

Vanuatu Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	173
Activities	175
Business Hours	176
Children	176
Climate Charts	177
Customs	177
Dangers & Annoyances	177
Disabled Travellers	177
Embassies & Consulates	177
Festivals & Events	178
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	178
Holidays	178
Insurance	178
Internet Access	178
Money	179
Photography	179
Post	180
Shopping	180
Telephone & Fax	180
Time	181
Toilets	181
Tourist Information	181
Visas	182
Volunteering	182
Women Travellers	182
Transport Around Vanuatu	182
Air	182
Bicycle	184
Boat	184
Bus	185
Car & Motorcycle	185
Hitching	186
Taxi	186
Tours	186

ACCOMMODATION

There's an impressive selection of luxury hotels in and around Vila and, to a lesser extent, on Espiritu Santo and Tanna. And all islands have a range of medium-priced bungalows or guesthouses. Budget places in the villages are a bit like camping, and if you need a meal, ring or send a message. Food happens on a daily need basis, so there's never the 'makings' and the root crops take ages to cook. There again, nothing happens in a hurry. **Vanuatu Hotels** (www.vanuatu-hotels.vu)

PRACTICALITIES

- The major newspapers are the *Daily Post* (100Vt), excluding Sunday, and the *Independent* (200Vt) on Sunday. *Port Vila Presse* is only on the Web: www.news.vu/en.
- *Pacific Magazine*, published by Pacific Basin Communications, often has information on Vanuatu; see www.pacificmagazine.cc. *Island Business* covers all South Pacific islands; see www.islandsbusiness.com.
- Don't get overexcited if you've got TV in your room. There are three channels: local TV from 4.30pm to 11.30pm, American gospel, and Chinese news in English. You can watch satellite coverage of international news and sports at Anchor Inn, the Wild Pig and the Office Pub in Vila, and Club de Sanma in Luganville.
- The country's only radio station, Radio Vanuatu, provides trilingual FM, AM and SW services from 6am to 10pm and offers international and local news bulletins (98 on the FM dial, 1125 on AM). You can also pick up the BBC at 99FM.
- Town power is provided in Vila, Luganville, Lenakel and Lakatoro. A few rural guesthouses have their own generators or solar power, with electricity available until 9pm. Elsewhere it's kerosene lamps or (your own) torchlight.
- The current in Vanuatu is 220V to 240V, 50Hz AC, using flat two- or three-pin plugs as in Australia.
- Vanuatu uses the metric system. There's conversion tables inside the front cover.

is a local online booking service, with useful information about the country.

Another option is to simply arrive at the airport, and you will be taken to a guesthouse by any of the locals at the airstrip.

In the isolated islands communication is by word of mouth; transport is by foot; supplies are from the earth and there's no money to fix things that break. You'll be

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.

pampered in the locals' happy-go-lucky, warm style. But if you've paid for everything back in your own country, take cash to cover all drinks, pay upfront for extras and don't be surprised if your host has no money. Payment for your visit will be a small percentage of what you paid, and will arrive perhaps six months after you've gone.

Places to stay are usually listed according to price ranging from the cheapest option to the most expensive.

Bungalows

These are quaint, thatched cubby houses, with verandas and plaited pandanus-leaf walls. Owners take great pride in them. They nestle in gardens you'd die for, wobble on clifftops with stunning views or fall apart in pristine rainforests.

Some hosts can't wait to show you all the treats the island offers, catch fresh seafood, head off at 4.30am for an hour's walk to the nearest boat, so that it's waiting for you at 7am. There again, you may be left to find your own way around, and get SAO biscuits for breakfast.

Staying in a bungalow costs between 1500Vt and 4500Vt per night, generally including all meals. Some bungalows are members of the Vanuatu Island Bungalows Association, and hence meet certain standards; local tour operators (p64) can advise you on which places are members.

You won't think twice about the geckos in the dunny (bring toilet paper), the drink can and bucket-water shower (bring soap), the holes in the mosquito nets (bring tape), the roosters crowing at 4am (bring earplugs), or the lack of warm bedding (bring a wrap: it'll double as clothing, beach towel and dressing gown).

For great pictures of remote bungalows, and all the info you need to get there, visit **Positive Earth** (www.positiveearth.org/bungalows).

Camping

Vanuatu's only camping ground is on Tanna (p100) but many bungalows and guesthouses will let you use their grounds and facilities. If you want to pitch your tent on a remote beach, the local chief will probably give his approval.

Guesthouses, Resthouses & Nakamals

Many villages have a room in their women's meeting room or church hall, or in someone's house, and sometimes a guesthouse is actually a bungalow. Whichever, they are usually part of the village, sparse but clean, with fresh flowers to welcome you and a villager assigned to look after you. Your bed will cost between 500Vt and 2000Vt and you'll probably have a kitchen.

You'll need bottled water, but the villagers will make sure you've got a light and if there's no mattress you will be given clean matting, but probably no bedding. Somebody may sit outside when the roosters start crowing, ready to fetch what you need as soon as you stir. Arrive early enough for everyone to wander off to find the key. With notice too, the villagers will cook for you (200Vt a plate).

Young males might be offered a spot in the village *nakamal* (clubhouse), in exchange for an evening's *toktok* (discussion). You'll need bedding and protection against mosquitoes (sometimes fleas and rats too).

The big problem always is that the toilet will be on the other side of the village, across a cliff face, down a jungle path, somewhere impossible when there's no light, like black as black. Solutions to this problem are always creative and usually totally hysterical.

Resorts, Hotels & Motels

Vila dominates Vanuatu's tourist industry and has accommodation to match. There are many very good budget options for less than 5000Vt a double, and single rates are often half, or open to negotiation.

Fabulous, atmospheric places abound in the midrange group, with prices between 6000Vt and 15,000Vt for two. Top-end hotels and resorts start at around 15,000Vt for a double or twin room.

You can usually negotiate a longer-stay rate. You may even get a discount simply by asking, especially in the low season (November to March). Beds for children under 12 are often free.

I DO – SO LET'S GO PARTY

Fancy tying the knot on the rim of a volcano, like to arrive by canoe to an idyllic beach, prefer to say 'I do' in a tiny historic chapel on a tropical island? This is one hot spot for weddings – and after the wedding, well, there's romance in the air.

Many of the resorts have wedding packages starting from about 70,000Vt, which will include a wedding arch and wedding certificate, celebrant or pastor, canoes, bouquets and lovely floral decorations, plus maybe a local choir. Some options can be seen on www.vanuatuweddings.com.

If you want an excuse for a second honeymoon, have a *kastom* (traditional) wedding. You arrive in a dugout canoe to be greeted by warriors. The groom offers pigs, kava and food to his bride's family, and hopefully they accept. It's not legal, but a wonderful way to retake those vows. Ask at your chosen resort or contact **Narasaed Adventure Tours** (☎/fax 27555; narasaed@vanuatu.com.vu).

ACTIVITIES

Excellent sailing, kayaking, fishing, diving, snorkelling, trekking – everything, actually – will call you, even extreme sports such as abseiling and parasailing. Golf courses and tennis courts are only in or near Vila and Luganville. The only squash courts are in Vila.

Diving

Dramatic drop-offs, pristine lagoons, magnificent reefs and caves, exceptional wrecks, colourful fish, warm tropical waters, night diving with flashlight fish twinkling around you – what more could a diver hope for? Vanuatu provides superb dives for both expert and beginner divers. For more detailed information, see the specialist diving chapter (p52).

Fishing

World-standard game fishing is easy to organise here. Boats range from 9m to 42m, most with the latest, highest-quality gear. Light tackle fishing, reef fishing, river fishing, it's all waiting to lure (sorry) you onto the water where the dogtooth or yellowfin tuna and wahoo abound; the catch is tagged and released or given to villagers.

You can generally hire a canoe on the outer islands, or pay a villager to take you out in a speedboat. Go spear-fishing with the locals for green jobfish, or dive for crayfish, but bring an underwater torch and enough batteries for everyone. There's prawns and eels in the rivers – several islands, especially Efate, Aneityum, Santo, Erromango and Malekula – have fast-flowing creeks and broad estuaries that provide good-sized catches. Gaua and Ambae boast large crater lakes where prawns and eels are the main attraction.

Always check who owns the water and the fish in it before casting your line. Fishing gear is available in Vila and Luganville, but it's best to go prepared in other areas.

Hiking

The cooler months of July and August are the perfect time to go hiking and trekking. Some islands have steep-sided mountains that virtually climb out of the sea, reaching over the 1000m mark. Then there are half-, one- or two-day coastal walks through coconut plantations, gardens, rainforest and friendly villages.

Grand walks include the four-day trek around southwest Erromango, the two-day trek to the volcanoes on Ambrym, various walks in the Vatthe Conservation Area in northern Santo, the two-day trek to Lake Letas and Siri Falls on Gaua, the two-day walk around the western half of Aneityum, and the four-day trek, climb, struggle across central Malekula.

Most accommodation places will provide a guide and help you organise your walk, or go with tour operators (p186).

Always carry plenty of drinking water. Cotton trousers and long-sleeved shirts will protect you from sunburn, mosquitoes and the dreaded *nanggalat* plant, whose large, purple-veined leaves produce painful weals that hurt for a week (islanders use the sap from the plant's roots, as an antidote). Warm clothing and rain jackets are appropriate in many areas, particularly at high altitudes.

Solid walking boots are essential. Wet, slippery conditions are common; so are sharp volcanic rock paths, and tree roots to trip you. A tent is necessary for treks in unpopulated areas, but you can often hire

A GUIDING LIGHT

A guide is essential for walks away from the main roads in Vanuatu. A companion with local knowledge and language can ensure that you don't break a *tabu* (sacred and forbidden) or walk on *kastom* land without permission. A guide can also get meals and arrange assistance for the next section of your walk. A guide can tell you interesting details about the land you pass through, they'll bring a cultural perspective, and be there if you twist your ankle on the impossible terrain.

Many walks don't have tracks. A guide will cut a path with a bushknife. Where there are tracks, these can become impassable due to cyclones or rapid regrowth.

Tour operators (p64) or your host will hook you up with a guide. Expect to pay from 1000Vt to 3000Vt per day per carrier or guide. You may also have to provide them with food, bedding and warm clothing on the trek, so sort this out before leaving. Often your guide becomes a small group. Check out who you have to pay and provide food for.

one. Make sure your food is always secure from cockroaches and rats.

Snorkelling

There are stacks of places where you can walk out from the shore and see brilliant, pristine coral: Hideaway Island, Nguna, Tanna, Bokissa, Vanua Lava, Mystery Island, it's a long list. There are also boat tours for snorkellers, or you can join a scuba group.

If you're travelling to outer islands, take your own snorkel gear, and ask villagers for permission to use their beach.

Swimming

Some beaches have stunning fine white sand, azure diamond-clear water, fringes of palms and little reefs of coral a few steps out from shore. Some are several kilometres long. Others are tiny windswept breaks between cliffs, with driftwood and rocks. Many have black sand while others are based on dead coral and black volcanic rock. Sharks and strong currents are a major risk at many islands, so seek local advice before plunging in. And always carry reef shoes and snorkel gear.

Visiting Archaeological Sites

Almost all islands have relics including the sites of ancient villages, ceremonial grounds and burial places. Stone foundations and dry-stone walls are common – the stone monoliths that mark old dancing grounds are widespread in northern areas, particularly Gaua.

Ancient systems and prehistoric petroglyphs, or rock carvings, representing the sun, moon and animals. North Pentecost and Maewo also have numerous petroglyph sites.

Every archaeological site has a traditional owner; you must ask permission to see it and possibly pay a small entry fee.

Watching Wildlife

The wildlife is a highlight when you put on the goggles and slip into the water near a coral reef, or among the turtles or dugongs. Apart from marine fauna, however, you'll only see birds and small lizards. Great for bird enthusiasts: the lake on Gaua has a large population of ducks; the cloud-forests of Santo are home to the endemic mountain starling; Emae has peregrine falcons; tiny Laika, off Epi, has a colony of shearwaters (mutton birds). In forested areas are parrots and pigeons – you may not see them, but you'll certainly hear them (check out www.positiveearth.org/vanbirds).

BUSINESS HOURS

Government offices open Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 11.30am, and 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Businesses generally stay open until 5pm, and will open on Saturday mornings.

Shops trade from 7.30am to around 6pm or 7pm and may close for the midday siesta. Saturday shopping generally ceases about 11.30am, although Chinese stores are often open all weekend.

Village stores open for customers, although the manager's religious beliefs determine which day they close for the Sabbath (Friday for Jon Frum, Saturday for Seventh-Day Adventists, Sunday for the rest).

CHILDREN

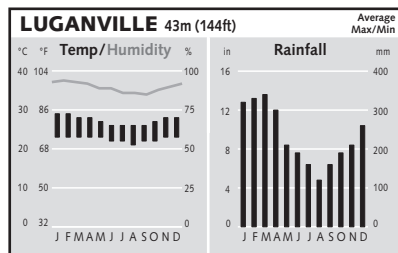
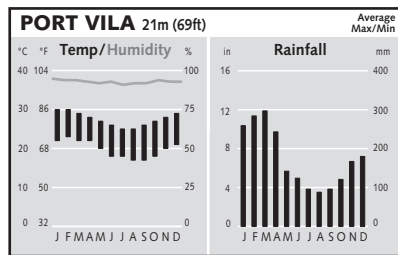
Apart from malaria precautions, there are no particular dos and don'ts for small children. Nappies (1750Vt for 32) and baby food are available in Vila's supermarkets but village stores don't sell them.

It's important to keep small children well hydrated; Gastrolyte helps prevent dehydration. Staff at all accommodation places will treat your kids like angels, and are always ready to baby-sit. See Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan for more useful advice.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Vanuatu's long stretch of islands means the climate varies considerably between the tropical north and the subtropical south. The dry season, between May and October, offers the tourist fine sunny days with pleasantly cool nights. November to April is the wet season, when it is hotter and wetter, and cyclones build up across the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Average temperatures in Luganville and Port Vila are a couple of degrees higher than at Lenakel on Tanna. Humidity in Vila, from December to February is high – around 83%, but averages a more comfortable 70% in other months. Winter (June to August) nights in Vila can drop below 12°C. See further climate info (p15).



CUSTOMS

You may bring in 200 cigarettes, 2L of wine and 1.5L of other alcohol, 250mL of eau de toilette, 100mL of perfume, and other items up to a value of 50,000Vt.

All plants, fruit, seeds, meat, fish, shellfish, dairy and poultry products must be declared on arrival. Failure to do so can lead to prosecution and fines. No firearms or ammunition may be brought into the country.

There are also restrictions on what you can take out of Vanuatu (see p75).

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

No one goes into the cooking pot these days, so apart from mosquito-borne diseases, stomach upsets and infected cuts, there's not much to worry about. There are sharks and venomous sea creatures and even in lagoons, swimmers and snorkellers should be aware of currents and tidal changes, especially water rushing through a pass in the reef into the open sea. Don't swim or snorkel alone and always seek local advice on conditions.

Your belongings will be quite safe in your hotel room, but don't leave valuables, wallets or handbags unattended. Clothing, footwear, snorkelling gear and other useful items might also attract thieves.

Ni-Vans are polite and honest, although there is the occasional drunk, or unscrupulous taxi driver.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

Travellers with restricted mobility will find some things about Vanuatu impossible. Vanair's planes have narrow doors, boats don't have ramp access, roads are rough. There again, you'll be faced with the helpfulness of locals; they're patient, they laugh, they're big and strong. So even though you may hate asking for assistance, it's different here. You'll happily be moved to wherever you need to go. Some hotels in Vila cater for disabled people (Poppy's, Le Lagon, Le Meridien).

For pretrip advice, check the Internet and contact the **Vanuatu Society for Disabled People** (☎ 22321, fax 27633; vanuatudisable@vanuatu.com.vu; PO Box 373, Vila); although not set up for travellers, they may be able to answer questions.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Vanuatu's Diplomatic Representatives
Vanuatu does not have embassies or consulates overseas. In addition to the following, honorary consuls are in Switzerland, Singapore, Philippines, China, Israel and Seychelles. Their contact details can be obtained from the **Foreign Affairs Department** (☎ 22347; PMB 9051, Port Vila).

Australia NSW (☎ 02-9597 4046; 54 Eden St, Arncliffe, NSW 2205) Victoria (☎ 03-9642 8888; Voitin Walker Davis, Level 5, 84 William St, Melbourne, Vic 3000)
France (☎ 01 40 53 82 25; 9 Rue Daru, 75008 Paris)
Japan (☎ 422-705 855; 4-22-36 Mure Mitaka, Tokyo 181-0002)

Embassies & Consulates in Vanuatu

All the diplomatic representations to Vanuatu are in Port Vila. High commissions or embassies are maintained by the following countries:

Australia (☎ 22777; Australian High Commission, PO Box 111, KPMG House, Rue Pasteur)

China (☎ 22598; Chinese Embassy, PMB 071, Rue d'Auvergne)

France (☎ 22353; Ambassade de France, PO Box 60, Lini Hwy)

New Zealand (☎ 22933; New Zealand High Commission, PO Box 161, Lini Hwy)

Also in Port Vila are the consuls for **Italy** (☎ 22243), **Papua New Guinea** (☎ 22930), **Spain** (☎ 22046), **Sweden** (☎ 22944) and the **European Union** (☎ 22501).

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Hang out in the villages and you'll soon be invited to a traditional ceremony – maybe a wedding, circumcision or farewell feast. These are grand; you feel like part of the culture. You'll probably be asked to make a speech!

Contact the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) for dates as they change each year. Two useful calendars can be found at www.vanuatu-tourism.com/vanuatu/cms/en/events/calendar.html and www.talpacific.com/vanuatu/guide.htm. Regular notable events:

Jon Frum Day Held in February in Sulphur Bay, Tanna; includes much festivity, dancing and a number of parades.

Naghol (Land-Diving) A spectacular, impressive April/May ritual that occurs in several villages in Pentecost.

Independence Day On July 30, Vanuatu's most important annual event means celebrations everywhere. Vila has the widest range of activities: sporting events, a military parade and fun stalls at Independence Park; canoe and yacht races in the bay; string-band competitions; and *kastom* dancing.

National Sand-drawing Festival Held in August on host islands. The next sand-drawing competition for women will be held at Avokh, near the Maskelynes, in 2007.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Gays and lesbians will probably have to be discreet in Vanuatu. While homosexu-

ality is accepted and is not illegal, public displays of affection are not the done thing, regardless of your sexual persuasion. There are no specifically gay bars on the islands.

HOLIDAYS Public Holidays

When a national holiday falls on a weekend, there's usually a public holiday on the following Monday.

Vanuatu's official national holidays include the following:

New Year's Day 1 January

Father Walter Lini (Remembrance Day) 21 February

Kastom Chiefs' Day 5 March

Easter March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Ascension Day 24 May

Children's Day 24 July

Independence Day 30 July

Assumption Day 15 August

Constitution Day 5 October

National Unity Day 29 November

Christmas Day 25 December

Family Day 26 December

School Holidays

There's a stream of students returning to their home islands during local school holidays. They mainly go by cargo boat, but it's a good idea to book domestic flights as early as possible at these times. Flights are also busier during Australian and New Zealand school holidays, but the tourist facilities will almost always have vacancies.

INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is vital, but some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include parasailing, scuba diving, motorcycling, even trekking. Check that the policy covers ambulances and an emergency flight home. If it doesn't and you're on a stretcher, you'll have to pay for nine seats in the plane!

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

INTERNET ACCESS

You can access the Internet at several cafés in Vila and Luganville, and one in Lenakel. Many hotels and resorts also offer Internet

access. On most outer islands, however, you can't get online.

A service called L@goon Kiosk allows secure Internet access through your laptop. Check it out at **Telecom Vanuatu** (☎ 22015; www.tvl.net.vu; per min/hr 27/1620Vt). Telecom Vanuatu is currently building a wireless access tower, which will bring prices down.

To hook your computer up you'll need a 'US style' plug (US RJ-11). To check if your laptop will plug into the local power supply, see the boxed text, p173.

Email addresses can be found at www.tvl.net.vu.

MONEY

Vanuatu's currency is the vatu, abbreviated to 'Vt'. There are 200Vt, 500Vt, 1000Vt and 5000Vt banknotes, and coins worth 5Vt, 10Vt, 20Vt, 50Vt and 100Vt. There are no limits on the amount of money you may bring in to or take out of the country.

For exchange rates, see inside the front cover of this book, and for an idea of costs, see p15. The vatu floats against a basket of currencies including the US dollar, so it is reasonably stable.

The major duty-free shops and hotels in Vila should accept cash and travellers cheques in major international currencies, but hotels outside the capital will need cash in vatu.

ATMs

The ANZ has several ATMs around downtown Vila, one at Bauerfield Airport and one at its Luganville branch, while Westpac has one in Vila. Both banks are agents for Visa and MasterCard; Westpac also acknowledges Amex. Your daily withdrawal limit at home will also apply here.

Cash

Always take plenty of vatu to rural Vanuatu as you won't be able to change foreign currencies once you're outside Vila or Luganville. In remote areas you will need coins and smaller-denomination notes.

Credit Cards

The major credit cards are accepted by hotels, car-rental agencies, airline offices, and most of the tourist-friendly shops and restaurants in Vila and, to a small extent, Luganville. You can't use plastic cards out-

HOW MUCH WILL IT BE?

You'll find, especially on the outer islands, that your host is like a favourite uncle. You'll be offered anything they have to offer: cup of coffee, canoe ride, adventure walk. They won't mention money, because it's not in their thoughts. But when the bill is made out, they will include the costs of these. It'll be a reasonable amount, but it's a surprise nevertheless. So any treats which you can see would cost, especially if fuel is involved, ask how much will it be, because it's unlikely to be free.

side these two towns and the main resorts on Tanna.

Moneychangers

The ANZ Bank, Westpac and National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) all change travellers cheques and foreign currency. Their main offices are in Vila, with branches in Luganville on Santo. The NBV also has a branch at Bauerfield Airport, open for incoming international flights.

There's a Western Union Money Transfer in Vila, handy for emergency funds. There's also Goodies Money Exchange, which offers very good rates.

Tipping

In *kastom* terms, tipping is an obligation that the receiver must return, so to avoid embarrassment keep your 'tip' to a smile of thanks.

Travellers Cheques

The NBV bank has branches on many islands and will exchange travellers cheques, but it's always easier and safer to carry vatu.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Common types of 35mm slide and print film are plentiful in Vila, but it's a different story elsewhere. It's best to bring your own if you need special film.

Print film is developed at several outlets in Vila. E6 slide film is processed only by **Top Shots** (☎ 23260; Lini Hwy) near Goodies. This is considered the best of the local processors; it charges 1350Vt for 24 prints and 1500Vt to develop and mount 24 slides.

You can upload photos to the web or burn to CD-ROM in Vila at Top Shots, Nambawan Market & Café (p64), and the Tour Shop (p64). In Santo, see Basil at Computer Net (p131), or go to Deco Stop Lodge (p135). Ask about scanning your printed photos to send by email.

POST

Vanuatu Post (www.vanuatuupost.vu) has the world's only Underwater Post Office and Volcano Post Box, making it quite famous; water- and fireproof postcards are 300Vt, and go anywhere in the world.

There's no street postal-delivery service in the country, addresses are a PO Box or Private Mail Bag (PMB). There's a poste restante service in Port Vila. All major centres have post offices. Outer-island mail is delivered to the main islands by Vanair; add the relevant airport to the address.

The worldwide airmail rate for postcards from Vanuatu is 90Vt. Pick up a *Postal Rates & Charges* leaflet from the Vila post office for other international letter and parcel rates.

SHOPPING

Vila offers the shopper some little gems, such as Lladro pieces you can actually afford and designer clothing. And best of all are the local handicrafts, available at the market and shops along Lini Hwy, as well as at a couple of shops in Luganville, Espiritu Santo. The local hardwood, *natora*, becomes richly-coloured, very strobable fat-bellied pigs. The tropical soft timbers turn into stunning carved outrigger canoes, complete with parchmentlike sails. Shells string together for necklaces, coconuts make little houses, brown plastic dolls don grass skirts and wear flowers in their hair. Shopping is a joy in Vila. But the outer islands hide the arts and crafts, giving the tourist the added fun of finding the artisans and dealing with them direct.

Some interesting new ideas for mementos are packets of instant kava, Tanna coffee and Santo beef in cryovac packs.

Bargaining

There is no bargaining; village people will take their produce back home from market rather than accept a lower price than that asked.

TELEPHONE & FAX

Vanuatu boasts a national microwave telephone network connecting all major islands. HF and VHF teleradio (ie radio telephone, or 'radphone') services are provided to more than 200 isolated island communities.

Public phones are all card-operated (for local and international calls) and are listed in the *Vanuatu Telephone Directory*. Guest-houses and bungalows on the outer islands use these public phones, so always travel with a spare phonecard. Go to www.vanuatu.com.vu for services and directories.

Fax

Local and international fax facilities are available at Vila's general post office and the Telecom Vanuatu office in Luganville.

Mobile Phones

Vanuatu is in the GSM digital network but only has coverage around Vila, Luganville and Norsup. If your phone company has a roaming agreement with GSM, you can use a SIM card from Telecom Vanuatu, just north of the Office Pub (Map p62). For more information, see www.smile.com.vu.

Phone Codes

To use the HF teleradio network, dial ☎ 22759 in Vila; for the VHF network, dial ☎ 22221 in Vila and ☎ 36248 in Luganville. ☎ 22221 in Vila and ☎ 36248 in Luganville. You don't need to know the call sign of the other party – just tell the operator who you want. You have to speak in turns, so signal for a reply by saying 'over'.

It's likely a subscriber can speak only Bislama, so have someone nearby who is fluent in this language.

Radios and telephones are scarce in rural Vanuatu: they're usually located at airports and in a public area in villages. If you need to speak to someone in particular, fix a time for them to be there when you ring back. Messages are always passed on.

Domestic calls between 6pm and 6am Monday to Friday and all weekend cost 20Vt for four minutes; double during peak times.

There are no area codes in Vanuatu; the first two or three digits of phone numbers indicate location within the country.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS

The code for international calls from Vanuatu is ☎ 00. Calls to Vanuatu require the in-

ternational direct dialling code of the country you're ringing from, then ☎ 678 (the code for Vanuatu), then the subscriber's number.

There are two zones for international call rates from Vanuatu: neighbourhood (Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Fiji) and the rest of the world. To call within the 'neighbourhood' costs 133Vt per minute during peak times (6am to 6pm Monday to Friday) and 108Vt per minute off-peak. The rates to everywhere else are 216/168Vt.

These calls can be made from any public telephone as long as you have a phonecard. Many larger hotels have IDD phones. You cannot make international reverse-charge calls from Vanuatu.

Phonecards

There are no coin-operated public phones, so if you have to make a call you must have a phonecard. And these are often not available. Not anywhere. So always travel with a couple of spare ones. It's worth buying them in Vila or Luganville (they make excellent gifts anyway). There are six cards available, ranging in price from 450Vt to 2700Vt.

Service Messages

Villages without telephones or teleradio can usually be contacted by sending a service message over Radio Vanuatu, which broadcasts them daily; villagers listen in case there is one for them. Often this is the only way you can let them know you're coming.

To send a service message in Vila, go to **Radio Vanuatu** (☎ 22999; Bligh St) north of downtown. In Luganville, **Radio Vanuatu** (☎ 36851) is opposite the University of the South Pacific.

TIME

Vanuatu time is GMT/UMT (Greenwich Mean Time/Universal Time Coordinated) plus 11 hours, one hour ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time. Noon in Vila is 1am in London, 8pm in New York and 11am in Sydney. See p367 for more information.

Time seems to move slowly in the South Pacific; after a while you get used to the unhurried pace of life. If you're travelling in rural Vanuatu you'll spend hours waiting for planes, taxis, speedboats, guides...

TOILETS

There are public toilets in Vila and Luganville, at several airstrips, near the rim of

Tanna's volcano (this one's a ripper) and that's about it. If you're travelling to the outer islands, take your own toilet paper.

TOURIST INFORMATION Local Tourist Offices

The official tourism office is in Vila: **Vanuatu Tourism Office** (VTO; ☎ 22813, 22515; www.vanuatu-tourism.com; tourism@vanuatu.com.vu). The travel agencies (p64) in Port Vila will give you information about the whole country, and arrange your trip if you want.

Tour operators (p69) offer a great variety of sightseeing and action-packed activities, mostly around Efate.

Most accommodation in and around Vila and Luganville have lots of promotional material. Other useful sources are websites such as **Vanuatu Hotels** (www.vanuatu-hotels.vu) for online bookings, **Wantok Environment Centre** (www.positiveearth.org) for information about outer-island bungalows, and **Vanuatu Adventure Travel** (www.vanuatu-adventure-travel.vu) which is full of ideas for island-hopping safaris.

Staff at the provincial government offices may have information about travel in their region. Provincial headquarters follow:

- Malampa** (☎ 48403, 48491, 48643; PO Box 22, Lakatoro, Malekula) Malekula, Ambrym and Paama.
- Penama** (☎ 38348, 38414, 38415; Saratamata, Ambae) Pentecost, Ambae and Maewo.
- Sanma** (☎ 36712; PO Box 239, Luganville, Santo) Espiritu Santo and Malo.
- Shefa** (☎ 22752; PMB 9078, Port Vila) Efate, Epi and the Shepherd Islands.
- Tafea** (☎ 68664, 68638; PO Box 28, Isangel, Tanna) Tanna, Erromango, Anietyum, Aniwa and Futuna.
- Torba** (☎ 38550; Sola, Vanua Lava) Banks and Torres Islands.

Tourist Offices Abroad

The VTO is represented in the following countries only:

- Australia** NSW (☎ 02-9959 3599; fax 9955 2171; info@thesalesteam.com.au; The Sales Team Marketing Group, Suite 602a, Level 6, 97-103 Pacific Hwy, North Sydney, NSW 2060); Queensland (☎ 07-3221 2566; fax 3221 3967; brisbane.sales@airvanuatu.com.au; Level 5, 293 Queen St, Brisbane, Qld 4000)
- New Caledonia** (☎ 28 66 77; fax 27 40 50; axxessga@affratel.nc; Axxess Travel, Lot 36 rue de Verdun, Noumea)
- New Zealand** (☎ 6844 1781; fax 6844 5499; vanuatu@traveltalk.co.nz; Craig Andrew Reid & Associates, PO Box 7240, Taradale, Auckland)

VISAS

Entry visas are not required for nationals of British Commonwealth and European Union countries. A number of other countries are also exempt (eg USA, Fiji, Japan, China). Have a look at www.vanuatu-tourism.com/visa_info.htm.

If you need a visa (fee 2500Vt), contact the **Principal Immigration Officer** (☎ 22354, fax 25492; vanuatuimmigration@vanuatu.com.vu; PMB 092, Port Vila). This must be finalised *before* you arrive. The only honorary consul who can organise visas outside Vanuatu is in New South Wales, Australia (p178).

Visa extensions are free and straightforward; you leave your passport and onward ticket with the Immigration Department in Vila or Luganville for about three days.

VOLUNTEERING

For information on volunteering in Vanuatu with Australian Volunteers International, see p75; see also p38 for a cultural perspective. Volunteering organisations that can provide information include **Global Volunteers** (www.globalvolunteers.org) and **Volunteer Abroad** (www.volunteerabroad.com); the following organisations have projects in Vanuatu: **Australian Business Volunteers** (www.abv.org.au) **Canadian University Service Overseas** (CUSO; www.cuso.org)

Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA; www.jica.go.jp)

Volunteer Service Abroad (NZ VSA; www.vsa.org.nz)

Voluntary Service Overseas (British VSO; <http://www.vso.org.uk/about/cprofiles/vanuatu.asp>)

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Vanuatu is considered a safe place for female visitors, but every female has a horror story, so practise care. This includes taking a taxi or sticking to busy areas at night. Try not to swim or sunbathe alone at isolated beaches.

Women staying overnight alone in villages may risk being harassed. Known as 'creepers', these men hang around making kissing and 'psst' noises. They are unlikely to take matters further but for peace of mind, ask them very strongly to not look at you or your door any more (an open door is an invitation) and to go away. The villagers will always 'lend' you a young woman to sleep in your bungalow if you are nervous.

Vanuatu is a bastion of male chauvinism, and the restrictions placed on women

may seem out of place, but they're unavoidable. The locals are bemused and tolerant of Western women's quaint behaviour and dress, but it's neither dignified nor respectful to wear skimpy clothing, especially on the outer islands which see few tourists.

Women intending to travel solo to the outer islands could contact the **Vanuatu National Council of Women** (☎ 23108; PO Box 975), next to the National Museum in Vila, for further information.

TRANSPORT AROUND VANUATU

Ownership of land, ocean, reefs etc is the basis of Vanuatu society. Ownership has been passed through families, and land disputes are serious all over the islands. For tourists this means you can't wander off the beaten track. Landing on an island is equivalent to walking into somebody's garden. If you're travelling independently, discuss your plans with a tour operator or the VTO.

In remote areas – such as the east coasts of Maewo, Pentecost and Ambrym, and the west coasts of Santo and Malekula – the only access is by foot or speedboat. Many islands have no roads, or if all the trucks die the roads quickly turn back to jungle. For many places, contact with the outside world is via the small cargo boats that operate out of Vila and Luganville.

All the larger islands and most major centres are serviced at least weekly by air services from Vila or Luganville.

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

AIR

Vanuatu's domestic air carrier is **Vanair** (www.vanair.vu; Rue de Paris, Vila). You can check prices, schedules and book flights through the website, by phone in Vila (☎ 25025) and Luganville (☎ 36421), at the offices, or at the airports. A return flight between Vila and Tanna will cost probably 25,000Vt, but you get a 20% discount by showing your international ticket, children are half-price, under-twos pay 10%, and oh the joy of flying in a small plane. It's worth every cent.

Vanair offers scheduled flights into 28 airfields using its small fleet of 20-seat Twin

Otters, a new 44-seat ATR and a tiny 9-seat Islander that's really cool. The service is regular but delays are common and routes may change to cover an emergency, particularly on 'milk run' flights (which deposit people and supplies). With stopovers you pay for each leg separately.

Book as far in advance as possible, particularly on popular routes such as Vila to Luganville and Tanna. Don't despair if the plane is booked out and you really want to get on it: if you go to the airfield just prior to departure there's a good chance of a vacancy.

Students with an International Student Identity Card get 25% discount. Internal flights out of Vila and Longana have a departure tax payable at the airport (200Vt).

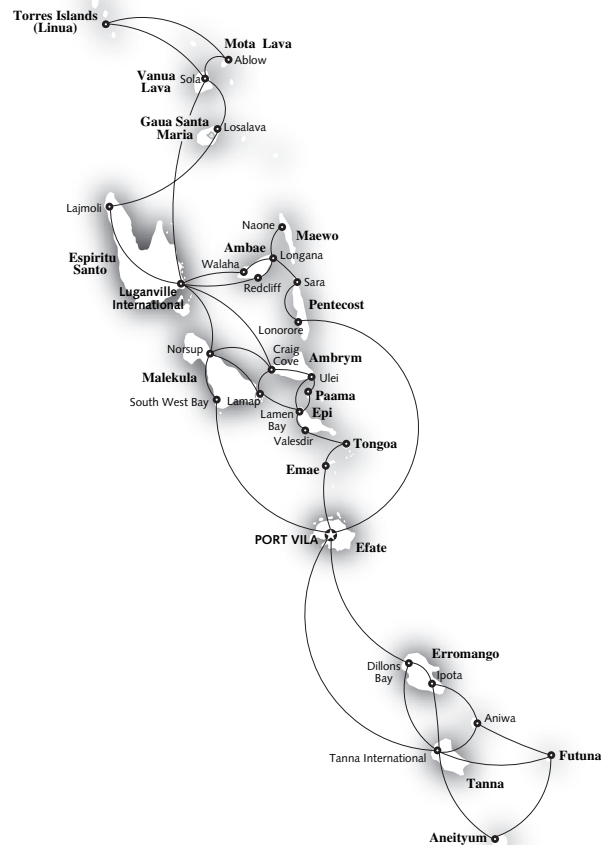
Vanair's baggage allowance is officially 10kg, but they're very good about bicycles, surfboards, whatever.

It's important to reconfirm your flight; note that check-in time is one hour prior to departure. Check that your bike/surfboard has been loaded, and maybe watch while freight is unloaded at airfields en route in case your baggage is taken off by mistake.

Only the airfields at Vila, Luganville and Tanna have sealed runways. The other airstrips have grass or coral and are often closed after heavy rain. Many don't have toilet facilities; make do with nearby vegetation.

Schedules will suddenly vary, so always check by asking around, and leave yourself plenty of time (and keep a phonecard

VANUATU AIR ROUTES



THE WAY TO FLY

The Sot Leg – an emerald dove that does indeed have short legs – was on the next seat, its head cocked to say, 'This is the way to fly!' Flying with Vanair is one fantastic adventure. Forget security queues and pat-downs, confiscation of your nailfile, and those sterile aircraft surrounds. With Vanair you see the propellers whizzing, sit with men who've got their bushknives on their knees, share a seat with a dove, and skim over crater lakes, coral reefs, rugged coastlines and ocean carpet.

The pilots are strict about everyone having a seat. When one passenger was left standing in the aisle the pilot waited patiently. Eventually somebody offered their seat and hopped out – the next plane was due in three days. No sweat.

Flights to Futuna were cancelled for a while. The grass on the airstrip was too long for safe landing because the lawnmower had broken. The only way to get the spare part was by plane. Tricky.

And when they needed a crocodile as a mate for the one living in Sulfur River on Vanua Lava, a tranquillised croc was loaded into the plane. Bit big in a small plane. Its head went through into the cockpit and rested between the two pilots. It sure is the way to fly.

in your pocket). Taxi drivers can turn up hours late, and planes can arrive an hour earlier than expected! Don't book a flight, expecting to connect with an international flight – go back to Vila the day before.

Unity Airlines (☎ 24475; www.unity-airlines.com; unity-airlines@vanuatu.com.vu; Lini Hwy) has a twin-engine Piper that holds 10 people for scenic tours or for charter.

BICYCLE

Although it's rare to see tourists travelling on bicycles, Efate, Santo, Malekula, Tanna and Pentecost have sufficient roads and tracks for mountain biking.

Bringing a mountain bike with you on your international flight should be possible, but check when booking. If you're travelling in a group, the cargo space of Vanair's Twin Otters only has space for two bikes.

Bring spares and tools, as bike shops are nonexistent. Some accommodation places have bikes for guests to use, and Vila has some bike hire available.

BOAT

Canoe & Speedboat

Canoes are dugout craft with outriggers, powered by paddles or sails. When ni-Vans talk of speedboats, they mean dinghies or small workboats with outboard motors.

Canoes are widely used as commuter craft and for fishing. Thanks to the outriggers they are stable and can go quickly. In most areas speedboats seating four to 10 passengers have replaced canoes for main journeys, but prices can be very high because the fuel is expensive and hard to come by.

If there's a regular speedboat service, such as Santo to Malo, and Efate to Nguna, it's much cheaper to take the scheduled trip rather than arrange your own. You can usually find someone with a canoe or speedboat to take you where you want to go – unless a cyclone has smashed all the boats. Always find out the cost of your ride before you leave, and make sure anything nonwaterproof is well protected.

Another interesting way to get around is by sea kayak; paddle to offshore islands – there are trips lasting from a half-day to 10 days.

Cargo Boat

Travelling around Vanuatu by cargo boat might seem like an adventure but facilities are basic and journeys can become both very long and very unpleasant if the sea is rough, which it usually is. If the captain decides it's too rough to head out you may be stuck for days. Bring a pillow and warm cover, ask if there are beds, and check the food and water situation. Cargo boats can't run to a schedule, although they do make round-trips every week, fortnight or month. Also consider the condition of your boat; you can check with **Vanuatu Maritime Authority** (☎ 23128) to see if it's certified. Boats leave from the old wharf behind Sea View Restaurant & Takeaway, or the main (Ifira) wharf on Wharf Rd in Vila.

Last-minute information on cargo boats leaving Port Vila to outer islands is posted in the VTO office. One cool way to find out a boat's movements is to ask at your local kava bar. Cargo boats that are reliable and take passengers on their weekly rounds:

THE LONG TRIP HOME

If you have chartered a boat to travel out to the islands, and your international flight from Vila back home is set in stone, here's the plan: sail out of Vila but leave the boat at the outer island and fly back with Vanair. Seas change too dramatically for that sort of deadline.

Brisk (☎ 36517, 43744; SeaLink, Santo) Santo, Pentecost, Ambrym, Epi, Vila.

Dinh 1 (☎ 22865; Dinh Shipping, Vila) Vila, Tanna, Malekula, Santo.

Kotu (☎ 36623; Unity Store, Santo) Santo, Ambae, Maewo, Banks Islands. Runs every three weeks.

MV Havannah (☎ 25225, 23889; Frank Maki, Vila) Noumea, Vila, Malekula, Santo. Runs monthly.

Sarafenua (☎ 24135, 46164; baboak@ifira.com.vu; Ifira, Vila) Vila, Epi, Paama, Santo, Pentecost, Ambrym, Ambae, Erromango, Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna, Aniwa.

Passenger Boat

A fabulous new powered catamaran *Diep-sea* operated by **Island Gateway** (☎ 22662, 51595; islandgateway@vanuatu.com.vu) goes to Santo via the Shepherds, Epi and Malekula each Friday (7000Vt), returning via Ambae, Maewo, Pentecost, Ambrym and Paama on Saturday (7000Vt). A second loop goes to Tanna (6000Vt) on Monday or Tuesday via Erromango, returning to Vila on Tuesday or Wednesday (6000Vt). The catamaran carries 58 people, has comfortable seating, refreshments and onboard entertainment.

Pelsaert (☎ 22743, 49094, fax 27763; adventure@vanuatu.com.vu), a 21m Precision, runs to Tanna twice-weekly, docking at Port Resolution Tuesday and Lenakel Thursday (one way 5500Vt, 10 hours). Friday it goes to Litslits on Malekula (5000Vt, 14 hours), and on to Luganville on Santo (6500Vt). It returns to Vila Sunday (6500Vt). Reclining seats cater for up to 70 people. Ask about coming into Lenakel and leaving via Port Resolution.

Yacht

Vanuatu is popular with yachties, some of whom may be prepared to give you a berth on an island cruise. Waterfront Bar & Grill and Vanuatu Cruising Yacht Club (www.vanuatucruisingyachtclub.org) in Vila have noticeboards about what's on offer. In Santo, check at the Natangora Café in the main street, or at Aore Island Resort.

Several operators do regular day trips around Vila, and can be chartered for extended cruises (p335).

BUS

Public bus services in Vila and Luganville are fantastic. They are privately owned – there's a red 'B' on their number plates – and seat 10 to 14. Flag them down by the roadside, and they'll stop if there's a spare seat. They drop you at your door, for a fixed price (usually 100Vt). Other people on the bus are taken to their destinations, so you get to see lots of backstreets on the way. People chat, ask the driver to stop at a shop for a minute, wave out the window. The driver may take you to destinations out of town, but ask what the fare will be. Try to have the correct change, particularly early in the morning.

A limited minibus service operates on the east coast of Santo. Malekula has limited services along its eastern and northern coast.

Vila has some buses on Sunday and public holidays, but they're nowhere to be seen at these times on Malekula and in rural Santo.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE Driving Licence

An International Driving Licence is not needed in Vanuatu; most national driving licences suffice, but you must have held your licence for at least a year.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol costs about 125Vt per litre in Vila, more elsewhere, although Santo is the only other island with advertised prices as it's the only other island with vehicles for hire. Outside the townships of Vila and Luganville, it is not possible to get spare parts and nearly impossible to find a mechanic. So it's important to check your hire vehicle before heading off.

Hire

You can hire cars and 4WD vehicles in Vila and Luganville, and scooters in Vila. The minimum age for car rental is 23; for a scooter it's 17, with a valid driving licence.

Insurance

Insurance is always added to the car or motorcycle hire – by law. Your hire car will come customised, with dents and scratches

on most panels, so take a note of major damage in case you add your own mark and need to make a claim.

Road Conditions

Roads are a major problem. Except for some roads in Vila, and the main road through Luganville, the term loosely describes a connected meandering line of boulders, tree roots, potholes, concrete slabs, blind corners and rocky slides running beside vine-covered drops into ravines or down ocean cliffs. Be wary of people, animals and logging trucks. Closures due to flooding and fallen trees are common.

Road Rules

There's a speed limit of 50km/h in Vila and Luganville, but elsewhere speed is dictated by road conditions – it's not going anywhere above 10km/h. Vehicles drive on the right-hand side of the road. Always give way to traffic coming from the right.

One of the main problems with driving yourself around both Efate and Santo is the lack of road signs, up-to-date road maps or any indication of where road the finishes and a ravine starts.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country. If you want to hitch a ride, flag down a passing vehicle and ask the driver the cost of a lift to wherever. The lack of traffic on rural roads makes hitching a very bad choice and vehicles you do see will probably already have a full load.

TAXI

Islands with roads have taxis. In Vila and Luganville most are sedans, but everywhere else, the taxi is a 4WD truck. Taxis don't have a meter, and drivers never try to rip you off. Ask the price. If it is too high the driver may adjust it a bit. The **Taxi Association & Bus Service Centre** (☎ 25135), opposite Centrepoin supermarket in Vila, will hear any complaints.

If there are two or three of you, taxis are generally cheaper than organised tours. Day trips cost between 8000Vt and 12,000Vt depending on the road conditions and distance. You'll probably need to provide lunch for the driver.

At island airstrips, there will be trucks to meet the scheduled flights. Check who can

REALITY CHECK

On the outer islands, fuel arrives by cargo boat, in drums. Drums are transferred to a motorboat, rolled out onto the shore then up into a truck for a slow trip to the local store where the fuel is drained into old 4L glass flagons (where did all that sherry go?) ready for you to buy and pour into your tank through a funnel.

take you, before they fill up. On most islands taxis are scarce, especially on Sunday and public holidays, so if you need one for an outing, try to book at least a day early.

TOURS

There's a wide variety of tours on offer. Those in and around Vila are well advertised – pick up some brochures. Tours are never ever those 'follow my yellow flag' sort. Just a few people in a minibus or 4WD truck, pretty laid back and always fun.

Many, especially yacht cruises, game fishing and scuba diving, offer experiences it'd be difficult to organise yourself (p65).

Things go a little crazy on a cruise-ship day; book your tour in advance.

Cultural Tours

Cultural spectacles have unmissable atmosphere, colour and drama: Melanesian feast nights with string bands, traditional displays, fire-walking, dance-and-song *kastom* tours to villages, discovery tours to historical sites, and much much more.

For major events, such as Pentecost land-diving, many agents and operators offer packages. They're expensive but always worth far more than anything you've paid. The Nekowiar and Toka festival on Tanna is difficult – dates are decided a few days before (between August and October about every three years). Ask an agent to send you details as soon as they are announced.

Hiking Tours

It's a great country for hiking, short walks and extended treks, with an unbelievable range of views and experiences. Contact a travel agent in Vila (p64) about the grand walks on the outer islands. **EcoTours** (www.vanuatuecotour.com.vu) is the Efate specialist, with half- to four-day jaunts.

Transport

CONTENTS

Entry Requirements	332
Air	332
Sea	335

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.travelarrange.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 **Cerde 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

CONTENTS

Before You Go	337
Insurance	337
Recommended Vaccinations	337
Medical Checklist	337
Internet Resources	338
Further Reading	338
In Transit	338
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	338
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	338
In Vanuatu & New Caledonia	338
Availability & Cost of Health Care	338
Infectious Diseases	339
Traveller's Diarrhoea	339
Environmental Hazards	340
Travelling with Children	341
Women's Health	341
Traditional Medicine	341

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
- antiarrhythmic 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 antiarrhythmic 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

CONTENTS

The Talk of New Caledonia	342
The Talk of Vanuatu	344
Language Books & Courses	344
Bislama & French	344
Accommodation	344
Conversation & Essentials	345
Directions	345
Emergencies	346
Health	346
Language Difficulties	346
Numbers	346
Shopping & Services	347
Times & Date	347
Transport	348

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 Yälayu; in the south it's Xäräcüü. 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'
ö	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>Elanyjë.</i>	<i>À demain.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Dréi la éjë 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>göhñë</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>hnengädrai</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>
-------------	-------------------

Good morning.

<i>Gudmorning.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
--------------------	-----------------

Good afternoon.

<i>Guddaftenu.</i>	<i>Bonjour.</i>
--------------------	-----------------

Good night.

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

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>
----------------------	-----------------------

Yes.

<i>Yes.</i>	<i>Oui.</i>
-------------	-------------

No.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Non.</i>
------------	-------------

Maybe.

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

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>
--------------------------------	-----------------------

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>
-----------------------------	-------------------------

I’m from ...

<i>Mi blong ...</i>	<i>Je viens de ...</i>
---------------------	------------------------

Do you like ...?

<i>Yu ting yu likim ...?</i>	<i>... vous plaît?</i>
------------------------------	------------------------

I like it very much.

<i>Mi likim tumas.</i>	<i>Je l’aime beaucoup.</i>
------------------------	----------------------------

I don’t like ...

<i>Mi no likim ...</i>	<i>Je n’aime pas ...</i>
------------------------	--------------------------

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>
--

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>
--

What ... is this?

<i>Wanem ... ia? 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/reva</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

fote

50

fefté

60

sikiste

70

sevente

80

eite

90

naente

100

handred

1000

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

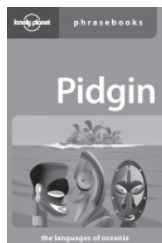
taksi

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.

erpnave – 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 *ferronickel*

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*

meresinfрут – 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*