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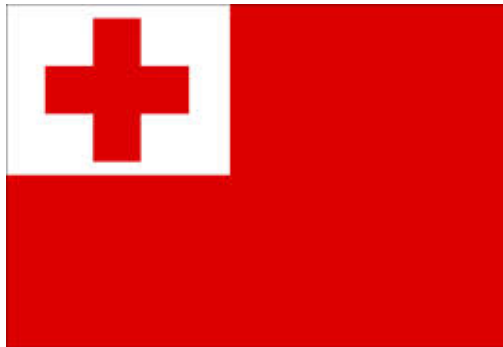
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TRANS OCEAN NO FOREIGN LAND

# Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga, South Pacific, Café Tropicana. **SailingTonga Port Officer Guide**

GPS Coordinates of location: Lat: **18°41' 60 S** Lon: **174°1' 60 W** Port Officer Guide Since 2023 Version 2026/8



## Description of geographic area covered:

The **Vava'u Island group in the Kingdom of Tonga** is a spectacular tropical island paradise in the Pacific Ocean. It has a year-round climate suitable for swimming, snorkelling, diving and sailing. Some islands are ringed by white sand beaches while others have tropical forests, sea-level caves, and dramatic limestone cliffs with breath-taking vistas.

Remote and truly unspoiled, the waters around Vava'u are crystal clear with visibility exceeding 100 feet. Most of the islands are uninhabited, a few have villages, and a few have very small unique resorts with exceptional food. There is abundant sea life with over 100 species of colourful tropical fish, giant clams, manta rays, sea turtles, spinner dolphins, and July-October the Humpback whales! Truly a paradise with the only Polynesian Monarchy this is a truly remarkable place to explore.



Greg Just  
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Mobile: +676 8812347 or +676 7512347  
Whatsapp **+676 8812347**  
Café Landline +676 71322

Viber: +676 8812347  
Twitter: @tongamazingweb  
Instagram: tongamazingcom  
Whatsapp group contributor  
VHF Ch: 60 "Tropicana"  
Citizen: NZ/UK/Tonga  
Divemaster IT Manager ITIL/PMP/CCNA  
Yachtie Master Drycleaner (nz) Treasury Analyst  
Website: [www.vavau.to/tropicana](http://www.vavau.to/tropicana)  
Agent [www.tongasuperyachts.com](http://www.tongasuperyachts.com) #  
Menu/Deli <https://cafetropicnavavau.business.site/>  
Media [www.offloop.net/media](http://www.offloop.net/media) password tropo  
[www.vavau.to](http://www.vavau.to) #  
[www.haapai.to](http://www.haapai.to) #  
[www.tongatapu.to](http://www.tongatapu.to) #  
[www.whaleswim.to](http://www.whaleswim.to) # Booking site, whale info  
[www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com) # online cruising guide home  
[www.pacificcruisingassoc.com](http://www.pacificcruisingassoc.com) # PCA home  
[www.tongamazing.com](http://www.tongamazing.com) # Booking site ALL  
[www.cruiseshiptonga.com](http://www.cruiseshiptonga.com) # Cruiseship info/booking  
[www.tongaholidays.com](http://www.tongaholidays.com) # Spare  
[www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf) Whats on in Tonga  
[www.vavau.to/whales.html](http://www.vavau.to/whales.html) Whale Swim Rules

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<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> or  
[paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com) or  
<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-fight-ataxia-and-support-greg-justs-journey> or  
<https://patreon.com/PacificCruisingAssociation> or  
<https://www.predictwind.com/?ref=pacificcruisinga>  
SSOC

Services available from **Café Tropicana**:  
Offshore assist via [offshoreassist@vavau.to](mailto:offshoreassist@vavau.to)  
Advanced Notice forms – Fiji/NZ/Australia.  
Courier package assistance/advice on request  
Snail Mail/Courier arrangements  
Yacht in transit SY Yacht Name c/- Café Tropicana  
Fatafehi Rd (or Private Bag 34 for Postal Service)  
Neiafu, Vava'u  
Kingdom of Tonga +676 71322  
Charts/Chartlets/Courtesy flags for the area  
Receiver of used oil/lead battery/dirty fuel  
Fully licenced bar  
Pre shop of supermarket provision items  
Resell Kingdom Koffee. Beans/Ground to order.  
Solar powered USB recharging points 2025.  
Vava'u Deli: meats, delicatessen items  
Resell TCC/Digicel phone credit, Digicel Sms  
Gift Vouchers. Games (chess, poker ...

Only Vava'u, main island, on grid solar producer. Since 2013, 29000kwh produced  
LPG tank refill – most adaptors. Petrol/diesel refill and loan 200L fuel bottles. Tuesday and Friday 9am  
Laundry: only frontloading rain water laundry. 3 wash, 5 dryers. Max 9kg per load. [www.vavau.to/laundry](http://www.vavau.to/laundry) #  
Ice cubes and 2kg solid ice blocks – rain water [www.vavau.to/ice](http://www.vavau.to/ice) #  
Provisioning for whales/picnics/passage. [www.vavau.to/deli](http://www.vavau.to/deli) #  
TV 800+series (11TB) and 10TB Movie (8000+) Documentaries, Concerts, Music, Comedy, Children, Fitness, Christian, Wiki offline. [www.offloop.net/media](http://www.offloop.net/media) # password tropo  
Harbour wifi provider SSID "Vava'u Net" Free info, weather coming soon. [www.vavau.to/net](http://www.vavau.to/net) #  
Shopping holding service (and frozen) while you shop in town.  
Espresso Coffee/Café/Bread/all day breakfast/lunch/Dinner  
Drinking water: pottable filtered rain water, your container or our 20 litre loan container, free car ride to your yacht at wharf, small boat marina or Beluga Diving dock.  
Hot rain water shower, no singing unless you can sing opera WELL.  
Retail Store – carvings/maps/soaps/postcards/ magnets/iron on flags/lapel pins/cuff links... Vava'u vanilla/coconut oil  
Free booking and information service. Go to guy for help...  
Famous in Vava'u "[www.vavau.to/bluewall.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/bluewall.jpg)" comedy wall and "[www.vavau.to/vavaucyclone.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/vavaucyclone.jpg)"  
Huge free book swap and reference library. Free 200gb ebooks/audio books – HDD only please  
Rentals – mountain bikes, kayaks, snorkel gear, tents, cars, scooters  
Local news/info feed Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals)  
**Eftpos AVAILABLE**, no fuel stations.  
Spare parts (pc/electrical and a huge range of loanable tools)  
Agent for [Boat House Apartments](http://www.vavau.to/boatapartments) in the harbour. Hotel information source [www.vavau.to/compendium.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/compendium.pdf)  
Qualified Massage Therapist, Portable massage table, chair massage: TENs unit, heat pad, Massage Gun, Swedish and Rock,  
40" TV + 4k webcam, wireless keyboard/mouse(Video conferencing/movies/presentations/sports/music/TV)  
A few people here have called me Grumpy Greg, because I don't smile much. I didn't have a great childhood and now have a degenerative terminal disease. If you listen to opinions about other people, you are going to have a shallow life. Have those people helped the Vava'u community, or just take from the country??  
Please advise corrections/suggestions to [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to)

Community Assistance

- 08-17 SAR Coordinator
- 14 on ADS-B host [www.flightradar.com](http://www.flightradar.com)
- 14 on AIS host [www.marinetraffic.com](http://www.marinetraffic.com)
- 14-17 Formed Vava'u Blue Water Festival, gifted to VTA 2018 to manage, 2024 name change obsolete
- 14 on news, info mainly affecting Tonga [www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals)
- 14 to 19 wrote Cruising guide for Tonga, assist SV Soggy Paws
- 16 on, 2 rubbish bins in town and Mt Talau
- 18 on, free reading glasses for locals
- 18 on formed Pacific Cruising Association
- 20 on, formed Vava'u Community Trust NGO Youth sailing, education, employment Trust CT-199
- 23 on [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf)
- 25 on Vavau Cruisers VHF Net host
- 27 IAB Internet in a box wiki wifi
- 27 [www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com) completed



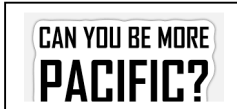
The best darn café in Vava'u,  
The Swiss Army knife of Cafes

Fatafehi Rd, Neiafu, Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga  
Private Bag 34, Neiafu, Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga  
Email [tropicana@vavau.to](mailto:tropicana@vavau.to) VHF 26 "Tropicana"  
Website [www.vavau.to/tropicana](http://www.vavau.to/tropicana) SSID "Vava'u Net"  
Ph +676 71322 Mob +676 8812347 (Whats App) or +676 7512347  
[www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) moving to [www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com) iframed to [www.noforeignland.com](http://www.noforeignland.com)



Ocean Cruising Club - Port Officer

Pacific Cruising Association. Port Officer/Secretary  
2027 FREE NZ WEBINARS/videos NZ RCC, NZ Marinas Association, NZ Passage planning...Independent, safe, best practice passage planning to NZ. Pacific countries briefings. Not a rally or Festival.  
JOIN [www.facebook.com/pacificcruisingassoc](https://www.facebook.com/pacificcruisingassoc) for invite to videos and dates of webinars.



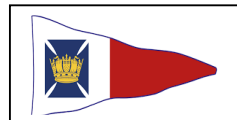
Seven Seas Cruising Association - Port Officer



Cruising Association – Honorary Local Representative



Island Cruising New Zealand - annual rally - Port Officer



The Royal Cruising Club – Port Officer



Noonsite.com - Ambassador



No Foreign Land – Country Provider



Transocean – Port Officer



Oyster Rally – bi annual rally 2026/8/10 - landbase



World Arc Rally – annual rally - info provider



Pacific Posse – annual rally - info provider



Grand Large Yachting World Odyssey – three yearly rally 2026/29/32 - info provider

### Whatsapp group contributor for Tonga

Video/info to promote Tonga Marine Tourism  
[www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4) [to do](#)  
[www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf)

Video/Info Passage planning to NZ  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf)  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4) [to do](#)

Tonga Expats and Locals - News portal - admin  
[www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals)

Sailingtonga.com - Facebook admin  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sailingtonga>

Future home of this and other tongan guides  
[www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com)

### Guide to whats on in Tonga

[www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf)

Guide to Cruiseship Tonga  
[www.vavau.to/cruiseshiptonga.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/cruiseshiptonga.pdf)



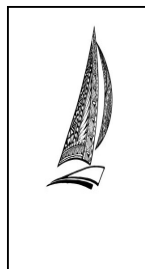
The South Pacific Adventure:  
Riviera Owners – Annual Rally – Info Provider



Mini Globe Race 580 Mini Yachts– 4 yearly Rally  
2029/33/37 – Info Provider

Vava'u Sailing Festival late September.

NZ Quarantine and Customs officials on site along with NZ arrival ports.



Best NZ practice advice to leave from Vava'u or Ha'apai for NZ unless you are collecting crew in Nukualofa. You can have crew fly in from Nadi direct to Vava'u on Air Fiji. Better line to Minerva. Avoid a semi active volcano!

End of season storms are common in Nuku'alofa. Not a big cruising area. Not a better line to Minerva from Nuku'alofa! Commercial harbour, will take longer to check out

This guide will move to its permanent home [www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com) with a lot more content when I can, an automatic redirect to the new page for [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf). It will have a translation tool into other languages, searchable by subject, hosted on wifi and a few other surprises when it is converted to a web page.

All information is from my observations as a resident of Vava'u (since 2007) and citizen of Tonga (since 2015), it is given freely to improve tourism. I have sailed since I was 12, attended Outward Bound Anakiwa at 21. I have about 150 days of blue water sailing, Sunburst to yachts to a Tall ship. NZ to Tonga 13 times. I am a Padi Divemaster. Voluntereed for 2 years with NZ coastguard, Vava'u for 10 years with VERA (SAR). One of only a few business that have sailed, 1 of 3 that have done NZ passage, and the only 1 to have done it more than once...

I encourage yachts to join a Cruising Association of your choice, for those unforeseen events, sense of community, encourage the industry. Often I have been called blunt, this information is not to promote myself or my business, but to help you and Tonga. It is not a comparison and recommendation of providers (as some compendiums have done in 2023– if you wish to compare then use every provider, if you list a comment from one then talk to the other providers!). Although I have placed WARNING notices on a few things/business – too many confirmed complaints to ignore. Ask if the operators recommend others, if they don't or won't help that gives you an indication of the persons character. Fair winds, following Seas. Leave only your wake and footprints in the sand, give more than you take...

I will add additional information on Ha'apai, Tongatapu, Eua, Niu when I can afford to travel, or get information from these Islands that is pertinent. I own a struggling Cafe with a TOP185k+ loan since COVID, no time, and can no longer sail due to illness. If you wish to help with projects to help cruisers, like the following for example, come in and see me

Surveymonkey questions. Assist zuluwaterways.com with info. Drone/pic of POI. Passage plan to Fiji/Aus. Pacific cruising calendar  
[openstreetmaps.com/google earth gps info](https://openstreetmaps.com/google-earth-gps-info). Edit promo vid for Tonga. [sailingtonga.com](http://sailingtonga.com) create wordpress.

Repair SY Lobo (sail school). Start sailing school. Convert PO guide to html. Help complete AID applications for various projects.

Complete Anchorage guide. Create Stopover in Tonga online pdf. Gather missing info from Ha'apai/Nukualofa.

Suggest itineraries sailing/activities. Build online app for SailingTonga. Review PO guide content ideas. Get Yacht Stats 2008 on.

Donate [www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana](http://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana) and state Cruising ONLY, or fund a project Any questions or suggestions for content are welcomed. [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to) [www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana](http://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana) SY Two Moons

Supporters of my free information services, please support them: [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

1. I get no AID money, industry or government funding for [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf), which has been going since 2023, my cruising guide was written in 2014. It is online only as things change so frequently, and to costly to print.

Unlike another stopover guide, funded in 2025 by Australia Market Development Facility (Aus AID agency), performed by [www.archipelagoes.net](http://www.archipelagoes.net), which plagiarised a lot of my copyrighted info without permission, has been printed, and has a considerable number of minor and a few major mistakes.

They just did the same in Vanuatu, feedback is "effectively useless for a real cruising yacht: it's more like a travel brochure"

In my opinion they should have supported local content providers like myself and Rocket Guides.

If you read my entire document you will see how much time has gone into it. The intention was to increase yachting tourism by providing useful impartial information. It is downloaded 2,500+ annually, it now carries content that assist all tourists, locals, expats and diaspora, as finding information can be a bit of a mission.

2. Whats app "SailingTonga" <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGNX> was started in 2024 so that correct, impartial options and "clip the ticket" charging stopped on another Whats App sailing group.

3. [www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals) was started in 2014 with the intention of providing "non fluffy" social media posts to help highlight and educate locals, diaspora, expats. It has 13,100+ members, a considerable number of tourists, yachties, government and overseas agencies are members. Answers from the community have assisted a huge number of people. It was particularly helpful during Covid 19 and after the HTHH Volcano on 15/1/22.

4. I attempted to start a sailing and swimming school. COVID and ill health put a stop to this. Attempts to assist the sailing community are ongoing and seeking funding. Webcams on docks and the harbour, Weather Stations and a huge list....

5. In 2027 I and friends are activating Pacific Cruising Association (PCA). The intention is to provide free, best practice non-rally, non festival, LOCAL information and advice, to counter commercial "non-local experts" that profit from Pacific Island cruising and do not promote safe, best practice routing. Information is out of date as it has not been updated and has relied on previous people and port officers for updates (I am done providing information and not being supported in return).

My intentions are to 1. Promote Tonga (I am based here), our government abandoned the industry in COVID, MDF supported Fiji to get "blue lanes" going which saw them through COVID. Island Cruising was formed with this aim in mind... respect the history! 2. Promote all Pacific Island all marina, yards unlike SPSN members, marina, yards. Vanuatu, Wallis&Futuna, Samoa, Solomons, Cooks, Niue.

3. Promote staying off season in Pacific Island countries, rather than festivals that MAINLY promote NZ.

4. Promote local knowledge resources (guides) not SPSN stopover guides (because of the huge errors) and hit and

run methods

5. Provide AID/Donor to tackle sailing tourism projects to improves cruising and also marine for locals All countries can participate Projects to aid in sailing tourist

6. Promote safe, best practice passage planning to NZ if yachts choose not to stay during cyclone season. Rather than rallies that don't.

7. Promote best value NZ yards

8. Promote ALL NZ ports, and encourage cruising around NZ after maintenance, travel home etc. Rather than some

NZ Ports that don't promote their own country for sailing.

Any assistance for PCA organisation and the PCA projects is gladly accepted <https://patreon.com/PacificCruisingAssociation>

Any assistance is appreciated via [www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana](http://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana) or [paypal.me/greg.just@windowlive.com](https://paypal.me/greg.just@windowlive.com) or supporting or donating at Café Tropicana in Vava'u. Nearly all marketing by business in Tonga is aimed at marketing their business ONLY, unlike myself. Give a little to get a little. Pay it forward!!! A lot of my supporters are contributing for the time I invest to my port officer guide, Facebook Tonga expats and locals, VHF net controller and also contribute to whatsapp groups.

I have a terminal neurological disease called Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) it's nickname is the "evil cousin of Parkinsons". It affects my walking, balance, vision, fine motor control, drop things frequently, cognitive and motivation issues. Reverend Jess Jackson died of this disease in 2025. I am currently Stage 3, Stage 4 I will have to return to a NZ Hospice probably 2027.

TOP140 p.a. (Group means shared ownership companies is also TOP140p.a) includes advertising on the following

- [www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf) (see detailed summary of supporters) New 2025 as many services are seasonal as we just don't have tourists like we used to!
- [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) 1,500+ downloads annually
- [www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals) 14,600+ members
- Mentioned on VHF 26 Cruisers Net
- Whatsapp groups

A huge Malo Aupito to the following supporters and advertisers and a few anonymous supporters that appreciate my country information/marketing attempts. These providers can advertise on FB Tonga Expats and Locals, flyer on [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf), listed in [www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf)

Cafe Tropicana – Café Vava'u – [www.vavau.to/tropicana](http://www.vavau.to/tropicana)

Group Tongan beach resort – Accommodation Vava'u – [www.thetongan.com](http://www.thetongan.com)

Group Boathouse Apartments – Accommodation Vava'u - <https://boathouse-tonga.com/>

Group Dive Tonga – [www.divingtonga.com](http://www.divingtonga.com)

Group Whalewatch – [www.thetonga.com](http://www.thetonga.com)

NOV. Ax Factor dive – Diving Vava'u - [www.axfactordive.com](http://www.axfactordive.com)

Harbour View Resort – Accommodation Vava'u - <https://www.harbourviewresort.com/>

Group Billfish Apartments – Accommodation Vava'u - [www.vavau.to/billfishflyer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/billfishflyer.pdf)

Group Fighting Lady Fish Charters – Fishing Charters Vava'u - [www.vavau.to/fightingladyflyer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/fightingladyflyer.pdf)

Mia Beauty – Hair, massage, Beauty Nukualofa - [www.facebook.com/miahairandbeautytonga/](https://www.facebook.com/miahairandbeautytonga/)

Toafa Guest Lodge – Accommodation Eua - [www.vavau.to/toafalodge.png](http://www.vavau.to/toafalodge.png)

Group Lagoon Apartments – Accommodation Nukualofa - [www.vavau.to/lagoonapartments.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/lagoonapartments.pdf)

Group PTH – Hardware Timber Nukualofa & Vava'u - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556285582052>

Group Leoila Duty Free – Duty Free Nukualofa and Vava'u - [www.facebook.com/leiolagroup](https://www.facebook.com/leiolagroup)

Group Wantok – Starlink reseller TONGA - [www.facebook.com/WantokTonga](https://www.facebook.com/WantokTonga)

Fale Tonga – Accommodation Nukualofa - <https://www.vavau.to/faletonga.pdf>

Seven Seas Cruising Association – Cruising Association International - <https://ssca.org/>

Group Takeaway Taxis (food delivery, couriers, vehicle rentals) [www.takeawaytaxis.com](http://www.takeawaytaxis.com)

Group Programming (apps, web development)

2/26 Praesedia Security Smoke alarms, monitoring, cctv, guard services [www.praesidia-alliance.net](http://www.praesidia-alliance.net)



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vavau.harbourview@gmail.com

Toula, Vava'u, The Kingdom of Tonga



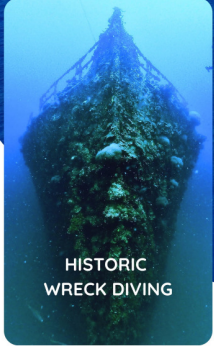
SEE MORE



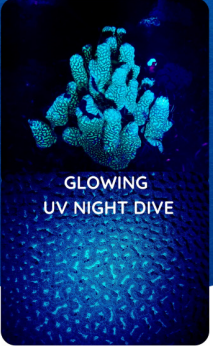
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CONTACT US:



Toula Village, Vava'u Tonga  
Rd opposite City Impact

www.axfactordive.com

+676 8646152



## Billfish Holiday Apartments Vava'u

Vava'u Sport Fishing Charters Ltd



Two self-contained apartments featuring one king size bed and two single beds with full kitchen, fridge, microwave, outdoor BBQ, full bathroom, ceiling fans, aircon, outdoor table and chairs, sun lounges, harbor-view, and much more. All linen, crockery, cutlery and towels are supplied. Ideally situated on the beautiful Port of Refuge Harbour foreshore with its own wharf, beautiful garden with fruit trees, very private, and about a 5 minutes taxi ride into Neiafu township.

Billfish Apartments can be your home away from home for vacation, business, group adventures or a romantic getaway

Mob: (676) 844 5352

Find us on FB: <https://www.facebook.com/Billfish-Apartments-Vavau>

Email: [chrisandnora@live.com.au](mailto:chrisandnora@live.com.au)

Web: [www.vavauholidayrentals.com](http://www.vavauholidayrentals.com) or [www.gamefish.com](http://www.gamefish.com)

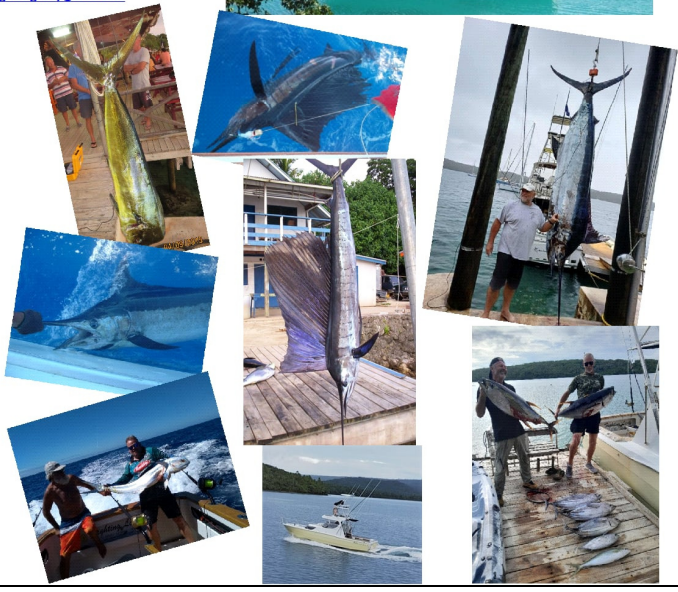


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Interlink Control  
Fire Blanket

Available at Praesidia Alliance Limited, Fatafehi Road, Neiafu

Extinguishers



2.5Kg ABE \$185.00  
4.5Kg ABE \$255.00  
9Kg ABE \$425.00  
9L FOAM \$675.00  
1m Fire Blanket \$55.00  
2.5Kg / 5Kg CO2 by order  
\* all prices include CT

Smoke Alarm (10 year battery) \$130.00  
Heat Alarm (10 year battery) \$130.00  
Wireless Interlink Control Switch \$140.00

Contact Us  
info@praesidia-alliance.net  
7757750 / 8858850 24/7



PAL 24/7 Operations Centre, Bypass Road, Ma'ufanga, Tongatapu



PAL Regional Operations Centre



**Praesidia Alliance**

*Praesidia Alliance Limited [ PAL ] has opened an office in Vava'u, Fatafehi Road, Neiafu, beside the BSP ATM in the Leiola building.*

*The original office is on Bypass Road, Ma'ufanga, Tongatapu*

*PAL, established in 2011 and 100% Tongan owned, is Tonga's leading protective services provider specialising in 24/7 monitored intruder and fire alarms, security consultancy, video surveillance systems, guards, patrols, alarm response units, fire safety equipment and related services. PAL provides full time employment for 60+ staff.*

**Do you have fire extinguishers in your building, how old are they, do they need replacement?**

**Do you have smoke alarms in your home and business? Are they 10 year alarms?**

**To update your fire safety equipment or surveillance or guard service visit or call PAL's offices 7757750, 8858850 info@praesidia-alliance.net 24 x 7.**

**OP-ed: Smoke and Heat alarms.**

**10 year smoke and heat alarms are the only way to go in the Kingdom. A smoke alarm is a legal requirement for ALL accommodation (Air BNB, apartment, resort and hotels etc). A heat alarm is a legal requirement for restaurants and cafes. A life saving addition to your home or business. The smoke and heat alarms can be linked wirelessly or standalone. Traditional 9volt alarms just don't last in the Kingdom, last less then 6 months and rust out.**

**Fire extinguishers**

**Quality extinguishers. Legal requirement for restaurants and cafes, 1 per room minimum. Again, a great addition to your car, business vehicles, home or business! Extinguishers suitable for lithium batteries (solar installations) are being priced currently.**

**Fire Blankets**

**Legal requirement for accommodation with kitchen facilities, restaurants and cafe kitchens. Or your home to put out small fires before they get out of control...**

**Monitored intruder, video surveillance systems**

**From personal experience, this is an invaluable service whether you are onsite or after hours. Recorded footage can be used for proof, prosecution of so much. Release of footage requires the owners (Harry Garrahy) interaction, not just permission. High-definition quality cameras, wifi controllers are installed professionally to provide maximum coverage.**

**GPS monitoring of vehicles**

**Again from personal experience, this service can quickly pay itself back in overtime, fuel, maintenance, accidents, speeding tickets, stolen revenue. and so much more.**

**Invest in safety and security. Fire, damage and theft are far more expensive!**

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**[WWW.VAVAU.TO/CRUISESHIPTONGA.PDF](http://WWW.VAVAU.TO/CRUISESHIPTONGA.PDF) [WWW.CRUISESHIPTONGA.COM](http://WWW.CRUISESHIPTONGA.COM) [RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENT] .....** **41**

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**PACIFIC CRUISING ASSOCIATION WILL HOST A WEBINAR IN JUNE, AUGUST, MID SEPTEMBER AND MID OCTOBER IN COLLABORATION WITH NZ MPI, NZ RCC, NZ MARINAS ASSOCIATION AND AN INDEPENDENT (AND SAFE) PASSAGE PLANNING DOWN TO NZ. VIDEOS WILL BE ONLINE AND REPLACED AS LEGISLATION AND SERVICES CHANGES.....56**

**NZ IS CONSIDERED A CYCLONE SAFE DESTINATION WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF SERVICES. ANOTHER OPTION IS TO STAY IN VAVA’U AND CONTINUE TO SAIL, HAULING OUT OR MOVING TO A CYCLONE MOORING IF A CYCLONE OCCURS. ....56**

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# GOVERNMENT/IMPORTANT

## ICE In Case of Emergency

911 or 70699 (vava'u) Fire NO VHF.

922 or 70233 (vava'u) Police VHF 16.

933 or 70201 (vava'u) Hospital NO VHF.

944 or 70798 or 7720115/6 (vava'u) Electricity.

Yachts can also hail 16/26 and ask for emergency assistance, if not an emergency then Whats App "Sailing to Tonga"

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGNX>

*ALL Government departments will give receipts with the Tongan Crest on the top - anything else is NOT an official receipt, DO NOT encourage corruption!!!! See the last page for a summary of fees.*

**Government Ministry lunch break was 12.30pm to 1.30pm, this ended 3 February 2025. I would expect some services will not be available during lunch hours, like cashier services, but who knows.**

Google Earth points of interest – yachts, locals, cruiseship. <https://vavau.to/cafetropicalnavavau.kmz>

## Tonga Government Fee summary for yachts [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

### Ministry Health

Practique \$100 – first entry port ONLY, \$200 not at dock. Phone health officers rather than waiting \$20 per hour OVERTIME.

### Marine and Ports, outward payment per port (lights and Bouys fee)

Vava'u: \$0.45 per gross tonne per month.

Nuku'alofa: \$2.45 per gross tonne per month.

Ha'apai: \$0.80 per gross tonne per month.

Niuaotupapu: \$100 anchorage. Free on wharf though? Go into Marine and ports for receipts. TOP only, NO BANKS! Do not pay in WINE!! **WARNING**

### Maff/Quarantine

Clearance fee per boat \$22

Rubbish \$0.40 per kg

Overtime \$20 per hour

### Revenue

TIN application for importing capital items for yachts – FREE. Take passport, yacht papers

### Police

Fines of upto \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for swimming with whales on your own. Enforcement of Whale regulations.

Don't drink and drive, do not drink on public streets.

Do not park a car on the right hand side of the road,

Random check points...

PLEASE ASK FOR RECEIPTS EVERYTIME **WARNING**

*UPDATED frequently – please download frequently, content suggestions are appreciated [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to)*

### Customs

**NOW MANDATORY, you must clear in 9am to 4pm!! Saturday/Public Holiday After hours clearance \$140**

Do not come ashore unless cleared by customs, fly Q flag

\$20 per hour OVERTIME

Entry/Exit ports – Nuku'alofa, Lifuka (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), Niuaotupapu

Boat visa 4 months, extend to 12 months on application - FREE

Inter Island Movement forms - FREE

### Immigration

Visa waiver country free 1 month. Schengen Country free 3 months

[https://tongapocketguide.com/do-you-need-a-visa-to-visit-tonga/#elementor-toc\\_heading-anchor-1](https://tongapocketguide.com/do-you-need-a-visa-to-visit-tonga/#elementor-toc_heading-anchor-1)

Non Visa country \$69 1 month

Additional 31 day visa \$69 (max 6 months in total).

A 15 day adult visa \$57.50. Children 31 day visa UNDER 16 \$11.50

ONLY Nuku'alofa and Neiafu can do visa extensions!!

~~One way crew fee \$34.50 (sail in, fly out crew). Immigration. Cancelled Feb 25?~~

One way crew visa \$34.50 (fly in, sail out crew) (Nuku'alofa, Neiafu can process).

Visa expired/other breach fine \$1150. DO NOT LET THIS LAPSE **WARNING**

Overtime \$20 an hour

### Fisheries

Vava'u use of Fisheries wharf during clear in/out, refuelling \$20, a receipt should be given. Enforcement of SMA/FHR Act (marine reserves).

**Check in, Check out ports. Nuku'alofa Tongatapu, Lifuka Ha'apai, Neiafu Vava'u, Niuaotupapu.**

Fees are required to be paid at the time of entry, I suggest you carry some Tongan cash, if you ask Customs they may permit someone to go to the ATM to get local currency in Nuk'ualofa, Ha'apai and Vava'u.. They may take foreign currency also, but you might not get change...

**WARNING Niuaotupapu DOES NOT HAVE BANKS, take Tongan cash! WARNING**

Pre-arrival into Tonga [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Complete Advanced Notice of Arrival <https://vavau.to/tongaanoa.pdf> and NEW email to [information@customs.gov.to](mailto:information@customs.gov.to) or fax +676 24124 at least 24 hours prior to arrival, an email confirmation will normally be sent. Covid vaccination is not required any more.

-Remember it is illegal to charter your yacht in Tonga, do you really want to lose your boat?

-Guns must be handed in at your arrival port, they will be returned when you leave. This includes bb pellet pistols, rifles.

-All recreational drugs are Class A here. A recent group of locals and expats were handed down 2 to 15 year sentences in 2022 for Cocaine offences.

A text version is on another page for low internet connections. [ANOA Text version](#)

ANOA details are checked and verified against Interpol and Pacific Customs Intelligence units, don't mess around!

**Customs:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

**International check in** (first Tongan port – AT WHARF, unless bad weather, but call Customs to confirm)

Fly your Q flag; call Vava'u Customs on VHF 26/16, they will answer, wait for Customs, Health and Immigration (\$100 Practique FEE) to check you in. NO OTHER FEES, apart from overtime. Clear your cockpit of any cigarettes, alcohol, fishing lures and smaller items. We DO NOT encourage gifts to Government officials! Offer a sprite, coffee or juice...

Customs are open business hours Monday to Friday (lunch time 12:30pm to 1:30pm), Saturday till noon. You do not have to Clear in Saturday or after hours, an overtime fee of \$140 is charged on Saturday morning. Fly your Q flag, DO NOT come ashore, or allow non crew aboard – fines are \$1150 per person, plus deportation, confiscation of your vessel as in most countries!

Print customs forms and complete prior to arrival to speed your checkin process up. Same for departure forms. If a lot of yachts are arriving/departing at the same time it can really speed the process up!

Suitable casual attire to show respect please. Shirts, shorts, no see through clothing

**Map of Vava'u harbour with description:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

International Clearance (domestic checkin does not require coming alongside)



Depth at customs wharf 10m+, depth at fishermans wharf 4m.. You will be instructed to tie up to the main wharf on the west side, in front of a container, lined up with your bow towards the main shore. This area is fenced off from the rest of the wharf. Occasionally the fishing wharf has to be used – a fee is charged \$20, a receipt should be offered. A sunken fishing boat is at the western end of the wharf since 2020 it is owned privately..

Also an island of silt is 50m off the wharf at the eastern end. It has been increasing for many years from the storm drains in `town.

A dock hand will (should) direct you into position and assist with line-handling. It is advisable to sling your fenders horizontally to protect your vessel from the hard rubber wharf bumpers which are spaced well apart. Ferry dock schedule is subject to change, you will be told to move quickly if a domestic ferry comes in.

Drone footage day and night comparison footage coming soon. Side by side comparison of day vs no moon. Harbour entrance, customs wharf, market marina, small boat marina, harbour town side and utulei side. **COMING SOON.**

Opencpn free chart overlay (SMA/FHR marine reserve overlay <https://www.vavau.to/opencpnvavaucharts.zip>)

VHF16 to Marine and ports or Customs. No one is allowed to assist vessels checking in on the VHF apart from Customs and Marine and Ports. New RULE since 2024.

WARNING: rats, cockroaches etc have walked along mooring lines onto a vessel. A recent case proved expensive (upto AUD5000) entering Australia after recent rat poo was found by Australian Border Force

Domestic Ferry Schedules: (re ferry ramp)

FISA – RED Ferry <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076080790143>

Tofa Ramsay - Blue Ferry <https://www.facebook.com/tofaramsayshipping>

Kelesi – white Ferry <https://www.facebook.com/groups/912112239745156>

Malau <https://www.facebook.com/malau.shipping.2025>

**International checkout;** (last Tongan port - AT WHARF, unless bad weather). Immigration Office (only if you have crew flying in on one-way flights), then Marine and Ports to pay Lights and Buoy fee, then Customs and duty free fuel can begin once an Export permit has been written by customs. You need to preorder the fuel 24 hours plus with Pacific Energy (70972) you DO NOT HAVE to order it with customs!

Check calendar in Tonga for holidays, cruise ships, tides, sports and other events, also your destination country calendar for ETA. Nothing worse than prepping to leave and an event is on! **Pacific Calendar TO DO**

As in ALL countries, you must leave the harbour and make your way out of Tongan waters... If you have issues VHF Customs and request return permission.

The ONLY FEE payable on exit is to Ports and Marine unless you check out on weekends or overtime!!!

DO NOT LOSE your Clearance/ZARPE documents! We have had several cases of people losing these.

DO NOT forget to complete your Advanced Notice of Arrivals for Fiji, NZ, and Australia etc.... massive fines! Take a hard copy of the notice with you, it will be required. Take local currency with you checkin fees are FJD600+ NZD 100 AUD ? Vanuatu ? New Cal ? Samoa USD? W Samoa ?

Fiji you must go to a quarantine ball, NZ/Aus you must go to a quarantine dock.

Check your passport is not within 6 months of expiring!

Cafe Tropicana has NZ yacht arrival packs – FREE. These have all the forms and information on arriving into NZ for a yacht

Customs, Health, Immigration have the option of coming aboard to check you out of the country.

**Recheckin (mechanical/medical forces return prior to entering another country)**

You may want to ask for a fellows cruisers help or Whatsapp group “sailing to Tonga” <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGNX> OR CALL Customs on VHF 16 and explain circumstances. Mechanical take pics and arrange help as required, Medical make arrangements to have doctors as required. Customs will normally assist with immigration. Involve Police and Fire Services as required. They may also allow cruisers to assist, if required, just ask fist.

Domestic checkouts just have CANCELLED written across them and refiled.

International checkouts also have CANCELLED written across them and refiled.

Do not mess around and take this for granted. At the end of it all, stop by and express your appreciation please.

Remember to make sure your visa do not expire \$1150 Fine **WARNING!**

**Domestic checkout** (not your final Tongan port. You DO NOT need to take the boat to the WHARF).

Marine and ports to pay lights and buoys FEE, then Boarding Officer at Customs for local movement report – NO OTHER FEES, apart from overtime.

CHECK your visa expiry DATES!

You will need boat papers and passports to complete this form.

Local Lights and Buoys fees must be paid at each Island prior to departing.

**Domestic checkin** (not your first Tongan Port. You DO NOT need to take boat to the WHARF).

Anchor, and at your convenience (within 48 hours) visit immigration (copy of the crew list is also required) local movement report from Boarding Officer at Customs. NO FEES, apart from overtime and Lights and Bouys Fee at Marine and Ports

CHECK your visa expiry DATES!

Suggest you take a pic or copy document, as you are not given a receipt!

<p>Vava’u Phone: +676 70053 676 70928 VHF 26/16 GPS: 18°39'7.04"S 173°59'4.18"W Halaevalu Wharf Boarding Officer <a href="mailto:pooikaufusi@gmail.com">pooikaufusi@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Nuku’alofa Phone: 23651 VHF Ch: 16 GPS coord: 21° 8'24.41"S 175°10'45.38"W Location Port Authority Building.</p>
<p>Ha’apai Phone: 60651 VHF Ch: 16 Does check ins once a day at 9am.</p>	<p>Niutatoputapu Phone: None? VHF Ch: 16</p>

**Customs Forms, a good idea to print and complete before you head to customs! Can jump you to the front of the queue if your paper work is ready!!!**

Advance Notice Of Arrival <https://vavau.to/tongaanoa.pdf> Or [https://vavau.to/tongaAdvanceNoticeofArrivalForm\\_FillableVersion.pdf](https://vavau.to/tongaAdvanceNoticeofArrivalForm_FillableVersion.pdf)  
 Inward Report <https://vavau.to/tongainwardreport.pdf>  
 Outward Report <https://vavau.to/tongaoutwardreport.pdf> Or [www.vavau.to/tongaoutwardreport - Fillable Form.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tongaoutwardreport - Fillable Form.pdf)  
 Local Movement Report (Internal) – domestic <https://vavau.to/tongalocalmovement.pdf> Or [www.vavau.to/tongaLocalMovementReport - Fillable Form.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tongaLocalMovementReport - Fillable Form.pdf)  
 Appointed Masters Letter – if owner is absent from vessel. <https://vavau.to/master1.pdf> See later for list of Yacht Masters based here.  
 Outward Clearance C15 – duty free fuel <https://vavau.to/tongaoutwardclearance.pdf> signed by customs prior to fuel truck offloading, full check out does not have to be completed to take on duty free fuel. You need to preorder the fuel 24 hours plus with Pacific Energy (70972) you DO NOT HAVE to order it with customs!

Checkin and out for immigration purposes is done by Customs. New visa, one-way fee, fines, non waiver free visa must be done through Immigration Ministry.

Yachts have a 4 month visa, extendable to maximum 12 months by application prior to former boat visa expiring. See Customs.

Hours 9am 12:30pm. 1:30pm -4.30pm M to F. 9am to Noon Saturday

Website: [www.revenue.gov.to](http://www.revenue.gov.to)

Email: [inforev@revenue.gov.to](mailto:inforev@revenue.gov.to)

NO fees inward/outward

Weekend/holiday clearance \$140

\$20 per hour Sat/Sun OVERTIME.

**Immigration: [Return to Table of Content]**

<p>Vava’u                  Phone:+676 70629 +676 71443 VHF: None                  GPS coord: 18°39'11.99"S 173°58'56.65"W                  Location: Sanft Building I – first floor                  Senior <a href="mailto:sunialilo@gmail.com">sunialilo@gmail.com</a> +676 70629</p>	<p>Nuku’alofa                  Phone: 23969 VHF Ch:                  GPS coord: 21° 7'58.74"S 175°11'55.51"W                  Location: St George building, Kolofou’au</p>
<p>Ha’apai – no extensions                  Phone: NA VHF Ch:</p>	<p>Niuatoputapu – no extensions                  Phone: NA VHF Ch:</p>

Email: [visatonga@gmail.com](mailto:visatonga@gmail.com) [tongapermit@gmail.com](mailto:tongapermit@gmail.com) Not very responsive, all visa/fee’s must be paid in cash, so consider using an agent for one way letters, non waiver country visa. Getting a website 2026

Hours 9am 12:30pm. 1.30pm-4:30pm M to F

Website: No website Phone: 7401888

30 day free visa. 90 day free visa for Schengen countries. Check free list. Maximum 6 months visa.

Country Boarding officer (Nuku’alofa based) 7755160 Havea

\$20 per hour Sat/Sun OVERTIME.

\$69 per 31 day Visa, \$57.50 for 15 day visa. (Café Tropicana does this for \$15 per visa if it has not expired!)

\$11.50 per 31 day under 16 years DO NOT let it expire! \$1150 fine. NO other fees inward/outward

~~One way crew fee \$34.50 (Sail in, Fly out crew), best to pay this to immigration PRIOR to going to the airport. Cancelled Feb 2025?~~

One way crew visa (Fly in, sail out) is required in most countries now. A CAPTAINS LETTER is not sufficient anymore. You have 3 options 1. One way letter from Tongan Immigration TOP\$34.50 is required if you fly in and are going to sail out– must have colour bio page of passport, flight details (must be done again if flights change), has to be done by Vava’u or Nuku’alofa <https://vavau.to/crew1.doc> has all the information you need as a word document, edit the document as required, you must print it for immigration. Has to be paid in cash, you will have to use a local agent in Tongatapu or Vava’u ONLY, ALLOW AT LEAST A WEEK (Café Tropicana does this for \$15 per visa). 2. buy a cancellable return ticket from say Air NZ. 3. a service called [www.onwardticket.com/vavau](http://www.onwardticket.com/vavau) . The fast, easy, and stress-free way to get a verified flight reservation for USD\$16.00.

**Ministry of Health: [Return to Table of Content]**

<p>Vava’u                  Phone: +676 70201 +676 70204 +676 758 4644                  Health Officer 7710338, 7769916, 8845145                  VHF Ch: NONE                  GPS: 18°38'45.06"S 173°59'3.01"W                  Ngu Hospital, Talau, Vava’u                  Senior <a href="mailto:tkmausia@gmail.com">tkmausia@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:vavau.health@health.gov.to">vavau.health@health.gov.to</a>                  +676 7710338 +676 8840197</p>	<p>Nuku’alofa                  Phone: 7400403                  Health Officers 23200 VHF Ch: NA                  GPS coord: 21° 9'19.56"S 175°13'6.79"W                  Location Vaiola Hospital  <a href="mailto:health@health.gov.to">health@health.gov.to</a></p>
<p>Ha’apai                  Phone: 60203 VHF Ch: NA</p>	<p>Niuatoputapu                  Phone: 7585605 80100 VHF Ch: NA</p>

GPS coord: 19°48'12.88"S 174°20'42.81"W  
[haapai.health@health.gov.to](mailto:haapai.health@health.gov.to)  
 Location Niu'ui Hospital, Hihifo

Location  
[niuas.health@health.gov.to](mailto:niuas.health@health.gov.to)

Health Practique form is part of a book.

Hours 9am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm - 4.30pm, M to F

Website: [www.health.gov.to](http://www.health.gov.to) \$100 Practique form is in a book – entry port only. \$200 if not done at wharf. NO other fees inward/outward \$20 per hour Sat/Sun OVERTIME.

Vava'u: An optometrist technician is available at the hospital, Fred Hollows Foundation donated equipment, Dental services are also available, Monday is the busiest day. A private Dental clinic is also in Toula Dr Liane 70054 8788228 7731156

Vava'u: Pharmacy at Hospital. Vava'u has 3 independent pharmacies and doctor by appointment. Universal pharmacy and clinic +676 70213 and Seini's pharmacy and clinic +676 8820427. A third pharmacy is planned to be located in the old ANZ building (same block as Cafe Tropicana) March 2024.

A good idea to carry some PCR test for your own piece of mind.

Dengue, Zika and Chikungunya are in Tonga during the tourist season, bring deet spray etc. Wear light coloured clothes as mosquitos are attracted to dark clothes, perfumes.

Staph is in the shoreline, do not swim if you have open cuts. Clean and cover 2-4 times a day, avoid an infection that requires antibiotics! If you have to stay overnight in the Hospital, you have to supply your own linen, toiletries. Nurses do not look after you as such, you must have family, or friends ... Vava'u VVMRA supplies loan hospital linen kits, suggest a donation.

Do not walk in bare feet. Pigs are wild, faeces can cause staph infections. Coral cuts are common and can become infected quickly.

**Quarantine:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Protecting Tongas plants and animals. Yacht rubbish clearance. Please also contact them regarding procedures for clearing in animals prior to arriving into the county. [www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg)

At this time no restrictions on fruit, veg, food or meat. Best to declare fruit and veg though in case of issues. If you have crew they can bring in frozen meat in an insulated bag, with a receipt,.. Declare it on arrival and pay a very reasonable duty fee.

Bear in mind below regulations as we tend to follow pacific trends.

Fiji has increased biosecurity quarantine standards, no pork, labelled vac packed NZ meat, honey, eggs.

Animals bonded to private yachts, can come ashore after quarantine. NO Government vet in country so this is not a quarantine safe country to take pets to NZ/Fiji (6 months). NZ you must now fly animals in for quarantine. Fiji pets are now not allowed on or off the boat.

Alcohol: list everything! It may be bonded and duty paid on consumed portion

Aus – no pork with bone, meat in cans only, no honey, cheese, eggs

Fiji - labelled nz meat only, no pork, no NZ chicken

NZ – labelled nz meat only, no honey, eggs, no veg

Vava'u Phone: 70635 Location: Quarantine building, next to customs GPS Coord: 18°39'6.90"S 173°59'4.93"W OIC <a href="mailto:tahi.vulangi22@gmail.com">tahi.vulangi22@gmail.com</a> +676 8420147	VHF: no	Nuku'alofa Phone: 24257 Location: Post Harvest Building, Hala Vuna, Touliki GPS coord: 21° 8'23.91"S 175°10'37.59"W	VHF:
Ha'apai Phone: 60400	VHF:	Niatoputapu Phone: 80010	VHF:

Conveyancing Inspection Form is part of a book.

Clearance fee per boat \$22

Rubbish \$0.40 per kg

Overtime \$20 per hour

Hours 8.30am to 12.30pm, 1.30pm to 3pm M to F

Website: [www.maff.gov.to](http://www.maff.gov.to) Email: [info@maff.gov.to](mailto:info@maff.gov.to)

**Marine and Ports:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Vava'u Phone: +676 70100 +676 70657 GPS coord: 18°38'57.61"S 173°58'43.86"W Above Customs, Vava'u wharf, payment of fees behind Customs counter OIC <a href="mailto:Pahafuavao23@gmail.com">Pahafuavao23@gmail.com</a> +676 70639	VHF Ch: NONE	Nuku'alofa Phone: 22555 GPS coord: 21° 8'24.41"S 175°10'45.38"W Location Port Authority Building.	VHF Ch:
Ha'apai		Niatoputapu	

Phone: 60100 VHF Ch:

Phone: 7585506 VHF Ch:

Hours 8.30am - 12pm, 1.30pm - 3pm M to F

Email: [akaufusi@foi.gov.to](mailto:akaufusi@foi.gov.to) Website: [www.infrastructure.gov.to/marine-ports](http://www.infrastructure.gov.to/marine-ports)

No fees inward.

Vava'u: \$0.45 per gross tonne per month.

Nuku'alofa: \$2.45 per gross tonne per month.

Ha'apai: \$0.80 per gross tonne per month.

Niu'toputapu: \$100 A fee of some description- go into Marine and ports for receipts, if you anchor they may not charge this....

Were doing no charge for time in the boatyard, stopped after Covid. If gross tonnage on yacht papers is incorrect, download proof from manufacturer, make/model sites. Apparently you are supposed to notify Marine and ports that you are going into the boatyard and they will suspend Lights and Bouys fees while you are on the hard! You could ask Boatyard office staff to see if they can assist.

**Waste Authority Limited:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

State owned enterprise of the government of Tonga, heavily supported by Japan. Rubbish fees are paid by all households and business. Fines for dumping waste \$20 to \$2000, do the right thing! Began charging boats 2024 for waste, attempting to move this to checkout fees based on weeks in country.

Used oil, batteries please drop to Café Tropicana. No recycling for bottles, can etc.

<p>Vava'u Phone: +676 70704 VHF Ch: NONE Kings Rd, way out of town OIC Tevita Toli <a href="mailto:tevita.toli@gmail.com">tevita.toli@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Ha'apai Phone: +676 60234 VHF Ch: NONE</p>
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Rubbish bins in town are for public use, normally collected Fridays in town, please be considerate if your rubbish smells. Do not use for used oil, batteries. A large bin down at the small boat marina for yachts and Beluga Diving, please bag rubbish, please respect this free service. For large collections please call or email Tevita.

Hours 8.30am - 12pm, 1.30pm - 3pm M to F

Email: [it@wasteauthoritylimited.com](mailto:it@wasteauthoritylimited.com)

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/wasteauthoritylimited>

**Pronunciation / Island Groups:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#) **TO do pronunciations phonetically**

Nuku'alofa is the Capital of Tonga, it is located in the Island Group Tongatapu. It is an International Airport, and checkin/checkout port.

Neiafu is the capital of the Vava'u Island group. It is an International Airport, and checkin/checkout port.

Pangai is the capital of The Ha'apai Group. It is normally called "The Ha'apai". It is a domestic airport and is a checkin/checkout port.

Nomuka group, no domestic airport, it is not a checkin/checkout port.

Niuatoputapu is a domestic airport and is a checkin/checkout port. Niuafu'uo has no airport or port.

Please learn how to pronounce names properly, the cringe factor is very real!

Name	Pronunciation	Name	Pronunciation
Nuku'alofa		Niuatoputapu	
Tongatapu		Niuafu'uo	
Neiafu		Eua	
Vava'u		Lifuka	
Pangai		Tonga	
Ha'apai			
Nomuka			

**Tongamazing online Survey** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

I am also conducting an ongoing online survey, aimed at quantifying economic benefits of yachting, as well as gathering comments and suggestions to improve cruising facilities, and customised to Tonga. Information shared with Vava'u Tourism Association (VTA) and possibly Ministry Tourism and Tonga Tourism Advisory Board. **To do tonga surveys marine.doc**

**Yacht Numbers in Tonga; to be completed** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Tongatapu	215	181	259														
Vava'u	444	416	551	460	450												
Ha'apai	62	36	91														
Niua's	65	85	80														

	786	718	981															
--	-----	-----	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

	23	24	25
Tongatapu			
Vava'u			
Ha'apai			
Niua's			
	560		

[ANOA Text version](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

If you have to divert to Tonga and have limited internet, email and complete text version of ANOA if you can. Explain reason for diversion. Signature is not required. Better than a fine for not completing.

Advanced Notice Of Arrival – text version

Part A craft details

- Name of Craft
- Name of person in charge
- Name of owner
- Name of Charterer
- country of registration
- port of registration
- gross tonnage
- sail number
- home port
- craft type - yacht/motor
- length overall meter
- yacht rig cutter/ sloop/ketch/yawl/schooner/other
- value of craft
- contact details
- owners address (street, number, city, country)
- charterers address (street, number, city, country)
- registration number
- total number of pax on board
- radio call sign
- shore station or radio contact
- draft meters
- hull colour
- superstructure colour
- hull type mono/catamaran/trimaran/other
- Part B voyage details
- port of arrival - tonga
- estimated date and time of arrival
- port arrived from and date departure
- list of overseas ports (last 6 ports, last port first)
- Part C crew and passengers - copy as required
- Family name
- first names
- nationality
- date of birth
- gender male/female
- passport number
- place of issue - city
- date and place of joining
- Part D cargo
- Any commercial cargo - details
- Part E - other

**Firearms**

animals on board - kind of animal/country and port boarded

**Police** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Visitor drivers licences are not required as of 2022. Any valid international drivers licence is acceptable, you are required to carry it when driving. If you are resident here you will have to move to a Tongan drivers licence at some point.

Left hand drive, park on the left hand side, not crossing traffic – european parking rules are illegal in the pacific!

No public drinking in town, no public drunkenness or swearing.

Vehicle registration plates – just for fun

- C Car
- T taxi
- B Bus
- H Heavy
- L Large
- J Jumbo
- P Public (government)

**Vava'u Directory** to be completed [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Name	Number	VHF	Name	Number	VHF
Police	911 or 922 70324	16	ATS Vava'u	70139	
Fire	999 70089		Air NZ Nuk	23192 NUK	
Ambulance	933 70201		BSP Bank		
VVMRA	8465645 7565645 "Vava'u Radio"	26 16	Beluga Diving		09
Cafe Tropicana	71322 8812347 Tropicana@vavau.to	26	DHL NUK	27700 NUK	
			EM Jones hardware	70422	
Customs	70052 70053	16 26	Lukes Supermarket	71222	
Immigration			Lulutai Airlines	70688	
Quarantine			Pacific Fuels	70972	
MAFF			Tonga Gas	70319	
Health					
Marine and Ports	70639		Western Union	70888	
Pharmacy	70213				

**Learn a little Tongan...** to be completed [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tongan	Meaning	Phonetic	Tongan	Meaning	Phonetic
Hello, Hi	Malo e Lelei		Day	Aho	
My name is	Ko hoku hingoa ko		Night	Po'uli	
You're welcome/Okay?	Sai pe ia		Rain	'uha	
Goodbye – you are going	Nofo a		Sun	La'aa	
Goodbye – you are staying	Alu a		Month, moon	mahina	
One	Taha		thunder	Mana	
Two	Ua		Water	Vai	
Three	Tolu		Beautiful	Faka'ofu'ofa	
Four	Fa		Food	Me'akai	
Five	Nima		Movies	Faiva	
Six	Ono		Beef or ball	Pulu	
Seven	Fitu		lamb	Sipi	
Eight	Valu		chicken	Moa	
Nine	Hiva		horse	Hoosi	
10	Hongofulu		Movies	Faiva	
Zero	Noa		Beef or ball	Pulu	
Yes	Io	E O	lamb	Sipi	
No	Ikai	E Ki	chicken	Moa	

Fork or breast	Huhu		horse	Hoosi	
Go	'alu		dog	Kulii	
Come	Ha'u		cat	Pusi	
Crazy	Fakasesele		pepper	Polo	
i don't know	'ikai keu 'ilo		Spicy pepper	Polo fifisi	
Hungry	Fiekaia		tomatoes	Temata	
See you later	Tau toki sio		bean	Piini	
Goodnight	Po'uli a		lettuce	Letisi	
Drink	Inu		cabbage	Kapisi	
Thirsty	Fieinua		apple	Apele	
Please	Kataki		orange	Moli	
Sorry	Fakamolemole		papaya	Lesi	
Shops or store	Falekoloa		watermelon	Meleni	
Island, crazy, break	Motu				

<https://pacificlearners.co.nz/pacific-education-videos/> or the download the App "Takaua" for audio/videos to help you with pronunciation. Language is contextual: words have multiple meanings.

**[Responsible Cruising](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

**Respect local ecosystems**

Tonga has introduced marine reserves (SMAs and FHRs) to encourage conservation and village-only fishing areas.

Special Management Areas (SMA): NO fishing allowed and fees for anchoring, snorkelling may be charged by the Village.

Fish Habitat Reserves (FHR): NO anchoring, NO fishing.

Just because it says Anchorage, does not mean you can anchor, check the following charts for details on the zones..

An old tonga sma/fhr map is available [https://vavau.to/Tonga\\_SMA-flier.pdf](https://vavau.to/Tonga_SMA-flier.pdf)

Individual island updates here <https://vavau.to/vavausma2024.jpg> <https://vavau.to/haapaisma2023.jpeg>

[www.vavau.to/whales](http://www.vavau.to/whales) for a detailed view on interaction rules

Whaleswim/watch: protected industry for your protection as well as the whales protection. Go with a trained/licenced operators, human vs Whale... you will lose everytime!! Don't be a dick!!! \$10,000 fine. If someone sees you and forwards a video to Police...

**Caution zone 300m no entry other than one whale vessel under 300m, one vessel within 100m of whale. No vessel in front or behind whale (30 degree of head or tail).**

**No duck dives (MUST be on the surface, no free diving, no scuba diving)**

**4 swimmers & guide in water,**

**legal crew guide and skipper (work visa and completed course in Tonga),**

**7 hour max on water.**

**no herding (driving whales towards guests),**

**No Queuing (whales are supposed to have a break from swimmers),**

**Whale guides licensed and working visa (3 japanese guides have completed this course for their groups)**

**Pay Tax,**

**monies received in Tonga (not via alipay or wepay).**

**Safety Briefing.**

**No leap Frogging (drop guests ahead of whales).**

**Leaves after 7am, back by 6pm.**

**Fitness: you are in an ocean, not a pool. Your fitness and stamina needs to be good!**

**Holders of whale swim License – Ministry of Tourism, Marine and Ports (safety gear vhf, hull, flares, carly rafts, grab bag, EPIRB, bilge pumps)**

**Infringements with pictures to Tourism [felemiika2012@gmail.com](mailto:felemiika2012@gmail.com)**

**Anchorage and mooring fields**

Speed limit in Neiafu Bay is 5 KNOTS. You are responsible for your wake. Be aware of swimmers, spear fishermen, and pearl farms.

Tongans spear fish, hunt for sea cucumbers and tend pearl farms in anchorages and mooring fields DAY and NIGHT. At night they MAY use flashlights.

Anchor only in sandy bottoms and float your chain to protect coral. Damaged coral takes upto 75 years to regrow: don't be a dick. Tahiti is now anti yachts because of damage to coral and loss of fish... be respectful of someone's backyard. If you are anchoring in front of a village or resort, please ask where to anchor as you might be in the way of village/resort tenders or affect the aesthetic view for guests.

Do not empty holding tanks close to a village!

Return rubbish to town, do not throw in the bush, overboard. Remove any fishing net, lines, plastic you find in the water – save the sea life

and stop micro plastics entering the food chain

[www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg)

### Respect cultural traditions

Sundays are a day of rest, quiet day – no noise, no exercise (swim, run, bike). Go for a walk, eat, rest

Do not fly drones over villages, **without permission**, especially Sundays.

Trade or barter for fish, fruit, vegetables. School supplies are a priority trade item. Do NOT trade alcohol. Most villages are dry by choice.

Respect the village traditions, history and culture. Show interest in the village and people. You might learn something.

Absolutely no nudity – on your yacht, swimming etc. People can probably see you and may call the Police as it is illegal and offensive.

All land is owned by someone. If you see a sign saying “private property” please respect it.

Do not start bonfires on beaches without permission of the village or resorts, embers could blow and start a fire!

### Marpol 73/78 Convention 1978

Tonga enacted “Marine Pollution Prevention Act” in 2020. It applies to ALL vessels in Tongan waters and enforces Marpol 73/78 as a result.

- Holding tanks for raw sewage, dumped at least 3 miles offshore, or pumped at an approved station.
- No rubbish dumping or oil dumping at sea.

### Float plan copies: [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Starlink has made a pronounced affect on cruising life. I have noticed VHF chat, get togethers and a sense of community have declined since SL is so prevalent. After a few to many instances of boats being overdue (partly because of Covid degrading yacht maintenance, and extreme weather). I have created [floatplan@vavau.to](mailto:floatplan@vavau.to) so you can forward your [www.vavau.to/floatplan.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/floatplan.pdf) (editable pdf) to me so I can respond quickly if you are overdue. Here are some of the reasons for a floatplan

<https://www.discoverboating.com/ownership/safety/float-plan?fbclid=IwAR1xy3-j3ib7u-MOPyp3ADcXsZhQwIU27HphN6Pf9i6CmuEtPMWqWkP3Q6Q> .

This will not be used for Tropicana for it’s marketing, but I will add your email for national BCC marketing!

### Overseas information [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Cafe Tropicana has NZ yacht arrival packs – FREE. These have all the forms and information on arriving into NZ for a yacht

### [Costs for entering Tonga vs Fiji vs New Zealand](#) to be completed, peer reviewed [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

*Cost of entering for 2 pax 10 tonne vessel, week days. Suggest taking local currency to make entry faster for each country.*

Item	Tonga TOP	Fiji FJD	NZ NZD
Free visa	1, 3 Mths Schengen	4 mths	?
Cost visa month	69	91	?
Inflation rate 2022	11%	4.5%	7.2%
Max Stay boat tax free	12 months	24 mths From 6/24	24 mths + extn
Max stay crew	6 months	6 months	?
Chartering	NO	Fee +\$\$%	?
Entry Qball/ wharf	Wharf	Q Ball	Q Dock
Marine ports lights bouys. Leaving fees	Vava’u \$0.45 Ha’apai \$0.80 Nuku’alofa \$2.45 per gross tonne per month	?	?

NZ, Fiji: do not leave the Qball or Qdock until fully cleared into the country, you face deportation, arrest, confiscation etc. Health, Quarantine, Customs, Immigration.

Entry cost week day, 2pax

Ministry	Tonga TOP	Fiji FJD	NZ NZD
Maff/Quarantine/Biosec	22	85	17
Immigration			0
Health	100	165	0
Mooring/Agent fee		25	0
Customs			17
Total	122	275	34

**[Marine Insurance providers in NZ](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

We recommend the following insurance provider in NZ, it is required for marina and haul out in NZ.  
The Marina Shop [www.marine-insurance.co.nz](http://www.marine-insurance.co.nz)

Nearly all insurance providers require you to be out of the pacific by 1 Nov. Topsail, a UK sail broker (Global Yacht cover underwriter) requires you to be out of the pacific by 1 December. Most cyclones in the pacific begin Jan/Feb.

**[Marine Brokerage in NZ](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

Looking to sell your yacht in NZ? We recommend the following broker in NZ.  
36 degrees [robbs@36degrees.nz](mailto:robbs@36degrees.nz)

If you are looking to sell your yacht whilst in the Pacific, here are some suggestions. List with a broker, yacht for sale websites and also list where you are and intended ports- if someone wants to come out and view they can.  
If you sell your vessel in Tonga and the new owners are taking the vessel out of the country: do a purchase and sale agreement here, get the magistrate to witness agreement, transfer funds as required, do a master letter so that the new owner can leave Tonga as the master, then enter the next country with a clean ownership record or masters letter. <https://vavau.to/master1.pdf>

**[Immigration NZ requirements](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

A medical visa may be required if you were in NZ and spent less than 12 months away, Friendly Island Medical Clinic in Nukua'lofa run by Dr Ana can do this. Open Monday to Friday 1630-1930, about 20-30 minutes walk from the port. They don't do appointments. Just walk to the clinic and state your business. They are familiar with the procedure and will file your results directly to your pending application.

**[Pacific Fuels – Petrol/diesel](#): [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

Duty free is available on the same day as the vessel is cleared out from Tonga and is the final port. It can be shared to meet minimums. Duty free is a significant saving, Fiji does not do duty free fuel. You need to preorder the fuel 24 hours plus with Pacific Energy (70972) you DO NOT HAVE to order it with customs! Fuel bunker is closed for trucks if a bunker boat is in the harbour. Appointment times are indicative only, 6 hours late is the record. Duty free is about 30% cheaper than the retail price at the pump (15% CT/15% Duty).  
Fuel stations are on the main road, and on the road towards Utungake No credit cards! Café Tropicana has a few LOAN diesel bottles, also a hand cart or hire car for fuel runs.  
Occasionally Tonga has fuel shortages, bunkering was extended in 2019 and 2025. Our last shortage was because of bad weather delaying the bunker boat. My advice never let your jerry can's run to low. Tropicana may be able to help if you run out of petrol...

Vava'u  
Phone: 70972 7555210 NO VHF  
If you ask a business to call please pay for the call.  
Email: [tuiaki.kauvaka@p.energy](mailto:tuiaki.kauvaka@p.energy) does not respond  
Website: [www.p.energy](http://www.p.energy)  
Hours 9am to 4.30pm M to F  
GPS coordinates: at Wharf 18°39'6.97"S 173°59'9.03"W  
OFFICE Toulfa fuel Bunker 18°40'36.58"S 173°59'8.61"W

Nuku'alofa  
Phone: 22511 22397 VHF Ch: None  
Email: [ifalemi.tauheluhelumau@p.energy](mailto:ifalemi.tauheluhelumau@p.energy)  
Website: [www.p.energy](http://www.p.energy)

Vava'u Minimum 24-48 hours' notice. CASH Only. Duty free 250litres Min but boats can share. Duty free generally delivered after 10am to the wharf and AFTER customs have given clearance papers. MUST be last Tongan port. Tanker refills petrol stations Monday morning and Friday afternoon. Not an easy delivery when a ferry is at the ferry dock! ATM limit per day per card is upto \$800 5 days a week. See Tropicana if you have to get cash out using credit cards more than this. You need to preorder the fuel 24 hours plus with Pacific Energy (70972) you DO NOT HAVE to order it with customs!  
Apr2024 truck has broken, using a trailer based 5000l tanker. New truck delivered June 2024.

I recommend Utulangivake fuel station for non-duty free delivery truck. More reliable than Pacific Energy in terms of time . Will deliver to the wharf at retail rates for minimum 250litres. +676 7512655 or +676 71286 [gasstation@utulangivaka.com](mailto:gasstation@utulangivaka.com) Small fuel truck.



Petrol stations in Vava'u are up Tui Rd, and a fuel station is just above Paradise Hotel (you CANNOT walk through the hotel from the dock, access has been stopped by the Government, you can also not swim off the dock.

Café Tropicana does a petrol/diesel fuel run Tuesday at 10am. \$10 per boat. Run back by 11am Drop your bottles in prior to 10am Tuesday. Several options

1. Drop bottles at café, collect bottles from café.
2. drop bottles at café, come into café and I can drop you and your bottles to small boat marina, market marina, beluga wharf. Tuesday/friday 9am run.
3. drop bottles at café, anytime (please arrange prior if possible), I will take you and fill your bottles, drop to small boat marina, market marina, beluga dock. I can also take you to Utulangivake petrol station which is the ONLY AMERICAN store in Vava'u. Great selection!
4. Pay in cash, I charge TOP10 for the service, a taxi would cost double that.

I have the following to LOAN 2 x 50 litre, 8 x 20 litre =260 litre. Please bring them back 1-2 days. No Charge, these bottles have been given to me by yachties to help YOU.

Tongatapu Minimum 24 hours' notice. Cash Only. Duty free 1000litres Min but boats can share. Duty free generally delivered after 10am to the wharf and AFTER customs have given clearance papers. Delivered in barrels (you must pay for them, no refunds), also no handpump supplied. ICNZ Olini may help you but he will sell the used barrel and won't give you the money...MUST be last Tongan port.

Ha'apai no duty free bunkering, fuel stations are not what you expect, hand pumping

Niuatoputapu no duty free fuel, fuel bunkering is VERY VERY limited.

As at 5/26 Vava'u diesel \$5.15TOP per litre, duty free \$3.63 TOP per litre, Petrol is \$4.25TOP per litre, no duty free price. Price changes 18<sup>th</sup> of each month. With the IRAN war prices are changing rapidly.

### [Departing Tonga \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Coins

If you have coins (unless you want momentos of Tonga or giving them away as gifts or you collect) they cannot be changed overseas at all. You could give them to a charity, or as a tip for your favourite café, taxi, market vendor, or take them to a bank and convert to notes...

### [Food restrictions NZ, Fiji, Australia \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Sailing to NZ [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz) anything containing or might contain pork will be removed because of swine flu

Sailing to Australia

Sailing to Fiji, no NZ chicken

If you have stores on board that you cannot take into your next port (meat, honey etc) you could

- Trade it with a yacht that does not have that issue
- Trade it with a café/restaurant for services
- Store it with a café/restaurant if you are returning next year. I once stored 30kg cheese in our freezers for 8 months!
- Gift it to someone that has gone out of there way for you, or just needs a hand up!
- Ask someone to give it to a charity of your choice, or give it them yourself of course, Cafe Tropicana can assist with this – you pick the charity, it will be dropped off anonymously (we just say a yacht) or in your yachts name...

### [Tattoos in Tonga \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Vava'u Sani Ta Tatau

Phone: 8760237. Sani is a deaf mute. Please text only

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sani.tapueluelululu>

Operating from: Toula

Hours Flexible

Tongatapu: Happy Sailor Tattoo

Phone: 7756777

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Happysailortattoo Tonga>

Operating from: 1-4 Taumoepeau Building. Corner Salote/Fatafehi Rd

Hours Unknown

[Projects to aid in sailing tourism.](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Small boat marina Vava'u- repair, extend.

Name the dock off the Vava'u small boat marina, so no business stakes a claim to it. Install a floating dock off the Vai Ko area for dinghy use, solar lights, cctv.

Permanent home for Vava'u village and fishing boats – Navy yard build starts 2026 and this will force relocation of more local boats.

Secure/cctv Quarantine dock for checkin/ checkout. Q balls for vessels waiting to checkin/out, under investigation/covid/overnight/emergency. Fee payable \$25top to yacht infrastructure fee.

Remove sunken fishing boat on fishing wharf. Vava'u

Stop silt mountain from town storm drains. Vava'u

Qballs to allow overflow yachts to wait for dock space, or held under quarantine rules or that get towed in and have a mechanical problem.

Quarantine dock to stop crew entering country until fully cleared n.

Wharf unsuitable for yachts, maybe finger wharf, which could also be used for cruiseship tenders and emergencies as wharf is bigger. Safer/faster refuelling when ferry/cruiseship/container ship is in.

Review immigration free visa period – maybe 2-4 months, like Fiji. Other fees to be reviewed. Length of vessel stay to., Fiji is now 5 years.

Duty free fuel minimum stay In Tonga 3 months. Fiji does not do duty free at all.

Removing Inter Island movement procedure would encourage movement, but may be open to abuse? Random interdictions may help.

Random interdiction by police/navy may discourage drug/gun/no customs trade/not clearing in

Coast watch to aid in illegal customs breaches, drug running etc

Review possibility of wharf charge, used for that island group to improve regional yacht facilities ONLY, i.e not consolidated fund. Yacht infrastructure fee.

Dredge wharf, fishing wharf, small boat marina, harbour entrance hump to allow bigger cruisehips into the harbour/wharf.

ANOA system – use Australian Border Force online system? Automated Interpol and local intelligence agencies. Or expand required info – like chartering, working.

Yacht infrastructure fee to be used solely to fund projects for cruising yachts. Land based tourism fee used solely to fund projects for land based tourists.

Promo vid for yacht tourism – email after ANOA

Post ANOA send out either [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) or official summary. Use ABF online ANOA system for Interpol and regional intelligence.

Formalise master/caretaker to stop unattended/unsafe moored vessels. Insurance/master mandatory.

Clean hull requirement/ effluent enforcement, Marpol

VHF base station for immigration, health, Quarantine. USB powered VHF handhelds? From Yacht Infrastructure fee.

Body cams to be worn by officials boarding vessels – paid for by yacht infrastructure fee. Uploaded where?

Marina in Ha'apai is unsuitable, Nuk year end only, At least for now

Chartering option for super yachts by reasonable fee. Stop overseas private vessels.

Reasonable Chartering fee for private vessels operating under a tongan company, employing locals etc. similar to Bermuda/caribbean rather

than high duty fees to import vessel.

Whale watch boats nearly all use panda wharf – extremely dangerous rafting up and moving passengers – use old vai ko and floating wharf?  
Fee for use per year per boat...

Webcams for remote viewing to encourage tourism. Vav 4 North East West South TCC tower. Café Tropicana 4 wharf (main wharf, fishing wharf, small boat marina, spare), entrance. Ha'apai 4 North East West South TCC Tower. 2 wharf/harbour. Nuk 2 x 4 North East West South TCC Tower, 4wharf. Weather, climate change, cyclone damage etc

AIS VHF (used in SAR, quarantine scenario as normal AIS is laggy)

Automatic Weather stations in hasrbour, anchorages to aid yacht tourism

Automated Weather bouys

Long range drone – whale watching breaches, scientific research on whales, border security and drug monitoring, post cyclone damage, climate change, police operations.

Vava'u Development Council and Ha'apai Development Council needs to address town planning, ways to develop the outer Islands.  
Governor, local MPS. Local nobles, District officers, town Officers, private sector all need a voice in projects and priorities.

# Commercial

[Safe Boating and Rescue Coordination Centre NZ](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

RCCNZ

Calling from outside of New Zealand:

**+64 4 577 8030**

Email [rccnz@maritime.govt.nz](mailto:rccnz@maritime.govt.nz)

[contact.beacons@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:contact.beacons@maritimenz.govt.nz) 406 distress beacon enquiries

- Spanning 30 million square kilometres, RCCNZ covers one of the largest search and rescue areas in the world.
- This area extends from the mid-Tasman Sea, halfway to Chile, and from the South Pole, almost up to the Equator.
- Every year, RCCNZ responds to approximately 1,200 search and rescue incidents.



**Please check the registration name/address etc for your EPIRB, NZ is responsible for the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest marine Search and Rescue area in the World**

Review the following articles to be better prepared, beforehand

[Rescue at sea, 20 things to be better prepared.](#)

[Things to know before a freighter rescues you at sea](#)

[Price comparisons](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga is remote, outer Islands are even more so. International shipping and domestic shipping prices have sky rocketed especially since COVID. Food retail prices should be around 9% higher in outer Islands – they are closer to 50% on average or higher. Very little price regulation happens, or margin control. The only competition is to find the highest price to charge.

Tonga revenue mandated retail shops use an online (linked to Revenue) POS in 2023. It has helped improve tax collection from the mainly Chinese supermarkets. ALL transactions must be entered and a receipt given. Report breaches to revenue (discreet video is best – it does not breach privacy law as only one party must consent to a recording – YOU).

This information is correct when it was entered and is given for you to be aware for comparison purposes only, no responsibility is taken for price changes. It will be updated periodically. **TO DO quarterly**

Vava'u 25/2/24 NZ butter 227g TOP 7.00. NZ Milk tetra TOP5.00, Local bread TOP3.00 (price controlled). Mobile Internet Top2.85 per GB (plan).

Ha'apai...

Nuku'alofa...

[Covid history, yacht industry in Tonga:](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Borders were closed January 2020. Covid was minimised by fairly tight requirement to stay in hotels for several weeks (MIQ) for people lucky enough to meet requirements. Very little (or fair) financial assistance was given to the Tourism industry from aid funds from overseas countries. An election in 11/21 changed the government. HTHH volcano 15/1/22 damaged the underwater fibre cable to Fiji (repaired 23/2/22) and buried the domestic cable to the outer Island (repaired 12/7/23). NZ, Australian and Fijian military force assisted but COVID became fairly widespread. Starlink delivered 50 units to Tonga (18/2/22), about 40 made it to the outer islands in very poorly planned locations. No assistance was forthcoming since the election. Maritime border reopens 27/9/22, minimal notice and less than 50 yachts for the year. Covid vaccination requirement removed 31/3/23. A few hundred

yachts in 2023. September 2023 MDF (AUS/NZ) agrees to a review and assistance of the yachting industry, realistically this is a year long project before any improvement is felt. A yacht Steering Committee was approved by Cabinet and began mid Feb 2024. Tourism, Customs, Police, Marine and Ports, Health, Quarantine, Immigration, and eventually private sector. Please be mindful our tourism industry was poorly assisted, virtually no marketing of Tonga has occurred for many many years by Ministry of Tourism, which has 100 staff.

**Services available within walking distance Vava'u:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- Hardware : EM Jones, (PTH is out of town)
  - Laundry: Café Tropicana (front loading, rain water, lpg driers) or Bubbles Laundry (top loading, town supply water, lpg driers) Vanessa laundry (top loading, town supply water, electric dryers) Mango Restaurant (top loading, town supply water. Mango Restaurant (top loading, town supply water, electric dryers). No Drycleaners in Tonga
  - **Café Tropicana is the only provider that uses front loading washing machines, rain water, gray water leech field. Whenever possible we dry in the sun on clotheslines. It is run by a former NZ Master Drycleaner, who ran valet plants in Wellington NZ for 4 years, amalgamated 3 valet plants in Auckland to make the largest Valet plan in NZ. Laundry has been running in Vava'u since 2014. Expanded in 2026 to 4+ washing/dryer stacks. Again, a lot of professional trade knowledge and years of hands on laundry experience.**
  - [Front-Load vs. Top-Load Washers: Which Is Actually Better?](#)
  - [Laundry with Rainwater: everything you need to know and more!](#)
  - **All other laundry providers (except Café Tropicana) use town water which is heavily calcified and chlorinated – not great for your clothes life cycle and use septic tank for gray water, most of which are very close to sea level.**
  - **WARNING** Bubbles laundry has a history of splitting a 9kg load into multiple small loads and charging you, staff get a bonus based on revenue. See reviews on <https://www.noforeignland.com/place/4770656187056128>
  - Supermarkets – China Fortune, Neiafu Shopping Centre, Pafilios, Leiola Duty Free and various others, No credit cards accepted. No shops open Sunday, few restaurants open Sundays. No single one good shop, get receipts, compare prices. Leiola duty free has the best and cheapest range of spirits, best beer is either Leiola. Recommend Pafilios or Lui's for general Shopping.

Ministry of Revenue have installed POS terminals in nearly all shops to reduce tax evasion. It also helps reduce over charging and some profiteering. Ask for a receipt...

American Stores – Utulangivake Petrol station, .. Tina Bourkes closed prior to 2020. Vava'u Famili Store closed 8/2025

- Shopping is a lot better in Nukua'alofa, then Vava'u, then Ha'apai. Domestic Ferries for outer Islands normally come up Thursday on, so Friday everything should be on shelves.
- Produce at the 'Utakalongalu market on the waterfront, 6 days from 8am, best day Saturday, Night market Friday/Saturday up Tui road (police station road)

Taro, giant Taro, Manioka (Tapioca), Yams, Kumala (sweet potato) (Hawaiian – purple inside and Palu - golden), Breadfruit, Avacado, Kola

- Fish market just along from ferry ramp – best days Saturday, also you may hear a whistle from the fisherman. Ciguatera poisoning is in Rainbow Trout, Barracuda, and Moustache Snapper, not common in Vava'u, but it does occur

Ha'apai Northern reefs, active volcanoes to the west.

- Arts and Crafts market next to vegetable market on the waterfront, also Langafonua next to Tourism
- Post Office. Police, Fire Station and Governors Office
- Duty Free Liquor Shop
- Historical – Pounu Park
- **Cafe/Restaurant/Bar:** Please make reservations between July and October, if you can get menu's and preselect dishes. Hiring staff is a huge problem with so many Tongans now employed in NZ and Australia picking/packing fruit.

# Gig Guide/Whats on report/Calendar with summary of local regulations. other local events are on the calendar.

[www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf)

- *This guide has been put together to help tourists and yachties book activities, find things to do prior to arriving in Tonga. I am based in Vava'u, so more information on this Island.*
- Advertising your activity, café etc for Nukualofa, Ha'apai can be done via [greg.just@gmail.com](mailto:greg.just@gmail.com)
- If you appreciate the information and wish to show your appreciation by donating, if you can't come into Café Tropicana...
- <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> OR
- [paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com) OR
- <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-fight-ataxia-and-support-greg-justs-journey> OR
- <https://patreon.com/PacificCruisingAssociation> OR
- <https://www.predictwind.com/?ref=pacificcruisingassoc>

**Food** Price range [Cafe Tropicana bar and grill](#) (\$\$), [Humpback Lodge](#) (\$\$ dinghy access via causeway road), [Kraken Vava'u](#) (\$\$\$), [Bella Vista](#) (\$\$\$), [Basque Tavern](#) (\$\$\$), [Tongan Beach Resort](#) (\$\$\$\$), [Harbourview](#) (\$\$\$ dinghy access via Koko bay), [Mango Cafe](#) (\$\$\$\$)

**Beer** Prices to confirm [Café Tropicana Bar and grill](#) All \$10, [Sam Restaurant](#) \$10, [Humpback Lodge](#) (\$10+ dinghy access via causeway road), [Kraken Vava'u](#) (\$10+), [Bella Vista](#) (\$10+), [Basque Tavern](#) (\$10+), [Tongan Beach Resort](#) (\$10+), [Harbourview](#) (\$10+ dinghy access via Koko bay), [Mango Cafe](#) (\$10+)

**I recommend pay as you go for drinks at all establishments, it stops accidents happening – another tables drinks on yours, overcharging.**

- **Free internet at Cafe Tropicana (minimum spend \$15 per device) please plug in ear buds do not use your speaker, All restaurants and Cafes have free starlink with purchase, just ask for password.**

- Transport:

- Mountain Bike and Kayak hire in Café Tropicana

- Buses

Buses are generally for school use only.

- **Vava'u Taxis:** Ana Tevunga Taxi Stand: 8872525 7519622 Tevita 7513124 Hene 8616430 Kava 8442756 Hingoa 7209072 Latu 8771826. Hene 8616430 Whatsapp 0676 7238096. Please ask for a price for your trip, PRIOR, to getting into the taxi. We don't have taxi meters. Carry small notes to avoid no change!

31/10 indicative Airport to Neiafu \$50. Airport to Nukualofa \$70. Pre-order taxis to airport, they don't come to every plane landing.

- **Vava'u Car Rentals.** Café Tropicana, overnight \$90-\$120+ fuel (overnight rentals) Coconut Car Rentals.
- **Airlines. Akl/Nuk. Nadi/Vav. Suva/Nuk.**

**Do not rely on Taxi being at Vava'u airport: book one**

- Lulutai Tonga Domestic Airline +676 70688 next to Tourism, Nukualofa 264888.for.website basic no online booking/schedule overseas bookings please email [lepani.baleinausori@lulutai-airlines.to](mailto:lepani.baleinausori@lulutai-airlines.to) or [siaosi.tangitau@lulutai-airlines.to](mailto:siaosi.tangitau@lulutai-airlines.to)

Please check your flight times 24-48 hours prior to departure, best to give them your Tongan Cellphone number so they can text or call you for changes. Flight times change frequently! Book a taxi or arrange with your accommodation

- Air Fiji +676 24021 or 24022 Nadi to Vavau seasonal. Suva to Nuk most days. Also cheaper/better way to get to Auckland from Vava'u. Be aware Vava'u is on another Island group than Nuku'alofa, it is a 24 hour domestic ferry ride or 1 hour domestic airline hop. If Air Fiji bags are not collected in Vava'u, or sends bags on another flight (sometimes they get offloaded for weight reasons) they can be collected from Vava'u Customs shed on the water front (Air Fiji does not have a vava'u office). Air tags will display your bag somewhere around the market area. Please have ID and your ticket to collect your bags...

- Talofa Airlines American Samoa pago pago Tue to Vava'u Fri Nukualofa [www.talofairways.com](http://www.talofairways.com)  
[enquiries@talofairways.com](mailto:enquiries@talofairways.com) +685 26116 8829421 8722325

-Airnz to Nukua'alofo 30073. Qantas to Nuk+679 323 9030.

- **Domestic National Ferries – freight/passage**

- Domestic Ferry Kelesi (Ko e Kelesi Pe) +676 7770965 owned by Niu island

[osimiki@gmail.com](mailto:osimiki@gmail.com) No website <https://www.facebook.com/groups/912112239745156>

- Domestic Ferry FISA (Otu AngaOfa) +676 23853 [friendlyislandshippingagency@gmail.com](mailto:friendlyislandshippingagency@gmail.com)

[www.friendlyislandshippingagency.com](http://www.friendlyislandshippingagency.com) <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076080790143...>

- Domestic Ferry Tofa Ramsay (Taka I Pomana and Vaomapa) +676 7725972

[ramsayshippingcompany@gmail.com](mailto:ramsayshippingcompany@gmail.com) No website

<https://www.facebook.com/tofaramsayshipping?mibextid=ZbWKwL>

- Domestic Ferry Malau 75 (Malau) +676 7725972 No website 7713367 Cannot find email

<https://www.facebook.com/malau.shipping.2025>

- International Shipping Freight

Matson Shipping [www.matson.com](http://www.matson.com)

NZ [https://www.matson.com/so\\_pacific/Matson\\_Schedule.pdf](https://www.matson.com/so_pacific/Matson_Schedule.pdf)

Australia [https://www.matson.com/so\\_pacific/MATSON\\_Australia\\_Schedule.pdf](https://www.matson.com/so_pacific/MATSON_Australia_Schedule.pdf)

Freight Consolidation Auckland

Fe'oFa'aki Shipping Servces <https://fss.net.nz/> [faith@fss.net.nz](mailto:faith@fss.net.nz) 14b Rennie Drive, Airport Oaks, Auckland 2150, New Zealand DO NOT FORGET to get your Tongan TIN from Ministry of Revenue before you ship something, , which is in the Sanft Building

- Customs Broker Vava'u

Jetsave Travel Vava'u Linda +676 8887726 Linda Pulini Tafea [jetsave.vav@gmail.com](mailto:jetsave.vav@gmail.com) All invoices, say if you're a yacht in transit.give TIN from Ministry of Revenue services, which is in the Sanft Building.

***Recipes (Tongan produce/flavours):*** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

To do – pics and recipe ideas

***Services available in area covered:*** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- **Superyacht Agencies**

Super Yacht Services [dhunttonga@gmail.com](mailto:dhunttonga@gmail.com) David Hunt

Yacht Help [dgleonard@hotmail.com](mailto:dgleonard@hotmail.com) Derek Leonard

Tongasuperyachts.com [superyacht@vavau.to](mailto:superyacht@vavau.to) Greg Just.

If this summary helps you... Looking for a Patreon or please support Café Tropicana or give a donation

[paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com) <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana>

- **Slipways**

Fishing slipway for smaller monohulls

Pafilios slipway for multihulls

The Boatyard - Mono and multihulls on hard storage.

In terms of costs for leaving a yachts in Tonga vs Fiji: Cost comparison Fiji vs Tonga. Haul out and mooring fees in Tonga are generally cheaper than fiji , repair facilities and staffing are better in Fiji, Cost of returning to Fiji is significantly cheaper to Fiji, Couriers are cheaper and faster to Fiji. More yards in Fiji. More international flights in Suva and Nadi. International flights into Tongatapu and Nadi/Vavau.

- **Water**

Town supply water available at Moorings/Riki Tiki by appointment please

Filtered rain water from Café Tropicana. Either bring in your own jugs or borrow upto 10\*20 litre jugs ( Free delivery to small boat marina, Belga, wharf, and use of 12v pump) . 50cents per litre. Wharf is good if you are checking out to fill tanks, we can drive jugs to the wharf for you

Rain water showers at Café Tropicana

- **Fuel**

Fuel available at fuel stations, or Pacific Fuel Truck (min 250 litres)

Duty free fuel at check-out wharf Min 250litres 70972. Pacific Fuels booked 24-48 hours prior to departure. See later page for more info on Pacific Energy

Kerosene – Motor Part Services, Vaitohi Petrol Station, Maka Petrol Station. Sometime high alcohol hand steriliser is available as a pre warmer for a kerosene stove in EM Jones, PTH or OE. Or ask on VHF for advice if you can't find it

- **Duty Free Alcohol**

Leiola Duty Free +676 70148 next to Cafe Tropicana Take your clearance paper on the day you are checking out, to duty free, purchase spirits ONLY, they will deliver to customs immediately. Customs will tick items off receipt and hand to the yacht. This change was made to stop a restaurant owner coming in with cruisers to buy duty free stock for his business. Mon to Frid 9am to 4.30pm Sat 8am to 1pm. Largest sprits range in Vava'u.

- **Moorings** – All moorings are privately owned. Do not just take one, different size blocks, chain etc. Approx \$15+ a night but does vary based on weight and season. Do not attempt to leave without paying, owners may talk to customs if monies are owed.

- Beluga Diving VHF 09 +676 70327 (yellow and white numbered buoys) [belugadivingvavau@hotmail.com](mailto:belugadivingvavau@hotmail.com)

- Moorings (red bouys) +676 8720022 [shane@tongasailing.com](mailto:shane@tongasailing.com) Do not pay Mango.

No anchoring fields Neiafu [www.vavau.to/vavauharbournoanchor.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/vavauharbournoanchor.jpg)

- **Trades**

- Welding Ashley 7512408 or 8470572. Trained by a Dutch master welder. Ken Spence Australian Trained kiwi welder 8437123

- Vava'u Boatyard. Vaipua Inlet Anchorage #4 8816854. Haulout, storage, Shipwright, mechanical.

-Sewing/canvas repairs – Riki inherited sewing machines from the late Canvas repairer. Philip Wheeler 8771066

-Electrical/electronics - nil

- HVAC – some technicians. Tau +676 8731368 +676 8627252, Ask Greg

- Outboard – nil

- Diesel mechanic – Boatyard, MPS, Tau +676 8731368 +676 8627252

- Rigging – nil

-Yacht Master on water service: checking vessel, engines etc

Riki Tiki Diving +676 8771066 [rikikitonga2@gmail.com](mailto:rikikitonga2@gmail.com)

Beluga Diving +676 70327 [info@belugadivingvavau.com](mailto:info@belugadivingvavau.com)

-Yacht cleaning/caretaking airing, cleaning, checking etc

Cafe Tropicana +676 8812347 [tropicana@vavau.to](mailto:tropicana@vavau.to)

-Chandlery: Yacht shop which is Boatyard Vava'u business. Jets Hardware (next to vege market), Em Jones (across road from Café Tropicana), Motor Part Services (also hydraulics) (a few blocks up Tui Rd), PTH (after Mormon Temple), JW Hardware (across road from Mormon Temple) also have some yacht and hardware supplies

- Fiji has a lot of services, send something to Fiji to be repaired by air or with your fellow cruisers and then have it flown or sailed back. See [www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020\\_Fiji\\_Shores\\_And\\_Marinas\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020_Fiji_Shores_And_Marinas_Guide.pdf) for facilities

Trades in Ha'apai and nuku'alofa **TO DO**

- **Insurance** – Overseas insurers are now able to arrange cover through the cyclone season in Tonga (although the cover excludes Windstorm damage). In recent years, the only South Pacific location acceptable to our insurers during the Windstorm season was ashore at Vuda Point, in Fiji.

**List of cyclones since 2004** [www.vavau.to/vavaucyclone.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/vavaucyclone.jpg)

**Other useful information specific to this area:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- **SPEED limit in the harbour** 5 knot – and/or no WAKE.

Be aware of wake for other yachts, swimmers, divers, fisherman turtles, whales! By order Marine and Ports Harbourmaster.

- **Docks/Marina access in town.** The small boat marina in front of the 3 story blue roofed OTTO.G.SANFT VAVA'U LTD building is a good place to tie up the dinghy and has good access to the town. However, the dock is in pretty bad shape since 2017. So be careful when tying up. A few cruisers with inflatable dinghies received a puncture and or tear after docking here. Tongan government is waiting for AID money to repair/replace the dock after no maintenance was done and it sunk. Tongan viilage and fishing boats also use this marina. Several expats managed to get one pontoon re-established (Riki Tiki using line from Cafe Tropicana).

-Floating dock at Kraken Restaurant: welcomes yachts to use their dinghy dock for a safe place to leave their

dinghy while they go to town. Climb the stairs and turn left to go to town. Kraken opens from 3pm Monday to Friday, 11am Saturday and Sunday

-Floating dock at Mango Restaurant: They do not mind if you tie your dinghy here and go to town, Climb the stairs on the right and turn left to go to town.

- Panda wharf has multiple height concrete platforms, not suitable for long term use if the tide changes. Also heavily used during the whale season. Shore side of the Panda dock has tie downs but suggest leaving someone in the dinghy for security.

- Please consider the environment and follow MARPOL rules and go 3 nautical miles to dump septic waste.
- Please walk on the pavement/sidewalk – NOT the road, this is a LEFT side driving country, the roads, drivers and cars are not very good. If no sidewalk walk on the right side of the road (against traffic so you can see vehicles)
- Cover and clean any open wounds, flies carry staph bacteria. Stay out of the sea, especially the first 50 metres from shore.
- Security and Safety are not normally an issue, but lock your boat up, do not leave things in your dinghy etc
- Special Management Areas/Fish Habitat Reserve

SMA/FHR are now in place, the legislation is designed to protect the breeding areas and environment. Fees to anchor, snorkel and dive can be levied by the village whose waters are protected. Officers carry ID, give receipts etc.

An old tonga sma/fhr map is available [https://vavau.to/Tonga\\_SMA-flier.pdf](https://vavau.to/Tonga_SMA-flier.pdf) Individual island updates here <https://vavau.to/vavausma2024.jpeg> <https://vavau.to/haapaisma2023.jpeg> [www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg)

- Whale watching regulations 2013

1. Unless you are in a licenced whale watching or whale swimming vessel, you are not allowed to approach any whale closer than 300m
2. Swimming with whales is prohibited unless you are on a licenced vessel and in the water with a certified guide.
3. If a whale surfaces near you, you should change the course of your vessel, in a safe manner, and move 300m from the whales at no-wake speed.
4. Kayaking with humpback whales is prohibited unless the kayak is launched from a licenced vessel.
- 5 No jet Skis are allowed within 2km of any whale.

First time offence is a fine of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 18 months

Repeat offence is a fine of between \$1000 and \$10000 and/or imprisonment of upto 3 years.

Season starts 1 July each year from 2023. No end date though, but generally whale numbers drop off markedly by mid November MOST years. [www.vavau.to/TongaWhaleWatchingandSwimmingRegulations2013.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/TongaWhaleWatchingandSwimmingRegulations2013.pdf)

- **WARNING** Do not feed/pet street dogs, they might bite the next person walking by with food who does not feed them....imagine if it is child... Please report dog bites to the Police.
- **Banks** BSP is the only full service bank 9am to 4.30pm. ANZ closed 2020.2 ATMS BSP bank and next to Leiola duty free. Cirrus/Visa. Foreign currency at BSP, MBF, Western Union. Take several forms of ID.
- **Etiquette** In town: men must wear a shirt at all times (and shorts of course). Woman dress conservatively (no bikini, see through clothing etc). Also do not get drunk or abusive, especially in town.
- **Sundays** only a few restaurants open. No shops. No noise
- **Power** 50hertz 220v Aus/NZ plug adaptors from most Chinese. 1/11/23 TOP1.06 per kwh i.e. NOT CHEAP, If you use power ashore please buy something from the shop to say thanks!
- **Smoking** law in restaurants, cafes, shops, public buildings Is NO SMOKING, please respect the law and others rights

Drones: [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- **Drones** Drones must be registered at Tonga Civil Aviation before you fly them. Do not invade people's privacy, Not to be flown on Sundays.. NOT TO BE FLOWN ABOVE WHALES under 1000ft. Form and contact number in attachment <http://moi.gov.to/images/Drone%20Registration%20Form%20Rev%201.pdf>

**Local Charts and Chartlets:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- Sailingbirds Guide to Vava'u/Ha'apai sold at Café Tropicana
- [www.vavau.to/marineguide](http://www.vavau.to/marineguide) free pdf for all of Tonga. Created by Cafe Tropicana, not updated since 2019
- NZ822 / NZ82 / NZ14605 / NZ14602/ 2691 Fiji A0 charts and laminated A3 Chartlets – sold at Café Tropicana
- [www.vavau.to/weather](http://www.vavau.to/weather) all the weather in one spot!

- Gig Guide/Whats on report/Calendar with summary of local regulations., other local events are on the calendar. [www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/gigguide.pdf)

**Embassies, Consulates, Honorary consuls** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- [NZ](#) High Commission. Nukua'lofa
- [Australian](#) High Commission. Nukua'lofa
- [Japanese](#) Embassy. Nukua'lofa
- [United States of America](#) Embassy. Nukua'lofa
- [Chinese](#) Embassy. Nukua'lofa
- [United Kingdom](#) High Commission,. Nukua'lofa

EU – see below

- [France](#) Honorary Consul, Nuku'aofa
- [Italy](#) Honorary Consul, Nuku'aofa
- [Sweden](#) Honorary Consul, Nuku'aofa
- [Czech](#) Honorary Consul, Nuku'aofa
- [Spanish](#) Honorary Consul. Nukua'lofa
- [German](#) Honorary Consul. Nukua'lofa
- [Netherlands](#) Honorary Consulate, Nukua'lofa
- [Finland](#) Honorary Consulate, Nuku'aofa

**Local cruising NET:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- VHF **Vava'u Cruisers Net** VHF Channel 26 8.30am each morning except Sunday, since late 80's. Alternative VHF 06 if 26 is down

[www.vavau.to/cruisersnet](http://www.vavau.to/cruisersnet)

Whatsapp group "Sailing in Tonga" <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcqKPZg63ZKGNX> as Starlink is so prevalent

Please observe net etiquette – hail and wait for the net controller to call you, don't just jump in and start talking or you could double with another station or your in the wrong section. VHF is not to be used to advertise – an exception is made for the Vava'u Cruisers Net, lets not screw this up.

As in most places that have a vhf net, it is called Vava'u Cruisers Net (and has been since the late 80's). It is not the Vava'u Cruisers Information Net as one business has renamed it to promote it's business.

Net controllers

Nora Chapkoun, owner / operator of Billfish Holiday Apartments [www.vavauholidayrentals.com](http://www.vavauholidayrentals.com) and Vava'u Sport Fishing Charters [www.gamefishtonga.com](http://www.gamefishtonga.com). We are Australian / Tongan citizens, we have been operating since 2008. I have been a net controller over these years and familiar of the cruisers need in the South Pacific. We are always happy to help.

Isa Ellis is from Coffee and Tees. Vava'u born. I have been a net controller since 2011. I am the manager of Coffee & Tees and you can find us at [www.facebook.com/coffeeandteesvavau](http://www.facebook.com/coffeeandteesvavau)

Greg Just. Vava'u since 2007. Kiwi, UK, Tongan. Bank Officer, IT Manager, Factory Manager. Owns Café Tropicana since 2007 [www.vavau.to/tropicana](http://www.vavau.to/tropicana) . Sailed since I was 13, 200 days blue water – NZ/Tonga, Fiji, PNG: Monohull and a tall ship. Net Controller since 2025. Produces [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) SSSA, CA, OCC, RCC, Transocean, PCA, ICNZ, Noonsite port officer

Vava'u Cruisers Net...order of service

Emergency/priority traffic

Check-ins/Whose listening

Arrivals and departures

Weather

Buy/sell/trade/swap/free

Lost and found – please be aware if a Tongan report it found to the Police you must pay 10% of the value to them,

Crew available/wanted

Local special events/information/announcements

Public events

Anything else

**Brief** adverts from local business 30 seconds each. Sometimes move to another channel if a fishing comp, other is on

[VHF check, mayday, pan pan: \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Radio Check... All stations, All stations... this is "vessel name" radio check please. Stations will respond with your audio quality and there location so you can judge range etc.

May day... Use only in grave or imminent danger

"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" "This is [vessel name and/or call sign if you have one]" (spoken three times) "My position is ... [Details of the ship's position]" "My vessel is ... [Nature of distress and assistance required is identified]" "I have ...

Pan Pan... Urgent call should be used when the distress call cannot be justified but there is an urgent message to transmit concerning the safety of the vessel or the safety of a person

- "Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan. "This is (name of boat three times, call letters once)."Report your location. Report the nature of your urgent situation. Report the kind of assistance needed.Report the number of people on board.

Securite.... Used to advise others of general situational information

"Sécurité, Sécurité, Sécurité, This is (name of authority/vessel), we are currently conducting a Search and Rescue for (details...), please stay off VHF 26."

Radio relay... Relaying a distress or non-distress call via another boat not in distress.

- Pan-pan relay (\*spoken three times), This is (name of boat three times, call letters once)."Report your location. Report the nature of your urgent situation. Report the kind of assistance needed.Report the number of people on board.
- 

Mayday Relay "This is [vessel name and/or call sign if you have one]" (spoken three times) "My position is ... [Details of the ship's position]" "My vessel is ... [Nature of distress and assistance required is identified]" "I have ...

[VHF Channels Vava'u: \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

06 Backup channel for VHF Net

09 Beluga dive/Beluga moorings

16 Hailing ONLY – Mayday/Pan Pan etc.

26 Repeater channel – VHF Net and used for long range communication, please be considerate, if you are talking to vessels that are close to you. Be aware this channel is monitored by Customs, Police, Governor and Tourism!

60 New repeater station under test 9/24 Not so good in the harbour...

71 Game Fishing

72 Moorings/Sunsail calling

73 Moorings/Sunsail working

74 Whale watching operators

77 Mounu Island

Please be considerate and discrete on all VHF channels, especially the above and move to a non-working channel as soon as practical...

08, 14, 17, 68 Common chat channels, be aware nosy people may follow you and listen in....

VHF radio check

"All stations, all stations, this is ????? Requesting a radio check on VHF channel ???"

Someone will respond and advise quality of call, and their location so you can see how far you are reaching.

[Cruiseships](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga gets over 20 cruiseships a year, Vava'u about 7+. Tours and venues are normally booked through the cruiseship, these venues/tours are not available except through the cruiseship, an exception are island tours using taxis but this is problematic as finding a taxi cannot be FUN or cheap! Most venues are normally paid tours from the cruiseship so not available to the public. **To do cruiseship guide for passengers – activities. Shops, cafes, internet, beer**  
[www.vavau.to/cruiseships.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/cruiseships.pdf)

For cruisers: not a good day to checkin, checkout, or refuel. Customs staff are normally on board helping with immigration, wharf has stalls and tenders coming and going. Restaurants and cafes could be busy if the ship is over 2000 people.

**Must See and do in Vava'u:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

**All have FB Points of Interest (POI) created by myself**

<https://vavau.to/sitenames> *update as more have been added to do*

Suggested itineraries [3, 7, 14, 30 days to do KMZ to do](#)

**Vava'u suggested 4 hour car itinerary**

Puono Park – historical site  
St Joseph Cathedral  
Veimuminu Cave  
Mt Talau Lookout  
Mormon Temple  
Utula'aina Lookout  
Esi O Salote Lookout

**Vava'u suggested 4 hour walking itinerary**

Puono Park – historical site  
St Joseph Cathedral  
Veimuminu Cave  
Mt Talau Lookout

- Tongan Feast – various. Island and main Island venues constantly change each year
- Walk up Mt Talau National Park; magnificent views from lookout platforms
- Swallows and Mariners cave tour
- Kava circle at Fire station or village, \$5 for the night. Great singing
- Church 10am for amazing singing at [Catholic Cathedral](#), English service at [City Impact Church](#) in Toula, dress appropriately, sit at the back so you can leave.
- Talau Cemetery – Palangi Cemetery
- Pouonu Park – birth place of Vava'u Code
- Kilikilitefua Wall (Makave) the old census system
- Beaches ([Eneio](#) Private), Keitahi (Private), Talihau Beach, [Ano Beach](#), [Holeva Beach](#)
- [Toula](#) cemetery and Veimumuni Caves
- ['Utula'aina](#) (Holonga), ['Esi 'o Salota](#) (Holonga), [Hila Ki Tapana/I 'o Mata'aho Mount](#) (Leimatua), Lolo 'a Halavalu (Neiafu), Fa ko Fiem'a (Vai ko lelea) (Neiafu), Sia 'o Kafoa (Taoa), 'Api 'o Maka (Taoa), 'Otualea Beach (Ha'alaufuli), To 'anga'ofa (Utui)
- Whaleswim 1/July to Oct/Nov. Season from 1/7. 26 Whale Licence holders in Vava'u. List provders **todo**
- Gamefishing – nearly all year. [Fighting Lady](#), [Ashlee G Fishing Adventures](#), [Blue Marlin Magic](#), [Kiwi Magic](#),
- Sailing – nearly all year. [Moorings/Sunsail](#)
- Sea kayaking – nearly all year, [FIKCO](#)
- Mananita Island is a bird sanctuary, no organised tours. Tongan Whistlers can be found in Mt Talau reserve – ask Greg for details.
- Diving - nearly all year. [Riki Tiki Dive](#), [Ax- Factor Dive](#) [Beluga Dive](#), [Tonga Dive](#). It is illegal to scuba with whales, a few operators will do a split dive/whale swim at the start and end of the season ONLY. Don't be a dick and spearfish around dive sites! Dive with local operators please, but here is a good list of popular/old dive sites, some would have changed with HTHH Tsunami, please advise changes.
- If you wish to learn to dive be aware you should do the elearning module PRIOR to arriving in Tonga, the instructor can then do the water dives and certify you. Select an instructor first as PADI and SSI are different. Elearning takes about 8 hours.  
<https://svsoggypaws.com/tongadive/index.htm> [www.vavau.to/vavaudivingkiteboardingsnorkelling.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/vavaudivingkiteboardingsnorkelling.pdf)
- Accommodation and Tourist information [www.tongatourism.travel](http://www.tongatourism.travel) or [© Tongamazing.com permission required to repost/use content \[www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf\]\(http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf\) Version 2026/8 Page32](https://tongapocketguide.com/the-</a></li></ul></div><div data-bbox=)

[complete-guide-to-tonga/](#)

- Marine guides [www.zuluwaterways.com](http://www.zuluwaterways.com) (and app) is my recommended online/offline geo/app. **To do regional on/offline cruising guide.** [https://www.svsoggypaws.com/files/Tonga\\_Compndium.pdf](https://www.svsoggypaws.com/files/Tonga_Compndium.pdf)
- Surfing kitesurfing spots in Tonga at Ha'atafu, Vava'u [www.vavau.to/vavaudivingkiteboardingsnorkelling.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/vavaudivingkiteboardingsnorkelling.pdf)
- GPS geo information. Consider updating [www.openstreetmaps.com](http://www.openstreetmaps.com) and Google Maps if you find new POI as this feeds into most geo based apps/programs free of charge, wiki foundation and Google. **To Do update for sites of interest to cruisers and land tourists – looking for volunteer. Drone, camera, car loan, boat, pc and internet connection**

**Non-Government Organisations/Charities/Volunteering:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

- VEPA Vava'u Environmental Protection Association. An environmental NGO based in Vava'u. Mangrove, education, turtle and other conservation. Located next to the Bookshop in the middle of town. [www.vavauenvironment.org](http://www.vavauenvironment.org)

Accepting volunteers <https://vavauenvironment.org/volunteer/>

- US Peace Corp Volunteers are now based in Tongatapu and Vava'u. Some are teaching English in schools, some are environmental volunteers working in the community. <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceCorpsTonga>

Any assistance, books, pens etc are gladly accepted. US based former Peace Corp Volunteers [www.facebook.com/friendsoftonga](http://www.facebook.com/friendsoftonga) who raise funds for projects in Tonga, US approved charity.

Vava'u volunteers can be reached via Cafe Tropicana.

- Pens, paper, drawing pencils etc, Toothpaste/Tooth brushes, English childrens books, reading glasses and Global Vision 2020 kits [www.gv2020.org](http://www.gv2020.org) . Accepted and distributed by Café Tropicana (you choose: a church, widows/orphans, WCCC: womans refuge, school students), or we can make suggestions if you wish to drop them off yourselves. We can also suggest places to Volunteer your time...

**Communications/Internet:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga had the HTHH volcanic explosion 15/1/22 which created a Tsunami. This destroyed our submarine fibre cable. Tongatapu link was fixed in a few months, Ha'apai and Vava' were replaced in 7/23. Both Telco's relied on Satellite with Digicel invested in long range Microwave.

Starlink also donated 50 units to Tonga, most were clustered in Government Ministries and Schools in the CBD of both outer Islands, these were supposed to be free to all public. Cable was repaired 2023, an earthquake early 2024 took the cable out again – no word on timeframe to repair. A 6 month interim approval for Starlink was granted 6/24, Full licence issued 12/24

E-sims are active with TCC only in 2024, Digicel is set to follow 2025.

Voicemail options exist on cellphones, but not widely used or understood, suggest not leaving a message... it will probably not be listened to.

Turn data saver on. Android/Apple: search settings for "data saver" and activate it. Data is not cheap here or fast, this will save a considerable amount of data and give you more speed. It turns off autoplay, auto audio, drops image quality a little on facebook and youtube, it also stops autosync for backups, app polling. PC's turn on "metered connection" [www.vavau.to/reducingdata.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/reducingdata.pdf)

Digicel – owned by Telstra since 2022. GSM phone and internet services. 8nnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 day, \$50 for 22gb over 30 days, \$70 for 35gb over 30 days. Make sure you opt out of the off bundle casual rate, by sending Y to 515, or your money will disappear if you do not have a data plan active. International plans \$4 30 min, \$10 90 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$12 2500 mins and texts to Digicel only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to TCC. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using My Digicel app, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 123 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours \*120# money Balance, \*130# Plan summary \*777# Sim number \*123# plan purchasing My Digicel App for data balance. Starlink reseller.

[Digicel Tonga Topup | Digicel Tonga Online](#)

TCC – government owned. Landline, GSM phone and Internet services. 7nnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 days. No opt out of the off bundle casual rate. International plans \$3.45 40 min, \$2.30 15 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$10 1000 mins and texts to TCC only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to Digicel. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using TCC Mobile/Bing apps, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 through TCC shop ONLY. Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 800 222 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours. TCC app does not work very well. Starlink reseller

WANTOK – PNG/Local partnership just starting up, in Tongatapu only currently. Starlink reseller

Niuva only has TCC services, limited power/solar.

**SSB/HF AIS/Internet Nets:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Far North Radio (NZ, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu) +64 94061423 [miss5kitty1@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:miss5kitty1@yahoo.co.nz) [https://www.noonsite.com/images/pdfs/new-zealand\\_far-north-radio-membership-form/view](https://www.noonsite.com/images/pdfs/new-zealand_far-north-radio-membership-form/view)

1800-1900 NZDST 6.516Mhz  
1900-1930 NZDST 4.417Mhz

Gulf Harbour Radio ZMH286  
[www.ghradio.co.nz](http://www.ghradio.co.nz) [ghradio@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ghradio@xtra.co.nz) +64 9 4245765 May 1 to November 30  
8752Khz or 8779 or 8297 in that order depending on interference  
NZST 0715 UTC 1915

Passage Guardian ZXMH292 AIS for passage tracking, either email/text or HF for information. Accepts float plans  
[www.passageguardian.nz](http://www.passageguardian.nz)  
4149 Khz 6230 8713 8737 12353 13101 16534 17257 18840 22168 22801 25106

**Laundry tips:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
[www.vavau.to/tipstrickslaundry.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tipstrickslaundry.pdf)

**Crew seekers:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
[World sailing and hitchhikers and crew](#)

**Selling your boat in Tonga:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
[World sailing and hitchhikers and crew](#)

**Yacht lockup hard and floating tips:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
[www.vavau.to/tipstricksyachtstorage.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tipstricksyachtstorage.pdf)

**Passage planning to Fiji:** *to be completed, I have only done one passage to Savu Savu by accident* [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
Lau is not an entry port, do no stop either. You face deportation.  
Savua Savu is a yacht friendly harbour. From Vava'u most people use the Nanuku Passage to Savu Savu. Oneata passage to Suva, which is a commercial harbour, but good for re-provisioning.  
Fiji has more Marine Services than Tonga. In 2023 a yacht had damaged rigging sent to Fiji by yacht, it was then sailed back by another yacht when it was repaired....  
[https://www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020 Fiji Shores And Marinas Guide.pdf](https://www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020_Fiji_Shores_And_Marinas_Guide.pdf) for a list of all services in Fiji

**Weather Routing** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
It is well worth the money to get Passage planning for your vessel  
[www.metbob.com](http://www.metbob.com) Bob Mcdavitt weather routing  
[brucetheweatherman@gmail.com](mailto:brucetheweatherman@gmail.com) Bruce Buckley, Weather  
[clouds@ozemail.com.au](mailto:clouds@ozemail.com.au) Roger Badham, Weather  
[www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com)

**Passage monitoring** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
Passage monitoring <https://passageguardian.nz>

**Passage planning to Aus:** *to be completed, looking for advice as I have never sailed to the West Island from Tonga. Just PNG from Brisbane on "Eye of the Wind"...* [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Don't forget to complete your ANOA and Evisa

It is well worth the money to get Passage planning for your vessel  
[www.metbob.com](http://www.metbob.com) Bob Mcdavitt weather routing  
[brucetheweatherman@gmail.com](mailto:brucetheweatherman@gmail.com) Bruce Buckley, Weather  
[clouds@ozemail.com.au](mailto:clouds@ozemail.com.au) Roger Badham, Weather  
[www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com)  
Passage monitoring <https://passageguardian.nz>

**Weather/Tides** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
*NZ NIWA and Australia have a shared weather project for weather stations and Tide equipment in Tonga*  
Online tides for Tonga/Pacific... <http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/#!/offshore> Neiafu and Nukualofa  
tonga

Apps <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.anujdivesh.PacificTides>  
<https://apps.apple.com/nz/app/pacific-tides/id1586592173>

Weather..

<https://met.gov.to/>  
[www.met.gov.fj](http://www.met.gov.fj)  
[www.countrytv.co.nz/weather](http://www.countrytv.co.nz/weather)  
[www.rainradar.to/simple](http://www.rainradar.to/simple)

Seasonality of groups by island **to do**  
Temp, rain, wind

**Starlink: [Return to Table of Content]**

Starlink has changed sailing. Unfortunately SL is currently going through the ISP licencing process in Tonga, and then residents can request permission/licencing for personal/business SL if this is granted, which seems unlikely based on Vanuatu SL. Who are now reapplying via a locally based reseller so a local presence requirement is met. Internet prices are about TOP2 a gb and max download 9Mbps, so not many business allow it. If someone does a favour for you using internet, think about paying or purchase something from them

Get one month free with this referral link <https://www.starlink.com/?referral=RC-51686-12258-63>

Please don't turn your VHF off and live in Whatsapp, the life you save may be your own.

Also do not solely rely in Starlink, have a redundant fallback. SSB, Garmin in reach. A number of searches have begun because contact was lost to Starlink ONLY vessels. Cable, router, dish, power failures are more common than you think.

Café Tropicana normally holds Starlink Ethernet cables for resale. This is the most common item to fail on starlinks!

**Interested in moving to Vava'u? [Return to Table of Content]**

Vava'u desperately need the following marine trades: electrical, electronics, HVAC, Solar, sail repair, rigger, diesel mechanic, outboard and small engine mechanic

If it is for a trade to work in Vava'u please contact [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to) to discuss opportunities. Could be seasonal employment visa initially...

Caution! If you do move here, get your business visa, THEN ship your personal items here. If your personal items (includes 1 car and also your work tools) arrive before you get your visa you will pay duty and CT. If you have your visa when they arrive, it will be minimal charges!

**Visa forms Tonga- Assured, Business, Employment [Return to Table of Content]**

Here are the visa checklists and visa application forms for the Kingdom of Tonga. Also below is all the forms for getting a Tongan police record, which is required for a liquor renewal, some job applications, overseas visa application, change/extension of Tongan visa if you have spent time within Tonga.

Change in Visa class requires 1. you to leave Tonga, have someone submit the new visa application or 2.TOP5,750 fee and stay in county.

[Assured](#) income visa checklist. You cannot work here

[Business](#) Visa checklist. Setup as business here

[Employment](#) Visa checklist, you work for someone with a business

Application [form](#) all visa use this form

**Police criminal record procedure [Return to Table of Content]**

Tonga Police records [form](#)

**Immigration: Naturalisation procedure for Tongans [Return to Table of Content]**

Immigration checklist <https://vavau.to/naturalisationform.jpg>

**Blood Banks [Return to Table of Content]**

A small blood bank exists in Nukua'lofa hospital.

If a patient requires blood, his family will appeal through family/friends, radio stations, facebook groups, Whatsapp, VHF.

Some of the rare and universal blood/plasma donors are known to Doctors.

Hospitals will provide your blood type at no charge – an extremely useful thing to know!

If you can donate blood: no alcohol or non-prescription drugs within the last 24-48 hours, no tattoos or piercings within the last 30 days. Family will normally collect you and return you from the Hospital.

Pay it forward if you can.

Solar assistance for those living here [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

<https://pcreee.org/> can assist with Solar installations in Tonga. Also give 25% subsidy if you use a pre-approved importer/installer based in Tonga. You can find someone to review your configuration, suggest advice, install or final sign off prior to Tonga Energy Commission signoff (only required for on grid installs)

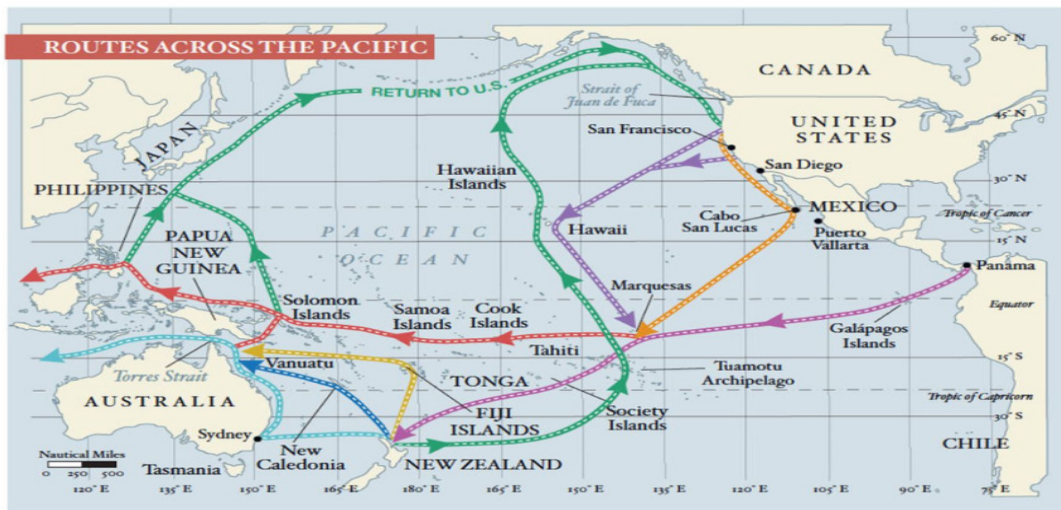
[Treasures of the Bilge Vava'u](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Café Tropicana has a treasures of the bilge basket just inside the door for any items you don't want anymore, your trash is someone's treasure... extremely popular and useful from a suggestion of a cruiser in the 2023 season.

[Tipping](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tips are not cultural in Tonga (as USA is), it is appreciated for good service. Look for a tip jar... Wages for hospitality are anything from TOP2 to TOP15 an hour. Trades are anything from TOP10 upwards.

[Sailing Routes - Pacific:](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)



[Coffee](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Café Tropicana and Coffee and Tees retail Kingdom Koffee, grown and roasted in Tongatapu.

Espresso machines in Vava'u are at Café Tropicana, Coffee and Tees, Bella Vista, Harbour view Resort.

Cafe Tropicana has Extra Dark, Dark, and Medium roast beans. They can grind to plunger and espresso in any quantity.



A guide to coffee...

[Homegas/Tongagas – LPG:](#) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Gas bunker is closed for refilling bottles if a Gas bunker vessel is in the harbour. LPG not Butane. If you have butane, the bottle needs to be empty – the two gases don't mix, it will stop LPG going into the bottle...

Vava'u Cafe Tropicana charges cost a kg and a \$10 surcharge per bottle, generally weekly on Tuesdays at 9am. Has 12+ adaptors,...

Camping Gaz, Calor, clipon 20, clipon 21, clipon 22, clipon 27mm, gasmate (NZ), Mini Acme, 3/8ths Gas nut, Coleman Spanish (clipon 35mm) and more I have forgotten the names of. Sorry I do not lend my adaptors out anymore. I do have some clipon adaptors for sale. Tonga gas has a large ACME but no other adaptors. Or taxi \$15 each way to depot. Been doing this since 2016, quite a bit of knowledge unlike another company that started in 2025 and has destroyed several gas bottles because they tried to remove an adaptor that was not removable.

Cafe Tropicana MAY have Gasmate bottles and Gasmate adaptors, 4kg POL bottles and POL gas adaptors for sale, please ask if you are desperate.

Vava'u Phone: 70319 VHF: NONE Email: NONE GPS coordinates: 18°40'37.44"S 173°59'8.27"W Location: Toula fuel Bunker Cash only	Nuku'alofa Phone: 21390 VHF Ch: None GPS coordinates: 21° 8'33.09"S 175°10'33.57"W Location Ma'ufanga Bunker
	Ha'apai – direct swap for Tongagas bottles only!

Website: [www.homegas.to](http://www.homegas.to) DOES not have any adaptors  
Hours 9am to 4.30pm M to Fri, Sat 9am to noon

Vava'u: Access has been stopped up the stairs to TongaGas for health and safety reasons. Imagine dropping a gas bottle down stairs...

Does a petrol/diesel fuel run Tuesday and Friday at 9am. \$20 per boat. Run back by 10am. I have 300l of fuel bottles I lend short term (donated by previous yachts to help others). Or use a taxi, which is \$15 each way

Be aware NZ and Australia do not refill fibreglass and only POL (US) bottles that are in test dates, no rust. You may have to gravity fill or swap to a POL bottle, which are filled everywhere. You can also buy duty free in NZ marine grade aluminium gas bottles. If size is an issue for your gas locker look for GASMATE gas bottles and buy a few adaptors and a NZ/Aus standard regulator.

As at 5/25 Vava'u \$5.10TOP per kg price changes 18<sup>th</sup> of each month. Again because of the war in IRAN LBG is going up rapidly

**Couriers:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga has the following couriers: UPS, Fedex, DHL. Service terminates in Nukualofa, you will have to pay for transshipment to Vava'u or Ha'apai. DO NOT give an address outside of Nuku'alofa, you will end up paying twice... Couriers are not cheap or quick to outer islands (5-7+ days from the time parcel is in Tonga).

Send colour scans of practice, ships registration paper, skippers passport to agent asap when you have the courier tracking number as this will speed up clearance of a yacht in transit.

A TIN (Tax identification number) is required for your vessel to import items – courier or sea freight. See Revenue services, it will take 1-2 days.

To import items you must use an Customs Agent. In Vava'u I recommend Jetsave Travel,

**Post Office**

Receiving a Postal courier package is 2-3 weeks +. Normal mail 6 to 8 weeks+  
\$10 handling fee per parcel to Post Office.

If you are using someone's private bag, it now costs \$125 annually – please consider a donation of \$10 per package

**UPS**

Nukualofa +676 30221

Vava'u +676 70422

Yacht in Transit Yacht name (yacht email address)

c/- EM Jones Logistics Tonga (Vava'u destination)

Hala Taufa'ahu

Nuku'alofa

Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga

**Fedex**

Western Union Nuku'alofa +676 23052

Vava'u Linda [jetsave.vav@gmail.com](mailto:jetsave.vav@gmail.com) +676 70215

Yacht in Transit Yacht name (plus yacht email address)

c/- Fedex Tonga (Vava'u destination)

Hala Taufa'ahu

Nuku'alofa

Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga

DHL

Tongatapu agent [dhltongainfo@gmail.com](mailto:dhltongainfo@gmail.com) Phone +676 27700.

Vava'u NO AGENT

Yacht in Transit Yacht name (plus yacht email address)

c/- DHL Tonga (Vava'u destination)

Vuna Road

Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu,

Kingdom of Tonga attn Silei

Documents required to clear a parcel (Health practise, Passport biometric page (in colour), TIN, invoice of parcel). Yacht in transit must be approved by Customs Head office (can take a few days), if it is purely replacing something try to prove it with pictures. A minimal handling fee will be charged by customs, customs agent fee, any transshipment fees, courier fees.

Your fellow cruisers may be able to bring stuff to and from Fiji – Request on #26 on Net. Also if you have flat mail, ask and offer a fellow cruiser to post it overseas, cheaper and FASTER!

In 2023 a yacht had damaged rigging sent to Fiji by yacht, it was then sailed back by another yacht when it was repaired....

[https://www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020\\_Fiji\\_Shores\\_And\\_Marinas\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.fijimarinas.com/pdf/2020_Fiji_Shores_And_Marinas_Guide.pdf) for a list of all services in Fiji

#### **Apostille/Certified copies:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

An Apostille or an Authentication certifies the authenticity of the signature, seal and position of the official who has executed, issued or certified a copy of a public document. An Apostille or an Authentication enables a public document issued in one country to be recognized as valid in another country. Justice of the Peace (JP) or a Magistrate (Court house) can do this for TOP10. Unfortunately no upto date list is available for JP's in Tonga, you will have to ask on FB or a local. You must take in photo ID – passport, drivers licence, national ID etc.

#### **Accommodation off the boat:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

A number of options exist depending on what you need. If your yacht is in the water and you just want a few days off.. Boathouse Apartments or Harbourview are popular as they have good access to the harbour.

If you are working at the boatyard and can't stay on board for many reasons, but want to be close you could stay at a managed property up the lagoon with water access and dinghy to it. Speak to Greg and see what's available through Vavau Island Property services.

#### **Gym/Fitness:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Vava'u Lahi Fitness Centre was based in Puatakanave Hotel. NOW CLOSED!

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100065078975484>

#### **Recycling:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

**Glass** can be crushed and used as an alternative for sand...

Tongatapu crush glass – AID funded project

Ha'apai crush glass – community funded project

Vava'u does not crush glass

**Used oil/contaminated fuel** can be used as a wood preservative, markings sports fields, weed poison, fire starter, bicycle chain lube, soak bath, furnace fuel, chainsaw and water pump oil... Vava'u used oil, contaminated fuel can be dropped into Cafe Tropicana. TOP10

**Dead 12v batteries** are periodically collected on each island and recycled

Vava'u Cafe Tropicana accepts dead batteries. Free.

#### **Various other**

Cafe Tropicana accepts glass jars with metal lids for preserves.

Market accepts Schweppes glass bottles and lids, as well as soda plastic bottles and lids for various things.

Used plastic bags are accepted in the market, reused as shopping bags.

Food scraps can be dropped into Cafe Tropicana (no meat, egg shells, onions) and is dropped into a composter or home bio gas unit. Mounu Island will do the same.

Metal tins nothing

Glass bottles are accepted in Nukua'lofa and Ha'apai for glass crushing as a replacement for sand in concrete. Vava'u does not have a glass crusher!

Polystyrene/Plastic bottles can be melted into paving stones but nothing is done..

Biogas is just starting to be used for bio fertiliser and bio gas.

**[Vava'u Anchorage Guide: \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)**

The Moorings chartering company numbered anchorages to make it easy for chartering its fleet. It continues to this day, see Cafe Tropicana who produce Chartlets with navigational info as well. Chartlets for Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Minerva, Fiji, Neiafu as well. This is a very brief summary, refer to cruising guides or compendium for your vessels safety, or wait till it's rewritten as a website. If anyone has updated comments please email [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to)

Electronic navigational charts were quite a few miles out early 2000, make sure you update to the latest version and ensure you spot check them!

Night sailing is not recommended, even if you know these waters well!

Be aware of Fisheries regulations that affect anchoring in SMA/FHR zones.

SMA – special management areas – anchoring fee paid to community

Taunga (21,22, 24) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Otea (6) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight

Falevai (7,8) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Ovaka (38,39,40) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Nuapapu (15) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight

Hunga (9,13) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Matamaka (15) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Makave (25) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Ofu (28) Donation

FHR – no anchoring, no fish, no take, some allow guided snorkelling

Refer to more extensive cruising notes/guides

**Chartlet pic/drone**

**Bottom/reef. Hold, anchoring/mooring tips Moorings/fees. SMA/FHR exposed to winddirection. Swell.. Suitable ☺fair weather, wind warning, gale force) environmental..**

**Cell reception Digicel/TCC**

**inHabitated? Villages, close business?**

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**Neiafu 1** (Knee AH foo) The safest yachting harbour In Tonga, Friday night races have largely failed as not many people wish to race the house and the yacht club is in name only. This is not “port of refuge”, it is “Port of Refuge Harbour”. The original Port of Refuge is actually in Longamapu “Uluaki Puatalefusi. Wreck MV Clan Mcwilliam 18° 40' 15" S., 173° 59' 27" W. Paradise Hotel access is stopped until renovation gets underway. Cafes and restaurants, fruit, veg, arts markets. Shopping. LPG, fuel. Fuel tanker minimum 250 litres. Duty free if last Tongan port. Very quick drop off to 40m+ from shore

**Pangai 2** (PAHNG-eye)

**Pangaimotu Causeway 3** (PAHNG-eye-MOH-too) Hoping at some stage this will be turned into a low bridge to flush the harbour and allow dinghies to the eastern side.. Sandy Bottom. Ano Beach and Hinakaeua Beach.

**Vaipua Lagoon 4** (vie-POO-ah) 18°38.663S / 173°59.907W. 4 moorings+ closest to yard is only for boats waiting haulout not overnight. \$15 per night. Protection from SE. Reefs on either side, be aware of scope length. Villages Vaipua, Taua, Vai Malo. Business Vava'u Boatyard.

**Lotuma Island (Vauleleva Bay) 5** (loh-TOO-mah) 18°30.746S /174°00.484W Protection from E/SE. Bottom mostly rock. Not nice in NE. Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. Book first. [www.thetonga.com](http://www.thetonga.com) Lotuma is a Tongan Navy Island, access is currently permitted.

**Mala 6** (MAH-lah) 18°41.446S /174°01.666W Good protection from SE. Shallow bommies. Shallow through pass, do not attempt. Japanese gardens snorkelling. SMA.Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. [www.thetonga.com](http://www.thetonga.com) Book first.

**Port Maurelle 7** (Port more elle) Fangakima(FAHNG-ah-KEE-mah) 18°41.980S / 174°01.788W Well protected except NW. SMA. Swallows Cave 18.6824° S, 174.0473° W . Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W No Digicel

**Nuku 8** (NOO-koo) Belongs to Falevai Island. SMA. Snorkel tour \$7 - \$10 per person

**Luamoko day only 9** (LOO-ahMOH- koo) Sandy bottom, fine weather holding only. SMA. Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W

**Aisea's or Lisa Beach 10** (eye-SAY-ah) 18°41.833S / 173°59.892W Protected N to SE 6.5km walk to town.

**Tapana 11** (tar par nar) 18°42.432S / 173°59.169W Sand bottom. Good protection SE to NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. Café Tropicana now owns several moorings – please pay if you use them TOP15 per night.

**Tapana South 12** (Ta Paan Ah) 18°72.398S / 174°98.929W, Good protection except NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. \*

**Hunga 13** (hoo n g a) 18°41.59S / 174°07.69W Beware of bommie coming into Hunga Lagoon. Hunga Haven/anchorage closed. Ika Lahi closed. SMA/FHR

**Foeata Island “Blue Lagoon” day only 14** (FOH-ay-AH-tah)18°42.609S / 174°08.321W. Day ONLY. SMA/FHR

**Nuapapu and Matamaka 15** (New a Pap OO) 18°42.355S / 174°5.546W Protection N to NW. Feasts are sometimes available. NO protection in S or SW wind . Protection N to SE SMA

**Vaka'eitu 16** (vark eh A2) 18°43.356S / 174°6.003W mostly Sandy with some coral. Protection N to SE Coral Gardens snorkelling sites.. Feasts sometimes available on Island during season.

**Lape Island 17** (LAH-pay) 18°42.929S / 174°5.015W. This has great SE protection and good holding. Better protection than it looks like it would be on the chart. There are no moorings remaining. Ok Digicel. SMA. Cultural tour Kolio 7513154

**Fonua Lei day only 18** .(foh-NOO-ah-LIE)

**Sisia day only 19** (sis e ah) 18°43.910S / 174°03.257W Rocky. Protection E

**Katafanga day only 20** (car ta far na )

**Taunga overnight 21** (ta oong a) 18°44.4S / 174°00.6W. Protected S and W. Ngau island is good snorkelling and diving. SMA

**Taunga Day Stop 22** (ta oong a) Exposed to Westerlies. SMA

**Ngau Day Stop 23** (Now) 18°45.316S / 174°00.627W Diving and snorkelling. Wind protection N to NE, SE. SMA/FHR

**Ngau Day Stop 24** (Now) 18°44.0S / 174°00.4W Protection from W and NW. SMA/FHR

**Old Harbour / Makave 25** (mah-KAH-vay) 18°39.247S / 173°58.28527W coral bottom – float your chain. good protection NE to SE. Kilikiletufua Wall in Makave. SMA

**'Olo'ua 26** (OH-loo-OO-ah) 18°40.206S / 173°57.473W protected in NE and S SMA

**Mafana 27** (mah-FAH-nah) protected in N and E. Mafana Backpacker closed. SMA

**Ofu 28** (OH-foo) 18°41.918S / 173°55.768W protected in NE and SE. Sand and rock. Good Digicel. SMA

**Eueiki Day stop 29** (E wa icki) Treasure Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned island. No anchoring, may have mooring for rent VHF 26. FHR

**Kenutu 30** (keh-NOO-too) 18°41.730S / 173°55.737W Uninhabited. Sand. Good protection from E and SE

**Maninita Island 31** (MAH-nee-NEE-tah) 18°51.400S / 173°59.866W. Good weather only. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary

**Euakafa 32** (AY-wah-KAH-fah) 18°45.194S / 174°2.117W

**Fuamotu Day only 33** (foo ah mo 2) 18°47.421S / 174°00.417W. Uninhabited. RAT free, permission must be given to go ashore

**Lua Ui 34** (LOO-ah OO-ee)

**Lahiapo (Luahaipo) daytime only 35** (LOO-ah-hee-AH-poh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

**Fonua' One'One 36** (foh-NOO-ah-OH-nay-OH-nay) 18°48.935S / 174°03.918W. Sandy bottom. Good protection from SSW through E. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

**Fangasito day only 37** (FAHNG-ah-SEE-toh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary.

**Ovaka 38** (oh-VAH-kah) Day Stop 18°45.935S / 174°05.206W Sandy bottom. Feast 7530552. Tavake Island Market day Thursday morning. Snorkel guide tour \$10 per person guide in FHR. Heavens Touch Gardens owned by Sergei from France

**Ovaka day only 39** (o var ka) 18°45.145S / 174°05.172W

**Ovalau 40** (oh-vah-LAHW) 18°44.985S / 174°04.844W Uninhabited sandy at 4m. Large sandy beach Protected SE to E. SMA/HR

**Mounu 41** (moh-OO-noo) 18°45.01S / 174°04.3W. Sandy, call for anchoring instructions based on weather. VHF 77  
[www.mounuisland.com](http://www.mounuisland.com) Mounu Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned.

**Mou'mua (Mu'omu'a) day only 42** (moo a moo a) 18°45.436S / 174°02.613W (MOO-oh-MOO-ah) Inhabited, private Island. Mike is the lease owner. Wind protection NE to E.

**North Shore** 18°37.418S / 174°01.894W Coral Sand 60ft Wind protection SE Not recommended.

**Big bay** (Vaitutakau Bay) 18°35'55.93"S 174° 0'39.24"W No protection unless SE settled weather. Not recommended.

**Port of Refuge** originally is actually in Longamapu "Uluaki Puatalefusi named because No protection W, not recommended. Tall Ships could not sail into the harbour. 18°39'11.92"S 174° 3'40.17"W Village of Longamapu

Suggested anchorage and land itineraries [3, 7, 14 30, 60 days to do KMZ to do](#)

This guide is not supported by Government, Aid or any Tongan business other than Café Tropicana. Please support us if you are in Vava'u or donate via <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> Or [paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](mailto:paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com)

- *This guide has been put together to help cruiseship guests book activities, find things to do prior to arriving in Tonga. I am based in Vava'u, so more information on this Island.*
- *Advertising your activity, café etc for Nukualofa, Ha'apai can be done via [greg.just@gmail.com](mailto:greg.just@gmail.com)*
- *If you appreciate the information and wish to show your appreciation by donating, if you can't come into Café Tropicana...*
- <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> OR
- [paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com) OR
- <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-fight-ataxia-and-support-greg-justs-journey> OR
- <https://patreon.com/PacificCruisingAssociation> OR
- <https://www.predictwind.com/?ref=pacificcruisingassoc>

# Tonga Marine Tourism Briefing Video [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

[www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4) to do  
[www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf)

All information is from my observations as a resident of Vava'u (since 2007) and citizen of Tonga (since 2015), it is given freely to improve tourism and improve safety at sea.. I have sailed since I was 12, attended Outward Bound Anakiwa at 21. I have about 150+ days of blue water sailing, Sunburst to yachts to Tall ships.NZ to Tonga 13 times. I am a Padi Divemaster. Volunteered for NZ coastguard, Vava'u SAR for 10 years with VERA. I do not rganise rallies but I am port officer for OCC, ICNZ, PCA, SSCA, CA, Noonsite, RCC, Trans Ocean, World Arc, Pacific Posse. I give SAFE information rather than to benefit a commercial business that a rally may promote.

Do not rush through Tonga, you are not doing it justice to spend less than 2 months here. Come back next year and enter in Ha'apai or Vava'u. A lot of people spend 5 years going through the Pacific before going to Australia and West.

## Tonga

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The strategic location of Vava'u at the crossroads of several sailing routes, as well as the reputation of the main anchorage, Refuge Harbour, as a safe hurricane hole, has turned it into a busy yachting centre – Jimmy Cornell

Population 108,000, Vava'u 16000.

176 islands, 34 inhabited, 5 Island groups. Christianity in constitution. Modesty and Sabbath rules apply.

13 hours ahead of GMT. Be aware of dateline changes!

Named Friendly Islands by Capt cook in 1773. SIDS small island developing state.

Direct flights from Nukualofa to NZ, Australia, Samoa, and Fiji. Vava'u direct to Nadi, Fiji April to Feb, and Samoa. Vava'u international airport development starts 2025., finish 2028.

One way crew letter from immigration \$34.50 (takes 2 weeks, pay in cash ONLY – Café Tropicana does this as a paid service) or <https://onwardticket.com/vavau> Visa for approved countries upon arrival at customs, other countries you must apply at immigration upon arrival – pre application is not required.

Trade winds April to December SE or E. spring tide 6 foot, average 4 to 5 foot

Cyclone season November to march. Most common cyclones jan, feb

Whale swim 1 July to October

VHF 26, 60 repeater, not much traffic on 16,

ANOA, 12 months boat visa. Human Visa 6 months max, requires exit to another country to reset.

Medical is varied but improving, recommend health insurance.

Large Christian based constitution. Conservative dress standards, Sunday rules apply.

Vava'u boatyard monohulls 50ft, 25 tonns. Cats 58ft, 25 tonnes. Draft max 7ft. You can, import duty free, non consumable parts for yachts.

Shipping routes via Auckland and United State SF every month. Couriers 2 weeks +. Duty free for boat parts, require TIN from revenue.

Pets – quarantined on vessel for a term, vaccination paperwork.

Starlink is approved.

Ciguatera is a very small issue. Certain reefs and fish.

15/1/22 HTHH Underwater Volcano caused Tsunami. Largest Volcanic event in 100 years. Biggest impact on Tongatapu, then Nomuka.

Then Ha'apai, very little impact on Vava'u.

Social Media resource <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals>

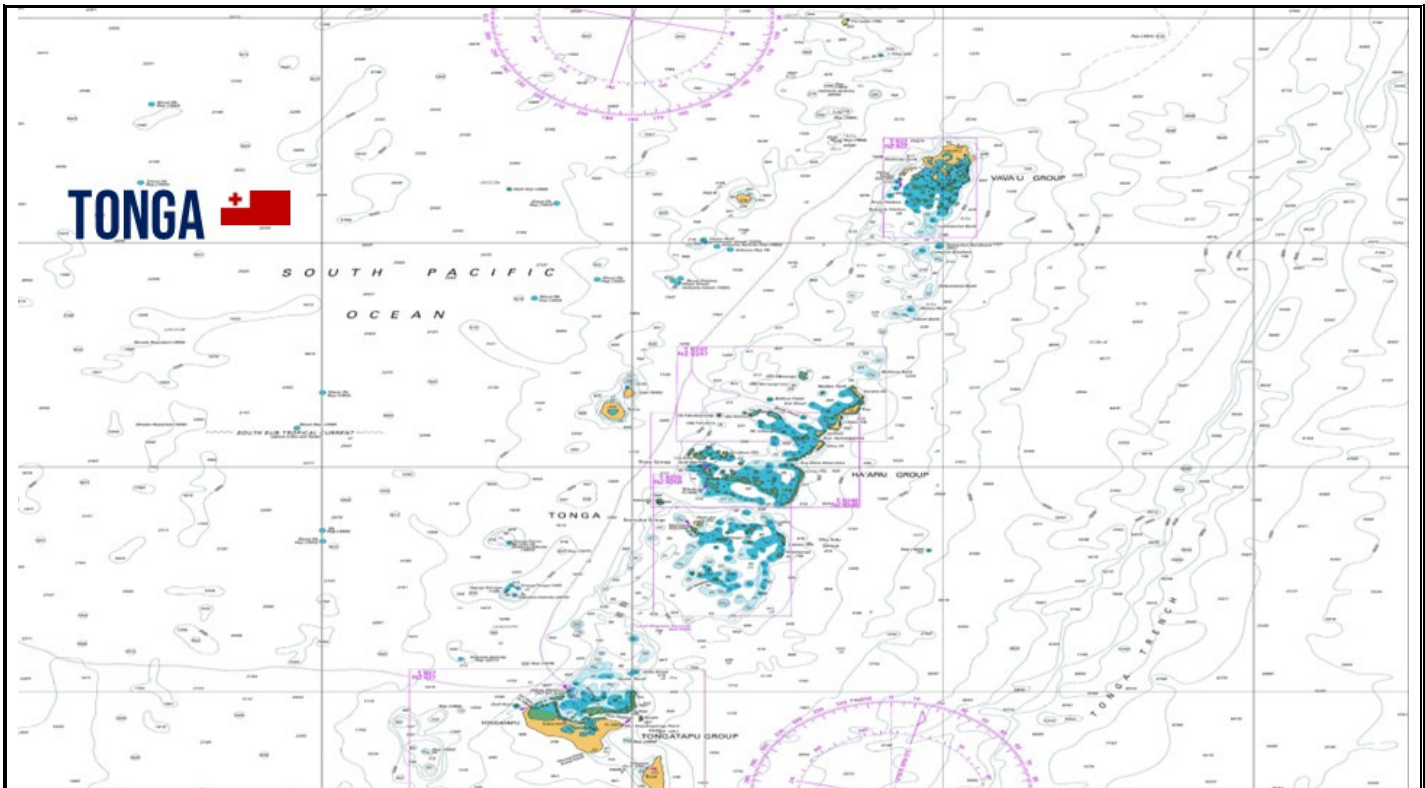
Social Media <https://www.facebook.com/vavaucruisersnet>

GPS mapping and info [www.sailingtonga.com](http://www.sailingtonga.com)

Whatsapp [Whatsapp group "Sailing to Tonga " Admin Help/information sailing to, and in, the Kingdom Tonga, from someone based in Tonga that will help with options rather than just clipping your ticket](#)

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGN X>

Info [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) always up to date



**Niuas Island Group.** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Furthest Northern Group. Entry/exit port Niuatoputapu. Main islands Niuatoputapu (sacred Island), Niuafu'ou (many coconuts) and Tafahi (Side Island). Cannot extend visa!

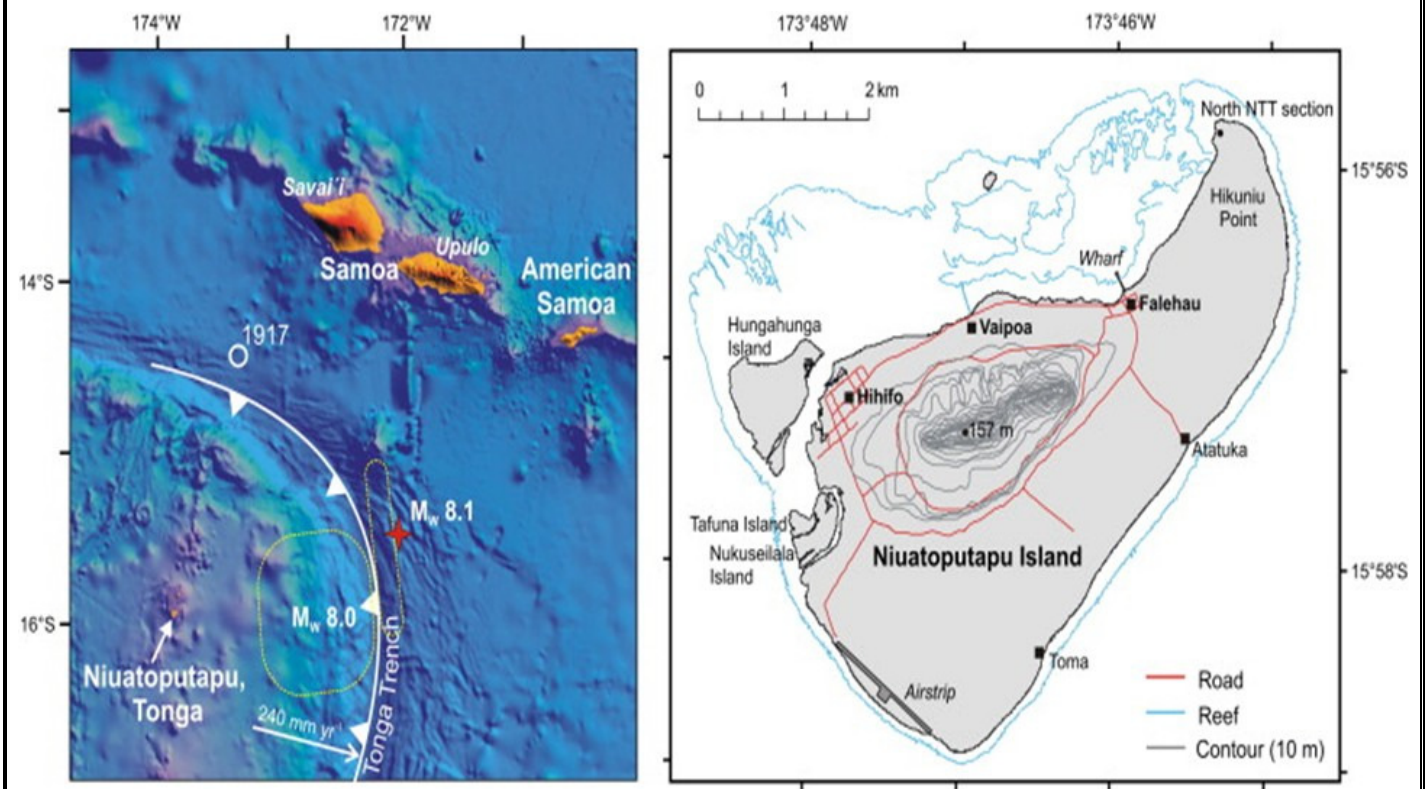
Niuatoputapu has a good walk to the peak, freshwater spring. Snorkelling, diving and beaches are unspoilt. Whalewatch from a beach or the peak august, September. A ferry comes monthly or bi monthly from Nukualofa, Vava'u... shopping is limited, fuel and repairs are limited. Amazing local honey.

Niuafu'ou Has Vai Lahi (Big lake) in middle of island

Tafahi is an extinct Volcano, it has a spectacular crater. Hire a local fishing boat and guide most days from Niatoputapu. Fish with a local can be educational

<https://tongapocketguide.com/the-complete-guide-to-the-niuas/>

[https://www.vavau.to/Cruising\\_Guide3.pdf](https://www.vavau.to/Cruising_Guide3.pdf) From page 14 onwards.

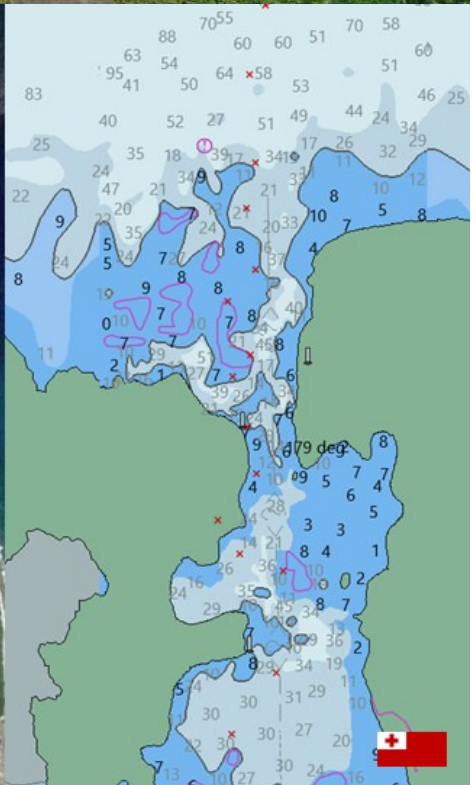




NIUAOTUPAPU



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**Vava'u Island Group**

[\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

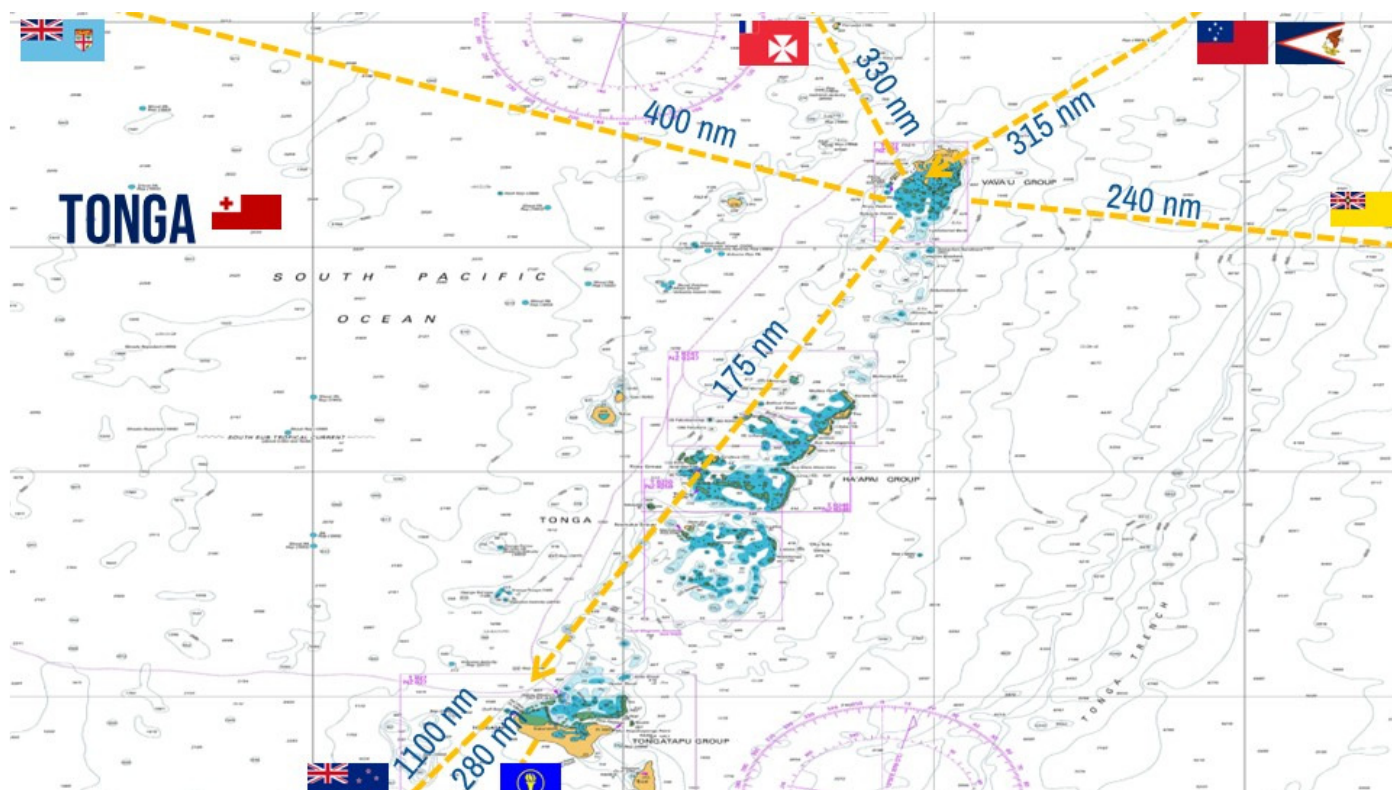
Capital Neiafu. Entry/exit point. The pearl of Tonga. Anchorage are close together. Diving, snorkelling. 50+ moorings. Good provisioning, café, restaurant. Duty free fuel at wharf if you are departing Tonga. LPG refilling. Crew change flying into Vava'u via Fiji and Samoa, True International airport completed by 2028 – private enterprise. A new Hospital is being built from 2025 by UN/Australia. A new Tongan Navy base begins 2025 onwards. Paradise Hotel is also being rebuilt probably 2026. Pronounced Vavaoo.

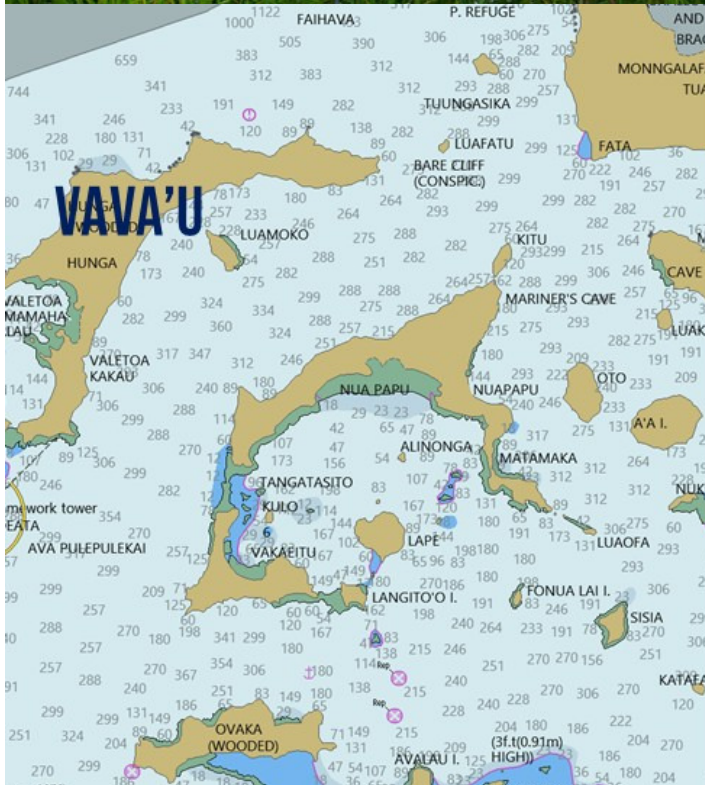
Traditionally yachts depart to NZ in October per cyclone insurance, weather is more stable the later you can leave. With the Vava'u boatyard this opens up staying all or part of the off season and have the option to haulout if required. Cruise without the maddening rush. If you are departing to NZ it is common "kiwi" practice to depart directly from Vava'u or Ha'apai to Minerva, unless you are doing a crew change in Nukualofa. Vava'u allows you to fully provision and depart quickly if a weather window opens. Bear in mind swell and weather patterns frequently are uncomfortable to go through Ha'apai and Nukualofa, unless you have to collect crew in Nuku'alofa.

2022/3/4 bad storms went through Nuku'alofa, Ha'apai was unpleasant at times. You may also depart from Ha'apai. If you return next year enter in the Ha'apai, and go further north as you wish.

<https://tongapocketguide.com/the-complete-guide-to-vavau/>

[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf)





**Ha'apai Island Group**

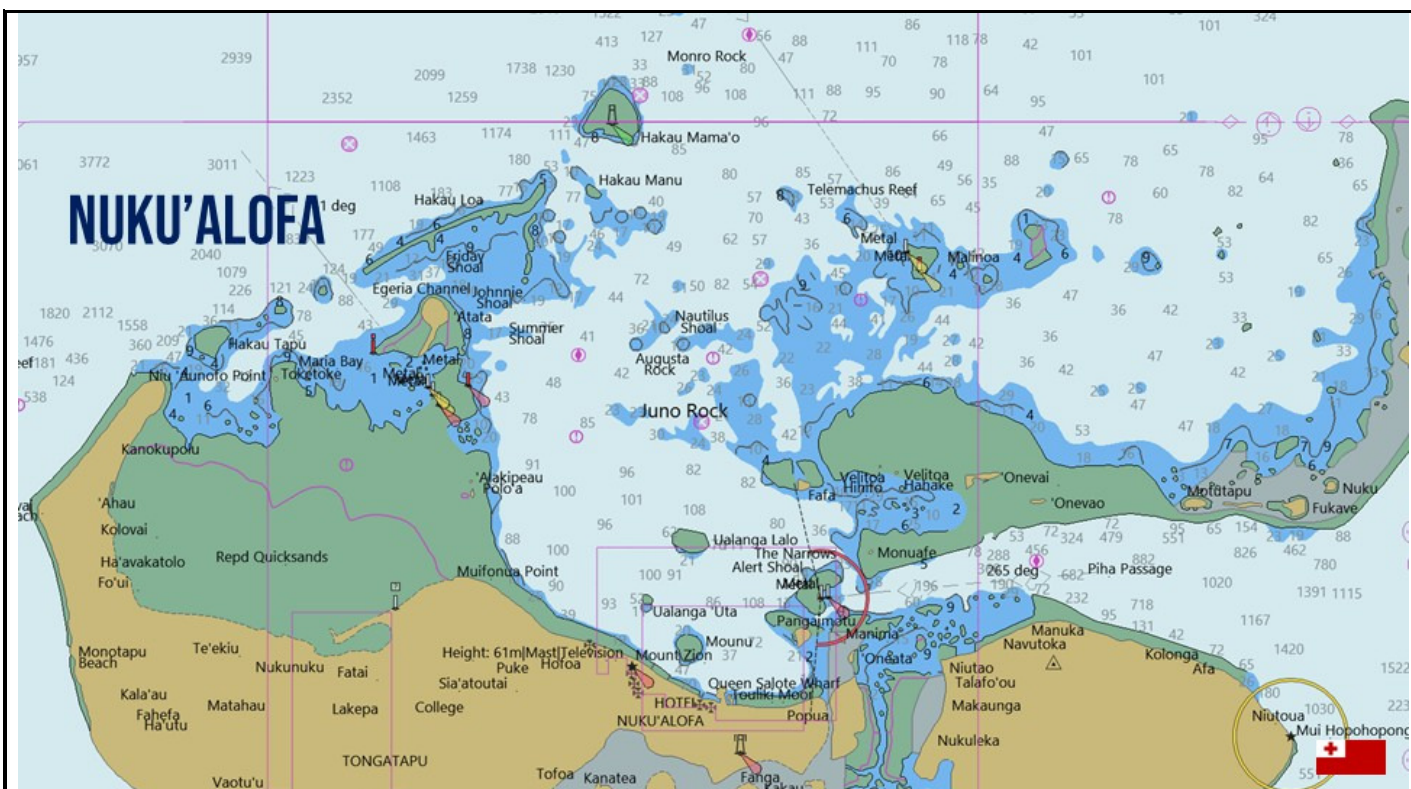
[\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Capital Lifuka. Very little wind cover, sandy bottom. Good drift diving. Basic provisioning, refuelling and LPG is an issue. Entry/exit point – cannot extend visa!

Check in/Out Mornings ONLY

<https://tongapocketguide.com/the-complete-guide-to-haapai/>  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf)





**[Minerva Islands](#)** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Disputed territory between Fiji and Tonga. Expect RNZAF Orion flyovers (turn on VHF 16) and a patrol boat from either Fiji or Tonga. Last few years have had very polite and professional behaviour. A good stopping point on the way to NZ from Tonga, do NOT stop in Minerva on the way to Tonga, you need to go EAST as early as possible. It is a weather hole, but you cannot get out until the weather passes.

Exploring Minerva Reefs by Rich Marshall SV Pogeyan [rich@pogeyan.net](mailto:rich@pogeyan.net)

[https://www.ghradio.co.nz/uploads/1/1/9/0/119037485/exploring\\_minerva\\_reefs.pdf](https://www.ghradio.co.nz/uploads/1/1/9/0/119037485/exploring_minerva_reefs.pdf)

Whatsapp group for Minervans. Here's the invite link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/JYQP5ju18milYACJelt4x>

**[Price comparisons](#)** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga is remote, outer Islands are even more so. International shipping and domestic shipping prices have sky rocketed especially since COVID. Food retail prices should be around 9% higher in outer Islands – they are closer to 50% on average or higher. Very little price regulation happens, or margin control. The only competition is to find the highest price to charge.

Tonga revenue mandated retail shops use an online (linked to Revenue) POS in 2023. It has helped improve tax collection from the mainly Chinese supermarkets. ALL transactions must be entered and a receipt given. Report breaches to revenue (discreet video is best – it does not breach privacy law as only one party must consent to a recording – YOU).

This information is correct when it was entered and is given for you to be aware for comparison purposes only, no responsibility is taken for price changes. It will be updated periodically. **TO DO quarterly**

Pa'anga is the local currency, seniti is cents.

Vava'u 25/2/24 NZ butter 227g TOP 7.00. NZ Milk tetra TOP5.00, Local bread TOP3.00 (price controlled). Mobile Internet Top2.85 per GB (plan).

Ha'apai...

Nuku'alofa...

**[Marine Insurance providers in NZ](#)** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

We recommend the following insurance provider in NZ, it is required for marina and haul out in NZ.

The Marina Shop [www.marine-insurance.co.nz](http://www.marine-insurance.co.nz)

**Nearly all insurance providers require you to be out of the pacific by 1 Nov. Topsail, a UK sail broker (Global Yacht cover underwriter) requires you to be out of the pacific by 1 December. Most cyclones in the pacific Jan/Feb.**

Cruising routes [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Passage planning/weather routing [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#) to be completed and peer reviewed, also NZ to Tonga passage planning to be done

[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.mp4) to do  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf)

[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf)  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4) to do

It is well worth the money to get Passage planning for your vessel

Qualified Meteorologists

[www.metbob.com](http://www.metbob.com) [bob@metbob.com](mailto:bob@metbob.com) Bob McDavitt NZ Meteorologist.

NZD10 per 5 minutes. 2 x Departure prep 10 minutes, voyage 1 x forecast 35 minutes, 3 x underway updates 15 minutes ballpark NZD120

[brucetheweatherman@gmail.com](mailto:brucetheweatherman@gmail.com) Bruce Buckley, Perth Australia Meteorologist.

Dependent on ports. 10 to 30 minute per forecast. Pacific to NZ ballpark AUD450, long term client discounts around 20%

[clouds@ozemail.com.au](mailto:clouds@ozemail.com.au) Roger Badham, Australia Meteorologist. No pricing info.

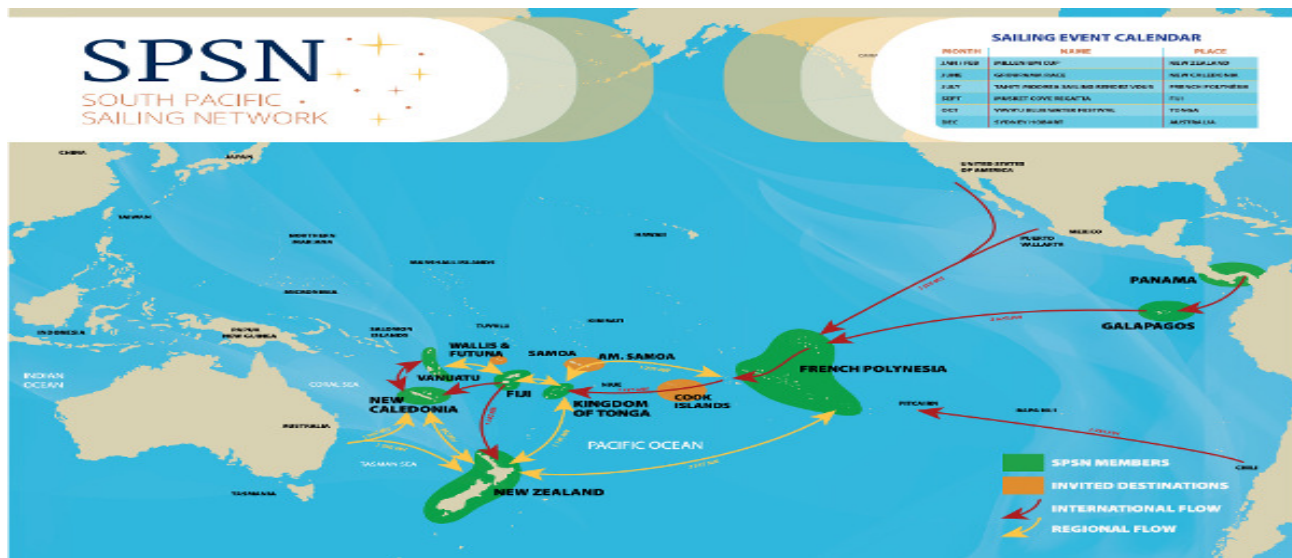
App/Non-qualified Meteorologists

[www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com) Free

[www.predictwind.com](http://www.predictwind.com) \$0 to USD499 per annum

[www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/](http://www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/) John Martin Single Routing – \$250USD for C&OC members \$297USD for other associated club members (\$347USD, non members). for a single passage, up to 3000nm, longer passages by negotiation. Making more than one passage in one cruising season? Then our Season Pass\*\* may benefit your needs. \$550USD for C&OC and Ocean Posse members. \$597USD for other associated club members (\$650USD, non member)\*\*\*.

<https://passageguardian.nz> Passage monitoring



NZ to Tonga and vice versa  
Tonga to Vanuatu and Australia.  
Tonga to Fiji and vice versa  
Samoa to Tonga  
French Poly to Tonga

**Quarantine:** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Protecting Tongas plants and animals. Yacht rubbish clearance. Please also contact them regarding procedures for clearing in animals prior to arriving into the county. [www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg)

At this time no restrictions on fruit, veg, food or meat. Best to declare fruit and veg though in case of issues. If you have crew they can bring in frozen meat in an insulated bag, with a receipt,.. Declare it on arrival and pay a very reasonable duty fee.

Bear in mind below regulations as we tend to follow pacific trends.

Fiji has increased biosecurity quarantine standards, no pork, labelled vac packed NZ meat, honey, eggs.

Animals bonded to private yachts, can come ashore after quarantine. NO Government vet in country so this is not a quarantine safe country to take pets to NZ/Fiji (6 months). NZ you must now fly animals in for quarantine. Fiji pets are now not allowed on or off the

boat.

Alcohol: list everything! It may be bonded and duty paid on consumed portion

Aus – no pork with bone, meat in cans only, no honey, cheese, eggs

Fiji - labelled nz meat only, no pork, No NZ Chicken

NZ – labelled nz meat only, no honey, eggs, no veg, no pork

[Communications/Internet: \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga had the HTHH volcanic explosion 15/1/22 which created a Tsunami. This destroyed our submarine fibre cable. Tongatapu link was fixed in a few months, Ha’apai and Vava’ were replaced in 7/23. Both Telco’s relied on Satellite with Digicel invested in long range Microwave.

Starlink also donated 50 units to Tonga, most were clustered in Government Ministries and Schools in the CBD of both outer Islands, these were supposed to be free to all public. Cable was repaired 2023, an earthquake early 2024 took the cable out again –no word on timeframe to repair. A 6 month interim approval for Starlink was granted 6/24, Full licence issued 12/24

E-sims are active with TCC only in 2024, Digicel is set to follow.

Voicemail options exist on cellphones, but not widely used or understood, suggest not leaving a message... it will probably not be listened to.

Turn data saver on. Android/Apple: search settings for “data saver” and activate it. Data is not cheap here or fast, this will save a considerable amount of data and give you more speed. It turns off autoplay, auto audio, drops image quality a little on facebook and youtube, it also stops autosync for backups, app polling. PC’s turn on “metered connection” [www.vavau.to/reducingdata.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/reducingdata.pdf)

Digicel – owned by Telstra since 2022. GSM phone and internet services. 8nnnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 day, \$50 for 22gb over 30 days, \$70 for 35gb over 30 days. Make sure you opt out of the off bundle casual rate, by sending Y to 515, or your money will disappear if you do not have a data plan active. International plans \$4 30 min, \$10 90 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$12 2500 mins and texts to Digicel only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to TCC. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using My Digicel app, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 123 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours \*120# money Balance, \*130# Plan summary \*777# Sim number \*123# plan purchasing My Digicel App for data balance. Starlink reseller

TCC – government owned. Landline, GSM phone and Internet services. 7nnnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 days. No opt out of the off bundle casual rate. International plans \$3.45 40 min, \$2.30 15 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$10 1000 mins and texts to TCC only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to Digicel. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using TCC Mobile/Bing apps, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 through TCC shop ONLY. Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 800 222 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours. TCC app does not work very well. Starlink reseller

WANTOK – PNG/Local partnership just starting up, in Tongatapu only currently. Starlink reseller

Niua only has TCC services, limited power/solar.



[Responsible Cruising](#) [Return to Table of Content](#)

#### Respect local ecosystems

Tonga has introduced marine reserves (SMAs and FHRs) to encourage conservation and village-only fishing areas.

Special Management Areas (SMA): NO fishing allowed and fees for anchoring, snorkelling may be charged by the Village.

Fish Habitat Reserves (FHR): NO anchoring, NO fishing.

Just because it says Anchorage, does not mean you can anchor, check the following charts for details on the zones..

An old tonga sma/fhr map is available [https://vavau.to/Tonga\\_SMA-flier.pdf](https://vavau.to/Tonga_SMA-flier.pdf)

Individual island updates here <https://vavau.to/vavausma2024.jpeg> <https://vavau.to/haapaisma2023.jpeg>

Whaleswim/watch: protected industry for your protection as well as the whales protection. Go with a trained/licenced operators, human vs Whale... you will lose everytime!! Don't be a dick!!! \$10,000 fine. Season 1 July till Octoberish



#### **Anchorage and mooring fields**

Speed limit in Neiafu Bay is 5 KNOTS. You are responsible for your wake. Be aware of swimmers, spear fishermen, and pearl farms.

Tongans spear fish, hunt for sea cucumbers and tend pearl farms in anchorages and mooring fields DAY and NIGHT. At night they MAY use flashlights.

Anchor only in sandy bottoms and float your chain to protect coral. Damaged coral takes upto 75 years to regrow: don't be a dick. Tahiti is now anti yachts because of damage to coral and loss of fish... be respectful of someone's backyard. If you are anchoring in front of a village or resort, please ask where to anchor as you might be in the way of village/resort tenders or affect the aesthetic view for guests.

Do not empty holding tanks close to a village!

Return rubbish to town, do not throw in the bush, overboard. Remove any fishing net, lines, plastic you find in the water – save the sea life and stop micro plastics entering the food chain

[www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg](http://www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg)

#### **Respect cultural traditions**

Sundays are a day of rest, quiet day – no noise, no exercise (swim, run, bike). Go for a walk, eat, rest

Do not fly drones over villages, **without permission**, especially Sundays.

Trade or barter for fish, fruit, vegetables. School supplies are a priority trade item. Do NOT trade alcohol. Most villages are dry by choice. Respect the village traditions, history and culture.

Show interest in the village and people. You might learn something.

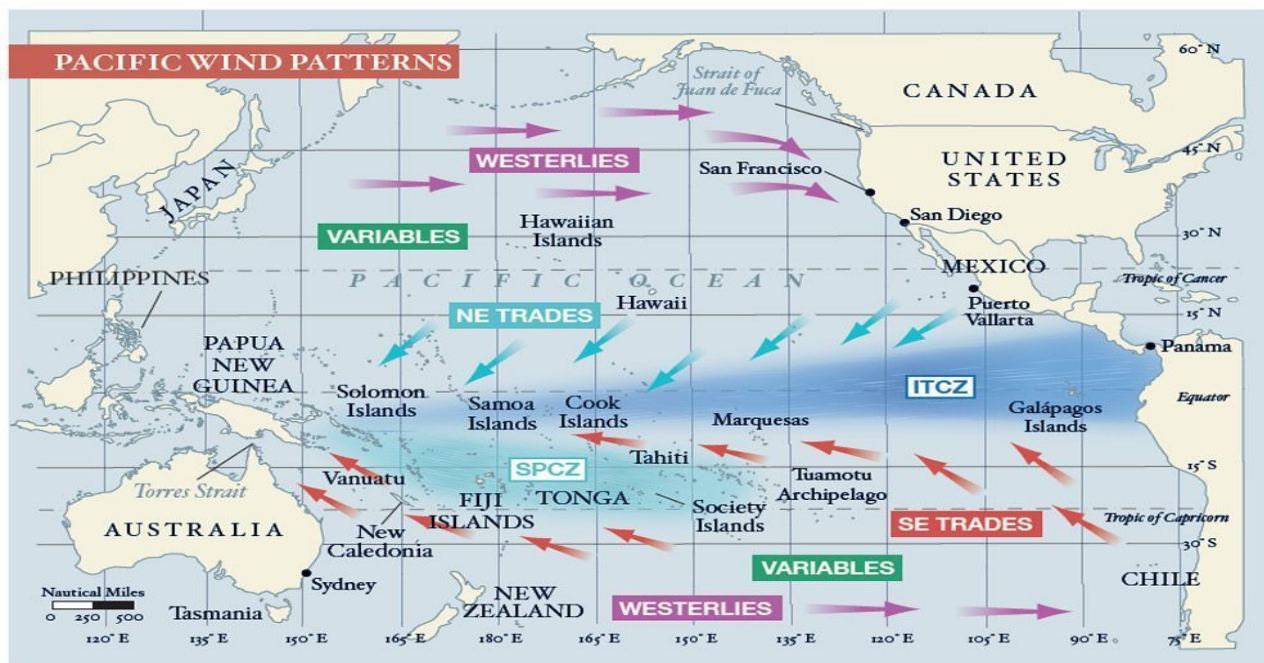
Absolutely no nudity – on your yacht, swimming etc. People can probably see you and may call the Police as it is illegal and offensive.

All land is owned by someone. If you see a sign saying “private property” please respect it. Do not start bonfires on beaches without permission of the village or resorts, embers could blow and start a fire!

#### **Marpol 73/78 Convention 1978**

Tonga enacted “Marine Pollution Prevention Act” in 2020. It applies to ALL vessels in Tongan waters and enforces Marpol 73/78 as a result.

- Holding tanks for raw sewage, dumped at least 3 miles offshore, or pumped at an approved station.
- No rubbish dumping or oil dumping at sea.



Start east and then go west.  
 NZ to Tonga: be an EASTern bunny

[Vava'u anchorage guide](#)  
[\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

The Moorings chartering company numbered anchorages to make it easy for chartering its fleet. It continues to this day, see Cafe Tropicana who produce Chartlets with navigational info as well. Chartlets for Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Minerva, Fiji, Neiafu as well. This is a very brief summary, refer to cruising guides or compendium for your vessels safety, or wait till it's rewritten as a website. If anyone has updated comments please email [greg@vavau.to](mailto:greg@vavau.to)  
 Electronic navigational charts were quite a few miles out early 2000, make sure you update to the latest version and ensure you spot check them!

Night sailing is not recommended, even if you know these waters well!  
 Be aware of Fisheries regulations that affect anchoring in SMA/FHR zones.  
 SMA – special management areas – anchoring fee paid to community

- Taunga (21,22, 24) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Otea (6) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight
- Falevai (7,8) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Ovaka (38,39,40) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Nuapapu (15) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight
- Hunga (9,13) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Matamaka (15) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Makave (25) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight
- Ofu (28) Donation

FHR – no anchoring, no fish, no take, some allow guided snorkelling  
 Refer to more extensive cruising notes/guides

- Chartlet pic/drone
- Bottom/reef. Hold, anchoring/mooring tips Moorings/fees. SMA/FHR exposed to winddirection. Swell.. Suitable ☺fair weather, wind warning, gale force) environmental..
- Cell reception Digicel/TCC
- inHabitated? Villages, close business?

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[Neiafu 1](#) (Knee AH foo) The safest yachting harbour In Tonga, Friday night races have largely failed as not many people wish to race the house and the yacht club is in name only. This is not “port of refuge”. Wreck MV Clan Mcwilliam 18° 40' 15" S., 173° 59' 27" W. Paradise Hotel access is stopped until renovation gets underway. Cafes and restaurants, fruit, veg, arts markets. Shopping. LPG, fuel. Fuel tanker minimum 250 litres. Duty free if last Tongan port. Very quick drop off to 40m+ from shore

[Pangai 2](#) (PAHNG-eye)

[Pangaimotu Causeway 3](#) (PAHNG-eye-MOH-too) Hoping at some stage this will be turned into a low bridge to flush the harbour and allow dinghies to the eastern side.. Sandy Bottom. Ano Beach and Hinakaeua Beach.

[Vaipua Lagoon 4](#) (vie-POO-ah) 18°38.663S / 173°59.907W. 4 moorings+ closest to yard is only for boats waiting haulout not overnight. \$15 per night. Protection from SE. Reefs on either side, be aware of scope length. Villages Vaipua, Taua, Vai Malo. Business Vava'u Boatyard.

[Lotuma Island \(Vauleleva Bay\) 5](#) (loh-TOO-mah) 18°30.746S / 174°00.484W Protection from E/SE. Bottom mostly rock. Not nice in NE. Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. Book first. [www.thetonga.com](http://www.thetonga.com) Lotuma is a Tongan Navy Island, access is currently permitted.

[Mala 6](#) (MAH-lah) 18°41.446S / 174°01.666W Good protection from SE. Shallow bommies. Shallow through pass, do not attempt. Japanese gardens snorkelling. SMA. Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. [www.thetonga.com](http://www.thetonga.com) Book first.

[Port Maurelle 7](#) (Port more elle) Fangakima (FAHNG-ah-KEE-mah) 18°41.980S / 174°01.788W Well protected except NW. SMA. Swallows Cave 18.6824° S, 174.0473° W . Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W No Digicel

[Nuku 8](#) (NOO-koo) Belongs to Falevai Island. SMA. Snorkel tour \$7 - \$10 per person

[Luamoko day only 9](#) . (LOO-ahMOH- koo) Sandy bottom, fine weather holding only. SMA. Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W

[Aisea's or Lisa Beach 10](#) (eye-SAY-ah) 18°41.833S / 173°59.892W Protected N to SE 6.5km walk to town.

[Tapana 11](#) (tar par nar) 18°42.432S / 173°59.169W Sand bottom. Good protection SE to NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. Café Tropicana owns several moorings – please pay if you use them.

[Tapana South 12](#) (Ta Paan Ah) 18°72.398S / 174°98.929W, Good protection except NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. \*

[Hunga 13](#) (hoo n g a) 18°41.59S / 174°07.69W Beware of bommie coming into Hunga Lagoon. Hunga Haven/anchorage closed. Ika Lahi closed. SMA/FHR

[Foeata Island "Blue Lagoon" day only 14](#) (FOH-ay-AH-tah) 18°42.609S / 174°08.321W. Day ONLY. SMA/FHR

[Nuapapu and Matamaka 15](#) (New a Pap OO) 18°42.355S / 174°5.546W Protection N to NW. Feasts are sometimes available. NO protection in S or SW wind . Protection N to SE SMA

[Vaka'eitu 16](#) (vark eh A2) 18°43.356S / 174°6.003W mostly Sandy with some coral. Protection N to SE Coral Gardens snorkelling sites.. Feasts sometimes available on Island during season.

[Lape Island 17](#) (LAH-pay) 18°42.929S / 174°5.015W. This has great SE protection and good holding. Better protection than it looks like it would be on the chart. There are no moorings remaining. Ok Digicel. SMA. Cultural tour Kolio 7513154

[Fonua Lei day only 18](#) .(foh-NOO-ah-LIE)

[Sisia day only 19](#) (sis e ah) 18°43.910S / 174°03.257W Rocky. Protection E

[Katafanga day only 20](#) (car ta far na )

[Taunga overnight 21](#) (ta oong a) 18°44.4S / 174°00.6W. Protected S and W. Ngau island is good snorkelling and diving. SMA

[Taunga Day Stop 22](#) (ta oong a) Exposed to Westerlies. SMA

[Ngau Day Stop 23](#) (Now) 18°45.316S / 174°00.627W Diving and snorkelling. Wind protection N to NE, SE. SMA/FHR

[Ngau Day Stop 24](#) (Now) 18°44.0S / 174°00.4W Protection from W and NW. SMA/FHR

[Old Harbour / Makave 25](#) (mah-KAH-vay) 18°39.247S / 173°58.28527W coral bottom – float your chain. good protection NE to SE. Kilikiletufua Wall in Makave. SMA

['Olo'ua 26](#) (OH-loo-OO-ah) 18°40.206S / 173°57.473W protected in NE and S SMA

[Mafana 27](#) (mah-FAH-nah) protected in N and E. Mafana Backpacker closed. SMA

[Ofu 28](#) (OH-foo) 18°41.918S / 173°55.768W protected in NE and SE. Sand and rock. Good Digicel. SMA

[Eueiki Day stop 29](#) (E wa icki) Treasure Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned island. No anchoring, may have mooring for rent VHF 26. FHR

[Kenutu 30](#) (keh-NOO-too) 18°41.730S / 173°55.737W Uninhabited. Sand. Good protection from E and SE

[Maninita Island 31](#) (MAH-nee-NEE-tah) 18°51.400S / 173°59.866W. Good weather only. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary

[Euakafa 32](#) (AY-wah-KAH-fah) 18°45.194S / 174°2.117W

[Fuamotu Day only 33](#) (foo ah mo 2) 18°47.421S / 174°00.417W. Uninhabited. RAT free, permission must be given to go ashore

[Lua Ui 34](#) (LOO-ah OO-ee)

[Lahiapo \(Luahaipo\) daytime only 35](#) .(LOO-ah-hee-AH-poh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

[Fonua' One'One 36](#) (foh-NOO-ah-OH-nay-OH-nay) 18°48.935S / 174°03.918W. Sandy bottom. Good protection from SSW through E. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

[Fangasito day only 37](#) .(FAHNG-ah-SEE-toh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary.

**Ovaka 38** (oh-VAH-kah) Day Stop 18°45.935S / 174°05.206W Sandy bottom. Feast 7530552. Tavake Island Market day Thursday morning. Snorkel guide tour \$10 per person guide in FHR. Heavens Touch Gardens owned by Sergei from France

**Ovaka day only 39** (o var ka) 18°45.145S / 174°05.172W

**Ovalau 40** (oh-vah-LAHW) 18°44.985S / 174°04.844W Uninhabited sandy at 4m. Large sandy beach Protected SE to E. SMA/HR

**Mounu 41** (moh-OO-noo) 18°45.01S / 174°04.3W. Sandy, call for anchoring instructions based on weather. VHF 77

[www.mounuisland.com](http://www.mounuisland.com) Mounu Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned.

**Mou'mua (Mu'omu'a) day only 42** (moo a moo a) 18°45.436S / 174°02.613W (MOO-oh-MOO-ah) Inhabited, private Island. Mike is the lease owner. Wind protection NE to E.

**North Shore** 18°37.418S / 174°01.894W Sand 60ft Wind protection NE to SE

Suggested anchorage and land itineraries [3, 7, 14 30, 60 days to do KMZ to do](#)

This guide is not supported by Government, Aid or any Tongan business other than Café Tropicana. Please support us if you are in Vava'u or donate via <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> Or

[paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://www.paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com)

Download the full SailingTonga Port Officer guide for full information [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf)

# Tonga To NZ Passage Planning

Pacific Cruising Association will host a webinar in June, August, mid September and mid October in collaboration with NZ MPI, NZ RCC, NZ Marinas Association and an independent (and safe) passage planning down to NZ. Videos will be online and replaced as legislation and services changes

NZ is considered a cyclone safe destination with a wide variety of services. Another option is to stay in Vava'u and continue to sail, hauling out or moving to a cyclone mooring if a cyclone occurs.

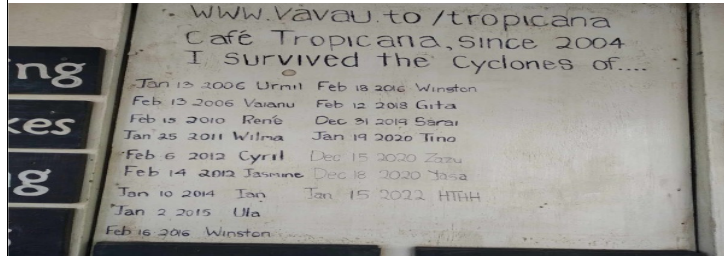
Long term I want to have each country do its own passage planning to nz session.

[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf)  
[www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.mp4](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.mp4) to do

Tonga to NZ options and points to think about. Several passage planning notes, weather from experienced skippers, float plans, professional weather routing providers. NZ To Tonga passage planning notes.

Option	Details																												
1. Vava'u to NZ direct	Duty free fuel 250l+. Propane refill – nearly all adaptors Can extend visa. Air Fiji fly Nadi to Vava'u May to Feb Crew have to fly domestic airlines and one way crew visa hassles. Aim 50nm above Minerva, option to stop for rest/weather. Halloween party at Vava'u Lahi bar. Better line to 30s 173w. West is best. Don't rush away – at least 2-8 weeks in some of the easiest cruising grounds in the Pacific																												
2. Vava'u to Ha'apai then NZ	No duty free fuel option. No Propane refill Cannot extend visa. Expensive shopping 1 x Interisland movement form, easy entry/clearance. Ha'apai not good in wind because of sand and low lying land. Good cruising otherwise Aim 50nm above Minerva, option to stop for rest/weather. Ha'apai is 1-3 weeks cruising, can be uncomfortable in high winds which are common in Sept/Oct																												
3. Vava'u to Ha'apai to Nuku'alofa to NZ	Duty free fuel option min 1000l. 50 gallon metal drums are sold at TOP65 each (no refund) on top of retail fuel price for orders of less than 1000l. You have to hand pump fuel into your boat, no hose is provided! Propane refill – no adaptors Can extend Visa in Nuku'alofa 2 x Interisland movement form. Long process to check out, harbour should be entered daytime on Stern to berths in commercial harbour, not pretty. Nuku'alofa commercial harbour and not easy entry/clearance, good for provisioning, cheaper than Vava'u – not cheaper than NZ. Domestic transfer does not require vessel to customs wharf, exit does require vessel at customs, pay Marine and Ports for Lights and bouys No cruising grounds. Big Mamas is basic since HTHH Tsunami, recommend paying for drinks as you go, do not run a TAB/Mooring Good to collect crew and avoid domestic flights, still one way crew visa hassles. Aim 50nm above Minerva, option to stop for rest/weather. Virtually no cruising grounds																												
4. Go to Fiji, then NZ	Very expensive to check in to Fiji, just to head to NZ FJD and TOP are virtually identical Go to Fiji at the start of a season – 6 months travel. Good to collect crew from Fiji. One way letter from Fiji or cancellable return ticket to Fiji Entry cost week day, 2pax <table border="1" data-bbox="613 1705 1149 1936"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ministry</th> <th>Tonga TOP</th> <th>Fiji FJD</th> <th>NZ NZD</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Maff/Quarantine/Biosec</td> <td>22</td> <td>85</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Immigration</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health</td> <td>100</td> <td>165</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mooring/Agent fee</td> <td></td> <td>25</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customs</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>122</td> <td>275</td> <td>34</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ministry	Tonga TOP	Fiji FJD	NZ NZD	Maff/Quarantine/Biosec	22	85	17	Immigration			0	Health	100	165	0	Mooring/Agent fee		25	0	Customs			17	Total	122	275	34
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Total	122	275	34																										
5. Stay in Vava'u	Few boats in area. Majority of cyclones are February – see pic Sail to Ha'apai if weather is settled. Have Boatyard on haulout standby if a cyclone comes. Continue with boat maintenance																												

Cyclone moorings available from Beluga Diving, Tongan Beach Resort  
Max 6 months immigration. Fly to a foreign country, then return for another 6 months  
Max 12 months boat visa  
Opportunity to look after a resort, house  
Volunteer  
Become a local!



Do not leave on a date, wait for a weather window, take professional passage planning information. I have seen some amazing routing plans from professionals. Check calendars for holidays, cruise ships, tides, local events.... A common misconception is to jump down to Nukualofa and leave to NZ. Most kiwi boats will leave from Vava'u or Ha'apai, better line, depart as late as mid December. Attending a Halloween party in Nukua'lofa, NZ arrival party in a port can maybe wait? Nothing flies to windward like a 747, yachts don't!

Going through Vava'u and Ha'apai at the end of the season in a rush does not do it justice, Ha'apai is also not pleasant in high winds, which is common at the end of the year. Suggest staying in Vava'u and enter through Ha'apai then to Vava'u next year.

Vava'u lahi Sports bar in Vava'u has a Halloween party with some great prizes... get down with locals before heading to NZ  
Nukualofa does not really have cruising grounds, enter harbour during the day, long process to check in, check out. Harbour does have a stern to berth, most people anchor at Pangaimotu Island. No wind protection, sandy bottom, no moorings. 2024 weather bomb caused a vessel to drag, another vessel had to drop its anchor to avoid being hit. A lot of yachts went North to avoid the predicted weather, and then left to NZ from Vava'u direct.

**Passage planning to NZ:** [www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf) [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)  
*to be completed and peer reviewed, also NZ to Tonga passage planning to be done*

**2027 NEWS!**

### **Nz info webinars**

- 1 May webinar – people start planning routes. Pacific and NZ
- 1 June webinar – first yachts to tonga/fiji
- 1 Aug webinar – mid season, Provision Planning and jumping off point planning
- 15 sept webinar – most boats prepping to go to nz, planning next year
- 15 Oct webinar – late boats prepping to go to nz, planning next year
- 30 Oct webinar – late boats

NZ sessions

Nz Ministries to confirm 2026

Nz Rescue Coordination Centre – rescue info, what to prepare for in a rescue, things to do to avoid incidents (weather routing/ routes/epirb/ssb etc - agreed prepping video

Nz marinas association – agreed, looking for pics or videos

Passage planning/staying in Pacific island countries

15 Jan

15 Feb

15 Mar

15 April

Predict wind – agreed, video and webinar already available

Passage planning tonga to nz – prepping video

Promo video Fiji

Promo video tonga

Promo video Wallis and Futuna

Vanuatu

Cook Islands

Niue islands

New Caledonia

Samoa

Wallis and Futuna

Q&A

### **Notifications/invites**

FB Pacific voyagers

FB Pacific Puddle Jump

FB Tonga expats and locals, vavau expats

SSCA, CA, OCC, Transocean, Noonsite, ICNZ, pca

No Foreign lands

Whatsapp sailing to tonga, going to tonga, sailing to nz, whangarei, opua

[www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf)

Pacific Cruising Association also invites all pacific countries who wish to do a session to contact me.

Country information

Passage planning tonga to nz – independent (of rallies and festivals) information about options to get to NZ SAFELY

Promo Video Tonga Marine

NZ – marsden cove/Whangarei, Nelson

No cost to cruisers, this is not a rally or festival – I am presenting information on NZ and the Pacific so you can your plan your passage. Travel down to NZ safely, not rushed.

Always free, donations gladly accepted

Organiser [www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana](http://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana)

Vava'u Tonga marine projects [www.givealittle.co.nz/vavaucommunitytrust](http://www.givealittle.co.nz/vavaucommunitytrust) ( 90x recorded CCTV of main wharf, small boat marina, harbour entrance, remote moveable unit. Solar lights in marinas. Weather Stations in harbour. Automated Bouys. And more. Already have land based AIS and ADSB(air traffic))

Other Pacific Countries are welcome to create and fund projects that are useful or will be supported by the cruising community

I get no AID money, industry or government funding for [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf), which has been going since 2023, my cruising guide was written in 2014. It is online only as things change so frequently, and too costly to print.

Unlike another stopover guide, funded in 2025 by Australia Market Development Facility (Aus AID agency), performed by [www.archipelagoes.net](http://www.archipelagoes.net), which plagiarised a lot of my copyrighted info without permission, has been printed, and has a considerable number of minor and a few major mistakes.

They just did the same in Vanuatu. Useless for a cruising yachting, more like a travel brochure

In 2026 I and friends are activating Pacific Cruising Association (PCA). The intention is to provide free, best practice non-rally, non-festival, LOCAL information and advice, to counter commercial “non-local experts” that profit from Pacific Island cruising and do not promote safe, best practice routing. Information is out of date as it has not been updated and has relied on previous people and port officers for updates (I am done providing information and not being supported in return).

My intentions are to 1. Promote Tonga (I am based here), our government abandoned the industry in COVID, MDF supported Fiji to get “blue lanes” going which saw them through COVID. Island Cruising was formed with this aim in mind... respect the history! 2. Promote all Pacific Island all marina, yards unlike SPSN members, marina, yards. Vanuatu, Wallis&Futuna, Samoa, Solomons, Cooks, Niue.

3. Promote staying off season in Pacific Island countries, rather than festivals that MAINLY promote NZ.

4. Promote local knowledge resources (guides) not SPSN stopover guides (because of the huge errors) and hit and run methods

5. Provide AID/Donor to tackle sailing tourism projects to improve cruising and also marine for locals

[Projects to aid in sailing tourism](#) All countries can participate

6. Promote safe, best practice passage planning to NZ if yachts choose not to stay during cyclone season. Rather than rallies that don't.

7. Promote best value NZ yards

8. Promote ALL NZ ports, and encourage cruising around NZ after maintenance, travel home etc. Rather than some NZ Ports that don't promote their own country for sailing.

#### Sponsored by

<https://www.predictwind.com/?ref=pacificcruisingassoc> 25% commission on first year subscription [support@predictwind.com](mailto:support@predictwind.com) The world leader in wind forecasting

#### Supported by

[www.marsdencovemarina.co.nz](http://www.marsdencovemarina.co.nz) [Gareth.cooke@marsdencovemarina.co.nz](mailto:Gareth.cooke@marsdencovemarina.co.nz) Entry port, marina and chandler for Whangarei, NZ.

[www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/](http://www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/) [admin@coastalandoffshorecruising.com](mailto:admin@coastalandoffshorecruising.com) John Martin Ocean Tactics Weather Routing, Assist with generic end of year routing to NZ, paid tailored passage planning services.

#### Fundraisers

<https://patreon.com/PacificCruisingAssociation>

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/vct> Projects: cams, weather stations, solar lights, wifi

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/pca> Pacific Cruising Association

[www.pacificcruisingassoc.com](http://www.pacificcruisingassoc.com) website assisted by South Pacific Pocketguide!

[www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana](http://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana) donations for [www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf](http://www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf) and Cafe Tropicana

Join Pacific Cruising Association Facebook for all information. [www.facebook.com/pacificcruisingassoc](https://www.facebook.com/pacificcruisingassoc)

**NZ MPI Forms** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/import/border-clearance/ships-and-boats-border-clearance/forms-and-templates-for-vessels-arriving/>

FORM - ANOA to NZ NZCS344 and information re this form

FORM - NZ Traveller declaration information (from 8/23) to replace paper based “passenger arrival card” – its free

FORM - Application form to arrive or depart at a non-approved port.

FORM - Masters declaration for full biosecurity clearance – animals/garbage/hull cleaning/pest organisms/plants/sporting equipment/shells carvings etc

FORM – Biosecurity pre-arrival report part 4. Fresh water (evidence of source)/treatment of ballast water/exemptions

FORM - Biosecurity pre-arrival report part 1-3. 1 food/rubbish/pest management/animals/plants. 2 antifoul. 3 ballast water

<https://www.customs.govt.nz/travel-to-and-from-new-zealand/travel-to-and-from-new-zealand-by-small-craft>

General information to be aware of when entering by yacht.

***NZ MPI Food restrictions*** [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/bring-send-to-nz/bringing-and-posting-items-to-nz/check-if-you-can-bring-or-send-an-item-to-nz/>

List of food items

Clothing that must be clean – shoes, clothing etc

Alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, medicines

Animal parts, shells etc

***Points to note Tonga to NZ***

[\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

A sailing festival in Vava'u late September each year attracts yachts heading to NZ (Regatta Vava'u 2007-2013, Vava'u Blue Water Festival 2014-2023, Vava'u Sailing Festival 2024-), NZ ports attend the festival to promote NZ as a destination. Unfortunately Vava'u just sees a week long festival and the business it generates and forgets to promote itself. Vava'u hopes yachts will return next year on the way west. Please don't race through Tonga, to get to NZ. Promoting Tongatapu as the jumping off point to break the trip up and attend a party with "free" weather routing. It is free if you go with the pack. If a weather window opens before or after this party? They are promoting an easy/cheap method to promote a party to depart from Tongatapu. Don't race through some of the easiest cruising grounds in the world (Vava'u and The Ha'apai) to leave from Tongatapu. Test information for the truth and it's motives. Next year enter Tonga in Ha'apai or Vava'u next year – cruising grounds for cruisers, not profits from cruisers! Interestingly promoting Tongatapu as the entry point for Tonga is also very common, it is not! No cruising grounds, not a yacht friendly harbour! Long time to complete formalities.

Vava'u is a relatively safe anchorage, having a boatyard to haul out if a named cyclone were to close. Haulout, do maintenance and refloat after the cyclone has gone. Talk to them, sometimes a minimum stay in the yard is required so get ready with odd job equipment.

Or several cyclone moorings are available in the harbour from Beluga Diving or Tongan Beach Resort.

Do not stop in Minerva on the way to Tonga – if you don't get Easting in, it will be a hell ride!

Complete NZCS340 (Advanced Notice of Arrival). . NZ customs pack at Café Tropicana – free.

Do not let your visa expire - \$1150 fine, only Nukualofa and Vava'u can extend visa

To move between Island groups you must have an interisland movement form each time – the boat does not need to come alongside, just the last port to check out of the country

Only Vava'u (min 250 litres) and Nuku'alofa (min 1000 litres) can give duty free diesel when you check out from those ports. You cannot go to other ports in Tonga – unless you declare a genuine emergency of course.

If a storm is following you into NZ, hit your engines and run in front of it.

Clean your bottom prior to going to nz, take pictures if you can for NZ Biosecurity. Be careful if you have open wounds while you are cleaning the hull, wear a wetsuit clean and disinfect open wounds. A staph infection can wreck your passage.

Be aware NZ has very strict biosecurity hull requirements as Fanworm is now established in NZ. You could get a local Tongan company to either do the hull clean work (and anchor well/chain) or inspect the work – with an invoice and underwater pictures or video. NZ could order your vessel straight to haulout if growth is too heavy, this has happened 4 times out of 2500 yachts.. Beluga Dive staff sometimes do hull cleans, talk to Huib and see who is free.

A clean bottom also means a faster passage of course. When hauling anchor in NZ any type of seaweed should be removed immediately to stop seaweed spread please.

RNZAF orion p8 – turn on vhf 16 and answer questions, they might confirm you have completed ANOA or ask about other vessel movements. Australia is currently (2024) testing semi-autonomous drones for maritime surveillance, These are large Predator size units. Most have a green light mounted in the front. I would expect NZ to start using them as well at some point. But be aware of the green light on drones – not a UFO!

Minerva reef is disputed territory between Tonga and Fiji, occasionally you might have both Navies facing off. Start of 2024 season

Tongan navy did a magic job checking boats, even had children on board patrol boat for tour. NZ has responsibility for Search and Rescue in that area so Orion's will fly over Minerva.

### [Sailing Whatsapp groups \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

SailingTonga “ Since 2024 <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGNX>

Whangarei Sailors <https://chat.whatsapp.com/lwF11vgF27d8oiK86LKQpt?mode=wwt>

Going to NZ <https://chat.whatsapp.com/HvMclzgXOoMDqMjRrQNTN?mode=wwt>

### [Food restrictions NZ, Fiji, Australia \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

If you have stores on board that you cannot take into your next port (meat, honey etc) you could

- Trade it with a yacht that does not have that issue
- Trade it with a café/restaurant for services
- Store it with a café/restaurant if you are returning next year. I once stored 30kg cheese in our freezers for 8 months!
- Gift it to someone that has gone out of there way for you, or just needs a hand up!
- Ask someone to give it to a charity of your choice, or give it them yourself of course, Cafe Tropicana can assist with this – you pick the charity, it will be dropped off anonymously (we just say a yacht) or in your yachts name...

### [Floatplan copies \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Starlink has made a pronounced affect on cruising life. I have noticed VHF chat, get togethers and a sense of community has declined since SL is so prevalent. After a few to many instances of boats being overdue (partly because of Covid degrading yacht maintenance, and extreme weather). I have created [floatplan@vavau.to](mailto:floatplan@vavau.to) so you can forward your [float plan](#) (editable pdf) to me so we can respond quickly if you are overdue. Here are some of the reasons for a [float plan](#). This will not be used for Tropicana marketing!

### [General ideas for NZ \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

NZ's EBAY is [www.trademe.co.nz](http://www.trademe.co.nz) you can buy anything and sellers all over NZ. Use your marina or haulout as your address.

My favourite rental is <https://spaceshipsrentals.co.nz/> they have a people mover that also doubles as a camper. Drives like a car but not as heavy as a campervan. Great for cruisers. Fridge, cooker, water, mini tv screen/dvd player. In Auckland and Christchurch only.

My Favourite NZ spots.

North Island: Whangarei, Russel, Waitomo, Te Aroha Soda Spa, Volcanic Plateau for geothermal spas, Lake Waikeremoana, Taupo.  
South Island: Nelson, Havelock, Golden Bay, Motueka (my family arrived here in 1860) and a few places are named after them (Kinzett), Maruia Springs, Queenstown.

Sail down to Nelson or Picton. Start touring the South Island and return to your yacht. Buy a van or car locally and sell it when you leave.

Yacht Zen Again has a great KML collection of [NZ](#).

Cruise Guide for Marlborough <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nz.co.cruiseguide.android&pli=1>

Island Cruising have a South Island rally - an adventure for yachts wanting to cruise south to Marlborough, Fiordland, Stewart Island, Otago, Banks Peninsula.

Join us for an adventure of a lifetime on the South Island Rally this summer. Visiting Abel Tasman & Marlborough Sounds, and the option to head further south to Fiordland, Stewart Island, Otago & Banks Peninsula too. Flexible destinations & departure dates, heaps of support to help you get organised, a detailed guide book with all the local contacts, connection with the others heading in the same direction and lots of fun along the way.

This is a unique way to explore our stunning country!

### **Destinations**

Rally participants will have the choice to select which destinations they'd most like to visit or to follow our suggested itinerary and time line.

Option One

- Abel Tasman
- Nelson
- D'Urville Island

- Marlborough Sounds

#### Option Two

- Abel Tasman
- Fiordland
- Stewart Island
- Otago
- Banks Peninsula
- Marlborough Sounds

Or choose your own destinations - you can even sail the route in reverse. Join us from either the North or South Island. The choice is yours.

#### [Safe Boating and Rescue Coordination Centre NZ](#)

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New Zealand (toll free): 508 4 RCCNZ or 0508 472 269

Calling from outside of New Zealand: +64 4 577 8030

Email [rccnz@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:rccnz@maritimenz.govt.nz)

[contact.beacons@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:contact.beacons@maritimenz.govt.nz) 406 distress beacon enquiries

- Spanning 30 million square kilometres, RCCNZ covers one of the largest search and rescue areas in the world.
- This area extends from the mid-Tasman Sea, halfway to Chile, and from the South Pole, almost up to the Equator.
- Every year, RCCNZ responds to approximately 1,200 search and rescue incidents.



**Please check the registration name/address etc for your EPIRB, NZ is responsible for the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest marine Search and Rescue area in the World**

**Rescue at Sea – how to improve your chances 20 points plus a few videos**

#### [Weather sites/services/scheds and other handy information](#)

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<https://www.yit.nz/>

<https://www.ghradio.co.nz/>

8752 kHz or 8779 kHz or 8297 kHz. (In that order depending on interference).

0515 UTC, 5:15pm NZST

May 1 - 15 November

Monday - Friday

daily during passage time

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

Tongan Coastal Radio 2182 / 6215kHz Phone +676 7400093

#### [Passage planning/weather routing](#)

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It is well worth the money to get Passage planning for your vessel

Qualified Meteorologists

[www.metbob.com](http://www.metbob.com) [bob@metbob.com](mailto:bob@metbob.com) Bob McDavitt NZ Meteorologist.

NZD10 per 5 minutes. 2 x Departure prep 10 minutes, voyage 1 x forecast 35 minutes, 3 x underway updates 15 minutes ballpark NZD120

[brucetheweatherman@gmail.com](mailto:brucetheweatherman@gmail.com) Bruce Buckley, Perth Australia Meteorologist.

Dependent on ports. 10 to 30 minute per forecast. Pacific to NZ ballpark AUD450, long term client discounts around 20%

[clouds@ozemail.com.au](mailto:clouds@ozemail.com.au) Roger Badham, Australia Meteorologist

App/Non-qualified Meteorologists

[www.passageweather.com](http://www.passageweather.com) Free

[www.predictwind.com](http://www.predictwind.com) \$0 to USD499 per annum

[www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/](http://www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/) John Martin Single Routing – \$250USD for C&OC members \$297USD for other associated club members (\$347USD, non members). for a single passage, up to 3000nm, longer passages by negotiation. Making more than one passage in one cruising season? Then our Season Pass\*\* may benefit your needs. \$550USD for C&OC and Ocean Posse members. \$597USD for other associated club members (\$650USD, non member)\*\*\*.

#### **Passage monitoring**

<https://passageguardian.nz>

[www.yit.nz](http://www.yit.nz)

#### **NZ Entry ports**

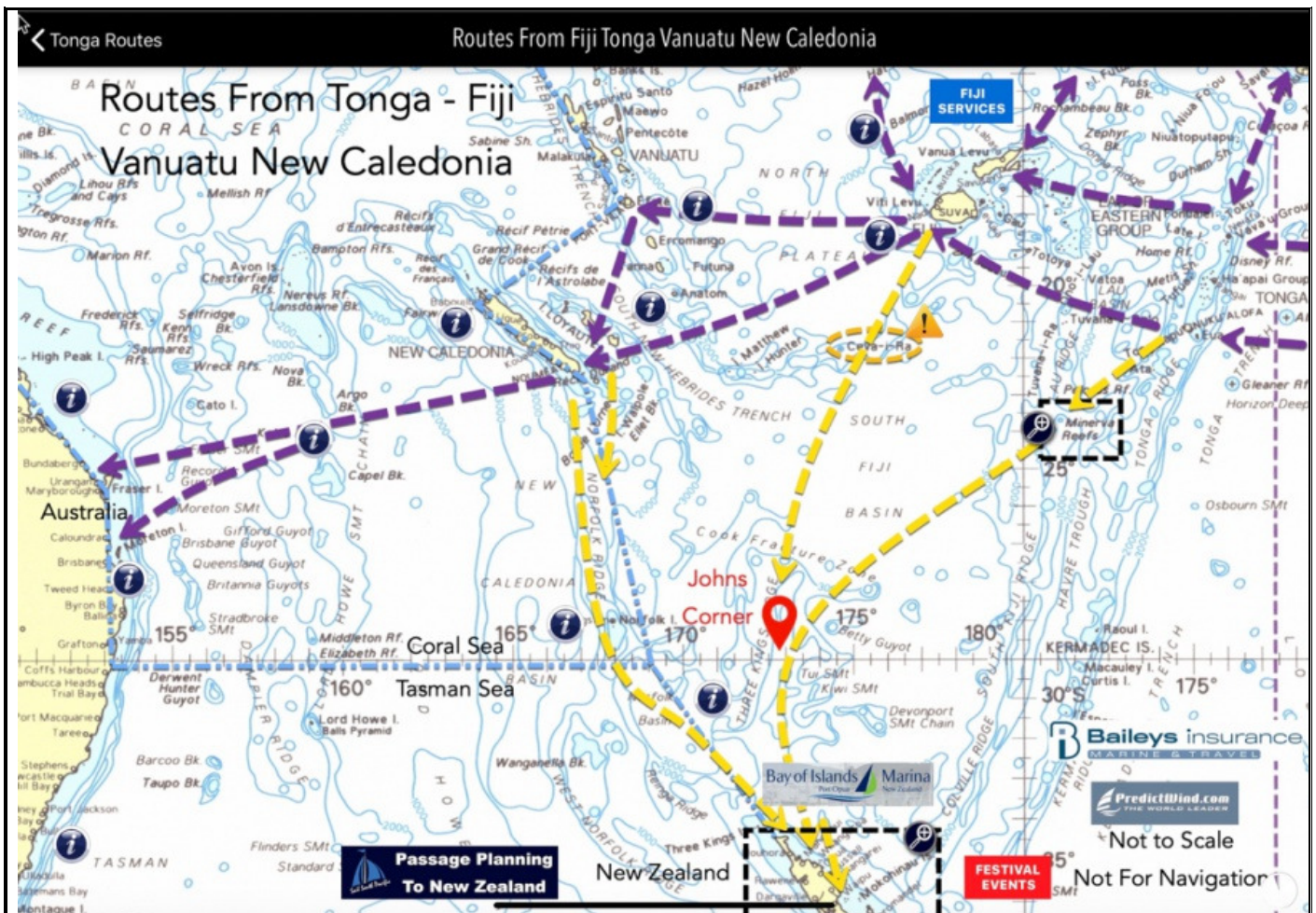
You can enter almost anywhere in nz, a few ports you cannot – see nz customs link above for those – the majority enter in Whangarei, Opuia or Auckland

Whangarei is a city, they have a variety of privately and council owned marina, and a huge range of boatyards and who compete and cooperate. A variety of other services you would expect in a city. Extensive shopping. A very hospitable NZ city. Council owned marina profits are put back into the community. The council assists all marinas in Whangarei in terms of marketing.

Opuia is a small town, has one council owned Marina, and a small privately owned Marina. A smaller range of yacht services. Limited shopping. Generally easier entrance after 7+ days sailing from Tonga. Council owned marina is run as a private enterprise.

#### **Passage plan to NZ from Tonga**

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Different views from a few experienced people.

1. (Greg Just) have done the passage 13 times. My worst passage was coming to Tonga (75 knot weather bomb – passage monitoring was responsible for the boat surviving), my fastest passage to NZ was also the most expensive (forestay sheared off (chinese stainless)), pulpit badly damaged, shroud started uncoiling due to poor heavy cargo placement. Crewed on a Whangarei based vessel, entered in Whangarei each time.

My advice Tonga to NZ; leave mid to late October or through to mid december on a weather window not to a date, go from Vava'u direct, get passage planning professionally done, if a storm is chasing you into NZ hit your engines and run into NZ.

2. John & Lyn Martin

2019 There are a lot of myths surrounding the passage to New Zealand from the pacific islands. Most are the result of inexperience and lack of knowledge, I've done the trip personally now 37 time and only had one really bad experience, the very first trip. The effort though is well worth it, NZ has some of the best cruising outside of the tropics anywhere in the world.

I decided after that first trip there had to be a better way so I started gathering some information. The first thing I learned is don't just pick a date and go. As it turned out boats that left just 3 days after we did had a great trip.

Weather is the governing factor when making this passage and your strategy will vary depending on your departure point. What doesn't change is the nature of weather in this region. In the South West Pacific the weather systems migrate from west to east, low follows high follows low in a never ending succession. Coming across the Pacific from French Polynesia the trade winds blow south east and east with the occasional hiccup to the north and north west as a front or trough passes through. These troughs (unless you are being affected by the SPCZ) are usually associated with a low pressure passing to the south. The strength of the trades at the STR (sub tropical ridge) is dictated by the center pressure of the high pressures passing below. These are the generalities and I will give you some events to look out for that have an adverse influence on weather for a passage at the end of this article.

The effect a high pressure system has on the trades depends on two factors, the center pressure and the latitude of the center. A 1020 center pressure high will give 15 to 20 knot trades at the STR, as the center pressure increases so do the winds along its top edge. This area of wind the STR is the squash zone between the high pressure cell and the sub tropical low which is the general area of low pressure either side of the equator. The latitude of this squash zone is dictated by the latitude of the center. For example a high of 1030 with a center at 30 south will give significant winds (30 to 35 knots) from 15s to 25s with the wind decreasing the further south you travel. This same high centered over the middle of New Zealand will have lower winds on its top edge (20 to 25knots) but spread over a larger belt. This high is also likely to have a larger area of little to no wind in its center. The high pressure centers tend to trend

south as summer starts in NZ.

As the high pressures migrate east the direction of the winds changes. In the trade wind belt this variation is less pronounced but as you travel further south and move away from the influence of the STR the winds will tend to follow the rotation of the systems, both highs and lows. Highs rotating in an anticlockwise direction and lows, clockwise in the southern hemisphere.

As you travel further south the effect and intensity of the frontal bands associated with each low are magnified. The majority of low pressure cells during October and November migrate along under Australia and tend to pop north east in the Tasman, cross NZ and migrate to the east. All low pressure cells will have a frontal band originating well north of the system and rotating around the low to its center. The closer to the low and the deeper the low's center pressure will dictate how much punch it has. As the front moves through the wind direction will change, (as much as 90 deg) usually to the west and southwest with a disturbed flow. Rain is usually associated with a front with clearing showers behind. The strength of the wind in this area is determined by the pressure gradient. There will also be large variations in wind strength around rain cells.

So to summarize, the more intense the high the more wind you will get on its edge and the punch from a frontal band is greater the closer you get to the low. We also know the wind direction around a high is going to change as the high moves through and this is more pronounced the further south we are. We know further that as the high migrates through it will be followed by a low and its associated frontal band.

In the weeks leading up to your passage we need to be looking at the speed that the systems are coming through. This will be between 5 and 8 days typically. An 8 day cycle is easier to plan for but short is OK too, you just take a different approach. Now however is where we need to consider where we are departing from.

Tonga, the most eastern departure point has some advantages and some disadvantages. From here we are looking to leave in the top of a high pressure as the wind swings from south east towards the east. But being so far east means that once the wind is in the east the high pressure below is also well east, you will only have its influence for a short time. The advantage is that you can use Minerva reefs as a stop off point if required and sit for the next window. From Minerva you are only 800 miles to NZ at an average of 5.5 knots or 130 miles per day this will take 5 to 6 days. Again it's likely you won't be able to do this in one weather system so you need to plan to have a frontal system somewhere along the way. This is going to have less punch if you are still north of 30 deg south and with the wind direction changing to west and southwest behind the front the plan is to have put in enough westing so that you have cracked sheet for the last leg into NZ. We usually plan to aim for a spot directly north of North Cape, New Zealand's most northerly point, at 30 south. This means quite a dog leg from Tonga but is well worth the effort. If things change as you head south then the strategy can be changed. If you do decide that the high is moving slowly enough that you change your mind and head straight for NZ, make sure you can get there before the front comes through because those lovely NW winds you are enjoying will be right on the nose after the front passes. You are also likely to get an uncomfortable 18 hours as the front passes. It's this decision to take the shortcut that causes most of the horror stories you will hear about.

So in a nut shell, leaving Tonga. If you plan to stop at either North or South Minerva (North is a more secure anchorage) then wait until a high pressure ( of around 1020 to 1025 centre pressure) is giving an easterly flow. You should be 2 to 3 days to Minerva with the wind tending northerly when you get there. Because you will be looking to put some westing in, on the next leg, you can leave from there on the front of the next high when the wind is still in the southeast. Depending on your progress and how fast the high is moving will dictate your strategy as you progress south. Remember it's better to take a front at 30 south even if you have to hove too for a day and wait for it, better still use the time to get further west. Remember the old expression, west is best.

If you have plenty of diesel and don't mind the donkey clattering away put peddle to the metal and start heading for the same point as described above, 30 south directly north of North cape. If the high is slow and you will make it in before the next front then great, go for it. You should get strengthening northerlies and northwesterly winds on the back of the high. Remember when it swings to NW the front is imminent. Regardless of how you think you are doing, don't vary your approach too much. If you want to cut the corner and you feel you have the time, change your waypoint from the one above but make North Cape your next waypoint. The fronts have a tendency to jump up from down south very quickly, if you are hugging the Northland coast by then you will be in relatively protected waters.

General strategies, look for a high of between 1020 and 1025, get west, take fronts north of 30 south, motor if your speed drops and don't cut the corner unless you are sure of getting in before the next front. The only other advise I can give you is to pick just one weather source. I use MetVuw, they have a very accurate 7 day forecast and use the same core data as the gfs grib. If you allow yourself to get into groups that are discussing weather and they are using different sources you're in trouble, we call this analysis paralysis, you may never leave.

### 3. SV PILGRIM ,These are our views on planing a passage .

If heading to NZ then don't be in a rush to head off as the later you leave, the longer the lag time between systems.

Look at weather patterns note the pressures of both highs and lows , as these give indacation of wind strengths .

I.E if a low has a barametric pressure of 950 at it's centre it will have higher winds than a low of 1005 centre.

The same applys to a high but in reverse. Barametric pressures of a high in the mid 20's will have less wind than highs in the 30's .

So looking at weather charts and finding that you have a barametric pressure low of a 1000 and a high below 1030 . The isobars far apart are all indercators of wind strength being low

Normal departure from Vava'u is with the trade winds these will take us with luck down to around the 30 deg mark .

Plan if possible to go into NZ on the back of a high this gives us winds from SE going around to NE and clocking right around to the NW . Making land fall before they get round to SW , the wind should not be a problem if the high is under the 1030 , one should be in the lea of the land .

If you make the trip heading for north cape this allows you sailing room to turn down the coast , sailing right into the BOI.

We always review what is ahead and if the situation requires , stopping at Minerva for a few days until one sees that the passage is suitable ,

Pay attention to weather coming through from sth Aust particularly Tasmania I look out four days with weather fax for this area all weather tends to track across from there, anything that is present there 4 days out should not make its way across for 2days.

This gives us a window of 5/6 days to make the passage from Minerva to Opuā.

It is around 120 NM a day .

Be prepared to motor or heave to for periods if need's arise .

There is some good advice out there on passage weather, the SSB if you have one, monitor and report your position .

Looks at windy TY and Grib files.

8752@ 0815hrs Gulf Harbour radio does passage weather and individual: where and when able if you are outside of the main passage routes

They have a large following due to fact that Patricia and David are recently retired off shore sailors.

The bonus here is that David is a meteorologist and is good at explaining what he sees .

They devote a good time to the passage weather.

One can register with them :

Email : register@yit.co.nz

Subject : Your boat name

Password :

Date format : m/d/y

Relace caption with boat description

WE find mid November on best for us to make the passage .

When heading back out of NZ we dont look at departure until mid May, looking to see that the trade winds have established themselves

Once this happens aim to leave on the back of a low this pushes one out to the 200nm mark or beyond .

Picking up the trade winds then enable one to have good sailing nth to Tonga at your leasure .

Stopping at Minerva for a break /fish / swim .

**DON'T BE PRESSURED INTO LEAVING TO EARLY HEADING INTO NZ OR OUT.**

Every season tends to be different, bare in mind that the sooner you arrive in NZ the sooner you are faced with departure unless you can extend your stay in NZ.

SV PILGRIM

4. Sv kOKOAMO 2019 This is my eighth time doing the trip down to NZ, having done my eighth trip up, so I have a fair idea what to look for. I shall deal with the trip down first.

I never even look at the weather until the first of November. By then a pattern is usually setting in, of great big highs leaving Australia, crossing the Tasman, and then NZ. They often stall there for a while. I use the "metvuw" site - forecasts - NZ-Fiji - ten day thumbnails. They provide forecast charts every six hours for ten days. For the last two years, particularly coming up, they have been spot on. What I look for is the arrival of the leading edge of the high. This gives SE winds, 15 knots being ideal, but anything from 10 to 25 can work. At 25 I just bear away a bit so that I am not hard on the wind. For the first 1,000 miles I don't worry if I am a hundred miles or more off course. The wind is going to change and take me back on course, which, by the way, is the rhumb line. I would once have been better going west, twice better going east, and the other five times made no difference.

I am a boring old fart, and don't have SSB or grib files en route. After all, it is pretty obvious if the weather is turning to crap, and I can't run away fast enough anyway. I am a slow boat, and assume I will do 100 miles a day. Times have varied from 9 to 18 days, the biggest problem being lack of wind.

On the subject of wind, there is a ridiculous amount of overexcited hype about this passage. After all, you must have done at least one ocean passage to be here, and if you or your boat are not capable of handling a gale, what are you doing out on the ocean? Anyway, the chances of seriously bad weather are pretty small if you are sensible. Also, for your general information, don't get too worried about named tropical depressions in this area. There are many systems which decide if one should be named. They all use a sustained wind speed of 35 knots as the trigger, but they all use different definitions of "sustained". The highest definition requires a sustained 35 knots for 10 minutes. Personally I would have the storm jib on long before that. The lowest definition is the one used in Australia and Fiji, the local forecast. It takes any gusts which exceed 35 knots for 3 seconds, and averages them for 10 minutes. Unpleasant enough, but not exactly a cyclone. Only just a gale.

Many yachties want to stop at Minerva, so they can say they have anchored in the middle of nowhere. It is not unusual to stop there in the middle of a nice passage only to have the wind turn unfavorable and be stuck there for ten days. Your choice.

South of Minerva light variable or no wind is common, then increasing as you approach NZ. Opuā, the most northerly port of entry, is very easy to approach through the Bay of Islands, which are an exceptionally nice cruising area. Don't miss Russell either, or the Tall Ships Race run annually by the Russell Boating Club at the beginning of January. They feed up

to a thousand people at the underground hangi, and the music is great.

Call NZ coastguard a few hours before you arrive and customs will meet you on arrival. As long as you declare everything they are pretty easy, and there are no charges. Their hours are 9 to 5.

Another reason for not arriving in NZ too early is your departure. You will get a 6 month visa, and don't really want to leave before May. You don't want to leave after May either; it gets cold and unsettled, making passage planning very frustrating. Depending on the speed of your boat, you will want favourable winds to make about 500 miles before it changes. At that time of year there is a tendency for a series of small nasty depressions to form every three days about 300 to 400 miles north of Opuia.

Again, the "metvuw" forecast is an excellent guide, but be aware that the small depressions form quickly, and it may well be necessary to postpone your departure date more than once. Don't worry, NZ customs is well used to this. They require a 72 hour advance notice of departure, but you just call them every time you want to delay. The customs officers have to come from Whangarei, and don't really want a wasted trip.

The second half of the passage to Tonga is likely to have varied conditions, with probably at least one strong wind day.

Again, I take the rhumb line, and have never regretted it, although some people like to put in some easting in order to benefit later from the SE trades which hopefully will be kicking in by then.

Personally I avoid Nuku'alofa and check in at Pangai in the Ha'apai group. This also avoids having to go alongside the somewhat dangerous wharf in Neiafu. You receive a free one month visa, and sometimes can extend that in Pangai, otherwise you must go to Neiafu or Nuku'alofa. Cost TOP69 per month. If you are staying longer than 4 months you will need to go to customs a few days beforehand and ask them to let your boat stay longer. No charge, you just fill in the form and get a copy.

Enjoy your stay. Both Tonga and New Zealand are wonderful cruising areas.

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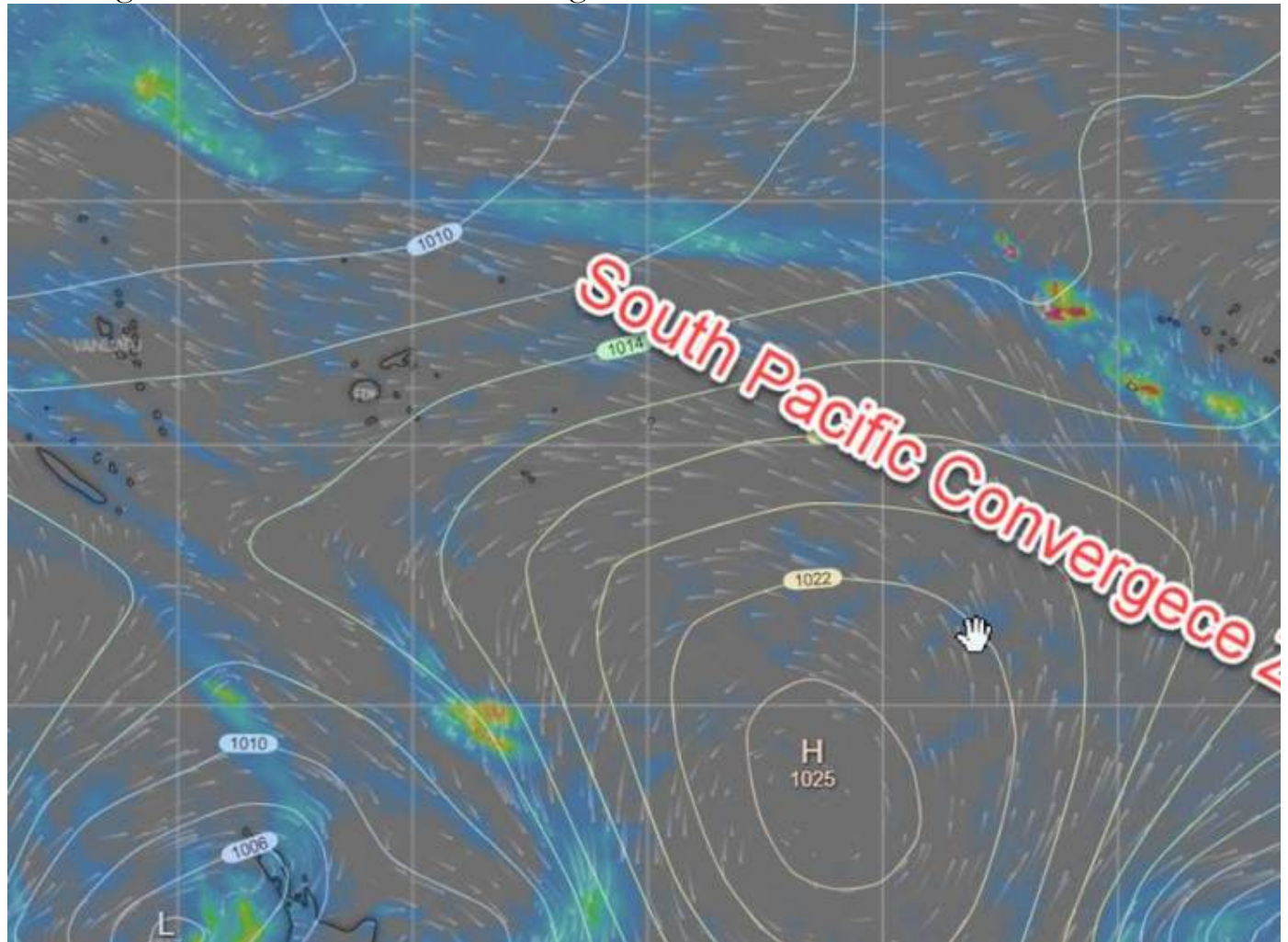
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## Tahiti to Tonga [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

### Bob McDavitt's ideas for sailing around the South Pacific.

The main players:

1. Getting from the Tahiti area to Tonga/Fiji means crossing the South Pacific Convergence zone, SPCZ. Like a dragon, it dances .



This zone may be weak or may contain squally showers. In the models it is portrayed as a zone of light winds. To see a forecast for this zone, use windy.com and rain accumulation for a period over five days.

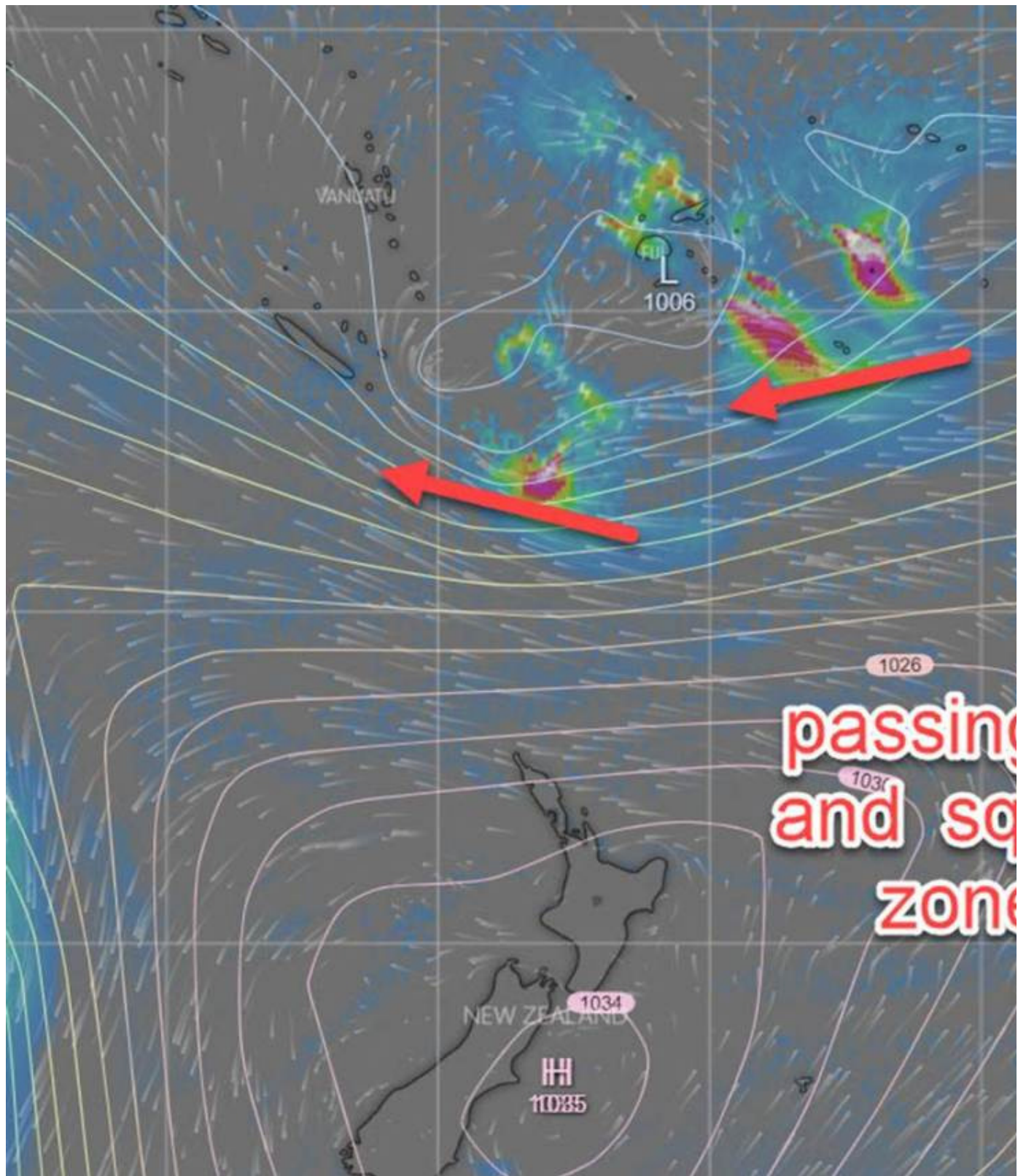
This zone may linger in the north (it does this in an El Nino) or it usually hovers between Samoa and Southern Cooks. To avoid it, choose a different latitude or aim for gaps in the zone.

The SPCZ goes thru periods of activity and inactivity and is most active when there is the positive phase of an MJO (Madden Julian Oscillation).

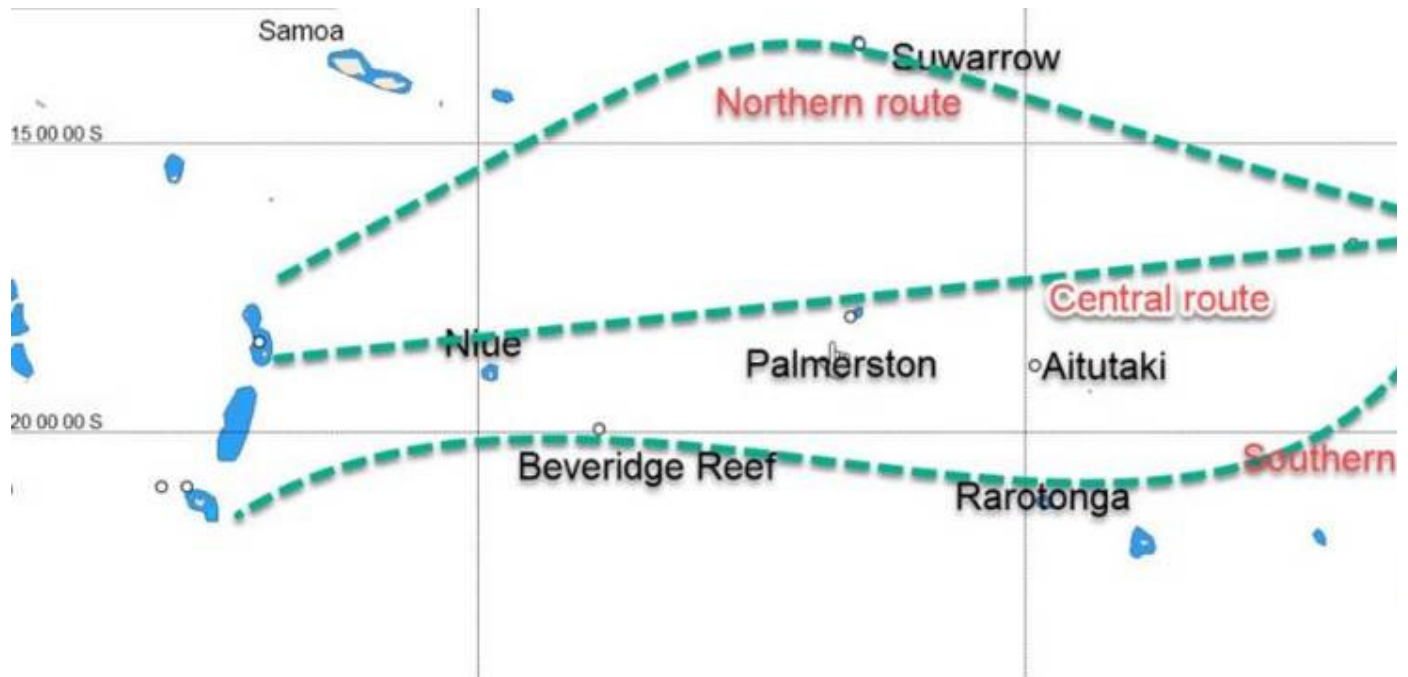
Occasionally a tropical low/passing trough will travel east/southeast along the zone, making for a burst of wind/rain travelling east from Fiji to Niue then SE across Southern coasts. These occur on occasions even at this time of the year and can be forecast beforehand and avoided.

- Another thing to avoid is a **SQUASH ZONE** when a large High travels east along 30S.  
High is 1030hpa or above, it gets dirty (isobars get bunched together along its rim). So in the tropics the isobars marking the trade winds may get squashed together making a “squash zone” of enhanced winds and rough seas. These usually occur around 20 to 25 South and may last for several days. In Fiji this is called BOGIWALU, in Tonga AHO VALO, and in Tahiti the name used is MARA’AMU. They are reasonably easy to forecast and are worth avoiding. If caught in one, change your latitude rather than your longitude.
- The third thing to avoid is the **PASSING THROUGH** or passing low.

The systems tend to form on the eastern end of the SPCZ in which case they travel southeast, propelled by upper NW winds as a steering field. OR they may form on the NW (back) corner of a travelling HIGH., in which case they may get shunted south or sometime to the southwest. They often have their own mini-squash zones (on their polar/southern side), and calm zones (on their equatorial/northern side). Isobars give a clue about the intensity of a passing trough: those above 1010hP are usually weak and those below 1007 are worth avoiding.



There are three routes between Tahiti and Tonga, the northern, central and southern:



Sometimes the **northern route** via Suwarrow/Samoa is favored, and sometimes not.

The northern route goes via Suwarrow to Samoa. Often this is covered by the SPCZ, but when the SPCZ is further south the northern route and its northeast winds may be best.

The **middle-route** offers stopovers such as Palmerston Island and Niue and is a good alternative when the SPCZ is further north. Watch out for passing troughs and squash zones ... these come and go. The middle route allows short hops. The **southern route** tends to get higher swells from the Southern Ocean

SO, all in all, the “best voyage” changes every few days ... sometimes it’s worth waiting for something that suits, sometimes it isn’t.

Basically, avoid passing troughs and squash zones, and go thru the SPCZ where/when it is weak. This may mean taking short hops rather than getting direct from Tahiti to Tonga in one go.