



VAVA'U 10-DAY SUPERIOR PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

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ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Note that 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 in Vava'u. Transfer to *Hilltop Hotel or Mystic Sands (subject to availability)*.
- Day 2** Transfer to *The Adventure Centre*. Orientation talk. 'Ene'io Botanical Gardens tour, followed by feast and cultural floorshow. Overnight *Harbour View Resort (or Hilltop Hotel or Vava'u Villa subject to availability)*.
- Day 3** Paddle to 'Eue'iki Island. Intertidal walk to cave. Snorkelling. Overnight *'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort (or Mounu Island Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 4** Paddle to 'Euakafa Island. Bush walk to summit, site of royal tomb. Snorkelling. Boat transfer to Taunga Island for Polynesian feast. Overnight *'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort (or Mounu Island Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 5** Whale watching (Jul-Oct) and/or snorkelling (Nov-Jun) in Vava'u Island Group. Overnight *'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort (or Mounu Island Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 6** Paddle to Kapa Island. Snorkel at Japanese Gardens. Overnight *Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 7** Overland walk to Port Mourelle and Falevai village. Snorkelling. Overnight *Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 8** Paddle inside Swallows Cave. Snorkel at A'a Island. Overnight *Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability)*.
- Day 9** Paddle to Vava'u Island via Port of Refuge and marina. Farewell dinner. Overnight *Hilltop Hotel or Mystic Sands (subject to availability)*.
- Day 10** Departure. Transfer to Lupepau'u Airport.

INTRODUCTION

Our all-inclusive 10-day tour is ideal for honeymooners, families and those who appreciate a hot shower, fine dining and a comfortable bed after an active day in the outdoors. Each of the three carefully selected resorts boasts unique features; harbour views and proximity to Neiafu township; idyllic "Treasure Island"; and luxurious Reef Resort overlooking the Japanese Coral Gardens. Experience the Vava'u Islands, Tonga's jewel in the King's crown. Kayak, snorkel and whale watch - all without sand between the sheets!

Situated approximately 240 kilometres north of Tongatapu, the Vava'u Island Group is a smattering of 50-odd islands covering an area 23 by 25 kilometres most of which is protected by a semi-circular reef. Although the islands are separated by reefs or open water, they are not great distances apart. In his book, *The Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific*, author Paul Theroux describes sea kayaking in Vava'u thus: "It was a perfect area for paddling a kayak - perhaps the best in the Pacific. There was a surfy side and a safe side to each island - the lee shores usually had the beaches - all were secluded, all were lovely."

On our Tonga sea kayaking expeditions we strive for a healthy balance between relaxation and adventure. We generally paddle in the mornings leaving the afternoons free for snorkelling amidst colourful coral and inside legendary marine caves; exploring lush tropical bush; and, observing the traditional village lifestyle. The pace of life in Vava'u is slow and relaxed - much like it was a century ago.

AIR TRAVEL TO VAVA'U

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

Air New Zealand: From Auckland to Tongatapu x 5 flights per week (Mon, Wed, Thurs, 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 Tongan 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 in the protected warm waters of the Port of Refuge. 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.

WHALE WATCHING

From July to October, Tonga's warm, sheltered waters are host to the southern ocean humpback whale. Spinner and bottlenose dolphins are also regularly seen in

the Vava'u Island Group. The rare green sea turtle breeds in Tonga waters, and is occasionally seen darting amongst coral heads by snorkellers, though is more likely to be spotted on the water's surface in calm conditions. Vigilant snorkellers might even glimpse a manta ray or eagle ray. Vava'u's extensive reefs of sturdy hard coral teem with small, colourful reef fish including clownfish, damselfish, parrotfish, angelfish, butterflyfish and lionfish. Among the invertebrates are anemones, shrimp, feather stars, sea hares and sea horses.

The naturalist guides onboard your vessel is keen to share their knowledge about the humpback whale (*megaptera novaeangliae*), once on the brink of extinction. This baleen whale is a most interesting cetacean to observe owing to its impressive acrobatic displays such as fluke, flipper and head slapping, lob tailing, spy hopping, and breaching. Whale sightings in Vava'u are very reliable since the shallow coastline that the whales frequent is accessible to boats.

During the day, you also have the opportunity to snorkel the crystal clear waters and immerse yourself in the spectacular underwater world!

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Note that 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 / Acclimatisation. Upon arrival at Lupepau'u Airport in Vava'u you transfer to your accommodation property. Please ensure that you send us your full flight itinerary so we may arrange transport. Shortly after your arrival, your guide contacts you to welcome you and to discuss the schedule of events for the next few days. The venue of your welcome dinner is Mango Restaurant overlooking the picturesque Port of Refuge.

D... Hilltop Hotel or Mystic Sands (subject to availability)

Day 2 Orientation / Botanical Garden Tour. Your guides present a 45-minute orientation talk commencing 9:30am at The Adventure Centre in Toulavillage, 2.5 km south-east of Neiafu. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk. Following the talk, we travel by taxi to 'Ene'io Botanical Garden on the scenic eastern shore of Vava'u Island. Our botanist host, Haniteli, takes us on a strolling eco-tour through his lush tropical paradise demonstrating the medicinal,

culinary and cultural uses of this impressive collection of native and exotic species. A sumptuous Polynesian feast and cultural floorshow organised by Haniteli's wife, Lucy, and the villagers, complete our glimpse into Tongan traditions. Enjoy a refreshing swim or snorkel or simply stroll along the beach before transferring back to your accommodation. This evening's meal is at The Balcony Restaurant offering casual dining and a lovely sunset harbour view.

B, L, D... Hilltop Hotel or Mystic Sands (subject to availability)

Day 3: Kayaking / Walking / Snorkelling. A safety briefing commences 9:00 a.m. at *The Adventure Centre* before departing for the first of five days of kayaking. Our destination and your base for the next three days is 'Eue'iki Island, occupied only by a small eco-resort. The remainder of the day may be spent snorkelling a reef wall and exploring the inter-tidal zone. At low tide your guide takes us to an immense cave with Tarzan-like vines cascading down through a hole in the cave ceiling. Dinner is at the resort's open-air restaurant right on the beach facing the setting sun.

B, L, D... 'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort; Paddling Time: 3-4 hours

Day 4: Kayaking / Walking / Snorkelling. On today's paddle to uninhabited 'Euakafa Island our Tongan guide leads us through shallow, reef-strewn turquoise waters. While paddling we may be fortunate enough to sight turtles, dolphins, and humpback whales, the latter of which migrate annually to Tonga's warm sheltered waters (June-November) to breed and calve. A guided walk through lush tropical vegetation to 'Euakafa's distinctive tabletop summit takes us to the site of a legendary royal tomb within the fortress of a Tu'i Tonga king. Following a refreshing snorkel at 'Euakafa's exquisite reefs, we paddle back to our eco-resort on 'Eue'iki Island to freshen up for this evening's Polynesian feast. A boat transfers us across the channel to Taunga Island where the villagers host an authentic Tongan feast consisting of roast suckling pork complemented by fresh root vegetables, octopus, reef fish, vegetarian dishes, and tropical fruits such as papaya in coconut milk, all steamed in an underground oven or *'umu*. This gastronomic delight is followed by a traditional Tongan song and dance performance.

B, L, D... 'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort; Paddling Time: 1-2 hours

Day 5: Whale Watching / Snorkelling. At 10:00 this morning our whale watch operator picks us up from our accommodation. Their team of whale

educators discuss humpback whale migration, mating, surface activity and song. From July through October we can observe the impressive acrobatic displays of these magnificent mammals who migrate from Antarctica annually to breed, give birth and nurse their new-born calves in Tonga's sheltered, warm waters. Outside the whale watch season, we enjoy a day of snorkelling, picnicking and sightseeing in the beautiful Vava'u Islands.

B, L, D... 'Eue'iki Island Eco Resort; Excursion Time: 5-6 hours

Day 6: Kayaking / Snorkelling. Today we paddle westward to the luxurious Reef Resort near Otea Village on Kapa Island. Here we are perfectly positioned for a variety of activities during the next three days. En route, we pull ashore at Mala Island for a picnic lunch and snorkel at the Japanese Coral Gardens teeming with colourful tropical fish.

B, L, D... Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours

Day 7: Walking / Village Visit / Snorkelling. For a change of pace, this morning we walk overland to Kapa Island's sheltered western bay of Port Mourelle, the first landing site of Spaniard Don Francisco Antonio Mourelle. Nowadays Port Mourelle is a safe anchorage for modern yachts as well as a popular snorkelling site. Following a picnic lunch and swim, we hike along the spine of the island to Falevai ("house of water") village where Mourelle obtained spring water. Here we visit a church, school, weaving hall and the police station whose recidivist inmate is a pig!

B, L, D... Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability); Walking Time: 1-2 hours

Day 8: Kayaking / Snorkelling. Back in our kayaks, we skirt Kapa Island's rocky northern shoreline and float inside Swallows Cave. A misnomer since, in fact, the cave's inhabitants are swiftlets not swallows! Slipping over the side of our kayaks we marvel at schools of tiny reef fish and the magnificent underwater wall outside the cave's entrance. We then take a short paddle south to A'a Island, a favourite dive site, for some more wall snorkelling from our kayaks before a picnic lunch at picture postcard Nuku Island.

B, L, D... Reef Resort (or The Tongan Beach Resort subject to availability); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours

Day 9: Kayaking. Our journey ends in the Port of Refuge, reputedly the most protected and beautiful harbour in the Pacific. Weave between the many visiting yachts in the marina. Pull ashore back at our base, The Adventure Centre, from where you transfer to your resort. Tonight's farewell dinner is at Ovava Restaurant with its pleasant beer garden and fascinating blend of South Pacific and Japanese interior décor.

B, L, D... Hilltop Hotel or Mystic Sands (subject to availability); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours

Day 10: Departure. The trip concludes today with a transfer to Lupepau'u Airport and warm farewell from your guides.

B ...

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. 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 and interpreting the natural and cultural features of Vava'u. Our guides lend invaluable local knowledge and cultural flavour to the experience and also offer outdoor safety, first aid and risk management expertise.

MEALS ON TOUR

Three meals per day are provided, beginning with dinner on Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 10. Please let us know well in advance of the tour of any food and/or drink allergies and/or dislikes.

At one of the villages we partake in an authentic *'umu* feast (feast baked in an underground oven) and share with the villagers their traditional song, dance, and customs. A multitude of chicken, roast pork, seafood and vegetarian dishes are served, but no one is offended if it isn't all eaten. We might be fortunate enough to participate in an impromptu kava ceremony, also permeated with Tongan culture, should the occasion present itself.

FOOD AND WATER

There are a wide selection of eateries in Nuku'alofa and Vava'u, some of which are excellent. In Nuku'alofa (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.

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 accommodation properties.

ACCOMMODATION

For details and images of package accommodation, please refer to our web site <http://www.fikco.com/tours-accommodation.html> 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. 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.

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 Niuas. 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.

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, 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 phone provider that you will be able to use your phone in Tonga. Contact details for the accommodation properties are as follows:

Hilltop Hotel

Email: sunset@kalianetvav.to
Phone: +676 70209 or + 676 70838
Fax: + 676 70209

'Eue'iki Island Resort

Email: reservations@tongaecoresort.com
Phone/Fax: +676 12935

Reef Resort

Email: mail@reefresortvavau.com
Phone: +676 59276 or +59279

Mystic Sands

Email: info@mysticsands.net
Phone: +676 75 84027

Vava'u Villa

Email: info@vavauvilla.com
Phone: +676 71010

Mounu Island Resort

Email: mounuislandresort@gmail.com
Phone: +676 54331 or +676 5907

The Tongan Beach Resort

Email: holidays@thetongan.com
Phone: +676 7038

EMERGENCY CONTACTS & DELAYS EN ROUTE

In the event that you are delayed en route or of 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. 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 to 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 Vava'u, you can do so at the ANZ Bank (ATM/Cashpoint available) or Bank of Tonga/Westpac in Neiafu on weekdays. Note that hotel and airport 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 and Neiafu.

Note that most of the 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 30-day visitors visa

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 per person for passengers holding international tickets.. Excess baggage will 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. In fact, 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 (containing DEET) 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 since 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 -swell 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.

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

Dental

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

Hospitals

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu and Prince Wellington Ngu Hospital in Neiafu, Vava'u, 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.

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 our baggage 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; 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.

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.

If you have any questions about clothing or equipment, consult your local canoe or outdoor equipment retailer or contact us.

Any excess baggage can be left at our base in safekeeping.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Passport <input type="checkbox"/> Travellers' cheques, small notes (pa'anga) <input type="checkbox"/> Basic first aid kit <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper (preferably unbleached) <input type="checkbox"/> Biodegradable salt water shampoo/soap <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"/> Snorkelling gear (prescription lenses for mask) & mesh carry bag | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 3 (2x 20L and 1x 10L) Nylon stuff sacks or dry bags for clothes & small items <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty rubbish bags (for lining stuff sacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Waist pack <input type="checkbox"/> Ziploc bags (medium & large) <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/headlamp, spare batteries, lighter |
|---|---|

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 Lupepau'u Airport (Vava'u) and package accommodation;
- Transfers between accommodation and activities;
- Nine nights' resort accommodation (double occupancy);
- A 45-minute orientation talk;
- Quality double and single fibreglass sea kayaks and accessories;
- Five days kayaking; one day whale watching and/or snorkelling; two days bushwalking (guide: guest ratio = 1:6);
- A guided tour of 'Ene'io Botanical Gardens, including cultural floorshow and feast;
- All meals starting with dinner on Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 10;
- A traditional 'umu feast with Polynesian singing and dancing in an island village; and
- A farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

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 with exception of complimentary farewell drink
- 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

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- 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. Resulting expenses 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.