code AF; hub Paris; ☎ 25 88 88; 41 rue de Sébastopol, Noumea)

Air New Zealand (www.airnewzealand.com; airline code NZ; hub Auckland; ☎ 28 66 77; Axxess Travel, 22 rue Duquesne, Noumea)

Air Vanuatu (www.airvanuatu.com; airline code NF; hub Port Vila; ☎ 28 66 77; Axxess Travel, 22 rue Duquesne, Noumea)

Qantas (www.qantas.com; airline code QF; hub Sydney; ☎ 28 65 46; 35 ave du Maréchal Foch, Noumea) Access from rue de Verdun.

Tickets

Tourism is busiest in Vanuatu at Christmas and during Australian and New Zealand midyear and September school holidays, so book ahead if possible at these times. New Caledonia has a steady stream of visitors year-round.

Confirm your bookings 72 hours before departure, and again before your return, except for flights with Pacific Blue. Those bookings do not need to be confirmed. Any rates quoted here are for return fares but are only an indication of how much you might expect to pay.

AIR PASSES

Some **air passes** (www.southpacific.org/air.html) are available that use a mix of air carriers. These include Circle South West Pacific Pass, Boomerang Pass and Visit South Pacific Pass. You may be able to buy one of these in conjunction with your international ticket.

See flight and fare sections of the websites of **Air Vanuatu** (www.airvanuatu.com) and **Aircalin** (www.aircalin.com) for more information.

Asia

There are no direct flights from Asia to Vanuatu, but Osaka and Tokyo have flights direct to New Caledonia with Aircalin. It flies there for around US\$1000.

Air Pacific operates direct flights from Tokyo and Osaka to Nadi in Fiji, which then connect with flights to Port Vila. Air New Zealand has flights from Tokyo to Auckland connecting with Air Vanuatu flights to Vila. If you're coming from elsewhere in Asia, the easiest option is to fly to Australia or New Zealand and then on to Vanuatu or New Caledonia.

Australasia

Air Vanuatu operates direct flights from Brisbane and Sydney to Port Vila three and five times a week respectively. Pacific Blue has direct flights twice a week from both Brisbane and Sydney. Both airlines arrange for your flight to connect with domestic flights from other Australian cities, often for no further charge. Fares from Sydney/Brisbane generally start from US\$585/500, but special deals are sometimes as low as US\$500/400.

Qantas and Aircalin fly to Tontouta in New Caledonia from Brisbane (three flights a week) and Sydney (daily). The 30-day excursion fare from Sydney/Brisbane starts at US\$400/350.

Many travel offices specialise in discount air tickets; check the travel sections of weekend newspapers, or try www.travel.com.au.

FLYING BETWEEN VANUATU & NEW CALEDONIA

Aircalin and Air Vanuatu offer services between the countries most days. The flight takes one hour and costs special/economy US\$215/330.

- Aircalin flies from Noumea to Vila on Monday at 16.40 and Friday at 17.55, returning to Noumea two hours later.
- Air Vanuatu flies from Vila to Noumea on Wednesday and Friday at 6.30, and on Sunday at 17.30, returning to Vila 2½ hours later.

WHO IS THAT TRAVELLING WITH YOU?

Your woven hat or mat is shaken over a sheet of paper by the quarantine officer and he laughs at the expression on your face. Lots of tiny insects are scuttling away across the paper. Oops.

Not to worry. The officer sends your gifts and mementoes off to be fumigated, returning them a few minutes later, ready for their journey into the Western world.

Some of the necklaces you've been given may need to stay with the officers. They are sometimes made from seeds of a toxic weed. But the colourful feather ornaments are OK. The dye will have destroyed any nasties.

Quarantine is incredibly important, and you see why as you watch your touristy knick-knacks being sorted. Only thing is, if you have a transport connection after your arrival at your Australian or New Zealand international terminal, leave plenty of time for your quarantine clearance.

With a bit of research you can often get yourself a good travel deal.

If you do not have a favourite travel agent, contact **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 360 960; www.statravel.com.au) or **Flight Centre** (☎ 13 1600; www.flightcentre.com.au). Both have dozens of offices around the country.

Many Pacific specialists offer flight-with-accommodation package deals, including **Talpacific Holidays** (☎ 1300 137 727; www.travel.arrange.co.nz) and **Escape Travel** (www.escapetravel.com.au).

For other specialists, take a look at www.vanuatu-tourism.com/travel_agents.htm, or go to the South Pacific section of www.tripadvisor.com. Contact Air Vanuatu or Qantas to find other flight/accommodation possibilities.

New Zealand

Air Vanuatu has direct flights twice weekly from Auckland to Vila (special/economy from US\$375/585), as well as flights via Nadi (Fiji) and Noumea (New Caledonia). Air Vanuatu is a good starting point for package deals, or look at www.travel.co.nz for online bookings.

There are four flights per week between Auckland and Noumea, either with Air New Zealand or Airalin. The 90-day return excursion fare starts at US\$400.

Both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0800 874 773; www.sta.travel.co.nz) have branches throughout the country.

Talpacific Holidays (NZ toll-free ☎ 0800 888 099; www.travelarrange.co.nz) is a South Pacific specialist.

South America

Fly with Qantas to Sydney, and connect with flights to either Vanuatu or New Caledonia – they'll both cost around US\$1400. From New Caledonia, you can also use an Airalin flight to Tahiti and connect with a Lan Chile flight to Santiago, via Easter Island.

South Pacific

Air Vanuatu, Air Pacific and Airalin fly to both Vanuatu and New Caledonia from Fiji. Airalin also flies direct to French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna. To/from other Pacific islands you'll need to get connecting flights in New Zealand or Fiji. See p333 for information about air passes.

FIJI

Air Vanuatu and Air Pacific offer direct flights from Nadi to Port Vila twice a week (special/economy from US\$160/185).

Aircalin flies from Nadi to New Caledonia once or twice a week (US\$590).

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Aircalin flies to Papeete's Faa'a airport once a week (US\$650).

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Airlines (☎ 677 20031; www.solomonairlines.com.au; Mendana Ave, Honiara) flies from Honiara to Port Vila, and back, each Thursday (30-day excursion/economy US\$445/640).

WALLIS & FUTUNA

Twice a week, Airalin flies to Hihifo on Wallis Island with a possible connection flight to Veve on Futuna. The return fare for either is around US\$600.

UK & Continental Europe

Qantas and Air New Zealand fly from Europe, with overnight stays in Sydney or Auckland. There's a more direct route via Japan for around US\$1400, provided by Airalin with code sharing with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines/Air France/Cathay Pacific/Singapore Airlines.

To look at specialist South Pacific travel agents in Europe, look at www.vanuatu-tourism.com/travel_agents.htm. Or you could inquire about fares at the following agencies:

FRANCE

Anyway (☎ 0892 893 892; www.anyway.fr)

Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 0825 000 747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)

OTU Voyages (☎ 0820 817 817; www.otu.fr)

GERMANY

Expedia (☎ 0180 500 6025; www.expedia.de)

STA Travel (☎ 01805 456 422; www.statravel.de)

NETHERLANDS

Airfair (☎ 020 620 5121; www.airfair.nl)

USA & Canada

From Los Angeles, both Air New Zealand and Qantas flights to Auckland or Sydney connect with Air Vanuatu flights to Port Vila (US\$1000).

The main gateway to New Caledonia from North America is Los Angeles or New York via Tahiti. You can fly with Air France or Air Tahiti Nui (approximately US\$1200 for either) to Tahiti where you can connect with an Airalin flight to Noumea. Or you can fly to New Caledonia with Air New Zealand via Auckland (US\$1000) or Qantas via Sydney (US\$1200).

Another option is to fly with Air Pacific from Los Angeles to Noumea via Nadi. The price is in the same range.

South Pacific Island Travel (☎ 1-877 773 4846; www.spislandtravel.com) is a Pacific expert.

The following websites are recommended for online bookings: www.cheaptickets.com; www.expedia.com; www.lowestfare.com.

Contact your travel agent or Qantas for fare and accommodation packages from North America. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 800 667 2887; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency. For online bookings, try www.expedia.ca.

SEA Boat

The large New Caledonian passenger and cargo boat **MV Havannah** (☎ 27 04 05; cmisa@lagoon.nc; one way US\$110) operates between Noumea and Port Vila, then going on to Malekula and Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu, before returning to Noumea. It does this round-trip once a month and has an excellent reputation for reliability and safety and a comfortable enclosed deck for passengers.

Cruise Ship

Glorious, shiny white cruise ships slip into Vanuatu's gorgeous hot spots like Mystery Island, Lamén Bay, Luganville, Wala Island and of course Port Vila. They're even going to go to amazing Ureparapara Island. What a comfortable, luxurious way to get a taste of what's here in these magical islands. Check with **P&O** (www.pocruises.com.au/html). A cruise ship visits almost weekly.

In Noumea, all cruise ships dock at the Gare Maritime on Quai Jûle Ferry. They also drop anchor at various spots around New Caledonia where they shuttle their passengers ashore to spend a day on the beach. *Pacific Sun*, *Pacific Star* and *Pacific Princess* (departing Sydney) are the most regular visitors. Ask your travel agent for

more information or check the website www.pocruises.com.au/html.

South Sea Shipping (☎ 22205; fax 23304; www.pocruises.com.au; southsea@vanuatu.com.vu; PO Box 84) in Vila is the agent for P&O's *Pacific Star*, *Pacific Sun* and *Pacific Princess*. Ask them if there's a spare berth; you might be able to do a leg or two to outer islands.

In Noumea, contact **CMA-CGM** (☎ 27 01 83; nma.cristofoli@cma-cgm.com; 32 rue du Général Galliéni).

Yacht

Sailing around the Pacific islands must be a dream come true. And all the islands are ready to welcome yachties, often with dances, feasts and tours being prepared as they spot your sails on the horizon. Arriving on a yacht also allows you to see islands that are way off the beaten track, so the experience can be unique to you and your travelling companions.

Vanuatu has ports of entry at Vila, Luganville (Santo), Lenakel (Tanna) and Sola (Vanua Lava). All have full customs and immigration facilities (see the individual chapters for details). The best sources of general information on yachting matters are on Efate, at **Vanuatu Cruising Yacht Club** (☎ 24634) and **Yachting World** (☎ 23490) at the Waterfront Bar & Grill.

There are no bareboats for charter in Vanuatu, so relax and let your captain do all the work. Charter a cruising catamaran, with skipper and crew, through the following:

Adventure Centre (☎ 22743; fax 27763; www.adventurevanuatu.com) Has a 42ft trimaran *Golden Wing* (24hr US\$685) and a 44ft catamaran *Margarita* (24hr US\$865).

Bali Hai Charters (☎ 27202, 46058; balihai.charters@vanuatu.com.vu; PO Box 1011) Has a 38ft trimaran *Witchitit* (24hr, per person US\$105).

The tall ship **Søren Larsen** (☎ 649-411 8755; www.sorenlarsen.co.nz) sails around Vanuatu from August to October, stopping at New Caledonia on its way to or from New Zealand. Check out its routes and schedules on the website.

New Caledonia welcomes about a thousand yachties every year. The country has marinas and customs and immigration clearing services in Noumea, Koumac, Hienghène and Lifou. Ahead of arrival in Noumea, use VHF Channel 67 to contact the **Capitainerie** (harbour master's office; 6 rue de la Frégate Nivose; ☎ 27 71 97; port.moselle@sodemo.nc).

The **Cercle Nautique Calédonien** (CNC; ☎ 26 27 27; secretaariat@cnc.asso.nc; VHF Channel 68; 2 rue du Capitaine Desmier) is a yacht club at Baie des Pêcheurs.

Paradise Adventures & Cruises (☎ 612-8799 2500; www.paradiseadventures.com.au) offers bareboat charters around New Caledonia from US\$400/US\$675 for a monohull/catamaran per day. Other packages include skippered and hosted yacht cruises out of both Noumea and Port Vila.

Sail Connections Limited (☎ 649-358 0556; www.sailconnections.co.nz) has both bareboat and crewed yacht charters available in New Caledonia. A bareboat 32ft yacht/40ft catamaran starts at US\$445/US\$740 a day.

Yachts come equipped with GPS plotter, autopilot, radar, dinghy with outboard motor, bimini, fishing and snorkelling gear and other useful items. For nonsailors a skipper costs from US\$170 a day.

The best season to sail north is in winter from late April to mid-November when the Southeast Trade Winds are blowing. You may well get brilliant days on end, with 10- to 15-knot winds. From November through to April, it is cyclone season and most yachts leave the area. Of those that stay, many are lost. The best weather summary is from **Noumea Météo** (www.meteo.nc). It's in French, but the marine charts, summaries and forecasts are easily understood. Bulletins are published three times every day, more often if it's stormy, and can be received by fax, SMS etc. Or check the nautical websites www

.cruising-vanuatu.com and www.cruising-newcaledonia.com.

BOOKS & CDS

Cruising New Caledonia & Vanuatu, by Alan Lucas, gives details on many natural harbours and out-of-the-way anchorages. The *Nautical Rocket Guide to Vanuatu* (it used to be called the *Tusker Cruising Guide*) on CD is essential viewing. It covers 140 anchorages, the coastlines of all Vanuatu's islands, tides, weather, plus accommodation and sights and attractions on the different islands. Buy it through the website (www.cruising-vanuatu.com), or from **Yachting World** (☎ 23490; Lini Hwy) in Port Vila. *Miz Mae's Guide to Vanuatu for Yachts & Backpackers* has useful information on anchorages.

The *Cruising Guide to New Caledonia*, by Joël Marc, Ross Blackman and Marc Rambeau, is a general yachting guide that also provides an exhaustive list of possible anchorages around the islands. The new CD, the *Nautical Rocket Guide to New Caledonia*, has photographic coverage of New Caledonia's coastline, bays, creeks, and coral reefs, plus coverage of anchorages, tides and weather. Buy it through the website (www.cruising-newcaledonia.com) or from **Ship Shop Service** (☎ 25 12 96; 37 rue de Général Galliéni) in Noumea.

Stop Press (☎ 22232; Au Bon Marche, Nambatu; stop.press@vanuatu.com.vu) in Port Vila stocks several yachting guides.

Health

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With sensible precautions and behaviour, the health risk to travellers to the West Melanesia region is low. Mosquito-transmitted disease is the main problem. The region is completely rabies-free.

Standards throughout Vanuatu are not good, with mostly no equipment and very meagre stocks, whereas standards of health care throughout New Caledonia are very good. All towns have well-stocked clinics.

BEFORE YOU GO

Planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. See your dentist, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription. Bring medications in their original labelled containers, and a letter from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medications. If carrying syringes or needles, have a letter saying they're needed or buy a prepared pack from a travel-health clinic.

INSURANCE

If your health insurance doesn't cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider extra

insurance. (Travel Links on the Lonely Planet website www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_links has more information.) Find out if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later. (In many countries doctors expect payment in cash.)

Make sure your insurance covers evacuation to the nearest major centre (eg Brisbane) – the extra premium is not very much.

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 immediately, visit your doctor at least six weeks before departure.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

This is a list of items you should consider packing. In addition, if you are travelling more than 24 hours away from a town area consider taking a self-diagnostic kit to identify malaria in the blood (for Vanuatu).

- acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin (aspirin should not be used for fever; it can cause bleeding in cases of dengue fever)

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever. If you travel from a yellow-fever-endemic country you may require vaccination for that.

Vaccinations can all produce slight soreness and redness at the inoculation site, and a mild fever with muscle aches over the first 24 hours. These are less likely with hepatitis A, and more common with hepatitis B and typhoid inoculations.

Yellow-fever vaccine is dangerous for anyone with egg allergy and sometimes causes a flu-like illness in the first week after vaccination. A certificate exempting you from the vaccine can be issued.

- adhesive tape
- antibiotics, eg ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor, Noroxin); prescription only
- antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions, prescription only
- antibiotic plus steroid eardrops (eg Sofradex, Kenacort otic); prescription only
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- anti-giardia tablets (eg tinidazole); prescription only
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- antimalarial pills (Vanuatu)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls, waterproof dressings
- DEET-containing insect repellent
- iodine tablets (for water purification)
- oral rehydration salts (eg Gastrolyte, Diarolyte, Repllyte)
- permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- pocketknife*
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers*
- steroid cream or hydrocortisone cream (for allergic rashes)
- sunblock
- syringes and sterile needles, and intravenous fluids if travelling in very remote areas*
- thermometer

*Do not take on planes in carry-on luggage

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel-health advice on the Internet:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

(www.cdc.gov)

Fit for Travel (www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk) User-friendly, up-to-date information about outbreaks.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) A good place to start.

MD Travel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com) Free travel-health recommendations.

Travel Doctor (www.traveldoctor.com.au) An Australian site, similar to the Fit for Travel website.

World Health Organization (www.who.int/ith) *International Travel and Health* available free online.

Also consult your government's travel-health website, if one is available:

Australia (www.dfat.gov.au/travel)

Canada (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

UK (www.dh.gov.uk/policyandguidance/healthadvicefortravellers/fs/en)

USA (www.cdc.gov/travel)

FURTHER READING

Try Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children and Healthy Travel Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific*.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. Symptoms include swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, usually on just one side, chest pain and/or breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To help prevent DVT, walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco. There is no good evidence that aspirin prevents DVT.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, get into natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) or promethazine (Avomine) are better at preventing motion sickness than treating it. A herbal alternative is ginger.

IN VANUATU & NEW CALEDONIA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

New Caledonian health care is of a high standard; specialists in most disciplines are available, and citizens of the EU have the same eligibility for government medical care as in France. In Port Vila the lack of quality systems may mean the equipment or medication you need is not available, even for simple problems. Outside Vila, diagnostic and treatment facilities aren't available, but volunteer doctors may be present in some hospitals.

Private medical practitioners in both countries will expect payment in cash. Consultation fees, X-rays etc cost around the same as those in a Western country. Where hospital facilities exist, a cash deposit will be required; credit cards may not be accepted. Public hospital outpatient services are free, but waiting time can be very long.

Commonly used drugs, including oral contraceptives and antibiotics, are available in Port Vila and throughout New Caledonia, and special drugs can be flown in. Diabetics may not be able to obtain their usual type of insulin preparation so it's safer to have your own supply. Up-to-date anti-epileptics and antihypertensives may be hard to come by.

Private dentists practise in Port Vila and in the main towns in New Caledonia.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Dengue Fever

Dengue fever, spread by mosquito bites, is mainly a problem in the wet season (November to April). It causes a feverish illness with headache and severe muscle pains; there might also be a fine rash. Be obsessive about using insect repellents. Self-treatment includes paracetamol (do not take aspirin as this can have very dangerous side effects), fluids and rest. Danger signs are prolonged vomiting, blood in the vomit and/or a blotchy dark red rash.

Hepatitis A

This is a virus disease causing liver inflammation. Fever, debility and jaundice (yellow skin and eyes, dark urine) occur, recovery is slow, and it can be dangerous to people with other liver disease, to the elderly and sometimes to pregnant women. It is spread by contaminated food or water. Self-treatment consists of rest, a low-fat diet and avoidance of alcohol. The vaccine is close to 100% protective.

Hepatitis B

Like hepatitis A, hepatitis B is a virus disease causing liver inflammation, but it is more serious and frequently causes chronic liver disease and even cancer. It is spread, like HIV, by mixing body fluids, by using contaminated needles and by accidental blood contamination. Treatment is complex and specialised but vaccination is highly effective.

HIV/AIDS

The incidence of HIV infection is on the rise in West Melanesia and unprotected sex carries huge dangers. Condom use is essential. If you require an injection for anything have your own needles or check that a new needle is being used.

Malaria

There is no malaria in Aneityum or Futuna in Vanuatu, and none in New Caledonia. It is also quite rare in Vila. Elsewhere, take extreme care. It is a parasite infection transmitted by mosquitoes that feed in dull light (ie at night, when it's overcast, in the jungle, or inside dark huts). Since no vaccine is available you must rely on mosquito-bite prevention and taking antimalarial drugs before, during and after risk exposure. No antimalarial is 100% effective.

If you have a fever in Vanuatu, first rule out malaria; most clinics will do a blood-smear check. If you have self-treatment malaria medication, still try to get a diagnosis and go to a major medical centre to confirm a cure.

This applies up to a few months after leaving the area. Malaria is curable if diagnosed early.

Typhoid Fever

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

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea in the tropics is usually caused by bacteria or parasites in contaminated food or water. Drink plenty of fluids, especially rehydration solutions. If you have more than four stools a day, you should take an antibiotic (quinolone drug) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, seek medical attention.

Giardiasis

A parasite in contaminated water in Vanuatu, giardia produces bloating and a foul-smelling persistent although not 'explosive' diarrhoea. Taking one dose (four tablets) of tinidazole usually cures it.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Bites & Stings

If you see the blue-coloured Indo-Pacific man-of-war in the water or on the beach, don't go in. Its whiplike sting is very painful. Treat with vinegar or ice packs. Do not use alcohol.

Coral Cuts

Live coral can cause prolonged infection. If you do cut yourself, treat the wound immediately, scrubbing it thoroughly with fresh water to get out all the coral, then with alcohol. Apply an antiseptic and cover with a waterproof dressing.

Coral Ear

This inflammation of the ear canal is caused when water activates any fungal spores, leading to bacterial infection and inflammation. It usually starts after swimming but can be reactivated in a shower, especially if your wet hair lies over the ear hole.

It can be very, very painful. Self-treatment with an antibiotic plus steroid eardrop prep-

aration is very effective. Stay out of the water until pain and itch have gone.

Diving Hazards

There are strict depth and time precautions upheld by your dive operator. But the temptation to stay longer at relatively shallow depths is great and is probably the main cause of decompression illness (the 'bends'). Any muscle or joint pain after scuba diving must be suspect. Novice divers must be especially careful.

There are decompression chambers in Vila (☎ 25566) and Noumea (☎ 15). Local planes fly patients in at a very low altitude. Check with **Divers Alert Network** (DAN; www.diversalertnetwork.org) about the current status, and insurance to cover costs.

Food

Only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Eating in restaurants that have good standards of hygiene is important; food that comes to you piping hot is likely to be safe. Be wary of salads and avoid buffet-style meals. In the outer islands, wash lettuce in vinegar to ensure any contamination from snails is removed.

Usually safe and edible fish can sometimes carry ciguatera. Poisoning causes stomach upsets, itching, faintness, slow pulse and bizarre inverted sensations – cold feeling hot and vice versa. Ciguatera has been reported in large carnivorous reef fish, including red snapper, barracuda and Spanish mackerel. There is no safe test to determine whether a fish is poisonous, but the locals know what to eat. Fish caught after any reef disturbance like a hurricane are more likely to be poisonous. Deep-sea fish like tuna are perfectly safe.

Leptospirosis

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 or bat urine. There is some concern that it can be contracted at Millemium Cave in Santo. If diagnosed early it is cured with penicillin.

Heat Exhaustion

This can be prevented by drinking at least 2L of water per day; more if exercising. Salt-

DRINKING WATER

Tap water is safe to drink throughout New Caledonia, and in Vila. In the rest of Vanuatu your host will tell you if the supply is pure water from a spring. If not, drink bottled water. In an emergency, boil or filter it or use iodine tablets.

replacement solutions are useful, as muscle weakness is due to salt loss and can be made worse by drinking water alone. The powders used for dehydration due to diarrhoea are just as effective for heat exhaustion, or try a good pinch of salt to a half-litre of water. Salt tablets can give you too much salt, causing headaches and confusion.

Heatstroke

This is a dangerous and emergency condition, with muscle weakness, exhaustion and mental confusion. Skin will be hot and dry. Put the fire out by lying in water and, if possible, with cold drinks. Seek medical help.

Sunburn

The time of highest risk is between 11am and 3pm, and cloud cover does *not* block out UV rays. Sunburn is likely to be a particular problem for those taking doxycycline as an antimalarial. Do the Australian 'slip, slop, slap' thingy: slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat. Treat sunburn like any other burn – cool, wet dressings. Severe swelling may respond to a cortisone cream.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Travel with children can present special problems. Dehydration develops very quickly when a fever and/or diarrhoea and vomiting occur. Malaria and dengue fever are much more dangerous to children than to adults. Insect repellents are essential.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Tampons and pads can be obtained, but it looks like they've been on the shelf for ages look for evidence of cockroaches.

Vanuatu is not ideal for a pregnant woman. Malaria can cause miscarriage or premature labour and prevention cannot be guaranteed even with antimalarial tablets. The recommended vaccinations (against hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever) do not contain live organisms so are not a problem, but the mumps/measles/rubella vaccine should not be given in pregnancy.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Local herbs, roots and leaves used by traditional healers often have effective ingredients; research institutions are currently investigating many of them. Extravagant claims (eg AIDS cures, aphrodisiacs) can be ignored and it is best to avoid compounds made with animal ingredients. Tree-bark concoctions for fever are similar to aspirin.

Kava has sedative and muscle-relaxant properties and is drunk mainly in Vanuatu.

POISONOUS REEF-DWELLERS

Sea snakes may be seen around coral reefs but are extremely unlikely to attack; their fangs will not penetrate a wetsuit.

Stonefish lie in rocky and sandy areas. The venomous dorsal spikes inflict immediate, incapacitating pain, and can be fatal. Bathing the wound in hot water helps, but get medical attention immediately.

Related to the stonefish and equally nasty is the brown and white lionfish. Its large, graceful dorsal fins contain venomous spines.

Poisonous cone shells abound on shallow coral reefs. Stings mainly cause local reactions, but palpitations, difficulty breathing, nausea or faintness are signs that you need medical attention pronto.

Reef shoes with strong soles will provide some protection.

Language

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In this language guide you'll find a combined list of useful words and phrases in French (spoken in both New Caledonia and Vanuatu) and Bislama (the widely-spoken lingua franca of Vanuatu) that will not only help you on your travels, but also enhance your stay and endear you to the people you meet. There are even some offerings in Drehu (p343), the most widely spoken of New Caledonia's Kanak languages.

THE TALK OF NEW CALEDONIA

French is the official language of New Caledonia. Some Tahitian, Wallisian, Indonesian and Vietnamese is also spoken, mainly in Noumea.

Kanak recognise the predominance of English in the Pacific region and regard it as an important language to learn, but few speak it fluently and many don't speak it at all – outside Noumea you'll hear it rarely. French is spoken and understood by 97% of the population, so a good French phrasebook will prove invaluable. If you master the basics of French and make the effort to use it, you'll usually receive a very warm reception wherever you go, even if your pronunciation is a bit awry.

A host of Kanak languages exist but, unlike neighbouring Vanuatu, New Caledonia

has no unifying indigenous language. This is hardly surprising considering that the French have long discouraged or ignored Kanak languages.

Kanak Languages

An estimated 27 distinctly different Kanak languages coexist in New Caledonia and are some of the 1200 known Melanesian languages spoken throughout the Pacific. The Melanesian dialects are an eastern subdivision of the huge, widespread Austronesian language family. Other spoken languages in this family include Malagasy (from Madagascar), Tagalog (from the Philippines) and the Polynesian and Malay-Indonesian languages. The many Melanesian dialects are not only the result of isolation of different communities but also reflect the multiplicity of the clans and of their contacts.

Within the Kanak language groups there are also many dialects, with most Kanaks being able to speak their own language as well as the neighbouring dialects. While all Kanaks know French and use it in particular situations, the majority of rural Kanaks use their own language within the sphere of their family and clan. Despite this, many of the Kanak languages are still in danger of being lost.

The Kanak language spoken by the largest number of people is Drehu. It comes from Lifou and has some influences from Polynesian, French and English. On Grande Terre there are numerous languages, the one most spoken being Ajië, which links clans on both coasts. The north is dominated by Yálayu; in the south it's Xârâcùù. A type of pidgin dialect called Tayo exists in the St Louis area near Noumea, as people from differing tribes were once brought to this region and needed a contact language. Some languages such as Zirë, spoken around Bourail, and Arhâ, near Poya, have as few as 250 speakers.

Literature was nonexistent until the missionaries translated the Bible into a few of the Kanak languages. The French ethnologist Maurice Leenhardt started studying the languages early this century. The Kanaks' linguistic diversity has long been

used by the French government as an excuse not to teach local languages in schools. However, there are some schools on the Loyalty Islands and around Houailou and Canala (both on Grande Terre) that now teach the local language for a couple of hours each week. In a Protestant *lycée* in Noumea, students can get training in Drehu and Ajië. At higher levels, both private and government-run teachers training colleges in Noumea offer students the option of studying Melanesian languages and literature, and the university has courses in Drehu and Ajië.

Kanak Grammar & Pronunciation

In Kanak languages there is often no difference between a noun and a verb; the Iaaï word *han*, for example, means both 'a meal' and 'to eat'. Nouns are not marked for gender; in Ajië, the generic term *mèyë* (chicken) becomes *mèyë bwè* and *mèyë wi*, meaning 'female chicken' and 'male chicken', respectively. One pronoun can cover many concepts; in Nengone, the word *inu* means 'I', 'me', 'my' and 'mine'. Plurals are formed by adding a pluraliser to the front of a word; in Drùbea, *mwà* is 'house', while *ma mwà* is 'houses'.

While many features of the various Kanak languages are similar, they don't have identical pronunciation. Some languages, such as Drehu and Nengone, don't feature nasal vowels, while others, including Paicî and Ajië, are tone languages (where changes in pitch within words can alter meaning). Long vowels are common to most languages in the region, but double consonants are not. Aspirated consonants are also fairly common. Aspirated consonants are accompanied by an audible puff of breath and, when written, are always preceded by an 'h'.

While most consonants sound similar to their English counterparts, the following may cause some confusion:

c	as the 'ch' in 'cheque'
dr	as the 'd' in 'day'
g	as the 'ng' in 'camping'
j	as the 'j' in 'June'
hw	as a 'w' but aspirated (accompanied by an audible puff of breath)
ny	as the 'ny' in 'canyon'
x	as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i>

Vowel sounds can be very different from English. Here are some that can cause confusion:

â	as the 'o' in 'on'
ë	as the 'an' in 'land'
ô	as the 'ou' in 'about'
ô	as the 'o' in 'long'
u	as the 'oo' in 'too'
û	as the 'oo' in 'too' but shorter

Drehu Basics

Drehu is the most widely spoken of the Kanak languages. A few Drehu words that may come in handy are listed here (their French equivalents are included for quick reference):

English	Drehu	French
Hello.	<i>Bozu.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Dréé.</i>	<i>Au revoir.</i>
Please.	<i>Sipone.</i>	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i>
Until tomorrow.	<i>Elanyjié.</i>	<i>À demain.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Dréi la éjé i éö?</i>	<i>Comment vous appelez-vous?</i>
How are you?	<i>Tune ka epun?</i>	<i>Comment allez-vous?</i>
What do you want?	<i>Epun a aja nemen?</i>	<i>Qu'est-ce que vous voulez?</i>
I'd like to buy ...	<i>Eni a itö ...</i>	<i>Je voudrais acheter ...</i>

banana	<i>wshnawa</i>	<i>banane</i>
beach	<i>hnangöni</i>	<i>plage</i>
bed	<i>göhnë</i>	<i>lit</i>
boy	<i>nekö trahmany</i>	<i>garçon</i>
bread	<i>falawa</i>	<i>pain</i>
dance	<i>fia</i>	<i>danser</i>
dinner	<i>xeni hej</i>	<i>diner</i>
to eat	<i>xen</i>	<i>manger</i>
English	<i>papale</i>	<i>anglais</i>
father	<i>kem-kakaa</i>	<i>père</i>
French	<i>wiwi</i>	<i>français</i>
language	<i>qene hlapa</i>	<i>langue</i>
mother	<i>thin-nenë</i>	<i>mère</i>
rain	<i>mani</i>	<i>pluie</i>
sky	<i>hnengödrai</i>	<i>ciel</i>
to speak	<i>ewekë</i>	<i>parler</i>
sun	<i>jö</i>	<i>soleil</i>

to swim	<i>oj</i>	<i>nager</i>
tree	<i>sinöe</i>	<i>arbre</i>
when	<i>eu</i>	<i>quand</i>
where	<i>kaa</i>	<i>où</i>
which	<i>kau</i>	<i>quel</i>
who	<i>drei</i>	<i>qui</i>
why	<i>némen</i>	<i>pourquoi</i>

THE TALK OF VANUATU

Vanuatu claims the highest concentration of different languages per head of population of any country in the world. There are at least 105 local languages as well as the more widely spoken English, French and Bislama – a form of pidgin (or ‘business’) English, is the national lingua franca.

The number of languages spoken by ni-Vanuatu reflects their diverse origins, and the fact that they have always lived in small and quite isolated communities, usually separated by physical barriers such as difficult terrain or sea.

Bislama

Also called *bichlamar* or *bichelamar* by French speakers, Bislama is the English-based pidgin (with a bit of French thrown into the mix as well) used throughout the archipelago. It enables people from totally different areas of the country (with different first languages) to converse. It also allows the 40% of the population who have been educated in French-language schools to communicate with the 60% who have studied in English-language institutions.

Most ni-Vanuatu can speak Bislama with varying degrees of fluency, while the more educated also speak either English or French at least reasonably well.

Bislama is now Vanuatu’s most important official national language. While most commerce and government correspondence is conducted in English or French, parliamentary debates are held in Bislama.

The language guide in this chapter offers equal doses of useful French and Bislama words and phrases, so you really have no excuse for not giving one or both a go.

LANGUAGE BOOKS & COURSES

French

If you’re planning on travelling through both New Caledonia and Vanuatu, French will probably be your language of choice.

For a more in-depth guide to French, get a copy of Lonely Planet’s *French Phrasebook*. If you’re interested in studying French, the Creipac school in Noumea has courses for tourists and visiting students (see p322).

Kanak Languages

For more on the Kanak languages of New Caledonia, get a copy of Lonely Planet’s *South Pacific Phrasebook*.

Bislama

Whatever time you can devote to learning this interesting new language will be well spent, particularly if you’re intending to travel into rural Vanuatu. While you’ll usually get by with simple English or French, even basic Bislama will enhance your travel experience considerably.

Lonely Planet’s *Pidgin Phrasebook* has a useful section on Bislama. Darrell Tryon’s *Let’s Talk Bislama* (Media Masters South Pacific Pidgin Post, Vila, 1986) is an entertaining and amusingly illustrated work, but difficult to find. *A New Bislama Dictionary* by the late Terry Crowley (Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, 1995) is an extremely comprehensive reference and the best one available – in fact, it’s essential if you’re serious about learning the language. The book is two separate dictionaries (English-Bislama and Bislama-English) in one.

There’s only one French-Bislama phrasebook available in Vila: *Apprenons le Bichlamar* (edited by Socom SA of Vila). It has about 700 words and phrases in the two languages.

BISLAMA & FRENCH

In the following list of words and phrases, Bislama is the first entry after English, and French the second.

ACCOMMODATION

I’m looking for ...

<i>Mi stop lukaot ...</i>	<i>Je cherche ...</i>
a hotel	
<i>hotel</i>	<i>un hôtel</i>
a guesthouse	
<i>reshaos</i>	<i>une pension de famille</i>
the (hotel) manager	
<i>managa/bos blong (hotel)</i>	<i>le gérant (de l’hôtel)</i>

Do you have a ... available?

<i>Yu kat ... long ples ia?</i>	<i>Avez-vous ...?</i>
bed	
<i>bed</i>	<i>un lit</i>
single/double room	
<i>rum blong wan/tu</i>	<i>une chambre simple/double</i>

Do you have a house I can sleep in?

<i>Yu gat haos blong slip?</i>	
<i>Avez-vous une maison où on peut dormir?</i>	

for one/two nights

<i>blong wan/tu naet</i>	
<i>pour une/deux nuit/s</i>	

How much is it per night/person?

<i>Hamas i blong wan naet/man?</i>	
<i>C’est combien par nuit/personne?</i>	

Is breakfast included?

<i>Hemia i blong brekfas tu?</i>	
<i>Est-ce que le petit déjeuner est compris?</i>	

Can I see the room?

<i>Mi save luk rum?</i>	
<i>Je peux voir la chambre?</i>	

Where is the toilet?

<i>Tolet i stap wea?</i>	
<i>Où sont les toilettes?</i>	

Do you have ...?

<i>Yu gat ...?</i>	<i>Avez-vous ...?</i>
a clean sheet	
<i>klin kaliko blong bed</i>	<i>un drap net</i>
hot water	
<i>hot wota</i>	<i>l’eau chaude</i>
a key	
<i>wan kei</i>	<i>un clef</i>
a shower	
<i>ples/rum blong swim</i>	<i>une douche</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.

<i>Alo.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
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Goodbye.

<i>Ata.</i>	<i>Au revoir.</i>
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Good morning.

<i>Gudmorning.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
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Good afternoon.

<i>Guddaftenu.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
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Good night.

<i>Gudnaet.</i>	<i>Bonsoir/bonne nuit.</i>
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Please.

<i>Plis.</i>	<i>S’il vous plaît.</i>
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Thank you (very much).

<i>Tank yu (tumas).</i>	<i>Merci (beaucoup).</i>
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You’re welcome.

<i>I oraet nomo.</i>	<i>C’est de rien.</i>
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Yes.

<i>Yes.</i>	<i>Oui.</i>
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No.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Non.</i>
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Maybe.

<i>Ating/Maet/Mebi.</i>	<i>Peut-être.</i>
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Excuse me.

<i>Skusmi/Excusez-moi.</i>	<i>Excusez-moi/Pardon.</i>
----------------------------	----------------------------

I’m sorry.

<i>Mi sori tumas.</i>	<i>Pardon/Je suis désolé/ée.</i>
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How are you?

<i>Olsem wanem?/ Yu oraet?</i>	<i>Comment ça va?</i>
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I’m fine, thanks.

<i>I oraet, tankyu./ I gud nomo.</i>	<i>Ça va bien, merci.</i>
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I want to talk to the chief/pastor.

<i>Mi wantem toktok long jif/pasta.</i>	<i>Je voudrais parler au chef/pasteur.</i>
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What’s your name?

<i>Wanem nem blong yu?</i>	<i>Comment vous appelez-vous?</i>
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My name is ...

<i>Nem blong mi ...</i>	<i>Je m’appelle ...</i>
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Where do you live?

<i>Yu (blong/stap) wea?</i>	<i>Où habitez-vous?</i>
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I’m from ...

<i>Mi blong ...</i>	<i>Je viens de ...</i>
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Do you like ...?

<i>Yu ting yu likim ...?</i>	<i>... vous plaît?</i>
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I like it very much.

<i>Mi likim tumas.</i>	<i>Je l’aime beaucoup.</i>
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I don’t like ...

<i>Mi no likim ...</i>	<i>Je n’aime pas ...</i>
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Wait a moment.

<i>Weit smol.</i>	<i>Attendez un moment.</i>
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It’s alright/No problem.

<i>I olraet/I no problem.</i>	<i>Ça va/Pas de problème.</i>
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DIRECTIONS

How do I get to ...?

<i>Bi mi go kasesem ... olsem wanem? Comment faire pour aller à ...?</i>
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Where is ...?

<i>Wea ples ...? Où est ...?</i>

How far is it from here?

<i>Hamas farawe long ia? A quelle distance est-il d’ici?</i>
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What ... is this?

<i>Wanem ... ia?</i>	<i>C’est quoi ... là?</i>
street/road	
<i>rod</i>	<i>cette rue</i>
village	
<i>vilej</i>	<i>ce village</i>

SIGNS – FRENCH

Entrée	Entrance
Sortie	Exit
Ouvert	Open
Fermé	Closed
Renseignements	Information
Interdit	Prohibited
(Commissariat de) Police	Police Station
Toilettes, WC	Toilets
Hommes	Men
Femmes	Women

here

long ples ia, long hia ici

there

longwe là

north/south

not/saat nord/sud

east/west

is/wes est/ouest

Out & About

beach	<i>sanbij</i>	<i>la plage</i>
bridge	<i>brij</i>	<i>le pont</i>
church	<i>joj</i>	<i>l'église</i>
coral reef	<i>korel rif</i>	<i>le récif de corail</i>
island	<i>aelan</i>	<i>l'île</i>
lake	<i>lek/revā</i>	<i>le lac</i>
river	<i>reva</i>	<i>la rivière</i>
school	<i>skul</i>	<i>l'école</i>
sea	<i>solwota</i>	<i>la mer</i>
volcano	<i>volkeno</i>	<i>le volcan</i>

EMERGENCIES

Help!

Help! Au secours!

Call a doctor/the police!

Singaot doctor/polis! Appelez un médecin/la police!

Go away!

Gowe! Laissez-moi tranquille!

HEALTH

I'm ...	<i>Mi sik blong ...</i>	<i>Je suis ...</i>
diabetic	<i>suga</i>	<i>diabétique</i>
epileptic	<i>foldaan</i>	<i>épileptique</i>
asthmatic	<i>gat sotwin</i>	<i>asthmatique</i>

I'm allergic to penicillin/antibiotics.

Mi no save dring penicillin/antibiotics.
Je suis allergique à la pénicilline/aux antibiotiques.

aspirin

asprin l'aspirine

condoms

kondom les préservatifs

contraceptive

meresin blong le contraceptif
blokem pikinini

diarrhoea

sitsit wota la diarrhée

medicine

meresin la médecine

nausea

harem trot la nausée

sunblock cream

meresin blong skin la crème haute protection
mo sun

tampons

koteks les tampons

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English/Bislama/French?

Yu toktok Engglis/Bislama/Franis?

Parlez-vous anglais/bichlamar/français?

I don't speak English/Bislama/French.

Mi no toktok Engglis/Bislama/Franis.

Je ne parle pas anglais/bichlamar/français.

I don't understand.

Mi save.

Je comprends.

I don't understand.

Mi no save.

Je ne comprends pas.

NUMBERS

1	<i>wan</i>	<i>un</i>
2	<i>tu</i>	<i>deux</i>
3	<i>tri</i>	<i>trois</i>
4	<i>fo</i>	<i>quatre</i>
5	<i>faef</i>	<i>cinq</i>
6	<i>sikis</i>	<i>six</i>
7	<i>seven</i>	<i>sept</i>
8	<i>eit</i>	<i>huit</i>
9	<i>naen</i>	<i>neuf</i>
10	<i>ten</i>	<i>dix</i>
11	<i>leven</i>	<i>onze</i>
12	<i>twelef</i>	<i>douze</i>
13	<i>tatin</i>	<i>treize</i>
14	<i>fortin</i>	<i>quatorze</i>
15	<i>feftin</i>	<i>quinze</i>
16	<i>sikistin</i>	<i>seize</i>
17	<i>seventin</i>	<i>dix-sept</i>
18	<i>eitin</i>	<i>dix-huit</i>
19	<i>naentin</i>	<i>dix-neuf</i>
20	<i>twante</i>	<i>vingt</i>
30	<i>tate</i>	<i>trente</i>

40

50

60

70

80

90

100

1000

*fote**feftē**sikiste**sevente**eite**naente**handred**taosin**quarante**cinquante**soixante**soixante-dix**quatre-vingts**quatre-vingt-dix**cent**mille*

matches

boks masis des allumettes

mosquito net

moskito net une moustiquaire

Do you have another colour/size?

Yu nogat kalar/saes ia?

Avez-vous un autre couleur/une autre taille?

bigger

yu gat big wan mo? plus grand(e)

smaller

yu gat smol wan mo? plus petit(e)

cheaper

i no saes tumas? plus bon marché

TIMES & DATE

What time is it?

Yu save wanem taem Quelle heure est-il?

naoia?

It's ... o'clock.

Hemi ... oklok. Il est ... heure(s).

1.15

kwotapas wan une heure et quart

1.30

hapas wan une heure et demi

1.45

kwota tu tu deux heures moins le quart

in the morning/evening

long moning/aftenun du matin/soir

When?

Wanem taem?/ Quand?

Wataem?

today

tude, tede aujourd'hui

tonight

tede naet, tunaet ce soir

tomorrow

tumoro demain

yesterday

yestede hier

Monday

mande lundi

Tuesday

tuste mardi

Wednesday

wenste mercredi

Thursday

toste jeudi

Friday

fraede vendredi

Saturday

satede samedi

Sunday

sande dimanche

January

januari janvier

February

febuari février

March

maj mars

April

epiril avril

May

me mai

SHOPPING & SERVICES

Where is a/the ...?

Wea ples i ...? Où est ...?

bank

bang la banque

clinic

haos meresin le centre médical

hospital

hospitel l'hôpital

market

maket le marché

post office

post ofis la poste

public toilet

pablik tolet, smolhaos les toilettes

restaurant

restoron un restaurant

store

stoa un/le magasin

telephone

pablik telefon un téléphone

I'd like to make a telephone call.

Mi wantem telefon.

Je voudrais faire un coup de fil.

How much is this?

Hamas long hemia nao?

Combien ça coûte?

I'd like to buy ...

Mi wantem pem ...

Je voudrais acheter ...

It's too expensive for me.

I sas tumas long mi.

C'est trop cher/chère (m/f) pour moi.

Can I look at it?

Mi save luk?

Je peux le/la regarder?

I'm just looking.

Mi stap lukluk nomo.

Je ne fait que regarder.

I'm looking for ...

Mi stap lukaot ... Je cherche ...

candles

kandel des bougies

clothing

klos des vêtements

June	<i>jun</i>	<i>juin</i>
July	<i>julae</i>	<i>juillet</i>
August	<i>ogis, oks</i>	<i>août</i>
September	<i>septemba</i>	<i>septembre</i>
October	<i>oktoba</i>	<i>octobre</i>
November	<i>novemba</i>	<i>novembre</i>
December	<i>disemba</i>	<i>décembre</i>

TRANSPORT

Can I go to ...?

Mi save go long ...?

Je peux aller à ...?

It's prohibited to go there.

Ples ia i tabu.

C'est interdit d'y aller.

I want to go to ...

Mi wantem go long ...

Je veux aller à ...

How long does the trip take?

Bae i longfela alsam wanem?

Le trajet dure combien de temps?

What time does ... leave/arrive?

Wanem time ... i leave/i kasem long ples ia?

A quelle heure départ/arrive ...?

it

em

t-il

the boat

bot

le bateau

the plane

plen

l'avion

I'd like to hire a ...

Mi wantem rentem ...

Je voudrais louer ...

speedboat

spidbot/bot

une vedette

guide

tour guide

un guide

taxi

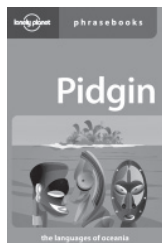
taksi

un taxi

canoe

kanu/kenu

une pirogue



Also available from Lonely Planet:
French Phrasebook and Pidgin Phrasebook

Glossary

accueil – reception or welcome

ADCK – Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak; an agency to promote Kanak culture

alimentation – large general store

Araucaria columnaris – columnar pine growing to 60m, found along New Caledonia's coast

ASNNC – Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature Néo-Calédonienne; nongovernment environmental protection organisation

atoll – low-lying coral islets and reef enclosing a lagoon

bami – spicy noodle-based dish with chicken, pork or prawns and vegetables

banyan – huge tree from the fig/rubber family, with a wide canopy and big aerial roots; also called 'nabanga'

barrier reef – long, narrow coral reef separated from the land by a lagoon; see also *fringing reef*

BCI – Banque Calédonienne d'Investissement

bêche-de-mer – sea cucumber, a lethargic bottom-dwelling sea creature; also called *trepang*

betel nut – round, greenish-orange nut that is chewed

bigman – chief

blackbirding – system where Melanesians worked in sugar cane fields in Australia and Fiji, and coconut plantations in Western Samoa

BNP – Banque Nationale de Paris

bommie – large coral outcrop

booby – tropical gull-sized sea bird with a strong beak; sometimes called a rock pelican (*Sulidae*)

bougna – traditional Kanak meal of yam, taro and sweet potatoes with chicken, fish or crustaceans, cooked in an earth oven

boulangerie – bakery

breadfruit – large, starchy fruit; can be boiled, mashed, or fried like chips; the timber is used for making *tamtam*

burao – wild hibiscus

bushknife – Pacific version of a machete or panga

cagou – New Caledonia's national bird

caldera – large crater formed by the explosion or subsidence of a volcano

Caldoche – white person born in New Caledonia whose ancestral ties go back to the convicts or early French settlers

Canaque – French for Kanak

cargo cult – religious movement whose followers hope for vast quantities of wealth (cargo) through the generosity of supernatural forces

case – traditional Kanak hut, either conical or rectangular

cassava – popular staple root food, also called *yuca* or *manioc*; the starch, often called tapioca, is used as a thickener

casse-croûte – informal expression for a baguette sandwich

cay – tiny, low island or large sandbank of coral debris and sand with vegetation

CCNH – Compagnie Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hébrides; French-owned company that acquired large tracts of land in Vanuatu

cephalopod – class of mollusc that includes octopus, cuttlefish, squid and nautilus

CFP – Cour de Franc Pacifique; local franc

chef – customary leader of Melanesian and Polynesian clans

chefferie – house of a Kanak chief

CIE – Le Centre d'Initiation à l'Environnement de Nouvelle-Calédonie; nongovernment environmental protection organisation

ciguatera – type of poisoning caused by eating infected reef fish

clan – or tribe; people with a descent from a common ancestor

cleverer – witch doctor or sorcerer

CNC – Cercle Nautique Calédonien; a yacht club

coconut crab – huge edible land crab

col – mountain pass

colon – French for a colonialist; the original French settlers in New Caledonia

Communard – person who participated in the Paris Commune uprising of 1871; many were exiled to New Caledonia

complet – fully booked

copra – dried coconut meat, processed to make oil for margarine and soap

coral – marine polyp of soft or hard varieties; hard coral has a lime skeleton that forms reefs

custom – see *kastom*

cyclone – severe tropical storm, also called a hurricane or typhoon

dispensaire – community clinic

DOM – Diocese of Melanesia; branch of the worldwide Anglican Church

dugong – fully protected but endangered sea mammal; lives on sea grass. Nets, traditional hunting and motorboat propellers take a heavy toll on their numbers.

erpnavet – grade-taking ceremony

faré – large, often open-sided meeting house; thatched shelter

ferro-nickel – metal alloy comprising iron and a minimum of 25% nickel

flèche faitière – ornamental wooden spear seen on top of every *grande case*

FLNKS – Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste; New Caledonia's main pro-independence political front, made up of several parties

frigate bird – large tropical marine bird with a huge wingspan

fringing reef – reef found along the shore of an island or mainland coast without enclosing a lagoon; see also *barrier reef*

fromagerie – place where cheese is made

fumaroles – small volcanic or thermal fissures spurring steam, smoke or gas

gâiac – little tree; its heartwood is very hard and is often used for making fence poles

gare maritime – boat or ferry terminal

gare routière – bus station

gaufres – waffles

gendarmarie – police force; police station

gîte – small tourist hotel, usually run by Kanaks

gomenol – essence extracted from the leaves of *niaouli* trees

Gondwanaland – ancient continent that encompassed present-day Africa, South America, Antarctica, the Indian subcontinent, Australia and New Zealand

grande case – conical-shaped hut where the tribal chiefs meet

groanpot – traditional pottery

groper – large, robust pelagic fish; can weigh 250kg and grow 3.5m long

guano – sea-bird manure and bodies, rich in phosphates and nitrates

hôtel de ville – see *mairie*

houp – tree highly prized for its beautiful yellowish wood; its flowers are bright red

IGN – Institut Géographique National; French national mapping organisation

indépendantiste – person who is pro independence for New Caledonia

indigénat – used to describe the colonial authority's repressive system that forced Kanaks into reservations and required them to work for the authorities

jacaranda – tree with pale purple flowers, originating from South America

jade – dark green semiprecious stone

kae kae – food

kaekae man – victim of cannibals

Kanaky – those who are pro independence for Vanuatu; also the name given to New Caledonia by pro independence Kanaks of New Caledonia

Kaneka – contemporary Kanak music

kastom – rules surrounding ancient ancestral legacies and customs

kastom ownership – traditional ownership of land, objects or reefs by individuals, families or clans

kauri – conifer giant of the forest, harvested for its wood

kava – mildly intoxicating drink

Kleber – witch doctor

kumara – root vegetable; also known as kumula and sweet potato

la brousse – bush or outback, encompassing everything outside Noumea; *Caldoches* from *la brousse* are sometimes called Broussards

la coutume – vital element of social and cultural life

lagoon – shallow water between land and ocean sealed off by reefs or sandbars

Lapita – site close to Koné, on Grande Terre, where old pottery was found; it gave its name to the Lapita people, who inhabited much of Melanesia

laplap – Vanuatu's national dish; tightly wrapped doughy mix filled with meat or fish and cooked in a ground oven

larfwood – very strong timber, sometimes called iron-wood, favoured in Vanuatu for making *tamtam*

ligne – bus route

LMS – London Missionary Society

lycée – secondary school

ma – snake dance

magasin – shop

maghe – grade-taking ceremony

mairie – city or town hall, also called *hôtel de ville*

mal mal – *T-piece*, of cotton or *tapa*, worn by male dancers

man blong posen – sorcerer

manioc – see *cassava*

marché – market

Marist – person from the religious society, Société de la Propagation de la Foi, founded in 1836 in Lyon

mato – traditional dance

matte – alloy containing cobalt and 75% nickel from refined *ferro-nickel*

Métro – someone from France

Melanesian – people of New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji

menu du jour – three-course meal with set price; often written as *menu*

meresinfrut – see *pawpaw*

Micronesian – people of the northwest Pacific, of Malay-Polynesian origin

moara – Kanak term for a clan

naghol – land-diving ritual practised on Pentecost

nagria – indigenous plant associated with honour and masculinity

nagriamal – people who use the symbols of the *nagria* and *namele* plants

nahunguwe – grade-taking ceremony

nakaimo – sorcerer who can change into a shark

nakamal – clubhouse where men meet to talk and drink *kava*

nalot – vegetable dish of roasted *taro* or banana with coconut cream

namanggitenge – female grade-taking procedure

nambagura – oil from local *ni-Vanuatu* plants, used for skin-care products

nambas – penis-wrapper of dried pandanus leaves worn during ceremonies

namele – indigenous plant used to proclaim ownership and territory

ngangae – fruit with a nut like an almond

nganggalat – plant that causes painful welts when it is touched

narambarambs – effigies of important chiefs used after their death to appease the spirits

nasara – chief's private room or area, where business decisions take place

natsaro – traditional dancing ground, usually surrounded by *tamtam* or stone obelisks

naus – fruit similar to a mango

nautilus – chambered sea creature with a beautiful red-brown and ivory-striped shell; considered a living fossil

niaouli – trees from the dry west New Caledonia coast, forming a *niaouli savannah*; see also *gomenol*

nickel – silvery-white metal, harder than iron and corrosion-resistant

nimangki – status and power earned by taking a series of grades

ni-Vans – indigenous people of Vanuatu

ni-Vanuatu – more formal name for the indigenous people of Vanuatu

notou – a pigeon indigenous to New Caledonia

noura – big yabby

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat – association of independent Pacific Island countries, plus Australia and New Zealand, which discusses common regional matters

PADI – Professional Association of Diving Instructors

paillotte – straw hut

pain de marmite – big, heavy bread baked in a large round pot

palolo worm – reef worm that tastes a bit like caviar

pandanus – tree found along the seashore; leaves are used for weaving mats and baskets

pareo – saronglike wrap made from hand-dyed material about 3m long

pastis – alcoholic aniseed-flavoured drink

pawpaw – also known as 'papaya'; staple, sweet-tasting fruit

pétanque – type of lawn bowls played on a hard surface

petroglyphs – designs carved in stone and found throughout the Pacific

pieds noirs – black feet; refers to French colonialists who left Algeria in 1961

pilou – supreme Kanak dance, for important ceremonies

piper methysticum – botanical name for kava

pirogue – traditional outrigger canoe

planche à voile – sailboard

Polynesian – people from Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa, the Cook Islands and New Zealand

pomelo – also called 'pamplemousse'; large, sweet, juicy grapefruit with a pink interior

Quonset hut – half-moon-shaped shed built by the American troops in WWII

rambaramp – effigy of an important chief made a few months after his death to appease his spirit

récif – reef

roussette – flying fox

sandalwood – perfumed yellow-brown wood rich in aromatic essence

SDA – Seventh-Day Adventist

SFNH – Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides; a large French-owned commercial organisation established in the late 19th century

SLN – Société Le Nickel

SMSP – Société Minière du Sud Pacifique

snack – inexpensive café

South Pacific Forum – association of independent Pacific Island countries, plus Australia and New Zealand, which discusses common regional matters; now called Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

SPC – Secretariat of the Pacific Community; established in 1947 to provide technical assistance and advice on development

sukwe – grade-taking process

sweet potato – tuberous root food that originated in South America

table d'hôte – family home offering meals

taboo – that which must be avoided

tabu – sacred or forbidden; can mean 'no entry' and can also apply to ceremonies, topics of conversation or other sensitive aspects of life

tamake – ceremonial mask made from tree-ferns

tamanu – mahogany-like tree

tamate – small carved figurine

tamtam – slit-gong or slit-drum made from a carved log with a hollowed-out section

tapa – cloth made from the bark of ebony, paper mulberry or *breadfruit* trees

taro – staple food all over the Pacific that can be boiled, crushed, baked or fried like chips; roots and leaves are eaten

toktok – discussion, chitchat, conference

TOM – Territoire d’Outre-Mer; French overseas territory

T-piece – piece of cloth which covers the groin area; see also *mal mal*

trench – long, narrow and very deep depression in the sea bed

trepang – also known as *bêche-de-mer* or sea cucumber

trocchus – *Trochus niloticus*, or *troca*; a coiled, pink-and-white shell; the snail-like sea creature inside can be eaten

trou – waterhole

TSS – *taxe sur le service*; a service tax

tuluk – small package of *manioc* dough wrapped in leaves and filled with meat or fish

UC – Union Calédonienne; the first New Caledonian political party involving Kanaks

USP – University of the South Pacific; its main campus is in Suva, Fiji, though there are annexes elsewhere, including Vila and Luganville

VTT – *vélo tout-terrain*; French for mountain bike

yam – starchy tuber (*igname* in French), a staple food of Melanesians that can grow more than 1m long, and weigh 45kg; it has important cultural significance

yuca – see *cassava*