

As Fiji travel specialists for over 30 years, we are confident that you will enjoy your stay. To ensure a memorable holiday and to help you experience the island's natural beauty and the warmth and friendliness of the Fijian people, we have put together this fact sheet, packed with tips on travelling well and safely.

ABOUT FIJI

Fiji is an archipelago consisting of six island groups with over 300 islands many with coral reefs and lagoons. The larger islands with high, rugged interiors are mainly of volcanic origin; the smaller islands are coral, limestone or sand cays.

Most people live on the largest island, Viti Levu (about 10,000 square kilometres) in the two major cities of Nadi (the international airport and pronounced Nan-di) and the capital, Suva, 3–4 hours away by road.

Renowned as a tropical paradise with white, sandy beaches, coconut palms and coral reefs, there are also mountain trails to trek in the highlands of the Koroyanitu National Park with traditional villages where local Fijian crafts and customs are on display.

It's easy to get around Fiji as there is good local and inter-island transport including express bus services, taxis, rental cars and bike companies, inter-island ferry and helicopter services, and two domestic airlines making regular flights to major islands.

FIJI FACT FILE

Area:	18,300 sq km
Capital:	Suva
Population:	883,125 est. (2011)
Ethnic groups:	Fijian (57%), Indian (38%), European and other (5%)
Language:	English (official), Fijian (official), Hindustani
Religion:	Christian (65%), Hindu (28%), Muslim (6%)
Currency:	Fiji dollar (FJD\$)
Exchange rate:	AUD\$1 approx FJD\$1.85
Electricity:	240 volts; 3-pin power points - the same as Australia and New Zealand
Telephone calls:	Country code 679; international direct dial from Fiji 001
Time:	Fiji is 2 hours ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time. Daylight Saving: starts 23 October 2011 and ends 4 March 2012
Climate:	Wet season Nov–Apr; dry season May–Oct

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance. A comprehensive policy is best to cover for medical expenses, loss of luggage and cancellation or interruption of your plans. Some policies may be provided 'free' with your credit card or banking organisation. Ensure that you are adequately covered. Our tip: Cover More offer a range of options for every budget www.covermore.com.au/.

Register your Fiji travel plans

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade encourages Australians travelling overseas to be smart and register their travel and contact details with them in case of any sort of emergency. You can do this online at www.smarttraveller.gov.au – you can also check out their travel advice for Fiji here.

Keep copies of your documents

Scan your documents (passport/visas, flight ticket, travel insurance policy, travellers' cheque numbers, credit card numbers and driver's licence) and email them to yourself OR make a couple of photocopies and keep one with you (separate from the original) and leave the other at home with someone you can contact if need be.

Packing for Fiji

Think tropical with maximum daytime temperatures in the 26–31°C range year round. Light clothes and a hat are usually all that's needed except

in the interior, where it can be a little cooler so you may want something warm in the winter months. Be aware that outside resorts, the dress code is conservative

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Health

Your medical kit should include sunscreen, band-aids, antiseptic ointment or powder, headache medication, mozzie repellent, medication for tummy upsets and diarrhoea, a rehydration solution such as Gastrolyte and an adequate supply of any prescription medicines. Check with you GP for up to date vaccination recommendations, as these can change from time to time.

Water

Tap water in Fiji is regarded as safe to drink. If in any doubt, use bottled water.

Tummy troubles

To help avoid tummy troubles, the universal rule applies for eating in restaurants: choose popular, busy restaurants where there's a high turnover of customers.

Other tips include:

- Eat only freshly cooked food
- Avoid food that's been sitting around in buffets
- Peel all fruit
- Choose cooked vegetables. If you like salads, they should be fine when you are eating in major hotels and restaurants in tourist areas; avoid them in more remote areas where fewer tourists go.

If you do get an upset tummy or diarrhoea, treat it with the medication your doctor suggested and keep yourself well hydrated. Consult a doctor if the problem lasts more than a couple of days or a fever develops.

ARRIVING IN FIJI

Passports, visas and entry formalities

Australians and New Zealanders need:

- A machine readable passport valid for 6 months from the date of departure from Fiji. While Fiji recognises dual nationality, the Australian government recommends dual nationals travel on their Australian passports
- Proof of onward or return passage

Most visitors who intend to stay less than four months do not require a visa. However, entry and exit conditions are liable to change. Contact the

nearest embassy or consulate of Fiji for current information.

Fiji Customs

Adults (over 17) can bring 250 cigarettes, 2.25 litres of liquor or 4.5 litres of wine. All the usual things are prohibited and/or subject to quarantine.

Australian Consulate

In Fiji you can obtain consular assistance from: Australian High Commission, 37 Princes Road, Tamavua, Suva, FIJI. Telephone +679 338 2211.

In an emergency, if you are unable to contact the High Commission you can contact the 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre on +61 2 6261 3305 or 1300 555 135 within Australia.

STAYING IN FIJI

The Best of Fiji

- Denarau Island for luxury resorts, the Denarau Golf & Racquet Club and Fiji's finest shopping and dining at the Marina.
- Mamanuca Islands for kayaking, snorkelling, deep sea fishing, diving at Gotham City and partying on Beachcomber Island – along with surfing the left-hander at Cloudbreak (if you are an expert).
- Nananu-i-ra for scalloped bays with white-sand beaches, surfing and diving.
- Yasawa Islands, a chain of 20 ancient volcanic islands, for stunning scenery, remote villages, white beaches, fabulous diving and meeting the rays off Manta Ray Island.
- Namosi Highlands for spectacular mountain scenery, traditional villages, waterfalls, and forested canyons.
- Rafting on the Upper Navua River along white-water rapids through pristine rainforest.
- Vuda lookout for the Gardens of the Sleeping Giant and Fiji's largest and most varied orchid collection.
- Taveuni, the Garden Island, for snorkelling and diving on some of the world's best reefs.
- Sigatoka Valley for a jet boat ride on the green river, visiting a traditional village and taking part in a kava ceremony.
- Pacific Coast for outdoor activities, shark diving, white water rafting, sea kayaking, zip-lining, game fishing and much more.

Driving in Fiji

If you are going to hire a car, you need a valid driving licence or an International Driving Permit, which is available from your state or territory motoring club.

Transport

There are plenty of taxis – but always settle on a fare to your destination first. Tip: Fares tend to be flexible and bargaining politely never hurts.

Shuttle-buses run between many hotels and popular tourist or shopping areas. Ask hotel reception for details. The most comfortable long-distance bus between Nadi and Suva is the air-conditioned Fiji Express.

Money

Give yourself options (credit/debit cards, traveller's cheques, and cash – Australian or US dollars). Confirm with your bank that you can use your credit/debit card in Fiji's ATM facilities. The Travel Money Buying guide at www.choice.com.au has useful tips.

The Fiji dollar comes in denominations of F\$50, F\$20, F\$10, F\$5 and F\$2. Hang on to small change if using public transport or visiting outlying areas. An ANZ Bank branch in the arrivals concourse at Nadi International Airport is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

International ATMs are available at the airport, in larger towns and at most tourist resorts. In small towns and remote areas, ATMs are less common, so it is best to carry cash. Change your dollars or travellers' cheques at your hotel/resort or at a bank. Bank hours are Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 3pm, and Friday from 9.30am to 4pm.

Major credit cards are widely accepted by hotels, car-rental firms, travel and tour companies, large stores and most restaurants.

Tipping

Tipping is optional, not expected and not encouraged – which is not to say a tip (and a smile) won't be appreciated if deserved for exceptional service.

Internet Access

Most hotels provide either in-room internet access or have an internet centre for guests to use. Check costs as they can be pegged to time or data usage.

If you have your laptop, you'll find that many restaurants and cafes offer either free or relatively inexpensive wireless access. They usually have a sign at the entrance. Ask the waiter for the 'password' or 'key'

Postcards, Letters and Parcels

Post offices are usually open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm. FedEx, UPS and DHL Express have service into and out of Fiji

Shopping

Before you spend up big, remember there's a combined limit of \$900 on 'general goods' you can bring into Australia duty free. In addition, many popular souvenirs must be declared for quarantine inspection, e.g. products made from coral, shell, wood, woven baskets and mats. Download A Guide to Travellers: Know before you go for tips on what you can and can't bring back to Australia at www.customs.gov.au

When dealing with Fijians, haggling is not considered polite. When dealing with Indo-Fijians in the smaller shops, however, bargaining is still acceptable. If you don't like bargaining then you should visit the shopping arcades of the larger hotels, or Jack's of Fiji, Prouds, and Tappoo, all of which have branches on the Queen's Road in Nadi Town, at Port Denarau, and in Suva.

Do's and Don'ts when Visiting Villages

Wear modest clothing (covering bare shoulders and bare legs), take off your hat (only the chief wears a hat) and if invited into someone's home, leave your shoes at the door. Be aware that Fijians don't touch people's heads, or hair, nor do they point at other people, so these are all on the 'don't do' list, too. However, do be prepared to shake hands and answer personal questions about where are you from, whether you are married and how many children do you have etc. And if you are invited to drink kava, drink it and enjoy the ritual and the numb tongue that follows.

Disclaimer

Although we have taken every care in compiling this fact sheet and we believed the contents to be correct at the time of publication, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.