



HA'APAI 12-DAY CLASSIC

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

FRIENDLY ISLANDS KAYAK COMPANY LTD.
PO Box 142, Waitati 9069, Otago, NEW ZEALAND
Phone: +64 3 482 1202 Fax: +64 3 479 9944
Email: tours@fikco.com Website: <http://www.fikco.com/>

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

- Day 1** Arrival and overnight at *Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability)*.
- Day 2** Acclimatisation. Orientation talk. Overnight at *Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability)*.
- Days 3-11** Kayaking in the Lifuka Archipelago. Camping (Days 3-10).
- Day 11** Farewell dinner. Overnight at *Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability)*.
- Day 12** Trip concludes.

INTRODUCTION

Situated approximately halfway between Vava'u and Tongatapu, the Ha'apai Islands are everything you might imagine of a tropical island paradise: friendly people; an uncanny sense of timelessness; remote, uninhabited atolls; lush, tropical bush; expansive, white sand beaches; balmy breezes; warm waters teeming with tropical fish. All the ingredients of a memorable escape! In Ha'apai you will find not only exceptional natural beauty, but also the friendliest folk in the Kingdom. Because *papalangis* or foreigners are rare in Ha'apai they are welcomed with open arms by the locals!

It was in Ha'apai that Captain Cook and his crew were invited ashore by the village chiefs for a feast. Unbeknownst to Cook, the chiefs' intention was to take over his ship and include some of his crew in the feast menu! Fortunately the chiefs could not agree on the timing of their gruesome plan and Cook sailed out of the Ha'apai's naming them the Friendly Isles. Ha'apai is also where the Mutiny on the Bounty took place. Captain Bligh and a few of his crew were forced to set off from Tofua Island in a rowboat on what was to become an epic journey.

Owing to its pristine natural environment and fascinating history, the Ha'apai Group has been designated a Conservation Area. We feel privileged, therefore, to be granted a license to offer kayak tours in this beautiful archipelago, the heart of Polynesia.

The 45 kilometre-long Lifuka archipelago comprises low lying coral islands, expansive white sand beaches, towering volcanoes and colourful lagoons. We paddle along the lee side of the archipelago, occasionally venturing offshore into more exposed waters to access remote islands. We strive for a healthy balance between relaxation and adventure, generally paddling in the mornings, leaving the afternoons

free for snorkelling amidst colourful coral; exploring lush tropical bush; and observing the traditional village lifestyle.

AIR TRAVEL TO/WITHIN TONGA

The following is a summary of air services to and within Tonga. These schedules are subject to change and should be confirmed with your local travel/booking agent. **NOTE: All flights to/from Ha'apai require an inter-island flight from either Tongatapu or Vava'u with Chathams Pacific.**

Air New Zealand: From Auckland to Tongatapu x 5 flights per week (Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat)

From Los Angeles to Tongatapu (via Auckland) x 4 flights per week (Mon, Wed, Thurs, Sat)

Air Pacific: From Los Angeles to Tongatapu (via Nadi) x 2 flights per week (Tues, Sat)

From Nadi (or Suva) to Tongatapu x 4 flights per week (Mon, Tue, Fri, Sat)

Pacific Blue: From Auckland to Tongatapu x 2 flights per week (Tue, Thu)

From Sydney to Tongatapu x 2 flights per week (Tue, Thu)

Chathams Pacific: Between Tongatapu/Vava'u/Ha'apai (Mon-Sat).

Chathams Pacific have an online booking facility:

Website: <http://www.chathamspacific.com/>

Email: Reservations@ChathamsPacific.com

Phone: +676 28852 Fax: +676 28853

We recommend that you allow a minimum of 2 hours connection time between your international flights and Tonga interisland flights (Chathams Pacific).

SEA KAYAKING

The concept of sea kayaking is still new to many people who may have visions of paddling in small unstable kayaks typically used on river trips. In contrast, we use stable, seaworthy double kayaks (Necky Tofino) especially suited to novices and the ocean environment. No previous kayaking experience is required, but a moderate level of fitness is necessary. Non-swimmers are welcome since everyone is required to wear a life vest. The issuing of single kayaks (Necky Arluk III and Quality Kayaks Southern Aurora) is at the guides' discretion as this depends not only on the paddler's ability, but also on weather, sea conditions and group

composition. There is usually at least one single kayak on tour, which may be shared amongst paddlers demonstrating solid support strokes.

Your guides cover boat handling basics; paddling strokes; use of the foot-controlled rudder; boat entries and exits; and rescue procedures. They also cover trip safety and carry a hand-held VHF radio and flares for emergency use. Sea kayaking is a very safe sport when conducted properly. The expedition always paddles as a group, but there is still ample opportunity for individuals to enjoy their personal space on land if so desired. Certain rules of sea kayaking must be agreed to and observed by all trip participants to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment. We discuss these rules and why they are necessary as well as contingency plans. We do everything reasonable to minimize the risks of this outdoor pursuit to ensure your safety and expect you to do the same.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Note: The following itinerary is a sample only and is subject to alterations and delays owing to weather, sea conditions or logistical considerations.

B = BREAKFAST L = LUNCH D = DINNER

Day 1: **Arrival.** A driver is waiting at Salote Pilolevu Airport in Ha'apai to escort you to your accommodation. Please ensure that you send us your full flight itinerary so we may arrange transport. Your guides contact you today to welcome you and to discuss the schedule of events for the next few days.

Meals and beverages on own.... Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability)

Day 2: **Acclimatisation & Orientation.** Today is an opportunity to acclimatise and, for those travellers arriving from far-away places, to recover from jet lag. Your guides present a 45-minute orientation talk commencing 9:30 a.m. at your accommodation property. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk.

B... Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability)

Day 3: **Day 1 of Kayaking.** Transport departs early this morning (exact time is tide-dependent) to our launching site approximately five kilometres north of Pangai. Here, the guides give a safety briefing before we depart for the first of nine days of kayaking. Today we

paddle along the lee shores of Lifuka and Uoleva Islands skirting pristine reefs and beaches. Tonight's camp is at the southern end of Uoleva Island, rated by Outside Magazine as one of the top 10 most beautiful beaches in the world. Here, too, is a magnificent coral ledge smothered in soft corals - a snorkeller's dream.

B, L, D... Uoleva Island; Paddling Time: 3-4 hours

Day 4: **Day 2 of Kayaking.** Weather permitting, we paddle across a wide channel to Tatafa, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by locals. Here, we stretch our legs and have a snack before paddling eastward to neighbouring Uiha Island. The view from our campsite on the southern end of Uiha is a preview of the remote southern islands to which we journey tomorrow. This afternoon we explore Felemea village and re-supply with fresh water in anticipation of spending the next few days, weather permitting, in the remotest part of the Lifuka Archipelago.

B, L, D... Uiha Island; Paddling Time: 1-2 hours

Day 5: **Day 3 of Kayaking.** Our paddle plan today is southward along the inside of a fringing reef across shallow aqua-hued waters to Uanukuhahaki (Uanuku) Island for three adventurous days of snorkelling, beachcombing and more paddling. Base camping three nights on Uanuku allows us to fully enjoy the remoteness of this perfect South Pacific island.

B, L, D ... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours

Day 6: **Day 4 of Kayaking.** We can snorkel for hours on end in the south of the archipelago and may witness green sea turtles nesting on Uanuku, one of our favourite islands in the Lifuka Group. This remote, uninhabited island is definitely not in the guidebooks! Nor is Uanukuhihifo island, an optional short paddle to the south.

B, L, D ... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours

Day 7: **Day 5 of Kayaking.** An optional paddle in empty kayaks to a nearby sand bar with nothing on it but sand and shells enhances one's sense of the remoteness of this very special area. Whilst paddling, we may be fortunate enough to sight turtles, dolphins, and humpback whales, the latter of which migrate annually (June through October) to Tonga's warm sheltered waters to breed and calve.

B, L, D ... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours

- Day 8:** **Day 6 of Kayaking.** Retracing our paddle strokes, we return today to Uiha Island and stroll through the quaint outer island fishing village of Felemea for a change of pace. Tonight's camp is on the uninhabited island of Tatafa, from where our guides may conveniently assess the sea conditions with tomorrow's channel crossing in mind.
B, L, D ... Tatafa Island; Paddling Time: 1-2 hours
- Day 9:** **Day 7 of Kayaking.** Conditions permitting, we cross 'Auhangamea channel to the lee shore of Uoleva Island. At the southern tip of Uoleva, we can enjoy snorkelling close to shore. More confident snorkellers can do a drift snorkel along a spectacular coral wall.
B, L, D ... Uoleva Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours
- Day 10:** **Day 8 of Kayaking.** Take advantage of today's more relaxed pace to explore Uoleva island. Work up an appetite paddling, fishing, snorkelling and/or beachcombing for this evening's meal at a local resort.
B, L, D ... Uoleva Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours
- Day 11:** **Day 9 of Kayaking.** On this final day of paddling, we paddle north along Uoleva and Lifuka Islands back to Pangai township where we started our journey nine days ago. From here, we transfer by taxi back to *your accommodation*, fresh water showers and a sumptuous farewell dinner!
B, L, D ... Matafonua Lodge (or The Resort at Billy's Place subject to availability); Paddling Time: 3-4 hours
- Day 12:** **Departure.** Your trip concludes today with transfers to Salote Pilolevu Airport and a warm farewell from your guides.
Meals and beverages on own

FITNESS AND EXPERIENCE

Whilst no experience is required for our sea kayak tours, a moderate level of physical fitness and a sense of adventure are important. A typical day entails two to three hours of paddling interspersed with rest stops. The guides endeavour to balance the group by pairing slower paddlers with stronger, more experienced paddlers. However, the slower paddlers always dictate the pace. Base camps offer the luxury of paddling empty kayaks or a lay day for exploring and relaxing. Paddling into a trade wind of 13-18 knots requires extra effort and can make the distance we travel feel longer. Those who engage in regular exercise such as

walking, cycling or swimming tend to derive more enjoyment from their adventure. Physical conditioning exercises and camping experience are recommended.

KAYAK GUIDES

A minimum of one Tongan professional guide accompanies all of our trips. Depending on the group size, there is an additional guide (guide: guest ratio = 1:6). The guides are responsible for making safety decisions, coordinating logistics and activities, preparing meals as well as interpreting the natural and cultural features of Ha'apai. Our guides lend invaluable local knowledge and cultural flavour to the experience and also offer outdoor safety, first aid and risk management expertise.

CAMP ORGANISATION

On the first camping day (Day 3), the guides orient participants to the camp kitchen and protocol for erecting and breaking camp. The more assistance with camp duties rendered, the quicker meals are served and the earlier the group gets out on the water each day. We typically aim to be on the water by 9:30 a.m. in order to take advantage of the cool morning hours for paddling and to reach our camp by lunchtime.

On arrival at camp the guides require assistance erecting the overhead tarpaulin; hanging up life vests and spray skirts; unloading the kayaks; and hauling seawater for washing dishes and vegetables. Once these duties are completed, everyone is free to pitch their tents. Assistance with meal preparation and dish washing is not expected but always appreciated. Packing bags and tents prior to breakfast makes the job of breaking camp more efficient.

MEALS ON TOUR

We re-provision with fresh tropical produce and water at outer island villages. The water is untreated rainwater collected from rooves and stored in cement holding tanks. We have never encountered a problem on tour with fresh water-borne diseases or infections.

Snacks and three meals per day are provided whilst on kayak trip, beginning with breakfast on Day 3 and ending with our farewell dinner on Day 11. Our fine food has an international theme so you are likely to find Thai, Indonesian, Italian, Mexican and Polynesian cuisine on the menu. The meals are predominantly vegetarian supplemented with fresh fish. We try to make extensive use of the delicious tropical fruits and vegetables and fresh seafood caught by our Tongan

guides. We also try our best to please every palate. Please let us know well in advance of the tour of any food and/or drink allergies and/or dislikes.

FOOD AND WATER

There are a wide selection of eateries in Nuku'alofa and Vava'u, some of which are excellent. In Tongatapu, we recommend Black Pearl, Café Reef, Fakalato Restaurant, Fresh Juice Bar, Friends Café, Little Italy Pizzeria, Lunarossa, Seaview Restaurant, Taste of India, The Two Sisters and The Waterfront Café. In Neiafu (Vava'u); Aquarium, Dancing Rooster, Mango, Ovava, The Balcony and the Tongan Beach Resort. In Ha'apai dining options are relatively limited though still of a reasonable standard: Mariner's Café, Matafonua Lodge and Sandy Beach Resort are recommended.

The tap water in Tonga is treated well water with a high mineral content, giving it a metallic taste. While the tap water is potable, for people unaccustomed to the local water, it is advisable to drink rainwater or bottled water. Both are readily available on request at shops, restaurants and hotels.

There are no waterfalls, rivers or lakes in Tonga and so, whilst on tour, we bathe and wash laundry in the sea using biodegradable saltwater shampoo or soap.

ACCOMMODATION

Matafonua Lodge and The Resort at Billy's Place are situated on the east (windward) coast of the Lifuka Archipelago. The attractive fales at *Matafonua Lodge*, our preferred property, are available on a first come, first served basis. The fales/rooms at the *The Resort at Billy's Place*, though clean and comfortable, are comparatively more basic. Please note that bathroom facilities are shared for all package accommodation in Ha'apai.

Package accommodation is based on double occupancy. Single supplements apply to those who prefer a private fale/room or who cannot be paired with another single participant. Tents and mattresses are included for the camping portion of the tour.

If you plan to extend your stay in Tonga please advise us of your accommodation requirements in advance and we will be happy to book on your behalf. For more details and images of package accommodation, please refer to our web site <http://www.fikco.com/tours-accommodation.html>

TONGA AND HER PEOPLE

Spread across 700,000 square kilometres of ocean, just west of the International Date Line and east of Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga comprises four major island groups. From south to north these are Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuaus. A total of 171 mostly raised coral islands (fewer than 40 of them inhabited) cover a total land area of 747 square kilometres. The population of Tonga is estimated to be 110,000 with two thirds of that number living on the main island, Tongatapu. Tongan and English are the official languages, and Tonga boasts a 98.5% literacy rate.

Tonga is unique in that it is the only Polynesian country never to have been colonised as well as the only surviving monarchy in the Pacific. Vava'u and Ha'apai cover approximately the same land area (119 and 110 square kilometres respectively), but the population of Vava'u (20,000) is approximately double that of Ha'apai (10,000). Vava'u is the water sports capital of the Kingdom while Ha'apai is known for its laid-back atmosphere, traditional way of life and history (this is where the Mutiny on the Bounty took place).

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Respect is extremely important within the Tongan culture. A clean, modest appearance signifies respect for you and for others. Visitors are not expected to be aware of Tongan codes of behaviour, but those who observe them are more likely to be accepted. Women are advised to dress conservatively (i.e. high necklines, covered shoulders, loose skirts, dresses or pants) in the villages. Low-cut tops, sheer and/or tight clothing should be avoided. Swimsuits are acceptable on the beach; covering up with a *lava-lava* (wrap-around cloth) is a polite gesture to approaching villagers. Men should wear long shorts in the daytime; long pants or a *lava-lava* at night-time. Men are required by law to wear a shirt in public except when on the beach. Footwear is removed before entering a Tongan *fale* (home). It is advisable to maintain a low profile until outside village areas, especially on Sundays when physical activity, noise and fishing are prohibited.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In an effort to preserve Tonga's natural environment, Friendly Islands Kayak Company strives to promote environmental sensitivity and to minimize impact on the marine and terrestrial environment. To this end, your guides impart the Company's Minimum Impact Guidelines with respect to waste disposal and conservation of reefs, marine life, flora and fauna during the orientation talk. We

carry out all non-decomposable rubbish along with other people's rubbish. Snorkellers are briefed on correct use of their fins and the importance of not touching the fragile reefs.

We employ a variety of methods for disposing of human waste. On most islands the guides dig a pit toilet within 50-75 metres of camp. Given that our campsites are not used year 'round we consider this method to be the best compromise. We generally use the inter-tidal zone at night.

CLIMATE

The climate of Tonga is very pleasant, being slightly cooler and less humid than most tropical areas. From June to November temperatures range from 22° to 30°C the mean humidity hovers around 74%; and, the trade winds blow an average of 13-18 knots - often perfect weather for paddling and adventuring.

During the wetter summer months (December to May) the weather is hotter (25-32 degrees C), more humid and changeable with a slightly increased risk of tropical cyclones. However most cyclones either brush past Tonga leaving little or no damage or miss Tonga altogether.

TIME AND COMMUNICATION

Tonga is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. International phone calls may be placed from your accommodation or from Tonga Telecommunications (in Pangai township), from where phone cards may also be purchased. There are currently two mobile phone networks in Tonga, Digicel and Vodafone You will need to confirm with your mobile provider whether you will be able to use your phone in Tonga. There is mobile coverage in Ha'apai.

Contact details for our tour accommodation are as follows:

Matafonua Lodge

Email: info@matafonua.com

Phone: +676 69 766

Fax: +676 69 766

The Resort at Billy's Place

Phone: +676 60 336

Fax: +676 60 200

EMERGENCY CONTACTS & DELAYS EN ROUTE

In the event that you are delayed en route or there is an emergency, contact Friendly Islands Kayak Company in Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga. Phone/Fax: +676 70 173 or mobile phone: +676 75 12262. Please give your name, trip name and revised arrival details.

If you experience delays or an emergency, and you cannot reach the above contact, leave a message at Friendly Islands Kayak Company's New Zealand office. Phone/Fax: +64 3 482 1202. Please be prepared to leave your name, details of your trip, **a telephone number where you can be reached**, and all other pertinent information. We will forward your information onto our team in Tonga and, if need be, will get back to you as soon as possible.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The unit of currency in Tonga is the Pa'anga (TOP\$). Check with your bank for a current exchange rate. The banks and larger accommodation properties accept travellers' cheques (USD\$).. If you have not already exchanged your money by the time you arrive in Ha'apai, you can do so at the Bank of Tonga/Westpac in Pangai on weekdays. Note that resort exchange rates are not as favourable as bank rates.

BUDGETTING

Consider bringing TOP\$40-\$100 in small denominations on the kayak tour for: purchasing handicrafts; placing on the oiled skins of the dancers and in the band kitty as a token of your appreciation (TOP\$1 and TOP\$2 notes). Budget TOP\$75-\$100 per day for meals (not including alcohol) and taxis in Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), Neiafu (Vava'u) and Pangai (Ha'apai).

Note that many accommodation properties have credit card facilities. However, many other businesses accept cash (TOP\$) only.

PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry to Tonga. You must present an onward ticket on arrival in order to be granted a stay of 30 days.

VISAS

You do not need a visa prior to arrival if you are a citizen of one of the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Finland, France, French Polynesia (New Caledonia, Tahiti, Wallis & Futuna) Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea,

Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland, The Bahamas, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu.

All other nationalities require a visa prior to arrival; this can be obtained by contacting the Immigration Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tonga visatonga@gmail.com. You may be able to extend your stay for up to six months if you are able to provide evidence of sufficient funds.

AIRPORT TAXES, EXCESS BAGGAGE FEES & SHUTTLES

These are your responsibility and are not included in the trip cost. Departure tax from Tongatapu is included in the cost of all air tickets.

The maximum baggage allowance for domestic flights is 20 kgs for passengers holding international tickets. Excess baggage is be subject to a surcharge and may have to travel on a different flight.

Both the domestic and international terminals at Fua'amotu Airport have unlocked covered waiting areas patrolled 24 hours a day by an on-site security guard. However, it is inadvisable to leave luggage unattended. The waiting areas can be breezy and cool particularly at night-time and so we recommend having a fleece and windbreaker handy (i.e. in your carry-on luggage).

Teta Tours operates a shuttle between the international and domestic terminals in Tongatapu for every inbound and outbound international flight (including those that arrive/depart at night or in the small hours of the morning). You may wish to obtain a few extra pa'anga to cover the shuttle fare.

TIPPING

Tipping is not customary in Tonga, but is not considered offensive either. In fact, the local people graciously accept tips. A guideline for tipping guides would be TOP\$30-\$40 per person per guide.

GIFTS

Tongans are exceptionally generous and gift giving is a central feature of their culture. If you wish, bring a few small gifts such as T-shirts, postcards, photos, lapel pins, hair ties, hats, watches, yoyos, washable tattoos, kites, lighters and pocket-sized games. Also, as educational resources are in short supply in the outer

island schools, the children and teachers greatly appreciate receiving pens, pencils, stationary and primary level books.

SECURITY

Theft is uncommon in Tonga. However, in a culture where "what's mine is yours" and items are "borrowed" indefinitely, unattended personal belongings and valuables are at risk. We recommend you bring your passport and airline tickets in a dry bag on the kayak trip so that, in the unlikely event of evacuation, your guides can readily access these documents.

MEDICAL MATTERS

Medical Forms

Every trip participant must provide an accurately completed medical form.

Vaccinations

No statutory vaccinations are required for entry into Tonga. However, we require every participant to have a current tetanus vaccination and recommend vaccinations against hepatitis and typhoid.

Dengue Fever

Dengue fever outbreaks can occur during the summer months (December-May) when the weather is hot and humid and when there is a high prevalence of mosquitoes. So long as our guests take sensible precautions the risk of exposure is minimal. Precautions to be taken include regularly applying insect repellent and, where possible, avoiding sheltered areas where mosquitoes are more abundant than in windy areas. Other precautions include covering up as much as possible e.g. wearing long sleeved tops, socks, trousers etc.

Medication

Please advise us of any medication you are taking and any possible side effects. Bring an adequate supply of medication as certain drugs are difficult to obtain in Tonga. Also consider giving half to your trip leader for safekeeping in case your supply gets lost or wet -swells or wind-waves may be encountered in the South Pacific. Most paddlers are not troubled by seasickness, but if this is of concern to you your doctor can recommend medication to help. Be sure to let us know if seasickness is a problem for you.

Dental

As Tonga's dental facilities are basic it is advisable to have a dental check-up before departure.

Hospitals

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu, Prince Wellington Ngu Hospital in Neiafu (Vava'u) and Niu'ui Hospital in Pangai, (Ha'apai) are experienced with cuts, fractures, and tropical disorders. However, for most other conditions it is advisable to seek diagnosis and treatment in your own country.

Medical Supplies

Although your guides will be carrying a comprehensive first aid kit, all tour participants are encouraged to bring a basic personal first aid kit to include the following items: ☑:

- Medication (including pain relief & preventative drugs such as a mild anti-nausea drug)
- Antiseptic swabs and cream
- Anti-histamine cream (for insect bites)
- Antibiotic cream or powder (powder is best in the humid tropical climate)
- Fabric plasters (more waterproof than plastic plasters)
- Lip sunscreen
- General sunscreen (water resistant at least SPF15)
- Insect repellent

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographic opportunities abound in Tonga! Tongan people are very photogenic and enjoy having their photo taken (except when they are eating). Asking their permission first is a polite gesture. A zoom lens is handy especially for photographing whales. However, bear in mind that the humidity and salt water can damage camera lenses and electronics. For this reason, some prefer to leave their expensive camera at home and bring an inexpensive disposable or waterproof camera instead. If you do decide to bring an expensive camera, store it in a dry bag or waterproof case with silicon packs **and insure your camera.**

GEAR AND CLOTHING

As we are self-sufficient (i.e. we carry all food and equipment with us in the kayaks) it is important to keep gear to a minimum. Large dry bags, duffel bags and backpacks cannot be accommodated in the hatches. Please bring no more than two

large (20L) dry bags; one for clothing, the other for miscellaneous items and optional sleeping bag; plus one small (10L) dry bag for items you need to access in the cockpit (e.g. wallet, documents, sun screen etc.) A mesh bag containing your snorkelling gear is additional to the above items. Nylon stuff sacks lined with heavy-duty rubbish bags are a more affordable option if you do not already have dry bags. However, a dry bag for the cockpit is essential. Camera and optical equipment should be waterproofed and insured.

We provide tents and mattresses. Lightweight cotton or quick-dry clothing is recommended for Tonga's warm tropical climate. Long-sleeved shirts with a collar offer good sun protection. *Lava-lavas* (2 metre wrap-around cloth) may be purchased in Tonga. It is a good idea to bring along two *lava-lavas*, one for wearing over shorts or a swimsuit when entering villages and a clean one for other occasions.

Biodegradable salt-water shampoo is available for purchase from Friendly Islands Kayak Company. Sleeping bags, blankets or sheets are not available. If you have any questions about clothing or equipment, consult your local canoe or outdoor equipment retailer or contact us.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport | <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 3 (2x 20L and 1x 10L) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travellers' cheques, small notes (pa'anga) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nylon stuff sacks or dry bags for clothes & small items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic first aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty rubbish bags (for lining stuff sacks) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> Waist pack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper (preferably unbleached) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ziploc bags (medium & large) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biodegradable salt water shampoo/soap | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/headlamp, spare batteries, lighter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun screen (SPF30+) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip screen (SPF30+) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun hat (stiff brimmed) with chin strap | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses (preferably polarized) with neck strap | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pack towel (viscose or polyester / polyamide) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink bottle (1-2 litres) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton-lycra swimsuit, sports bra & briefs | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight rain jacket with hood | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight fleece jacket (i.e. Polartec 100) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton/quick-dry T-shirts (long & short sleeved) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quick dry shorts & pants | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calf-length skirt/dress | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lava-lava (can be purchased in Tonga) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton socks & underwear (for duration of trip as no laundry facilities available on kayak tour) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton bandanna, hankie | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy sandals | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag liner, and/or: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Summer weight sleeping bag/compact quilt or blanket (June-Sept)</i> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snorkelling gear (prescription lenses for mask) & mesh carry bag | |

Optional Items

- Binoculars*
- Hand sanitizer, handy wipes*
- Talcum powder and/or Vaseline (for preventing chafing)*
- Camera, film, spare batteries*
- Favourite snacks, drink crystals*
- Fishing lures & hand line*
- Pocket knife, sewing/repair kit*
- Reading & writing materials*
- Half wetsuit 3mm (June-Sept)*
- Cycling gloves (without fingers)*
- Reef shoes or old running shoes (for intertidal walks)*
- Rubber sandals/thongs*
- Clothes line & pegs*

PACKAGE COMPONENTS

Your trip includes the following services:

- Return airport transfers between Salote Pilolevu Airport (Ha'apai) and package accommodation;
- Transfers between accommodation and activities;
- Three nights' accommodation (based on double occupancy): Two nights before the kayak trip and one night after at *Matafonua Lodge* (or *The Resort at Billy's Place*, subject to availability). Optional upgrade to *Sandy Beach Resort* upon request.
- A 45-minute orientation talk;
- Use of quality double and single fibreglass kayaks and accessories;
- Camping equipment including tents and mattresses;
- A 9-day kayak tour of the outer islands with professional guides (guide: guest ratio = 1:6);
- Snacks and 3 meals a day on the kayaking portion of the tour;
- An evening meal at an outer island resort, and;
- A farewell dinner;

NON-INCLUSIVE SERVICES

The following services are not included in your trip package:

- International/Domestic Airfares
- Visa and passport fees
- Personal travel insurance
- Airport departure taxes
- Excess baggage charges
- Airport transfers that are not included in the above itinerary
- Accommodations that are not included in the above itinerary
- Single supplement fee
- Beverages and meals that are not included in the above itinerary
- Clothing, liquor, laundry, postage, medical expenses and any other expenses of a personal nature
- Expenses incurred as a result of delays due to inclement weather, delays of scheduled aircraft, logistical delays, and resultant changes to the itinerary
- Emergency evacuation charges
- Gratuities to guides

ITINERARY CHANGES AND/OR DELAYS

It is possible that route or itinerary changes and/or delays may become necessary for reasons of safety or enhancing the quality of the trip. These changes and/or delays could be due to inclement weather, acts of God, delayed transport, political or cultural considerations, government restrictions, participants' limitations, or any other cause. If our return from the kayak trip is delayed, Friendly Islands Kayak Company will continue to provide all camping and food needs in the outer islands. However, any additional expenses incurred by a trip participant such as meals, accommodation, prepaid airline tickets, fees for visas, etc. in connection with changes and/or delays to a route or itinerary shall be borne by the trip participant. If possible, ensure some degree of flexibility in your travel plans. A sense of adventure and tolerance for the unexpected are essential attributes when visiting developing nations such as Tonga where "Tonga Time" is synonymous with delays and waiting.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Personal travel insurance is not included in the trip cost and is a pre-requisite for trip participation. We recommend you purchase a policy that includes airfare, trip cancellation (in particular cancellation owing to severe weather), and medical coverage.

READING REFERENCES

For a comprehensive reference list of recommended publications on the Kingdom of Tonga please visit our Web site: <http://www.fikco.com>

FINAL NOTE

There will undoubtedly be further communiqués from us in the months to come as the trip departure date draws closer. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to let us know your concerns, questions and plans.