

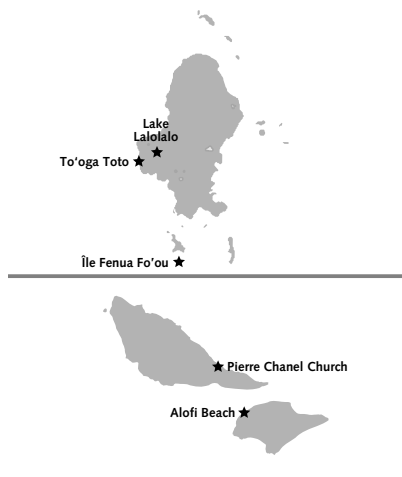
# Wallis & Futuna

These two forgotten specks that lie smack in the centre of Polynesia/Melanesia make up one of the world's least known countries. The inhabitants, who are markedly more reserved than in most Polynesian isles, are happy to keep it that way. And why not? This French colony has managed to keep its culture remarkably intact throughout serious Catholicism and a strong French presence. France pours in the money and the people continue to live as they always have, fishing and planting taro and manioc – but now they also drive brand-new Toyota 4WDs, go to church and watch satellite TV. This is a country that has figured out how to get all the perks of colonialism without losing its soul. There are no plans for a push for tourism and, as long as the airfares and cost of living stays as high as they are (this place makes Tahiti seem cheap), it's not likely to receive heaps of honeymooners or package tourists any time in the near future. Movements for independence are few: the hospitals, schools and highly paid government jobs are all welcome enough additions that the people are happy to put up with a few handfuls of French expats.

Wallis and Futuna, which lie 230km away from each other, are linked through French colonialism, period. Wallis has ancestral connections with Tonga while Futuna traces its roots to Samoa. This is evident in the languages, which are quite different although mutually comprehensible, as well as the Samoan-like tapa designs of the Futunans and the Tongan-influenced designs found on Wallis. The two islands remain competitive with each other but Wallis, being more populous and the centre of government, retains the upper hand.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Camp out in a communal *fale* (house) on the mosquito-free *motu* (island) on **Île Fenua Fo'ou** (p816), Wallis
- Listen to the cacophony of bird calls around Wallis' **Lake Lalolalo** (p816)
- Feel the ancient Tongan presence while visiting the remote, vine-covered ruins of **To'oga Toto** (p816) on Wallis
- Marvel at the imposing tower and graceful tapa decorations at **Pierre Chanel Church** (p817), Futuna
- Laze around on a perfect, empty beach on **Alofi** (p818)



## CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

It's not surprising that, being in the middle of the tropics, Wallis and Futuna are markedly hot and humid. The sweatiest months are between November and March, while more temperate weather can be expected from April to October. Rain is likely at least 260 days of the year; Wallis averages an impressive 3m of rainfall a year, while Futuna gets a lush 4m on average. Both islands experience occasional cyclones (the season is May to October). The most destructive recorded cyclone was Raja, which ravaged the islands in 1986. See p827 for Pacific climate charts.

## HISTORY

Wallis and Futuna were populated when the great Lapita settlement wave moved across the Pacific between 1500 BC and 500 BC. Objects found on Futuna have been dated to 800 BC, although it's probable there are even older sites. Later Futuna came under the influence of Samoa while Wallis suffered repeated invasions from Tonga, starting around AD 1400. The ferocity of the Tongan invasions ensured their position in the island's oral histories and today Tongan forts are some of the only remaining archaeological sites.

The Dutch explorers Jacques Le Maire and Wilhelm Schouten chanced upon Futuna in 1616 and named the island Hoorn, after their home port (the same Hoorn after which Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America is named). The next visitor, the English navigator Samuel Wallis who had recently discovered Tahiti, arrived at Uvea in 1767. Again the island was renamed but Wallis' name, unlike Hoorn, has stuck.

In the first half of the 19th century the islands became popular stops for whaling ships, followed by traders, *bêche-de-mer* gatherers and, inevitably, missionaries. The first Catholic Marist missionaries, including Pierre Bataillon on Wallis and Pierre Chanel on Futuna, arrived in 1837. In 1841 Chanel was murdered by King Niuluki, an action which was to make Pierre Chanel the Pacific's first saint (see p812). In the second half of the century France gradually began to assume control of the islands, officially taking control over the years 1886 to 1888.

## WALLIS & FUTUNA FACTS

- **Capital city (and island):** Mata'Utu (Wallis)
- **Population:** 14,944
- **Land area:** 247 sq km
- **International telephone code:** 681
- **Currency:** Cour de Franc Pacifique (CFP)
- **Languages:** Wallisian, Futunan and French
- **Greeting:** *Malo* (Wallisian), *Maro* (Futunan), *Bonjour* (French)
- **Website:** www.wallis.co.nc in French

Things remained quiet until WWII when Wallis and Futuna was the only French colony to side with the collaborationist Vichy government, despite pressure from New Caledonia. The arrival of war in the Pacific ended that phase and in May 1942 the 5000 Wallisians suddenly found 2000 American forces coming ashore. Airstrips were built – the one at Hihifo is still in use today. At its peak there were 6000 Americans on Wallis and their presence deeply influenced traditional culture.

On 29 July 1961 Wallis and Futuna officially became a French *Territoire d'Outre-Mer* (overseas territory). These days, there appears to be little local sentiment in favour of independence from France.

## THE CULTURE

### The National Psyche

Despite French presence and devout Catholicism, Wallis and Futuna are still very steeped in local tradition. Day-to-day life is dictated by a rigid social and class structure. The ruling class, the *aliki*, make all the decisions, hold all the important jobs and make most of the money. The king is elected from one of the upper-class families by the *aliki*, and as long as he (or she as is sometimes the case on Wallis but never on Futuna) manages to represent the other classes in a satisfactory manner and share the wealth, they will win continued support. Because there are several royal, *aliki* families, the power has always remained balanced, shifting to a new king and/or family when popular demand asked for a change. This remains true

**ST PIERRE CHANEL OF OCEANIA** Errol Hunt

Pierre Louis Marie Chanel was born into a French peasant family in 1802, and trained as a priest. He embarked for the Pacific islands with the newly formed Catholic Society of Mary (Marist) in 1836 and, the following year, was the first missionary to set foot on Futuna. The ruling king, Niuluki, welcomed him.

As the missionaries gained converts and thus eroded the traditional power structure of the island, Niuluki became less keen on the newcomers. When Niuluki's own son asked to be baptised, the king issued an edict that the missionaries cease their activities. On 28 April 1841 a band of warriors, probably condoned by Niuluki, attacked Pierre Chanel and killed him.

Despite this (or perhaps because of it) the island soon became fully Catholic as other Marist priests took up the challenge.

Pierre Chanel was declared venerable in 1857, beatified in 1889 and finally canonised as the patron saint of Oceania in 1954. He is also recognised as the first martyr to lay his life down for Oceania (Rev John Williams had been dead two years at this stage, but he was a Protestant – and that doesn't count).

on Futuna (where there are two kings ruling two separate kingdoms) but the power structure on Wallis is suffering.

King (*Lavelua*) Tomasi Kulimoetoke, who has been in power for over 35 years, has become too powerful and now, even though the other *aliki* families want him out, he has instilled his own family too strategically to be sacked. Match this with the introduction of satellite TV which, since 2001, has opened Wallisian eyes to the wonders of the Western world, and you have a recipe for upheaval. Today there are two opposing groups: the reformist *aliki* who want to oust the king and head towards the future, and the old king, backed by the lower classes who hope that things will return to how they were before.

The conflict in Wallis has not left Futuna unscathed. Only accessible via air from Wallis, Futuna becomes completely isolated from the world when flights are cut, as they often become in times of political turmoil on Wallis or in the event of cyclones and tropical depressions. In March 2006 Futuna sent a delegation to Paris (the largest it has sent since the islands became a French territory in 1961) to ask that flights from Futuna to both New Caledonia and Fiji become possible.

**Lifestyle**

On Futuna, you can still see the men meeting nightly in *fale fono* (village halls), dressed in *pareu* (a sarong-style garment) and having a cup of kava or three with their mates. The days are hot and quiet, usually marked by

working in the taro fields, fishing and napping, while early evening is an active time for playing rugby and *kirikiti* (the local game of cricket). Most people still live in traditional *fale*, which are oblong, open aired structures with woven roofs. Nowadays, some families keep a modern house but most still will sleep in their cool and breezy *fale*.

It's rare to see traditional *fale* on Wallis (except for in the village of Vailala) and kava drinking has been replaced almost entirely with beer drinking. Still, the lifestyle roots itself in family and tradition; people do not socialise much outside of their own extended families.

**Population**

The islands have a population of approximately 14,944: 10,071 on Wallis and 4873 on Futuna, but there is an even larger population living overseas. It's estimated over 20,000 Wallisians and Futunans live in New Caledonia.

As well as the indigenous population, about 800 expats, mainly French, live on Wallis and 100 on Futuna.

**RELIGION**

Wallis and Futuna is very Catholic. A Sunday church service, usually at around 7am, is well worth going along to: lots of colour, lots of flowers and wonderful singing.

A huge number of often impressively large churches are found round the two islands, and even uninhabited Alofi and the small islands around the Wallis lagoon have chapels and oratories.

Because of the strong religious devotion, dress in the islands is very conservative: both sexes keep their legs covered to the knees and women's dress is usually an ankle-length *pareu* with a matching loose-fitting blouse that reaches the elbows.

**ARTS**

Beautiful tapa (cloth made from the bark of mulberry and breadfruit trees) featuring traditional motifs is produced on both islands. Futuna tapa, called *siapo*, is marked with predominantly geometric patterns whereas Wallis tapa, known as *gatu*, depicts land-and-sea designs (see p57).

Majestically large *tano'a*, the multilegged wooden bowls used for making kava, are carved on Futuna. Local woodcarving artists of note include Mika Initia, Suve Suva and Soane Hoatau.

The year's big event is on the eve of 14 July when a competition is held involving traditional dancers from several villages. The ancient *soamako* (war dances) are particularly impressive.

**LANGUAGE**

Virtually no English is spoken on Wallis and even less on Futuna, so being able to speak some French really helps.

Reflecting the historical connections of the islands, Wallisian is very similar to Tongan, and Futunan is similar to Samoan. See Language in the Samoa (p483) and Tonga

(p691) chapters for pronunciation tips, and Language in New Caledonia (p309) for French basics.

**Wallisian basics**

Hello (in the morning).	<i>Malo te ma'uli.</i>
Hello (later).	<i>Malo te kataka.</i>
Goodbye (to someone who is leaving).	<i>'Alu la.</i>
Goodbye (if you are leaving).	<i>Nofo la.</i>
How are you?	<i>'E lelei pe?</i>
I'm well.	<i>Ei, 'e lelei pe.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Malo te ofa.</i>
Yes.	<i>Ei.</i>
No.	<i>Oho.</i>

**Futunan basics**

Hello (in the morning).	<i>Malo le ma'uli.</i>
Hello (later).	<i>Malo le kataka.</i>
Goodbye (to someone who is leaving).	<i>'Ano la.</i>
Goodbye (if you are leaving).	<i>Nofo la.</i>
How are you?	<i>E ke malie fa'i?</i>
I'm well.	<i>Lo, e kau malie fa'i.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Malo.</i>
Yes.	<i>Lo.</i>
No.	<i>E'ai.</i>

**ENVIRONMENT**

The group consists of three major islands and about 20 islets, approximately 300km west of Samoa and 600km northeast of Fiji.

Wallis is a strikingly flat volcanic creation highlighted by several crater lakes. The highest bump on the landscape is Mt Lulu Fakahega (145m). Wallis' shallow lagoon can only be entered by one of four passes, the Honikulu Pass. About 15 small islets – some volcanic stumps, others classic sandy *motu* (islands) – are dotted around the lagoon.

Futuna and neighbouring Alofi lie 230km to the southwest of Wallis. The result of geological upheavals, they're much more mountainous than Wallis. Futuna's highest point is Mt Puke (524m); on Alofi it's Mt Kolofau (417m). Fringing reefs embrace both islands while in places the mountainous interior plunges straight into the sea.

Both Wallis and Futuna sit close to the meeting point of the Pacific and the Indo-Australian continental plates and are subject to earthquake activity, most recently in the disastrous quake of 1993.

Deforestation has left only a fraction of the original forests intact (15% on Wallis, 30%

on Futuna), but many of the once deforested areas are now covered by secondary growth or agricultural plantations, so it's hard to tell that deforestation has occurred at all. The problem is not due to international logging concerns but more to the use of wood as the main fuel source. The deforested, steep slopes of Futuna are particularly prone to erosion, and increased run-off poses a threat to coral reefs and vital fisheries. On Alofi most of the tropical jungle still stands.

## WALLIS ISLAND

pop 10,071 / area 77.9 sq km

The island of Wallis is no particular stunner by Polynesian standards. It's a big, flat jungle with a web of roads and not much in the way of attractive architecture or beaches. What makes this destination exceptional is its island-dotted, Eden-like lagoon where each islet offers a new experience. Add a fascinating, traditional culture in the midst of change, some crater lakes and extensive archaeological sites still waiting to be excavated, and you'll find it easy to become enamoured of this unusual place.

### WALLIS IN...

#### Two Days

Your first day in Wallis should be spent exploring by car. You'll need a local to show you to the hard-to-find **To'oga Toto** (p816) and **Talietumu** (p816) archaeological sites, and **Lanutavake** (p816) and **Lalolalo** (p816) crater lakes. Finish the day with sunset views from **Mt Lulu Fakahega** (opposite) and dinner at **Chez Patricia** (p817). The next day can be leisurely spent on the northern islets of **Nukufotu** (p816) and **Nukuloa** (p816) visiting the bird nesting grounds, hiking and swimming.

#### Four Days

Take an excursion, either diving or picnicking around the southern islets with **Evasion Bleue** (p816). Your last day should be spent **snorkelling** (p816) with the rays and turtles around the eastern islets.

## INFORMATION

**Banque de Wallis et Futuna** (☎ 72 09 71; Fenuarama shopping centre, Mata'Utū; ☎ 8am-11.30am & 1.30-4pm Mon-Fri)

**Gendarmerie** (☎ 72 29 17; Mata'Utū) Police.

**Hospital de Sia** (☎ 72 07 00; Mata'Utū)

**K Prim** (Uvea Sharp shopping centre, Mata'Utū; ☎ 7.30-11.30am & 2-5pm Mon-Fri) Internet and coffee. The shopping centre is on the road towards the Fenuarama shopping centre.

**Papeterie de Fenua** (☎ 72 12 94; Fenuarama shopping centre) Good selection of books.

**Post office** (☎ 72 08 00; Mata'Utū; ☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-1.30pm Fri)

**Wallis Voyage** (☎ 72 27 87; fax 72 27 28) A travel agency across from Hôtel Lomipeau.

## TRANSPORT

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**Aircalin** (☎ 72 00 00) is the only airline serving Wallis and Futuna.

#### BOAT

There is no regular passenger transport by sea.

### Getting Around

There's no public transport on Wallis so it's a case of rent wheels or walk.

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Hihifo airport is 6km from Mata'Utū. Hotels offer transfers for 1500 CFP each way but if you are stuck someone will offer you a ride.

#### BOAT

Taxi boats to the southern islets are available from Halalo through **Foto Fenua** (☎ 72 12 37) for 1000 to 2000 CFP return.

In Vailala, ask around for Vitolio (no phone); he can drop you off at Nukufotu then pick you up again according to the tides for 1000 CFP.

#### CAR

Car hire costs around 8000 CFP per day; there are no scooters or bicycles for rent on Wallis. Unless otherwise noted, all rental agencies are in Mata'Utū.

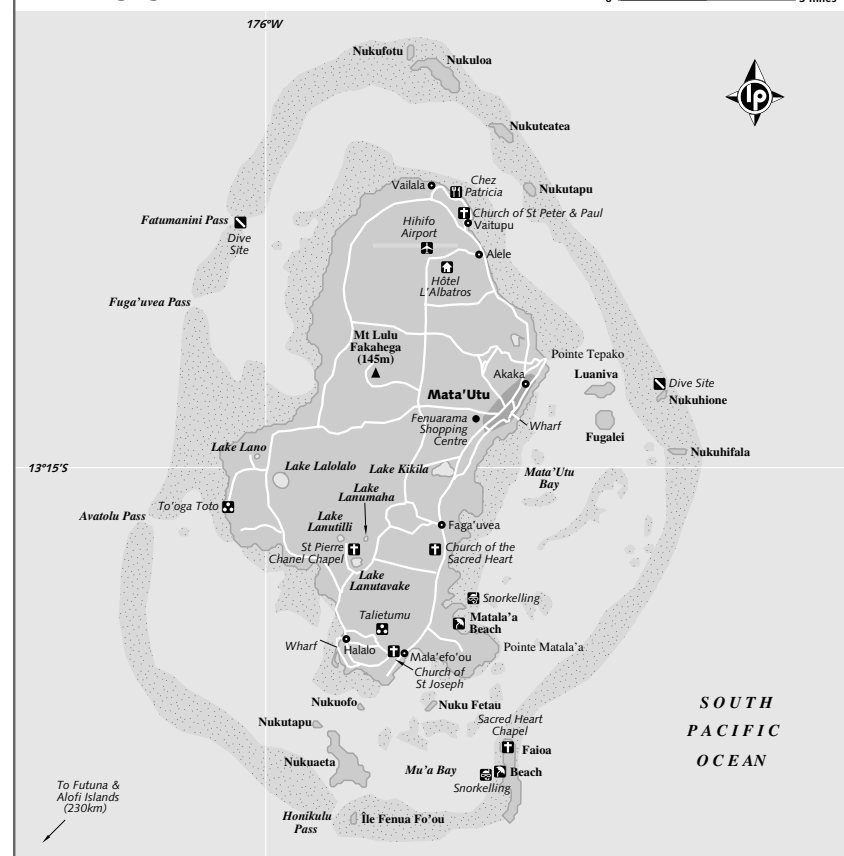
**Multi Service** (☎ 72 27 52; Hihifo airport)

**Pacific Auto Location** (☎ 72 28 32; fax 72 29 33)

**Pacific Dihn Motoka** (☎ 72 26 57)

**Plaisir du Fenua** (☎ 72 02 27)

## WALLIS ISLAND



## MATA'UTU

pop 1300

Mata'Utū is the country's sprawling administrative and business centre – it's a long walk from anywhere to anywhere. Due to the heat, humidity and lack of walking paths, you'll find less people walking in Mata'Utū than in LA. There are no street names, and no tourist information source.

The waterfront is dominated by **Our Lady of Good Hope Cathedral**, looking across the open green to the lagoon. The Maltese cross centred between the two towers is the royal insignia of Wallis. The adjacent **King's Palace**, with its two-storey verandas running all the way around, almost looks like an Australian country residence.

Across from the King's Palace is the post office, while the gendarmerie and the Uvea and Fenuarama shopping centres are straight up the road inland about 500m, 1km and 1.5km respectively.

## AROUND THE ISLAND

For a good look over the whole island, head for **Mt Lulu Fakahega** (145m). You can drive to the top, where there's a small abandoned chapel. Footpaths meander down to the west coast road from the summit.

The 35km island-circuit road is unsealed and at times fairly rough. It never actually runs along the coast although in a few places there are detours that run along the water's edge.

In Mala'efo'ou, the **Church of St Joseph** is the oldest church on the island. It has a beautiful interior covered in a kaleidoscope of decorations. Many of them are inspired by traditional land-and-sea tapa designs. Other impressively grand churches can be found in nearly every village.

An unmarked side road leads to the impressive **Taletumu** archaeological site. This huge and beautifully restored site was a fortified Tongan settlement, dating from around AD 1450. The fortress wall apparently runs for several kilometres in each direction although much of it has been destroyed and other parts engulfed by the jungle. The stone paved roads in and around the site were used only by the king, whose feet were not allowed to touch the ground.

In the southwest of the island, the striking, lush **Lake Lanutavake** lies just off the road.

**Lake Lalolalo** is the most spectacular of the Wallis crater lakes. The eerie lake is an almost perfect circle, with sheer rocky cliffs falling 30m down to the inky, 80m-deep lake waters. Tropical birds are often seen gliding effortlessly across the lake and it is tabu to clear the jungle here, making this some of the best preserved primary forest on the island. It's said that the American forces dumped equipment into the lake at the end of WWII.

Back along the coast is **To'oga Toto**, an immense, nearly hidden ruin of a Tongan fort. The name is translated as 'the blood of Tongans', referring to bloody battles that were fought here; an alternative name for the area is the *marais sanglant* or 'swamp of blood', since the marshy water reflects a red hue through the many tropical chestnut trees here. It's a trek to get here and another to tramp through all the vines and jungle to actually see the site, but it's worth it if only to find the scattered shards of Lapita pottery (see p39) in the stone-paved king's path.

Continue to the northern end of the island to the tranquil coastal villages of **Vailala**.

## AROUND THE LAGOON

The calm, turquoise waters and impressive variety of islets of Wallis' lagoon are as much a reason to visit this island as the sights of the interior. In the south, **Faioa** probably has the finest beaches, while **Île Fenua Fo'ou** (more commonly referred to as 'the pass') has

plenty of *fale* camping space. Spend the day fishing, snorkelling or just lounging on the beach of crystalline sands, then be swept to sleep by one of the world's most spectacular night skies. Don't forget to bring plenty of fresh water, though, since there's none on the islet. Just opposite, **Nukueta** is the only islet with fresh water and was once a leper colony. The unique flora of this small island make this a fascinating place to visit.

In the north, the Unesco-protected **Nukufotu** is a nesting ground for marine birds and you can walk from here to the neighbouring islet of **Nukuloa**. Climb up the high rocks for breathtaking views of the lagoon.

The islets to the east offer the best **snorkelling** and are frequented by turtles and rays.

## ACTIVITIES

**Te U Hauhaulele** (☎ 72 12 37), the diving club of Wallis, can arrange dives. The president changes yearly so there is no fixed phone but you can contact Foto Fenua on the number provided to get the newest phone number.

**Evasion Bleue** (☎ 72 12 37; wallis-&futuna.islands.com) is an ambitious project, in formation at the time of writing, that will incorporate a dive centre (including lake and night dives), taxi-boat service, lagoon excursions and special weekend 'Wallisian culture' trips where visitors can live a traditional Wallisian lifestyle on an islet in the lagoon.

## WALLIS FOR CHILDREN

Anywhere out on islets of the lagoon is a fantastic adventure for kids. There is no end of sandy beaches, warm water and colourful fish.

**L'Association de Vakalā** (☎ 72 29 67; gins.p@wallis.co.nz; boat rental/class 2000/4000 CFP) is a sailing school near Akaka, but visitors can stop by and join in or rent a kayak to boat out to the eastern *motu*. At the time of writing, the association was building an underwater garden of exploration, where kids and adults can snorkel around and read signs that label the different types of corals and other sites of interest.

## SLEEPING

**Hôtel Lomipeau** (☎ 72 20 21; hotel.lomipeau@wallis.co.nz; s/d/tr 10,500/11,500/13,000 CFP; 🍷 🍴) Centrally located in Mata'Utu, this standard hotel-style place has great views of the lagoon but the funny noises coming from

the old plumbing pipes might keep you awake.

**Hôtel Moana Ho'ou** (☎ 72 21 35; fax 72 21 35; s/d 8500/9500 CFP; 🍷) On the water in Mata'Utu, this is a quieter option.

**Hôtel L'Albatros** (☎ 72 20 99; fax 72 18 27; s/d 12,750/16,000 CFP; 🍷 🍴) It's near the airport but away from Mata'Utu and the bungalows are clean and plain.

## EATING & DRINKING

Aside from the few restaurants, simple snack bars dot the island. There's a supermarket in the Fenuarama shopping complex.

**Chez Patricia** (☎ 72 21 38; mains 1500-1900 CFP; 🍷 lunch & dinner) A waterfront, out-of-the-way spot in Vailala, this place decorated in Wallisian style is a stylish choice for a great meal.

**Le Récif** (☎ 72 20 21; mains 1850-2350 CFP; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This place at Hôtel Lomipeau has an extensive menu, good service and a bright setting but it's overpriced for the small portions.

**La Terrasse de Liku** (☎ 72 27 37; mains 2000-2500 CFP; 🍷 lunch & dinner) It's near town and on the waterfront but is in need of some fresh, local ingredients.

## FUTUNA & ALOFI

Futuna: pop 4873 / area 64 sq km

Alofi: pop 0 / area 51 sq km

Sweet, flower-scented Futuna embraces its visitors with sumptuous jungles, sparkling beaches and a very intact traditional culture. There is absolutely no tourist infrastructure out here so, unless you know someone, getting around ranges from the impossible to the extremely expensive. You'll need to stay awhile to crack this place open, but once you do you may never want to leave. It's divided into two kingdoms, Alo and Sigave, which nowadays live in peaceful if not competitive harmony with each other.

Uninhabited Alofi, with its tropical forest and beach, is a piece of paradise. A strait less than 2km wide separates the two islands.

## LEAVA

pop 950

Everything of note is concentrated in Leava, Futuna's major centre, on the south coast. There are a couple of supermarkets,

the island's administrative headquarters (there's even a library), and a wharf. It's all along one road so you can't get lost.

## Information

**Banque de Wallis et Futuna** (☎ 72 36 40) Has very irregular opening hours and no ATM.

**Gendarmerie** (☎ 72 32 17; 🕒 7.30-11.30am & 2-5pm)

**Hospital de Kaleveleve** (☎ 72 33 29)

**Internet** (☎ 72 31 20; Somalama Park Hôtel) Offers Internet access to its guests.

**Post office** (☎ 72 08 00; 🕒 7.30am-2pm Mon-Fri) The only public telephone on the island is here in Leava and you can buy phone cards inside.

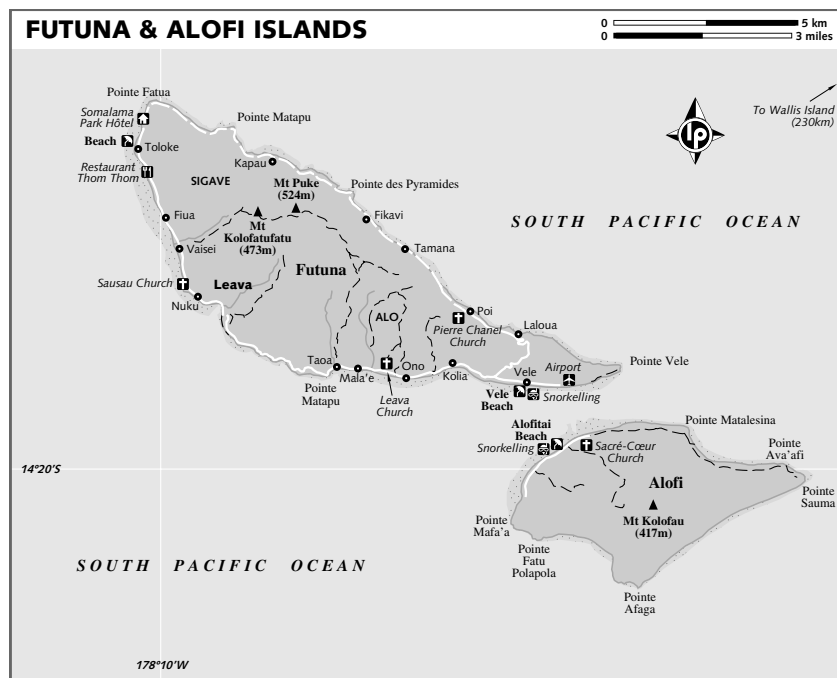
## Sights

It's a 33km circuit around Futuna but with speed bumps on the good roads and pot-holes on the bad ones it'll take at least an hour and a half to go round. If you could get a hold of a mountain bike, this would be a fabulous ride. This route starts at Leava and goes counterclockwise.

Grand **Leava Church** has a fine ceiling with carved wooden men that support the rafters with an outstretched arm; if you look closely, you'll notice that each little man is completely unique. Like much Futuna carving, the woodwork was done using a chainsaw.

The road leads up to a plateau with fantastic views over a forest of coconut palms and fruit trees and out to the idyllic shores of Alofi. Continuing to the descent to the eastern side of the island, the view gets even better with the rolling jungle, crystal coastline and **traditional fale villages**. Passing the first of many quiet villages of beautifully constructed traditional houses, you reach the famous, towering **Pierre Chanel church** (called Petelo Sanele in Futunan). The exterior is in need of a new coat of paint, but the interior, which has enough pews to seat several hundred worshippers, is painstakingly decorated throughout with white and brown tapa. The chapel includes relics of the saint, including some of his clothes and the war club said to have dispatched him. There is a large wooden statue of Chanel that welcomes you at the door.

After the village of Poi, the sealed road ends and it gets pretty bumpy until Pointe Fatua in the north of the island. There's an uninhabited stretch from Fikave to Kapau



where you'll pass the lava rock formations of **Pointe des Pyramides** and it's about here that you start to pray to St Chanel that your rent-a-wreck doesn't break down. The paved road begins again right before Somalama Park Hôtel.

Heading south back towards Leava, **Sausau Church** is a colourful, three-towered confection that would fit right in at Disneyland. It was built in just eight months after its predecessor was destroyed in the catastrophic 1993 earthquake.

No road crosses the interior, but there is a network of footpaths winding up into the central hills. With enough time you might even find a way up **Mt Puke** (524m).

Boats run across to uninhabited **Alofi** from Vele beach, beside the airport (4000 CFP for the whole boat, 15 minutes). Alofi has an idyllic beach, clear water and plenty of shady trees, and people often come from Futuna to tend gardens and check on their pigs. There's a series of open, solar-powered *fale* for overnight accommodation but people usually just stay for the day. Alofi even has a small **church** – Sacré Coeur.

### Activities

The *pensions* (guesthouses) claim that they offer excursions, but getting them to actually take you on one can be a real chore. There is good snorkelling off the back of the reef, but waves and currents can make this dangerous.

### Sleeping & Eating

The two hotels on Futuna both have excellent bar-restaurants.

**Hôtel Fiafia** (☎ 72 32 45; fax 72 35 56; d incl breakfast with shared/private bathroom 7000/9000 CFP; ♿) Right in Leava, the rooms here are nicer than at Somalama but the setting leaves much to be desired. The owner sometimes offers free island tours, and airport transfers are free.

**Restaurant Thom Thom** (☎ 72 30 67; mains 1300-2500 CFP; ☺ lunch & dinner) French, Caribbean and South American cuisine mingle with local ingredients at this excellent beachside restaurant run by a well-travelled chef.

Futuna's shops and supermarkets are stocked with an amazing but expensive variety of imported goods. Snack bars come and go.

### THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Somalama Park Hôtel** (☎ 72 32 20; somalama@wallis.co.nc; s/d incl breakfast 10,500/11,500 CFP; ♿) Located on the north-west tip of Futuna, this place has a hacienda feel and looks out over a lovely beach. Getting anywhere from here can be difficult but you might not want to leave. Don't miss a chance to dine at the exceptional outdoor Chinese restaurant while being serenaded by the sounds of the sea.

### Getting There & Around

**Aircalin** (☎ 72 00 05) flies to/from Wallis twice daily five days a week. Futuna's grass airstrip is 12.5km from Leava.

The two hotels can arrange car hire, which is an exorbitant 4000/8000 CFP for a half-/full-day plus 75 CFP per kilometre for a dilapidated Suzuki. Finding a bicycle to hire is near impossible.

## WALLIS & FUTUNA DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

The few hotels are rarely full. Nevertheless, booking ahead secures you a room, but, equally important, it means you get picked up at the airport (1500 CFP).

All the hotels are comfortable with air-con and private bathrooms, but are impersonal and have no particular style. Prices range from 7000 CFP for a single room to 15,000 CFP for a two-person bungalow; a French-style breakfast is included. The exceedingly polite and formal service you'll find everywhere is a bit disorienting for such a wild and natural destination.

### ACTIVITIES

The lagoon is the place to be for nearly every activity on Wallis (see p816), while there are a few hiking opportunities on Futuna (see opposite). Especially on Wallis, if you ask around, you should be able to find a local to take you out fishing.

Snorkellers should head for the reef fringes, the best being around the eastern islets of Wallis, Vele beach on Futuna and around the lagoon on Alofi.

Golf is played on a six-hole course on Wallis, although by playing the same holes in different directions they manage to make it feel bigger – at the time of writing the course was closed to nonmembers.

French or not, one of the most popular sports on Wallis is *kirikiti*, the Polynesian version of cricket. See the boxed text, p481.

### BUSINESS HOURS

Shops are open Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 11.30am and 1.30pm to 5pm, and many open at weekends, but they tend to shut for a long, lazy lunch.

### CHILDREN

Wallis and Futuna is very family oriented and you'll fit right in if you have children. The stores are well stocked with baby supplies although they are quite expensive.

### EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

There are no overseas diplomatic representatives and since Wallis and Futuna is a French territory, French embassies abroad represent the islands.

### PRACTICALITIES

- The only local newspaper, *Fenua*, was banished by the king in 2002 for publishing true but incriminating information about the royal family. Occasional newspapers from New Caledonia and magazines from France (all somewhat outdated) are available in supermarkets but there is nothing available in English.
- RFO (Reseau France Outre-mer), the French global radio and TV network, operates a 24-hour local radio station and one TV channel which broadcasts from 6am to around midnight; satellite TV is becoming widely available.
- The video system is SECAM.
- Wallis and Futuna electricity is 220V, 50Hz AC, with two round-pronged plugs.
- Weights and measures are metric. See the Quick Reference page for conversions.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Most holidays and festivals are the French dates also celebrated in New Caledonia and Tahiti and French Polynesia (see p670). In addition, 29 July commemorates the day when Wallis and Futuna became a French territory; St Pierre Chanel Day is 28 April.

## INTERNET ACCESS

There's an Internet café, K Prim, in the Fenuarama shopping complex in Mata'Utu. On Futuna guests can use the terminal at Somalama Park Hôtel.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Wallis and Futuna's official site ([www.wallis.co.nc](http://www.wallis.co.nc)) is for Francophones only.

## MONEY

As in Tahiti & French Polynesia and New Caledonia, the Cour de Franc Pacifique (CFP) is the local currency, tied to the euro. For exchange rates, see the Quick Reference page. It's wise to bring some CFP with you – there's no bank at the Wallis airport.

The Banque de Wallis et Futuna (BWF) branch in Fenuarama shopping centre in Mata'Utu can advance cash to Visa and MasterCard holders. It will change foreign currency but exacts a horrific 1000 CFP commission on each travellers cheque exchange.

Credit cards are accepted in most hotels and at car-hire agencies but not in most shops.

### HOW MUCH?

- **Pareu:** 3500 CFP
- **Shell necklace:** 300 CFP
- **Imported pear:** 100 CFP
- **Kava bowl:** 10,000 CFP
- **Tapa handbag:** 6000 CFP

### LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **1L petrol:** 135 CFP
- **1L bottled water:** 200 CFP
- **Bottle of Foster's lager:** 240 CFP
- **Souvenir T-shirt:** 1200 CFP
- **1kg of mangoes:** 300 CFP

## ATMs

The country's only ATM is at the BWF branch at the Fenuarama shopping centre. It tends to run out of cash Friday night and doesn't get refilled till Monday morning.

## Tipping

There's no need to tip and your server might not understand the gesture.

## TELEPHONE Mobile Phones

For the time being this country is a cellular-free zone.

## Phonecards

Public phones require a telecard (1000, 3000 or 5000 CFP) which can be bought at post offices. In Futuna the only public phone is outside the post office in Leava. On Wallis there are several cardphones including one at the Hôtel Lomipeau and at the post office in Mata'Utu.

## TIME

Wallis and Futuna is just west of the International Date Line and 12 hours ahead of GMT.

## VISAS

Visa regulations are the same as for France's other Pacific territories; see Embassies & Consulates in the Tahiti & French Polynesia (p670) or New Caledonia (p349) chapters for diplomatic representation.

# TRANSPORT IN WALLIS & FUTUNA

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Aircalin** ([www.aircalin.nc](http://www.aircalin.nc) in French) flies three times a week to/from New Caledonia (52,000/60,000 CFP return fare in low/high season); two of the flights return to Noumea (New Caledonia) via Nadi in Fiji. For local Aircalin contact details, see opposite.

None of the South Pacific air passes include Wallis and Futuna.

### Sea

There are no regular ferries nor cruise ships docking.

Yachts are not inclined to visit Wallis that often, despite its welcoming lagoon. Because there is not much room around the Mata'Utu wharf, yachts are encouraged to moor near the petroleum wharf at Halalo in the south of Wallis.

## GETTING AROUND

### Air

**Aircalin** (📞 Wallis 72 00 00, Futuna 72 32 04; [www.aircalin.nc](http://www.aircalin.nc) in French) flies between the islands twice a day, five days a week (from 24,800 CFP return). It is best to book in advance. Check the website for the latest schedules.

### Boat

Transfers to the islets of Wallis are available from 1000 to 2000 CFP return but are subject to island time and the tides. See p814 for more details. Contact local fishermen to

get a lift to Alofi from Futuna (4000 CFP return). See p818 for more details.

### Car

There is no public transport on either of the islands; if you want to get anywhere you had better rent a car (around 8000 CFP/day). On Futuna renting a car is an out-of-someone's house affair; no-one will ask for a driving permit or have considered any insurance issues. On Wallis things are more professional and you will need to show your permit (any kind will do) and ask about insurance, as it varies from agency to agency. On both islands, driving is on the right-hand side and there are no enforced rules of the road. For agency details, see p814 for Wallis and p819 for Futuna.

No-one hires out motorcycles, scooters or bicycles.

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