

Samoa Islands Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	131
Activities	133
Business Hours	138
Children	138
Climate Charts	139
Customs	139
Dangers & Annoyances	139
Disabled Travellers	140
Discount Cards	140
Embassies & Consulates	140
Festivals & Events	140
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	141
Holidays	141
Insurance	141
Internet Access	142
Legal Matters	142
Maps	142
Money	142
Photography & Video	143
Post	144
Shopping	144
Telephone	144
Time	145
Toilets	145
Tourist Information	145
Visas	146
Women Travellers	146
Transport in the Samoan Islands	146
Air	147
Bicycle	147
Boat	148
Bus	148
Car & Motorcycle	149
Hitching	150
Taxi	150

ACCOMMODATION

Compared to more developed Pacific islands such as Hawai'i and Fiji, accommodation options in the Samoas are fairly limited. Samoa offers a range to suit all pockets, but budget accommodation outside the ubiquitous *fale* (traditional thatched house) is not necessarily cheap. Also, though there are several expensive resorts to choose from, don't expect European pleasure palaces.

PRACTICALITIES

- Samoa's main newspaper is the *Samoa Observer* (ST2), published daily except Monday. In American Samoa, the *Samoa News* (US\$0.50, Friday edition US\$1) is published daily Monday to Saturday, while the *Samoa Post* (US\$0.50) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.
- The monthly magazine *Tapu* (ST5/US\$3) declares itself the 'magazine from the Samoas, Niue and Tokelau' and has an interesting mix of current affairs, culture, sports and business. Another monthly is *Pacific Magazine* (US\$3), though it spreads itself across all Pacific nations.
- In Samoa, listen to popular music on Magik 98FM or the government-run AM station Radio 2AP. In American Samoa, the main stations are Radio KHJ 93FM and Radio KSBS (FM 92.1).
- TV Samoa broadcasts mainly overseas programmes in Samoa. The American Samoan government-owned station, KVZK, is responsible for Channel 2 (local programmes, noncommercial US fare) and Channel 4 (commercial US programmes).
- Use Australian-style three-blade plugs to access Samoan electricity (240V, 50Hz AC). USA-style plugs are used in American Samoa (110V, 60Hz AC).
- The video format used in both Samoas is NTSC.
- Samoa uses the standard metric system, while American Samoa uses the American version of the imperial system.

Good-value tourist accommodation in American Samoa is disappointingly scarce.

The accommodation options listed in this guidebook for Samoa and American Samoa are given in order of author preference – leading each section are the places our author recommends the most. In Samoa, we generally treat any place charging up to ST100 as budget accommodation.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Midrange places usually cost between ST100 and ST250, while we regard anywhere charging over ST250 as top-end accommodation.

In American Samoa, budget accommodation peaks at US\$50, midrange places charge between US\$50 and US\$100, and top-end facilities levy over US\$100. Prices are fairly consistent year-round in both countries.

An excellent source of information on accommodation around 'Upolu and Savai'i in Samoa is the **Samoa Hotels Association** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 30160; Beach Rd, Apia).

Camping

It isn't really worth bringing camping gear to the Samoan islands unless you intend, for example, to hike up Mt Silisili on Savai'i, spend a couple of days in the O Le Pupupu'e National Park on 'Upolu, or trek into remote corners of Ta'u in the Manu'a Islands. More than 80% of land in the Samoas is under customary ownership and if you wish to camp on any of it – even a seemingly secluded beach – you must ask permission from the traditional owners.

Fale

Across Samoa, the cheapest and often the best accommodation is in traditional thatched-roofed shelters called *fale* – sometimes these are enclosed but usually they're open-sided. *Fale* are almost invariably planted on the edge of a beach, where the occupants are continually serenaded by the sounds of surf and sea breezes, and where visions of tropical paradise start to become fully realised. The downside to these idyllic settings is that the incessant sound of wind and waves can take a bit of getting used to, particularly if you're tossing and turning inside your mosquito net in the wee hours, and when a storm blows in quickly you can sometimes find yourself having a midnight bath.

Sleeping mats and mosquito nets are supplied in all *fale*, which can cost anywhere from ST30 to ST90 per person. The more expensive ones come with oil lamps and occasionally electric lights, a table and chairs, and sometimes a bed as opposed to a mat. Bathroom facilities are usually pretty basic, with cold water being the norm. The *fale* price often includes at least breakfast and dinner (eaten at communal dining tables in the more social places), but self-caterers may have the option of foregoing meals and paying less; check this before you commit to a place. *Fale* will be unattended in more remote places, but if you hang around someone will eventually come out of a nearby residence to attend to you.

Theft from open *fale* can sometimes be a problem. If you're worried about this, ask the owners if they can provide a secure storage area for valuables.

The only place that currently even approaches traditional *fale* accommodation in American Samoa is Tisa's Barefoot Bar (see p117).

Guesthouses

There is a handful of guesthouse options in both Samoa and American Samoa. These are often secluded, fairly luxurious modern homes with plenty of conveniences on offer, though sometimes they involve a more relaxed stay in a contemporary dwelling in outer villages of main towns like Apia. There used to be a lot of budget guesthouses in Apia, but these have more or less disappeared from the local accommodation scene. Breakfast is often included in the price of a guesthouse stay.

Homestays

Samoaan hospitality is legendary and sometime during their visit travellers may have the opportunity to stay in the home of a Samoan family. Not only will this provide outsiders with invaluable insights into the extremely complex culture of the islands, it will reflect a degree of honour upon the host in the eyes of other villagers.

No-one in the Samoas, foreigner or otherwise, will ever be required to spend a night without a roof over his or her head. Those who would choose to do so – to camp outside, for instance, especially within sight of a village – might cast shame upon the

village for failing to invite the strangers in. Be warned, however, that the hospitality of the people should not be construed as a cheap means of 'doing' the islands. Even the most welcome guest will eventually become a strain on a family's resources. It would probably be best to move on after a few days, but of course that will depend upon the individual situation.

When it's time to leave, gather the family together and offer your sincerest thanks for their hospitality, then leave a *mea alofa* (gift) as a token of your esteem. Don't call it 'payment' or your hosts may be offended, thinking you may consider them guilty of selling their kindness and friendship.

Gifts most gratefully received include money and goods that can't normally be obtained without money (as a general rule, goods or money to the value of about ST30 will be adequate thanks if you're staying with a family for two or three days). Store-bought foodstuffs will always be appreciated, while clothing such as printed T-shirts will also be enthusiastically accepted, as will photographs of the family, picture books, musical instruments, simple toys for the children or any type of gadgetry unavailable or expensive in the islands.

In Samoa, more formal (and generally more expensive) village stays can be organised through **Safua Tours** (p90), based at the Safua Hotel on Savai'i. The **National Park of American Samoa** also operates a homestay programme; for details see p108.

Hotels, Motels & Resorts

There are quite a few smaller hotels, motels and bungalow-style resorts (in the Pacific, the term 'resort' can refer to any accommodation anywhere near the sea) that cater to the needs of budget and midrange travellers in both Samoas. These range from bare-bones accommodation in dilapidated buildings to reasonably well-maintained rooms with air-conditioning, a fridge, TV and an en suite. Occasionally there are tiny dorms and budget twin rooms on offer, and there's often access to a shared kitchen. The smaller resorts tend to offer self-contained accommodation in cabins located in a small grassy compound.

Big, upmarket resorts prefer to reside on 'Upolu, where swim-up cocktail bars, lavish meals, games rooms and virtually private

beaches can be indulged in. Note that in Samoa, a number of top-end hotels quote prices in US dollars. This is not always obvious, so it might pay to double-check whether a rate is being quoted in *tala* or US dollars.

ACTIVITIES

The Samoa islands have plenty of outdoor activities to offer visitors, but whatever you do – whether it's hiking up volcanoes, snorkelling in lagoons or even surfing offshore breaks – be sure to ask the local owners beforehand for permission to use their land/beach/lagoon.

Many beaches are subject to day access fees levied by the village that owns them. Sometimes a signpost will tell you how much this fee is and where to pay it. At other times there'll be someone waiting in a day *fale* or a nearby house to collect your cash. Don't pay the fee to anyone else (certainly not kids). Standard fees in Samoa are ST2 per person (on foot), and between ST5 and ST10 per car. In American Samoa, only a couple of beaches east of Pago Pago on Tutuila tend to charge access fees (between US\$2 and US\$5 per person).

Diving SAMOA

Although diving in Samoa isn't as spectacular as in some other Pacific countries, it's still pretty good. Many of the popular dive sites are close to the villages of Maninoa and Si'umu on the south coast of 'Upolu; ask the local dive operators for more information. Some of the popular sites include: **Christmas Tree Rock** This large boulder rises from a white sand bowl at 25m. A giant pink gorgonian sea fan with a sprinkling of black coral at its base perches on the boulder, and titan trigger fish and red snapper can be seen around the site.

Elephant's Arch The elephant-like rock formation that gives this site its name is actually onshore, out at the end of Cape Niuaotai. A narrow channel weaves gently through a long, sloping ledge of coral, home to a variety of smaller marine life. Depths are around 14m to 18m, but this site can be subject to swell.

Garden Wall Also at Nu'usafe'e, the Garden Wall is, as the name indicates, a solid and densely packed wall of colourful hard coral ranging from 6m down to 30m. Schooling fish and spotted eagle rays can be seen here.

Shark Plateau About 7km west of the south-coast resorts and then 4km offshore to the south, this site

features a plateau rising from 30m to around 10m to 15m from the surface. This isolated outcrop, well out into the open sea, attracts a great number of pelagics, including the sharks which have given the site its name.

Sheer Wall Another 45 minutes past Nu'usafe'e and close to the eastern tip of 'Upolu is Sheer Wall, a lava-rock wall which drops away from 10m to over 35m. Small tropical reef fish are found here, along with larger trevally, tuna, snapper and sometimes reef sharks. Nearby is Namu'a, a popular turtle dive.

The Aquarium Anywhere in the diving world there's almost certain to be a dive site called 'The Aquarium'. Samoa's version is just offshore, close enough to snorkel out from the beach. A variety of outcrops and bommies at 10m to 15m depth are cloaked with a wide variety of lettuce, brain and other coral. There is lots of small marine life, including anemones and their colourful colonies of

clown fish, while trevally, snapper and even turtles are sometimes seen.

The Terraces There are two popular dive sites about a 35-minute boat ride to the east of the south-coast resorts on the fringing reef of Nu'usafe'e. The Terraces are just offshore, where the lava cliffs drop into the ocean, and feature a shelf and terrace at around 5m depth and two sea mounds that drop down to the ocean floor at 30m. Large sea anemones with their attendant clown fish can be seen here, as well as schooling tropical fish and occasional dolphins and turtles.

Treasure Island Off the north coast of 'Upolu, Treasure Island is a submerged coral island with dense coverage of hard corals and many tropical reef fish. Large red snapper are sometimes seen here along with black-tip reef sharks. Five Mile Reef is another north-coast site, dived when weather conditions make the south coast unsuitable.

CORAL REEF – A BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL

Much of the coastline in the Samoan islands is fringed by coral reefs – fragile environments of calcareous deposits secreted by tiny marine animals known as coral polyps. The glorious white-sand beaches of the Pacific Ocean are often composed of dead coral, shells and marine algae.

Without the reefs, many of the beaches would eventually erode and disappear. The reefs also provide shelter and habitat for a variety of fish, shellfish, crustaceans, sea urchins and other marine life, which, in turn, provide a food source for larger fish (and, of course, for humans).

Coral is usually stationary and often looks decidedly flowery; until around 250 years ago it was generally considered to be a plant. In fact, it's an animal – a hungry carnivorous one.

Corals belong to the coelenterate class of animal, which also includes sea anemones and jellyfish. The true reef-building coral, or *Scleractinia*, is distinguished by its lime skeletons, which are relatively indestructible and actually form the coral reef. As new coral continually builds on old, dead coral, the reef gradually builds up.

Coral takes a number of forms but all are distinguished by polyps, the tiny tube-like fleshy cylinders that resemble their close relation, the anemone. The top of the cylinder is open and ringed by waving tentacles that sting any passing prey and draw it into the polyp's stomach, the open space within the cylinder. Each polyp is an individual creature, but it can reproduce by splitting to form a coral colony of separate but closely related polyps. Although each polyp catches and digests its own food, the nutrition passes between the polyps to the whole colony. Most coral polyps only feed at night; during the daytime they withdraw into their hard, limestone skeleton, so it is only at night that a coral reef can be seen in its full, colourful glory.

Hard coral takes many forms. One of the most common and easiest to recognise is the staghorn coral, which grows by budding off new branches from the tips. Brain coral is huge and round, with a surface that looks very much like a human brain. It grows by adding new base levels of skeletal matter and expanding outwards. Flat or sheet coral, like plate coral, expands from its outer edges. Many corals can take different shapes depending on their environment. Staghorn coral can branch out in all directions in deeper water or form flat tables when it grows in shallow water.

Like its reef-building relative, soft coral is made up of individual polyps, but they do not form a hard limestone skeleton. Lacking hard coral's protective skeleton, soft coral might be expected to fall prey to fish, but in fact it seems to remain relatively immune, either due to toxic substances in its tissue or to the presence of sharp limestone needles that protect the polyps. Soft coral can move around and will sometimes engulf and kill off hard coral.

Coral catches its prey by means of stinging nematocysts. Some corals can give humans a painful sting: the fern-like stinging hydroid, for example, should be given a wide berth.

On 'Upolu, try the recommended south-coast dive outfits Liquid Motion (p79), AquaSamoa (p79) and Moanalei Dive 'n' Surf (p83).

On Savai'i contact Dive Savai'i (p95).

AMERICAN SAMOA

There's plenty of good diving in American Samoa. At the northern and western ends of Tutuila, visibility is excellent and many places have walls of coral 18m deep or more. The Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary on the south coast has some superb reefs. The problem is that at the time of research, there were no dive outfits operating in American Samoa. Get an update on this situation from the territory's **Office of Tourism** (Map p103; ☎ 699 9411; www.amsamoa.com; Tafuna, Tutuila).

Fishing

Samoan reefs and their fishing rights are owned by villagers, so you can't just drop a line anywhere; seek permission first. If you'd like to go fishing with the locals, inquire at your hotel or beach *fale*, or speak to the *pulenu'u* (mayor) of the village concerned.

Game fishing is becoming increasingly popular in the islands – in fact, Samoa has been rated one of the top 10 game fishing destinations in the world. The Samoa International Game Fishing Tournament, first held in 1996, takes place around 'Upolu usually during the second week of May and attracts competitors from all over the world. On 'Upolu you can organise fishing excursions through Sa'moana Resort (p82) and Boomerang Creek Resort (p83).

In American Samoa, the **Pago Pago Yacht Club** (Map p107; ☎ 633 2465; Utulei, Pago Pago) serves as the headquarters for the local game fishing association. Inquire here about fishing charters.

Golf

Golf lovers visiting 'Upolu in Samoa can play at the **Royal Samoa Country Club** (Map p75; ☎ 20120; off Main East Coast Rd), which has an 18-hole, par 72 course. Visitors are welcome and will pay ST10/20 to play nine/18 holes. Club hire is ST20 (with a ST50 deposit). There's also the **Faleata Golf Course** (Map pp58-9; ☎ 23964), located a few kilometres south of Vaitele. To play nine/18 holes here costs ST5/8. Only half-sets of clubs are available for hire (ST10).

In American Samoa, the **'Ili'i Golf Course** (Map p103; ☎ 699 2995) on Tutuila is a 'very forgiving' par 70 course with dramatic mountain peaks overlooking it to the north and a view of the South Pacific to the east. The green fees for nine/18 holes are US\$3/4 on weekdays and US\$7/9 on weekends. Club hire costs US\$5. There is a country club here but it is a fairly ordinary place for a drink. Take care on the hellishly potholed access road.

Hiking

There are plenty of opportunities for hiking on all of the islands. Their rugged coastal areas, sandy beaches, lush rainforests and volcanoes all invite exploration on foot. The main challenge is that not all trails are well maintained, and can quickly become obscured with growth because of the lush tropical environment. Combine this with the effect heavy rain can have on tracks and there's a good chance of getting lost (or at least covering yourself in mud). So, for more remote treks, it might pay to organise a guide to go with you.

The cost of guiding can vary enormously. Sometimes villagers will be happy to accompany you for nothing and at other times they will be seeking goods as a reward (ie cigarettes), but mostly they'll be interested in cash. In remote places like Ta'u, you will probably have no choice but to pay a lot for a guide.

Even on short walks, the sun and the almost perpetually hot and humid conditions can take their toll. Be sure to carry insect repellent to ward off mosquitoes, antihistamines to counter wasp stings if you're allergic to them, sufficient water and salty snacks to replenish body elements lost to heavy sweating, and protect yourself from the sun with a hat and an effective sunblock cream. Good walking shoes are also essential.

SAMOA

Hiking possibilities on 'Upolu include the coastal and rainforest walks in O Le Pupupu'e National Park (p80); the coastal route from Falefa Falls to Fagaloa Bay (p77); the short but rather taxing walk to see the graves of Robert Louis and Fanny Stevenson near the summit of Mt Vaea (p74); and the muddy but rewarding trek to Lake Lanoto'o (p77) in the central highlands.

On Savai'i, there is even more scope. Shorter possibilities include the hike to Afu Aau Falls (p99) and the mysterious Pulemelei Mound (p100), while longer day-hikes include exploration of the Mt Matavanu area (p95), the Tafua Peninsula Rainforest Preserve (p92) or the Falealupo Rainforest Preserve (p97) (with an overnight stop in a banyan tree). For more of an expedition, you can hire a guide and climb Mt Silisili (p97), the highest point in the Samoan islands.

A well established and reliable option in Samoa is Apia-based **SamoaOnFoot** (☎ 21529, 25416; samoaoonfoot@hotmail.com), which can guide travellers to remote locations such as Lake Lanoto'o, Fagaloa Bay and Pe'ape'a Cave.

AMERICAN SAMOA

The **National Park Visitor Information Center** (Map p107; ☎ 633 7082; www.nps.gov/npsa/home.htm; Pago Plaza; 🕒 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) in Pago Pago on Tutuila can tell you everything you need to know about hiking opportunities in the National Park of American Samoa. On Tutuila you can stride along a ridge to the summit of Mt Alava (p108) and continue down to the island's north coast, while on remote Ta'u you can take the lonely trail to places like Judds Crater (p130).

The other possibilities on Tutuila include tackling the overgrown trail to Massacre Bay (p119) and scaling the island's highest peak, Matafao Peak (p117). You can also take a slow walk around pristine Aunu'u (p121).

Kayaking & Canoeing

Sea-kayaking is an excellent way to explore the islands and one of the only ways to access some of the more remote parts of the coastline. A seven-day sea-kayaking tour is available with **EcoTour Samoa** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 22144; www.ecotoursamoa.com). On this tour you'll have the chance to see coral reefs just 4.5m below you, chat with local fishers in their *paopao* (canoes) and spot many dolphins. It costs US\$190 per person per day, including most meals and village accommodation.

Island Explorer Sea Kayaking (☎ 22401; www.islandexplorer.ws) offers a range of guided tours for beginners to experienced paddlers. Day trips cost ST180 per person, while overnight two-day tours to Manono or the offshore islands at Aleipata are ST360 (you'll need to pay an extra ST50 to ST70 for accommodation and meals).

A number of places in Samoa offer out-rigger canoe tours, including accommodation providers on Manono (p85) and the village of Sataoa (p80). If you want to see how the professionals do it, six-person out-rigger canoe teams race across the harbour in Apia most evenings.

Snorkelling & Swimming

The Samoan islands offer abundant snorkelling and swimming opportunities, most of which involve walking into reef-sheltered waters straight from a beach and flopping face-first into a marvellous underwater world.

Always ask permission from local villagers before using their beach. Not many places hire out snorkelling gear, so it's well worth bringing your own mask and snorkel.

SAMOA

If you need to rent snorkelling equipment in Samoa, you can do so on 'Upolu at the Palolo Deep Marine Reserve (p64), Litia Sini's Beach Resort (p83) at Lalomani, and Boomerang Creek Resort (p83) at Saleapaga. On Savai'i, you can hire gear at Lusua's Lagoon Chalets (p92) near Salelologa.

Although just about any stretch of reef in Samoa with more than a metre of water over it will qualify as a snorkelling site, one of the best areas for inexperienced snorkellers is in the Aleipata district (p83) at the eastern end of 'Upolu. Strong, experienced swimmers can tackle the turbulent waters en route to the excellent snorkelling around Nu'utele and Nu'ulua, and between Malaela village and Namu'a, but be extremely wary of the pounding surf and the overpowering current that sometimes ploughs through this area. Another excellent area for beginners is around Manono (p84).

There is less coral off Savai'i because recent volcanic flows have covered reef areas. The best snorkelling is in the northwest at Vaisala, where you can stay at the Vaisala Beach Hotel (p99), and on the east coast at Si'ufaga Beach (p92).

Some diving outfits (see Diving earlier in this chapter; p133) also offer organised snorkelling trips to sites around 'Upolu.

AMERICAN SAMOA

If you don't take your own gear to American Samoa, your best bet is to buy a snorkel

and mask at Samoa Sports Inc (p114) in Pago Pago.

Some of the best snorkelling in all of the Samoas is off Ofu Beach (p127) in the Manu'a Islands. There are some good spots for swimming and snorkelling along the south coast of Tutuila (though none as good as Ofu), including Alega Beach (p116), Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (p118), and off Aunu'u (p123). In Pago Pago itself, there is a beach at Utulei where the locals swim, however, although pollution levels have dropped in recent years, the harbour definitely isn't the cleanest swimming spot on the island. In general, snorkelling is safe on the north side of the island in winter when the trade winds blow in from the southeast, and on the southern coast in summer when winds come from the north.

It's worth remembering, too, that shallow reefs, pounding surf and the swift movement of water through *ava* (passages through reefs) make much of the coastline of American Samoa treacherous. Always seek local advice on the best places to swim, and never swim or snorkel alone.

Surfing

Powerful conditions, sharp reefs, and offshore breaks that are difficult to access mean that surfing in the Samoan islands is challenging, to say the very least, and probably one of the worst places in the world to learn how to surf! While the surf can be unbelievable at times, offering waves of a lifetime in glorious surroundings, conditions are generally difficult to assess, with some very dangerous situations awaiting the inexperienced or reckless. Despite all this, the islands have become an increasingly popular destination for experienced surfers. The wet season (November to April) brings swells from the north; the dry season (May to November) brings big swells from the south.

To really get the goods, it's best to go with an operator. They know all the best spots and provide boat transport to them, and, perhaps more importantly, they have established relationships with local villagers and understand the culture – they know where it is and isn't OK to surf. On occasion, independent surfers have caused great distress to locals by surfing in off-limit areas and not considering the local culture – stripping off into your board shorts in public as you

might back home is likely to cause a great deal of upset in Samoa. This can also create difficulties for subsequent surfers.

Guest numbers at surf resorts are often limited to ensure the breaks don't get too crowded. For this reason, bookings are advisable, as most of the resorts get fully booked for the best part of the season.

SAMOA

Places on 'Upolu where guided surfing trips can be organised include Salani Surf Resort (p81), Sa'moana Resort (p82) and Maninoa Surf Camp (p82). Guided surfing is also conducted by Moanalei Dive 'n' Surf (p83). There's also an experienced surf-tour operator on the 'big island' – Savai'i Surfaris (p90).

Surfers planning to visit the big island should be aware of the Savai'i Education Fund. All surfers who visit Savai'i are asked to contribute ST10 per day to this fund, which was established to benefit the people of Savai'i, principally the local primary schools. This extra cost is included in all Savai'i Surfaris tours. Independent surfers will be asked by a village representative for their contribution (make sure you keep your receipt as confirmation).

Well-known surf spots on 'Upolu include Solosolo, 10km east of Apia; the break near the islet of Nu'usafe'e on the south coast; and Boulders (p79), off Cape Niuaoto'i. We have also heard that there's a decent surf break near Boomerang Creek Resort (p83). Two of the best spots on Savai'i are at Fagalamo (p95) on the north coast, and Satuiatua (p99) on the southwest coast.

AMERICAN SAMOA

According to those in the know, the surf in American Samoa is (or was) one of the best-kept secrets of the South Pacific. Powerful 2m waves breaking in very shallow water over very sharp coral, however, make it an activity only for the advanced. Tutuila is one of the few Pacific islands outside Hawai'i that has a high concentration of surf spots. Some of the best surfing is found just beyond the reef near Faganeanea (just south of Pago Pago), but if the trade winds are blowing and the tides aren't right, surfing will be impossible. The rest of the time, it is still very risky. Other breaks worth investigating include those at Poloa (p119),

Amanave (p119), Sliding Rock (where you will find the fine Sliding Rock Lodge; see p120), Nu'uuli, Lauli'ituai, Alofau and Tula (p117). There are currently no surf resorts or operators on Tutuila.

BUSINESS HOURS

Generally, banks in Samoa and American Samoa are open from 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday (some branches open on Saturday between 8.30am and 12.30pm). Shops usually operate from 8am to 4.30pm on weekdays and from 8am to noon on Saturday, though small kiosks and convenience stores often keep longer hours. Restaurants and takeaway shops serve breakfast and lunch between 8am and 4pm, and dinner from 6pm to around 10pm. Bars in the main towns often open for drinking around lunchtime and point patrons to the front door at midnight.

In Samoa, government offices open from 8am to 4.30pm, while in American Samoa they're more likely to open at 9am and close at 5pm.

On Sunday, almost everything not directly related to the tourist industry is closed, although ripples of activity appear in the evening. Markets normally get under way by about 6am; the Maketi Fou in Apia (Samoa) is active more or less 24 hours a day.

We generally don't give opening hours for establishments mentioned in the text unless they differ greatly from the standard hours outlined above. Note, however, that time in the Samoan islands is tolerated rather than obeyed. Be prepared for pre-arranged meeting times and standard opening hours to regularly be ignored without a hint of remorse or social consequence.

CHILDREN

The Samoan islands' climate (except for long periods of heavy rain or the odd cyclone of course), warm waters and dearth of poisonous creatures make them a paradise for children. Samoans tend to lavish attention on very young children – this includes reprimands for bad behaviour – but are much more offhand with older children. This usually means that foreign toddlers will not be starved for attention or affection while visiting the islands.

Never leave your child unsupervised near beaches, reefs or on walking tracks, particularly those running along coastal cliffs

(these are never fenced). In the event of an emergency, be aware that medical facilities are limited in both Samoas. Lonely Planet's *Travel With Children* has useful advice on family travel. See also p53 in the Samoan Snapshots chapter for further information.

Practicalities

Bring your own baby carrier, as you won't find any for hire on the islands. Unfortunately, it's typically only the top-end hotels that are imaginative enough to provide cots for young children, and only the bigger car hire agencies can provide safety seats. When it comes to taxis or buses, you'll have no choice but to act the part of a safety seat yourself. Highchairs are also a rarity except in the restaurants of larger hotels and resorts. Formula and disposable nappies are available in Apia and Pago Pago, but we didn't come across any nappy-changing facilities. Breast-feeding in public is a definite no-no.

Professional baby sitters are as rare as vegetarian restaurants in the Samoan islands. Talk to your accommodation provider about the options if you want to have your child looked after.

Sights & Activities

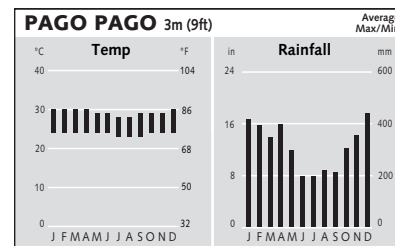
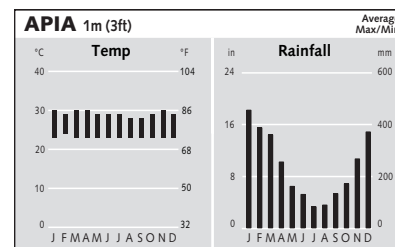
All of the islands have natural attractions that will delight children. 'Upolu has arguably the safest beaches for swimming – head to the Aleipata district (p83) and to the beach further west at Matareva (p79). Also on 'Upolu is the marvellous Palolo Deep Marine Reserve (p64), Robert Louis Stevenson's charming old home (p74), Fatumea Pool (p78) and the cultural delights of peaceful Manono (p84). Savai'i offers numerous freshwater pools in which to take a dip, such as Mata'olealele Spring (p96), as well as a walk through a rainforest canopy (see p98), a chance to swim with turtles (p95) and the opportunity to cheer on the oceanic power of the Alofaaga Blowholes (p100).

In American Samoa, children can watch traditional *fiafia* (singing and dancing presentations; p114), watch flying foxes swoop over Amalau Valley (p115), pretend they're stranded on wild Aunu'u (p121) and experience one of the best, most remote beaches in the world on Ofu (p127).

Concessions for children are only offered at a few attractions – we have indicated these in the text.

CLIMATE CHARTS

The equatorial Samoas enjoy a hot and humid climate for most of the year. The main climatic variation is in the amount of rainfall that washes over the islands during the wet season. See When to Go (p14) for more information on Samoan weather patterns.



CUSTOMS

Visitors to Samoa can bring in a 1L bottle of spirits and up to 200 cigarettes duty free. You must declare all foodstuffs, flowers and items made of natural fibres (eg hats, mats) to officials of Samoa's **Quarantine Service** (☎ 20924; www.samoaquarantine.gov.ws) upon arrival in the country. Any sexually explicit publications or other material the officials consider objectionable will be confiscated.

Visitors to American Samoa can bring in one gallon of liquor and up to 200 cigarettes duty free. Items that must be declared are the same as for Samoa.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

The Samoan islands are not fundamentally dangerous destinations, unless you adopt Samoan eating habits (particularly those of fast food-loving American Samoans) or consider too much snorkelling to be deleterious to your health. But exploring the islands does mean having to be aware of some potential hazards and rip-offs.

See the Health chapter (p296) for warnings about sunburn and heat exhaustion, recommended vaccinations, the dangers of coral cuts, the importance of avoiding stepping on stonefish, and warnings about things that bite or sting. Issues that may affect solo women travellers are detailed on p146.

Custom Fees

Each village in the Samoan islands is separately governed by a village council (for an explanation of these institutions, see p34) responsible for the affairs of associated *'aiga* (families) and for furthering the cause of the village. Outsiders, both foreigners and residents of other communities, are often required to pay a fee to use resources, such as beaches, mountains and caves, belonging to one village or another. While this seems a fairly good way to supplement village coffers and is neither a 'danger' nor an 'annoyance', there can be a few scams involved.

Sometimes custom fees are prominently signposted, or a collection booth is set up near the entrance to the attraction. On other occasions, however, visitors will merely be approached and requested to pay. Sometimes this is legitimate, but often individuals who are in no way related to the village council get away with collecting money (sometimes in extortionate amounts) from unwary or foolish travellers.

Even authorised charges can sometimes be unrealistic. If you are in doubt about a particular fee, ask to see the *pulenu'u* before paying. As a rule, never pay children and never pay after the fact unless there was no one around to collect a valid fee when you arrived. Standard custom fees range from ST2 to as high as ST10 per person. In many places, charges are made per vehicle.

Dogs

Dogs in the Samoas can be a real menace. Sometimes they'll run at you from their owner's house, while at other times you may encounter large groups of unfriendly strays while walking off the main road. Not all dogs are a threat of course, but it's better to treat them all with caution. For some advice on how to deal with being hounded, see the Man's Best Friend? boxed text (p104), which was written specifically about Tutuila, but applies just as much to the other islands.

Security

Theft is not a major problem across the Samoas, but it can happen. Avoid becoming suddenly destitute by keeping your money in inside pouches and secret stashes, and by not carrying your wallet in your back pocket. Also carry a combination of cash and credit cards, with maybe a few travellers cheques in small denominations as a back-up. When staying in beachside *fale*, particularly on the more isolated beaches, don't leave any valuables lying around.

Remember that it's not only honesty that's the issue here. Samoan society is traditionally communal, which means that an article belonging to one person also belongs to others who may need it. 'Borrowing' your possessions or absconding with them altogether (essentially the same thing) won't violate any real social protocols and won't cause severe strain on the Samoan conscience.

Violent crime and alcohol-related incidents do happen in the Samoan islands, but unless you hang around the rougher pool halls at closing time you're highly unlikely to be at risk.

Swimming

Many of Samoa's beaches aren't great for swimming as lagoons and reefs can become very shallow at low tide. Even in the protected waters of a lagoon, swimmers and snorkellers should be aware of currents and tidal changes, particularly the swift movement of water through *ava* into the open sea. An *ava* can usually be spotted from an elevated location onshore as a width of darker (deeper) water extending out through the reef. Avoid swimming or snorkelling alone and always seek local advice on conditions.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

Unfortunately, travellers with restricted mobility will find little in the way of infrastructure designed to make it easier for them to get around in the Samoan islands. Almost all forms of transport and island activities are geared for the 'able-bodied', and only a handful of top-end hotels can accommodate disabled guests – the Aggie Grey hotels in Apia (p69) and near the airport (p79) on 'Upolu, Si'ufaga Beach Resort on Savai'i (p93), and Sadie Thompson Inn (p112) and the Tradewinds Hotel (p120) on

Tutuila. However, this lack of infrastructure is made up for in some part by the helpful nature of most Samoans, who are more than likely to lend a hand if needed.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Card-carrying student, disabled and elderly travellers will unfortunately find that discounts are not specifically offered to them in the Samoan islands.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Samoan Embassies & Consulates

In countries without Samoan diplomatic posts, Samoa is represented by New Zealand and British diplomatic missions. Samoa has its own diplomatic representation in the following countries:

Australia (☎ 02-6286 5505; fax 02-6286 5678;

13 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, ACT 2606)

Belgium (☎ /fax 322-675 0336; 123 Ave Franklin Roosevelt, 1050 Brussels)

New Zealand (High Commission; ☎ 04-472 0953; fax 04-471 2479; 1A Wesley Rd, Kelburn, PO Box 1430, Wellington)

USA (☎ /fax 212-599 0797; Suite 400D, 800 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10017)

Embassies & Consulates in Samoa

Following is a list of countries with diplomatic missions based in Apia.

Australia (Map pp62-3; ☎ 23411; www.embassy.gov.au/ws.html; Beach Rd; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri)

Canadian consular services are also provided here.

China (Map p75; ☎ 22474; Vaillima)

New Zealand (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21711; Beach Rd; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 8am-1pm Fri)

USA (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21631; 5th fl, ACB Bldg; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri)

Embassies & Consulates in American Samoa

All American Samoan diplomatic affairs are handled by the USA. There are no consulates or embassies in American Samoa and currently no places that are able to issue visas for the USA.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Following are some of the main causes of celebrations across the islands, that is, aside from Sunday church services, Sunday feasts, extraordinarily lavish *fa'alavelave* (traditional gift-giving ceremonies), spontaneous singing sessions...you get the picture.

In August and September 2007, Apia will again host the **South Pacific Games** (www.internationalgames.net/southpac.htm), while the **10th Festival of Pacific Arts** is slated to be held in American Samoa in 2008.

April

Flag Day Held on 17 April, this is American Samoa's territorial holiday. It commemorates the raising of the US flag over eastern Samoa on that day in 1900, and features an arts festival (in conjunction with long-winded speeches by political figures). Celebrations include *fautasi* (longboat) races, singing, dancing and traditional competitions such as coconut husking, basket weaving and fire building.

May

National Tourism Week American Samoa's rather lower-key version of Samoa's Teuila Festival takes place in early May.

June

Independence Celebrations Samoa celebrates its independence on the first three days of June with a number of well-attended events, including *fautasi* and outrigger races, horse races, dancing, feasting and more of the traditional competitions mentioned in the above discussion of Flag Day (yes, even the long-winded speeches by *tulafale*, the aptly named talking chiefs). Everything closes down for five days during this celebration, so don't expect to do any business during this time! (Samoa actually gained independence on 1 January 1962. However, as New Year's Day is already a cause for merriment, they decided to have another holiday in June.)

September

Teuila Festival (www.teuilafestival.ws) The main objective of this festival, based in Apia and named after red ginger, Samoa's national floral emblem, is to draw more tourists to the country, but locals have been quick to embrace the festival's celebratory spirit. The land behind the information centre is filled with food stalls, children's amusements and demonstrations of traditional crafts, including tattooing, while Beach Rd is strung up with coloured lights. There are also choir, dancing and brass band competitions, *paopao* (outrigger canoe) races and talent shows, with the pageantry culminating in the crowning of Miss Samoa. Accommodation is virtually booked out during the festival.

October

White Sunday Takes place in Samoa and American Samoa on the second Sunday in October and is dedicated to kids. They dress in their finest whites, parade to church and lead church services. Afterwards, the children are guests of honour at a feast that is prepared and served by adults.

Tisa's Tattoo Festival (www.tisabarefootbar.com/eventstattoo.htm) The inauguration of this exuberant festival took place in October 2005 at Tisa's Barefoot Bar on Tutuila in American Samoa and looks set to become an annual event.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Gays and lesbians will probably have to remain discreet in the Samoan islands. The obvious presence of the *fa'afafine* (effeminate Samoan men who sometimes dress as women and who are well integrated into society) belies the fact that homosexuality is not openly accepted in Samoan society – this is just one of many Samoan paradoxes. There is no 'gay scene' as such, and no specifically gay bars on the islands.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays celebrated only in Samoa are followed by an (S); those unique to American Samoa, an (AS).

New Year's Day 1 January (S & AS)

Day after New Year's Day 2 January (S)

Martin Luther King Day Third Monday in January (AS)

President's Day Third Monday in February (AS)

Flag Day 17 April (AS)

Anzac Day 25 April (S)

Good Friday & Easter April (S & AS)

Easter Monday April (S)

Aso o Tina or Mothers' Day First Monday in May (S)

Memorial Day Last Monday in May (AS)

Independence Celebrations 1 to 3 June (S)

Independence Day 4 July (AS)

Manu'a Day 16 July (AS)

Labor Day 4 August (S)

Labor Day First Monday in September (AS)

White Sunday Second Sunday in October (S & AS)

White Monday Second Monday in October (S)

Columbus Day Second Monday in October (AS)

Palolo Day October or November (S)

Arbor Day First week of November (AS)

Veterans' Day 11 November (AS)

Thanksgiving Third week of November (AS)

Christmas Day 25 December (S & AS)

Boxing Day 26 December (S)

INSURANCE

Don't underestimate the importance of a good travel-insurance policy that covers theft, loss and medical problems – nothing is guaranteed to ruin your holiday plans quicker than an accident or having that brand new digital camera stolen. Most policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options;

the higher ones are chiefly for countries that have extremely high medical costs, such as the USA. There is a wide variety of policies available, so compare the small print.

Some policies specifically exclude designated 'dangerous activities' such as scuba diving, surfing and even bushwalking. If you plan on doing any of these things, make sure the policy you choose fully covers you for your activity of choice.

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 later make sure you keep all documentation. Check that the policy covers ambulances and emergency medical evacuations by air.

See also Insurance (p296) in the Health chapter. For information on insurance matters relating to cars that are bought or hired, see p149.

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

INTERNET ACCESS

It's usually only top-end hotels and resorts that can help those who have brought their own laptop or palmtop to the Samoan islands and want to connect to the Internet. Otherwise, your only option for accessing the Web (assuming your accommodation provider doesn't have any terminals for guest use) is an Internet café. Note that Web connections can drop out with frustrating frequency on these remote islands.

In Samoa, you'll find several Internet cafés scattered around Apia (for details, see p61). On Savai'i, you can get connected in Salelologa (p91) and Manase (p94). On 'Upolu, expect to pay up to ST4 per 15 minutes of access; on Savai'i you'll pay up to ST10 for the same amount of time.

American Samoa has several Internet café options in Pago Pago (p106), where you'll pay around US\$3 per 15 minutes.

LEGAL MATTERS

It's fair to say that most travellers will have no formal contact with Samoan police, except perhaps when watching the Police Band do its early morning march along Apia's waterfront, or when asking a local American Samoan cop for directions to the taxi rank outside Tafuna International Airport.

Anyone caught carrying any amount of illegal drugs will face a potentially harsh penalty (particularly in American Samoa) so firmly resist the temptation to do this. Remaining in either of the Samoos beyond the life of your permit or visa is also not a good idea, as you risk deportation or other penalties. Remember that if you are arrested, your local consulate or embassy (assuming there is one) will not be able to help you if you are in any way at fault.

MAPS

The Tourism Authority in Apia distributes the free, super-basic Jasons *Samoa Visitor Map*. It also sells the much more detailed 1:200,000 *Samoa* map published by Hema (ST10), but it's woefully out of date.

The **Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 23800; Beach Rd) in Apia sells 1:50,000 topographic sheet maps of 'Upolu (two sheets) and Savai'i (four sheets) for ST30 per sheet. Unfortunately these haven't been updated since 2000 and lack recent road system changes. You need to pay for the maps at the ministry office beside the New Zealand High Commission and then pick them up from a second office near the deep sea wharf.

The University of Hawai'i's *Islands of Samoa* map (US\$4) contains topographic detail of both Samoa and American Samoa, comprehensive labelling of geographic names and a useful index. On the downside, it was last updated in 1990. In Apia the map is usually available from **Aggie Grey's Gift Shop** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 22880; Beach Rd). In Pago Pago it's available from the **lupeli Siliva Wesley Bookshop** (p107; ☎ 633 2201).

The US National Park Service publishes a handy free map and guide to American Samoa. It's available from the **National Park Visitor Information Center** (Map p107; ☎ 633 7082; www.nps.gov/npsa/home.htm; Pago Plaza; ☎ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri).

Detailed topographic mapping for American Samoa is available through the **USGS** (US Geological Survey; www.usgs.gov), which has offices all over the USA.

MONEY

The *tala*, which is divided into 100 *sene*, is the unit of currency in use in Samoa. Because of Samoa's proximity to American Samoa, the most acceptable foreign currency is the

US dollar, which is normally negotiable in shops, restaurants and hotels. (Indeed, some hotels quote their rates in US dollars so they don't sound so expensive!) Banks will exchange just about any hard currency, but most preferable are US, New Zealand and Australian dollars, and pounds sterling.

The US dollar, divided into 100 cents, is the currency used in American Samoa.

See the Quick Reference listings on the inside front cover for a list of exchange rates. Hardly anyone uses travellers cheques in either Samoa because of the presence of internationally linked ATMs in main towns.

In this book, unless otherwise stated, all prices given in the Samoa chapters are in *tala*, and all prices in the American Samoa chapters are in US dollars. For an idea of local costs, see p15. For information on taxes, see p16.

ATMs & EFTPOS

Branches of the ANZ, Westpac and several local banks in the main towns of Samoa are equipped with ATMs. In American Samoa, ATMs are provided by the ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank and the Bank of Hawai'i. Be aware that ATMs don't always operate 24 hours, and that they can be prone to running out of bills at the start of the weekend. Take plenty of cash with you (in small denominations) when you're heading outside the bigger settlements.

Eftpos (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) is a convenient service that allows you to use your bank card (credit or debit) to pay directly for services or purchases, and often withdraw cash as well. However, it's currently only available in some of the larger hotels and upmarket restaurants.

Credit & Debit Cards

A plastic card is arguably the best way of 'carrying' your money while travelling. Credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted by many hotels, restaurants and tour agencies, and are pretty much essential (in lieu of a large deposit) for hiring a car. They can also be used to get cash advances over the counter at banks and from many ATMs, depending on the card, though these transactions incur immediate interest.

Debit cards avoid the often steep interest charges associated with credit cards and let

you draw money directly from your home bank account using ATMs and banks. Any card connected to the international banking network – Cirrus, Maestro, Plus and Eurocard – should work, provided you know your PIN. Fees for using your card at a foreign bank or ATM vary depending on your home bank; ask before you leave.

The most flexible option is to carry both a credit and a debit card.

Moneychangers

The three main banks in Samoa and those that change travellers cheques and foreign currency are the ANZ Bank, Westpac and the National Bank of Samoa. At Faleolo Airport there are currency-exchange branches that open to coincide with most incoming and outgoing flights. All the banks charge a small commission for changing travellers cheques.

In American Samoa you can exchange money in Pago Pago at the Bank of Hawai'i and the ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank. Both charge around 2% commission on travellers cheques. There is no exchange office or ATM at Tafuna International Airport, so make sure you have some US currency when you arrive.

Tippling

Tippling is not part of everyday life in Polynesia and is not expected or encouraged in the Samoos. It is, however, deemed acceptable for exceptional service at finer restaurants.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO Equipment

Film is normally more expensive in the Samoan islands than it is in Europe, North America and Australasia, so stock up before you leave home. There are a couple of photographic and processing shops in the capitals, but memory cards and accessories for digital cameras are extremely thin on the ground – bring such items with you. Also bring spare batteries for cameras and flash units since they're quite expensive locally.

Photographing & Filming People

While many Samoans enjoy being photographed or videoed, others will be put off by it. The main point is to respect the wishes of the locals, however photogenic they may

be. Ask permission to capture their image if a candid shot can't be made, and don't insist or snap a picture anyway if permission is denied.

Often, people will ask for a copy of the image for themselves, particularly if you've spent any time with them or their family. An excellent idea is to have prints laminated before sending them back.

Technical Tips

Points worth keeping in mind include the heat, humidity, very fine-grain sand, tropical sunlight, equatorial shadows and the great opportunities for underwater photography. The best times to take photographs on sunny days are the first two hours after sunrise and the last two before sunset. This brings out the best colours and takes advantage of the colour-enhancing long red rays cast by a low sun. At other times, colours will be washed out by harsh sunlight and glare, although it's possible to counter this by using a polarising filter.

If you're shooting on beaches, it's important to adjust for glare from water or sand, and to keep your photographic equipment well away from sand and salt water. When photographing out-of-doors, take light readings from the subject and not the brilliant background, or your subjects will turn out underexposed.

For more information, see Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography* by Richard l'Anson.

POST

Postal services in the Samoan islands are reasonably efficient. The main post offices in Apia and Pago Pago hold mail for visitors. You need to provide some form of identification (such as a passport) to collect mail.

Samoa

Samoa's postal service is run by SamoaTel. See its website (www.samoatel.ws/postal_mail_services.asp) for further details.

American Samoa

The United States Postal Service is responsible for handling mail in American Samoa. To get an idea of the rates charged for sending envelopes and parcels of different sizes and weights from American Samoa, check out the organisation's postage calculator (<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>).

SHOPPING

Siapo, known elsewhere in the Pacific as *tapa*, is a type of cloth made from the pounded bark of the paper mulberry tree and is one of the most typically Polynesian souvenirs you can buy. Decorated with rich, earthy, natural dyes, *siapo* was originally used as clothing and covering. Its production declined rapidly when European cloth became available, but it is still produced for ceremonial use and collectors, and as artwork. Samoan *siapo* reach only a few square metres in size, making them fairly portable.

Baskets, bags and other articles of woven pandanus are beautiful, inexpensive and make excellent souvenirs. Woven mats of dried and treated pandanus are made by women in their spare time and serve as beds and carpeting in traditional *fale*. The *fala moe* (bedroll mats) are used for sleeping and the *papa laufala* (floor mats) cover the floors of Samoan dwellings. The much more intricate *ie toga* (fine mat) is made of pandanus leaves split into widths of just a couple of millimetres and, when completed, has the sheen and appearance of fine silk. An average one will take hundreds or even thousands of hours to weave, and the finest merit heirloom value.

Beautiful and finely made 'ava bowls are popular with visitors and are actually used in the Samoan islands. These multilegged wooden bowls come in more imaginative shapes than their counterparts in other South Pacific countries, and all but the biggest bowls are reasonably priced.

Well-made wooden models of traditional outrigger canoes are another excellent souvenir. Carved wooden weapons can be found everywhere and there is plenty to choose from in the way of coconut-shell jewellery. In order to help protect endangered or threatened species, don't buy items made from coral or turtle shell.

Bargaining

The Pacific is not like Asia – bargaining isn't the norm on any of the islands and the price listed is the price you're expected to pay.

TELEPHONE

The telecommunications provider in Samoa is **SamoaTel** (Map pp62-3; www.samoatel.ws; Beach Rd, Apia). A three-minute local call will cost

you ST0.50. International calls from Samoa to Australia or New Zealand cost around ST3 per minute and calls to the USA ST4.50 per minute. Collect and credit card international calls can be made from public phones by dialling ☎ 957.

The **Telecommunications Authority** (Map p107; ☎ 633 1121; Pago Pago) of American Samoa is open for both local and international calls. Local calls cost US\$0.10. Station-to-station calls to the US mainland and Hawai'i cost US\$6 for the first three minutes and US\$0.40 for each minute thereafter, with evening and weekend discounts. To Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, the charge is US\$5.70 for the first three minutes and US\$1.10 thereafter. Calls to Europe cost US\$8 for the first three minutes and US\$1.60 thereafter.

Mobile Phones

Samoa runs on an analogue system. You can organise for a local number to be allocated to your phone (if compatible) through **Telecom Samoa Cellular** (☎ 26081). Charges will be deducted from your credit card.

In American Samoa you can hire phones or buy SIM cards for GSM 900-compatible mobiles from **Blue Sky Communications** (Map p107; ☎ 699 2759; Pago Plaza, Pago Pago).

Phone Codes

The country code for Samoa is ☎ 685 and for American Samoa is ☎ 684. Neither nation uses area codes.

Phonecards

In Samoa, phonecards are available for ST5, ST10, ST20 and ST50, and can be used in around 75 card phones around 'Upolu and Savai'i. There's a similar choice of phonecards in American Samoa, though card phones are virtually nonexistent outside Pago Pago and the main commercial strips of Tafuna and Nu'uuli.

TIME

Time doesn't really move more slowly in the South Pacific, but it certainly seems that way. On Sunday in particular, it can even appear to grind to a halt. Visitors will need to get accustomed to an entirely different set of rules regarding punctuality. If a Samoan agrees to meet you at 9am, you may be waiting until noon, three hours being a perfectly acceptable margin of lateness in the islands.

Nothing is so pressing, they reason, that one should become flustered or inconvenienced. If it is worth doing, it can wait until later, or even until tomorrow. If not worth doing, it can be conveniently forgotten.

The Samoan islands lie just east of the International Dateline, which means their dates are the same as those of North America. The local time is GMT/UTC minus 11 hours. Therefore, when it's noon in the Samoan, it's 11pm the same day in London, 3pm the same day in Los Angeles, and 9am the following day in Sydney.

For more on international timing, see the map of world time zones (p319) at the back of the book.

TOILETS

The good news is that there are no fees for using public toilets in the Samoan islands. The bad news is that outside a couple of conveniences in Apia and Pago Pago, public toilets are few and far between. If you're travelling off the beaten track you may, on occasion, have to nip behind a banyan tree – coconut trees are potentially hazardous due to falling coconuts. Though all toilets are of the Western sit-down variety, many villages won't have flush toilets (water is supplied in a separate container). It's a good idea to always carry spare toilet paper with you.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local Tourist Information

Office of Tourism (Map p103; ☎ 699 9411; www.am.samoatourism.ws; Tafuna, Tutuila; ☎ 7.30am–4pm Mon–Fri) It may be inconveniently situated in a small prefab building to the northwest of the airport, but American Samoa's Office of Tourism does have very helpful staff. If they don't have the information at hand, they'll usually try to track it down for you. For other organisations that can be of assistance to travellers in American Samoa, see p108.

Samoa Tourism Authority (Map pp62-3; ☎ 635500; www.visitsamoa.ws; Beach Rd, Apia; ☎ 8am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–noon Sat) Samoa's Tourism Authority inhabits a large *fale* on Apia's foreshore. We found them lacking in helpfulness during our research trip, but hopefully this was just a short-term experience and is not indicative of the country's willingness to assist visitors. Sharing the Tourism Authority *fale* is the highly efficient Samoa Hotels Association (p64).

Tourist Information Abroad

Samoa has Tourism Authority offices in the following countries:

Australia (☎ 02-9279 4808; samoa@ozemail.com.au; Level 9, 99 York St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

New Zealand (☎ 09-379 6138; samoa@samoaco.nz; Level 1, Samoa House, 283 Karangahape Rd, Newton, Auckland)

American Samoa has no official tourism offices overseas.

VISAS

A free, 60-day visitor permit is granted to all visitors on arrival in Samoa – except for nationals of China who must obtain a visa beforehand – provided you have an onward ticket and a passport valid for at least another six months. You'll also be required to provide a contact address within the country, so have the name of a hotel ready upon arrival. A vaccination certificate for yellow fever may be required if you are coming from an infected area.

US citizens can visit American Samoa visa-free if they have a valid passport and an onward ticket. Nationals of the following countries equipped with a valid passport and an onward ticket receive a free one-month visa on arrival in American Samoa: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Federated States of Micronesia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Nationals of all other countries must apply in advance at any American embassy for their one-month visa (US\$40).

Visa Extensions

Samoa visitor permits may be extended by several weeks at a time by the country's **Immigration Office** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 20291; www.samoaimmigration.gov.ws; Convent St; ☎ 8am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) in Apia. Take along your passport, wallet and two passport-sized photos and don't make any other plans for the rest of the day. You may also need to have proof of hotel accommodation, onward transport and sufficient funds for your requested period of stay. Your application to extend your permit must be made before the original permit expires.

American Samoa visa extensions are handled by the **Immigration Office** (Map p107; ☎ 633 4203; www.asg.gov.net/LEGAL%20AFFAIRS.htm; grd fl, Executive Office Bldg, Utulei; ☎ 8am-2.30pm Mon-Fri). The office is located

within the Department of Legal Affairs in Pago Pago. The office has no signage – it has a long counter and is directly opposite a (nonfunctioning) ANZ ATM. Visas can only be extended by one month (US\$50), and you must be sponsored by a resident.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Thanks to Western and Asian videos, which are extremely popular in the Samoan islands, foreign women have a reputation for easy availability. Polite refusal of sexual attention by a non-Samoan woman may be taken to mean 'keep trying' by a hopeful Samoan man, who may have difficulty imagining why you wouldn't be interested given the promiscuity he sees portrayed on the screen (a sort of Polynesian myth working in reverse). The Samoan word for 'no' is *leai* (pronounced lay-eye) and it should be used firmly (of course, only if that's what you want to say). While frequent advances may be annoying, sober Samoans are unlikely to physically force the issue.

To avoid the measure of attention that a lone foreign woman is likely to attract, modest dress is recommended. Don't turn up at a pub or disco alone unless you're expecting advances, and ignore the inane remarks of adolescents who'll try to chat you up. Samoan custom requires men to ask permission of your male escort before requesting a dance, so unwanted attention can be screened that way.

Lone women may receive unwanted attention from men who offer to guide them at more isolated locations around the islands. If you have any doubts about the sincerity of the offer, try to make discreet local inquiries before accepting.

Most of all, however, don't be paranoid – you may miss out on some very pleasant (and platonic) friendships.

TRANSPORT IN THE SAMOAN ISLANDS

This section is devoted to information about travelling within Samoa and American Samoa. Information on travelling between the two nations, or to/from other international destinations, is covered in the Transport to & from Samoan Islands

& Tonga chapter (p290). There are also separate Getting Around sections at the beginning of the 'Upolu (p57), Savai'i (p90) and Tutuila (p104) chapters that deal with transport around each of these individual islands; a similar section appears at the beginning of The Manu'a Islands chapter (p126), summarising transport around this island group.

AIR Samoa

The 15-minute flight between 'Upolu and Savai'i isn't as cheap as catching the ferry, and there'll be the hassle of organising another hire car in Salelologa if you want to do a driving tour, but you'll nonetheless get a great bird's-eye perspective of the islands. **Polynesian Airlines** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21261; www.polynesianairlines.com; NPF Bldg, Beach Rd, Apia; ☎ 8am-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) flies between Fagali'i Airport, just east of Apia on 'Upolu, and Ma'ota Airport, 5km west of Salelologa on Savai'i. There are usually two to three services a day and the fare is ST50/95 one way/return. There is another domestic airport on Savai'i – Asau Airport in the island's northwest – but at the time of writing there were no scheduled services using it.

American Samoa

Inter-Island Airways (Pago Pago ☎ 699 7100; Ofu ☎ 655 7100; Ta'u ☎ 677 7100; www.interislandair.com) services the 30-minute air route between Tutuila and the Manu'a Islands. It does flights between Tafuna International Airport on Tutuila and the tiny airstrip on Ofu (US\$140 return), and between Tafuna and the airstrip on Ta'u (US\$140 return). You'll need plenty of patience and flexibility when dealing with Inter-Island (their office at Tafuna Airport is signed 'Inter-Island Vacations') as it was still getting its act together when we used them: we were twice given incorrect departure times; it didn't accept credit card payments, only cash or cheques; and it was yet to offer direct flights between Ofu and Ta'u (to visit both islands requires flying to one, returning to Tafuna, then flying back out again to the other). At the time of writing, flights between Tutuila and either Ofu or Ta'u only took place on Tuesday and Thursday. Note that flight cancellations are regular occurrences, particularly in regard to Ofu because of the wind currents

that can cut across the airstrip and make landing impossible – prepare to be flexible with your Manu'a Islands itinerary.

BICYCLE

Touring 'Upolu and Savai'i by bicycle is a scenic, mostly relaxed option for fit, experienced cyclists – we say 'mostly' because aggressive dogs are a prevalent problem around the islands (p139). The roads are generally in good condition and traffic is minimal. The major roads encircling the islands are all sealed, but you'd need a sturdy mountain bike to tackle most of the trails to beaches and other coastal attractions. The longest stretch between accommodation options would be about 45km on Savai'i. You can transport a bike between Samoa's two main islands on the ferry that crosses Apolima Strait (p148).

Tutuila in American Samoa is much less suitable for cycling than the main islands of Samoa. Though smaller than 'Upolu and Savai'i, Tutuila is more mountainous, traffic is heavier and a complete circuit of the island is impossible since there are no roads across the rugged north coast. Dogs can be a major hassle here as well. You could conceivably take a bike over to the Manu'a Islands by boat, but the minimalist road networks of these islands would make this a rather dubious plan.

One of the biggest challenges for cyclists in the Samoas is the heat. Even during the coolest months (July, August and September), afternoon temperatures will still reach the high twenties. Plan your expedition carefully to avoid cycling long stretches in the heat of the day. Also bear in mind that buses are unlikely to be able to accommodate bicycles should you run out of leg power.

Bikes are a common form of local transport in the Samoan islands, so it shouldn't be hard to track down a bike repairer if you really need one. But it is obviously best to bring your own comprehensive bike repair kit, not to mention a decent lock and heavy-duty panniers. And don't expect high-quality parts to be available. Some accommodation providers rent bikes, but these are for day touring, not long-distance rides.

For information on the availability of topographic maps of the islands, see p142.

BOAT Samoa

Ferries regularly plough the 22km across Apolima Strait between 'Upolu and Savai'i. Tickets cost ST9/65 per person/car. Large ferries officially depart the Mulifanua Wharf on 'Upolu and the Salelologa Wharf on Savai'i every two hours between 6am and 4pm Wednesday to Monday, while a smaller ferry services this route at less regular intervals on Tuesday. Sailing times are thrown into turmoil when big swells roll across the strait and slow the ferries down.

Vehicles should be pre-booked to ensure a place. Make reservations through the **Samoa Shipping Corporation** (Map pp62-3; Apia ☎ 20935; Salelologa ☎ 51477). Before putting your car on the ferry at Mulifanua Wharf, you must have its underside cleaned (free) at the spraying station 100m before the boat terminal. This is done to prevent the spread of the Giant African Snail. The spraying only takes a few minutes and you get a quarantine card to flash when driving on to the ferry.

American Samoa

The **American Samoa Inter-Island Shipping Company** (☎ 633 4707) operates a boat called the *Manu'a Tele*, which departs Pago Pago for the Manu'a Islands on Wednesday at 10pm; the trip takes about eight hours. Though primarily a cargo vessel, it does take passengers (US\$35 one way, plus US\$5 per piece of luggage). You can buy tickets and check in from 8am on the day of departure – the company's kiosk down at the waterfront is otherwise unattended. This boat is a good option for divers who want to transport their tanks to the Manu'a Islands, which they cannot do by plane.

You can also travel to the Manu'a Islands on board the **MV Sili** (☎ 633 5532), which departs Pago Pago every second Friday (coinciding with the Tutuila pay week) at 10pm. Tickets cost US\$20 for a one-way trip (also around eight hours), plus US\$1 per piece of luggage, and ticketing/check-in takes place between 8am and 4pm on the day of departure. This boat doesn't enter Manu'a harbours – rather, you transfer to a smaller boat at the harbour entrance.

Both the *Manu'a Tele* and *MV Sili* depart from the dock near the Fono in Pago Pago. Ask each company about pick-up times from Ofu and Ta'u.

BUS

Travelling by public bus is the most common method of getting around in the Samoan islands and is an experience that shouldn't be missed. The buses are vibrantly coloured, wooden-seated vehicles (prepare yourself for hard jolts) that blast music at volumes that, depending on your opinion of Samoan pop music, inspire you to either boogie while sitting down or become ill with a throbbing headache. In American Samoa, buses tend to be small 'aiga (pick-up trucks with a bus frame attached at the back).

The biggest problem with bus travel is that services operate at the whim of the drivers. If a driver feels like knocking off at 1pm, they do, and passengers counting on the service are left stranded. Never, under any circumstances, rely on catching a bus after about 2pm. Buses are scarce on Saturday afternoon and often only cater to church services on Sunday.

Pay the fare to the driver or leave the money on the dash as you leave. Paying the fare will go more smoothly if you have as near to the exact change as possible. The buses make so many stops and starts that the going is slow anyway, but a driver having to dig for ST19.50 in change will hold things up considerably.

To stop a bus in either Samoa, wave your hand and arm, palm down, as the bus approaches. To signal that you'd like to get off the bus, either knock on the ceiling, clap loudly or, on the more 'modern' buses, pull the cord.

Although most visitors don't notice it at first, there is a seating hierarchy on Samoan buses, and a great deal of amusement can be derived from observing the manner in which Samoans seat and stack themselves. Unmarried women normally sit together. Foreigners and older people must have a seat and sit near the front of the bus. Don't worry about arranging this yourself – the Samoans will see to it that everything is sorted out. When all the seats are full (or a young woman boards and there is no other woman to sit with), people begin stacking up. Women sit on laps of women, men on men (although some mixed stacking occasionally happens) and sometimes they are stacked up to four high. When this system is exhausted, people sit on kero tins and sacks in the aisle. If someone in the rear of

the bus is blocked by those seated, everyone systematically files off the bus, lets them off, and reboards without a word. You get the feeling they've been doing this for a long time.

Details about specific routes and fares are provided in the Getting Around sections at the beginning of chapters dealing with individual islands.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

In either of the Samoan islands, hiring a car will give you the opportunity to see the sights around the main islands quickly and comfortably. It will also allow you to get to places that are not served by public transport. That said, a complete reliance on a hire car will rob you of some of the unique cultural experiences that can be gained on public transport.

At the time of writing, motorcycles were not available for hire in either Samoa.

Driving Licence

Visitors to Samoa need to obtain a temporary driving licence from the **Ministry of Works, Transport & Infrastructure** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21611; Beach Rd; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) in Apia. Bring your passport and driving licence with you when you apply. A licence valid for two/three months will cost ST10/50.

A valid foreign driving licence should allow you to drive in American Samoa, though you can always get yourself an international driving licence to be absolutely certain.

Fuel

In Samoa, petrol stations practically vanish once you get away from the north coast of 'Upolu but are more widely scattered on Savai'i (along the east and north coasts). In American Samoa, fuel is widely available around Tutuila.

Hire

There are lots of firms based in the capitals or at airports where you can hire vehicles. For details of car hire firms on 'Upolu, see p58. For details of outfits operating on Tutuila, see p105.

When hiring a vehicle, check for any damage or scratches before you get into the car and note everything on the rental agreement, lest you be held liable for dam-

age when the car is returned. Furthermore, fend off requests to leave your passport or a cash deposit against possible damages.

Note that you can take hire cars from 'Upolu over to Savai'i and back, but cars hired on Savai'i cannot be taken over to 'Upolu.

Insurance

It's essential to have your hire car covered by insurance, as repair costs are extremely high in Samoa and American Samoa. Insurance costs aren't always included in the price of a quote, so make sure you always double-check this.

Hiring a car in Samoa means being subject to a ST2500 insurance excess (non-reducible) in the event of any accident that's your fault. For information on the importance of being covered by a collision/damage waiver (CDW) when hiring a car in American Samoa, see p105.

Road Conditions & Hazards

The main roads that weave around 'Upolu, Savai'i and Tutuila are sealed and in fairly good condition. The same can't be said for all the side roads, which are often narrow, potholed and make for a rough drive.

The main hazard confronting drivers in the Samoan islands is streetlife – the pedestrians, dogs, chickens, pigs and other creatures that go about their daily business along the narrow verges. You need to be wary of what may lie around every corner, particularly in the cool of the late afternoon when people tend to go for walks, and on Sunday when villagers flock to local churches.

If you hit a domestic animal on the road, some travellers advise you to keep driving. If you stop, they say, you may experience the wrath of the offended village and possibly risk personal injury, or the destruction of your vehicle. Instead, you could note the name of the village and arrange to make fair restitution through the police.

Many Samoan drivers have lead feet and will attempt to pass you even if there's a vehicle approaching on the other side of the road. Bus drivers in particular seem to enjoy terrorising the rear ends of hire cars on the main coastal roads. Whatever happens, just let them do their thing, and if you're really worried, pull over.

Never park your car under a coconut palm unless you're interested in some natural panel beating.

Road Rules

Vehicles drive on the right-hand side of the road in both Samoa and American Samoa. The speed limit in Samoa within central Apia and through adjacent villages is 40km/h (25mph); outside populated areas it's 55km/h (35mph). In American Samoa, the limit is 32km/h (20mph) through villages and 55km/h (35mph) outside populated areas.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they plan to go.

The main difficulty with hitching in the Samoas is that rides won't generally be very

long, perhaps only from one village to the next, so it could take you a good while to go a longer distance. Still, given the sorry state of the bus service on Savai'i, hitching is one way to see that island, and it will give you an out if you're caught in the nether lands of 'Upolu or Tutuila after the buses have stopped running for the day. You might be expected to pay a small fee for a ride, so offer what you think the ride is worth – a good rule of thumb (pun intentional) is to offer the bus fare equivalent for the distance travelled – although offers of payment will normally be refused.

TAXI

On 'Upolu in Samoa, taxis can be a useful transport option for day-tripping – see p59 for details of prices. The same can't be said for taxis on Savai'i, which are only convenient for short trips. Ditto Tutuila in American Samoa, where a cab ride can be an expensive venture.

Transport

CONTENTS

Entry Requirements	290
Air	290
Sea	294

THINGS CHANGE ...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and to be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

The physical isolation of the Samoan islands and Tonga means you need to give careful consideration to the best way of getting out there. Flying direct to/from each island grouping, for instance, probably won't represent the greatest value for money. It might make more sense to engage in some careful route planning that may enable further exploration of the South Pacific or even Australasia.

For information on travelling within either Samoa or American Samoa, see p146. For information on travelling within Tonga, see p285.

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

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Entering Samoa

To be issued a visa on arrival in Samoa, you must have an onward ticket, a passport valid for at least another six months, and a contact address within the country (have the name of a hotel handy). An international yellow fever vaccination certificate will also be required if you've visited a high-risk country in the six days prior to your arrival in Samoa (see p296).

Entering American Samoa

A passport valid for at least six months beyond your arrival date and an onward ticket will allow nationals of 25 countries to obtain a visa on arrival. Nationals of other countries will need to apply for a visa in advance. For full details, see p146.

The yellow fever regulations that apply to Samoa also apply to American Samoa.

Entering Tonga

Citizens of most countries are granted a 31-day visitors visa on arrival in Tonga upon presentation of a passport with at least six months' validity and an onward ticket. An international yellow fever vaccination certificate will be necessary if you've been to a high-risk area in the past six days.

AIR

While the Samoan islands and Tonga aren't exactly as remote or obscure a destination as Tuvalu or Kiribati, they are not as popular as Fiji or Tahiti either (not yet anyway), and airfares often reflect this. Access to either island group is fairly straightforward from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Hawai'i or Los Angeles. From anywhere else, however, travelling there will almost always entail reaching one of these connecting points first. Auckland and Nadi/Suva are the most convenient and best-served runs, and there are often some good discount fares on these routes. Tonga and the Samoas are also popular as a stop-over or cheap 'optional extra' on some tickets and round-the-world fares between Europe or North America and New Zealand.

Visitors to Samoa will arrive near Apia on 'Upolu, those visiting American Samoa will arrive near Pago Pago on Tutuila, and the majority of those visiting Tonga will arrive at Nuku'alofa.

Airlines

Airlines that service the region include the following (note all phone numbers mentioned here are for dialling from within Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga):

Air New Zealand (airline code NZ; Apia ☎ 20825, Nuku'alofa 23192; www.airnz.com; hub Auckland International Airport)

Air Pacific (airline code FJ; Apia ☎ 22738, Nuku'alofa 23422; www.airpacific.com; hub Nadi International Airport)

Hawaiian Airlines (airline code HA; www.hawaiianairlines.com; hub Honolulu International Airport, Hawai'i)

Inter-Island Airways (Pago Pago ☎ 699 7100; www.terislandair.com; hub Tafuna International Airport, Tutuila)

Pacific Blue (airline code DJ; www.flypacificblue.com; hub Brisbane International Airport)

Polynesian Airlines (airline code PH; Apia ☎ 22737, Pago Pago 699 9126, Nuku'alofa 24566, Neiafu 70644; www.polynesianairlines.com; hub Faleolo Airport, 'Upolu)

Polynesian Blue (airline code DJ; www.polynesianblue.com; hub Brisbane International Airport)

Qantas (airline code QF; Apia ☎ 21261; www.qantas.com.au; hub Kingsford-Smith Airport, Sydney)

Royal Tongan Airlines (airline code WR; Nuku'alofa ☎ 23414; www.tongatapu.net.to/tonga/islands/royalt/default.htm; hub Fua'amotu International Airport, Tongatapu)

Tickets

Automated online ticket sales work well if you're doing a simple one-way or return trip on specified dates, but are no substitute for a travel agent with the lowdown on special deals, strategies for avoiding stopovers and other useful advice.

Paying by credit card offers some protection if you unwittingly end up dealing with a rogue fly-by-night agency, as most card issuers provide refunds if you can prove you didn't get what you paid for. Alternatively, buy a ticket from a bonded agent, such as one covered by the **Air Travel Organiser's Licence** (ATOL; www.atol.org.uk) scheme in the UK. If you have doubts about the service provider, at the very least call the airline and confirm that your booking has been made.

INTERCONTINENTAL (RTW) TICKETS

Round-the-world (RTW) tickets are generally put together by the three biggest airline alliances – **Star Alliance** (www.staralliance.com), **Oneworld** (www.oneworldalliance.com) and **Skyteam** (www.skyteam.com). They give you a limited time (usually a year) in which to circumnavigate the globe. You can go anywhere the participating airlines go, as long as you stay within the prescribed kilometre extents or number of stops and don't backtrack when flying between continents. Backtracking is generally permitted within a single continent, though with certain restrictions; see the relevant websites for details.

An alternative type of RTW ticket is one put together by a travel agent. These are usually more expensive than airline RTW fares but allow you to devise your own itinerary.

RTW tickets start at around UK£900 from the UK and US\$1800 from the USA.

CIRCLE PACIFIC TICKETS

A Circle Pacific ticket is similar to a RTW ticket but covers a more limited region, using a combination of airlines to connect Australia, New Zealand, North America and Asia, with stopover options in the Pacific Islands. As with RTW tickets, there are restrictions and limits as to how many stopovers you can take.

INTERNATIONAL AIR PASSES

Polynesian Airlines' Polypass is good for 45 days (excluding the Christmas holiday period) and allows five stops in the Pacific, which may include Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji. In the USA, this is sometimes called the Pacific Explorer Air Pass and costs from US\$1100. The airline also offers various Polypacks, where travellers have up to two months to complete an itinerary that includes several Pacific destinations (these cost from NZ\$1400); see the Polynesian Airlines website for details. Note, however, that at the time of writing the future of these passes was in doubt due to the launch of the Polynesian Blue airline (a joint venture between Virgin Blue and the Samoan government), which is slated to take over most of Polynesian Airlines' international routes.

The Visit South Pacific Pass offers discounted airfares on a variety of South Pacific routes. The options are many and varied – altogether the pass covers 45 possible routes and involves nine Pacific carriers. The pass must be purchased in conjunction with an international air ticket from outside the Pacific region, but can offer fare savings of up to 50%. All passes are basically tailor-made; discuss the options with a travel agent.

ONLINE TICKET SITES

For online ticket bookings, including RTW fares, start with the following websites:
Air Brokers (www.airbrokers.com) This US company specialises in cheap tickets.
Cheap Flights (www.cheapflight.com) Informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches from the USA, the UK and other regions.

FLYING WITHIN THE REGION

You can fly direct between Samoa and American Samoa with Inter-Island Airways and Polynesian Airlines for about US\$180 one way.

The principal airlines that fly between Samoa and Tonga are Air New Zealand (from NZ\$250 one way) and Polynesian Airlines (from ST1000 one way). At the time of research, the only airline between Tonga and American Samoa was Polynesian Airlines (T\$470 one way); in Tonga, you embark or disembark in Vava'u, not Tongatapu.

For more info on travel within the South Pacific region, see opposite.

Flight Centre International (www.flightcentre.com) Respected operator handling direct flights.

Flights.com (www.tiss.com) International site for flight tickets; offers cheap fares and an easy-to-search database.

Roundtheworld.com (www.roundtheworldflights.com) This excellent site allows you to build your own trips from the UK with up to six stops.

STA (www.statravel.com) Prominent in international student travel but you don't have to be a student; site linked to worldwide STA sites.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) US site that allows you to search fares (in US\$) from/to practically anywhere.

Travel Online (www.travelonline.co.nz) Good place to check worldwide flights from New Zealand.

Asia

Air Pacific has direct flights from Tokyo to Nadi, which connect with flights to Samoa (Apia) and Tonga (Nuku'alofa). Air New Zealand has a number of flights from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka to Auckland, where there are many onward flights to the Samoas. Most flights from other parts of Asia are also routed through Auckland and Nadi.

Qantas flights from countries in the Asian region touch down in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne before flying towards South Pacific islands via Nadi. The exception is the direct flight to Apia from Sydney.

Excellent bargains are often available in Hong Kong. Recommended local agents in Southeast Asia:

Phoenix Services Hong Kong (☎ 852-2722 7378)

STA Travel Bangkok (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th); Singapore (☎ 65-6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg); Tokyo (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

Australia

From Australia, flights to Samoa and Tonga are available from Sydney with new carrier Polynesian Blue and with Qantas. Pacific Blue also flies to both Samoa and Tonga from Brisbane as well as Sydney. Flights are often routed through Nadi or Auckland.

Polynesian Blue fares to Apia from Sydney start at around A\$450, though keep in mind that this was an introductory fare at the time of writing and prices may rise (probably not by much though) if the route proves popular. The average fare from Sydney to Nuku'alofa is around A\$650, although we did come across promotional fares as low as A\$300.

There are no direct flights to Pago Pago in American Samoa from Australia. You need to get to Apia (Samoa) first to hook up with a regional route.

Bear in mind that the Australian Christmas holiday season (December to January) is the busiest and most expensive time to fly. Standard fares increase by up to 25%, though 'holiday specials' are occasionally offered. Travellers should also be aware that ever-increasing code-share agreements mean that it should be easy to arrange a through-ticket from destinations across Australia.

STA Travel (☎ 1300 360 960; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) have offices throughout Australia. **Hide-away Holidays** (☎ 02-8799 2500; www.hideawayholidays.com.au) is a South Pacific specialist offering a range of flight/accommodation deals to the Samoan islands. Packages start at approximately A\$1300 (for five nights) and, once your five nights are up, there's nothing to stop you moving somewhere else and staying on a bit longer.

New Zealand

From New Zealand there are a number of flight options to Samoa and Tonga with Air New Zealand, Qantas, Royal Tongan Airlines, Polynesian Blue and Pacific Blue. One-way fares from Auckland to Apia start at NZ\$570; one-way fares for the 2½- to three-hour flight from Auckland to Nuku'alofa start around NZ\$450.

Flight/accommodation packages from New Zealand can be excellent value; such packages can sometimes work out cheaper than the flight alone. Air New Zealand is a good starting point for such deals.

For reasonably priced fares, try one of the numerous branches of **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz). Another good option is **House of Travel** (www.houseoftravel.co.nz); see its website for contact telephone numbers for its dozens of New Zealand offices.

South Pacific

While island-hopping around the Pacific isn't difficult, some flights operate only once or twice per week from the Samoan islands and Tonga and you might face more than a few scheduling problems on some routes. There are direct flights from both of the island groups to Fiji and Hawai'i, but if you are travelling on to other Pacific islands you'll probably need to either fly back to New Zealand to make connections, or travel via Fiji. Check out one of the regional air passes (see p291) if you want to see a host of other Pacific islands.

Air Pacific and Royal Tongan Airlines both fly between Nuku'alofa (Tonga) and Nadi (Fiji) three times a week. Air Pacific also flies between Nadi and Apia (Samoa), as does Polynesian Airlines. One-way fares from Fiji to Apia usually start at F\$300, while fares to Nuku'alofa cost from F\$220.

Royal Tongan Airlines also puts on a weekly Tongatapu to Niue flight via Vava'u (a two-hour trip). Royal Tongan is the only international airline serving Niue.

UK & Continental Europe

An Air New Zealand flight from London to Apia (Samoa), via Los Angeles, is the most straightforward option for travel from Europe to the Samoan islands. High-season return fares from London start at UK£1500. There are also a number of flights from Frankfurt to Los Angeles, where passengers can connect with onward flights to the Samoas or other South Pacific countries. Other cheap fares from Europe generally go via Sydney, Australia.

The best fares from Europe to Nuku'alofa (Tonga) are generally with Air New Zealand from London via Los Angeles, then Auckland or Nadi. However, various code-sharing agreements mean that other stopovers and routings through the South Pacific are possible. Air New Zealand's return fares from London to Tonga, via Los Angeles and Auckland, start from UK£1100. You are usually allowed one free stopover in each

direction. Air New Zealand's flights via Fiji are often at least 10% more expensive.

Popular agencies in the UK include the ubiquitous **STA Travel** (☎ 0870-1630 026; www.statravel.co.uk), **Traifinders** (☎ 020-7938 3939; www.traifinders.co.uk) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 0870-499 0040; www.flightcentre.co.uk).

A good option in the Dutch travel industry is **Holland International** (☎ 0900-8858; www.hollandinternational.nl). From Amsterdam, return fares start at around €1500. Another recommended agency in the Netherlands is **NBBS Reizen** (☎ 0900-102 0300; www.nbbs.nl). Recommended German agencies include the Berlin branch of **STA Travel** (☎ 069-743 032 92; www.statravel.de).

In France (more specifically, Paris), try **Odysia** (☎ 01 43 29 69 50; www.odysia.fr) or **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 40 29 12 22; www.otu.fr) – both are student/youth specialists and have offices in many French cities. Other recommendations include **Voyageurs du Monde** (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; www.vdm.com/vdm) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 08 25; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr/nf); the details given are for offices in Paris, but again both companies have branches elsewhere.

USA & Canada

Los Angeles and Honolulu are the two main gateway cities for travel between North America and the South Pacific. Although a huge amount of Pacific traffic passes through Los Angeles, there are also direct flights to Honolulu from nearly every major city in the USA. In Honolulu you can connect with Air New Zealand flights going direct to Samoa and Tonga.

Air New Zealand operates direct Los Angeles–Apia flights (about US\$620 one way) and direct Los Angeles–Nuku'alofa flights (around US\$650 one way). Return flights to Pago Pago start from about US\$580 from Honolulu with Hawaiian Airlines.

Discount travel agents in the USA are known as consolidators (though you won't see a sign on the door saying 'Consolidator'). San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities.

STA Travel (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices all over the USA.

Canadians will find the best South Pacific deals are via Honolulu. Like travellers from the USA, you'll probably fly with at least

two different code-sharing carriers. From Canada, flights to the Samoas are through Los Angeles/San Francisco and Honolulu. Return fares from Vancouver to Apia are around C\$2220, while return flights from Vancouver to Nuku'alofa are about C\$2500.

The airfares sold by Canadian discount air ticket sellers (consolidators) tend to be about 10% higher than those sold in the USA. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 866-246 9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and has offices in all major cities.

SEA

Cargo Ships

As a transport option, cargo ships are not opportunities for stowaways or free berths, but involve paid tickets to ride aboard willing supply vessels. If you're interested in this unusual option, check out the website of California-based **Freighterworld** (☎ 800-5317774; www.freighterworld.com), which has lots of relatively up-to-date information on container ships that offer berths on trips through the South Pacific. Prices obviously vary considerably according to the itinerary, but US\$2000 for two weeks of travel is not uncommon.

Three cargo ships sail between Apia in Samoa and the remote Tokelau Islands. Bookings for the 20-hour trip can be made in Apia at the **Tokelau Apia Liaison Office** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 20822; Fugalei St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri). You must obtain a permit to visit Tokelau before booking. Sailings are usually fortnightly but occasionally more frequent. Return deck fares are NZ\$290/145 per adult/child; return cabin fares are NZ\$530/270.

Cruise Ships

A number of cruise ships make their way (very slowly) into the ports at Apia (Samoa), Pago Pago (American Samoa) and Nuku'alofa (Tonga), disgorging passengers keen to have a fully catered and organised South Pacific experience. Itineraries vary from two weeks to a month, and the routes are limited only by the imaginations of the tour providers. While Tahiti is the favoured main destination for such cruises, the Samoan islands and Tonga tend to be included in many such leisurely South Pacific voyages.

A good place to start your research into what sort of cruise suits you is the website of **Travel Wizard** (www.travelwizard.com), which provides oodles of information on international

cruise lines and options. Also have a look at the website of the **Cruise Lines International Association** (www.cruising.org) – it focuses on North American-based lines, but this is where most Pacific cruises will be coming from.

Fares vary widely depending on the length of the trip, the luxuriousness of the boat and its facilities, the number of stopovers, and the embarkation/disembarkation points. A typical itinerary for a one-month voyage starting from Los Angeles takes in Hawai'i, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand. Fares for such a voyage often hover around US\$3500 per person (double occupancy).

Ferries

Samoa Shipping Corporation (Map pp62-3; ☎ 20935/6; reservations@samoashipping.com; Beach Rd, Apia) runs a car ferry called *Lady Naomi* between Apia and Pago Pago once a week. It departs Apia on Wednesday at midnight and returns on Thursday at 4.30pm. The trip takes seven hours each way. The return deck/cabin fare from Apia to Pago Pago is ST100/140. Note that American passport holders can only buy one-way tickets from Apia.

In Pago Pago, the ferry runs every Thursday at 3.30pm and tickets must be purchased at least one day in advance from **Polynesia Shipping Services** (Map p107; ☎ 633 1211). The return deck/cabin fare from American Samoa is US\$75/100.

Yachts

Yacht charters are practically impossible to track down in the Samoan islands, whereas the myriad scattered islands and enigmatic sailing passages of Tonga seem to have been custom-designed for those wanting to undertake a lengthy island-hop.

Between May and October (outside the cyclone season) the harbours of the South Pacific swarm with cruising yachts from around the world, many following the favourable winds west from the Americas, while others come north from New Zealand.

The yachting community is quite friendly, especially towards those who display an interest in yachts and other things nautical. Sometimes they are looking for crew, and for those who'd like a bit of low-key adventure, this can be the way to go. Most of the time, crew members will only be asked to take a turn on watch – that is, scan the horizon for cargo ships, hazardous objects

and the odd reef – and possibly to cook or clean. In port, crew may be required to dive and scrape the bottom, paint or make repairs. Sailing experience is usually not necessary; 'green' crew members learn as they go. Most yachters charge crew upwards of US\$15 per day for food and supplies.

All that aside, bear in mind that the conditions of a long ocean voyage greatly magnify rivalries and petty concerns. Only set out on a long passage with someone with whom you feel relatively compatible and remember that, on board, skipper's rule is law.

INFORMATION

Private yacht owners who intend to visit Samoa's islands are required to apply for clearance from the **Prime Minister's Department** (Map pp62-3; ☎ 21339; 5th fl, Government Office Bldg, Beach Rd) in Apia – bear left as you exit the elevator and take the unmarked door straight through the archway. The captain will need to present crew passports and the boat's registration papers.

On Tongatapu in Tonga, the boarding officers are in the **One Stop Shop** (☎ 23967; Queen Salote Wharf; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri) in Nuku'alofa. Check-in is possible on weekends but will incur a fee. There's a charge for anchoring anywhere in Tongan waters, payable upon departure at the **Ports Authority** (Map pp184-5; ☎ 23168; marports@kalianet.to; Queen Salote Wharf; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri) in Nuku'alofa, or whichever port you're using. Anchoring fees/charges in Tongatapu are calculated by multiplying T\$1.80 by gross tonnage of the yacht. Pay the harbour dues and then take the receipt to Customs.

In Vava'u, pull up at the southern end of Neiafu Wharf and contact the **boarding officers** (☎ 70053; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri).

To summon the harbour master and for emergencies in Tonga use VHF channel 16. However, there's only a slight chance that any Tongan government or navy vessel will come to your assistance (they rarely have fuel); your best bet is the local sailing and fishing community. If you're in VHF range of Vava'u, contact the charter yacht company **The Moorings** (VHF channel 72) which can coordinate rescue efforts. Any response to a triggered EPERB (an emergency beacon that sends SOS messages via satellite) will come from, or be coordinated by, the New Zealand navy. It may take days before help arrives.

BOOKS

If you're travelling by yacht in Tonga or elsewhere in the Pacific, *Landfalls of Paradise: Cruising Guide to the Pacific Islands* by Earl R Hinz is highly recommended. The experienced Pacific yachting author provides all the nitty-gritty on anchorages, navigation, marinas, fees and officialdom throughout the South and central Pacific region. *Sailingbird's Guide to the Kingdom of Tonga*, by Charles Paul and Katherine Pham-Paul, is a staple cruising guide that doubles as a coffee table book and also includes plenty of land sights. *Cruising Guide for the Kingdom of Tonga* by Ken Hellewell, is a comprehensive, spiral-bound guide covering the entire kingdom, including charts, over 90 anchorages, GPS waypoints and port practicalities. If you're planning to charter a yacht in Vava'u and cruise around its islands, *A Cruising Guide to the Kingdom of Tonga*, produced by charter company **The Moorings**, is probably ample.

CHARTER VESSELS

To begin getting your mind around the possibility of chartering a yacht, see p275. To charter a vessel for a leisurely exploration of South Pacific waterways can roughly cost anywhere between US\$280 and US\$450 per person per night for two people; between US\$250 and US\$300 per person per night for three people; and around US\$240 per person per night for four people. One such option is **Impetuous** (www.sailingtonga.com), a fully crewed charter yacht operating mostly around Vava'u (Tonga), but which may be willing to pick up/drop off guests in Ha'apai, Nuku'alofa, Fiji or even Samoa. Another option worth checking out is chartering a yacht called **Melinda** (www.sailtonga.com).

SAMOAN PORTS

Apia in Samoa and Pago Pago in American Samoa are the main ports in these countries, and serve as the official entry points for private yacht owners. On Savai'i (Samoa), there are also anchorages at Fagamalo, Salelologa Wharf and Asau Harbour.

TONGAN PORTS

Ports of entry for cruising yachts in Tonga are Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), Pangai on Lifuka (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), Falehu (Niuatoputapu) and Futu (Niuafu'ou).

Health

Dr Michael Sorokin

CONTENTS

Before You Go	296
Insurance	296
Recommended Vaccinations	297
Medical Checklist	297
Internet Resources	297
Further Reading	297
In Transit	298
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	298
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	298
In the Samoan Islands & Tonga	298
Availability & Cost of Health Care	298
Infectious Diseases	299
Traveller's Diarrhoea	300
Environmental Hazards	300

Fortunately for visitors to the Samoan islands and Tonga, there is no malaria in the region. Nor is rabies a danger in any of the islands. And there are no crocodiles. Mosquitoes do exist, however, and the main danger from them is dengue fever. Health facilities vary from good in American Samoa to reasonable in Samoa and Tonga. These are all small governments with limited budgets so even 'good' does not necessarily equate with the facilities you could expect in a well-developed country.

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

If you have been in a designated yellow fever country within the previous six days, you need an International Certificate of Vaccination against yellow fever for entry into American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga. For all countries in the region, vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever.

Side-Effects of Vaccinations

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 hepatitis B vaccine can produce temporary joint pains.

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 vaccination. More commonly a flu-like illness of varying severity may occur at any time up to 10 days from vaccination. In the elderly, encephalitis has been recorded.

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 does not cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider supplemental insurance. (Check the Travel Links section of the Lonely Planet website at www.lonelyplanet.com.au/travel_links for more information.) Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. (In many countries doctors expect payment in cash.)

For Americans, be sure to check whether your health plan covers expenses in American Samoa. Serious illness or injury may

require an evacuation, eg to Apia or Pago Pago, or even to a major regional centre such as Los Angeles or Auckland; make sure that health insurance has provision for evacuation. Under these circumstances hospitals will accept direct payment from major international insurers but for all other health costs cash up front is the usual requirement.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, you will need to visit a physician approximately 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, to help yourself in the case of minor illness or injury. 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)
- antibiotics (by prescription only), eg ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor; Noroxin)
- antibiotic as well as steroid eardrops (by prescription only), eg Sofradex, Kenacort Otic
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs, eg loperamide
- anti-inflammatory drugs, eg ibuprofen
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- anti-giardia tablets, eg tinidazole (by prescription only)
- 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 (30+)
- syringes and sterile needles, and intravenous fluids if travelling in very remote areas
- thermometer (digital)

Note that aspirin should not be used for fever – it can cause bleeding in dengue fever. Remember, don't take your scissors, tweezers or pocket knife in your carry-on luggage.

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the Internet. For further information, the Lonely Planet website (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start. The WHO produces a superb text entitled *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually. It is no longer published in book form but is available online at no cost at www.who.int/ith/. Other websites of general interest are MD Travel Health at www.mdtravelhealth.com, which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily and also at no cost; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov; Fit for Travel at www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk, which has up-to-date information about outbreaks and is very user-friendly; and www.traveldoctor.com.au, a similar Australasian site.

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

- Australia** (www.dfat.gov.au/travel/)
- Canada** (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/travel-voyage/index_e.html)
- New Zealand** (www.mfat.govt.nz/travel)
- UK** (www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en)
- USA** (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 fluids and avoid alcohol and 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 THE SAMOAN ISLANDS & TONGA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

American Samoa has readily available doctors in private practice, and standard hospital and laboratory facilities with consultants in the major specialties – internal medicine, obstetrics/gynaecology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, paediatrics, pathology, psychiatry and general surgery. Private dentists, opticians and pharmacies are also available.

In Samoa and Tonga, specialised services may be limited or available periodically, but private general practitioners, dentists and pharmacies are present.

Not surprisingly, the further you get from main centres, the more basic are the services.

Private consultation and private hospital fees are approximately equivalent to Australian costs, and particularly less expensive in Tonga. Government-provided service fees 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 prolonged hospital stay is necessary; your insurer will need to be contacted by you. Although large hospitals are coming into line in accepting credit cards, there will be difficulty with the more remote, small hospitals and most private practitioners are reluctant to accept this form of payment except for the larger private doctor groups in American Samoa. Even they still prefer cash and not all credit cards are acceptable – check with the relevant company beforehand. If a credit card is not accepted you should be able to arrange cash on credit through the local banking system.

Most commonly used medications are available in countries with good or reasonable health care. Where only basic care is available, even aspirin and antiseptics may be hard to come by. 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. While the container should preferably specify the generic name of the drug, this has become much less of a problem with the use of Internet search engines. Asthma inhalers and most anti-inflammatories are over-the-counter preparations in the Samoan islands. 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 like 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.

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, or chest or abdominal pains, it is best to go to the nearest clinic or private practitioner in the first instance.

Tampons and pads are readily available in main centres. Dengue 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, on general principles immunisation in the first three months of pregnancy is not recommended and yellow fever vaccines should not be given.

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.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

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

Dengue

Risk All countries

Dengue fever is a virus disease 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 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, as this can cause bleeding. Haemorrhagic dengue has been reported only occasionally, manifested by signs of bleeding and shock and requires medical care.

Eosinophilic Meningitis

Risk Tonga

This is 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. Eosinophilic

meningitis is caused by a microscopic-size parasite – the rat lungworm – which contaminates raw food. There is no proven specific treatment, but symptoms may require hospitalisation. For prevention pay strict attention to advice on food and drink.

Filariasis

Risks All countries

Also known as elephantiasis, this disease is spread by mosquitoes. It can cause a fever with lymph gland enlargement and later chronic leg swelling. It is now rare and requires prolonged exposure. Antimosquito precautions are essential. Specific treatment is available.

Hepatitis A

Risk All countries

Hepatitis A is a virus disease causing liver inflammation and is spread by contaminated food or water. Fever, nausea, debility and jaundice (yellow colouration 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

Risk All countries

This virus disease causes 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 vaccination is highly effective.

Hepatitis C

Risk Incidence is uncertain within the region but must be assumed to be present

This virus disease is similar to hepatitis B, causing liver inflammation which can go on to chronic liver disease or result in a symptomless carrier state. It’s 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

Risk All countries

The incidence of HIV infection is on the rise in the whole region. Safe sex practices are 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.

Japanese B Encephalitis

Reported outbreaks No outbreaks in region, but potential exists for this to happen

This is a serious, but quite rare, virus disease spread by mosquitoes. It can cause brain fever (encephalitis) with an approximate death rate of 30%. There is no specific treatment. An effective vaccine is available but is expensive and involves a course of three injections over a month. Allergic reactions to the vaccine, though rare, can occur. Vaccination is only recommended for anyone staying more than a month and going to work in village situations, and certainly if there has been a reported recent outbreak.

Leptospirosis

Risk American Samoa

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 risk practice. If diagnosed early it is cured with penicillin.

Typhoid fever

Risk All countries

This 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 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, Replyte). 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 as described in the section on environmental hazards.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

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

Bites & Stings

JELLYFISH

The notorious box jellyfish (seawasp) has not been recorded in these waters, but the blue-coloured Indo-Pacific 'Man o' War' is found in all waters. If you see these floating in the water or stranded on the beach it is wiser 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 can cause generalised symptoms (although this is rare), especially in someone with poorly controlled heart disease.

POISONOUS CONE SHELLS

Poisonous cone shells abound along shallow coral reefs. Stings mainly cause local reactions but nausea, faintness, palpitations or difficulty in breathing are signs flagging the need for medical attention.

SEA SNAKES

As in all tropical waters, sea snakes may be seen around coral reefs. Unprovoked, sea

VENOMOUS MARINE LIFE

Various fish and other sea creatures can sting or bite dangerously, or are dangerous to eat. Listen to local advice on how to avoid them.

Certain cone shells found in the Pacific can sting dangerously or even fatally. Do not touch any cone-shaped shell.

Several species of jellyfish are found in these waters (blue-bottle jellyfish are the most common) and can deliver a painful sting. Dousing in vinegar will deactivate any stingers which have not 'fired', while calamine lotion, antihistamines and analgesics may reduce the reaction and relieve the pain.

Stonefish have poisonous dorsal spines which deliver a very painful sting requiring medical treatment. As the name suggests, they are very well camouflaged and inhabit coral or rocky areas. You'll also need medical treatment if you get stung by lionfish or stingrays.

As a rule, don't touch anything unfamiliar while snorkelling or diving and wear reef sandals, wet-boots or old trainers while paddling or exploring rock pools.

More commonly encountered is stinging coral – it's the bright, sulphur-yellow-coloured coral with a smooth surface. The sting is only bothersome, not dangerous, and can be neutralised by applying vinegar or fresh urine.

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. Antivenin is effective, but may have to be flown in. Only about 10% of sea snake bites cause serious poisoning.

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 want to.

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. Self-treatment using 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 Hazards

Because the region has wonderful opportunities for scuba diving, it is easy to get overexcited and neglect strict depth and time precautions. Diving on old shipwrecks is fascinating and some of these dives can be up to or beyond 30m. Coral-viewing dives are not so deep but the temptation to spend longer than safe times at relatively shallow depths is great and is probably the main cause of decompression illness (the 'bends') in the region. Early pains may not be severe and attributed to other causes but any muscle or joint pain after scuba diving must be suspect. There are no compression chambers in the Samoan islands or Tonga. Even experienced divers should check with organisations like DAN (Divers' Alert Network) about the current site and status of compression chambers in the region, 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 Apia, Pago Pago and Nuku'alofa can be trusted, but elsewhere avoid untreated tap water. In some areas the only fresh water available

may be rain water collected in tanks, and this should be boiled. Steer clear of ice. Only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Eat food which is hot right through and avoid buffet-style meals. Food in restaurants frequented by locals is not necessarily safe, but most resort hotels have good standards of hygiene, although individual food-handlers can carry infection. Food which comes to you piping hot is likely to be safe. Be wary of salads. If you are preparing your own salads from market produce, make sure that each piece and leaf is thoroughly washed with water that 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.

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.

Heat Exhaustion

The region lies within the tropics so it is hot and frequently humid. Heat exhaustion is actually a state of dehydration associated to a greater or lesser extent with salt loss. Nat-

ural 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 1½L to 2½L per day. Salt replacement solutions are useful since 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 when it is due to heat exhaustion. Apart from commercial solutions, a reasonable drink consists of a good pinch of salt to a pint (½L) of water. Salt tablets can result in too much salt being taken in, causing headaches and confusion.

Heatstroke

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 (together 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. 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+ 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.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'

Language

CONTENTS

Samoan	303
Pronunciation	303
Conversation & Essentials	303
Language Difficulties	304
Out & About	304
Tongan	304
Pronunciation	305
Conversation & Essentials	305
Language Difficulties	306
Out & About	306

SAMOAN

The main language spoken in the Samoan islands is Samoan, a Polynesian language similar to Maori, Tongan, Hawaiian and Tahitian. All of these belong to the Austronesian family of languages, which also includes Malay, Malagasy and Melanesian languages. The similarity between Samoan and Malay reflects ancient migrations to Polynesia from southeast Asia.

Nearly everyone in Samoa speaks English as a second language, so unless you're travelling to some of the more remote villages on Savai'i, you're not likely to have any major communication problems.

Having said that, it's worth the effort to try and speak a little Samoan and people are delighted when foreigners make any attempt to use it – whether it's a simple *malo* (hello) in greeting or *tasi pia fa'amolemole* when you're asking for a beer.

Pacific languages do not use an 's' to denote plurals (as the English language does). Although this rule is happily broken almost everywhere – a Samoan hotel owner will offer to show you around their *fales* (huts). We have stuck to the rules in this book and relied on the context to make the meaning clear.

There are a few shops in Apia and Pago Pago that sell Samoan dictionaries. The Wesley Bookshop in Pago Pago carries a good one, compiled by GB Milner and pub-

lished by Polynesian Press; a less comprehensive publication is available at the la Malamalama Bookshop in Apia.

PRONUNCIATION

The Samoan alphabet consists of only 14 letters – five vowels and nine consonants. Stress is normally placed on the next-to-last syllable.

Vowels

The five vowels may be long or short, depending on whether or not they are stressed, but the actual difference in sound between them is very slight to the untrained ear. A long vowel is conventionally indicated by a line above it (a macron) and is pronounced as a long version of its short counterpart.

Diphthongs (combinations of vowels) are also common in Samoan, and are pronounced as they would be in English (eg in the word 'ear').

The main thing to remember is that all vowels are pronounced (you'd be amazed how many travellers pronounce *fale* as the English word 'fail' rather than the correct 'fa-leh').

a	as in 'father'
e	as in 'set'
i	as in 'sit'
o	as in 'hot'
u	as in 'full'

Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced the same as their English counterparts. The letter **g** is pronounced as a soft 'ng' – so that *palagi* is pronounced 'pa-lung-i'. The glottal stop (represented by an apostrophe) is the sound you hear between the vowels in the expression 'oh-oh' – it's produced by a momentary closing of the throat. In Samoan, the glottal stop replaces the 'k' of other Polynesian languages.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello/Hi.	<i>Malo.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Tofa.</i>
Bye. (informal)	<i>Fa.</i>
Goodbye/Farewell.	<i>Tofa soifua.</i>

Good morning.	<i>Talofa.</i>
Good evening.	<i>Talofa.</i>
Good night.	<i>Manuia le po.</i>
Yes.	<i>loe.</i>
No.	<i>Leai.</i>
Maybe.	<i>Masalo.</i>
Please.	<i>Fa'amolemole.</i>
Thank you (very much).	<i>Fa'afetai (tele).</i>
Welcome.	<i>Afio mai.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Tulou.</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>Ua ou sese.</i>
Forgive me.	<i>Malie.</i>
How are you?	<i>O a mai 'oe?</i>
I'm fine, thanks.	<i>Manuia, faafetai.</i>
What's your name?	<i>O ai lou igoa?</i>
My name is ...	<i>O lo'u igoa o ...</i>
Where are you from?	<i>Fea lou atunu'u?</i>
Where are you going?	<i>Alu i fea? (often used as a pleasantry)</i>

Are you married?	<i>Ua fai se aiga?</i>
How many children do you have?	<i>E to'afia tama'iti?</i>
How old are you?	<i>Fia ou tausaga?</i>
I'm ... years old.	<i>Ua ... o'u tausaga.</i>
Do you like ...?	<i>E te manao i le ...?</i>
I like it very much.	<i>O lo'u vaisu.</i>
May I?	<i>E mafai?</i>
It's all right/No problem.	<i>Ua lelei.</i>

girl	<i>teine</i>
little girl	<i>teine'iti'iti</i>
woman	<i>fafine</i>
mother	<i>tina</i>
boy	<i>tama</i>
little boy	<i>tama'iti'iti</i>
man	<i>tamaloa</i>
father	<i>tama</i>
family	<i>'aiga</i>
boyfriend	<i>uo tama</i>
girlfriend	<i>uo teine</i>
white person	<i>palagi</i>

bad	<i>leaga</i>
beautiful	<i>manaia</i>
fine	<i>manuia</i>
good	<i>lelei</i>
happy	<i>fiafia</i>
journey	<i>malaga</i>
love	<i>alofa</i>
How much is it?	<i>E fia le ta'u?</i>
I'd like to buy it.	<i>Ou te fia fa'atauina.</i>
It's too expensive.	<i>Taugata mo a'u.</i>

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

I understand.	<i>Ua ou Malamalama.</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Ou te le mala-malama.</i>
I don't speak ...	<i>Ou te le tautala ...</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Ete iloa Nanu?</i>
How do you say ...?	<i>E faapefea ona ...?</i>
Please write it down.	<i>Fa'amolemole tusi i lalo.</i>

OUT & ABOUT

Where is (the/a) ...?	<i>O fea (le/se) ...?</i>
church	<i>faleasa</i>
city centre	<i>nofoaaga autu o le a'ai</i>
hospital	<i>falemai</i>
market	<i>maketi</i>
store	<i>faleolao</i>

beach	<i>matafaga</i>
bird	<i>manulele</i>
chicken	<i>moa</i>
entrance/exit	<i>ulufale/ulufafo</i>
fish	<i>i'a</i>
flower	<i>fuamatala</i>
house	<i>fale</i>
island	<i>motu</i>
lake	<i>vaituloto</i>
mosquito	<i>namu</i>
pig	<i>pua'a</i>
rain	<i>timu</i>
sea	<i>sami</i>
sun	<i>la</i>
village	<i>nu'u</i>
wind	<i>savili</i>

TONGAN

Tongan is a Polynesian language belonging to the Austronesian language family. Its closest relatives are the other Polynesian languages like Samoan, Hawaiian, Maori and Tahitian. More distant cousins are Malay, Malagasy and Melanesian languages, a connection that adds weight to the widely accepted theory that the Polynesian peoples originated in South-East Asia.

The same Tongan language is spoken on all the islands in Tonga, with the exception of Niuafo'ou, the most north-westerly island, where a dialect that's closer to Samoan is spoken.

Both Tongan and English are used in the schools throughout Tonga, so you shouldn't encounter any problems communicating in

English. On major islands (Tongatapu, Vava'u), almost everyone speaks English as a second language. On smaller, more remote islands people may speak less English, but communication can always be achieved somehow. Tongans are often surprised when foreigners make an attempt to speak their language, and will be very helpful and encouraging.

PRONUNCIATION

The Tongan alphabet has only 16 letters, with five vowels and 11 consonants.

It's worth listening to the way native speakers pronounce vowels because vowel length can affect the meaning of some words. You may see vowels written with a macron or *toloi* (eg ā), which indicates that they are long. The long sound is simply an extended and accented (stressed) version of the short vowel. Stress is placed on the next to last syllable in most Tongan words, unless there's a long vowel, in which case that syllable receives the stress.

Another important element of Tongan language is the glottal stop, represented by an apostrophe ('). It signals a momentary halt in the flow of air through the vocal cords, similar to the non-voice between the syllables of 'oh-oh'.

Diphthongs, or combinations of vowels, are pronounced by enunciating each of the component sounds individually. When a glottal stop is inserted between two vowels, a stop must be made in the pronunciation. This, too, is a significant element of Tongan language that changes not only the pronunciation but also the meaning of words: for example, *tae* means 'cough', but *ta'e* means 'faeces'. The word *hau* means 'earring', but *ha'u* means 'come here'.

Even if you do make mistakes with the pronunciation of glottal stops, and long and short vowels, Tongan people are usually very helpful, and they'll still try to understand what you're saying.

The letters used in the Tongan alphabet are pronounced more or less as follows:

Vowels

a	as in 'far' or as in 'ball'
e	as in 'end'
i	as in 'Fifi'
o	as in 'go'
u	as in 'tune'

Consonants

f	as in 'far'
h	as in 'here'
k	as the 'c' in 'curd'
l	as in 'love', with a slap of the tongue
m	as in 'me'
n	as in 'no'
ng	as in 'singer', not as in 'finger'
p	midway between the 'p' in 'park' and the 'b' in 'bark'
s	as in 'sand'
t	midway between the 't' in 'tip' and the 'd' in 'dip'
v	as in 'very'

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Malo e lelei.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>'Alu a. (to someone leaving)</i> <i>Nofo a. (response to someone staying)</i>
Good morning.	<i>Malo e lelei ki he pongipongini.</i>
Good evening.	<i>Malo e lelei ki he efiadini.</i>
Yes.	<i>'lo.</i>
No.	<i>'ikai.</i>
Maybe.	<i>Mahalo pe.</i>
Please.	<i>Faka molemole.</i>
Thank you (very much).	<i>Malo ('aupito).</i>

You're welcome.	<i>'lo malo.</i>
Welcome.	<i>Talitali fiefia.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Kataki.</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>Faka molemole'iau.</i>
How are you?	<i>Fefe hake?</i>
Fine, thank you.	<i>Sai pe, malo.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Ko hai ho hingoa?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Ko hoku hingoa ko ...</i>
Where are you from?	<i>Ko ho'o ha'u mei fe fonua?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>Ko'eku ha'u mei ...</i>
Are you married?	<i>Kuo ke'osi mali?</i>
How old are you?	<i>Koe ha ho ta'u motua?</i>
I'm ... years old.	<i>'Oku 'ou ta'u ... ta'u motua.</i>
I'm a tourist/student.	<i>Ko'eku ha'u (eve'eva/taha ako).</i>
Do you like ...?	<i>'Oku ke sai'ia 'ihe ...?</i>
I like it very much.	<i>'Oku 'ou sai'ia 'aupito.</i>
I don't like ...	<i>'Oku ikai teu sai'ia ...</i>
Just a minute.	<i>Tali si'i.</i>
May I?	<i>Faka molemole kau?</i>
It's all right/no problem.	<i>'lo 'oku sai/sai pe ia.</i>

girl	<i>ta'ahine</i>
woman	<i>fefine</i>
boy	<i>tamasi'i</i>

man	<i>tangata</i>
big/bigger	<i>lahi/lahi ange</i>
small/smaller	<i>si'i si'i/si'i si'i ange</i>
more	<i>lahi</i>
less	<i>si'i</i>
expensive	<i>mamafa</i>
cheap/cheaper	<i>ma'ama'a/ma'a ma'a ange</i>
good	<i>lelei</i>
bad	<i>kovi</i>
pretty	<i>faka 'ofa 'ofa</i>

Where is ...?	<i>Ko fe'ia a'e ...?</i>
How much is it?	<i>Fiha hono totongi?</i>
I'd like to buy it.	<i>'Oku ou fie fakatau ia.</i>
It's too expensive for me.	<i>Fu'u mamafa kiate au.</i>

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

I understand.	<i>'Oku mahino kiate 'au.</i>
I don't understand.	<i>'Oku ikai ke mahino kiate 'au.</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>'Oku ke lava 'o lea faka palangi?</i>
Does anyone speak English?	<i>'Oku 'iai ha taha'oku lea faka palangi?</i>
How do you say ...?	<i>Koe ha ho lea ...?</i>
What is this called?	<i>Ko 'e ha hono hingoa 'o 'e me'a ko 'eni?</i>

OUT & ABOUT

bank	<i>pangike</i>
beach	<i>matatahi</i>
bridge	<i>hala kavakava</i>
church	<i>fale lotu</i>
city centre	<i>i loto kolo</i>
embassy	<i>'api 'oe 'amipasitoo</i>
hospital	<i>fale mahaki</i>
island	<i>motu</i>
lake	<i>ano vai</i>
market	<i>maketi</i>
ocean (deep)	<i>moana</i>
palace	<i>palasi</i>
post office	<i>positi 'ofisi</i>
rain	<i>'uha</i>
restaurant	<i>fale kai</i>
ruins	<i>maumau</i>
sea	<i>tahi</i>
street/road	<i>hala</i>
suburb	<i>lotokolo</i>
sun	<i>la'a</i>
telephone office	<i>fale telefoni</i>
tourist office	<i>'ofisi taki mamata</i>
tower	<i>taua</i>
village	<i>kolo si'i si'i</i>
wind	<i>matangi</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
South Pacific Phrasebook

Glossary

SAMOAN ISLANDS

'aiga – family, descent group

aitu – spirit, ghost

alia – war canoe

ali'i – one of two orders of high chief (*matai*)

alofa – love

aoa – banyan tree

ava – passage through a reef

'ava – traditional, mildly intoxicating drink (also called *kava*) produced from the root of the *Piper methysticum* (pepper plant)

esi – papaya, pawpaw

fa'aaloalo – respect for elders

fa'afafine – effeminate men who sometimes dress as a woman

fa'afetai – thank you

fa'alavelave – occasion, such as a wedding or funeral, when family assistance should be given; literally, 'distraction from normal life'

fa'a Samoa – according to Samoan customs and tradition

fai – banana

fale – a traditional thatched house

fale talimalo – traditional Samoan guesthouse or hotel

faleaitu – traditional entertainment by Samoan youth

faletua – wife of the high chief or *ali'i*

fautasi – Samoan longboat, made from the *fau* tree

fiafia – time of celebration; presentation of singing and dancing

fofo – traditional Samoan healer

fono – governing council of a village made up of its *matai*

Fono, the – the national parliament

ie faitaga – man's undecorated formal *lava-lava*

ie toga – finely woven mat made from pandanus fibres

ifilele – large tree used for timber and 'ava bowls

ifoga – traditional apology

kava – see 'ava

kirikiti – Samoan cricket

koko Samoa – drink made with locally grown roasted cocoa beans, sugar and water

lalaga – weaving

laumei – sea turtle

lava-lava – wraparound sarong

lotu – religious observance

malae – village green; sacred site in pre-Christian times

malu – female tattoo

mana – supernatural power

matai – chief of an 'aiga

mea alofa – gift

mo'o – gecko

musu – moodiness, silence as form of protest

oka – Samoan dish of marinated raw fish

palagi – white-skinned person; literally, 'those who burst from the sky' (*pa* = burst; *lagi* = sky)

paopao – traditional outrigger canoe

pe'a – male tattoo

pili – skink

pisupo – corned beef

pola – coconut-leaf blinds

popo – mature coconut; also a spongy, white substance in a sprouting coconut known as Samoan ice cream

puaa – pig

pulenu'u – village mayor

puletasi – long skirt and tunic worn by Samoan women

sa – sacred, forbidden; time set aside for prayer

sene – currency unit; 100 *sene* equals ST1

siapo – bark cloth made from the paper mulberry tree

ta'amu – large edible tuber, 'big taro'

tala – Samoan unit of currency (ST)

talking chief – see *tulafale*

tamaiti – children

tanoa – 'ava bowl

taulaitu – spirit medium

taulasea – traditional healer

taupou – title of office bestowed by high-ranking *ali'i* upon a young (virgin) woman of his 'aiga

teuila – red ginger; Samoa's national floral emblem

to'ona'i – Sunday lunch

tufuga – tattoo artist

tulafale – an orator who liaises between the *ali'i* (high chief) and outside entities, carries out ceremonial duties, engages in ritual debates and, traditionally, protects the *ali'i*

u'a – mulberry tree

ula – flower garland; also lobster

umu – traditional underground oven

umukuka – cooking house

vai Samoa – traditional medicines

TONGA

ahi – sandalwood

'api – plantation of 3.34 hectares

'esi – resting site or mound

faikakai – breadfruit pudding

faito'o – traditional Tongan medicine

faka Tonga – the 'Tongan way'

fakaleiti – men who dress and behave as women

fakapale – custom of rewarding Tongan dancer with money; literally 'to award a prize'

fala – everyday mats

fale koloa – small grocery kiosks

falekai – restaurant

fatongia – duties and obligations

feke – octopus

feta'aki – single piece of *tapa* cloth

fihu – valuable, silk-like pandanus mat

fingota – shellfish

hala – road

heilala – Tonga's national flower

'ika – fish

'inasi – traditional Tongan agricultural fair or festival

kailao – war dance

kalia – large seafaring canoes, also war canoes

kapa pulu – tinned beef

kava – intoxicating drink made from the root of the pepper shrub; also see *ava*

kava kalapu – *kava* club

kilikili – pumice-like volcanic gravel

koloa – wealth; offerings given out of respect and to mark important occasions

kumala – sweet potato

kupesi – relief of *tapa* pattern

lafo – Tongan game played with pieces called *pa'anga*

lakalaka – a traditional dance

langanga – strips of *tapa*

langi – pyramidal stone tomb

mala'e – sacred area/field

malau – local name for the Niuafu'ou megapode, a bird native only to Niuafu'ou

mali – spouse

malo – thank you

matapule – 'talking chief' involved in ceremonies and burial rituals of the nobility

Maui – demigod who, according to one myth, fished Tonga out of the sea

ma'ulu'ulu – dance performed at feasts and on public holidays

motu – coral islet

ngatu – decorated/finished *tapa* product

pa'anga – Tongan unit of currency (T\$)

palangi – foreigner (originally *papalangi*)

pasi – bus stop

peka – flying fox or fruit bat

pekepekatae – white-rumped swiftlets

popao – outrigger canoe

RTA – Royal Tongan Airlines

seniti – currency unit; 100 *seniti* equals T\$1

sipi – mutton flaps

ta'ovala – pandanus mat tied around the waist; worn on formal occasions

tapa – mulberry bark cloth

tapu – sacred

tau'olunga – graceful traditional dance performed by a solo woman at ceremonies

TCC – Tonga Communications Corporation

TCF – Tonga Cooperative Federation (supermarket)

tevolo – devil spirit

tiki – wooden statue representing old Polynesian god

toa – ironwood tree

Tu'i Tonga – royal title

tuitui – candlenut

tupenu – men's wraparound skirt

TVB – Tongan Visitors Bureau

u'a – inside bark of the mulberry tree, used for making *siapo*

'umu – stone oven in the ground