



## Things To Do On Tongatapu

### **Tongatapu – Sacred South – is the southern starting point for visitors exploring the Kingdom of Tonga**

Expect a warm welcome at one of the world's most easy-going international airports before journeying north across the island to the Tongan capital of Nuku'alofa. The harbour-side town is the centre of Tongan commerce and government and also the residence of the Royal Family in the South Pacific's only monarchy. Around 70,000 people live on Tongatapu and Nuku'alofa - 'Abode of Love' - is a vibrant introduction to the Kingdom. Ferryboats and trading ships dot Nuku'alofa Harbour, preparing to venture to the far-flung Vava'u, Ha'apai and Niua island groups to the North. Nuku'alofa's Talamahu Market is a proudly local affair, selling fresh tropical produce and authentic Tongan arts and crafts. On Sundays, the churches of Tongatapu glow with soaring harmonies and a warm welcome to visitors. Ancient Tongan history includes the fascinating 11th century AD Ha'amonga 'a Maui trilithon and the ancient Langi (Terraced Tombs) of the Tongan kings. More recent are the Tongatapu landing sites of Abel Tasman and Captain James Cook and on Nuku'alofa's waterfront you'll find the elegant Royal Palace. Offshore island resorts effortlessly combine the rustic with the romantic. The 'Anahulu Caves and the Mapua 'a Vaea blowholes present Tongatapu's more rugged natural beauty.

### **Flying Fox Reserve - located in Kolovai**

At Kolovai 18kms west of Nuku'alofa, visitors can find the rare flying foxes, dark brown fruit bats, some with wing spans of up to 1 metre. Ha'atafu and Monotapu beaches are also situated at the western end of the island; they're easily accessible and well protected.

### **The Blowholes**

One of the most impressive sights in Tonga are the blowholes which can be found along the coastline at Houma, 15kms from Nuku'alofa. Waves send seawater spurting some 18 metres into the air through holes in the coral reef. This stretch of coastline is known as Mapu 'a Vaea ( the Chiefs Whistle ) by Tongans because of the whistling sound made by the spouts.

### **Ha'amonga Trilithon**

This is a massive stone arch possibly used as a seasonal calendar, erected at the same time as the Terraced Tombs and again made from coral. The Anahulu Cave is an underground cavern of stalactites and stalagmites near the beach of the same name about 24kms from Nuku'alofa.

### **The Terraced Tombs at Langi**

On the Eastern end of the island are the Langi ( Terraced Tombs ), 10 kms from the Ha'amonga Trilithon towards Nuku'alofa. The tombs form quadrilateral mounds with huge blocks of stone rising in terraces to heights of 4 metres, built for the old Tu'itonga ( Spiritual Kings ). The stones are of coral, built around AD1200, possibly carried from Wallis Island on large canoes known as lomipeau.

### **Go Whale Watching**

Humpback Whales arrive in Tongan waters July to October, to calf & mate. During the season many whales can be seen from the Tongatapu foreshore. If you prefer a closer view, you'll find many reputable whale watching operators

### **Nuku'alofa City Tour**

This fun & informative walking tour is a great way to experience & familiarise yourself with the Kingdoms capital. In addition to visiting the Royal Palace you'll visit Talamahu Market the kingdoms main fresh produce hub. It's a hive activity here especially on Saturday mornings and you'll also get the chance to see the Langafonua Handicrafts Centre which stocks the best range of traditional Tongan handicrafts and fine arts.

### **Island Day Trip**

Jump on a ferry to Pangaimotu, Fafa or 'Atata Islands for the day. Spend the day snorkelling, kayaking, enjoying leisure walks along the beach or simply order cocktails and sit in the clear water whilst enjoying the ultimate escape !

Tours are the best way to experience the history, ecology, culture and food of the Kingdom of Tonga, all delivered by gentle and unassuming local guides.