

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

HA'APAI ISLANDS - KINGDOM OF TONGA

12 DAY TRIP WITH 9 DAYS SEA KAYAKING

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Due to its pristine natural environment and fascinating history, the Ha'apai Group has been designated a Conservation Area. We feel privileged, therefore, to be granted a license to offer kayak trips in this beautiful archipelago, the heart of Polynesia.

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

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1 Arrival and overnight at our group accommodation.
Day 2 Acclimatization. Orientation talk. Overnight at the group accommodation.
Days 3-11 Kayaking in the Lifuka Archipelago. Camping (days 3-10).
Day 11 Finish kayaking. Farewell dinner. Overnight at the group accommodation.
Day 12 Trip concludes.

AIR TRAVEL TO HA'APAI

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

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

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

Air New Zealand: Fly from Auckland to Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) four times a week and from Los Angeles to Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) via Auckland.

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

Chathams Pacific: Fly between Tongatapu (Nuku'alofa) and Ha'apai daily except Sundays.



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

CHATHAMS PACIFIC

Email: reservations@chathamspacific.com

Website: www.chathamspacific.com

Phone: +676 28 000 or 28 133

Fax: +676 23 447

SEA KAYAKING

The concept of sea kayaking is still new to many people who may have visions of paddling in small unstable kayaks typically used on river trips. In contrast, we use very stable, seaworthy double kayaks (Necky Tofino and Dusky Bay) especially suited to novices and the ocean environment. The issuing of single kayaks (Necky Arluk III, Quality Kayaks Southern Aurora and Puffin) is at the guides' discretion as this depends not only on the paddlers' ability, but also on weather, sea conditions and group composition (i.e. ratio of novice to experienced paddlers). There is usually at least one single kayak on tour, which may be shared amongst paddlers who can demonstrate solid support strokes.

Your guides cover boat handling basics; paddling strokes; use of the foot-controlled rudder; boat entries and exits and rescue procedures in the protected warm waters of the Port of Refuge. They also cover trip safety and carry a hand-held VHF radio and flares for emergency use. Sea kayaking is a very safe sport when conducted properly. The expedition always paddles as a group, but there is still ample opportunity for individuals to enjoy their personal space on land if so desired. Certain rules of sea kayaking must be agreed to and observed by all trip participants to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment. We discuss these rules and why they are necessary as well as contingency plans. We do everything reasonable to minimize the risks of this outdoor pursuit to ensure your safety and expect you to do the same.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

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

Day 1: Arrival. Upon arrival at Salote Pilolevu Airport in Ha'apai you will be transferred to your accommodation. Please ensure that you send us your full flight itinerary so we may arrange transport at the appropriate time. Your guides will phone you at your accommodation this afternoon to welcome you and discuss the schedule of events for the next few days.
Meals not included...Matafonua Lodge (or the Resort at Billy's Place, subject to availability).

Day 2: Acclimatization. Today is an opportunity to acclimatize and, for those travellers arriving from far-away places, to recover from jet lag. Your guides present a 45-minute orientation talk commencing 9:30 a.m. in Pangai township. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk. Following the briefing there is an optional walking tour of Pangai township and environs.
B...Matafonua Lodge (or the Resort at Billy's Place, subject to availability).

- Day 3: **Day 1 of Kayaking.** Transport will depart early this morning (exact time is tide-dependent) from *your accommodation* to our launching site approximately five kms north of Pangai. Here, the guides will give a safety briefing before departing for the first of nine days of kayaking. Today we paddle along the leeward shores of Lifuka and Uoleva Islands skirting pristine reefs and beaches. Tonight's camp will be on the southern end of Uoleva Island, rated by Outside Magazine as one of the top ten most beautiful beaches in the world. Here, too, is a magnificent coral ledge smothered in soft corals-a snorkeller's dream.
B, L, D ... Uoleva Island; Paddling Time: 3-4 hours
- Day 4: **Day 2 of Kayaking.** Weather permitting, we paddle across a wide channel to Tatafa, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by local fishermen. Here, we can stretch our legs and enjoy a snack before paddling eastward to neighbouring Uiha Island. The view from our campsite on the southern end of Uiha gives a preview of the remote southern islands to which we journey tomorrow. This afternoon we explore Felemea village and re-supply with fresh water in anticipation of spending the next few days, weather permitting, in the remotest part of the Lifuka Archipelago.
B, L, D ... Uiha Island; Paddling Time: 1-2 hours
- Day 5: **Day 3 of Kayaking.** Our paddle plan today is southward on the inside of a fringing reef across shallow aqua-hued waters to Uanukuhahaki (Uanuku) Island. We experience three adventurous days of snorkeling, beachcombing and more paddling. Base camping for three nights on Uanuku allows us to fully enjoy the remoteness of this perfect South Pacific island.
B, L, D ... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours
- Day 6: **Day 4 of Kayaking.** We can snorkel for hours on end in the south of the archipelago and may witness green sea turtles nesting on Uanuku, one of our favourite islands. This remote, uninhabited island is definitely not in the guidebooks. Nor is Uanukuhifo island, an optional short paddle to the south.
B, L, D... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours
- Day 7: **Day 5 of Kayaking.** An optional paddle in empty kayaks to a nearby sand bar enhances the sense of remoteness of this very special area. Whilst paddling, we may be fortunate enough to sight turtles, dolphins and humpback whales, the latter which migrate annually (June through to November) to Tonga's warm sheltered waters to breed and calve.
B, L, D... Uanukuhahaki Island (Base camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours
- Day 8: **Day 6 of Kayaking.** Retracing our paddle strokes, we return today to Uiha Island and stroll through the fishing village of Felemea. After stretching our legs, we paddle to our camp on Tatafa Island. Here, the guides may conveniently assess the sea conditions with tomorrow's channel crossing in mind.
B, L, D... Tatafa Island; Paddling time: 1-2 hours
- Day 9: **Day 7 of Kayaking.** Conditions permitting, we cross 'Auhangamea channel to the lee shore of Uoleva Island. At the southern tip of Uoleva, we can enjoy snorkeling close to shore. More confident snorkelers can do a drift snorkel along a spectacular coral wall.
B, L, D... Uoleva Island (base camp); Paddling Time: 2-3 hours
- Day 10: **Day 8 of Kayaking.** Take advantage of today's more relaxed pace to explore Uoleva Island. Work up your appetite paddling, fishing, snorkeling and/or beachcombing for this evening's meal at a local resort.
B, L, D ... Uoleva Island (base camp); Paddling Time: 1-2 hours

Day 11: **Day 9 of Kayaking.** On this final day of paddling, we paddle north along Uoleva and Lifuka Islands back to Pangai township where we started our journey nine days ago. From here, transfer by taxi back to our accommodation, fresh water showers and a sumptuous farewell dinner.
B, L, D...Matafonua Lodge (or the Resort at Billy's Place, subject to availability).
Paddling time: 3-4 hours.

Day 12: Departure. The trip concludes today with transfers to Salote Pilolevu Airport and a warm farewell from your guides.
Meals not included.

FITNESS AND EXPERIENCE

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience can be useful for this trip. A typical day entails two to four hours of paddling interspersed with rest stops. Whilst the guides endeavour to balance the group by pairing slower members with stronger and more experienced paddlers, the slowest members dictate the pace. Base camps offer the luxury of paddling empty kayaks or a lay day for exploring and relaxing. Paddling into a trade wind of 13-18 knots requires extra effort and can make the distance we travel feel longer. Those who engage in regular exercise such as walking, cycling or swimming tend to derive more enjoyment from their adventure. Physical conditioning exercises and camping experience are highly recommended.

KAYAK GUIDES

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

CAMP ORGANIZATION

On the first camping day (Day 3) the guides orient participants to the camp kitchen and protocol for erecting and breaking camp. The more assistance with camp duties rendered, the quicker meals are served and the earlier the group gets out on the water each day. We typically aim to be on the water by 9:30 a.m. so as to take advantage of the cool morning hours for paddling, usually reaching our camp by lunchtime.

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

MEALS ON TOUR

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

Snacks and three meals per day are provided, beginning with lunch on Day 3 and ending with dinner on Day 11. Our fine food has an international theme so you are likely to find Thai, Indonesian, Italian, Mexican and Polynesian cuisine on the menu. The meals are predominantly vegetarian supplemented with fresh fish. We try to make extensive use of the delicious tropical fruits and vegetables and fresh seafood caught by our Tongan guides. We also try our best to please every palate. Please let us know well in advance of the trip of any food and drink allergies and/or dislikes.

We might be fortunate enough to participate in an impromptu kava ceremony, also permeated with Tongan culture, should the occasion present itself.

FOOD AND WATER IN TONGA

There is a wide selection of eateries in Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), some of which are excellent. In Nuku'alofa we can recommend Fakalato Restaurant, Friends Café, Little Italy Pizzeria, Seaview Restaurant, Café Escape, The Giggling Whale Bar & Grill, Luna Rossa and The Waterfront Café. In Pangai (Ha'apai), dining options are limited. We recommend the restaurants at Matafonua Lodge and Sandy Beach Resort.

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

ACCOMMODATION IN HA'APAI

Matafonua Lodge and The Resort at Billy's Place are situated on the east (windward) coast of the Lifuka Archipelago. The attractive fales at Matafonua Lodge, our preferred property, are popular and therefore, not always available. The fales/rooms at Billy's Place, though clean and comfortable, are comparatively more basic.

Package accommodation is based on double occupancy. Single supplements apply to those who prefer a private fale/room or who cannot be paired with another single participant.

We are able to book extra nights at our group hotels in Ha'apai for those who require pre or post trip accommodation.

Tents, groundsheets and mattresses are included for the camping portion of the trip.

STOPOVER ACCOMMODATION IN NUKU'ALOFA

Incoming international flights rarely connect with a domestic flight to Ha'apai, necessitating a stopover night in Nuku'alofa. The following hotels/lodges have been recommended by some of our past travelers. Prices noted are in Tongan Pa'anga (TOP\$) and are subject to change. Bookings can be made direct to the accommodation property online, or, for a service fee of A\$25.00, Southern Sea Ventures can arrange the booking for you. Most hotels will provide airport transfers for an additional cost.

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

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

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

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

TONGA AND HER PEOPLE

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

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

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

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

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

It is advisable to maintain a low profile until outside village areas on Sundays when physical activity, noise and fishing are prohibited.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In an effort to preserve Tonga's natural environment, we strive to promote environmental sensitivity and to minimize our impact on the marine and terrestrial environment. During the orientation talk your guides share the company's Minimum Impact Guidelines with respect to waste disposal and conservation of reefs, marine life, flora and fauna. We carry out all non-decomposable rubbish along with other people's rubbish. Snorkellers are briefed on correct use of their fins and the importance of not touching the fragile reefs.

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

CLIMATE

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

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

TIME AND COMMUNICATION

Tonga is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Contact details for our group hotels in Ha'apai are as follows:

Matafonua Lodge

Email: info@matafonua.com

Web: www.matafonua.com

Phone: +676 69766

The Resort at Billy's Place

No current email or web address

Phone: +676 60336

Fax: +676 60200

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

ITINERARY CHANGES AND/OR DELAYS

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

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

TRAVEL INSURANCE

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

AIRPORT TAXES, EXCESS BAGGAGE FEES AND SHUTTLES

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

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

PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry to Tonga. You must present an onward ticket on arrival in order to be granted a 30-day visitors visa.

VISAS

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

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

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

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

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

BUDGETTING

Consider bringing TOP\$40-T\$100 in small denominations on the kayak trip for purchasing handicrafts. Budget TOP\$75-100 per day for meals (not including alcohol) and taxis in Nuku'alofa and Pangai.

TIPPING

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

GIFTS

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

SECURITY

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

MEDICAL MATTERS

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

Hygiene

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

Vaccinations

No statutory vaccinations are required for entry into Tonga. However, we require every participant to have a current tetanus vaccination and recommend vaccinations against hepatitis, typhoid and polio.

You should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information. Hepatitis vaccinations are generally a good idea for all travellers.

Medication

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

Dengue Fever

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

Medical Supplies

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

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

Dental

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

Hospitals

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu and Niu'ui Hospital in Pangai are experienced with cuts, fractures and tropical disorders. However, for most other conditions it is advisable to seek diagnosis and treatment in your own country.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographic opportunities abound in Tonga! Tongan people are very photogenic and enjoy having their photo taken (except when they are eating). Asking their permission first is a polite gesture.

Bring plenty of spare film and batteries and sufficient memory storage for digital cameras. For film users, Fujichrome Velvia professional film does justice to the tropical blues and greens of the water and foliage. We recommend that all film be processed in your home country for best results.

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

GEAR AND CLOTHING

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

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

Biodegradable salt water shampoo is available for purchase from Friendly Islands Kayak Company in Tonga for \$5.00AUD/ 100ml bottle. Sleeping bags, blankets or sheets are not available.

Lightweight cotton or quick-dry clothing is recommended for Tonga's warm tropical climate. Long-sleeved shirts with collars offer good sun protection. Lava lavas (two metre wrap-around cloth) may be purchased in Tonga.

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

Recommended

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

Optional

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

MONEY MATTERS

Your tour cost includes:

- Return airport transfers between Salote Pilolevu Airport (Ha'apai) and the hotel.
- Three nights' accommodation (based on double occupancy) at the *Matafonua Lodge or The Resort at Billy's Place* depending on availability. Upgrades to Sandy Beach Resort also available depending on availability-surcharge payable.
- A 45-minute orientation talk.
- Use of quality double and single fibreglass kayaks and accessories.
- A 9-day kayak tour of the outer islands with professional guides (guide:guest ratio = 1:6).
- Camping gear (tents, groundsheets and mattress).
- Snacks and 3 meals a day on the kayaking portion of the tour.
- A farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Your tour cost does not include:

- International & domestic air fares.
- Visa and passport fees.
- Personal travel insurance.
- Airport departure taxes.
- Excess baggage charges.
- Airport transfers that are not included in the above itinerary.
- Accommodation not included in the above itinerary.
- Single supplement fee.
- Beverages and meals that are not included in the above itinerary.
- Clothing, liquor, laundry, postage, medical expenses and any other expenses of a personal nature.
- Snorkelling gear.
- Expenses incurred as a result of delays due to inclement weather, delays of scheduled aircraft, logistical delays, and resultant changes to the itinerary.
- Emergency evacuation charges.
- Gratuities to guides.

READING REFERENCES

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

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Stanley, D. *South Pacific Handbook*. (7th ed). Avalon Travel Publishing, 2000.

Stanley, D. *Tonga-Samoa Handbook*. Avalon Travel Publishing, 1999.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS & DELAYS EN ROUTE

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

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

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