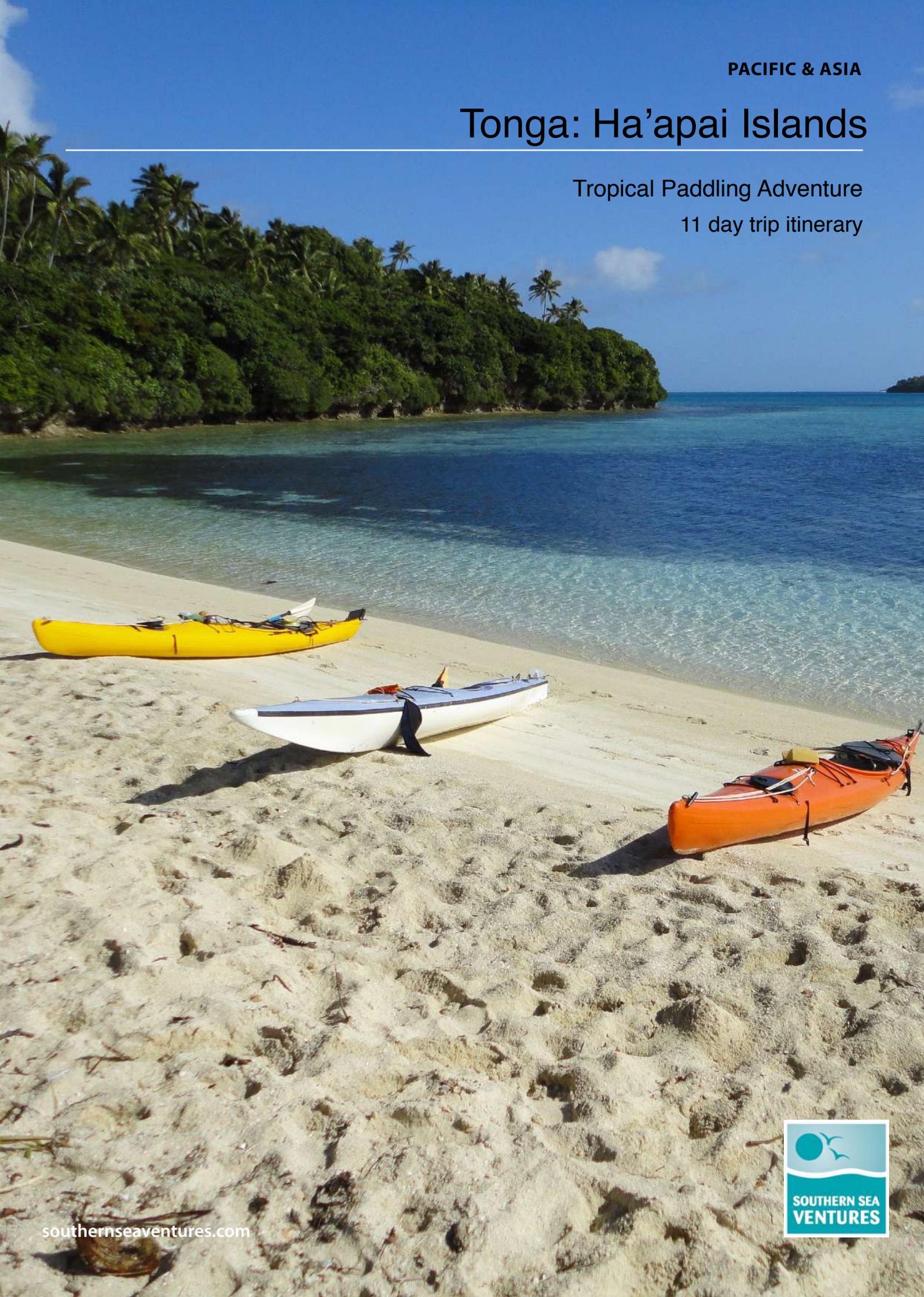


PACIFIC & ASIA

Tonga: Ha'apai Islands

Tropical Paddling Adventure

11 day trip itinerary



Tonga: Ha'apai Islands



11 day trip 8 days kayaking

Situated approximately halfway between Vava'u and Tongatapu, the Ha'apai Islands are everything you might imagine of a tropical island paradise: friendly people; remote, uninhabited atolls; lush forests; expansive, white sand beaches; balmy breezes and warm water teeming with tropical fish. All the ingredients for the perfect tropical escape! In Ha'apai, you will not only find exceptional natural beauty, but also the friendliest folk in the Kingdom. As papalangis, or foreigners, are not so common in Ha'apai, they are welcomed with open arms by the locals.

It was in Ha'apai, in 1777, that Captain Cook and his crew were invited ashore by the village chiefs for a feast. Unbeknownst to Cook, the chiefs' intention was to take over his ship and include some of his crew in the feast menu! Fortunately, the chiefs could not agree on the timing of their gruesome plan and Cook sailed out of the Ha'apai's naming them the Friendly Isles. Ha'apai is also where the Mutiny on the Bounty took place. Captain Bligh and a few of his crew were forced to set off from Tofua Island in a rowboat on what was to become an epic journey.

The 45 kilometre long Lifuka archipelago comprises low lying coral islands, expansive white sand beaches, towering volcanoes and colourful lagoons. We paddle along the lee side of the archipelago, occasionally venturing offshore into more exposed waters to access remote islands. We strive for a healthy balance between relaxation and adventure, generally paddling in the mornings, leaving the afternoons free for snorkelling amidst colourful coral; exploring lush tropical bush and observing the traditional village lifestyle.

A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

Day 1: Arrival, afternoon trip briefing and overnight at the group guesthouse.

Day 2: Begin kayak trip. Camping. L • D

Days 3-9: Exploring the Lifuka Archipelago. Camping. B • L • D

Day 10: Finish kayaking. Overnight at the group guesthouse. B • L

Day 11: Trip concludes.

Meeting Place and Time

If arriving into Ha'apai on Day 1, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the group guesthouse. We recommend a morning arrival into Ha'apai as the trip briefing takes place on the afternoon of Day 1.

How to Get There

The following is a summary of air services to, from and within Tonga (subject to change). Flights can be booked using the airline website or through a travel agent. There are no flights into, out of or around Tonga on Sundays.

Fiji Airways fly Nadi to Tongatapu and Vava'u and v.v. They operate flights to Nadi from Australia, New Zealand and Los Angeles. They also fly from Auckland to Tongatapu.

Virgin Australia fly direct from Sydney to Tongatapu and Auckland to Tongatapu and v.v.

Air New Zealand flies from Auckland to Tongatapu and v.v.

Connections in Auckland from Australian cities and Los Angeles are possible.

Real Tonga fly between Tongatapu and Ha'apai (at times via Vava'u) daily (except Sundays).

Your domestic flight to/ from Tongatapu and Ha'apai can be purchased on the Real Tonga website. Real Tonga is the only domestic airline in Tonga. Costs quoted on their website are in Tongan Pa'anga.

It is recommended, due to the possibility of Real Tonga flight delays, to give yourself at least a minimum of two hours connection time between international flights and domestic flights and v.v.

REAL TONGA

Website: www.realtonga.to

Email: booking@realtonga.to

Phone: +676 23777.

Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience is required for this trip. Sit on top kayak experience is not a substitute. There is no need to be an expert kayaker, however you should

practice a wet exit and assisted re-entry prior to the trip. The degree of difficulty **will depend on the weather** we encounter. The sea and weather conditions in the islands are predominantly stable but in windier conditions a full day's paddling may be required. Paddling loaded kayaks into a trade wind of 15-20 knots requires extra effort and can make the distance we travel feel longer. An "average" paddling day will range from two to four hours and we mix in as much snorkelling and exploration walking as possible. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks are stable, easy to paddle, control and ideally suited for this remote trip. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts (the craft used are mainly double Necky Tofino kayaks). It is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry all of our food and equipment in the kayaks. The issuing of single kayaks is at the guide's discretion as it depends not only on the paddler's ability, but also on weather, sea conditions and group composition (i.e. ratio of novice to experienced paddlers).

Your guides cover boat handling basics; paddling strokes; use of the foot-controlled rudder; boat entries and exits and rescue procedures before departing on the kayak adventure. They also cover trip safety and carry a cell phone 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 minimise the risks of this outdoor pursuit to ensure your safety and expect you to do the same.

In general, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling, so it's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip.

Proposed Itinerary

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather, sea and logistical conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary. Sundays in Tonga are an enforced day of rest (no kayaking). Paddling times are approximate only.

Day 1: If arriving today, you will be met at Salote Pilolevu Airport on Lifuka Island, Ha'apai and transferred to your accommodation. Your guide will be in contact to discuss the schedule of events, including the time and place for this afternoon's orientation talk. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk.

NO MEALS INCLUDED/EVALONI'S GUESTHOUSE OR LINDSAY GUESTHOUSE (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY).

Day 2: Transport will depart early this morning (exact time is tide-dependent) from your accommodation to the launching site. The guides will give a safety briefing before departing for the first of eight days of kayaking. Today we paddle along the leeward shores of Lifuka and Uoleva Islands, skirting pristine reefs and beaches. Tonight's camp will be on the southern end of Uoleva Island, rated by Outside Magazine as one of the top ten most beautiful beaches in the world! Here, too, is a magnificent coral ledge smothered in soft corals-a snorkeler's dream. Paddling time 3-4 hours.

L • D / CAMPING

Day 3: Tide permitting, we paddle across a wide channel to Tatafa, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by local fishermen. Here, we can stretch our legs and enjoy a snack before paddling eastward to neighbouring Uiha Island. The view from our campsite on the southern end of Uiha gives a preview of the remote southern islands to which we journey tomorrow. This afternoon we explore Felemea village and re-supply with fresh water in anticipation of spending the next few days, weather and other environmental conditions permitting, in the remotest part of the Archipelago. Paddling time 2-3 hours.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 4: Our paddle plan today is southward along the inside of a fringing reef across shallow aqua-hued waters to Uanukuhahaki (Uanuku) Island, nesting grounds for the green turtle. Base camping for three nights on Uanuku allows us to fully enjoy the remoteness of this perfect South Pacific island. Paddling time 3-4 hours.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 5: We can snorkel for hours on end off Uanuku, marvelling at the crystal clear waters and hundreds of colourful reef fish. This remote, uninhabited island is definitely not in the guidebooks! Nor is Uanukuhihifo Island, an optional short paddle to the south. While paddling the archipelago, we may be fortunate to sight turtles, dolphins and humpback whales, the latter which migrate annually (July to October) to Tonga's warm sheltered waters to breed and calve. Paddling time 2-3 hours.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 6: Today, Sunday, is by Tongan law a day of rest and worship. By law, tour operators are not permitted to offer guided activities on a Sunday. Bathing in the warm sea (no snorkelling), beachcombing, reading, socialising and eating are pleasant diversions on this enforced lay day.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 7: Retracing our paddle strokes, we return today to Uiha Island and re-provision with fresh rainwater. Tonight's camp is on the adjacent uninhabited island of Tatafa. Here, the guides may conveniently assess the sea conditions with tomorrow's channel crossing in mind. Troll with a hand line for snapper or long tom on the way to camp. If you or your guide catch fish along the way you can look forward to helping them prepare a traditional underground 'umu feast! Paddling time 4-5 hours.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 8: This morning we break camp and paddle offshore to Luangahu, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by local fishermen and nesting sea snakes (which preclude camping here!) After a picnic lunch, we circumnavigate the island on foot observing makeshift fishermen's shelters and their octopus drying trees. Those with sharp eyes may find remnants of whalebone in the sand dunes from Tonga's whaling days. Following a refreshing swim and snorkel, we paddle northward to Uoleva Island. Paddling time 2-3 hours.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 9: Take advantage of today's more relaxed pace to explore Uoleva Island. In the cooler hours of the morning stretch your legs with a walk through low-lying bush to the windward side of the Island. After lunch, join an optional paddle across the bay to Taina's Beach Resort situated at the tip of a beautiful white sand crescent beach. Back at camp, snorkel a reef drop-off at the edge of Auhangamea channel. Confident swimmers may follow the guides on a drift snorkel along this spectacular coral wall. There are also lovely pockets of coral



and reef fish closer to shore for the less confident snorkeller. A sunset stroll down the beach takes us to Serenity Beaches Resort, a small eco-resort, for dinner featuring fresh seafood and locally grown natural foods. Paddling time 1 hour.

B • L • D/ CAMPING

Day 10: On this final day of paddling, we kayak north along Uoleva and Lifuka Islands back to Pangai township where we started our journey nine days ago. From here, transfer by taxi back to our accommodation and enjoy modern conveniences, such as a fresh water shower! Dinner is not included tonight. Paddling time 3-4 hours.

B • L/ EVALONI'S GUESTHOUSE OR LINDSAY GUESTHOUSE (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY)

Day 11: If departing today, the trip concludes with transfers to Salote Pilolevu Airport.

END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS

Climate

The climate of Tonga is very pleasant, being slightly cooler and less humid than most tropical areas. From June to November temperatures range from 22°-30°C with humidity around 74%. The southeasterly trade winds average 12-18 knots-ideal weather for paddling and camping.

During the wetter summer months, (December to May), the weather is hotter (25°-32°C), more humid and changeable with an increased risk of tropical cyclones.

Trip and Camping Organisation

Paddling days will start early to take advantage of cooler temperatures. It's a good idea to pack your dry bags before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tents so that loading for departure can be organised. On a paddling day we'd like to be on the water before 9:30am and arrive into camp for lunch.

On the first camping day, (Day 2), the guides introduce participants to the camp kitchen and protocol for erecting and breaking camp. On arrival into camp, the guides require help with erecting the overhead tarpaulin; hanging up life vests and spray skirts and unloading the kayaks. 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.

Tents (screened), and self-inflating mattresses are included for the camping portion of the trip.

Expedition Staff

A minimum of one Tongan professional guide accompanies all trips. Depending on the group size, there is an additional guide (guide:guest ratio=1:6). The guides' role is to co-ordinate the expedition and ensure the safety of the group. They will answer questions and inform you of the objectives and progress of the trip. They will decide on safety matters, administer the medical kit and liaise with

the local villagers on your behalf. Should you have any enquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guide/s.

Meals while Kayaking

Snacks and three meals per day are provided, beginning with lunch on Day 2 and ending with lunch on Day 10. Meals have an international theme and you're 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.

Please let us know well in advance of the trip of any food and drink allergies and/or intolerances. Some specialist diet food products are not available to buy in Tonga, for example, gluten-free cereal and UHT soy milk are hard to find. We recommend you bring some from home for your personal consumption during the trip.

Food & Water in Tonga

There is a wide selection of eateries in Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu). We can recommend Cafe Reef, Fakalato Restaurant, Fresh Juice Bar, Little Italy Pizzeria, Luna Rossa, Friends Café, Seaview Restaurant and The Waterfront Café. In Pangai (Ha'apai) try Mariner's cafe and on Foa Island, Matafonua Lodge and Sandy Beach Resort.

The tap water in Tonga is treated well water with a high mineral content, giving it a metallic taste. While the tap water is potable, for people unaccustomed to the local water, it is advisable to drink rainwater or bottled water. Both are readily available on request at shops, restaurants and accommodation properties.

While kayaking, our 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.

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 Ha'apai

The rooms at Evaloni's Guesthouse and Lindsay Guesthouse are simple, clean and comfortable. Package accommodation is based on double or twin occupancy. Single supplements apply to those who prefer a private room or who cannot be paired with another single participant.

Evaloni's Guesthouse: phone +676 60029.

Lindsay Guesthouse: phone +676 60107 or +676 60667.

Let us know if you wish to upgrade your accommodation to a beachfront resort and we can provide a quote.



Travel Arrangements

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures and its' partners in Tonga, Friendly Islands Kayak Company (FIKCO), are not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself.

Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and Southern Sea Ventures and FIKCO will do their best to rectify the situation. 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.

Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace ("Tonga time") and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible. We're sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole Tongan island experience.

Travel Insurance

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. 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.

Time & Communication

Tonga is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. There are currently two cell phone companies in Tonga: Digicel and Vodaphone. Mobile phone coverage is usually good on Tongatapu and in Pangai but may be patchy while kayaking. Buying a SIM card is usually quite easy and both phone companies have a booth at Tongatapu International airport.

Cultural Considerations

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).

As gift giving is very much a part of Tongan culture, the Tongan people don't make a fuss about giving and receiving gifts compared to westerners. In fact, when receiving a gift, a "thank you", or even eye contact for that matter, is not social protocol in Tonga.

The Tongan way when sitting on the floor is for men to sit crossed-legged and women side saddle. Note that it is considered rude in Tonga to sit with your knees drawn towards your chest or with both legs outstretched. Tongans typically eat with their hands-either hand is acceptable. It is a Tongan custom for guests to dine and dash (believe it or not!). In this way, the hosts may then follow in behind and partake while the food is fresh.

Sundays in Tonga

The government of Tonga has legislated that Sundays are a day of prayer and rest. Businesses are required by law to close, with the exception of restaurants. Marine activities, including kayaking and snorkelling, are banned. No commercial or physical activities on Sundays are allowable anywhere within the Kingdom.

Sundays, therefore, are lay days and our guides strive to arrange other activities such as beach combing and socialising.

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

At the time of writing, a visa is not required for a stay of less than 30 days for those visitors travelling on either an Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, UK and US passport. Please check with your nearest Tongan embassy for up to date information.

Environmental Responsibilities

In an effort to preserve Tonga's natural environment, we strive to promote environmental sensitivity and to minimise our impact on the marine and land 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. Snorkellers 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.

Photography

The humidity is always high in Tonga and as we are paddling in a salt water environment, the delicate electronics in cameras can be damaged. You might consider bringing a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries as there is no opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity while camping. It is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it.

Whale Watching

Humpback whales migrate each year from the Antarctic to the warm, sheltered waters of Tonga, typically between the months of July to mid October. A number of whale watching operators offer day trips which may include swimming with the whales. It is advisable to pre book a trip before arriving in Ha'apai to ensure a place on a boat. If you're interested in booking a day with the whales, pre or post kayak trip, contact us and we'll put you in touch with our local partners who can answer questions and arrange a booking. Please note that tours do not operate on Sundays.

Money Matters

Your tour cost includes:

- Return airport transfers between Salote Pilolevu (Ha'apai) and the group guesthouse.
- Accommodation at our group guesthouse on a twin share basis for the first and last night of the trip.
- Double and single expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Two person tents.
- Sleeping mattresses (that also convert to camp chairs).
- Professional guide/s.
- Snacks and three meals a day on the kayaking portion of the trip including a celebratory dinner at an outer island resort.

Your tour cost *does not* include:

- Any flights.
- Meals in Pangai.
- Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) accommodation, transfers and meals.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Airport taxes (if any).
- Travel insurance.
- Snorkelling gear.
- Single supplement fee.
- Tips.
- Items of a personal nature such as WIFI and laundry.
- Expenses incurred as a result of delays due to inclement weather, flight delays, logistical delays and resultant changes to the itinerary.
- Emergency evacuation charges.

Money to Bring With You

Consider bringing TOP\$50-T\$100 in small denominations on the kayak trip for purchasing handicrafts and drinks at outer island resorts. Budget TOP\$100-125 per day for meals (not including alcohol) and taxis in Nuku'alofa and Pangai.

Currency

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 Ha'apai, you can do so at Westpac Bank of Tonga in Pangai. Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and Saturday 8am to 11am. There are no ATM's in Pangai. The larger accommodation properties, tour operators and restaurants usually accept Visa and MasterCard, a surcharge of 4.5-5% usually applies. Smaller businesses usually accept cash (TOP\$) only.

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.

Tips

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\$4-\$5 per day per person for each guide.

Baggage Allowances and Airport Shuttle

The maximum baggage allowance for Tonga domestic flights is 23kgs for passengers holding international tickets valid within 24 hours of

travel. Excess baggage is subject to a surcharge and may have to travel on a different flight than you. Please refer to Real Tonga's website for up to date details.

Local taxis operate a shuttle service 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 early hours of the morning). The one way taxi fare is approximately TOP\$10.00 (Pa'anga) 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).

Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them.

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 triple wrapped in a dry bag on the kayak trip so that, in the unlikely event of evacuation, your guides can readily access the document.

Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. You may also like to look up the contact details of your country's consulate in Tonga.

Medical Matters

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Participants aged 65 years or over must also provide a doctor's sign off on their medical form. 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 as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

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

For entry into Tonga there are no statutory vaccinations at the time of writing, however, you should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information. Every participant should have a current tetanus vaccination and we recommend vaccinations against hepatitis, typhoid and polio.

Dental

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

Mosquito-borne diseases in Tonga

Mosquito-borne illnesses, such as Dengue Fever, occur most years in Tonga, especially during the summer months (December to May) when the weather is hot and humid and there is a high prevalence of mosquitoes. Zika virus is also present in Tonga and pregnant women should take extra care to protect themselves from insect bites. As long as 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 throughout the day and night. Our tents are screened and rooms at our preferred accommodation properties have mosquito screening on the window and/or mosquito nets over the beds. It's a good idea to close all doors before dusk when the majority of mosquitos come out. Our guides select breezy campsites to keep the mosquitoes at bay.

Medical Supplies

On our trips into more isolated areas we carry a comprehensive medical kit.

In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Medication (pain relief, anti-inflammatory, mild anti-nausea drugs).
- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SPF30).
- Lip protectant (SPF30+).
- Band-aid strips (water-proof).
- Antiseptic swaps and cream.
- Antihistamine cream (for insect bites).
- Antibiotic cream or powder (powder is better for tropical climates).
- Insect repellent (containing DEET).
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness.
- A mild antiseptic soap/liquid hand wash.

It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. Consider giving your trip leader half your medication for safekeeping in case your supply gets lost or wet.

If you are prone to any health disturbances (e.g. easily infected cuts or severe migraines) please remember to bring any preventative medications.

Hospitals

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu and Niu'ui Hospital in Pangai (Ha'apai) 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.

Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

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 kayak hatches. Please bring no more than two medium sized (20-25 litre) dry bags per person; one for clothing, the other for miscellaneous items plus one small (10L) dry bag for items you need to access in the cockpit (e.g. wallet, documents, sun screen etc). A mesh bag containing your snorkelling gear and an optional summer weight sleeping bag is

additional to the above items. Nylon stuff sacks lined with one or two heavy-duty garbage bags are a more affordable option if you do not already have dry bags. However, a dry bag for the cockpit is essential. Camera and optical equipment should be waterproofed and insured.

Any excess baggage not needed while kayaking can be left at your guesthouse, however this is at your own risk.

Quick-dry clothing is recommended for Tonga's warm tropical climate. Long-sleeved shirts with a collar offer good sun protection. Long loose pants and socks provide protection from mosquitoes. Lava-lavas (two metre wrap-around cloth) may be purchased in Tonga. It is advisable to bring along two lava-lavas, one for wearing over shorts or a swimsuit when entering a village and a clean one for other occasions.

Gear List

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

Essential Items:

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- 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. A lightweight capilene or polypropylene top may be suitable.
- Swimwear.
- T-shirts (long and short sleeved).
- A lycra sun top is useful for snorkelling.
- One pair of light-weight, quick drying, full length trousers.
- Two pairs of shorts.
- Two lava lavas (can also double up as a second sheet).
- Very light-weight fleece jacket (not a heavy jacket), i.e. Polartec 100 is sufficient, or a sweatshirt.
- Sleeping sheet.
- Sleeping bags are not generally required with fairly mild nights but you might like to bring a small airline size blanket. If you tend to feel the cold and choose to bring a sleeping bag, ensure it is lightweight, very compact and zips open.
- One pair of running shoes (recommend to get away from wet sandals and sand in the evenings.) Not expensive as they may get wet.
- Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly.
- Lightweight socks and underwear.

- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal, or a medium sized hand towel).
- Minimal toiletries (a bio-degradable soap that will lather in salt water is very useful). Bring unbleached toilet paper.
- Medical supplies as per section above.
- A headlamp or small torch and batteries.
- One or two 1-litre water bottles—the type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- Dry bags (2X 20-25L and 1X10L) or nylon stuff sacks lined with heavy duty garbage bags.
- Small TOP\$ notes.
- Plastic Ziplock bags, large and small.
- Snorkelling gear is not provided nor is it readily available to hire, so you should bring your own mask, snorkel and fins stored in a mesh carry bag. Really keen divers might bring a small but bright waterproof torch for night snorkelling.
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling.
- Pillow case or very small pillow (e.g. airline pillow). It must fit into your dry bag. A pillow case can give you the flexibility to make for a comfortable sleep.
- Favourite snacks. Healthy snacks, such as dried fruit or granola/muesli bars can be hard to buy in Tonga. We recommend you pack a few of your favourite snacks for the kayak trip.

Optional items:

- Camera, with waterproof container if the camera is not waterproof.
- A book/reading matter.
- 10 metres of lightweight clothesline.
- Drink crystals.
- Fishing lures and hand line.
- Binoculars.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash.
- Ear plugs—noisy roosters!!
- Half wetsuit 3mm (Jun-Sep).

Delays or Problems

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:: +676 8748506. 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 Ventures 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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