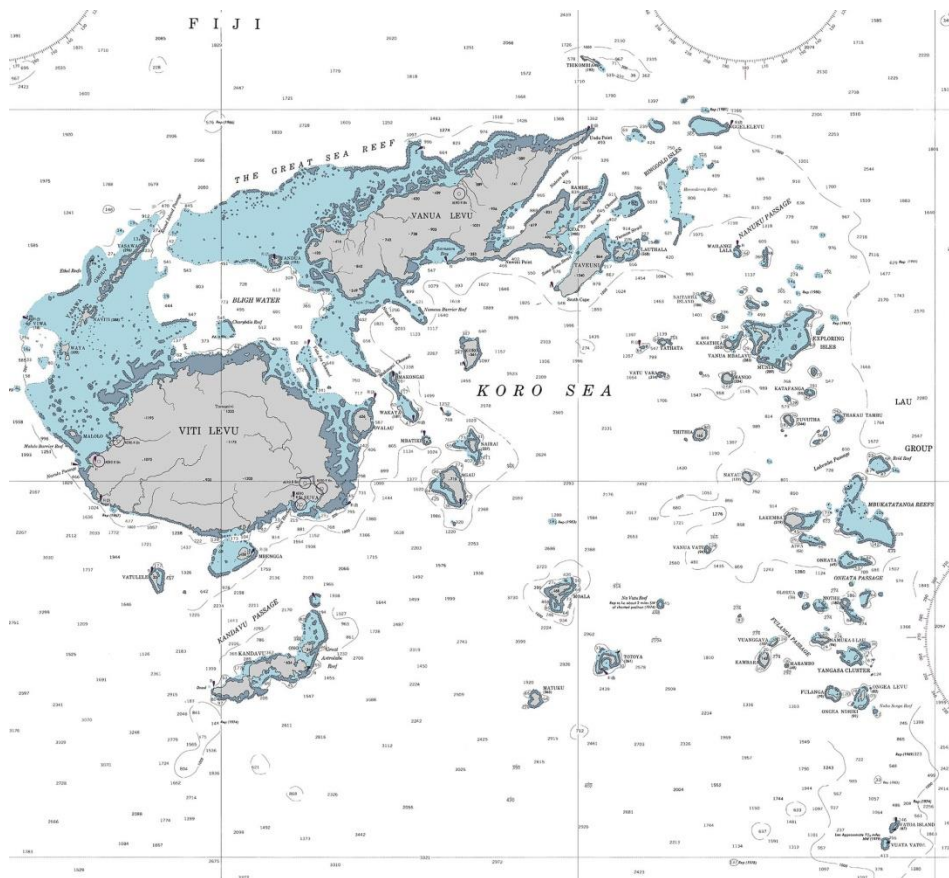


SOUTH PACIFIC POSSE

CRUISING FIJI >>

- Cruising Intro
- Cruising Yasawas
- Cruising Vanua Levu, Taveuni
- Cruising Kadavu & Beqa
- Cruising Lomaiviti
- Cruising the Lau Group
- Cruising The Lau Group of Islands

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CRUISING THE FIJI GROUP

with Captain Carol Dunlop

There are so many reasons to cruise the idyllic waters of Fiji. It is one of the warmest, friendliest nations on earth and caters to cruisers looking for adventure, timeout experiences with locals and very remote cruising.

Fiji is a nation comprising 322 islands in 18,376 square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean. The islands range from being large and volcanic with high peaks and lush terrain to sand keys so small they peak out of the warm aqua water when the tide recedes, to rugged up thrust limestone cliffs.

There are five distinct cruising areas as described throughout this guide, which provide very diverse cruising locations to suit every traveler of the high seas. This is not always the case in some of the other South Pacific island destinations where good anchorages can be sparse. In the outer islands, off the beaten tourist track, there are many deserted beaches, good anchorages, and opportunities to really experience local customs and the culture of Fiji.

Fiji is certainly worth making the decision to pass through the Panama Canal and into the South Pacific for something unique in all the island groups.

Now that superyachts can charter in Tahiti and now Fiji, and New Zealand, many ship owners and captains may be tempted to commit to a longer cruise in this magical region, which compared to the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, must be refreshingly unpopulated



“Cruising in Fiji waters is remote and stunningly beautiful, and over the past 44 years it has given me the opportunity to experience many once-in-a-lifetime moments.”

with unspoiled coastlines and often empty anchorages.

Provisioning and other supplies for superyachts are easily imported from New Zealand and Australia on a regular basis; however, it is worth noting that many Fiji suppliers especially near Nadi can meet such demands.

Fiji also has some very capable ship repair experts; Specializing in hydraulics; electronics; engineering; varnishing; canvas works and more. Also, IMEL operates a floating dry dock business in Fiji with lifting capacity of 3500 MT.

Cruising in Fiji waters is remote and stunningly beautiful, and over the past 44 years it has given me the opportunity to experience many once-in-a-lifetime moments. However, its isolation and untouched beauty also means that it is one of the

more navigationally exacting cruising areas in the South Pacific.

With the start of the Americas Cup challenge in Auckland March 2021 owners may not wish to miss the stunning cruising in this country. Its also a chance to catch up on boat maintenance; plan major refits, where the shipwright standards and local expertise is high. Out of the South Pacific tropical cyclone belt it's a great country to take time out before exploring more remote island groups beyond Fiji.

So, as the South Pacific has so much to offer the adventurous cruiser, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- Captain Carol Dunlop

Cruising in the Fiji Group with Captain Carol Dunlop

This series of articles is about cruising the 5 quite distinct and diverse areas of Fiji. Voyage and charter planning should be restricted to one area at a time, to avoid the cruise being interrupted by long sea passages as the ship re-positions. Yasawa & Mamanuca Islands | Kadavu & Beqa Lagoon | Lomaiviti Group comprising the Vatuira Channel, Makogai, Namena, Wakaya, Ovalau, Gau and including the Northern side of Viti Levu | Taveuni, Vanua Levu and The Ringgold's | Northern and Southern Lau and Eastern Group of Islands.

CRUISING THE YASAWA & MAMANUCA ISLANDS

White sand beaches & protected cruising



Wayalailai Beachfront. Photo: Jayson Chang



The Yasawa and Mamanuca islands are the closest cruising grounds to Fiji's International Airport in Nadi.

A departure from Port Denarau (which is only 20 minutes from the main international airport) will find you at Malolo Island, the southern-most in the Yasawa/Mamanuca chain of islands, in just a couple of hours.

The chain of islands and surrounding coral reefs are strung out over 80 nautical miles from Malolo Island to Yasawa-i-rara at the most northern tip of the Yasawas. Most of the traveling is inside the reef with short passages between many good anchorages and fine beaches.

The climate is reliably very sunny due to being located on the "dry" side of Fiji. You are likely to see a few cruising boats, but the area is still pristine with easy, safe diving and very good snorkeling.



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*Waya Sunset. Photo: Capt. Carol Dunlop*

The diving is good for novice to moderately experienced divers. It's a great area for guests that do not feel comfortable in open waters.

There are a few small boutique resorts in the Mamanucas where you can hire jet skis, go parasailing, have a spa treatment and do the usual resort things.

Good anchorages can be found off Malololailai and Qalito Island close by.

Musket Cove really encourages yachts; there is a bar on the beach. It's a great place to visit; hire a mooring and do some socializing; Its close to Cloud 9 which is a bar and restaurant from which you can surf paddle board and windsurf.

Momi Bay is a good anchorage both to arrive at night on the leading lights, and from where to make an early departure.

At the southern most island of the Yasawas - Waya Island, you will find the lovely Octopus Resort. Cruise northwards up the island chain to see the many other small backpacker operations and several more luxurious resorts nestled on some of the islands.

Many of these resorts if properly approached can offer Spas and the use of some of the facilities but a polite call first is a must do.

About midway up the chain you will find the Blue Lagoon anchorage (so named as this was the location for the movie Blue Lagoon in 1980) and the private Turtle Island Resort.

Nanuya Island Resort is right on the beach at Nanuya Lailai Island; close by and actively welcome cruising yachts.

They put on a lovo and meke on a Saturday night and welcome yachts if they made a booking. It is a lovely venue with perfect sunsets.

A lovo is the Fijian way of cooking food on hot rocks buried in the ground. A lovo meal will include fish, pork, whole chicken, and some dalo (taro), palusami and other root crops from the market. The resort staff weave coconut frond baskets to hold the food, which is then placed on the heated rocks, covered with banana leaves and more coconut fronds, and buried for a few hours. The food comes out tender, juicy and infused with the flavor of grated coconut.

We have also found the Blue Lagoon Beach Resort on the Southern end of Nacula Island very helpful in assisting some of our guests. The Resort is lovely and the location stunning.

Yaqona (Kava) drinking while being serenaded by harmonious Fijian singers provide a musical delight under the stars. A really great night out Fiji style! We would take our guitars and ukuleles. I guess this is the nearest thing to a nightclub - South Pacific Island style!

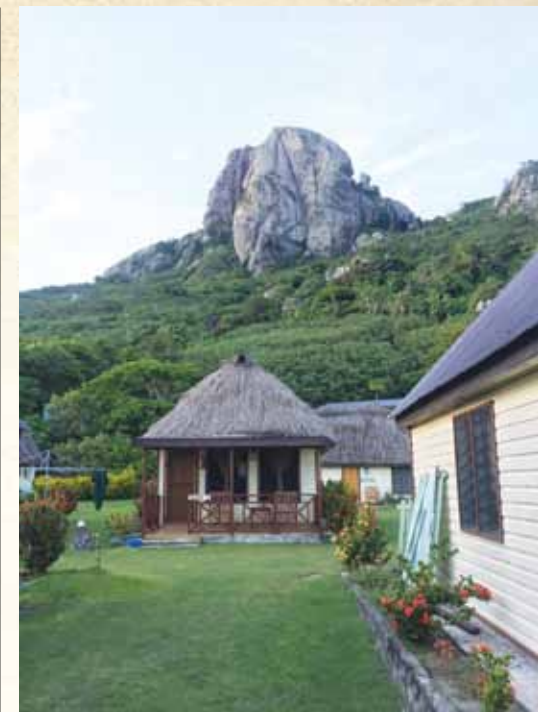
One can easily cruise for 7-10 days in the Yasawa/ Mamanuca area and find something of interest to suit everyone on board; beaching, hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, diving, fishing, cultural village visits and water sports. Most villages will

put on a meke (Fijian Dancing) and/or lovo for guests on very short notice.

The beaches are magnificent. Whiter and more dramatic the further north you go; Yasawa Island being the most spectacular with miles of white sand, nobody there except for a few villages and the very upmarket Yasawa Island Resort tucked away, almost invisible amongst the palms.

At the southern end of Yasawa Island are the famous Sawa-i-Lau Caves which are worth a visit. You can hire a guide from the village to show you the entrance into the underwater caves. Take torches, masks and snorkels! The lagoon at Sawa-i-Lau is just great for exploring with kayaks, and the snorkeling is very good near the caves. There is a fee charged which varies from week to week!

Many anchorages can be found both on the east and west side of the island chain. The best in bad weather being the Blue Lagoon anchorage at Matacaulevu; other anchorages are at Sawa-i-Lau caves, which has good holding; Vawa island in a strong southerly and North and South Naviti and Waya island both east and west depending on the wind direction. ■

*Vatuvula Bures, Wayalailai. Photo: Jayson Chang**Yasawa Islands. Photo: Patricia Mallam*



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Cruising in the Fiji Group with Captain Carol Dunlop

CRUISING TAVEUNI AREA, VANUA LEVU KIOA, RABI & THE RINGGOLDS



Kioa. Photo: Carol Dunlop



Taveuni is famous for its spectacular waterfalls, varied bird watching, and world-class dive sites. Here you will need a dive guide as the correct tide and current is essential to see the 'Rainbow Reef' and the white coral flowers open on the sheer 'Great White Wall'. Good anchorage areas close to the Rainbow Reef dive sites are Viani and Vatudamu bays.

Buca Bay on mainland Vanua Levu also offers a very good anchorage in bad weather with good holding ground and is also a great spot for a seaplane to land when transporting guests to and from your vessel.

While in the area, you should spend some time exploring. Be sure to include a visit to the two islands in Fiji that are populated by displaced South Sea Islanders, namely Rabi and Kioa.



Left: Catherine Bay, Rabi. Right: Matagi Island anchorage. © Carol Dunlop



Rabi (Rambi) where you can meet the inhabitants who are displaced Banabans from Ocean Island, in Micronesia. Phosphate mining devastated Ocean Island, so the British bought Rabi for resettlement. Though Fiji citizens since 1945, they still speak in their native tongue - Gilbertese, and their lifestyle preserves age-old traditions. Their dancing is very unlike Fijian dancing; more Polynesian in style and very stimulating! The sailing canoes still in use are a pretty sight.

Catherine Bay in the south is a very good anchorage. The wharf has been completely destroyed by cyclone Winston but a dinghy can safely land on the beach nearby. Be sure to visit the local elder who lives close by to ask permission to visit the village. There is no sevusevu but he is charming and only wants to know where you are from and have a chat.

The Methodist church is huge and used for all sorts of important venues. They have a serious brass band in the village and the Rabi dancers sometimes perform here.

Nuka on the western side is the main village where you can enquire about the dancers and is the home of the Rabi council.

To the North is the magical Albert Cove. Usually there is only one family in residence but not on a regular basis. The Rabi Islanders make a coconut toddy but beware of the mature potion!

Kioa is an outlier to Vanua Levu. Situated opposite Buca Bay. It is a freehold island purchased by settlers from Tuvalu, who arrived between 1947 and 1983. Their skill in fishing is as legendary as their artisans and handcrafts. The village is spotless and the people welcoming. An elder will escort you around and tell you stories about the past. There is no sevusevu here as in Rabi.

A recent village visit in 2019 showed a stark contrast with previous visits. The village was immaculate. The houses; the rara and druas were well presented and the villagers forthcoming. We had a great time and it proved to be one of the great revisits.

To the south of Kioa is 'Sau Bay Fiji Retreat. An Eco Resort' run by fifth generation locals Nigel and Carol Douglas; the anchorage is good, especially for larger yachts and Nigel is the best guide for diving this area. He has piloted and led dives on many visiting super-yachts. However, please do get permission to land from the owners. They are a wealth of information on anything in these northern islands.

To the East at Waiyevo on the island of Taveuni you can find basic stores and provisions. Anchor well south of Korolevu Island to avoid the bombies and tender ashore. Fresh provisions can also be sought in the area.

The Bouma Heritage National Park Falls or Tavoro waterfalls are a worthwhile visit on Taveuni or trek the Vidawa rainforest trail. Lavena coastal walk is also a great excursion as is a visit to Civa Pearl Farm at Vurevure Bay on the east side. These places can be accessed from Matei via road in a taxi or truck – or tender into Navakacoa and take a truck ride from there.

The Waitavala water slide which is a great hit with kids and adults is accessed from Waiyevo.

The islands of Matagi (Matangi) and Qamea (Gowmear) located to the east of Taveuni also boast some excellent anchorages. Matagi is owned by Noel and Flo Douglas who have hosted numerous Superyachts over the years. This is a charming boutique resort with lovely beaches and great diving. A very good anchorage can be found to the south of the island. As this is a private island



Left: Sau Bay Fiji Retreat. Right: Ringgolds. © Carol Dunlop



you do need to ask permission to land and any arrangements should be made with the resort beforehand. If they are really busy they will not be able to accommodate anything more than a possible dinner ashore or a spa overlooking the water. Laucala Island, to the east of Matagi, is home to a private 7-star resort often frequented by the affluent and famous. It is considered one of the world's most exclusive private retreats. Previously owned by Malcolm Forbes the present owner heads the Red Bull energy drink company.

The island is magnificent to say the least and the facilities amazing. Anchoring in front of the resort or the beaches is strictly not permitted but Superyachts that wish to check their guests into the resort and have made arrangements may anchor off to the side in protected waters.

The Ringgold Islands are to the North of Matagi Island; the pass is deep and wide into the area. Your sevusevu can be presented to Yanuca (Yanutha) village.

Be sure to visit the Cikobia (Thikombia) Crater, and the deserted Raranitingga island is also worth a lunch stop. The anchorage to the NW of this island is very deep 100ft approx.

NORTHERN VANUA LEVU

The channel along the Northern Vanualevu coastline is deep and wide.

It is really beautiful and rarely visited by yachts. There are some lovely spots including Kia island; Nukubati island private resort and many great river trips. Great for Kite surfing and fishing the northern reefs.

The Labasa river can be a navigational experience at low tide but a fun day out in the busy colorful town with great markets and curry shops.

WEATHER

Taveuni is called the garden isle so does have its fair share of rainfall in the wet season around November to March. Tradewinds blow as usual and are stronger between June and August.

Once in the lee of Taveuni you do have protection from the swells. The current in Somosomo straits between Taveuni and Vanua Levu can be strong at times when you have wind against tide.

The Taveuni area has several good anchorages. Depending on the wind direction Catherine Bay; Buca Bay, Vanua Levu; Nasau Bay; Niviivi Bay, Gamea; Lali Bay, Gamea; all have good holding. ■



Nasau Bay, Vanua Levu. © Carol Dunlop

Cruising in the Fiji Group with Captain Carol Dunlop

CRUISING KADAVU & THE BEQA LAGOON

Aqua-trek. Photo: www.davidpalfrey.com

For diving, surfing & adventure close to the main island of Viti Levu



KADAVU

The North Astrolabe lagoon offers close proximity to some excellent diving. Due to its location and topography the water here is consistently one degree lower than the rest of Fiji and the chances are you will likely see large pelagic species, schooling barracudas, turtles, manta rays, and stunning corals. There is about 25 nm of open water from NE Beqa (Sulphur Pass or Bala Pass as it is called) before you enter into the lee of the North Astrolabe Kadavu reefs and the entrance into the North Astrolabe lagoon via Usbourne pass.

A *sevusevu* should be presented to the chiefly village of Draveuni before undertaking any cruising and diving in the area of the North Astrolabe lagoon. There are some beautiful beaches within the Astrolabe mainly at Draveuni, Yaukuve Levu



Cape Washington. Photo: Carol Dunlop

home of the new Kokomo Yaukuve Island Resort and Namara, the deserted island nearby.

Kokomo's Private Island Resort are happy to encourage yachts wishing to utilize the wonderful facilities ashore but prior contact for permission is required and only polite. They also have been amazing in allowing a Helipro Medivac land on their helipad in the middle of the night with all their staff and full assistance on the dock. Their private plane is also available for charter. They are definitely a high spot in the North Astrolabe Lagoon.

There are a few dive resorts further south on the island of Ono and mainland Kadavu. People are friendly and welcoming in the villages. All of these places are off the traditional tourist route.

There are great waterfalls on the southern side of Kadavu island in Kadavu village, close to the small Waya Island. Captains need to take tenders in to the village at half tide rising. Close to Kadavu village is the eco-resort Matava who can spin you to the incredible Manta dive on the south coast near Galoa. Matava is also where you will find an IGFA Captain and weigh-station at Bite Me Game Fishing



Charters. The anchorage way inside at Galoa is really good and a great place to run to in boisterous conditions.

The Namalata reefs to the north of Vunisea are great to explore with SCUBA but as always, a local guide will guarantee you hit the best spot at the best time to get the best experience. See Dive Kadavu as in my experience they are the best on the northern Namalata reef side.

At the most western end of the island is Cape Washington, which is another location for fantastic diving, surfing and fishing. A great left break called King Kong is amazing. This area, which is about 80nm south of Port Denarau, is a fabulous cruise, particularly for those who are interested in varied diving. Alternatively, a passage between Beqa (Frigate passage) and Cape Washington is about 40nm.

The village at Cape Washington have been known to put on a great Meke (traditional Fijian dance). Your *sevusevu* needs to be made to the village of Nabukalevuira on the top of the hill underneath the awesome mountain. There was a surf resort 'Naigiagia' on the island just off Cape Washington, however this has now closed but the surfing, snorkeling and diving are wonderful in this location providing the wind is right for the very deep anchorage. SW around to ENE is fine. There is a ledge on the eastern part of the bay where you will find 60-80 feet.

There is the additional option to fly into Vunisea, the main village on the north-western side of mainland Kadavu where you can find a small market, Government stations and a medical center.

BEQA

Beqa is home to the famous Beqa Fire Walkers, members of the Sawau tribe, who can walk bare foot across blazing hot rocks! A historical encounter with a spirit God by one of their great ancestors saw the exchange of the captured Gods freedom for power over fire. Ask any Beqa island native to regale you with their story and they will be happy to share the history of their people with you.

Yachts are able to anchor off the village Dakubeqa, near Beqa Lagoon resort on the western side of Beqa to engage the village in a fire dancing spectacle. The resort can also assist in arrangements.

"Come and join us as the flames start to disappear and the warriors of Dakuibeqa village uncover the stones that have been buried in roaring fire for hours. Be told the story of the spirit god that, in exchange for his life, blessed the Chief of Dakuibeqa and all generations after him with the ability to walk on fire. Listen as the warriors chant to the fire and then witness as they walk over and even pause on top of these white-hot stones. These are the famous Beqa Island Firewalkers. Watch in awe as they perform this traditional ceremony unique only to Beqa Island, and forbidden to be performed by anyone who it not a descendant of Chief Tui Naiviqalita."

One of the best anchorages on the NE side of Beqa is Malumu Bay. Here you will find Lalati Resort & Spa. The sapphire waters of the bay offer a safe harbour for yachts and super yachts alike. Here you can grab a nice cold beer from the beach bar, eat gourmet style island cuisine in the chiefly – style open air bure, or sign up for a spa treatment...or two. You can also go for a guided dive with a member of the resorts dive team.

Vaga Bay on the west side of Beqa is great for a more protected night time anchorage if you are visiting the exclusive Royal Davui Resort on Stewart Island. Permission should be obtained from the island's



Royal Davui Island Resort

managers before making any arrangements to visit the resort. Bookings can be made for a private dinner ashore and maybe a meke and or with the famous firewalkers can be organized. This would have to be booked well in advance so that the staff can prepare.

The surf at Frigates Passage is extremely good and considered one of the best surf breaks in Fiji while fishing in the Beqa channel is renowned for hooking yellow fin tuna, wahoo and walu and marlin. Check out the reef Cakau lekakeka!

There is some good diving and surf by Black Rock at Frigate Pass, SW Beqa. If you are on your way to Kadavu, Malumu Bay close to the pass offers anchorage for early departure to Kadavu.

To the North of Yanuca Island are many SOFT coral dives but most of these are novice dives and generally no more than 60 feet.

PACIFIC HARBOUR

This is an area not to be missed with action packed shark dives and a river rafting adventure in the Navua highlands with Rivers Fiji. The rafting & kayaking adventure into the heartland of Fiji is an all day trip with rapids and waterfalls. This is an extremely well run organization and if you have the time definitely worth doing.

They offer both river and sea kayaking trips for novice to medium level kayakers as well as whitewater kayaking and rafting. A great cultural day out as it involves a traditional village visit and a Fijian yaqona ceremony.

The area is the base for popular shark dive operators. Large vessels can anchor outside the breakwater and tender in to the new marina tucked inside the river. There is the option of two renowned shark dive companies, Aqua-Trek and Beqa Adventure Divers.



Lalati Resort & Spa

Aqua-Trek's founder Brandon Paige is known as the pioneer of the Fiji shark dive. In 1999 he created a dive with the intent to educate divers and aid in the conservation of sharks. Little did he know he was creating what is now known as the worlds #1 shark dive. This is a 2-tank dive which is usually booked out so you may have to book well in advance. It can be an exclusive dive with early pre-booking or just book into a group. An afternoon dive is possible if you have a minimum of 4 people for the booking.

Another exciting excursion is Kila Eco Adventure Park, 19km east from The Pearl Marina. The park has rope courses, giant swings, zip lining, abseiling etc. and is designed to make your tree climbing



The Pearl Resort Marina entrance and Beqa in the distance.

adventures perfectly safe but with the maximum level of adrenalin and fun.

Walk through 10km of jungle and get a closer look at the indigenous flora and fauna from tiny, fragile species to larger, agile and fascinating ones. Cool off under waterfalls and rest at picnic spots around the park.

WEATHER

The southern coast of Viti Levu can be boisterous during the height of the trade wind season June - August.

If it is blowing say 15kts SE or E over the country the Southern coast of Viti Levu and the NE tip of the island and down the eastern Vatuiria passage can often be blowing 10 kts stronger so 25kts or more is not uncommon. Great if the wind is behind you.

Travelling to Beqa from the west is an uncomfortable beat. However, there is often a land breeze at night and with our little 36-foot sail boat we would take off at say 5 in the morning and travel east and sail with a northerly until 10am when the trades kicked in. Larger power boats sailing at 10kts may choose to do an overnight to Pacific Harbour by leaving Momi anchorage at MN and arriving early AM. ■

AQUATREK COMING

Cruising in the Fiji Group with Captain Carol Dunlop

CRUISING THE LOMAIVITI GROUP



Aerial view of Leleuvia Island Resort.

Between the Lau Group & the mainland of Viti Levu



This is the dive area of Fiji for serious divers. There are numerous world-class dives in the Vatu-i-ra channel, and at the fabulous islands of Namena, Koro, Makogai and Gau. It's highly recommended to carry a dive guide as this is "experienced divers only".

On the island of Ovalau you will find the old capital Levuka. It's like being in a time warp with many buildings standing just as they were 100 years ago. The Royal Hotel reminds me of something out of Somerset Maugham and a visit to the local watering hole, The Ovalau Club, has to be part of life's rich experiences. The leading lights, particularly the lower one on the main church spire, are the best in Fiji and are rarely out!

LELEUVIA

Leleuvia Island is nestled between Ovalau and Viti Levu. The Moturiki Passage that takes you into Leleuvia is 2.5 kilometers across and while unmarked



Levuka Coastline. Photo: Carol Dunlop

it is easily visible during the day. Leleuvia Island Resort actively encourages yachts to visit and use their facilities. The resort is very authentic and has magnificent coastal flora and fauna.

NAMENA

A visit in 2018 found the island devastated. There was nobody there and the whole island had been totally destroyed by Cyclone Winston 3 years before. The dive sites were badly affected but after 4 years hopefully the corals are coming back. Such a fabulous dive experience around these waters. Worth a visit anyway to see how the ecosystems are managing. Anchorage on the NW is around 80ft and watch for a few bombies.

MAKOGAI

Makogai island has a very good anchorage in Dalice Bay which is currently used as the site of a Department of Fisheries clam hatchery and turtle head-start program. The island is state owned (although a sevusevu is still required) and steeped in history, as it was previously a large leprosarium serving the region. After cyclone Winston the island suffered major devastation on land and particularly on the dive sites. Annual humpback whale surveys around Makogai and Levuka, record sightings of migrating humpback whales, so do keep your eyes open.

GAU ISLAND

Good anchorages and some more world class dive sites. Gau is the 5th largest island in Fiji covering an area of 136 sq km. There is an airstrip (unused at times) at the southern tip of the island. The Rugby's 7's legend Serevi hails from this island.

Inside the Lagoon divers will need a guide with knowledge of the ideal times to dive. On the outer wall however, times to dive are flexible.

A sevusevu is required at the main village of

Sawieke, approached only at high tide.

Waikama is a good village as is Lovu to the south. Hot springs can be found close by Waikama village.

Close to Waikama there is a new eco resort called Nuku resort in the Bay of Angels. Mantas can often be sighted in this location. The anchorage there is deep 100ft

WAKAYA

WAKAYA IS A PRIVATE ISLAND

Homestead Bay is now a Marine Protected Area gazetted by government and use of the bay as an anchorage is not permitted without prior consent from Wakaya management. Strictly no access to the beaches is permitted, with MPA boundary up to the high water mark and Wakaya private property beyond that.

The Wakaya Club & Spa is strictly a private resort with no facilities available to yachts unless you have confirmed arrangements to check in your guest/s. However, there is nothing to stop a vessel from



Makogai Children's Dance Group

Photo: Carol Dunlop

diving the outer reef. Mantas and hammerhead sharks are frequently seen on the dives around the island.

KORO

Koro Island is a very interesting island. Not well known but during WW2 the Americans practiced their landing for Guadalcanal on Koro. They tried 3 times before they got it right! We had a very interesting visit there this year 2019. The stories on the Americans testing their landing skills there are not well documented.

This year we went in search of the "story" and found that indeed this did happen in the village of **Nabuna** in the north. A lovely story was recounted to us during our visit. They actually do have two steel helmets left by two American soldiers that were left behind or absconded! Great Village and very friendly. They actively welcome yachts. There are some lovely dive sites to the north of the village.

Koro Island is part of the Lomaiviti archipelago. The Koro Sea is named after this volcanic island, which has a chain of basaltic cinder cones extending from north to south along its crest. With a land area of 108.9 sq kms, it is the sixth largest island of Fiji.

Fiji Link has weekly flights to Koro, and there are ferry connections each week between both Suva and Savusavu. Charter flights through Pacific Island



Dere Bay Resort, Koro Island

Air can also be arranged to the airport situated on the Eastern coast.

On the North Western tip of the island, you will find the Dere Bay Resort and the Koro Beach Resort. The beautiful residential development 'Koro Seaview Estates' surrounds Dere Bay, if you decide you cannot tear yourself away from the area. A deep but good anchorage can be found in Dere Bay, and also to the North of the island in southerly winds.

Cyclone Winston tore into this island and a great deal of reconstruction has been achieved over the past few years. However, they need all the help they can get. As of 2019 the village of Kandi is still living under tarpaulins.

NORTH VITI LEVU - Inside Passage

This is deep, clear and suitable for large ships. The channel is deep and wide. There are some good dives on the outer reefs and many places to drop the pick. Vatia Beach Eco Resort, Volivoli Beach Resort and Wananavu Beach Resort offer anchorages. Chart plotters are very accurate here.

NANANU-I-RA ISLAND

Hidden Away from the rest of the world Macdonalds Nananu Beach Cottages and Bethams Beach Cottages are out of the way and the friendly staff and comfortable accommodation offer the weary



Bethams Beach Cottages



MacDonald's Nananu Beach Cottages

traveler a place to relax and experience nature at its very best.

The Island of Nananu-I-Ra offers eight white sandy beaches, miles of unexplored reef systems and 870 acres of coves and bays to discover. Great swimming and snorkeling are only meters away from the doorstep of your cottage. It is of a little surprise that travelers from around the world often extend their stay on this lovely island. The cottages are spacious, fully self-contained and overlook the mysterious Nakauvadra Mountain range, legendary home of the Fijian Gods.

The departure point for the short boat ride to Nananu-i-ra. Boats from the island will pick up and drop off at Ellington Wharf.

Compared to the ever popular Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands, this place is very laid back. Enjoy uncrowded beaches (that are every bit as good as the finest in the Yasawas), and water sports activities that include kitesurfing, windsurfing, SUP, snorkeling, diving and game fishing. Your day can be spent snorkeling, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, kiteboarding and fishing. Exploring or just lazing in the sun. Your night can be spent counting the stars, enjoying a barbeque with a cool drink and exchanging travel stories.

Things To Do On The Island

Don't expect this island to be the same as the Mamanucas (a list of daily activities posted on a board each morning). You do as much or as little as you like, with water sports predominating. With reliable trade winds for kitesurfing, close to top class dive sites, and sheltered sandy beaches on the leeward side, this is a mecca for water-based activities. Here are just a few of the highlights.

Diving - there are some terrific dive sites in close proximity to Nananu-i-Ra, which range from beginner to experienced. Several dive operators are based in this area and service all the lodges here, so



Wananavu Beach Resort, Rakiraki

just ask the staff at your accommodation.

Windsurfing and Kiteboarding - this is the place to be if you enjoy either of these sports or want to learn.

Snorkeling - there is snorkeling right off the beach. Swim at the end of the jetty, where the fish have become tame and will keep you company as you explore the corals. It is also possible to take a short boat ride out to some of the outer reefs for some exciting dives.

Fishing - either handline or charter the experts at Volivoli Beach Resort and chase Snapper, Rainbow Runner, Trevally and Spanish Mackerel.

Roughly midway between Nadi and Suva on the Kings highway, lies the coastal township of Rakiraki.

WEATHER

The NW side of Viti Levu can have enhanced Tradewinds (easterly quadrant) during the season. It can be 10kts up on other areas in the Fiji group as the winds whistle around the Vatuira channel. With a forecast of 15kts you can have up to 25kts in this area. The Nananuira anchorage area is inside the reefs and mostly in the lee of the island so that it is pretty protected for yachts anchoring. There are many good anchor spots inside the reef system all along the North Viti Levu coast. It's a lovely cruise in sheltered waters. Chart plotters are usually very accurate here. ■










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Cruising in the Fiji Group with Captain Carol Dunlop*Fulaga Lagoon. Photo: Carol Dunlop*

The remote eastern group of islands, the Lau group, have to be one of the best cruising destinations of all time and are certainly one of the highlights in a world cruise!

It used to be more difficult to visit the Lau Group due to restrictive permit requirements, however you will find it easy today as permission to cruise Lau is included in your government issued permit for the entire area of Fiji Waters.

In Lau you will find absolutely no tourism. It is very much open-ocean sailing between the islands and as such, some of the passages between the islands can be quite bumpy. The bonus however, is that isolated reefs and islands are well-defined, so that night passages between islands are safe for competent navigators. Indeed, one commonly reaches through the night across Force 4-5 trade winds, hearing and even smelling unseen islands to windward, making some superb sailing.



Both Northern and Southern Lau are very remote areas away from any tourist track. There is absolutely no shopping, nightclubs, stores, or resorts! However, there is excellent fishing, great diving, rich cultural experiences and beautiful scenery. The Fijians of this region follow a subsistence lifestyle that is not greatly changed from that of their ancestors. Unlike on the large islands there are few people of other races, and only rarely has land been sold out of indigenous ownership. It is very important that visitors respect the traditions that underlie daily life, as careless or disrespectful behavior can lead to animosity, and damage to the fragile ecosystem. Please keep this in mind while cruising here.

The island life is very simple, and the people are poor in material terms but rich in others. Most villages have a store, but there is little for sale. Fresh fruit and vegetables are hard to find, and villagers are not used to the idea of selling these things that are normally shared freely with friends and family.

Premix petrol (and diesel) is rarely available in the larger villages. While most islands have a telephone at the post office, internet is rarely available. Although Vanuabalavu does have a Vodafone and Digicel

*Iguana in Kabara.*

tower now. Since our recent cruise in 2019 we discovered that there really is no wifi in Southern Lau. The odd school will offer a connection for emails but we basically were 3 weeks without internet!

Digicel is up and coming and generally offers better coverage in Lau.

Vanuabalavu and Lakeba have the only airports in Lau and both are serviced by domestic carrier Fiji Link, with intermittent flights to these islands. There are airstrips on Cicia and Moala too – again Fiji Link runs a schedule to Cicia while Northern Air services Moala. These flights are subject to change. Charter flights can land at all these airstrips. Cargo ships, with passengers, visit some islands roughly monthly (in theory), but this is unreliable. Due to this infrequency, the local stores are often in low supply, so do not rely on buying any of your supplies here. In 2019 we discovered that some islands are serviced every two weeks?? Unheard of!

Changeover of guests; provisioning; etc usually rely on Pacific Island Air charter flights with their larger seaplanes covering the more remote areas.

iQoliqoli

While the state ultimately retains ownership of the ocean and her resources, the people of Fiji have been given tenure and the right to fish for subsistence from allocated areas of coral reef referred to as 'i-Qoliqoli'.

All coral reef areas in Fiji are part of an iQoliqoli. Deeper water passages between the islands of Fiji are commonly outside of iQoliqoli areas.

If your yacht is berthed within one of the iQoliqoli jurisdictions (apart from a marina), you will need to present your sevusevu to the village and ask for permission to anchor or fish there.

*Left: Washing day in Totoya. Right: Refueling day in Fulaga. Photos: Carol Dunlop*



Please observe the sevusevu protocol; you must bring the required yaqona with you as it cannot be purchased easily once in Lau. This means estimating how many villages you will visit during your entire stay! In these remote islands, gifts of basic stores, schoolbooks, pens, pencils, paper, and both school and medical supplies are greatly valued.

While in Lau, you must also pay particular attention to observing the iQoligoli protocols as they are of fundamental importance and followed more strictly in this area, that retains such a strong link to their tradition and culture.

How to get there.

Before stopping in Lau, you will first need to report to a Port of Entry. Any boat found to have stopped in Lau before clearing into Fiji is likely to be in serious

(and expensive) trouble. Please refer to the WHITE section in the back of this guide that details all the information you will require. As of 2019 we were asked by every island for the cruising permit. Most villages are a little confused as to the terminology but once we introduced the cruising permit, they were happy. If you don't have one then you obviously haven't cleared customs and the sky will fall on your head!

If you are arriving into Fiji from the East perhaps consider entering in Savusavu which is a Port of Entry on the southern coast of Vanua Levu. From here it is only a 40 nm sail to windward into the lee of Taveuni and thus much closer to Northern Lau. and a nice reach south to southern Lau.

Visit the fabulous Wailagilala Atoll 40 nm to the East of Matagi Island, its then a beam wind

Thurston's Palm (Pritchardia thurstoni) on mushroom islets in Fulaga © Carol Dunlop

to Vanuabalavu. From Nadi it's a 240 nm mile passage back to Vanuabalavu or from Suva 180 nm against the prevailing winds to get to Northern Lau – however, you will not regret the effort once you arrive!

Our usual route however for relocation from Nadi towards Lau is in from the inside route N Viti levu then down Vatuiara channel and away up to Taveuni leaving Makaogai to starboard and Namena to port.

If you have guests on board that would prefer not to make the windward passage, or your ship is constrained by a time factor, there are daily flights from Nadi to Taveuni or Savusavu, or special charters flights can be arranged on seaplane, helicopter or fixed wing to most areas.

There are small grass airstrips at Lomaloma, on the island of Vanua Balavu, and on Lakeba as mentioned before, but these are not always accessible if the weather is difficult.

Islands with good anchorages

Vanua Balavu

A long and winding island with uplifted coral in the north, and volcanic landforms in the south. A huge lagoon bounded by a 130-kilometer barrier reef encloses a 37-by-16-kilometer lagoon extending east. One could cruise the area, making use of the many excellent anchorages for seven days or more.

The island has a beautiful harbour that is popular with cruisers at the north end called the Bay of Islands (or Qilaqila in Fijian). This Bay is a recognized hurricane shelter. Although I think Maluca to the south has better good mud holding and is surrounded by mangroves. The Bay of Islands have sharp limestone rocks and a sand bottom so to drag anchor would be nasty!

The Bay of Islands are under the village Daliconi so its good to present your sevusevu to that village on the west coast just south east of Adavaci Island.

Adavaci Island is privately owned and a caretaker is in residence.

A great calm anchorage can be found in the fjord-like harbour at Nabavatu. On some chart plotters It is called soso which can be confusing. it is very secure and can accommodate a few dozen yachts. Here you will find the Nabavatu Plantation, which almost completely surrounds the harbour and offers lovely walks and spectacular scenic



Making magimagi for lashings on a new drua canoe. Photo: Carol Dunlop

views including westward over the Bay of Islands.

The owners Greg and Jean Lawlor are usually in residence and prefer that you don't enter their private residence compound close to the small village on top of the hill. With the huge increase in the numbers of yachts now cruising Lau their very private lifestyle is being somewhat invaded! Please be aware that it is a working plantation so please leave gates as you find them.

Cyclone Winston caused phenomenal damage to the Yacht Club and the whole of the plantation and it is yet to be re-built. The leaves are back on the trees and so to all visitors the magical place looks picture perfect.

Susui

The southern end of Vanuabalavu has an area similar to the Bay of Islands in the North. Many limestone islets and a lovely village still rebuilding after Cyclone Winston. Do visit the village to make a sevusevu and to see the school. If you are anchored away from the village

the elders will approach your yacht and request that you make sevusevu.

There are some great landlocked anchorages around this area. About 15ft on entrances and beautifully calm inside.

Lakeba

Population is about 2000, in 7 villages spread around the shore, with a road running right around. The island has a very basic shop and a clinic. There is a basic guest-house, but no other facilities for visitors or tourists.

This roughly circular volcanic island, about 6 miles across, is the political centre of Lau, indeed Lakeba, and Bau (on Viti Levu), were the two poles of power in traditional Fiji, and the tombs of several of the great leaders of Fiji are revered on the main village of Tubou's waterfront.

The channel through the reef off Tubou is very narrow (20m wide), is only roughly marked and very challenging.

Leading about half a mile inside the reef, the channel leads to a long jetty and past this to a narrow anchoring basin



Left: Children and making masi in Oneata. Photo: Carol Dunlop



New drua in the making at Fulaga. Right: Sail weaving for the new drua. Photo: Carol Dunlop

about 6m deep on sand. With care there could be room for two small cruising yachts, but only using great skill, good anchors and co-operation. The anchorage is calm, but difficult. It is recommended to take a dinghy ride in before entering with the yacht, and to enter only at slack water as currents are strong.

Not really recommended for any sizable super yacht; the pass is considered very dangerous at times.

The ship can lie off outside the reef at Tubou while the tender can be used to pick up and drop off guests via the dock and then to the small airport on the island (4 nm NW of Tubou). A local carrier can be hired to carry the

guests but this is a hard seat truck - no taxis here!

Aiwa (south of Lakeba)

A good clear entrance and a good anchor spot on the NW end if you need a rest. The upthrust limestone islets are full of sea snakes and so its not a highlight for shore activities.

Pods of humpback whales are often see in this area.

Wainiyabia

Another anchorage to the North of Tubou on the western side of Lakeba is called Wainiyabia (18 12S 178 50W). This affords an anchorage in winds between SSE and NNE close to the reef in about 60ft. There is a small boat landing here, through an

opening in the reef by the shore, close to the anchorage.

The leads here are a couple of beacons with a white triangle top mark, point up, on the shore and the course in is about 120T on the alignment of the beacons. Probably non existent now!

Oneata Island

To the South East of Lakaba is the island of Oneata which has several reasonable passes in good light. There is a nice village on the southern side and lovely anchorages on the Northern side.

Komo Island

Has a deep wide pass and a delightful village on the southern side of the island. The anchorage is normally mid island on the Northern side and guests can walk through to the village to the south; but with care a yacht can pass west about the island and anchor on the SW side of the island and islet.

Yagasa Cluster

Further south the Yagasa cluster affords some remote anchorages away from any village. There may be a few fishermen around but that's about all. Like many islands in Lau, the land is sharp, raised coral rock, and access

to the land is difficult: the anchorage is welcoming, but the land is not! The middle island in the cluster, Navutu-i-Loma, has a small, pretty beach on the Northern side. Small Yachts may anchor inside and larger yachts can anchor to the west of the islet in normal trades

Fulaga (Vulaga)

South again to Fulaga, this island consists of an oval rim of jungle-covered hills of raised coral, around a lagoon about 6 miles by 5 miles where the small sailing canoes (Waka) are still seen today. There is one 50m-wide pass into the lagoon, straight but challenging - and dangerous in bad weather or strong tides. Inside the lagoon are countless mushroom islets and some larger islands dotted with rare palms, countless anchorages over white sand, usually <10m deep. At least one anchorage could be considered hurricane shelter for a small boat. The pass is difficult, but can accommodate at least a 35m vessel with a draft of 3m. This cannot be attempted with a strong current running and the usual time to enter this pass is on slack water, which is usually at half tide.

Population is about 400 over three villages. One village (Naivindamu) lies on the W shore inside the lagoon, with good anchorage about 200m offshore allowing ready contact with the welcoming villagers. The other two villages lie close together on the southern edge, with two tracks leading from the lagoon to them. The head-village, Monacake, where one should present the sevusevu, has the school and clinic, and is about half an hour's easy walk over the hills. No airport, and

very infrequent ships make this a very isolated world.

In the past only about 4 yachts a year passed through; last year over 100 yachts swamped the lagoon and put great pressure on the villages. The original chief passed away as well and the new chief has had to step up and take measures to cope with this new influx of yachts.

The chief in the village Monacake will ask you for your permit. He will also ask for an anchoring fee; in 2019 this was \$50FJD. There should not be any requests from the other two villages.

While we were there the final touches were being made to a new drua that was due to be launched later this year. Everyone in the village had a job. Traditional rope (magimagi) was being made. Sails were being woven by the ladies; a great village community project.

Ogea Island

This is a really lovely island. The main island Ogea has a lovely protected anchorage on the western side. The pass is deep and uncomplicated and suitable for large vessels.

The diving in the outer pass is spectacular. Fishing outside is productive, and the chief was pleased when we gave



Meke practice in Ogea. Photo: Carol Dunlop

the village a huge saqa. At our sevusevu we asked permission to fish which is a must.

A tender tour at HW will take you through a myriad of islets leading you through from the west to the centre of the island where the village stands. A village visit has to be made just before HW in order to land on the waterfront. The chief is charming; the school put on a very special meke for us. We took school supplies. The village was engaged in making wood carvings and especially tanoas made of the hard wood vesi.

Ogea Driki is also a great anchor spot with a small but lovely beach. In comparison to Fulaga this island has a lot going for it.

Kabara Island

Just NW of Fulaga lies the island of Kabara which is famous for its handicrafts and carvings. They are especially renowned for the huge kava bowls that are sent to Suva to be sold. Anchorage is found off the village on the NW side.

In order to avoid the bommies close to the shore anchorage is in about 80 ft.

The main village Naikaleyaga is full of lovely trees and breadfruit with plenty of shade to walk around to see the church, handicraft market, and the school, post office and medical Centre, which serves more than 400 people from the four villages on the island.

Many carved handicrafts are available; although the island is being stripped of the vesi trees which take up to 80 years to grow.

Vuaqava Island close by has been uninhabited since it suffered a cholera outbreak in the 1860s, when the sick were dragged into caves and left



Weaving for the new drua in Fulaga. © Carol Dunlop



Amazing craftpeople of Naikeleyaga village in Kabara. Photo: Carol Dunlop

to die, and villagers moved to nearby Kabara Island. But their descendants still return to fish, and to guide those of us who choose to go on an hour-long hike through jungle to see the island's large saltwater lake and the skeleton-riddled caves. Permission from Suva is needed to visit this island and cannot be given by the village. A run with the wind into the Yasyasa Moala Group overnight is good with the usual prevailing easterly quadrant winds. The group is comprised of three islands - Moala, Totoya and Matuku. All these islands are reputed to be excellent surf spots in the right conditions.

Moala

The island is of volcanic origin; the summit of 'Delai Moala' is 468m high in the NW part. A barrier reef encircles the island, line up Double Hill on a bearing of 080T which leads you through the pass into the lagoon. NE Point bearing 167T leads to an open roadstead (Herald Roadstead) or approximately 0.7nm off the Northern part of the island on this alignment turn onto the leads bearing 189T.

Nairoi, situated at the NE end is the principal village of the island and your sevusevu needs to be carried out here. Anchorage

can be found to the west of Observatory rocks. Its quite a walk from the dinghy landing to the west of the village through to the school and to make the sevusevu so not ideal in the midday sun! Another anchorage is via Daveta-i-Cakova. There are several other anchorages around the island but these are best in normal prevailing easterlies. There is an airstrip on the island.

Totoya

The island is about 5 miles wide, being the rim of a volcano with the crater open to the south, and a barrier reef around most coasts. The crater is accessible through a clear pass on the west side, and by a passage inside the reef. Anchorage in the crater is far from ideal, and very deep (20m+). Anchorage on the N coast is possible, open but calm in S winds. The usual anchorage is inside the pass on the western side in Herald sound.

Matuku

This is a beautiful, verdant, high volcanic island, with its crater open to the west through a wide, clear pass. There is an excellent sheltered anchorage, 10 - 15m over mud inside the crater off the village of Lomati. Other deeper, less sheltered anchorages are in the channel

inside the pass, to the north of the main channel (17m over sand), or south of the main channel, amongst coral (6m over sand). There are more marginal anchorages inside some narrow passes on other coasts. Seven villages are spread around the coasts, with total population about 800. No airport, only occasional shipping and yachts (mostly surf and dive charters). The main village is Yaroi, on the NW coast, with a clinic and school. Anchorage is possible off another delightful village, Makadru, south of the pass.

Over the past few years Matuku and to a lesser extent Moala and Totoya have been explored for excellent surfing opportunities. You would be sure to have a clear go at the breaks!

Weather

The region is dominated by the SE trade winds, which are usually from Force 3 - and mostly 5. Quite frequently these bring occasional showers. When fronts pass through heavy showers and rain are more frequent, making navigation in lagoons a little tricky. June, July and August can be very boisterous sailing between the Islands.

Sevusevu

To the south of Vanuabalavu and into Southern Lau it seems that every visit has to be preceded by a sevusevu the presentation of yagona correctly bundled. This is a very expensive commodity now in Fiji but is an essential part of visiting these remote islands. School books; reading books; medical supplies are greatly valued. As is the odd rugby ball! You will be asked for your cruising permit when you go ashore so it pays to make a bunch of photocopies and keep the original on the boat. ■

The Lau Group of Islands

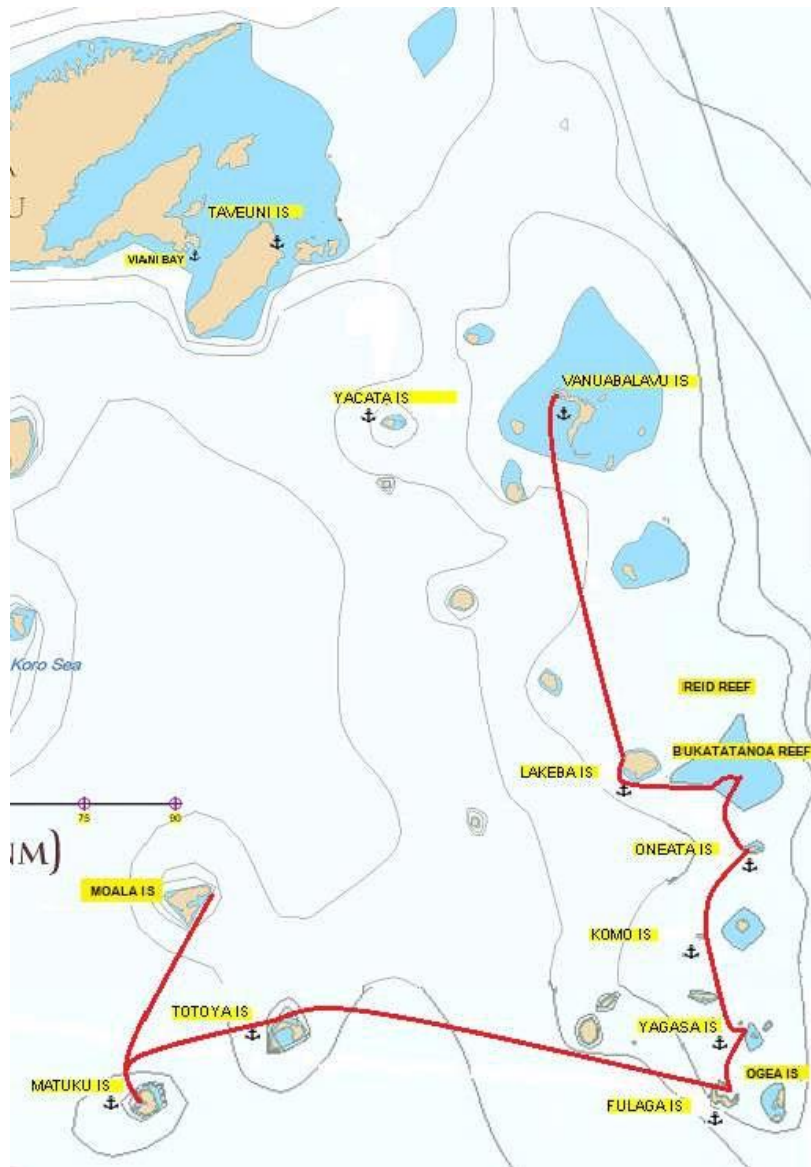
Forbes Magazine has listed the Lau group of islands as one of the top 12 World's Most Beautiful Places. Forbes chose the Lau Archipelago for its "mind-blowing array of marine life and a gentle, carefree vibe."

The Lau Group of islands are the least visited and most remote islands in Fiji. The culture and traditions have been preserved along with a fascinating history where the chiefs of Lau ruled most of Fiji. The Lau islands have a unique Geology made up of limestone that has been eroded by the elements into dramatic islets and arches located inside sheltered lagoons.

The Lau Group will provide a voyage of adventure of discovery for the yachtsman. The people of Lau are welcoming and friendly. Many villages are excited at the sight of visiting yachts and the children eagerly await your arrival on the beach. Visitors are afforded a genuine South Pacific welcome and lead through the village to the chief's hut where elders will gather for the traditional welcome ceremony "Sevusevu".

Many of the Lau islands are also uninhabited and you can experience the pristine natural beauty of these islands.





Vanua Balavu (Exploring Isles)

This very beautiful and unique island offers many great anchorages. The most spectacular of which is in the Bay of Islands. Located in NW part of the lagoon this area is covered with limestone islands and islets that have been carved by the elements into arches, caves and overhangs, all covered with thick vegetation. The geology is the same as the famous Palau Lagoon in Micronesia.

The area offers some very well protected inlets that are so deep you can tie up to the trees ashore

Inland there is a sacred lake where every few years a ceremony performed by a bete (Fijian traditional priest) that mysteriously causes all the fish in the lake to float up to the surface where they are collected for food. There is an old plantation on the island (Namavatu) this can be explored on foot and there are some great walks with good views in the area.



The Southern western end of the island also offers a beautiful anchorage that provides a dramatic colour contrast between the lush forest of the island, the sandy bottom and the large reef flats that extend to the reef drop off.

From this anchorage you can explore the Qaranilaca limestone sea cave at the

southernmost tip of Vanuabalavu adjacent to Namalata Island. This cave was excavated and was shown to have been used by humans over 1000 years ago.

The village of Delaconi in the NW is the chiefly village of this island and should be visited first to present your Kava (Sevusevu) to the Chief.

There is no tourism on this island and visitors will experience traditional Fijian culture.



Islands in Vanuabalavu



Yacata

This rarely visited island has a large cave where the bones of Tongan warriors and the remains of a war canoe were hidden after a failed Tongan raid.



Lakeba

This is the island is where the Tui Nayan (Chief of all the Lau Islands) resides. Lakeba is the traditional political power base where invading Tongan warlords also based themselves.





Lakeba has the only sealed airstrip in the Lau Group. Guests can fly in here to start a cruise.

Visit ashore to see the village of Tubou and present you Kava to the Chief. This village contains many historical sites.

Take a stroll on one of the uninhabited beaches and a swim in the warm Fijian waters.

Endemic to Lau

Oneata Island

This low lying island is surrounded by a large lagoon. There is plenty of smooth water and space for Kite surfing.

On the island there are two villages Waiqori and Dakuiloa. Waiqori is the Chiefly Village where you will need to present your Sevusevu (gift of Kava) to the Tui Oneata (Chief of Oneata).

Oneata has a deep water pass in the NW named Middle Passage that allows entry to the lagoon. Good anchorage is found in the uninhabited bays on the NW side of the island. From here it is tender ride to the villages on the South side of the island.

Oneata Island apart from being the first island to have lasting contact with Europeans was also the first place in 1830 that missionaries arrived.

There is good snorkelling and diving in the passes and lagoon. A pleasant walk (30 mins) can be taken along the track that links both villages.



Take a stroll on one of the uninhabited beaches and a swim in the warm Fijian waters.



Beach at Oneata

Komo

Komo has an easily accessible lagoon which is entered through the “West Pass” on the NW side of the Lagoon. The lagoon is clear of Coral Heads once you are inside. There is a good anchorage sheltered from the trade winds on the North side of the island where the beaches are pristine. There is one village called Moce on the SE island. The land is flat and there are some nice walks across the island.



Komo Island

Yagasa Group

This uninhabited group of 4 islets provides some great exploring and beachcombing on beaches that rarely visited by people. The lagoon has good diving and snorkeling. The anchorage is good and the lagoon is easy to access.



Fulaga

This is the most unique and beautiful of the Southern Lau islands. Entry into the lagoon is through the pass in the NE side of the outer reef. Once inside the lagoon there is a spectacular array of Limestone islands and arches of all sizes are dotted throughout.



The People of Fulaga are known for excellent wood carvings and canoe building. They have the best traditional Kava bowls "Tanoa" that the Kava drink is prepared in.

There is a very good drift dive in the Fulaga Passage with lots of pelagic species to be seen at the entrance.



Fulaga Lagoon

Ogea Levu

The people of Ogea are known for their happy and carefree approach to life. The lagoon is a rich fishing ground around both their islands which are surrounded by magnificent reefs. The village is located in the large bay at the south end of the island. This bay contains many small islets and is great to explore by tender.



Totoya

This very unique horse shoe shaped island has a lagoon within a lagoon. The island is an ancient volcano and the creator has sunk leaving a nearly land locked inner lagoon.

Legend goes that when the first chief to discover the island and saw it from afar he said that it is "Totoka" meaning beautiful which is how the name Totoya was derived.

There are 2 big well charted passes through the outer reef one in the north and the other in the West. Yachts can then make their way round into Totoya Bay (the inner Lagoon) in the center of the horse shoe. This bay provides a deep water anchorage and protection from all wide directions.

The Chiefly village of Tovo should be visited first to present your gift of Kava to the high chief. The Village will put on a traditional Meke (dance) for their rare visitors.

The island offers some great exploring and has many unspoiled and untouched white sandy beaches. There is good diving in the many small passes through the outer reefs.

Moala

This is the highest island in Southern Lau and has the biggest population of 3000 people. The island was originally volcanic and is very fertile with the farming of Cassava, kumala (sweet Potato), and yams on the hillsides. Large dalo plantations are found in the waterlogged valleys. Moala has an airstrip which can be used by charter aircraft for guest transfers or provisioning.



There are some nice walks and great views from the top of the hill. In the interior there are 2 small crater lakes that can be hiked to. Diving and snorkeling is good on the outer reefs.





Matuku

This island is a high volcanic island and is known for its large deep-water natural harbor which can be entered through the pass on the west cost of the island.

Matuku is the only island in Lau that was not invaded by the Tongans and the people of Matuku do not wear Masi (type of dress made from the bark of the Mulberry Tree) that is commonly worn elsewhere in the Lau Group.





This island catches the Southern Ocean swells and is known for its great off the beaten track surfing.

Air Transfers

There are 4 serviceable airstrips in the Lau Group and these can be accessed by Twin Otter and Bandeirante aircraft. Helicopter access is also possible.

Village Etiquette

No hats, sunglasses or revealing clothing can be worn in the Villages. The best way to dress for both males and females is to wear the traditional Sulu (or Sarong) with a sleeved shirt or T-shirt. The villages own the fishing rights and it is their lively hood. Ask the village if you want to fish and they can assist you with this.

Kava

Present your gift of Kava roots (Sevusevu) to the village before engaging in other activities.

Gifts

Gifts are welcome and should be shared as much as possible within the village. Clothes, school books, pens/pencils, sweets for children etc... are best. Any cash donations should be given to the village fund, school fund or other recognized community project.

Alcohol is strictly Taboo (forbidden) in all the Lau villages and should not be offered or landed ashore.