

# SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

## VAVA'U ISLANDS - KINGDOM OF TONGA

### 8 DAY TRIP WITH 6 DAYS SEA KAYAKING

#### INTRODUCTION

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

On our Tonga sea kayak expeditions we strive for a healthy balance between relaxation and adventure. We generally paddle in the mornings, leaving the afternoons free for snorkeling amidst colourful coral or inside legendary marine caves, exploring lush tropical bush and observing the traditional village lifestyle. The pace of life in Vava'u is slow and relaxed - much like it was a century ago. We spend our evenings on deserted beaches beneath waving palms and the Southern Cross, bathed by warm South Pacific breezes.

#### ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1       Arrival, afternoon trip briefing and overnight at our group hotel.  
Days 2-7    Kayaking in the Vava'u Archipelago. Camping (Days 2-6).  
Day 7       Finish kayaking. Farewell dinner. Overnight at the group hotel.  
Day 8       Trip concludes.

#### AIR TRAVEL TO VAVA'U

The following is a summary of air services to and within Tonga (subject to change). Flights can be booked using the airlines' websites or through a travel agent.

Note: all flights to/from Vava'u require an inter-island flight to/from Tongatapu with Chathams Pacific airlines.

**Pacific Blue** (Virgin Airlines): Fly from Sydney to Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) twice a week (Tue, Thur).

**Air New Zealand**: Fly from Auckland to Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) four times a week (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat) and from Los Angeles to Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) via Auckland.

**Air Pacific**: Fly from Nadi and Suva to Tongatapu three to four times a week.

**Chathams Pacific**: Fly between Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) and Vava'u daily except Sundays.

Your domestic flights to and from Vava'u can be purchased on the Chathams Pacific website. Costs quoted on the website are in Tongan Pa'anga. Chathams Pacific does not issue flight tickets. Instead, passengers receive a reference number usable for booking confirmation. On check-in, the airline will only require identification and details of flights booked.

**Please book the early morning flight if travelling from Tongatapu to Vava'u on Day 1 of the itinerary.**

#### CHATHAMS PACIFIC

Email: [reservations@chathamspacific.com](mailto:reservations@chathamspacific.com)

Website: [www.chathamspacific.com](http://www.chathamspacific.com)

Phone: +676 28 000 or 28 133

Fax: +676 23 447



## SEA KAYAKING

The concept of sea kayaking is still new to many people who may have visions of paddling in small unstable kayaks typically used on river trips. In contrast, we use very stable, seaworthy double kayaks (Necky Tofino and Dusky Bay) especially suited to novices and the ocean environment. No previous kayaking experience is required, but a moderate level of fitness is necessary. The issuing of single kayaks (Necky Arluk III, Quality Kayaks Southern Aurora and Puffin) is at the guides' discretion as this depends not only on the paddlers' ability, but also on weather, sea conditions and group composition (i.e. ratio of novice to experienced paddlers). There is usually at least one single kayak on tour, which may be shared amongst paddlers who can demonstrate solid support strokes. Your guides cover boat handling basics; paddling strokes; use of the foot-controlled rudder; boat entries and exits and rescue procedures in the protected warm waters of the Port of Refuge. They also cover trip safety and carry a hand-held VHF radio and flares for emergency use. Sea kayaking is a very safe sport when conducted properly. The expedition always paddles as a group, but there is still ample opportunity for individuals to enjoy their personal space on land if so desired. Certain rules of sea kayaking must be agreed to and observed by all trip participants to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment. We discuss these rules and why they are necessary as well as contingency plans. We do everything reasonable to minimize the risks of this outdoor pursuit to ensure your safety and expect you to do the same.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

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

- Day 1: Arrival. Upon arrival at Lupepau'u Airport in Vava'u you will be transferred to your hotel. Please ensure that you send us your full flight itinerary so that our driver can meet you on arrival. Your guides will phone you at your hotel this morning to welcome you and discuss the schedule of events.  
This afternoon, at 4pm, your guides present a 45-minute orientation talk at *The Adventure Centre* in Toula Village, 2.5 km south-east of Neaifu. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk.  
*Meals not included... Hilltop Hotel, Port Wine Guest House or Harbour View Resort.*
- Day 2: **Day 1 of Kayaking.** A safety briefing commences at 9:00 a.m. before departing for the first of six days of kayaking. Our journey begins at the entrance to the Port of Refuge, reputedly the most protected and beautiful port in the Pacific. We paddle into renowned Swallows Cave, snorkel and picnic at Kapa Island and finish off the day by skirting several islands on the western side of the island group. Tonight's camp is on uninhabited Vaka'eitu Island.  
*L, D ... Vaka'eitu Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 3-4 hours*
- Day 3: **Day 2 of Kayaking.** Following a leisurely hot breakfast, there is an optional paddle to the village of Matamaka on nearby Nuapapu Island. At low tide, we snorkel the magnificent Coral Gardens, adjacent to our campsite, where colourful coral gardens teeming with reef fish offer snorkellers endless hours of delight. A short hike before dinner to the island's summit may be rewarded by a view of the setting sun and possibly humpback whales (June-November) in Pulepulekai channel!  
*B, L, D ... Vaka'eitu Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours*
- Day 4: **Day 3 of Kayaking.** After breaking camp we paddle to Ovalau Island, reprovisioning with fresh water at either Lape village or Ovaka village en route. While paddling in Vava'u we may be fortunate enough to sight turtles, dolphins and humpback whales, the latter of which migrate annually to Tonga's warm sheltered waters to breed and calve.

Tonight's camp is a sandy beach facing the setting sun with possibly the best view in the Vava'u group.

*B, L, D ... Ovalau Island; Paddling Time: 2-3 hours*

Day 5: **Day 4 of Kayaking.** Today we paddle to Taunga Island, our base camp for tonight and tomorrow night. This evening, the villagers host an authentic Tongan feast consisting of roast suckling pork complemented by fresh root vegetables, octopus, reef fish, vegetarian dishes and tropical fruits such as papaya in coconut milk, all steamed in an underground oven or 'umu. This gastronomic delight is followed by a traditional Tongan song and dance performance.

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

Day 6: **Day 5 of Kayaking.** In the afternoon, an optional paddle takes us to nearby uninhabited 'Eueiki Island where we do some wall snorkelling and explore an immense cave with Tarzan-like vines cascading down through a hole in the cave ceiling. Alternatively, you can forego paddling and explore the inter-tidal zone of Taunga, Ngau and Pau Islands, connected to one another at low tide by a sand bar.

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

Day 7: **Day 6 of Kayaking.** On this final day of paddling, the journey westward takes us back to the Port of Refuge where we started our journey. We skirt Mala Island, once the home of a cannibal demi-god that liked nothing better than to catch and eat paddlers passing in outrigger canoes! We cross the channel to Otea village. From the beach we can snorkel to the entrancing Japanese Gardens before returning to the Adventure Centre, Toula village. From here, we transfer by taxi to our hotel and hot showers! This evening, we dine at a local restaurant in Neiafu.

*B, L, D... Hilltop Hotel, Port Wine Guest House or Harbour View Resort.*

*Paddling Time: 2-3 hours.*

Day 8: Departure. The trip concludes today with transfers to Lupepau'u Airport and a warm farewell from your guides. *Meals not included.*

## **FITNESS AND EXPERIENCE**

No experience is required for our sea kayak tours but a moderate level of physical fitness and a sense of adventure are important. A typical day entails two to three hours of paddling interspersed with rest stops. Whilst the guides endeavour to balance the group by pairing slower members with stronger and more experienced paddlers, the slowest members dictate the pace. Base camps offer the luxury of paddling empty kayaks or a lay day for exploring and relaxing. Paddling into a trade wind of 13-18 knots requires extra effort and can make the distance we travel feel longer. Those who engage in regular exercise such as walking, cycling or swimming tend to derive more enjoyment from their adventure. Physical conditioning exercises and camping experience are highly recommended.

## **KAYAK GUIDES**

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

## **CAMP ORGANIZATION**

On the first camping day (Day 2) the guides orient participants to the camp kitchen and protocol for erecting and breaking camp. The more assistance with camp duties rendered, the quicker meals are served and the earlier the group gets out on the water each day. We typically aim to be on the water

by 9:30 a.m. so as to take advantage of the cool morning hours for paddling, usually reaching our camp by lunchtime.

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

### **MEALS ON TOUR**

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

Snacks and three meals per day are provided, beginning with lunch on Day 2 and ending with the farewell dinner on Day 7. Our fine food has an international theme so you are likely to find Thai, Indonesian, Italian, Mexican and Polynesian cuisine on the menu. The meals are predominantly vegetarian supplemented with fresh fish. We try to make extensive use of the delicious tropical fruits and vegetables and fresh seafood caught by our Tongan guides. We also try our best to please every palate. Please let us know well in advance of the trip of any food and drink allergies and/or dislikes.

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

### **FOOD AND WATER IN TONGA**

There is a wide selection of eateries in Nuku'alofa and Vava'u, some of which are excellent. In Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), we can recommend Fakalato Restaurant, Friends Café, Little Italy Pizzeria, Seaview Restaurant, Café Escape, The Giggling Whale Bar & Grill, Taste of India, Luna Rossa and The Waterfront Café. In Neiafu (Vava'u), the Sovereign Residence, Mango, Aquarium, Tropicana, Mermaid and The Tongan Beach Resort.

The tap water in Tonga is treated well water with a high mineral content, giving it a metallic taste. While the tap water is potable, for people unaccustomed to the local water, it is advisable to drink rainwater or bottled water. Both are readily available on request at shops, restaurants and hotels. There are no waterfalls, rivers or lakes in Tonga so on tour we bathe and wash laundry in the sea using biodegradable saltwater shampoo or soap. Provided there is not a drought we fill solar shower bags with rainwater from cement tanks in the villages.

### **ACCOMMODATION IN VAVA'U**

The fale/rooms at the *Harbour View Resort, Hilltop Hotel and Port Wine Guest House* are basic but spacious, clean, comfortable. Package accommodation is based on double occupancy. Single supplements apply to those who prefer a private fale/room or who cannot be paired with another single participant.

We are able to book extra nights at our group hotel in Vava'u for those who require pre or post trip accommodation. If you are extending your stay in Vava'u and would prefer "resort" style accommodation, we recommend the Tongan Beach Resort. Their website is [www.thetongan.com](http://www.thetongan.com) Tents, groundsheets and mattresses (thermarests) are included for the camping portion of the trip.

### **STOPOVER ACCOMMODATION IN NUKU'ALOFA**

Incoming international flights rarely connect with a domestic flight to Vava'u, necessitating a stopover night in Nuku'alofa. The following hotels/lodges have been recommended by some of our past travellers. Prices noted are in Tongan Pa'anga (TOP\$) and are subject to change.

Bookings can be made direct to the accommodation property online, or, for a service fee of AU\$25.00, Southern Sea Ventures can arrange the booking for you. Most hotels will provide airport transfers for an additional cost.

The Villa  
Vuna Road,  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga.  
Ph & Fax: +676 24998  
Email: villamac@kalianet.to  
www.tongavilla.com  
TOP\$178 single room  
TOP\$225 double room

Little Italy Hotel and Restaurant  
Vuna Road,  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga  
Ph: +676 25053  
Email: melangel@kalianet.to  
www.littleitalytonga.com  
TOP \$230-\$290 per room

Seaview Lodge  
Vuna Road,  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga.  
Ph: +676 23709  
Fax: +676 26906  
Email: seaview@kalianet.to  
www.seaview-lodge.com  
TOP\$200-280 per room

Winnies Guesthouse (backpacker style  
with shared bathrooms)  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga.  
Ph: +676 25215  
Email: winnies@kalianet.to  
TOP \$57.00 per person

### **TONGA AND HER PEOPLE**

Spread across 700,000 square kilometres of ocean, just west of the International Date Line and east of Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga comprises four major island groups. From south to north these are Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuaus. A total of 171 mostly raised coral islands (fewer than 40 of them inhabited) cover a total land area of 747 square kilometres. The population of Tonga is estimated at 101,700, with two thirds of that number living on the main island, Tongatapu. The native language is Tongan although approximately 70% of the population speak English, with a 99% literacy rate.

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

### **CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

Respect is extremely important in the Tongan culture. A clean, modest appearance signifies respect for you and for others.

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

### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

In an effort to preserve Tonga's natural environment, we strive to promote environmental sensitivity and to minimize our impact on the marine and terrestrial environment. During the orientation talk

your guides share the company's Minimum Impact Guidelines with respect to waste disposal and conservation of reefs, marine life, flora and fauna. We carry out all non-decomposable rubbish along with other people's rubbish. Snorkelers are briefed on correct use of their fins and the importance of not touching the fragile reefs.

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

## **CLIMATE**

The climate of Tonga is very pleasant, being slightly cooler and less humid than most tropical areas. From May through December (peak season), the temperatures range from approximately 22°-32°C (72°-90°F), the mean humidity hovers around 74% and the trade winds blow an average of 13-18 knots - often perfect weather for paddling and adventuring.

During the wetter summer months (January to May) the weather is hotter (25°-30°C), more humid and changeable with a slightly increased risk of tropical cyclones. However, most cyclones either brush past Tonga leaving little or no damage or miss Tonga altogether.

## **TIME AND COMMUNICATION**

Tonga is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Contact details for our group hotels in Vava'u are as follows:

### ***Harbourview Resort***

Email: [marcella@kalianetvav.to](mailto:marcella@kalianetvav.to)

Web: [www.harbourviewresort.com](http://www.harbourviewresort.com)

Phone: +676 70 687

Fax: +676 70 846

### ***Hilltop Hotel***

Email: [info@hilltophotelvavau.com](mailto:info@hilltophotelvavau.com)

Web: [www.hilltophotelvavau.com](http://www.hilltophotelvavau.com)

Phone: +676 70 209 or +676 70 838

Fax: +676 70 209

### ***Port Wine Guesthouse***

Email: [portwine\\_guesthouse@yahoo.com](mailto:portwine_guesthouse@yahoo.com)

Web: [www.portwineguesthouse.com](http://www.portwineguesthouse.com)

Phone: +676 70 479

International phone calls may be placed from the hotel or from Tonga Telecommunications where phone cards may be purchased.

## **ITINERARY CHANGES AND/OR DELAYS**

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after the commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures is not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself.

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



adventure and tolerance for the unexpected are essential attributes when visiting developing nations such as Tonga where “Tonga Time” is synonymous with delays and waiting.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover you against trip cancellation due to sickness and accident, loss of baggage and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Please ensure your insurance covers trip cancellation due to inclement weather. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

### **AIRPORT TAXES, EXCESS BAGGAGE FEES AND SHUTTLES**

These are your responsibility and are not included in the trip cost. The maximum baggage allowance for Tonga domestic flights is 20kgs per person. Excess baggage is subject to a surcharge.

Teta Tours operates a shuttle between the international and domestic terminals in Tongatapu for every inbound and outbound international flight including those that arrive/depart at night or in the wee hours of the morning. The cost is TOP\$1.00 per person. Both the domestic and international terminals at Fua'amotu Airport have unlocked covered waiting areas patrolled 24 hours a day by an on-site security guard. However, it is inadvisable to leave luggage unattended. The waiting areas can be breezy and cool particularly at night, we recommend having a fleece and/or windbreaker handy (i.e. in your carry-on luggage).

### **PASSPORT**

Your passport must be valid for at least six months from the date of entry to Tonga. You must present an onward ticket on arrival in order to be granted a 30-day visitors visa.

### **VISAS**

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

Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Darussalam, Denmark, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Finland, France, French Polynesia (New Caledonia, Tahiti, Wallis & Futuna), Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kirabati, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Russia, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Spain, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lusua, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland, The Bahamas, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu.

All other nationalities require a visa prior to arrival; this can be obtained by contacting the Immigration Division, Ministry of Foreign affairs of Tonga by the following email: [visatonga@gmail.com](mailto:visatonga@gmail.com)

### **CURRENCY EXCHANGE**

The unit of currency in Tonga is the Pa'anga (TOP\$). If you have not already exchanged your money by the time you arrive in Vava'u, you can do so at the ANZ Bank (ATM/Cashpoint available) or Bank of Tonga/Westpac in Neiafu on weekdays. Note that hotel and airport exchange rates are not as favourable as bank rates. Note that most of the accommodation properties have credit card facilities. However, many businesses accept cash (TOP\$) only.

### **BUDGETTING**

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

## **TIPPING**

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

## **GIFTS**

Tongans are exceptionally generous and gift giving is a central feature of their culture. If you wish, bring a few small gifts such as T-shirts, postcards, photos, lapel pins, hair ties, hats, watches, yoyos, washable tattoos, kites, lighters and pocket-sized games. Educational resources are in short supply in the outer island schools and children and teachers greatly appreciate receiving pens, pencils, stationary and primary level books.

## **SECURITY**

Theft is not common in Tonga. However, in a culture where “what’s mine is yours” and items are “borrowed” indefinitely, unattended personal belongings and valuables are at risk. We recommend that you bring your passport and airline tickets in a dry bag on the kayak trip so that, in the unlikely event of evacuation, your guides can readily access these documents.

## **MEDICAL MATTERS**

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

### **Hygiene**

Be conscious of hygiene. Regularly wash your hands, be wary of uncooked food and wash fruit or preferably peel it, with clean hands!

### **Vaccinations**

No statutory vaccinations are required for entry into Tonga. However, we require every participant to have a current tetanus vaccination and recommend vaccinations against hepatitis, typhoid and polio. You should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information. Hepatitis vaccinations are generally a good idea for all travelers.

### **Medication**

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital. Consider giving your trip leader half of your medication for safekeeping in case your supply gets lost or wet. Most paddlers are not troubled by seasickness, but if this is of concern to you, your doctor can recommend medication.

### **Dengue Fever**

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

### **Medical Supplies**

On all our trips into more isolated areas we carry a very comprehensive medical kit. However, you are encouraged to bring a few basic first aid items of your own including waterproof plasters (fabric plasters stay on well in water); waterproof tape; a blister kit; antiseptic cream; antibiotic ointment or powder; vitamin A ointment or talcum powder for salt water rashes and medication for pain relief. If you are taking any medication, consider bringing twice the normal required amount (half for our safekeeping) should you misplace your supply on the trip. If you are prone to any health disturbances (e.g. easily infected cuts or severe migraines) please remember to bring any preventative medications.

In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:  
-Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP15)  
-Lip protectant  
-Band-aid strips  
-Insect repellent  
-Aspirin or equivalent headache remedy  
-A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness  
-A mild antiseptic soap

### **Dental**

Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a checkup before departure.

### **Hospitals**

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu and Prince Wellington Ngu Hospital in Neiafu are experienced with cuts, fractures and tropical disorders. However, for most other conditions it is advisable to seek diagnosis and treatment in your own country.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Photographic opportunities abound in Tonga! Tongan people are very photogenic and enjoy having their photo taken (except when they are eating). Asking their permission first is a polite gesture. Bring plenty of spare batteries and sufficient memory storage for digital cameras. For film users, Fujichrome Velvia professional film does justice to the tropical blues and greens of the water and foliage. We recommend that all film be processed in your home country for best results.

A zoom lens is handy especially for photographing whales. However, bear in mind that humidity and salt water can damage camera lenses and electronics. For this reason, some prefer to leave their expensive camera at home and bring an inexpensive disposable or waterproof camera instead. If you do decide to bring an expensive camera, store it in a dry bag or waterproof case with silicon packs and insure your camera.

### **GEAR AND CLOTHING**

As we are self-sufficient, (i.e. we carry all food and equipment with us in the kayaks), it is important to keep gear to a minimum. Large dry bags, duffel bags and backpacks cannot be accommodated in the hatches. Please bring no more than two large (20L) dry bags; one for clothing, the other for miscellaneous items and an optional sleeping bag; plus one small (10L) dry bag for items you need to access in the cockpit (e.g. wallet, documents, sun screen etc). A mesh bag containing your snorkelling gear is additional to the above items. Nylon stuff sacks lined with one or two heavy-duty garbage bags each are a more affordable option if you do not already have dry bags. However, a dry bag for the cockpit is essential. Camera and optical equipment should be waterproofed and insured.

**We provide tents, groundsheets and mattresses.** Please bring your own snorkeling gear.

Biodegradable salt-water shampoo is available for purchase from Friendly Islands Kayak Company in Tonga for \$5.00AUD/ 100ml bottle.

Lightweight cotton or quick-dry clothing is recommended for Tonga's warm tropical climate. Long-sleeved shirts with collars offer good sun protection. Lava lavas (2 metre wrap-around cloth) may be purchased in Tonga. It is a good idea to bring along a lava lava to wear over shorts or a swimsuit when entering villages.

If you have any questions about clothing or equipment, consult your local outdoor equipment retailer or contact us. Any excess baggage not needed while kayaking can be left at our base for safekeeping.

## Recommended

Passport, airline tickets, small TOP\$ notes  
Basic first aid kit  
Toiletries, unbleached toilet paper  
Biodegradable salt water shampoo/soap  
Sunscreen (strong), lip screen, insect repellent  
Sunhat (stiff brimmed) with chin strap  
Sunglasses (preferably polaroid) with neck strap  
Pack Towel (100% viscose)  
Drink bottle (1-2 litres)  
Snorkeling gear, mesh carry bag  
Swimmers  
Lightweight rain jacket with hood  
Lightweight fleece jacket (ie Polartec 100)  
One long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin.  
T-shirts (long & short sleeved)  
Quick drying shorts & pants  
Lava lava (can be purchased in Tonga)  
Cotton socks & underwear (no laundry facilities while kayaking)  
Gloves (cycling or cotton)  
Cotton bandanna, hankie for cleaning glasses  
Reef shoes or old running shoes, sturdy sandals  
Sleeping bag liner/Cotton sheet  
Summer-weight sleeping bag/quilt/blanket (June-Sept)  
Nylon stuff sacks with heavy duty garbage bags (or preferably dry bags)  
Dry bags (2 x 20L and 1 x 10L)  
Ziploc bags (medium & large)  
Flashlight/headlamp, spare batteries, lighter

## Optional

Clothes line & pegs  
Calf-length skirt/dress  
Camera, spare batteries  
Binoculars  
Reading and writing materials  
Pocket knife, sewing/repair kit  
Favourite snacks, drink crystals  
Fishing lures and handline  
Hand sanitizer/handy wipes  
Talcum powder/Vaseline to prevent chafing  
Half wetsuit 3mm (June-Sept)

## MONEY MATTERS

### Your tour cost includes:

- Return airport transfers between Lupepau'u Airport (Vava'u) and the hotel.
- Two nights' accommodation (based on double occupancy) at the *Harbourview Resort or Hilltop Hotel or Port Wine Guesthouse* depending on availability. Upgrades to Tongan Beach Resort also available depending on availability-surcharge payable.
- Use of quality double and single fibreglass kayaks and accessories.
- A 6-day kayak tour of the outer islands with professional guides (guide:guest ratio = 1:6).
- Camping (tents, groundsheets and mattress).
- Snacks and 3 meals a day on the kayaking portion of the tour.
- A traditional 'umu feast with Polynesian singing and dancing in an island village.
- A farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

### Your tour cost does not include:

- International & domestic air fares.
- Visa and passport fees.
- Personal travel insurance.
- Airport departure taxes.
- Airport transfers that are not included in the above itinerary.
- Accommodation not included in the above itinerary.
- Single supplement fee.

- Beverages and meals that are not included in the above itinerary.
- Alcohol, laundry, postage, medical expenses and any other expenses of a personal nature.
- Snorkelling gear.
- Expenses incurred as a result of delays due to inclement weather, delays of scheduled aircraft, logistical delays, and resultant changes to the itinerary.
- Emergency evacuation charges.
- Gratuities to guides.

## READING REFERENCES

The following are just a few of the many reference books and articles available on the Kingdom of Tonga.

### FLORA AND FAUNA

Allen, Gerald R. & Steene, Roger. *Indo Pacific Coral Reef Field Guide*. Sub Tropical Reef Research, 1996.  
 Coleman, Neville. *Sea Birds and Others of the South Pacific*. Sea Australia Resource Centre, 1997.  
 Cook, Douglas. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Tonga*. Nuku'alofa: Government Printers of Tonga, 1984.  
 Hargreaves, Dorothy & Bob. *Tropical Blossoms of the Pacific*. Ross-Hargreaves Publishers, 1970.  
 Payne, Roger. *Among Whales*. Simon & Schuster Inc., 1995.  
 Ryan, Paddy. *The Snorkeller's Guide to the Coral Reef*. Exisle Publishing Ltd, 1994.

### HISTORY

Ledyard, Patricia. *The Tongan Past*. Nuku'alofa: Vava'u Press Ltd., 1982.  
 Martin, John M.D.. *Tonga Islands: William Mariner's Account* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Nuku'alofa: Vava'u Press, 1991.  
 Hough, Richard. *Captain Bligh and Mr. Christian: Mutiny on the Bounty*. Hutchinsonson, 1972.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Bain, Kenneth. *The New Friendly Islanders*. Kent: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993.  
 Hau'ofa, 'Eveli. *Our Crowded Islands*. Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987.  
 Hau'ofa, 'Eveli. *Tales of the Tikongs*. University of Hawaii Press, 1983.  
 Ledyard, Patricia. *'Utulei: My Tongan Home*. Vava'u Press Ltd., 1993.  
 Theroux, Paul. *The Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992.

### TRAVEL GUIDES

Lonely Planet Samoan Islands and Tonga Travel Guide 6<sup>th</sup> edition/Nov 2009.  
 Stanley, D. *South Pacific Handbook*. (7<sup>th</sup> ed). Avalon Travel Publishing, 2000.  
 Stanley, D. *Tonga-Samoa Handbook*. Avalon Travel Publishing, 1999.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS & DELAYS EN ROUTE

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

If you experience delays or an emergency, and you cannot reach the above contact, call Southern Sea Venture's Australian office. Please be prepared to leave your name, details of your trip, the telephone number where you can be reached, and all other pertinent information. We will forward your information on and, if need be, will get back to you as soon as possible.

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