



Travel Information



Getting To Tonga

Getting to the Kingdom of Tonga is easy. Air New Zealand operates almost daily flights out of Auckland and Virgin Australia operate 2 flights per week. Both airlines also operate flights from Australia (Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne). Fua'amotu International Airport is located 13 kilometres from the nations capital, Nuku'alofa. Once in Tongatapu, Real Tonga runs domestic flights across the Kingdom.

Customs/ Entry Requirements

A visa is not required by New Zealand or Australian passport holders for stays up to 30 days. Visitors are required to have a valid passport with at least 6 months validity and a return or onward ticket.

Climate

Tonga is blessed with a warm tropical climate year round. Temperatures though are fairly consistent throughout the year with all months reaching over 19°celsius. March is considered the wettest month, however much of the rain happens at night resulting in humidity during the day.

Language

The two official languages are Tongan and English. English is taught in most schools and is spoken in main towns. Try mastering a few Tongan words and see the delight of the Tongan people as you make an effort to speak their language.

Medical

Hospital and medical facilities in Tonga are limited. There are hospitals in Vaiola (Tongatapu), Hihifo (Ha'apai) and Neiafu (Vava'u) which will treat minor ailments and dispense medicines. The most common travellers complaint is coral scratches and attention to these is recommended.

Driving

The official line is that to drive in Tonga you need a visitor's driving licence (T\$40) from the Ministry of Transport, valid for 3 months. Driving is on the left side of the road. The speed limit is 30 kilometres per hour around schools, 50 kilometres per hour in villages and 70 kilometres per hour outside the populated areas. There is a good network of metalled roads, although with some potholes.

Electricity

240V / 50Hz. Tonga has 3 pin power outlets similar to those in New Zealand & Australia.

Currency

The currency used is the Tongan Pa'anga. Currency exchange facilities are provided at Fua'amotu International Airport. There are ATMs in Tongatapu and Vava'u but other islands like Ha'apai and Eua are ATM-free. Major credit cards are accepted but often attract a 4% to 5% transaction fee.

Drinking Water

Mains water is chlorinated and safe to drink in the main towns. Elsewhere, drinking water should be considered a potential health risk and sterilisation is advisable. Bottled water is available.

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Getting Around

There are many taxis throughout Tonga with the majority based in Tongatapu. Taxis are often unmarked and are identified by the letter 'T' at the beginning of their number plate. Taxis are not metered so it's important to always agree on the fare with the driver first. Taxis can also be hired for a half or full day of sightseeing. Buses are mainly used by the locals and generally run between 8 am – 5 pm and can be waved down at anytime. Local knowledge about how to use the service is a real advantage and both locals & the driver will be only too happy to assist in this area. Most of the island groups are serviced by inter- island ferries. These are mainly used by the Tongan people as an affordable means of transport. These ferries also carry cargo & livestock and provide the vital link between the island groups. Visitors can also travel on these services. Tickets are generally sold onboard and there are no sailings on Sundays.

Food

Expect to be well fed in Tonga. Food & feasting are an integral part of Tongan society and the feasts of the Kingdom are renowned throughout the Pacific for their size and diversity. Traditional Tongan favourites to try include 'ota 'ika (raw fish marinated in lemon and coconut cream) and lu pulu (corned beef and coconut milk wrapped in taro leaves).

Clothing

The dress code is definitely 'casual'. When in public, it's against Tongan law to go shirtless. Lightweight shorts & T-shirts are recommended for all, while skirts and dresses are fine for woman. When outside resorts, longer shorts, skirts and dresses (to the knee) should be worn. If you plan to visit villages, etiquette advises that shoulders should be covered for both men & women and hats should not be worn. Church services are very important in Tonga and smart clothes and shoes should be packed.

Duty Free

The following goods may be imported into Tonga by travellers aged 18 years and over without incurring customs duty; 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of tobacco or up to 50 cigars, 2.25 litres of spirits or 4.5 litres of wine or 4.5 litres of beer.

Whale Watching Season

During July through to October humpback whales can be seen in the warmer Tongan waters. The high number of whales visiting at this time of year means that there are plenty of opportunities to see and swim with them. Tonga is one of the few places in the world where you can still swim with the whales. As most of the whales are mothers with their calves, the operators take great care not to intrude too heavily on these magnificent creatures.

Island Time

When you're in the Kingdom of Tonga, you're on Island Time. Things definitely move a little slower but it gives you more time to appreciate all that surrounds you. So make sure you chill out & enjoy all the benefits that Island Time offers !!