

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Five-star hotels, B&Bs, hostels, motels, resorts, treehouses, bungalows on the beach, campgrounds and village homestays – there's no shortage of accommodation options in Fiji.

Rates quoted in this book include Fiji's 12.5% value-added tax (VAT). Also they are peak season rates, which tend to be 10% to 20% higher than those for the low season.

Useful accommodation websites:

[www.fiji-backpacking.com](http://www.fiji-backpacking.com)  
[www.fijibudget.com](http://www.fijibudget.com)  
[www.4hotels.co.uk/fiji](http://www.4hotels.co.uk/fiji)  
[www.fiji4less.com](http://www.fiji4less.com)  
[www.travelmaxia.com](http://www.travelmaxia.com)  
[www.wotif.com](http://www.wotif.com)

## PRACTICALITIES

- **Fiji Magic** (☎ 330 0591; [www.fijilive.com/fijimagic](http://www.fijilive.com/fijimagic)) and **Fiji Holidays** (☎ 992 8063; [promedia@connect.com.fj](mailto:promedia@connect.com.fj)) are free, monthly publications with details and prices of accommodation, restaurants, activities and tours.
- The government-sponsored Fiji Broadcasting Commission has stations in English (2Day FM – 100.4 FM), Fijian (Radio Fiji 1 – 558AM) and Fiji-Hindi (Radio Fiji 2 – 620AM and 98 FM).
- Bula 100 FM plays an eclectic mix of pop, rock, reggae, dance, folk, country and local music.
- The video and DVD system used in Fiji is PAL, which is the same as in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, the UK and most of Asia and the Pacific. The US video and DVD systems are in NTSC, which is incompatible.
- Electricity is supplied at 240V, 50Hz AC. Many resorts have universal outlets for 240V or 110V shavers and hairdryers. Outlets use flat two- or three-pin plugs as in Australia or New Zealand.
- Fiji follows the metric system; kilometres, kilograms, litres, and degrees in Celsius.

## Budget

Budget travellers in Fiji can expect to pay \$20 to \$30 for a dorm bed, \$40 to \$80 for a single room and \$60 to \$90 for a double. Camping is also generally available (see p240). Facilities at budget places are usually shared. Many backpacker resorts in places such as Nadi and the Coral Coast on Viti Levu have their own restaurants, bars, laundries, Internet access and tour desks. On the outer islands amenities become a little simpler and sometimes hot water is a luxury. Budget resorts in the Yasawa and Mamanuca islands often include three meals in their tariffs as there is nowhere else to eat and no self-catering facilities.

When booking offshore budget accommodation get details such as: the safety

of the transport (especially if it includes small-boat trips); cleanliness; facilities and equipment available; the type and price of food; and any hidden costs. If possible, quiz other travellers, check Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) or browse through the comments book of the Fiji Visitors Bureau (FVB) to get the latest picture of a particular place.

If you're making reservations at budget places while you're on the road, don't be completely surprised if you show up and nobody's heard of you. Administration can sometimes be a little less than organised and reservations that are made don't always seem to make it into the book.

### Midrange & Top End

The bulk of accommodation in Fiji falls under the midrange banner. Options include hotels, motels and resorts ranging from \$80 to \$150 for one person and \$90 to \$170 for two. Guests can expect bathrooms, TVs, bar fridges, and tea and coffee facilities in hotels while many lodges and resorts offer self-contained units with kitchens. Options on some islands such as Taveuni are more costly than at most other destinations.

Top-end options are generally five-star chain resorts and other upmarket resorts, with prices ranging from \$170 for a double to sky's-the-limit tariffs. If you're after a short stay in a top-end place, consider prebooking your accommodation as a package deal – you'll almost always get a cheaper price than the quoted 'rack rate'. Moreover, you'll need to book well in advance for popular resorts, particularly during the peak season of May to October. However, it's also often possible to get cheaper walk-in rates, particularly during the very quiet months of February and March.

If you're looking to stay a bit longer and want to move around, avoid paying too much in advance and keep your options open. There are many places to choose from so if you're not happy with the place you booked, you won't be tied by prepaid reservations and can just move on.

Remote islands, such as Kadavu, have few places to stay and the main form of transportation is by small boat. In this case, avoid being left stranded without a vacancy in your price range by prebooking – this will also ensure you'll be met at the airport or ferry.

### BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

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

### Types of Accommodation

#### CAMPING

Don't just set up camp anywhere without permission. Most of Fiji's land, even in seemingly remote areas, is owned by the indigenous population, by *mataqali* (extended families) or villages. If you are invited to camp in villages, avoid setting up next to someone's *bure* (traditional dwelling). Doing so can be misinterpreted as implying that you feel the house is not good enough for you to stay in. Ask where the best place to pitch your tent is and provide a *sevusevu* (gift).

Elsewhere you can pitch your tent at some of the budget lodges in the Yasawa and Kadavu islands as well as Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Viti Levu's Coral Coast. Some resorts in the Yasawas also offer camping in their own tents. Expect to pay \$10 to \$15 per person per night. For details of the location of camping areas refer to the individual island chapters.

#### HOSTELS

The Cathay chain has budget accommodation at Lautoka, Saweni Beach, the Coral Coast and Suva. It gives discounts for HI (Hostelling International) and Nomad card holders. There are many cheap hotels with dorm accommodation and some hotels and resorts have converted a room or two into dorms – often a great bargain as you'll have access to all of the resort's facilities.

#### RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Most of the long-term rental accommodation is in Suva and Pacific Harbour, and to a lesser extent in Nadi. There are also a number of houses for rent on Taveuni. Renting apartments or rooms with weekly rates may be a cheap option if you are looking for a fixed base from which to take day

trips. Normally apartments have cooking facilities, and if you are in a small group, a joint effort to buy groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables from the local market can save a fair bit of money.

#### RESORTS

The term 'resort' is used loosely in Fiji and refers to accommodation ranging from backpacker-style to exclusive luxury. If you are prepared to put up with rudimentary facilities and services, you can find your self an inexpensive piece of paradise. There are some beautiful coral islands where you can stay cheaply in simple thatched-roof *bure* in idyllic settings. Most resorts offer meal plans, which are fixed-price packages that generally include breakfast, lunch and dinner. Nonmotorised activities tend to be included in resort rates, but diving, parasailing, water-skiing, jet-skiing, fish-

ing and island-hopping excursions generally cost extra.

There are many backpacker resorts on the offshore islands, including the Yasawas, on Mana in the Mamanucas, Kadavu, Nananu-i-Ra, and Leluvia and Caqalai near Ovalau. The standards of many of these places can slide up and down with popularity; normally booking requires a payment up front, so before embarking try to get information from travellers who have just been there. Popular places can become overcrowded and less popular places can feel totally abandoned. Transport is often by small open boat, which can be risky in rough weather.

For those who are happy to spend up to a few hundred dollars per day for extra comfort, services and activities, there are many popular resorts in the Mamanucas, on Viti Levu's Coral Coast, on Taveuni, as well as on more remote islands.

#### FIJIAN HITCH

Fiancées and honeymooners flock to Fiji like lovesick bees to a honey convention. The tropical beaches, the amber sunsets, the secluded resorts, the island singing – this archipelago smacks of romantic paradise and 'don't it know it'. Many resorts cater to the almost- and newly I-do's with irresistible honeymoon and wedding packages and can provide you with much of the information and planning you need. Regardless of how you go about it there are some fundamentals you'll need in order to tie the knot.

Essentials for a marriage license to be issued in Fiji include; someone of the opposite sex (unfortunately same-sex marriage is not legal in Fiji), birth certificates, passports (it would be tricky getting into the country without one) and, if you're under the age of 21, a document of consent signed by your folks. If (and this is a little prickly) this is your second time round, you'll also need to produce a copy of divorce papers, a Decree Nisi or death certificate.

You'll need to present all of the above documents to a Registry Office prior to your actual marriage in order to obtain a marriage licence. This process only takes around 20 minutes but it's a good idea to make an appointment if you're not getting a resort or travel agent to organise the whole shebang for you. The **Registrar General office** (☎ 331 5280; Ground fl, Suva House, ☎ 8.30am-3.30pm) is in Suva, but there are also **Divisional Registrars** (Lautoka ☎ 666 5132; 1st fl, Rogorogivuda House, Tavewa Ave; ☎ 9am-3pm; Nadi ☎ 670 0101; Korivolvu Ave; ☎ 8am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri). There's a \$22 fee involved and you then have 21 days to get hitched.

A less practical but equally important consideration is the weather. Regardless of the wording, your vows will lose some of their romantic impact if you end up reciting them beneath a golf umbrella in gale-force winds (see p17 for more climate information). If you have dreams of you, your betrothed and a priest alone on a secluded beach you may want to check your resort's occupancy before you book.

Lastly, it's a good idea to get some perspective, advice and tips from the romance experts. The following websites can help you plan the perfect Fijian wedding or honeymoon, if not organise it outright:

<http://destination-weddings-abroad.com/fiji/>

[www.fijiweddings.com](http://www.fijiweddings.com)

[www.fijihoneymoon.com](http://www.fijihoneymoon.com)

[www.holidaysforcouples.com.au/pacificocean-fiji.html](http://www.holidaysforcouples.com.au/pacificocean-fiji.html)

[www.weddings-in-fiji.com](http://www.weddings-in-fiji.com)

### TOP FIVE RESORTS

Fiji is, unsurprisingly, bursting at the seams with resorts. Fortunately, like travellers, they come in all shapes, sizes and flavours. The following is a selection of the best and each caters to a different guest.

**Caqalai Island Resort** (p180) Rustic backpacker retreat on a small, gorgeous coral island.

**Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort** (p199) Classy boutique resort with superb diving and an excellent (and mandatory!) kids' club.

**Octopus Resort** (p164) Perfect island resort that manages to appeal to every age and budget. It has friendly staff, fine food and fab rooms.

**Tokoriki Island Resort** (p154) Pure romance and five-star indulgence for couples.

**Treasure Island Resort** (p151) One for the families – loads of activities for little and big kids and wallet-friendly rates.

### ACTIVITIES

Fiji has plenty to offer the adventurous and active. The archipelago's warm, clear waters and abundance of reef life make it a magnet for divers and snorkellers. Visibility regularly exceeds 30m, though this is reduced on stormy days or when there is a heavy plankton bloom.

#### Bird-Watching

Fiji features some brilliant members of the feathered family. Taveuni is home to more than 100 species including the rare orange dove. See p213 for information regarding the best sites. Kadavu (p226) is also home to a diversity of birdlife including the Kadavu musk parrot. Taveuni has better infrastructure than Kadavu, and is cheaper and easier to travel around.

On Vanua Levu, the Tunuloa Peninsula (p202) is home to the rare silktail, while the rainforests around Savusavu are popular bird hang-outs. On Viti Levu, Colo-i-Suva Forest Park (p124) near Suva has great bird-watching, as does the area near Waidroka Bay Resort (p111) on the Queens Road. For more about Fiji's birds, see p53 and consider picking up a copy of *Birds of the Fiji Bush*, by Fergus Clunie & Pauline Morse of the Fiji Museum.

#### Cycling

Cycling is a good way to explore Viti Levu, Vanua Levu (the Hibiscus Hwy) and parts

of Ovalau and Taveuni. With the exception of the Kings and Queens Roads, most roads, especially inland, are rough, hilly and unsealed, so mountain bikes are the best option. Some resorts have bikes for hire. Expect to pay around \$10 to \$15 for half a day. See p79 for information on mountain biking.

Consider taking a carrier (a small truck) up to Abaca and riding down to Lautoka. You could also cycle along Vanua Levu's unsealed roads from Savusavu along Natewa Bay (no accommodation around here) and along the Hibiscus Hwy from Buca Bay, where you can take the ferry over to Taveuni. Ovalau also has a scenic unsealed (mainly flat) coastal road.

There seems to be no official road rule regarding cyclists so the rule of thumb should be to assume all vehicles have right of way. For general information on cycling in Fiji, see p260.

#### Diving & Snorkelling

The beauty of Fiji is that, with a dive industry that is well-established, you can have great access to diving and snorkelling regardless of whether your funds extend from budget or luxury. For information on diving see p57; for information on diving insurance, see p271.

Snorkelling in Fiji's warm waters is a definite highlight. There are beautiful reefs teeming with amazing life. Snorkelling is often fantastic very close to the coast, making it a relatively inexpensive and easy pastime compared with diving. All you need is a mask, snorkel and fins. Ideally wear a T-shirt and waterproof sunscreen as it is easy to become absorbed by the spectacle, lose sense of time and scorch your back and legs.

If you have not snorkelled before or are not a confident swimmer, familiarise yourself with the equipment in a pool or shallow water. Learn how to clear your snorkel, so that you don't panic and tread over the fragile coral. Keep to the surface if you feel more comfortable there and never dive too deep. It is best to swim with a partner, to always use fins and to ask locals about currents. Some operators who take snorkellers on their dive trips may just dump you overboard with a buoy, on a barrier reef, far from land. If you are not confident, ask for a life jacket. It is common to see reef sharks but don't panic, they're probably more scared

of you. The most beautiful creatures can be poisonous so avoid touching anything. Also avoid being washed against the reef as coral cuts can turn into nasty infections.

In Fiji, you are likely to see brilliant soft and hard corals, multitudes of colourful fish of various shapes and sizes, sponges, sea cucumbers, urchins, starfish, Christmas-tree worms and molluscs. Crustaceans are more difficult to spot and many only come out at night. Night snorkelling with a light is a fantastic experience if you can overcome your fear of the unknown!

Most resorts offer snorkelling and have equipment for hire. However, always check first when going to a remote budget resort – it can be frustrating if you are in a gorgeous location without any (or poor) equipment. If you are a keen snorkeller it may be worth having your own equipment – it's relatively cheap and easy to carry. Dive operations usually take snorkellers to outer reefs if there is room on the boat, although some prefer to keep the activities separate.

In many places you can snorkel off the shore; however, often you can only swim at high tide and channels can be dangerous. The best sites on Viti Levu are at Natadola Beach (watch the current here, though), Nananu-i-Ra and Beqa Lagoon. Viti Levu's Coral Coast is not that great for snorkelling as it is usually a fair way to the drop, much of the reef is dead and swimming is mostly tidal.

The best snorkelling sites are on the outer islands. Notable sites include: the Mamanucas and Yasawas (superb reefs with mostly hard coral); Vanua Levu's rocky coastline, especially near Mumu's Resort; Taveuni's Vuna Reef; offshore of the Matava Resort in Kadavu; and the Lomaiviti Group's Caqalai and Leleuvia.

#### Fishing & Boat Chartering

Villages have rights over the reefs and fishing so you cannot just drop a line anywhere; seek permission first. Many of the more expensive resorts offer game-fishing tours and boat chartering. Taveuni has several companies offering game-fishing expeditions; see p213 for details. On and around Viti Levu, resorts at Pacific Harbour (p113), and Vatulele (p118), and outfits at Nananu-i-Ra (p141) offer fishing trips. There are also fishing and boat chartering possibilities on Vanua Levu – see p195 for more information.

Consider the southeast trade winds when choosing the best spot – the leeward sides of the islands are generally calmer. For boat chartering see p150.

#### Hiking

It is culturally offensive to simply hike anywhere – you need to ask permission, be invited or take a tour. For information on how to be culturally sensitive in villages, see p36. You should ask local villagers or hotel staff to organise permission and a guide. Good boots are essential for hiking all year-round. Carry plenty of water, good maps, a compass, a warm jumper and a waterproof coat. Be sure to tell others where you are heading in case you get lost or have an accident.

Viti Levu (p142) and Taveuni (p213) are the best islands for hiking and there are some excellent trails on Waya (p163) in the Yasawas. Kadavu is more isolated but equally beautiful. Colo-i-Suva Forest Park (p124) near Suva and the Lavena Coastal Walk (p222) on Taveuni have marked trails. Another good place for hiking is Koroyanitu National Heritage Park in Viti Levu (p143). For an easy but scenic walk, follow the Coral Coast Scenic Railway from the Shangri-La's Fijian Resort to the beautiful Natadola Beach. For more information on the walks and guided tours, see the destination chapters.

If you plan to be in Fiji for a while, consider contacting the Rucksack Club in Suva (contact details available from the FVB). It organises regular walks and excursions.

#### Horse Riding

There are a few places in Fiji where horse riding is an organised activity. Try the Beachhouse (p111) on Viti Levu's Coral Coast and Vatuwiri Farm in Taveuni (p218).

#### Kayaking & River Trips

*Bilibili* (bamboo rafting) and kayaking trips can be made on the Navua River in the Namosi Highlands of Viti Levu; see p113 for details. Many village trips also include a ride on a *bilibili*. Jet Fiji (p87) at Denarau has speed-boat tours through the island's mangroves. See also sea kayaking, p244.

#### Sailing

Yachties are often looking for extra crew and people to share costs. Approach the marinas, ask around and look on the notice boards.

Fiji's marinas include the Royal Suva Yacht Club (p126); Vuda Point Marina (p89) between Nadi and Lautoka; Levuka Harbour on Ovalau; Musket Cove Marina (p155) on Malololailai in the Mamanucas; and the Copra Shed Marina and Waitui Marina (p195), both at Savusavu on Vanua Levu.

The designated ports of entry for Fiji are Suva, Levuka, Lautoka and Savusavu. Yachties intending to sail to the outer islands, such as the Lau Group, will require a customs permit and a permit to cruise the islands, obtained from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, or from the commissioner's office in Lautoka, Savusavu or Levuka. Seek advice from a yachting agent or yacht club in Fiji before applying for the permit. Refer to p253 for more details.

The main yachting season is June to August, but there are races and regattas throughout the year. Obviously the Fijian reefs necessitate good charts and crews with sailing experience.

For organised cruises and charters, refer to the individual island chapters. Musket Cove Marina hires out a range of vessels for sailing around the Mamanucas and Yasawas, including some that are fully crewed with skipper and cook. There are also private boats for sail and adventure cruises from Savusavu's marinas. By Fijian law, you must have a local guide on all chartered boats.

Contact individual yacht clubs for further information, and pick up a copy of the *Yacht Help Booklet, Fiji* available from the FVB. *Landfalls of Paradise - The Guide to Pacific Islands* by Earl R Hinz, and Michael Calder's *Yachtsman's Fiji* are also popular references.

### Sea & Dive Kayaking

Sea and dive kayaking are becoming increasingly popular in Fiji. Kayaking is a great way of exploring the coast at a gentle pace. Dive kayaks, which can carry lunch, snorkelling gear and scuba gear, can be double the fun.

The islands of Taveuni, Vanua Levu, Yasawa, Nananu-i-Ra and Kadavu are great for kayaking. Some keen kayakers paddle Taveuni's rugged Ravilevu Coast, but generally the western sides of the islands are preferred as they're sheltered from the southeast trade winds.

Many resorts have kayaks for guest use, or for hire at about \$20/30 for a half-/full

day. There are also special sea-kayaking tours available during the drier months between May and November. Some combine paddling with hiking into rainforests, snorkelling, fishing and village visits, and have support boats that carry camping gear and food. They don't necessarily require that you have previous experience. For more information on kayaking tours, see the destination chapters.

Independent travellers planning extended trips should check weather forecasts, watch the tides and currents, and wear a life jacket, hat and plenty of sunscreen. Ideally, take a signalling device, mobile phone or radio and always let someone know of your plans.

### Surfing

It is believed that surfing has existed in Fiji for hundreds of years. Surfing reefs over warm, crystal-clear, turquoise-blue water is a very special experience. The majority of Fiji's rideable breaks are on offshore reefs that require boat trips. When choosing accommodation, also consider the price of getting to the surf. The best surf spots are along Viti Levu's south coast and in the Mamanuca Group. There are also breaks at Kadavu and Taveuni. The dry season (May to October) is the best time to go due to low pressures bringing in big surf. Keen surfers should bring their own board.

You should be aware that Fijian villages usually have fishing rights to, and basically own, adjacent reefs. Some resorts pay the villages for exclusive surfing rights, which has led to disputes between competing surfing and diving operations. If you would like to explore lesser-known areas you will need to respect local traditions and seek permission from the local villagers.

Riding the dangerous southern Mamanuca reef-breaks should only be attempted by experienced surfers. If you want to stay at the popular surf resorts on Tavarua and Namotu, book well in advance. See the boxed text, p117 for a summary of Fiji's major breaks. Some lesser-known spots include: Suva, which has a reef-break at the lighthouse - you need a boat to get there; Kadavu's Cape Washington, which has good surf but no place to stay; and Lavena Point on Taveuni, which also has rideable though inconsistent waves.

Click onto [www.globalsurfers.com/fiji.cfm](http://www.globalsurfers.com/fiji.cfm) for more useful information.

### Visiting Villages

Many tours include a village visit in their activities. Some villages have become affected by busloads of tourists parading through their backyards every other day and the *sevusevu* ceremony and *meke* (traditional dance) can seem somewhat put on. Other village tours, especially those run by the villagers, are smaller in scale with perhaps not so much going on; however, the whole experience can feel much more genuine.

The village tours to Lovoni (p173) on Ovalau are fantastic and Navala (p144), in Viti Levu's highlands, is one of Fiji's most picturesque villages. Avoid visiting villages on Sunday, as it is considered a day for church and rest. Refer to p36 for information on village etiquette.

### BUSINESS HOURS

Fijians are not known for their punctuality and usually adhere to 'Fiji time'. Post offices and most shops and cafés open between 8am and 9am and close at around 5pm weekdays, or 1pm on Saturday. Banks are open 9am to 4pm on weekdays, though some close at 3pm on Friday. A few Internet cafés and shops are open for limited hours on Sunday but the general rule is to assume everything will be closed. For indigent Fijians it is a day for church, rest and spending time with family.

Restaurants generally open for lunch (11am to 2pm) and dinner (6pm to 9pm or 10pm) from Monday to Saturday as well as dinner on Sunday. Many remain open from 11am to 10pm. Bars in Suva and Nadi are open from late afternoon to around midnight on weeknights but extend their hours into early morning from Thursday to Saturday. Resort bars have more flexible schedules and cater to guests' drinking preferences (ie daiquiris at 10am).

Government offices are open from 8am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday, and 8am to 4pm Friday.

Many places in Fiji close for lunch from 1pm to 2pm.

### CHILDREN

Fiji is a major family destination and is very child-friendly. Many resorts cater well for kids, with babysitting, cots and high chairs, organised activities and children's

pools. However, smaller exclusive resorts tend not to accept children or at least relegate them to a specific period during the year. Some resorts are on multiple levels and sand paths, which make using prams and strollers difficult.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* has useful advice on family travel, and has a section on Fiji.

### Practicalities

Travelling around with kids in Fiji is fairly easy. The large chain car-rental companies can provide baby seats, but local companies and taxis don't. If you intend to take public transport, a backpack for transporting infants is a good idea. Also bear in mind that local buses have bench seating, no seat belts and can be fairly cramped and so may not be particularly conducive to travelling with small children or babies.

Many restaurants in cities and touristed areas such as the Coral Coast on Viti Levu and well-equipped resorts in the Yasawas and Mamanucas have high chairs. Similarly, midrange and top-end resorts in these areas, as well as self-contained accommodation in and around the main cities can provide cots, although the further you get from the beaten track in Fiji the more remote this option will be.

Long-life milk is readily available, as is bottled spring water and fruit juice. Fiji is a fairly conservative and demure society and while breast feeding is common among the local population you'll seldom see it so take their example and find a private place to do so. Nappies, formula and sterilising solution are available in pharmacies and supermarkets in the main cities and towns, but if you are travelling to remote areas or islands, take your own supplies. Consider using cloth nappies wherever you can. Many small boats don't carry enough life jackets and never have child-sized ones; if you're planning to island hop, you might want to consider bringing your own Coast Guard approved inflatable life jackets.

Children are valued in Fiji, and childcare is seen as the responsibility of the extended family and the community. Everyone will want to talk with your kids and invite them to join activities or visit homes. Babies and toddlers are especially popular - they may tire of having their cheeks pinched! Fijian

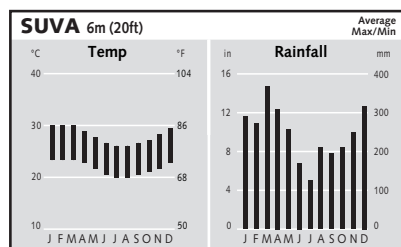
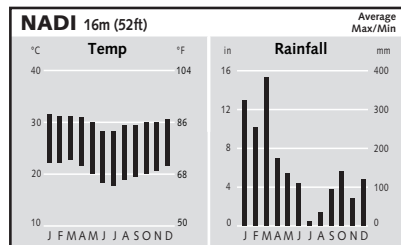
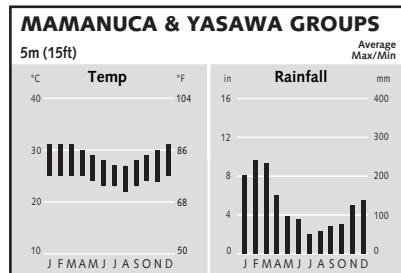


men play a large role in caring for children and babies, so don't be surprised if they pay a lot of attention to your kids. Fijian children are expected to be obedient and spend lots of time playing outdoors. Backtalk and showing off is seen as disruptive to the fabric of the community, so when visiting a village, try to curb any crying, tantrums and noisy behaviour.

For ideas on keeping the kids content, see the boxed text, p80.

## CLIMATE CHARTS

Fiji's wet season is from November to April, with the heaviest rains falling between December and mid-April. Fiji has a mild average temperature of 25°C, however it can climb to above 30°C in summer (December and January) and sink to 18°C in winter (July and August). See p17 for information about the best time to visit Fiji.



## CUSTOMS

If you are travelling with expensive camera or computer equipment, carry a receipt to avoid possible hassles with your customs people when arriving home.

Visitors can leave Fiji without paying VAT on: up to \$400 per person of duty-assessed goods; 2L of liqueur or spirits, or 4L of wine or beer; 500 cigarettes or 500g of cigars or tobacco, or all three under a total of 500g; and personal effects.

Pottery shards, turtle shells, coral and trochus shells and giant clamshells cannot be taken out of the country without a permit. You can bring as much currency as you like into the country but you need to declare any amount over \$10,000 and you can't take out any more than you brought in.

Importation of vegetable matter, seeds, animals, meat or dairy produce is prohibited without a licence from the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries. If you're taking a domestic pet in you need to write to the **Director Quarantine Section** (☎ fax 330 5043; PO Box 18360, Suva) and send them your animal's details including an up-to-date vet report. The department will send you a licence or approval to take your pet into Fiji. Otherwise staff will quarantine your pet on arrival for a few weeks.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Fiji is still a pretty safe place for travellers. When you're in Nadi or Suva, though, do not walk around at night, even in a group, as muggings are common. Locals catch cabs after dark in these cities and you should do the same. Don't hitchhike; while it's commonly done by locals, as a foreigner, you're a sitting duck for muggers. As a precaution, use a moneybelt and keep your valuables in a safe place.

While it's unlikely that you'll be robbed, it does happen, so try to keep all valuables out of sight and lock your door while you're out or sleeping. Most resorts have a safe where you can store your moneybelt. You can also avoid becoming utterly destitute by stashing a small amount of cash or a couple of travellers cheques in a separate place to where the bulk is stored.

As you exit customs at Nadi airport, you'll likely be swarmed by touts who will do their best to get you into their shuttle van and on the road to their employer's

resort. It's advisable to have at least your first night of accommodation booked, but if you're unsure of where you want to stay and want to avoid these mobs while you consider your options, head to the FVB desk (p77).

Sword sellers are not as common as they used to be, but if anyone becomes overly friendly, wants to know your life story and begins carving your name on a long piece of wood, just walk away, even if they pursue you claiming that you have to pay for the rubbishy item. If you are travelling for an extended period you may tire of being asked where you are staying. While this is often just innocent conversation, it can also be a way of judging how much you're going to be charged for dinner. Male travellers in particular are likely to be approached and asked if they want marijuana (see p250).

If you are unlucky enough to be caught in a natural disaster such as a cyclone or flood, ask locals for advice on where to seek protection from the elements.

If driving there are some road hazards you should be aware of; see p264 for more information.

Contrary to Fiji's image promoted overseas, many beaches, especially on the large islands, aren't great for swimming. The fringing coral reefs often become too shallow at low tide. Avoid swimming or snorkelling alone and be very careful of currents and tidal changes. Always seek local advice on conditions. For safety precautions regarding marine life see p270.

## DISABLED TRAVELLERS

In Pacific countries disabled people are simply part of the community, looked after by family where necessary. In some cities there are schools for disabled children but access facilities, such as ramps, lifts and Braille, are rare. Many resorts are designed with multiple levels, lots of stairs and sandy paths, making them difficult for some people to use. Buses do not have wheelchair access and pavements have high kerbs.

Nevertheless, people will go out of their way to give you assistance when you need it. Airports and some hotels and resorts have reasonable access; before booking a particular resort, check if it suits your needs. Access-friendly resorts include Tokatoka Resort Hotel and the Beachside Resort in

Nadi and Treasure Island Resort in the Mamanucas. On the Coral Coast, Hideaway Resort will also cater to special needs.

## Organisations

For pretrip planning advice try the Internet and disabled people's associations in your home country. The **Fiji Disabled People's Association** (Map p122; ☎ 331 1203; fax 332 1428; 355 Waimanu Rd, Suva) may also be able to provide advice.

Australian-based **Travelaffare Hove** (☎ in Australia 08-8278 7470; www.e-bility.com/travelaffare) can assist disabled people with information on international holidays, including those to Fiji.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

STA Travel and other student-travel agencies give discounts on international airfares to full-time students who have an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). Application forms are available at these travel agencies. Student discounts are occasionally given for entry fees, restaurants and accommodation in Fiji. You can also use the student health service at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva.

Several backpacker resorts also accept VIP cards. Click onto www.vipbackpackers.com to purchase a card and find out about discounts.

We didn't come across any instances where people with seniors' cards received any discounts.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

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

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. For example, if you need to get home urgently, a free ticket home is exceedingly unlikely – the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If all your money and documents are stolen, the embassy might assist with getting a new

passport, but a loan for onward travel is out of the question.

### Fijian Embassies & Consulates

Fiji has diplomatic representation in the following countries.

**Australia** (☎ 02-6260 5115; fhc@cyberone.com.au; 19 Beale Cres, Deakin, Canberra, ACT 2600)

**Belgium** (☎ 02-736 9050; www.fijiembassy.be; 66 Av de Cortenberg, Boite Postale 7, Brussels 1040)

**Canada** (☎ 613-233-9252; Suite 750, 130 Slatter St, Ottawa, K1P 6E2)

**Japan** (☎ 813-3587 2038; www.fijiembassy.jp; 14th fl, Noa Bldg, 3-5, 2 Chome Azabudai, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 106)

**New Zealand** (☎ 04-473 5401; fax 04-499 1011; 31 Pipitea St, Thorndon, Wellington)

**UK** (☎ 020-7584 3661; www.fijihighcommission.org.uk; 34 Hyde Park Gate, London SW7 5DN)

**USA** (☎ 202-337-8320; www.fijiembassy.org; Suite 240, 2233 Wisconsin Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20007)

### Embassies & Consulates in Fiji

The following countries have diplomatic representation in Fiji. All embassies are in Suva.

**Australia** (Map p119; ☎ 338 2211; 37 Princes Rd, Tamavua)

**China** (Map p119; ☎ 330 0251; 147 Queen Elizabeth Dr)

**European Union** (Map p122; ☎ 331 3633; 4th fl, Fiji Development Bank Centre, Victoria Pde)

**Federated States of Micronesia** (Map p122; ☎ 330 4566; 37 Loftus St)

**France** (Map p122; ☎ 331 2233; 7th fl, Dominion House, Thomson St)

**Japan** (Map p122; ☎ 330 2122; 2nd fl, Dominion House, Thomson St)

**Korea** (Map p122; ☎ 330 0977; 8th fl, Vanua House, Victoria Pde)

**Malaysia** (Map p122; ☎ 331 2166; 5th fl, Air Pacific House, Butt St)

**Nauru** (Map p122; ☎ 331 3566; 7th fl, Ratu Sukuna House)

**New Zealand** (Map p122; ☎ 331 1422; 10th fl, Reserve Bank Bldg, Pratt St, Suva)

**Tuvalu** (Map p122; ☎ 330 1355; 16 Gorrie St)

**UK** (Map p122; ☎ 322 9100; Victoria House, 47 Gladstone Rd)

**USA** (Map p122; ☎ 331 4466; 31 Loftus St)

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

#### February or March

**Hindu Holi (Festival of Colours)** People squirt coloured water at each other either late in February or early March; mostly in Lautoka.

### March or April

**Ram Naumi (Birth of Lord Rama)** A Hindu religious festival and party on the shores of Suva Bay during late March or early April. Worshippers wade into the water and throw flowers.

**Fiji International Jazz Festival** Three-day jazz festival showcasing musicians from around the world. Held early to mid-April along the Coral Coast.

### July

**Bula Festival** One of Fiji's biggest festivals – held in Nadi with rides, music, shows and the crowning of 'Miss Bula'.

### August

**Fiji Ocean Swim** (www.manafiji.com/swim2.htm) International swim event attracting athletes from all over the world who race along a 3km course of ocean at Mana island.

**Hibiscus Festival** Held in Suva, with floats, food stalls, fire-walking, fair rides and the crowning of 'Miss Hibiscus'.

**Hindu Ritual Fire Walking** Performed by southern Indians in many temples, including Suva's Mariamma Temple (p109).

### September

**Fiji Regatta Week** (www.musketcovefiji.com) Annual regatta luring avid yachties from around the world. Held at Musket Cove.

**Lautoka's Sugar Festival** Lautoka comes alive with fun fairs, parades and the crowning of the Sugar Queen.

### October or November

**Diwali (Festival of Lights)** Hindus worship Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity); houses are decorated and business is settled. Candles and lanterns are set on doorsteps to light the way for the god. Held in late October or early to mid-November.

**Ram Leela (Play of Rama)** Primarily a Hindu festival, theatrical performances celebrate the life of the god-king Rama and his return from exile. It's held at the Mariamman Temple (in Yunivau, near Labasa) around the first week of October, and has been celebrated here for more than 100 years.

**South Pacific World Music Festival** Acclaimed Fijian and international musicians treat Savusavu to five days of global harmony. Held in late November.

**Armistice Day** Also known as Remembrance Day, Suva observes a minute's silence at 11am on 11 November, although sometimes it might actually be at 10.50am, depending on the accuracy of the docks.

### FOOD

Dining options in this book are sometimes listed in order of options; ie Restaurants, Cafés & Quick Eats and Self-Catering. Listings under each category are in order of preference.

Budget travellers can pay around \$10 for a meal, although quick-eat options such as bakeries and cheap curry joints are plentiful and with a self-catered meal per day travellers on the cheap can get by on spending \$10 to \$15 all up. Midrange travellers can expect to pay \$10 to \$25 for lunch or dinner at a good café or restaurant. In the cities and upmarket resorts fussy palates are catered for with some excellent cuisine (seafood in particular) and meals tend to cost anywhere from \$25 to \$50.

See p66 for more information about food and drink in Fiji.

### GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Fiji's constitution states that discrimination must not occur on the basis of sexual orientation and, precoup, Chaudhry's government was all for legalising homosexual activity. However, this sentiment evoked a heated reaction from the present conservative and very Christian government. In 2002 the debate of possibly legalising homosexuality was once again sparked when a new Family Law bill was put forward. Sadly, this stirred greater hostility and two prominent gay men (the Red Cross leader John Scott and his partner) were murdered in July 2002.

There is some indication of changing attitudes in the community, though. A large number of openly gay men work in the hospitality industry, and some nightclubs in Lautoka, Nadi and Suva are gay-tolerant, if not outwardly gay-friendly. Furthermore, in 2005 the Fijian High Court acquitted two gay men who were previously convicted and sentenced for having a sexual relationship. The Judge who gave the ruling also urged the Fijian Law Commission to address reform in legislation regarding homosexuality in Fiji.

It's important to remember, however, that sodomy and other homosexual acts remain illegal in Fiji and as such, the police have the right to arrest and prosecute on these grounds. Public displays of affection are considered offensive in Fiji in general; as a gay or lesbian couple, the risks of receiving unwanted attention for outwardly homosexual behaviour are high. But gay couples who are relatively private are extremely unlikely to have any troubles in Fiji. Gay singles should exercise some caution; don't give anyone an excuse to even think you are paying for sex, and be very careful

not to provide the impression you are after young Fijian men.

Two useful international websites are www.qrd.org and www.planetout.com.

### HOLIDAYS

Fijians celebrate a variety of holidays and festivals; for details of the latter, see opposite. New Year's Day is celebrated all over Fiji: in villages, festivities can last a week or even the whole month of January. There is also a day commemorating the man considered Fiji's greatest statesman, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna.

### Public Holidays

Annual public holidays include:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Easter (Good Friday & Easter Monday)** March/April

**Prophet Mohammed's Birthday** April

**National Youth Day** May

**Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Day** First Monday in June

**Queen's Birthday** Mid-June

**Constitution Day** July

**Birth of Lord Krishna** August/September

**Fiji Day (Independence Day)** Early October

**Diwali Festival** October/November

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**Boxing Day** 26 December

### School Holidays

School holidays in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand can have an impact on accommodation availability in Fiji. In Fiji they generally last for two weeks from late April to early to mid-May and mid-August to early September. Summer holidays run from early December to late January.

For details on school holidays in Australia and New Zealand, click onto www.school-holidays.com.au and www.minedu.govt.nz.

### INSURANCE

Having a travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a very good idea. There are many policies available and your travel agent will be able to recommend one. Some policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options but the higher ones are mainly for countries such as the USA, which have extremely high medical costs. Check the small print. You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals direct rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim

Canadians have access to an Honorary Consul; **Mr Janna Bai Vyas** (Map p76; ☎ 972 2400; Nadi airport, Nadi).

later make sure you keep all the documentation. See p266 for more information.

Some policies specifically exclude so-called 'dangerous activities', which can include diving, motorcycling and even hiking. If you're planning to dive it's best to purchase either comprehensive cover or pay extra for this activity; see p271. A motorcycle licence acquired in Fiji may not be valid under some policies.

Check that the policy covers ambulances and an emergency flight home. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade warns travellers that some insurance companies will not pay claims that arise when travellers have disregarded the government's travel advice.

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

## INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés are fairly prolific in Suva, Lautoka and Nadi and competition means that you can jump online with broadband access for \$0.06 to \$0.10 per minute. Budget resorts in Nadi also have Internet access. Outside of the urban centres access is more limited and pricier (\$0.10 to \$0.20 per minute). Setting up an Internet-based email account is the easiest and most affordable way of keeping in touch while you're on the road.

If you're carrying your own laptop and are in the country for a while you can sign up to a dial-up account with a service provider such as **Connect** ([www.connect.com.fj](http://www.connect.com.fj)). Many midrange and top-end resorts have phone lines, so you simply need to plug your computer in.

Wireless Internet access (wi-fi) is a recent phenomenon to Fiji thanks to **Unwired Fiji** ([☎ 327 5040](tel:3275040); [www.unwired.com.fj](http://www.unwired.com.fj)). It enables users to connect to the Internet without the use of a phone line (but you'll need to purchase a special modem from them).

## LEGAL MATTERS

The only drug you are likely to come across is marijuana. It's illegal; don't seek it out or buy it as the risk is too high if caught. It is not uncommon for drug users in Fiji to be imprisoned in the psychiatric hospital. It's also illegal to drink and drive. Refer also to p249 for information on gay and lesbian legal restrictions.

Most travellers avoid any run-ins with the local authorities. If you are arrested, though, you have the right to contact your embassy or consulate, which will be allowed to provide you with legal representation but can do little else.

## MAPS

The best place to buy maps of the Fiji islands is the **Map Shop** (Map p122; ☎ 321 1395; Rm 10, Department of Lands & Surveys, Government Bldgs) in Suva. It sells big (1:50,000) and detailed topographic maps of each island or island group, as well as maps of Suva.

Bookshops sometimes stock town maps, and some tourist brochures also have simple town maps. At the FVB, or specialist book and map shops overseas, you can usually purchase the latest Hema map of *Fiji*. Specialist marine charts are usually available at Fijian ports but are expensive; try to buy them overseas.

## MONEY

The local currency is the Fiji dollar (\$); it's fairly stable relative to Australian and New Zealand dollars. See inside front cover for exchange rates. All prices quoted herein are in Fiji dollars unless otherwise specified.

The dollar is broken down into 100 cents. Bank notes come in denominations of \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2. There are coins to the value of \$1, \$0.50, \$0.20, \$0.10, \$0.05, \$0.02 and \$0.01. Even though Fiji is now a republic, notes and coins still have a picture of England's Queen Elizabeth II on one side.

It's good to have a few options for accessing money – take a credit card, a debit card, some travellers cheques and a small amount of foreign currency. The best currencies to carry are Australian, New Zealand or US dollars, which can be exchanged at all banks.

Before you head out to remote parts of Fiji, check in the appropriate chapter to make sure you can access money, exchange currency or change travellers cheques.

## ATMs

ATMs are common in major urban areas and most accept the main international debit cards including Cirrus and Maestro. The ANZ bank has an ATM at Nadi International Airport and you'll find more in town at Nadi and Suva. There's also one in Savusavu,

but have a backup plan (such as travellers cheques) in case it's out of order. Although they are more commonplace, you won't find ATMs in remote areas, so plan ahead.

## Credit Cards

Restaurants, shops, midrange to top-end hotels, car-rental agencies, tour and travel agents will usually accept all major credit cards. Visa, Amex and MasterCard are widely used. Some resorts charge an additional 5% for payment by credit card. Cash advances are available through credit cards at most banks in larger towns.

## Tippling & Bargaining

Tippling is not expected or encouraged in Fiji; however, if you feel that the service is worth it, tips are always appreciated. At many resorts you can drop a tip in the 'Staff Christmas Fund' jar.

Indigenous Fijians generally do not like to bargain, however it's customary in Indo-Fijian stores, especially in Nadi and Suva. Indo-Fijian shop owners and taxi drivers consider it bad luck to lose their first customer of the day, so you can expect an especially hard sales pitch in the morning.

## Travellers Cheques

You can change travellers cheques in most banks and exchange bureaus, and at larger hotels and duty-free shops. It's a good idea to take travellers cheques in both small and large denominations to avoid being stuck with lots of cash when leaving.

The 24-hour ANZ bank at Nadi International Airport charges \$2 on each transaction. Other banks and exchange bureaus don't normally charge a fee.

## POST

**Post Fiji** ([www.postfiji.com](http://www.postfiji.com)) is generally quick with its actual delivery (if a little slow at the counter) and has offices throughout the country.

To mail a letter within Fiji costs \$0.18. Postcards sent internationally cost \$0.27, while letters (up to 30g) cost \$0.31.

Sending mail is straightforward; by the time you've reached the front of the queue, you'll know the process by heart. Surface mail is cheaper but slow; airmail can usually make it to Australia or New Zealand within three days and Europe or North America

within a week. If you're really in a hurry, there's an international express-mail service available through the main post offices.

It's possible to receive mail at poste restante counters in all major post offices. Mail is held for up to two months without a charge. It's also possible to receive faxes at **Fintel** (Fiji International Telecommunications; Map p122; ☎ 331 2933; 158 Victoria Pde) in Suva and major post offices (see p252).

## SHOPPING

The main tourist centres of Nadi, the Coral Coast and Suva have lots of handicraft shops. Savusavu (on Vanua Levu) and Lautoka are quieter and the salespeople are less pushy. You can also buy interesting handicrafts direct at villages, particularly woven goods and carvings.

Traditional artefacts, such as war clubs, spears and chiefly cannibal forks, are popular souvenirs. So too are *kava* (*yaqona*; a Fijian narcotic drink) bowls of various sizes (with miniature ones for salt and pepper), woven pandanus mats, baskets from Kioa, sandalwood or coconut soap, and *masi* (bark cloth) cloth in the form of wall hangings, covered books and postcards. Specialties from Tavuni and Ovalau are 'Bula Bears' – stuffed, *masi*-patterned teddies that are quite cute. Pottery can be a good buy – if you can get it home in one piece. Don't buy any products derived from endangered species such as turtle and avoid the temptation of buying sea shells. Also be cautious about buying wooden artefacts. A label reading 'Treated Wood' doesn't guarantee an absence of borers. Inspect items closely for holes or other marks; otherwise you may end up paying more for quarantine in your own country than you did for the actual piece.

Clothing shops in Suva and Nadi have *bula* shirts (a *masi*- or floral-design shirt) and fashion items by local designers. There are also vibrant saris and Indian jewellery on sale. Fijian ceramic jewellery is sold in the Government Crafts Centre in Suva.

The shop at **Fiji Museum** (Map p122; ☎ 331 5944; Ratu Cakobau Rd) in Suva has some interesting books, posters and postcards.

## TELEPHONE & FAX

There are no area codes within Fiji. To dial a number in Fiji, dial the country code (☎ 679) followed by the local number. To use



International Direct Dial (IDD), dial ☎ 00 plus the country code.

You'll find a phone in most midrange and top-end hotel rooms. While local calls are often free, hefty surcharges are added onto long-distance calls. **Fintel** (Map p122; ☎ 331 2933; 158 Victoria Pde); in downtown Suva, also provides an international phone service.

Be aware that domestic calls are charged according to time. Rates on public phones are \$0.20 per 10 minutes for a local call; around \$0.20 per 45 seconds between neighbouring towns; and \$0.20 for each 15 seconds for more distant calls (eg Nadi to Suva or between islands). Calls to mobile phones are more expensive (around \$0.80 per minute). Mobile numbers in Fiji generally start with a ☎ 9. Collect calls are also more expensive and, when using operator assistance, there's a minimum charge of three minutes plus a surcharge of \$1.13. Outer islands are linked by cable and satellite to worldwide networks.

You can send and receive faxes from major post offices. If you're faxing internationally, try Fintel in Suva. At post offices, incoming faxes cost \$1.20 per page and sending a local/regional/international fax costs \$1.65/9.65/12.15 per page. Additional pages, though, are usually a little cheaper. Check out the website of **Post Fiji** (www.postfiji.com) for offices offering fax services.

### Mobile Phones

**Vodafone** (www.vodafone.com.fj) is the only mobile phone company in Fiji. It operates a GSM digital service and has roaming agreements with Vodafone in Australia, New Zealand and the UK as well as Optus in Australia. Ask for rates charged in Fiji for your mobile-phone calls before you leave home – you may end up paying international rates for local calls. Mobile phones can be rented from some car-rental agencies.

### Phonecards

The cheapest way to phone home is by direct dial with a public phonecard; as they have a limited credit, it's also a good way to stop your relatives from chatting away your savings. Phonecards can be purchased at post offices, newsagents and some pharmacies and come in denominations of \$3, \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50. You'll find public phones outside post offices but they're generally just

### INTERNATIONAL PHONE CODES

Country	Code
Australia	☎ 61
Canada	☎ 1
France	☎ 33
French Polynesia	☎ 689
Germany	☎ 49
Japan	☎ 81
New Zealand	☎ 64
Tonga	☎ 676
UK	☎ 44
USA	☎ 1
Vanuatu	☎ 678

for décor (they're rarely functioning). You'll also find them at resorts and around town.

For international calls, the cheapest calling cards are 'Call the World For Cheap' cards, available from shops in urban centres.

### TIME

Fiji is 12 hours ahead of GMT/UTC. When it's noon in Suva, corresponding times elsewhere are as follows:

City	Time
<b>Same Day</b>	
Sydney	10am
Auckland	noon
Honolulu	2pm
<b>Previous Day</b>	
London	midnight
Los Angeles	5pm
New York	8pm

Subtract one hour from these times if the other country does not have daylight savings in place. See the World Time Zones map (p291) for more information.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

The **Fiji Visitors Bureau** (FVB; www.bulafiji.com) is the primary tourist information body in Fiji. The head office in Fiji is in Nadi; **FVB** (Map p76; ☎ 672 2433; www.bulafiji.com; Suite 107, Colonial Plaza, Namaka) and there is also a **Suva office** (Map p122; ☎ 330 2433; www.bulafiji.com; cnr Thomson & Scott Sts).

The **South Pacific Tourism Organisation** (Map p122; ☎ 330 4177; www.spto.org; 3rd fl, Dolphin Plaza, cnr Loftus St & Victoria Pde, Suva) promotes coopera-

tion between the South Pacific island nations for the development of tourism in the region. Check out its website for a Pacific Islands travel directory.

### VISAS & TRAVEL PERMITS

You'll need to have an onward ticket and a passport valid for at least three months longer than your intended stay to get a visa. A free tourist visa for four months is granted on arrival to citizens of more than 100 countries, including: most countries belonging to the British Commonwealth, North America, much of South America and Western Europe, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and many others. (Check www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/fiji\_faqs.shtml for a full list.)

Nationals from countries excluded from the list will have to apply for visas through a Fijian embassy prior to arrival.

Those entering Fiji by boat are subject to the same visa requirements as those arriving by plane. Yachts can only enter through the designated ports of Suva, Lautoka, Savusavu and Levuka. Yachts have to be cleared by immigration and customs, and are prohibited from visiting any outer islands before doing so. Yachties need to apply to the **Ministry for Fijian Affairs** (www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/m\_fijian\_affairs.shtml) for special written authorisation to visit the Lau Group.

Visitors cannot partake in political activity or study, and work permits are needed if you intend to live and work in Fiji for more than six months. Foreign journalists will require a work visa if they spend more than 14 days in Fiji (see right for more details).

### Visa Extensions

Tourist visas can be extended for up to six months by applying through the **Immigration Department** (Map p122; ☎ 331 2672; Government Bldg, Suva). You'll need to show an onward ticket, proof of sufficient funds and your passport must be valid for three months after your proposed departure.

### WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Fiji is a fairly male-dominant society, but it is unlikely that solo women travellers will experience any difficulties as a result. Be aware, however, that men in this environment may view the influence of Western women as a threat to their own position and therefore might discourage their wives from talking with you.

If you're travelling alone, you may experience whistles and stares but you're unlikely to feel threatened. Nevertheless, some men will assume lone females are fair game and several female readers have complained of being harassed or ripped off, particularly in touristy areas.

Generally speaking though, women travellers will find Fijian men friendly and helpful, especially if you are travelling with a male partner. You'll be treated with more respect by both men and women if you follow the local dress codes (see p36).

For information on health matters, see p268.

### WORK

Those travelling to Fiji for reasons other than a holiday must declare this on their arrival card. They will be given a visa for 14 days and will have to apply for subsequent extensions. Those wishing to live or work in Fiji for more than six months will require a working visa. These can be difficult to get and need to be organised at least two months prior to travelling to Fiji. Application forms can be obtained from any Fijian embassy and must be completed and sent by the applicant to the immigration authorities in Fiji. Your application will normally only be approved if supported by a prospective employer and if a person with your skills cannot be found locally. Unemployment is a problem in Fiji and consequently finding work once you're in the country is difficult. If you want to conduct business in Fiji, contact the **Fiji Trade & Investment Board** (Map p122; ☎ 331 5988; www.ftib.org.fj; 6th fl, Civic Tower, Government Bldgs, Victoria Pde, Suva).



# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Centrally situated in the South Pacific, Fiji is one of the main airline hubs of the Pacific region (Hawaii is the other). Many travellers visit Fiji on round-the-world (RTW) tickets or on a stopover between North America and Australia or New Zealand. Most agents

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. You should check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and the ticket you may buy) works. See the airline websites listed for up-to-date fares and information. In addition, the travel industry is highly competitive and there are many lurks and perks.

The upshot of this is that you should get opinions, quotes and advice from as many airlines and travel agents as possible before you part with your hard-earned cash. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

will allow those visiting Fiji on a package deal to extend their stay on either side of the accommodation package.

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

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Make sure you have a valid passport and, if necessary, an appropriate visa on arrival in Fiji. See p253 for more details. Immigration procedures are straightforward and it's highly unlikely that travellers will experience difficulty.

In general, visitors do not need to show immunisation cards on entry, although it's always wise to check with your local authorities before leaving in case this changes.

### AIR Airports & Airlines

Most visitors to Fiji arrive at Nadi International Airport, situated 9km north of central Nadi. A few international flights land at Nausori airport near Suva.

On arrival you will be greeted by a sea of smiling faces and guitar serenading. Most of these people will be representing local accommodation or the many travel agencies in the airport.

Nadi International Airport has a 24-hour ANZ bank with currency exchange. There are many travel agencies, airline offices and car-rental offices in the arrivals area, as well as a post office, cafeteria, restaurant, duty-free shop, newsagency and luggage storage area. Luggage storage costs \$3 to \$6 per day.

Nausori International Airport, about 23km northeast of downtown Suva, hosts Air Fiji flights to Tuvalu, and Air Pacific and Qantas flights direct to and from Sydney. Air Pacific also flies to New Zealand. Otherwise the airport is mostly used for domestic flights.

The following international airlines fly to and from Fiji. Phone numbers are those in Fiji unless otherwise stated.

- Air Fiji** (airline code PC; ☎ 672 2521, 331 3666; [www.airfiji.com.fj/index.cfm](http://www.airfiji.com.fj/index.cfm); hub Nausori & Nadi, Fiji)
- Air Nauru** (airline code ON; ☎ 672 2795, 331 2377/3731; [www.aimauru.com.au](http://www.aimauru.com.au); hub Nauru)
- Air New Zealand** (airline code NZ; ☎ 331 3100; [www.airnz.co.nz](http://www.airnz.co.nz); hub Auckland, New Zealand)

### SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have special needs of any sort – you've broken a leg, are vegetarian, in a wheelchair, taking the baby, terrified of flying – let the airline know as soon as possible so that it can make arrangements accordingly. You should remind staff when you reconfirm your booking (at least 72 hours before departure) and again when you check in at the airport. It may also be worth ringing airlines before you make your booking to find out how they can handle your particular needs.

Children under two travel for 10% of the standard fare (or free, on some airlines) as long as they don't occupy a seat. They don't get a baggage allowance either. 'Skycots' should be provided by the airline if requested in advance; these will take a child weighing up to about 10kg. Children aged two to 12 years can usually occupy a seat for half to two-thirds of the full fare and get a baggage allowance. Push chairs (strollers) can often be taken as hand luggage.

You can take bicycles to pieces and put them in a bike bag or box as luggage, but (if it's allowed) it's much easier to wheel your bike to the check-in desk, where it should be treated as a piece of baggage. You may have to remove the pedals and secure the handlebars sideways so that it takes up less space in the aircraft's hold. It's best to check all this with the airline well in advance, preferably before you pay for your ticket.

Many travellers also bring surfboards into Fiji. This is easy enough as long as you have a suitable case or bag. Be prepared to pay a hefty excess baggage fee also.

- Air Pacific** (airline code FJ; ☎ 672 0888, 330 4388; [www.airpacific.com.fj](http://www.airpacific.com.fj); airline hub Nadi, Fiji)
- Air Vanuatu** (airline code NF; ☎ 672 2521, 331 3666/3055; [www.airvanuatu.com](http://www.airvanuatu.com); hub Port Vila, Vanuatu)
- Aircalin** (airline code SB; ☎ 672 2145; [www.aircalin.nc](http://www.aircalin.nc); hub Noumea, New Caledonia)
- Freedom Air** (airline code SJ; ☎ 0800 600 500; [www.freedomair.co.nz](http://www.freedomair.co.nz); hub Auckland, New Zealand)
- Korean Air** (airline code KE; ☎ 672 1043; [www.koreanair.com.au](http://www.koreanair.com.au); hub Seoul, Korea)
- Pacific Blue** (Virgin Blue International; [www.flypacificblue.com](http://www.flypacificblue.com); hub Brisbane, Australia)
- Polynesian Airlines** (airline code PH; ☎ 672 3822; [www.polynesianairlines.com](http://www.polynesianairlines.com); hub Samoa)
- Qantas Airways** (airline code QF; ☎ 672 2880, 331 3888/1833; [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au); hub Sydney, Australia)
- Royal Tongan Airlines** (airline code WR; ☎ 672 4355; [rtafiji@connect.com.fj](mailto:rtafiji@connect.com.fj); hub Apia, Tonga)
- Solomon Airlines** (airline code IE; ☎ 672 2831; [www.solomonairlines.com.au](http://www.solomonairlines.com.au); hub Honiara, Solomon Islands)
- United Airlines** (airline code UA; ☎ in Australia 131 777; [www.united.com](http://www.united.com); hub Chicago, USA)

### Tickets

It is always worth putting aside a few hours to research the current travel market. Talk to recent travellers, look at advertisements in newspapers and magazines, search the Internet and watch for special offers. Airlines are useful for supplying information on routes and timetables; however, except at times of airline ticketing wars, they usually do not supply the cheapest tickets. For straightforward return tickets, online booking agencies tend to offer the best deals.

High-season travel to Fiji is between April and October as well as the peak Christmas and New Year period. Airfares peak between April and June and in December and January. If you book well enough in advance, however, it's possible to escape the seasonal price variations.

Fijian departure tax is \$30, payable at the airport before passing through immigration. This situation is likely to change, though, and the tax may be incorporated into your ticket by the time you read this.

- Recommended websites for bookings:
- Cheap Flights** ([www.cheapflights.com](http://www.cheapflights.com)) Informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches from the USA and other regions.
- Cheapest Flights** ([www.cheapestflights.co.uk](http://www.cheapestflights.co.uk)) Cheap worldwide flights from the UK.
- Expedia** ([www.expedia.msn.com](http://www.expedia.msn.com)) Mainly US-related travel site.
- Flight Centre International** ([www.flightcentre.com](http://www.flightcentre.com)) Respected operator with sites for Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the USA and Canada.
- Opodo** ([www.opodo.com](http://www.opodo.com)) Reliable company specialising in fares from Europe.
- Orbitz** ([www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)) Excellent site for web-only fares.
- STA** ([www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)) Prominent in international student travel, but you don't have to be a student; site linked to STA sites worldwide.
- Travel.com** ([www.travel.com.au](http://www.travel.com.au)) Good site for Australian travellers.
- Travelocity** ([www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)) A US site that allows you to search fares (in US dollars) to/from practically anywhere.
- Trip Advisor** ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)) Good site for flights from the USA.

**INTERCONTINENTAL (RTW) TICKETS**

RTW tickets are often real bargains. One that takes in the Pacific will cost between US\$1700 and US\$2500, depending on where you want to stop. They are usually put together by a combination of two or more airlines and permit you to fly anywhere on their routes as long as you do not backtrack. Most tickets are valid for up to one year.

The cheaper RTW tickets usually have more restrictions such as fewer choices of where you can stop, large fees to change flight dates and mileage caps. It's also worth checking the minimum and maximum number of stops you can make and how many different airlines you can use. An alternative type of RTW ticket is one put together by a travel agent using a combination of discounted tickets.

Circle Pacific tickets use a combination of airlines to...circle the Pacific – they generally include stops in the USA, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, New Zealand and Australia. As with RTW tickets, there are advance purchase restrictions and limits to how many stopovers you can take. These fares are likely to be about 15% cheaper than RTW tickets.

Online ticket sales for RTW and Circle Pacific fares:

**Airbrokers** (www.airbrokers.com) A US company.

**Just Fares.com** (www.justfares.com) A US company.

**Roundtheworld.com** (www.roundtheworldflights.com)

This excellent site allows you to build your own trips from the UK with up to six stops.

**Usit** (www.usit.ie) Irish company.

**Western Air** (www.westernair.co.uk) A UK company.

**World Travellers' Club** (www.around-the-world.com)

A US company.

**Asia**

There are direct flights to Nadi from Japan and South Korea. Low-/high-season return airfares from Tokyo to Nadi are around ¥118,300/414,000 (US\$1000/3500); from Seoul to Nadi they are about US\$1700/2700. Fares are most expensive between December and January, and June and July.

Most flights to/from Southeast Asia go via Australia or New Zealand. Return airfares from Hong Kong to Nadi are around US\$1400/2700 for low/high season. Most countries offer fairly competitive deals – Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong are good places to shop around for discount tickets.

Recommended agencies in Japan:

**No 1 Travel** (☎ 03-3205 6073; www.no1-travel.com)

**STA Travel** (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

**Australia**

Qantas, Air Pacific and Pacific Blue operate between Australia and Fiji. Qantas planes don't actually fly to Fiji but the airline sells tickets and code shares seats on Air Pacific flights. The flight time is about 4/4½ hours from Sydney/Melbourne.

Fares from Sydney or Brisbane are typically A\$550/800 return for low/high season. Flights from Melbourne cost A\$100 to A\$150 more. The further in advance you book the cheaper your ticket is likely to be.

Agencies in Australia with specialist Fiji knowledge:

**Essence Tours** (☎ 07-3245 7815; info@essencetours.com.au)

**Fiji & Pacific Specialist Holidays** (☎ 02-9080 1600; www.pacificolidays.com.au)

**Hideaway Holidays** (☎ 02-8799 2500; www.hideawayholidays.com.au)

**South Pacific Holidays** (☎ 1300 997 287; www.tropicalfiji.com)

**Talpacific Holidays** (☎ 1300 137 727; www.talpacific.com)

**Canada**

Fiji is a popular stopover between Canada and Australia or New Zealand, and for those on RTW tickets. Air Pacific flies between Vancouver and Nadi; fares start at around C\$2300 from June to November, peaking at around C\$2700 between November and February. Fares from Ottawa or Toronto are C\$100 to C\$150 more; these generally fly via Chicago and LA.

Toronto's *Globe & Mail*, the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Toronto Sun* and the *Vancouver Sun* are good places to look for cheap fares.

Canadian-based travel agencies:

**Pacesetter Travel** (☎ 1800 387-8827, 604-687-3083; www.pacesettertravel.com)

**Travel Cuts** (☎ 866-246-9762; www.travelcuts.com)

Canada's national student travel agency with offices in all major cities.

**Continental Europe**

Generally there is not much variation in airfares for departures from the main European cities, but deals can be had, so shop around. Expect to pay around €1400/2000 for low/high season.

Useful agencies:

**Adventure Travel** (www.adventure-holidays.com) German agency specialising in South Pacific travel.

**BarronTravel** (☎ 020-625 8600; www.barron.nl) Dutch agency operating 3 Oceans Travel, which specialises in the South Pacific.

**OTU Voyages** (☎ 08 20 81 78 17, 01 44 41 38 50; www.otu.fr) French network of student-travel agencies; supplies discount tickets to travellers of all ages.

**Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)

**Voyages du Monde** (www.vdm.com)

**Wereldcontact** (☎ 0343-530 530; www.wereldcontact.nl) Dutch agency.

**New Zealand**

Air Pacific flies from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to both Suva and Nadi. Air New Zealand also flies between Nadi and Auckland and has shared services on the other routes. Freedom Air flies from Christchurch, Wellington, Palmerston North and Hamilton to Nadi. From Auckland to Fiji (three hours) costs about NZ\$460/730 for low/high season. Flights from Wellington and Christchurch tend to cost around NZ\$200 extra with the bigger airlines, but Freedom Air offers some serious bargains on their lesser-flown routes.

Good booking agencies:

**Air New Zealand** (☎ 0800 737 000; www.airnewzealand.co.nz)

**Flight Centre** (www.flightcentre.co.nz)

**Go Holidays** (☎ 0800 464 646; www.goholidays.co.nz) South Pacific specialists for accommodation and packages.

**House of Travel** (www.houseoftravel.co.nz) Nationwide travel agency.

**STA** (www.statravel.co.nz)

**Talpacific Holidays** (☎ 09-914 8728; www.travelarange.co.nz) South Pacific specialists.

**Travel Online** (☎ 0800 000 747, 09-920 6000; www.travelonline.co.nz)

**Zuji** (www.zuji.co.nz) Online booking service.

**Pacific Countries****AIR PASSES**

Intercountry flights in the Pacific can be expensive. The only really workable way to travel to more than a handful of countries is by using an air pass. Fortunately, there are lots to choose from. New deals are always coming up so it's worth checking with your travel agent or searching the Internet. Conditions apply and seating can be limited, so book early.

**Polynesian Airlines** (www.polynesianairlines.com) offers a number of air passes through the Pacific that take in cities on the US west coast and Australian east coast, New Zealand, and a number of South Pacific countries including Fiji, Samoa, the Cook Islands, and Tonga. Valid for up to 45 days, a Poly Pass ticket including six stops costs between US\$1100 and US\$1600. Passes are not valid for travel in December or January.

Air Pacific's Triangle Fare links Fiji, Samoa and Tonga for \$670 (Fijian dollars). The fare is only available from North America, and travel must be completed within 60 days. You must stop in each county and can fly on Air Pacific, Polynesian Airlines or Air New Zealand flights. There are also limited offers on other Triangle Fares, such as New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The Visit South Pacific Pass allows for travel with lots of different airlines (including Air Pacific, Airalin and Qantas), with a minimum of two stops and a maximum of eight. Each flight costs between US\$220 and US\$370. The ticket covers the South Pacific as well as Australia and New Zealand.

The Qantas Boomerang pass is only available in connection with travel to/from Australia, New Zealand or Fiji from outside the region; it is not available to residents of these countries. The pass covers Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands with a minimum of two stops and a maximum of 10. Tickets range in price, depending on how many 'zones' you cross. A flight in Zone A (up to 1200km) costs from A\$160, in Zone B (1200km to 1840km) costs from A\$295 and Zone C (over 1840km) costs from A\$360.

**UK & Ireland**

London is the travel discount capital of Europe. Airline ticket discounters are known as bucket shops in the UK, and many advertise in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheets, such as the *Independent* on Saturday and the *Sunday Times*. Also check the travel section the free magazine *TNT*. A return ticket from London to Nadi costs about £850/1100 in low/high season. Some agencies to check out:

**Bridge the World** (☎ 0870 444 7474)

**Ebookers** (☎ 0870 814 0000; www.ebookers.com)

**Traillfinders** (☎ 0845 058 5858; www.traillfinders.co.uk)

**Travel Bag** (☎ 0870 814 4441; www.travelbag.co.uk)

## USA

Fiji is a major stopover between the west coast of the USA and Australia or New Zealand. Fiji is about six/12 hours from Hawaii/west-coast USA. Fares from the USA vary greatly depending on season and ticket restrictions. Los Angeles to Nadi with Air New Zealand is about US\$920/1300 for low/high season.

The following agents specialise in travel to Fiji and the South Pacific:

**All Travel** (☎ 800 300-4567, 310-312-3368; www.all-travel.com)

**Fiji Travels** (www.fijitravels.com)

**Golden Fish Travels** (☎ 877-255-7438; http://goldenfishtravels.com/fiji.html)

**South Pacific Direct** (www.southpacificdirect.com)

**Sunspots International** (☎ 800 334-5623, 503-666-3893; www.sunspotsintl.com)

## SEA

Travelling to Fiji by sea is difficult unless you're on a cruise ship or yacht.

## Cargo Boats

Few of the shipping companies will take passengers on cargo ships and those that do will usually charge hefty rates. It is virtually impossible to leave Fiji by cargo ship unless passage has been prearranged. A useful American company is **Freighter World Cruises** (☎ 800 531-7774; www.freighterworld.com), which can organise travel on a freighter ship around the South Pacific. You could also try asking your local shipping agents, or go to the docks and personally approach the captains.

## Yacht

Fiji's islands are a popular destination and stopover for yachts cruising the Pacific. The best time to sail is in the 'winter' from early November to late April when the southeasterly trade winds are blowing. During the 'summer' months (May to October), winds change direction more often and the chance of finding yourself in a storm or cyclone is greater.

Yachts need to head for the designated ports of entry at Suva, Lautoka, Levuka or Savusavu, to clear customs, immigration and quarantine. Be sure to have a certificate of clearance from the previous port of call, a crew list and passports. Before departing, you'll again need to complete clearance formalities (within 24 hours), providing in-

## ISA LEI, A FIJIAN FAREWELL SONG

As your boat departs from the shore or you hike off from the village, Fijians are likely to sing you this farewell song written by a student in the early 20th century for his forbidden love, Isa. While her social standing may have separated Isa from her lovesick suitor, it couldn't keep what became Fiji's No 1 song from reaching her ears. By the time you leave Fiji, you too may well know it by heart.

*Isa Isa Vulagi Iasa dina*  
Isa Isa you are my only treasure  
*Nomu lako au na rarawa kina*  
Must you leave me so lonely and forsaken  
*Cava beka ko a mai cakava*  
As the roses will miss the sun at dawn  
*Nomu lako au na sega ni lasa*  
Every moment my heart for you is yearning

*Isa lei, na noqu rarawa*  
Isa Lei, the purple shadows fall  
*Ni ko sa na gole e na mataka*  
Sad the morning will dawn upon my sorrow  
*Bau nanuma na nodatou lasa*  
Oh forget not when you are far away  
*Mai Viti nanuma tiko ga*  
Precious moments from Fiji

*Vanua rogo na nomuni vanua*  
My heart was filled with pleasure  
*Kena ca ni levu tu na ua*  
From the moment I heard your tender greeting  
*Lomaqu voli me'u bau butuka*  
Mid the sunshine we spent the hours together  
*Tovolea ke balavu na bua*  
Now so swiftly those happy hours are fleeting

bound clearance papers, your vessel's details and your next port of call. Customs must be cleared before immigration, and you must have paid all port dues and health fees. For more information see p253.

Other marinas in Fiji include Vuda Point Marina (between Nadi and Lautoka), Port Denarau (Denarau Marina), and Musket Cove Marina on Malololailai (Plantation Island) in the Mamanucas. Yachties are often looking for extra crew and people to share day-to-day costs. If you are interested, ask

around the marinas and look on the noticeboards. For more details on travelling by yacht see p243.

## GETTING AROUND

By using local buses, carriers (small trucks) and ferries you can get around Fiji's main islands relatively cheaply and easily. If you'd like more comfort or are short on time you can use air-conditioned express buses, rental vehicles, charter boats and small planes.

## AIR

The international airports on Viti Levu, at Nadi and Nausori (near Suva), are also the main domestic hubs. Other domestic airports include Savusavu and Labasa on Vanua Levu; Matei on Taveuni; Vunisea on Kadavu; Bureta on Ovalau and; in the Mamanucas, Malololailai and Mana. Many other small islands also have airstrips. There are flights to some outer islands where there is no accommodation for tourists and an invitation is needed to visit – in some cases

it is illegal to turn up uninvited. Rotuma, Gau, Koro, Moala and Vanua Balavu, and Lakeba in Lau have airstrips but receive few visitors, while other islands such as Vatulele, Yasawa and Wakaya have their own airstrips that serve the upmarket resorts.

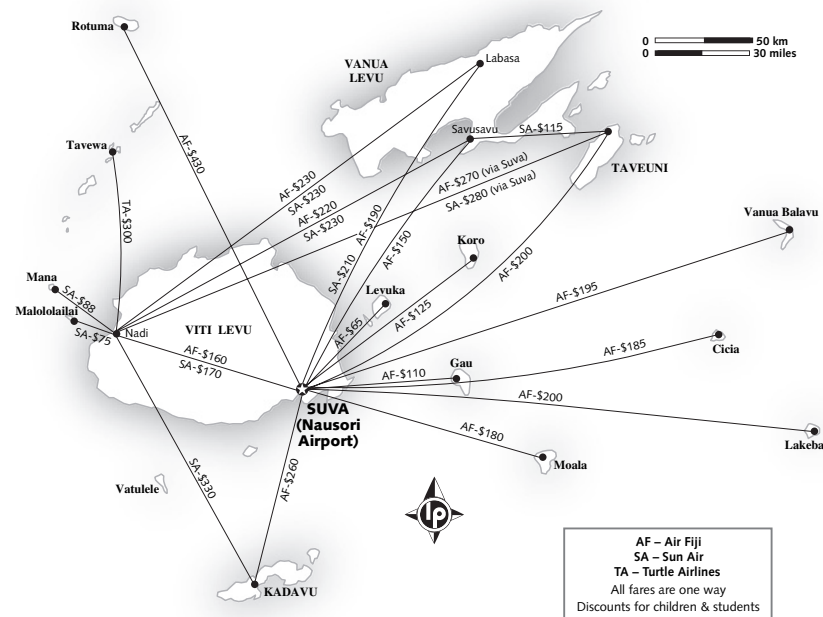
## Airlines in Fiji

Fiji is well served by internal airlines, which have frequent and generally reliable flights. Some may find the light planes scary, especially if it's windy or turbulent, but the views of the islands, coral reefs and lagoons are fantastic.

Air Fiji and Sun Air have regular inter-island flights by light plane. Most of Air Fiji's services operate out of Nausori, while Sun Air is based in Nadi. Sun Air often transports passengers' luggage in a separate plane, and arriving before or after your possessions is a common occurrence. Prices on routes shared by the airlines are almost identical.

Air Pacific was planning to re-enter the domestic market by 2006, with a plan to fly to Taveuni, Savusavu and other northern destinations. At the time of writing it was

## FIJI AIR FARES





uncertain whether the airline would simply add these destinations to its route map or purchase Sun Air.

**Air Fiji** (☎ 331 3666; www.airfiji.com.fj) operates flights from Suva to Nadi, Kadavu, Koro, Labasa, Lakeba, Levuka, Moala, Rotuma, Savusavu, Taveuni and Vanua Balavu. From Nadi, there are flights to Suva, Labasa, Malololailai, Mana, Savusavu and Taveuni.

**Sun Air** (☎ 0800 672 5725, 572 3016; www.fiji.to) flies from Suva to Nadi, Labasa and Taveuni, and from Nadi to Suva, Kadavu, Labasa, Malololailai, Mana, Savusavu and Taveuni.

### Air Passes

Air Fiji has a 30-day air pass for \$520 (US\$270). It is sold only outside Fiji in conjunction with an international air ticket. The pass includes four flights but you can have additional legs for \$100 per sector. It's best to book your seats, as the small planes often fill up quickly. Children under 12 get a 25% discount and infants are charged 10%. There is a \$100 predeparture cancellation fee, and reimbursement is minimal once in Fiji. If you change your mind it will cost \$100 to re-issue your ticket.

### Charter Services & Joyflights

Charter services and joyflights are available.

**Island Hoppers** (☎ 672 0410; info@helicopters.com.fj) offers transfers to most of the Mamanucas island resorts, as well as helicopter flights departing from Denarau island and Nadi airport. A flight to Malololailai by helicopter costs \$210 one way per person. A 20-minute flight over the Sabeto mountain range and the gorges of Koroyanitu (Mt Evans), east of Lautoka, costs \$170 per seat (four to six passengers). A 25-minute flight over the Mamanuca islands is \$200 per seat and a combination of the two – the 'Islands & Highlands' trip, costs is \$260 per person and lasts 35 minutes.

**Turtle Airways** (☎ 672 1888; reservations@turtleairways.com) has a fleet of seaplanes departing from New Town Beach or Denarau, near Nadi. As well as joyflights, it provides transfer services to the Mamanucas, Yasawas, the Fijian Resort (on the Queens Road), Pacific Harbour, Suva, Toberua Island Resort and other islands as required. Turtle Airways also charters a five-seater Cessna and a seven-seater de Havilland Canadian Beaver. Contact them for rates.

**Pacific Island Seaplanes** (☎ 672 5644; www.fiji.seaplanes.com) also offers transfers to islands in the Mamanuca, Yasawa and Lau Groups.

### BICYCLE

Fiji's larger islands have good potential for cycling, although some areas are too hilly and rugged. Viti Levu has long, flat stretches of sealed road along the scenic Coral Coast, and it is possible to cycle around the perimeter of the island by the Kings and Queens Roads.

The best time to go is the drier season (May to October), and note that the eastern sides of the larger islands receive higher rainfall. Mountain bikes are best for exploring the interior. If you intend to cycle around Fiji as a main form of transport bring your own bike, helmet, waterproof gear, repair kit and all other equipment. It is difficult to get bike parts in Fiji. Maps are available from the government **Map Shop** (Map p122; ☎ 321 1395; Rm 10, Department of Lands & Surveys) in Suva. If you wish to take a bike on a domestic flight, make sure it is demountable.

The biggest hazard is the unpredictable traffic – Fijian drivers can be pretty manic and are not used to cyclists. Avoid riding in the evening when visibility is low. Travel light but carry plenty of water – it can be hot and dusty or humid. You can usually buy coconuts and bananas from villages along the way. Storage at Nadi airport is relatively expensive; the cheapest place to store bikes is at backpacker hostels. For information on routes, see p242. For information on taking a bike on a plane, see the boxed text, p255.

### Hire

Bicycles can be rented in Nadi, the Coral Coast and Ovalau and cost around \$25 to \$40 per day. A security deposit is not generally necessary. Wacking Stick Adventure Tours near Nadi runs mountain-bike tours (see p79). Rental bikes can be in pretty poor condition, so test the brakes and gears beforehand. Also helmets aren't provided by all operators.

### BOAT

With the exception of the Mamanuca and Yasawa groups, and upmarket resort islands, often the only means of transport to and between the islands is by small local boats, especially for the backpacker resorts. Life jackets are rarely provided on the small boats

and usually they have no radio-phones as well. If the weather looks ominous or the boat is overcrowded, consider postponing the trip or opting for a flight.

In other areas, it is difficult to explore and hop from island to island unless you have a charter boat or yacht. On Kadavu, for example, transport is mostly by small village or resort-owned boats. Apart from the Suva–Kadavu ferry, there is no organised transport here and most resorts have their own boats.

### Ferry

Interisland trips for sightseeing and catamaran transfers are available to the Mamanucas and Yasawas; see this section as well as p150 and p161 for more details.

Regular ferry services link Viti Levu to Vanua Levu and Taveuni, and also Viti Levu to Ovalau. See the map on pp2-3 for ferry routes. The Patterson Brothers, Beachcomber Cruises and Consort Shipping boats are large roll-on, roll-off ferries, carrying passengers, vehicles and cargo. They have canteens where you can buy drinks, snacks and light meals. Ferry timetables are notorious for changing frequently; boats sometimes leave at odd hours and there is often a long waiting period at stopovers. The worst thing about the long trips is that the toilets can become disgusting (take your own toilet paper). There are irregular boats that take passengers from Suva to Lau, Rotuma and Kadavu.

### NADI-MAMANUCAS

**South Sea Cruises** (☎ 675 0500, www.ssc.com.fj) operates two fast catamarans from Denarau Marina to most of the Mamanuca islands, including Malolo, Walu Beach, Castaway Island, Mana, Treasure Island, Beachcomber Island, Bounty Island, South Sea Island, Matamanoa and Tokoriki. See p150 for information on these services.

### NADI-YASAWAS

**Awesome Adventures** (☎ 675 0499, www.awesomefiji.com), which is the same company as South Sea Cruises, operates the lurid yellow *Yasawa Flyer*, a large catamaran that services all the resorts in the Yasawa islands plus some of the Mamanuca resorts daily. It's a large boat with a comfortable interior including a snack shop and toilets but you'll still feel the swell on choppy days. See p161 for more details.

### SUVA-SAVUSAVU-TAVEUNI

**Consort Shipping** (Map p122; ☎ 330 2877; fax 330 3389; Ground fl, Dominion House Arcade, Thomson St, Suva) sails three times a week from Suva to Savusavu (\$80/50 for cabin/seat), departing Suva at 6pm on Monday and Friday and noon on Wednesday. It takes 12 hours to reach Savusavu. On Wednesday and Friday it continues for another eight hours on to Taveuni (\$90/55 from Suva for cabin/seat). On the way back it departs Taveuni around noon on Friday and Sunday, arriving in Savusavu at around 5pm. This service sometimes stops at Koro – a nine hour trip; see p189 for more information.

**Beachcomber Cruises** Lautoka (☎ 666 1500; fax 666 4496; Savusavu (☎ 885 0266); Taveuni (☎ 888 0036) has a 500-passenger ship the *Adi Savusavu*, which has good facilities and runs three times a week between Suva and Savusavu (\$45/65 for economy/1st class). The journey takes 11 hours and departs Suva at 10am on Tuesday, noon on Thursday and 6pm on Saturday, returning from Savusavu at 8pm on Wednesday and Friday and 7pm on Sunday. The boat also travels between Savusavu and Taveuni (\$25/45 for economy/1st class), departing Savusavu at 1am on Wednesday and Friday, returning from Taveuni at noon on Wednesday and Friday. This journey takes five hours.

**Grace Ferry** Labasa (Gulam Nabi & Sons; ☎ 881 1152; Nasekula Rd); Savusavu (Country Kitchen; ☎ 927 1372) has a bus/boat trip from Taveuni to Savusavu and Labasa (\$20). See p213 for more information.

### (LAUTOKA)–ELLINGTON WHARF–NABOUWALU (VANUA LEVU)–(LABASA)

**Patterson Brothers Shipping** Labasa (☎ 881 2444; Nasekula Rd); Lautoka (☎ 666 1173; 15 Tukani St); Levuka (☎ 344 0125; Beach St); Suva (Map p122; ☎ 331 5644; fax 330 1652; Suites 1 & 2, Epworth Arcade, Nina St) travels this route twice a week (\$60). It involves a bus ride (3½ hours) from Lautoka, a trip on the Ashika ferry (3¾ hours) and a trip on another bus to Labasa (four hours). Buses depart from outside the Lautoka office at 4am on Friday and Monday, and from Labasa at 6am on Sunday and Wednesday.

### (SUVA)–NATTOVI–NABOUWALU–(LABASA)

Patterson Brothers Shipping (above) travels this route (\$45 one way) on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Again it involves



a bus ride (1½ hours) from Suva, a ferry trip (4½ hours) and another bus to Labasa (four hours). Buses depart the Suva office at 4.30am.

#### (SUVA)–NATTOVI–BURESALA–(LEVUKA)

Patterson Brothers Shipping operates a daily service (\$24 one way), which involves a bus ride (1½ hours) from Suva (Western Bus Terminal, Rodwell Rd) to Natovi Landing, followed by a ferry to Buresala Landing (one hour) and another bus to Levuka (one hour). Buses depart Suva at 2pm and Labasa at 5am.

#### (SUVA)–BAU LANDING–LELEUVIA–LEVUKA

There are services from Suva to Leleuvia via Bau Landing (\$30 one way) and from Leleuvia to Levuka (\$20 one way). See p189 for more information.

#### SUVA–KADAVU

**Kadavu Shipping** (Map p119; ☎ 331 1766, 339 5000, 339 5788; Rona St, Walu Bay, Suva) has irregular passenger services on the MV *Bulou-ni-Ceva* (\$45 one way). See p228 for more information.

#### SUVA–LAU GROUP

**Saliabasaga Shipping** (Map p119; ☎ 330 3403; Walu Bay, Suva) has fortnightly trips aboard the MV *Tunatuki* to Lakeba, Nayau, Cicia, Tuvuca, Vanua Balavu and occasionally Moce and Oneata. The one way fare to Vanua Balavu is \$90/120 for deck/cabin including meals.

**Kabua Development Corporation** (Map p119; ☎ 330 2258; fax 332 0251; Muaiwalu Complex, Old Millers Wharf, Rona St, Walu Bay, Suva) has fortnightly trips aboard the *Taikabara* to the southern Lau Group. It visits Lakeba, Vanuavatu, Komo, Kabara, Moce, Fulaga, Namuka, Vatoa, Ogea Levu and Ono-i-Lau (deck/cabin including meals \$75/85 one way). It costs an extra \$10 to visit the far south of the group (Vatoa and Ono-i-Lau). Boats can take up to a week to get to these distant outer islands.

**Khans Shipping** (Map p119; ☎ /fax 330 8786; Muaiwalu Complex, Rona St, Walu Bay, Suva) visits islands in southern Lau about once a month. It's best to talk to them about their itinerary as it varies depending on demand. The journey takes about 10 hours and costs \$80 each way.

#### SUVA–MOALA GROUP

There is no accommodation for visitors on the Moala islands – you would need to be

invited to stay by a local. Khans Shipping (see left) has monthly trips to Moala, Matuke and Totoya in the Moala group. The journey takes about eight hours and a one-way fare is \$80.

#### SUVA–ROTUMA

**Western Shipping** (Map p119; ☎ 331 4467; Naryan Jetty, Suva) operates the *Cagi Mai Ba* to Rotuma (deck/cabin \$130/150). The journey takes 36 hours; phone for departure times and dates.

#### Yacht

Yachting is a great way to explore the Fiji archipelago. It is possible to charter boats or hitch a ride at marinas. See p258 and p243.

#### BUS

Fiji's larger islands have extensive and inexpensive bus networks. Local buses are cheap and regular and a great way to mix with the locals. While they can be fairly noisy and smoky they are perfect for the tropics, with unglazed windows and pull-down tarpaulins for when it rains. There are bus stops but you can often just hail buses, especially in rural areas.

Air-conditioned express buses run on some major routes such as Nadi to Suva.

Sunbeam Transport and Pacific Transport are the main carriers on Viti Levu; see p75 for more information. Pacific Transport also operates services on Taveuni (see p213). Local companies operate buses on Vanua Levu (see p201 and p207).

Reservations are not necessary for local buses. If you are on a tight schedule or have an appointment, though, it's a good idea to buy your ticket in advance, especially for bus trips and tours over longer distances (eg Suva to Nadi). Pacific Transport and Sunbeam issue timetables (available from the Fiji Visitors Bureau; FVB), but for most local buses just ask around the bus stations.

#### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

About 90% of Fiji's 5100km of roads are on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, of which about one-fifth are sealed. Both of these islands are fun to explore by car, 4WD or on motorcycles.

#### Driving Licence

If you hold a current driving licence from an English-speaking country you are entitled

to drive in Fiji. Otherwise you will need an international driving permit, which should be obtained in your home country before travelling.

#### Fuel

Petrol stations are common and easy to find on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. They are most prolific and competitive in the cities. Once you get off the beaten track they become fewer and further between. If you plan to do some driving by 4WD into Viti Levu's interior you should take a full tank with you. If you do run out of fuel, it might be available in village shops (but don't assume so).

#### Hire

Rental cars are relatively expensive in Fiji. Despite this, it is a good way to explore the larger islands, especially if you can split the cost with others.

Some rental agencies will not allow their cars to be driven on unpaved roads, which greatly limits exploration of the highlands. It is possible to take vehicles on roll-on, roll-off ferries to Vanua Levu or Taveuni, but again, some companies do not allow this. The ferry costs are pretty expensive and vehicles are available to rent on both these islands anyway. If you do take a car on a ferry to Vanua Levu, it's best if it's a 4WD.

The shorter the hire period, the higher the rate. Delivery and collection are often included in the price. Rates for a week or more with an international company start at around \$70 per day, excluding tax, but the same car can cost twice as much per day for just one or two days' hire. Some companies will hire at an hourly rate or per half-day, while some have a minimum hire of three days. It's usual to pay a deposit by credit card. If you don't have a credit card you'll need to leave a hefty cash bond.

A valid overseas or international driving licence is required. The minimum-age requirement is 21, or in some cases 25.

Ask the FVB about the various companies. Generally, the larger, well-known companies have better cars and support, but are more expensive. Consider what's appropriate for you, including how inconvenienced you might be if the car breaks down, what support services are provided, the likely distance, insurance to travel, if value-added tax (VAT) is included and the

excess or excess waiver amount. Regardless of where you rent from check brakes, water, and tyre pressure and condition before heading off.

The easiest place to rent vehicles is on Viti Levu. Most rental agencies have offices at Nadi International Airport; the established companies also have offices in other towns and rental desks at larger hotels. Car-rental agencies on Vanua Levu and Taveuni have mostly 4WDs due to the islands' rough roads.

Some of the more reputable car-rental agencies on Viti Levu include:

**Avis Rent a Car** (www.avis.com) Nadi airport (☎ 672 2233); Nausori airport (☎ 347 8963); Suva (☎ 331 3833)  
**Budget Rent a Car** (www.budget.com.fj) Labasa (☎ 881 1999); Nadi airport (☎ 672 2636); Nausori airport (☎ 347 9299); Suva (☎ 331 5899); Taveuni (☎ 888 0291)  
**Hertz** (www.hertz.com) Nadi airport (☎ 672 3466); Nausori airport (☎ 338 0758); Suva (☎ 338 0981)  
**Thrifty Car Rental** (www.thrifty.com) Nadi airport (☎ 672 2935); Suva (☎ 331 4436)

Although not widely available, motorcycles and scooters are not a bad way to travel in Fiji. Similar traffic rules and rental conditions as mentioned previously for car rental apply to motorcycles and scooters. Rental per day starts at around \$35/60 for scooters/125cc motorcycle.

**Beat Rentals** (Nadi (Map p76; ☎ 672 1471; Queens Rd, Martintar); Suva (Map p119; ☎ 338 5355; Grantham Rd, Nabua) have been in the game for a while.

#### INSURANCE

Third-party insurance is compulsory and all car-rental companies add it onto the daily rental rate (count on \$22 to \$30 at least). Personal accident insurance is highly recommended if you are not already covered by travel insurance. Renters are liable for the first \$500 damage. Common exclusions, or problems that won't be paid for by the insurance company, include tyre damage, underbody and overhead damage, windscreen damage and theft of the vehicle.

#### Road Conditions

The perimeter of Viti Levu is easy to get to know by car: the Queens Road and most of the Kings Road are sealed, although the section between Korovou and Dama is still unsealed. Roads into the interior are unsealed and a 4WD is generally necessary.

There are unsealed roads around most of Vanua Levu's perimeter, but there's a sealed road from Labasa to Savusavu and the first 20km of the Hibiscus Hwy from Savusavu along the scenic coast is also paved. The remainder of the Hibiscus Hwy is quite rough.

### Road Hazards

Some locals drive with a fairly heavy foot on the accelerator pedal and many ignore the whole idea of sticking to the left-hand side when navigating bends (particularly along the Coral Coast). Local drivers also tend to stop suddenly and overtake on blind corners, so take care, especially on gravel roads. Buses also stop where and when they please. There are lots of potholes, and sometimes the roads are too narrow for two vehicles to pass, so be aware of oncoming traffic.

Watch for sugar trains in the cane-cutting season, as they have right of way. Dogs wandering onto the road can be a major hazard so observe the speed-hump enforced 20km/h rule when driving through villages. Avoid driving at night as there are many pedestrians and wandering animals – especially along the southeast coast of Viti Levu, on Vanua Levu and Taveuni.

### Road Rules

Driving is on the left-hand side of the road. The speed limit is 80km/h, which drops to 20km/h in villages. Many villages have speed humps to force drivers to slow down. Seat belts are compulsory for front-seat passengers. Should you pick up a parking fine in Suva it's likely to be around \$2.

### HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country, and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk.

Hitching in Fiji, however, is common. Locals do it all the time, especially with carriers. It is customary to pay the equivalent of the bus fare to the driver. Hitchhikers will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go. Crime is more prevalent around Suva, although there have been cases of hitchhikers being mugged around Nadi.

### LOCAL TRANSPORT

Many locals drive small trucks (known as carriers) with a tarpaulin-covered frame on the back. These often have passenger seating and some run trips between Nadi and Suva. You can pick one up in Nadi's main street; they leave when full and are quicker than taking the bus.

Minivans are also an increasingly common sight on the road. Popular with locals, they're also quicker and more expensive than a bus but much cheaper than a taxi. Your ride won't necessarily be more comfortable, though – it's generally a sardine-type affair. Minivans plough up and down the Queens Road around Nadi.

### TAXI

You will find taxis on Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Ovalau. The bus stations in the main towns usually have taxi depots and there is often an oversupply of taxis, with drivers competing for business. There are some good cabs, but most are rickety old dinosaurs bound for or retrieved from the wrecker. Most taxi drivers are Indo-Fijians keen to discuss life and local issues. They invariably have relatives in Australia, New Zealand or Canada.

Unlike in Suva, the taxi drivers in Nadi, Lautoka and most rural areas don't use their meters. First ask locals what is the acceptable rate for a particular trip. Then, if there is no meter, confirm an approximate price with the driver before you agree to travel. Cabs can be shared for long trips. For touring around areas with limited public transport such as Taveuni, forming a group and negotiating a taxi fee for a half- or full day may be an option.

Always ask if the cab is a return taxi (returning to its base). If so, you can expect to pay \$1 per person or less, as long as the taxi doesn't have to go out of its way. To make up for the low fare, the driver will usually pick up extra passengers from bus stops. You can usually recognise a return taxi, as most have the name of their home depot on the bumper bar.

### TOURS

Fiji has many companies providing tours within the country, including trekking, cycling, kayaking, diving, bus or 4WD tours. Cruises to the outer islands such as the

Mamanuca (p149) and Yasawas (p159) are popular. There is also a sailing safari on the *Tui Tai* from Savusavu to Taveuni, Kioa and Koro (p196).

Viti Levu has the most tours, including excellent two-, four- or six-day treks with Mount Batilamu Trek (p143) or Adventure Fiji (p81). There are also a few tours on Ovalau (p173) and Vanua Levu (p195).

**Feejee Experience** (☎ 672 0097; www.feejeeexperience.com) offers coach and accommodation packages for budget travellers. It can be a fun and social way to get around, especially if you are short on time. Travel passes allow you to hop-on-and-off as you like within six months; the six-day 'Lei Low' (\$600) includes

Natadola Beach, sandboarding down the Sigatoka Dunes, the Coral Coast, highland trekking, tubing on the Navua River, Suva nightclubs, *bilibili* (bamboo raft) trips, kayaking, snorkelling and a night on Nananu-i-Ra and Beachcomber Island. The four-day 'Hula Loop' (\$425) includes slightly less.

**Green Turtle Tours** (☎ 672 8889; www.greenturtle.com/fiji) offers small group tours around Viti Levu that include highland villages, Nananu-i-Ra and islands in the Yasawa and Mamanuca groups. Three-/four-day tours costs \$720/1100 including all accommodation, meals and activities.

There are also live-aboard dive boats (see p65).

# Health

Dr Michael Sorokin

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Rabies is no danger in any of the Fijian islands. And there are no crocodiles. There is also no malaria in Fiji, a huge health plus. Mosquitoes do exist, though, and the main danger from them is dengue fever. Health facilities are good in Fiji; however, this is a small country with a limited budget so 'good' does not necessarily equate with the facilities in a well-developed country.

## BEFORE YOU GO

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

### INSURANCE

If your health insurance policy does not cover you for medical expenses abroad, con-

sider taking supplemental insurance. (Check [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_links/](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_links/) for more details.) Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. (In Fiji most treatment requires payment in cash, though.)

Really serious illness or injury may require evacuation, eg to Auckland or Sydney; make sure that your health insurance has provision for evacuation. Under these circumstances hospitals will accept direct payment from major international insurers.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their desti-

#### REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

If you have been in a country affected by yellow fever within six days of arriving in Fiji, you will need an International Certificate of Vaccination for yellow fever to be allowed entry into the country. Vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever.

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

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

nation. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before departure. A recent influenza vaccination is always a good idea when travelling. If you have not had chicken pox (varicella) consider being vaccinated.

### MEDICAL CHECKLIST

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

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

\*Aspirin should not be used for fever – it can cause bleeding in sufferers of dengue fever + Do not take on planes in carry-on luggage

### INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the Internet. For further information, [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start.

WHO produces a superb free, online text, *International Travel and Health*, which is available at [www.who.int/ith/](http://www.who.int/ith/). Other websites of general interest are MD Travel Health at [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country (updated daily), also at no cost; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); and Fit for Travel at [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk), which has up-to-date information about outbreaks and is very user-friendly; and [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au) a similar Australasian site.

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

**Australia** ([www.dfat.gov.au/travel/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/travel/))

**Canada** ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca/](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/))

**New Zealand** ([www.mfat.govt.nz/travel](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/travel))

**UK** ([www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk)) Click on Policy and Guidance, then on Health Advice for Travellers.

**USA** ([www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/))

### FURTHER READING

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

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

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

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

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating

light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

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

## IN FIJI

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Fiji has readily available doctors in private practice, standard hospital and laboratory facilities with consultants in internal medicine, obstetrics/gynaecology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, paediatrics, pathology, psychiatry and general surgery. Private dentists, opticians and pharmacies are also available. The further you get from main cities the more basic the services.

Private consultation and private hospital fees are approximately equivalent to Australian costs. Fees for government-provided services vary from modest to negligible but waiting times can be very long. Direct payment is required everywhere except where a specific arrangement is made, eg in the case of evacuation or where a prolonged hospital stay is necessary; you will need to contact your insurer. Although hospitals will accept credit cards, there might be difficulty with the more remote small hospitals. If a credit card is not accepted you should be able to arrange cash on credit through local banks.

Except in the remote poorly staffed clinics, the standard of medical and dental care is generally quite good even if facilities are not sophisticated. The overall risk of illness for a normally healthy person is low; the most common problems being diarrhoeal upsets, viral sore throats, and ear and skin infections – all of which can mostly be treated with self-medication. For serious symptoms, eg sustained fever, chest or abdominal pains it is best to go to the nearest clinic or doctor straight away.

### Family Health

Tampons and pads are readily available in main centres but do not rely on getting them if you travel to one of the outer islands. Den-

gue fever, especially in the first three months of pregnancy, poses a hazard because of fever but otherwise there is no reason why a normal pregnancy should prevent travel to the region. However, unless necessary, immunisation in the first three months of pregnancy is not recommended.

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

### Medications & Contraception

Most commonly used medications are available. Private pharmacies are not allowed by law to dispense listed drugs without prescription from a locally registered practitioner, but many will do so for travellers if shown the container or a prescription from home. Oral contraceptives are obtainable without prescription in Fiji, as is the 'morning after' pill. Asthma inhalers and most anti-inflammatories are available over the counter. It is best to have a sufficient supply of a regularly taken drug as a particular brand may not be available and sometimes quantities can be limited. This applies particularly to psychotropic drugs such as antidepressants, antipsychotics, anti-epileptics or mood elevators. Insulin is available even in smaller centres, but you cannot guarantee getting a particular brand, combination or preferred administration method. If you have been prescribed 'the very latest' oral antidiabetic or antihypertensive make sure you have enough for the duration of your travel.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

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

#### Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a virus spread by the bite of a day-biting mosquito. It causes a feverish illness with headache and severe muscle pains similar to those experienced with a bad, prolonged attack of influenza. Another name for the disease is 'break bone fever' and that's what it feels like. Danger signs include prolonged vomiting, blood in the vomit and a blotchy rash. There is no preventive vaccine and mosquito bites should be avoided

whenever possible. Self-treatment involves paracetamol, fluids and rest. Do not use aspirin. Haemorrhagic dengue fever has been reported only occasionally, manifested by signs of bleeding and shock, and requires medical care.

#### Eosinophilic Meningitis

Eosinophilic meningitis is caused by a microscopic parasite – the rat lungworm – which contaminates raw food. It's a strange illness manifested by scattered abnormal skin sensations, fever and sometimes by the meningitis (headache, vomiting, confusion, neck and spine stiffness), which gives it its name. There is no proven specific treatment, but symptoms may require hospitalisation. For prevention pay strict attention to advice on food and drink.

#### Hepatitis A

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

#### Hepatitis B

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

#### Hepatitis C

This is a virus similar to hepatitis B that causes liver inflammation, which can progress to chronic liver disease or result in a symptomless carrier state. It is spread almost entirely by blood contamination from shared needles or contaminated needles used for tattooing or body piercing. Treatment is complex and specialised. There is no vaccine available.

### HIV/AIDS

The incidence of HIV infection is on the rise in the whole South Pacific and is fast becoming a major problem in Fiji. Safe-sex practise is essential at all times. If an injection is needed in a smaller clinic it is best to provide your own needles. Blood transfusion laboratories do tests for HIV.

### 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 urine. The organism penetrates skin, so swimming in flooded areas is a risky practice. If diagnosed early it is cured with penicillin.

### Typhoid Fever

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

### TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

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



To prevent diarrhoea pay strict attention to the precautions regarding food and water; see opposite for details.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

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

### Bites & Stings

Fiji is blessedly free of dangerous land creatures. There are some land snakes but these are very rarely seen.

### JELLYFISH

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

### POISONOUS CONE SHELLS

Poisonous cone shells abound along shallow coral reefs. Stings can be avoided by handling the shell at its blunt end only and, preferably, using gloves. Stings mainly cause local reactions but nausea, faintness, palpitations or difficulty breathing are signs flagging the need for medical attention.

### OTHER MARINE LIFE

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

Some of the most beautiful sea creatures such as the scorpion fish and lionfish are also highly venomous. Avoid the temptation and keep your hands to yourself! Sea urchins, crown-of-thorns starfish and stonefish can be poisonous or cause infec-

tions. Barracuda eels, which hide in coral crevices, may bite. Sea lice or stingers can also be a nuisance.

Shark attacks on divers and snorkellers are rare in Fiji. Reef sharks don't normally attack humans for food, but they can be territorial. Avoid swimming near waste-water outlets, areas where fish are being cleaned, and the mouths of rivers or murky waters. If you are lucky enough to see a shark, just move away calmly.

### Coral Cuts

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

### Coral Ear

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

### Diving Decompression

Because Fiji has wonderful opportunities for scuba diving, it is easy to get overexcited and neglect strict depth and time precautions. The temptation to spend longer than safe times at relatively shallow depths is great and a major cause of decompression illness (the 'bends'). Early pains may not be severe and may be attributed to other causes but any muscle or joint pain after scuba diving must be suspect. A privately run compression chamber is available in Suva but transport

## FISH POISONING

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

to it can be difficult. Even experienced divers should check with organisations such as **Divers' Alert Network** (DAN; [www.diversalertnet.org](http://www.diversalertnet.org)) about the current site and status of compression chambers, and insurance to cover costs both for local treatment and evacuation. Novice divers must be especially careful. If you have not taken out insurance before leaving home you may be able to do so online with DAN.

### Food & Water

The municipal water supply in Suva, Nadi and other large towns can usually be trusted, but elsewhere avoid untreated tap water, and after heavy rain it's worth boiling the water before you drink. In some areas the only fresh water available may be rain water collected in tanks and this should certainly be boiled. Food in restaurants, particularly resort restaurants, is safe. Be adventurous by all means but expect to suffer the consequences if you succumb to adventurous temptation by trying raw fish or crustaceans as eaten by some locals.

### Heat Exhaustion

Fiji lies within the tropics so it is hot and often humid. Heat exhaustion is actually a state of dehydration associated to a greater or lesser extent with salt loss. Natural heat loss is through sweating making it easy to become dehydrated without realising it. Thirst is a late sign. Small children and old people are especially vulnerable. For adults, heat exhaustion is prevented by drinking at least 3L of water per day and more if actively exercising. Children need about 1.5 to 2.5L per day. Salt replacement solutions are useful as

muscle weakness and cramps are due to salt as well as water loss and can be made worse by drinking water alone. The powders used for treating dehydration due to diarrhoea are just as effective for heat exhaustion. Apart from these, a reasonable drink consists of a good pinch of salt to a pint (0.5L) of water. Salt tablets can result in too much salt being taken, causing headaches and confusion.

### Heat Stroke

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

### Sunburn

It should go without saying that exposure to the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun causes burning of the skin with accompanying pain, dehydration and misery (with the long-term danger of skin cancer) but experience shows that reminders are necessary. The time of highest risk is between 11am and 3pm and remember that cloud cover does not block out UV rays. Neither does a pleasant breeze. The Australian *Slip, slop, slap* slogan is a useful 'mantra' – slip on a T-shirt or blouse, slop on a sunscreen lotion (of at least 15-plus rating) and slap on a hat. Treat sunburn like any other burn – cool, wet dressings are best. Severe swelling may respond to a cortisone cream.

# Language

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One of the reasons many visitors from the English-speaking world find Fiji such a congenial place to visit is that they don't have to learn another language – the majority of the local people they come in contact with can speak English, and all signs and official forms are also in English. At the same time, for almost all local people, English is not their mother tongue – at home, indigenous Fijians speak Fijian and Indo-Fijians speak Fiji-Hindi (also known as Fijian Hindi and Fiji Hindustani). If you really wish to develop a better understanding of the Fijian people and their culture, it's important that you know something of the Fijian languages and, no matter how poor your first attempts at communicating, you'll receive plenty of encouragement from Fijians.

## FIJIAN

The many regional dialects found in Fiji today all descend, at least partly, from the language spoken by the original inhabitants. They would have come from one of

the island groups to the west, either the Solomons or Vanuatu, having left their Southeast Asian homeland at least 1000 years previously and spread eastwards by way of Indonesia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. From Fiji, groups left to settle the nearby islands of Rotuma, Tonga and Samoa, and from there they spread out to inhabit the rest of Polynesia, including Hawaii in the north, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the east, and Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the south. All the people in this vast area speak related languages belonging to the Austronesian family.

There are some 300 regional varieties (dialects) of Fijian, all belonging to one of two major groupings. All varieties spoken to the west of a line extending north-south, with a couple of kinks, across the centre of Viti Levu belong to the Western Fijian group, while all others are Eastern Fijian.

Fortunately for the language learner there is one variety, based on the eastern varieties of the Bau-Rewa area, which is understood by Fijians throughout the islands. This standard form of Fijian is popularly known as *vosa vakabau* (Bauan), though linguists prefer to call it standard Fijian. It's used in conversation among Fijians from different areas, on the radio and in schools, and is the variety used in this chapter.

In Fijian, there are two ways of saying 'you', 'your', and 'yours'. When speaking to someone who is your superior, or an adult stranger, you should use a longer 'polite' form. This form is easy to remember because it always ends in *-ni*. In all other situations, a shorter 'informal' address is used.

## PRONUNCIATION

Fijian pronunciation isn't especially difficult for the English speaker, since most of the sounds found in Fijian have similar counterparts in English. The standard Fijian alphabet uses all the English letters, except 'x'. The letters 'h' and 'z' are used for borrowed words only and occur rarely.

The Fijian alphabet was devised relatively recently (in the 1830s) by missionaries who were also competent linguists. As a result it

### 'FIJINGLISH'

Here are a few English words and phrases used in Fijian but with slightly different meanings:

Fijian English	English
grog	<i>kava</i>
bluff	lie, deceive
chow	food, eat
set	OK, ready
step	cut school, wag
Good luck to ...!	It serves ... right!
Not even!	No way!

is economical and phonetically consistent – each letter represents only one sound, and each sound is represented by only one letter.

As with all Pacific languages, the five Fijian vowels are pronounced much as they are in languages such as Spanish, German and Italian:

<b>a</b>	as in 'father'
<b>e</b>	as in 'bet'
<b>i</b>	as in 'machine'
<b>o</b>	as in 'more'
<b>u</b>	as in 'flute'

Vowels have both short or long variants, with the long vowel having a significantly longer sound. In this guide a long sound is written as a double vowel, eg **aa**. An approximate English equivalent is the difference between the final vowel sound in 'icy' and 'I see'. To convey the correct meaning of a word it's important that vowel length is taken into account in your pronunciation. For example, *mama* means 'a ring', *mamaa* means 'chew it', and *maamaa* means 'light' (in weight). Note that *maamaa* takes about twice as long to pronounce as *mama*.

Most consonants are pronounced as they are in English, but there are a few differences you need to be aware of:

<b>b</b>	pronounced with a preceding nasal consonant as 'mb'
<b>c</b>	as the 'th' in 'this' (not as in 'thick')
<b>d</b>	pronounced with a preceding nasal consonant as 'nd'
<b>g</b>	as the 'ng' in 'sing' (not as in 'angry')

<b>j</b>	as the 'ch' in 'charm' but without a following puff of breath
<b>k</b>	as in 'kick' but without a following puff of breath
<b>p</b>	as in 'pip' but without a following puff of breath
<b>q</b>	as the 'ng' in 'angry' (not as in 'sing')
<b>r</b>	trilled as in Scottish English
<b>t</b>	as in 'tap' but without a following puff of breath, often pronounced 'ch' before 'i'
<b>v</b>	pronounced with the lower lip against the upper lip (not against the upper teeth as in English) – somewhere between a 'v' and a 'b'

Occasionally on maps and in tourist publications you'll find a variation on the spelling system used in this guide – it's intended to be easier for English speakers to negotiate. In this alternative system, Yanuca is spelt 'Yanutha', Beqa 'Mbengga', and so on.

## FURTHER READING

A good introduction to the language is Lonely Planet's *Fijian Phrasebook*, which provides all the essential words and phrases travellers need, along with grammar and cultural points. Lonely Planet's *South Pacific Phrasebook* covers the languages of many South Pacific islands – ideal if you intend visiting a few countries in one trip. Those interested in further studies of Fijian will find George Milner's *Fijian Grammar* (Government Press, Suva, 1956) an excellent introduction to the language. Likewise, Albert Schutz's *Spoken Fijian* (University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1979) is a good primer for more advanced studies.

## ACCOMMODATION

<b>Where is a ...?</b>	<i>I vei ...?</i>
<b>hotel</b>	<i>dua na otela</i>
<b>cheap hotel</b>	<i>otela sawarawara</i>

A note of caution. The term 'guesthouse' and its Fijian equivalent, *dua na bure ni vulagi*, often refer to establishments offering rooms for hire by the hour.

<b>I'm going to stay for...</b>	<i>Au na ...</i>
<b>one day</b>	<i>siga dua</i>
<b>one week</b>	<i>maacawa dua</i>

**I'm not sure how long I'm staying.***Sega ni macala na dede ni noqu tiko.***Where is the bathroom?***I vei na valenisili?***Where is the toilet?***I vei na valelailai?***CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS**

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Bula!</i>
<b>Hello.</b> (reply)	<i>lo, bula/la, bula.</i> (more respectful)
<b>Good morning.</b>	<i>Yadra.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Moce.</i> (if you don't expect to see them again)
<b>See you later.</b>	<i>Au saa liu mada.</i>

You may also hear the following:

**Where are you going?***O(ni) lai vei?* (used as we ask 'How are you?')**Nowhere special, just wandering around.***Sega, gaade gaa.* (as with the response to 'How are you', there's no need to be specific)**Let's shake hands.***Daru lululu mada.*

<b>Yes.</b>	<i>lo.</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Sega.</i>
<b>Thank you (very much).</b>	<i>Vinaka (vakalevu).</i>

<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>(Ni) Vosota sara.</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>O cei na yacamu(ni)?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>O you o ...</i>

**Pleased to meet you.***la, (ni) bula.***Where are you from?***O iko/kemuni mai vei?***I'm from ...***O yau mai ...***How old are you?***O yabaki vica?***I'm ... years old.***Au yabaki ...***Are you married?***O(ni) vakawati?***How many children do you have?***Le vica na luvemu(ni)?***I don't have any children.***E sega na luvequ.***I have a daughter/a son.***E dua na luvequ yalewa/tagane.***I don't speak Fijian/English.***Au sega ni kilaa na vosa vakaviti/vakavaalagi.***Do you speak English?***O(ni) kilaa na vosa vakavaalagi?***I understand.***Saa macala.***I don't understand.***E sega ni macala.***May I take your photo?***Au tabaki iko mada?***I'll send you the photo.***Au na vaakauta yani na itaba.***DIRECTIONS****I want to go to ...***Au via lako i ...***How do I get to ...?***I vei na sala i ...?***Is it far?***E yawa?***Can I walk there?***E rawa niu taubale kina?***Can you show me (on the map)?***Vakaraitaka mada**(ena mape)?***Go straight ahead.***Vakadodonu.***Turn left.***Gole i na imawi.***Turn right.***Gole i na imatau.*

Compass bearings (north, south etc) are never used. Instead you'll hear:

**on the sea side of ...***mai ... i wai***on the land side of ...***mai ... i vanua***the far side of ...***mai ... i liu***this side of ...***mai ... i muri***HEALTH & EMERGENCIES****Help!***Oilei!***Go away!***Lako tani!***Call a doctor!***Qiria na vuniwai!***Call an ambulance!***Qiria na lori ni valenibula!***Call the police!***Qiria na ovisa!***I'm lost.***Au saa sese.***I need a doctor.***Au via raici vuniwai.***Where is the hospital?***I vei na valenibula?***I have a stomach-ache.***E mosi na ketequ.***I'm diabetic.***Au tauvi matenisuka.***I'm allergic to***E dau lako vakacaa vei***penicillin.***au na penisilini.***condoms***rapa, kodom***contraceptive***wai ni yalani***diarrhoea***coka***medicine***wainimate***nausea***lomalomacaa***sanitary napkin***qamuqamu***NUMBERS****0***saiva***1***dua***2***rua***3***tolu***4***vaa***5***lima***6***ono***7***vitu***8***walu***9***ciwa***10***tini***11***tinikadua***12***tinikaru***20***ruasagavulu***21***ruasagavulukadua***30***tolusagavulu***100***dua na drau***1000***dua na udolu***SHOPPING & SERVICES****I'm looking for ...***Au vaaqaraa ...***a church***na valenilotu***the market***na maakete***the museum***na vale ni yau maaroroi***the police***na ovisa***the post office***na pos(i)tovesi***a public toilet***na valelailai***the tourist office***na valenivolavola ni saravanua***What time does it open/close?***E dola/sogo ina vica?***Where are the toilets?***I vei na valelailai?***How much is it?***E vica?***That's too expensive.***Au sega ni rawata.***I'm just looking.***Sarasara gaa.***bookshop***sitoo ni vola***clothing shop***sitoo ni sulu***laundry***valenisavasava***pharmacy***kemesi***TIME & DATES****What time is it?***Saa vica na kaloko?***today***nikua***tonight***na bogi nikua***tomorrow***nimataka***yesterday***nanoa***Monday***Moniti***Tuesday***Tusiti***Wednesday***Vukelulu***Thursday***Lotulevu***Friday***Vakaraubuka***Saturday***Vakarauwai***Sunday***Sigatabu***TRANSPORT****Where is the ...?***I vei na ...?***airport***raaraa ni waqavuka***(main) bus station***basten***bus stop***ikelekele ni basi***When does the ... leave/arrive?***Vica na kaloko e lako/kele kina na ...?***bus***basi***plane***waqavuka***boat***waqa***FIJI-HINDI**

Fiji-Hindi (also known as Fijian Hindi and Fiji Hindustani) is the language of all Indo-Fijians. It has features of the many regional dialects of Hindi spoken by the Indian indentured labourers who were brought to Fiji from 1879 to 1916. (Some people call Fiji-Hindi 'Bhojpuri', but this is the name of just one of the many dialects that contributed to the language.)

Many words from English are found in Fiji-Hindi (such as room, towel, book and reef), but some of these have slightly different meanings. For example, the word 'book' in Fiji-Hindi includes magazines and pamphlets, and if you refer to a person of the opposite sex as a 'friend', it implies that he/she is your sexual partner.

Fiji-Hindi is used in all informal settings, such as in the family and among friends, but the 'Standard Hindi' of India is considered appropriate for formal contexts, such as in public speaking, radio broadcasting and writing. The Hindu majority write in Standard Hindi using the Devanagari script with a large number of words taken from the ancient Sanskrit language. The Muslims use the Perso-Arabic script and incorporate words from Persian and Arabic. When written this way, it is considered a separate language, Urdu, which is the principal language of Pakistan. Indo-Fijians have to learn Standard Hindi or Urdu in school along with English, so while they all speak Fiji-Hindi informally, not everyone knows the formal varieties.

Some people say that Fiji-Hindi is just a 'broken' or 'corrupted' version of standard Hindi. In fact, it is a legitimate dialect with its own grammatical rules and vocabulary unique to Fiji.

**PRONUNCIATION**

Fiji-Hindi is normally written only in guides for foreigners, such as this, and transcribed using the English alphabet. Since there are at least 42 different sounds in Fiji-Hindi and only 26 letters in the English alphabet, some adjustments have to be made. The vowels are as follows:

<b>a</b>	as in 'about' or 'sofa'
<b>aa</b>	as in 'father'

<b>e</b>	as in 'bet'
<b>i</b>	as in 'police'
<b>o</b>	as in 'obey'
<b>u</b>	as in 'rule'
<b>ai</b>	as in 'hail'
<b>aai</b>	as in 'aisle'
<b>au</b>	as the 'o' in 'own'
<b>oi</b>	as in 'boil'

The consonants **b, f, g** (as in 'go'), **h, j, k, l, m, n, p, s, v, y, w**, and **z** are similar to those of English. The symbol **ch** is pronounced as in 'chip' and **sh** is pronounced as in 'ship'.

The pronunciation of the consonants 't' and 'd' in Fiji-Hindi is a bit tricky. In 't' and 'd' in English, the tip of the tongue touches the ridge behind the upper teeth, but in Fiji-Hindi it either touches the back of the front teeth (dental) or is curled back to touch the roof of the mouth (retroflex). There are also two 'r' sounds, both of which differ from English. In the first, the tongue touches the ridge above the upper teeth and is flapped quickly forward, similar to the way we say the 't' sound in 'butter' when speaking quickly. In the second, the tongue is curled back, touching the roof of the mouth (as in the retroflex sounds) and then flapped forward. In this chapter we've used a simplified pronunciation guide and haven't made these distinctions. You can substitute the English 't', 'd' and 'r' for these sounds and still be understood.

Finally, there are 'aspirated' consonants. If you hold your hand in front of your mouth and say 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers', you'll feel a puff of air each time you say the 'p' sound – this is called aspiration. When you say 'spade, spill, spit, speak', you don't feel the puff of air, because in these words the 'p' sound is not aspirated. In Fiji-Hindi, aspiration is important in distinguishing meaning. Aspiration is indicated by the use of an 'h' after the consonants – for example:

<i>pul/phul</i>	bridge/flower
<i>kaalaa/khaalaa</i>	black/valley
<i>taali/thaali</i>	clapping/brass plate

Other aspirated consonants are:

<b>bh</b>	as in 'grab him' said quickly
<b>chh</b>	as in 'church hat' said quickly

<b>dh</b>	as in 'mad house'
<b>gh</b>	as in 'slug him'
<b>jh</b>	as in 'bridge house'
<b>th</b>	as in 'out house'

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

There are no exact equivalents for 'hello' and 'goodbye' in Fiji-Hindi. The most common greeting is *kaise* (How are you?). The usual reply is *tik* (fine). In parting, it's common to say *fir milegaa* (We'll meet again).

More formal greetings are: *namaste* (for Hindus), *salaam alaykum* (for Muslims) – the reply to the latter is *alaykum as-salaam*.

There are no equivalents for 'please' and 'thank you'. To be polite in making requests, people use the word *thoraa* (a little) and a special form of the verb ending in *naa*, eg *thoraa nimak denaa* (Please pass the salt). For 'thanks', people often just say *ach-haa* (good). English 'please' and 'thank you' are also commonly used. The word *dhan-yavaad* is used to thank someone who has done something special for you. It means something like 'blessings be bestowed upon you'.

The polite form of the word 'you', *ap*, should also be used with people you don't know well. The informal mode uses the word *tum*. Polite and informal modes of address are indicated in this guide by the abbreviations 'pol' and 'inf', respectively.

<b>Yes.</b>	<i>ha</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>nahi</i>
<b>Maybe.</b>	<i>saayit</i>
<b>I'm sorry.</b> (for something serious)	<i>maaf karnaa</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>aapke naam kaa hai?</i> (pol) <i>tumaar naam kaa hai?</i> (inf) <i>hamaar naam ...</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>aap/tum kaha ke hai?</i> (pol/inf)
<b>Where are you from?</b>	<i>ham ... ke hai</i>
<b>I'm from ...</b>	<i>shaadi ho gayaa?</i>
<b>Are you married?</b>	<i>kitnaa larkaa hai?</i>
<b>How many children do you have?</b>	
<b>I don't have any children.</b>	<i>larkaa nahi hai</i>
<b>Two boys and three girls.</b>	<i>dui larkaa aur tin larki</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>aap/tum English boltaa?</i> (pol/inf)
<b>Does anyone here speak English?</b>	<i>koi English bole?</i>
<b>I don't understand.</b>	<i>ham nahi samajhtaa</i>

## DIRECTIONS

<b>Where is the ...?</b>	<i>... kaha hai?</i>
<b>shop</b>	<i>dukaan</i>
<b>airport</b>	<i>eyapot</i>
<b>(main) bus station</b>	<i>basten</i>
<b>market</b>	<i>maaket</i>
<b>temple</b>	<i>mandir</i>
<b>mosque</b>	<i>masjid</i>
<b>church</b>	<i>chek</i>

You can also use the English words hotel, guesthouse, camping ground, toilet, post office, embassy, tourist information office, museum, café, restaurant and telephone.

<b>I want to go to ...</b>	<i>ham ... jaae mangtaa</i>
<b>Is it near/far?</b>	<i>nagich/dur hai?</i>
<b>Can I go by foot?</b>	<i>paidar jaae saktaa?</i>
<b>Go straight ahead.</b>	<i>sidhaa jaae</i>
<b>Please write down the address.</b>	<i>thoraa edres likh denaa</i>

<b>By the ...</b>	<i>... ke paas</i>
<b>coconut tree</b>	<i>nariyal ke per</i>
<b>mango tree</b>	<i>aam ke per</i>
<b>breadfruit tree</b>	<i>belfut ke per</i>
<b>sugar-cane field</b>	<i>gannaa khet</i>

## HEALTH & EMERGENCIES

<b>Help me!</b>	<i>hame madad karo!</i>
<b>Call the doctor/police.</b>	<i>doktaa ke/pulis ke bulaae</i>
<b>Go away!</b>	<i>jaao!</i>
<b>Where is the hospital?</b>	<i>aaspataal kaha hai?</i>
<b>I'm diabetic.</b>	<i>hame chini ke bimaari hai</i>
<b>I'm allergic to penicillin.</b>	<i>penesilin se ham bimaar ho jaae</i>
<b>I have a stomach-ache.</b>	<i>hamaar pet piraawe</i>
<b>I feel nauseous.</b>	<i>hame chhaant lage</i>
<b>condom</b>	<i>kondom/raba</i>
<b>contraceptive</b>	<i>pariwaar niyojan ke dawaai</i>

<b>medicine</b>	<i>dawaai</i>
<b>sanitary napkin</b>	<i>ped, nepkin</i>
<b>tampon</b>	<i>tampon</i>

## NUMBERS

<b>1</b>	<i>ek</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>dui</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>tin</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>chaar</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>paanah</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>chhe</i>
<b>7</b>	<i>saat</i>
<b>8</b>	<i>aath</i>
<b>9</b>	<i>nau</i>
<b>10</b>	<i>das</i>
<b>100</b>	<i>sau</i>
<b>1000</b>	<i>hazaar</i>

English is normally used for numbers from 20 to 99.

## TIME & DATES

<b>What time is it?</b>	<i>kitnaa baje?</i>
<b>It's ... o'clock.</b>	<i>... baje</i>
<b>When?</b>	<i>kab?</i>
<b>today</b>	<i>aaj</i>
<b>tonight</b>	<i>aaj raatke</i>
<b>tomorrow</b>	<i>bihaan</i>
<b>yesterday</b>	<i>kal</i>

English days of the week are generally used.

## TRANSPORT

<b>When does the ... leave/arrive?</b>	<i>kitnaa baje ... chale/pahunche?</i>
<b>ship</b>	<i>jahaaj</i>
<b>car</b>	<i>mottar</i>

You can also use the English words bus, plane, boat.



# Glossary

See p70 for some useful words and phrases dealing with food. See the Language chapter, p272, for some other useful words and phrases.

(F = Fijian; FH = Fijian-Hindi/Hindi; O = Other)

**adi** (F) – female chief

**balabala** (F) – tree fern with the unique property of not igniting over hot stones – good for fire walking rituals

**bêche-de-mer** (O) – elongated, leathery sea cucumber, with a cluster of tentacles at the mouth – sound appetising? Considered a delicacy in Asia; you may find it on your menu

**beka** (F) – flying fox

**bete** (F) – priests of the old Fijian religion

**bhindi** (FH) – okra

**bilibili** (F) – bamboo raft

**bilo** (F) – drinking vessel made from half a coconut shell

**bolubolu** (F) – traditional custom of apology and reconciliation

**breadfruit** (O) – It's a fruit... with a breadlike texture; trees are common throughout the Pacific and the (bready) fruit is cooked and eaten

**buā** (F) – frangipani

**bula** (F) – cheers! hello! welcome! (literally, 'life')

**bula shirt** (F) – *masi*- or floral-design shirt

**burau** (F) – ceremonial *kava*-drinking ritual

**bure** (F) – traditional thatched dwelling or whatever your resort decides it to be

**bure bōse** (F) – meeting house

**bure kalou** (F) – ancient temple

**cibi** (F) – death dance

**copra** (O) – dried coconut kernel, used for making coconut oil

**dadakulaci** (F) – banded sea krait, Fiji's most common snake

**dakua** (F) – a tree of the kauri family

**dele** (F) – a dance where women sexually humiliate enemy corpses and captives; also called *wate*

**drua** (F) – double-hulled canoe; traditional catamaran

**FVB** – Fiji Visitors Bureau

**girmitiya** (FH) – indentured labourer; the word comes from *gimit*, the Indian labourers' pronunciation of agreement

**ibe** (F) – a mat

**ibuburau** (F) – drinking vessels used in *kava* rites

**ika** (F) – fish

**io** (F) – yes

**ivi** (F) – Polynesian chestnut tree

**kai colo** (F) – hill people

**kaihidi** (F) – Indo-Fijian

**kaivalagi** (F) – literally, 'people from far away'; Europeans

**kaiviti** (F) – indigenous Fijian

**kanikani** (F) – scaly skin from excessive *kava* use, often accompanied by a tranquil grin

**kasou** (F) – very drunk

**kava** (F) – Polynesian pepper shrub; more importantly the mildly narcotic, muddy and odd-tasting drink made from its aromatic roots; also called *yaqona*

**kerekere** (F) – custom of shared property; also means please

**koro** (F) – village headed by a hereditary chief

**kumala** (F) – sweet potato

**liku** (F) – traditional skirt of womanhood, made from grasses or strips of *pandanus* leaves; phased out by the missionaries

**lovo** (F) – Fijian feast cooked in a pit oven

**malo** (F) – see *masi*

**mangi mangi** (F) – traditional weavings

**mangrove** (O) – a tropical tree that grows in tidal mud flats, and deserves praise for beautifying wet dirt

**masi** (F) – bark cloth with designs printed in black and rust; also known as *malo* or *tapa*

**mataqali** (F) – extended family or landowning group

**meke** (F) – a dance performance that enacts stories and legends

**nama** (F) – an edible seaweed that looks like miniature green grapes... not so yum

**namaste** (FH) – hello/goodbye; perhaps the word that got the Beatles all confused

**narak** (F) – hell

**NAUI** (O) – National Association of Underwater Instructors

**PADI** (O) – Professional Association of Diving Instructors

**paidar** (FH) – on foot

**paisa** (FH) – money, moola, dosh

**pandanus** (O) – a plant common to the tropics whose sword-shaped leaves are used to make mats and baskets

**pelagics** (O) – large predatory fish, or whales

**piala** (F) – small metal enamelled bowl

**rara** (F) – ceremonial ground

**ratu** (F) – male chief

**saqa** (F) – trevally fish

**sega** (F) – no

**sevusevu** (F) – presentation of a gift to a village chief and, consequently the ancestral gods and spirits; the gift is often *kava* (*yaqona*); however *tabua* is the most powerful *sevusevu*; acceptance of the gift means the giver will be granted certain privileges or favours

**sulu** (F) – skirt or wrapped cloth worn to below the knees

**tabu** (F) – forbidden or sacred, implying a religious sanction

**tabua** (F) – the teeth of sperm whales, which carry a special ceremonial value for Fijians; they are still used as negotiating tokens to symbolise esteem or atonement

**taga yaqona** (F) – pounded *kava*

**takia** (F) – Fijian canoe

**talanoa** (F) – to chat, to tell stories, to have a yarn

**tanoa** (F) – *kava* drinking bowl

**tapa** (F) – see *masi*

**tevoro** (F) – a god of the old Fijian religion

**tikina** (F) – a group of Fijian villages linked together

**trade winds** (O) – the near-constant (and annoying) winds that buffer most of the tropics

**tui** (F) – king

**turaga** (F) – chief

**turaga-ni-koro** (F) – hereditary chief

**vale** (F) – a family house

**vale lailai** (F) – toilet

**vanua** (F) – land, region, place

**vasu** (F) – a system in which a chiefly woman's sons could claim support and ownership over the property of her brothers from other villages

**vatu ni bokola** (F) – head-chopping stone used during cannibalistic rituals

**veli** (F) – a group of little gods

**vesi** (F) – ironwood, considered a sacred timber

**vilavilairevo** (F) – fire walking (literally, 'jumping into the oven')

**vinaka** (F) – thank you

**Viti** (F) – the name indigenous Fijians used for Fiji before the arrival of Europeans (whose mispronunciation gave Fiji its current name)

**vulagi** (F) – visitors; also *kaivalagi*

**waka** (F) – bunch of *kava* roots

**wakalou** (F) – climbing fern species

**wate** (F) – see *dele*

**yaqona** (F) – see *kava*

**yasana** (F) – a province formed by several *tikina*

**yavu** (F) – bases for housing

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