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Agritourism: A delicious first in the Solomons

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Gus Kraus MBE
CEO Solomon Airlines
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Out and About

PEACE MARATHON RUNNING UP FAST

The Solomon Islands Peace Marathon is fast approaching, an event which is set to be an athletic precursor to the Pacific Games in November.

On June 26, around 1,000 runners are set to take the starting line for the marathon, which returned last year in a half-marathon format after a COVID-enforced break. This year, the event is even bigger with the re-introduction of the gruelling 42.2km full marathon.

Martin Faeni won last year’s men’s half-marathon event in a time of 1.15:47 and Diana Matekali the women’s in 1.29:42, and come late-June both of these locals are expected to again be tough to beat.

There are also 2km, 5km, and 10km events to go with the marathon events, with community fun and laughs at the forefront of the event quite as much as elite performance.

Supporting health and fitness for both locals and visitors alike is seen as a key element to continuing to build on a tourism industry already built on outdoor action. Water-based activities like scuba diving, surfing, swimming and snorkelling are already popular among locals and visitors alike, and the marathon shapes as another avenue for the Solomons to build on its growing reputation as a health and wellness destination — only this one is on the ground. Wellness-focused travel has been a key trend in the global tourism sector for some time but more specifically, marathon tourism is a real thing and a growing market. The Solomon Islands are an ideal place to stage a marathon, given the stunning landscapes, consistent weather and atmospheric buzz created by locals.

Solomon Airlines will once again be sponsoring the event, including the SI$3,000 prize to the winners of the full-marathon event.

Other supporters of the Peace Marathon include Solomon Ports, Solomon Telekom, Solomon Power, South Pacific Oil, Solomon Island National University (SINU), The Heritage Park Hotel, Solomon Island Breweries and Soltuna.

TORQUET CONTINUES TO BOUNCE BACK, ACCORDING TO STATISTICS

The Solomon Islands tourism industry continues to show signs of a strong recovery, following the release of visitor statistics for the fourth quarter of 2022.

A total of 4,207 international visitors travelled through Honiara International Airport from October – December 2022, representing a 69% increase over the total recorded for the previous quarter.

Australians once again made up the bulk of the numbers with the 1,775 Aussie visitors an increase of 71% over from the figure recorded across Q3, and accounting for 42% of the Q4 total.

“We’d been coming here for about five years before the pandemic,” said Craig from Brisbane, who Fly Solomons spoke to in the departure lounge en route to Honiara recently.

“It’s great we can come here again and not worry about anything. There’s a big group of families that we go with, since the kids have been pretty young. Family trips do take a bit of organising, and we felt confident enough this time that we’d be right.

“I’ll take the young fella out on a boat to see what we can catch, the girls love getting in the water, it’s the sort of place where there’s something for everyone.”

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FELLOWSHIP RECOGNITION FOR SOLOMONS WOMAN

Solomon Islander and social entrepreneur Millicent Barty continues to go from strength to strength, having recently been awarded a prestigious fellowship to the Emerson Collective.

An Emerson fellowship is designed to encourage individuals of exceptional talent and creativity to advance bold new projects in education, immigration, the environment, social justice, media, and health.

Barty, who has previously met with the likes of former U.S. President Barack Obama as an Obama Foundation Scholar, and Queen Elizabeth II, has turned her area of focus to climate change. As a Kastom Keeper of traditional culture, Barty is using a collective and traditional approach to fighting a new issue.

“I’m so incredibly blessed to be elevating the traditional perspectives of our home in the climate actions space whilst tackling loss and damage of culture through Kastom Keepers,” she said in a statement after receiving the fellowship.

“I am so humbled and thrilled to join the climate cohort of the Emerson Collective, along with other leaders from across disciplines, we are pivoting to an environment-focused body of work that illuminates our collective pathway to a healthier planet.”

You can follow Barty on Twitter at @millicent_barty.
Conveniently positioned centrally within the South Pacific and embedded deeply in World War Two history and Melanesian culture, Honiara is not only the capital of the Solomon Islands, but a great base for travellers visiting the South Pacific.

As well as this, there are a number of excellent food and drink options throughout the city, and modern facilities available for every kind of traveller.

Check out our map for information on where to go in the capital.
The Girls Go Surfing program launched recently in the Solomon Islands’ Western Province, an initiative which is helping to turn the tables on surf’s history as a male dominated sport.

On April 6th, the program was launched at Titiana beach, Gizo, Western Province, paving the way for a more inclusive surf culture and promoting gender equality in the country. Part of the Solomon Islands’ Surf Sisters initiative, the program aims to empower young women and girls, and foster strong communities, through surfing.

With the support of local and international organizations and brands, the program is making waves in the Solomon Islands. A strong crowd, mostly between the ages of 12 and 21, participated in the first session. The six-hour session covered topics such as surf confidence, mindset, and awareness in the water. The girls were provided with surfboards and sponsor swimwear from Salt Gypsy and were given gift bags to take home, but they also took with them a sense of camaraderie and excitement for the sport.

Titiana is the ideal place for a beginner to hone their craft, a gentle right-hander breaking over a deep reef. In sunny weather, the girls took on the challenges of the ocean, and a solid set of waves, while acknowledging the waves in their lives and the challenges of societal norms.

“It was amazing to be out there, sharing the experience with other women and girls who were just as excited as I was,” said young surfer Leah.

“Having access to the boards and coaches made all the difference, and I feel like I learned so much from the program. I can’t wait for the next session to connect with the other female surfers in my community and continue to grow as a surfer.”

The Girls Go Surfing program is a turning point for women’s surfing in the region and the success of the launch will see it become a regular fixture on the Western Province calendar, bringing surfers together once a month. Local girls from nearby villages have also joined the program, creating a community of support, both in and out of the water.

Zantia and Shanon grew up in a charming coastal village where the sound of the sea was a daily wake-up call, but despite their love for the water, they never had the opportunity to experience it firsthand.

The program aims to empower young women and girls, and foster strong communities, through surfing.

Opposite: The Girls Go Surfing program is yet another step forward for surfing in the Solomon Islands. Below: Almost 20 participants turned out for the launch of the initiative, ranging from 12 to 21 years old.
“The Girls Go Surfing program has given us that chance, and it was so much fun! It was really cool to be out there with all the other girls, and I felt so empowered to be trying something new,” said Shanon.

“I have always been interested in surfing, but I never had the chance to try it before,” added Zantia.

Nagarita Baea is the Girls Go Surfing women’s surfing representative from Western Solomons Surf Association (WSSA).

“The Girls Go Surfing program is about promoting equal opportunity, having fun, and dropping judgment, with the belief that the best surfer is the one having the most fun,” she said.

“We are trying to empower women and promote gender equality through Solomon Islands Surf Sisters and transcend the principles of our platform and programs to have ripple effects on women’s empowerment and participation in other areas of societies, using surfing as a vehicle for change.”

With strong swell, a number of consistent reef breaks and an array of stunning beaches, the Solomon Islands have long been seen as a potential surf paradise. Local participation is on the rise, and there are a number of surf camps and operators who can show you the best waves – both on and off-shore.

The program’s launch has been met with excitement from both participants and local representatives, with male surfers also showing their support for a more inclusive surf culture.

The initiative is an extension from the Western Solomons Surf Association, a network not only aiming to promote surfing, but to educate on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, the importance of a healthy ocean and to provide opportunities for the development of local communities.

Promoting equal opportunity, having fun, and dropping judgment, with the belief that the best surfer is the one having the most fun.
When the Fly Solomons Magazine hits the seats of Solomon Airlines flights on May 1, there will be 184 days until the XVII Pacific Games kicks off in Honiara.

Since 1963, when the Games were first held in Suva, Fiji, they have represented not only the pinnacle of athletic competition around the Pacific, but a chance for friendships to be forged and an already close region to become even closer.

The Solomon Islands become the seventh country to host the event, with around 10,000 athletes, officials and visitors expected to hit Honiara’s streets. The capital has been a hive of activity in recent times with the building of stadia, the promotion of clean, green games and athletic practice.

Martin Rara is the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Games, and Vice-Chairman of the National Hosting Authority (NHA), the body which oversees the various committees tasked to help deliver the Games. Rara is steeped in athletic competition in the Solomon Islands, given he also serves as President of the National Olympic Committee of Solomon Islands (NOCISI) which is the Pacific Games Association (PGA), responsible for selection of Team Solomon Islands.

If anyone knows how the Games are shaping up, it’s Martin. We sat down with him to get an idea of how things are looking ahead of November.

Fly Solomons: Tell us about how preparation is coming along in terms of construction and building of stadia, athlete housing etc.

Chairman of Games Organising Committee (GOC) Martin Rara: Preparations for the 2023 Pacific Games is on track. The facilities will be completed and handed to the National Hosting Authority (NHA) in August and then later in October to the Games Organizing Committee (GOC), to give ample time for GOC to make ready the venues for the Games. The athletes’ village is coming on really well also. Overall, everything is all on schedule and Solomon Islands will be ready to deliver the Sol2023 Pacific Games.

FS: Are there any events and sporting events worldwide that you have studied, and taken inspiration from, in the planning of the 2023 Pacific Games?

MR: Prior to the appointments of the Committees for the Games, we have engaged a taskforce to visit and look at the different models that were used and done in previous hosts of the Pacific Games. The team had a look at the 2015 Pacific Games, 2017 Pacific Mini Games and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. From visiting and talking to the various committees involved in these Games, it has helped us setup the 2003 Pacific Games.
FS: Do you think there is a specific Solomon Islands flavour that can be brought to the Games, that will distinguish it from previous Pacific Games?

MR: The last time Solomon Islands held a sporting event close to this magnitude was back in 1981 — the Pacific Mini Games held in Honiara. This year (2023)’s Pacific Games will be even bigger, and will be the first major regional event held since the COVID global pandemic. The first Pacific Games Solomon Islands will have hosted. We have brand new state-of-the-art sports facilities that will be used for the first time at Games time and provide us a legacy and the opportunity for hosting future events and competitions. We are expecting and anticipating mass participation from both athletes, visitors and the Solomon Islands public. We are expecting 5,000 plus athletes and officials and up to 8,000 plus visitors (the biggest Solomon Islands will have ever seen). We are very confident of delivering a uniquely successful Sol2023 Pacific Games.

FS: What has been the biggest challenge so far?

MR: The biggest challenge now is the weather we are experiencing in the capital at the moment that has affected our progress, otherwise we still have time on our side and as far as I am concerned, all preparations are on track and on schedule.

FS: What is the feeling around Honiara and the wider Solomon Islands for the Games?

MR: The general feeling of excitement and anticipation both in Honiara and in the provinces is centered around being hosts of the Pacific Games. Thanks to ‘Solo’, the official Games Mascot and the GOC’s Community Engagement Program, people are now well aware and anticipating the Games. Other programs that are on and will be rolled out include; The Ambassadors program (where we have engaged 10 both former and current athletes) going out to the provinces to share their experiences of the pathways that aspiring athletes can dream and work towards achieving, and also the Games Baton Relay which will visit some of the most eye-attracting locations and sites throughout Solomon Islands — all of which contribute to spreading the Games message and getting Solomon Islands (event to the village level) ready for the Games.

FS: What are you most looking forward to, as part of the Games?

MR: The Opening Ceremony is what I most look forward to. We have a great very dedicated team that’s planning and organizing it — we are confident of giving the best Opening to the Games we can possibly give. Apart from that I am also looking forward to the opening of the Sports facilities.

Above all, I very much look forward to seeing our own athletes compete and perform well in front of the home crowd.

FS: How many people is it estimated will come to the Solomon Islands for the Games?

MR: Athletes and officials, we are expecting more than 5,000 plus, visitors almost 8,000 plus — so there will be more than 10,000 additional people within Honiara during the two weeks of the Games. Around 3,000 volunteers will be required.

FS: Is there a particular event or athlete you, personally, are looking forward to watching?

MR: Weightlifting, Track and Field, Bodybuilding, Boxing, Football are just some of the sports that I personally look forward to.

My take on it? The strength of our team is in the individual events and therefore, we have so much hope for them and we will be cheering for them come Sol2023 Pacific Games.
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Set against the wider theatre of World War Two, the Solomon Islands emerged as a surprising, but critical battleground during the Pacific War, a campaign which played a major role in the shift of power towards allied forces.

Moving around Honiara, history is in front of your eyes. We pick out five absolute must-visit World War Two experiences in the Solomons’ capital.

1. **VILU WAR MUSEUM**

   A simple sign out the front of a long, winding driveway, with long grass either side, is all there is to indicate that this is not just any old plot of land; it is Vilu War Museum, an eerie walk through history in the middle of the jungle, about 12km west of Honiara.

   The museum has been painstakingly curated by locals, collecting remnants from the war over the last few decades and piecing them together. Set amongst dense forest and the call of coucals, a walk through Vilu will reveal aircraft, weapons, equipment, and personal items used by both Allied and Japanese forces during the war. An American Douglas SBD Dauntless aircraft is in surprisingly good condition considering the life it’s had, as are the row of cannons used by the Japanese that greet you near the entrance.

   Lenggakiki, Solomon Islands — Ph (677) 87 77287

2. **GUADALCANAL AMERICAN MEMORIAL**

   Located on Skyline Ridge, overlooking the city of Honiara, America’s memorial to the Pacific War commemorates the sacrifices made by the US Marines during the Guadalcanal campaign, a turning point in World War Two.

   The memorial includes a chapel, a museum, and a peaceful garden that provides visitors with an opportunity for quiet reflection. It also exhibits key moments in the Guadalcanal campaign, acknowledging the twists and turns that took place throughout the six-month long battle.

Exploring the Solomons’ capital is a like being in a captivating Netflix war documentary, if you know where to look.
There is a surreal feeling that greets those who swim alongside the remains aircraft and boats that were sunk at Bonegi Beach, not far from Honiara. A B-17 Flying Fortress bomber lies next to a variety of marine life, including colourful fish and coral, as well as a number of Japanese shipwrecks which are popular spots for locals, offering easy diving and snorkelling. There can’t be many more memorable ways to explore a site of historical significance, which is located on this picturesque, palm-tree lined beach. Diving, swimming and snorkelling are all possible at Bonegi.

The shipwrecks start with Hirokawa Maru — or B1 — a 20-minute drive west of central Honiara.

The USS Aaron Ward lived a brief, but dramatic life as a destroyer ship for the Allied Forces between 1942 and 1943, when it was brought down by three Japanese planes in a stretch of water known as Iron Bottom Sound. It wasn’t until 1994 that a team of divers located the ship, about 60-70 metres deep, and it is now a site for more experienced divers to take on. Numerous naval battles were fought along Iron Bottom Sound and as a result, dozens of sunken warships and aircraft lie dormant in the area.

For more information on diving in the Solomon Islands, contact Tourism Solomons: visitsolomons.com.sb
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At 4pm on April 30, 2000, Captain Oliver Kreuss hit an uncharted reef while navigating the MS World Discoverer and her 190 passengers through the Sandfly Passage between Nggela Sule Island and Mbokonimbeti Island. In an effort to ensure the passengers’ safe evacuation and enable a potential salvation of the now sinking ship, Captain Kreuss steered her into the calm shallow waters of Roderick Bay.

With the damage extensive and the owners eventually going bankrupt, the MS World Discoverer was left to the mercy of the ocean. But, as the old saying goes, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure and with the ingenuity of a local villager, that wreck is now one of the best travel experiences within a couple of hours of Honiara.

On a clear day Savo Island and Nggela Sule Island are clearly visible from the shoreline of Honiara, and on a clear night you can even catch a glimpse of the lights of the former capital of the British Solomon Islands, Tulagi in the distance. Today is not very clear, and we can barely see the end of the pier leading out from the shores of Point Cruz Yacht Club where I meet Matthew and Tome, my transport away from the hustle and bustle of Honiara and across Iron Bottom Sound to the peaceful Roderick Bay Bungalows, home to the wreck of the MS World Discoverer.
What should take a comfortable hour and half turns into nearly three hours as we navigate the waves, wind and lack of visibility. I’m lashed by the rain as we bounce over the swell, smiling broadly at Matthew driving the boat while Tome lies asleep beneath a tarpaulin. My only real worry is when Matthew asks if I have GPS on my phone...

The Solomons is all about adventure and this is no exception. Where else in the world can you zipline off a shipwreck into open water?

Patrick tells me the story of how, once the World Discoverer was deemed unsalvageable, local villagers made use of what they could. This is therefore why there’s a house in the village with the most excellent, ship-style windows. Whatever the reason it has been a windfall for Patrick and his family. The cruise companies pay handsomely for their passengers to spend time around the wreck and Patrick and his family have set up myriad of experiences for them. There are local village visits, a hike to the aforementioned peak that Patrick tells me has some of the best views in the region. There’s snorkelling around the wreck and the reefs nearby and you can even head out for a fish and exploration of the passage. Exploring the wreck herself has been off limits for awhile now with rust and decay making it quite dangerous to climb around in. It hasn’t however stopped
Only, there are no Oompa Loompas or Slugworths here — just a humble chocolate maker by the name of Grace, who is quietly making waves in the chocolate industry at home and abroad.

Amazing Grace Boutique Cocoa and Garden Tours are the latest addition to Solomons Grandmother Grace Fekau’s cocoa business, which has gone from strength to strength over the past 20 years. Fekau initially begun harvesting the abundant cocoa plants on her property as a means of income when her husband passed away in the 1990s. She now runs the farm by hand with two other women, and makes the all-natural chocolate herself.

“I like how I make it,” Fekau told Fly Solomons when asked why she doesn’t seek any help for the laborious process. “We don’t have any special machines here, we just do it all with our hands and I think it’s better this way.”

“I like seeing people’s faces when they try the chocolate because everyone seems to enjoy eating it, and it’s very healthy for you.”

While ad hoc tours have taken place on a sporadic basis in the past, Fekau’s collaboration with the Australian-backed Strongim Bisnis program has seen the development of a genuine and unique agritourism experience that is set to become a must do for foodies and international travellers to the Solomon Islands.

The farm is located about 20 minutes north of Honiara, next to the picturesque Tenaru Beach. Black sand and palm trees blend seamlessly into a colourful garden and surrounding cocoa farm, with a modern structure in the middle serving as the fulcrum for tours. When Fly Solomons visited we were treated to not only a demonstration of chocolate making, but several taste tests which included a delicious chocolate tea.

It’s the Solomon Islands equivalent of Willy Wonka’s golden ticket.
The tours see cocoa farming take place in front of their eyes, with traditional food and chocolate demonstrations, and a stroll through what is a genuinely stunning part of the world. There’s also the opportunity to purchase a number of cocoa and cacao-based products to take home.

While chocolate is seen as a ‘sometimes food’, Fekau’s approach means that her products, as with all cocoa and cacao products in the Solomon Islands, are completely organic and actually pretty healthy for you.

Tours opened to the public in early-March, and are limited to a maximum of 25 people per session. Amazing Grace’s first official tour hosted members of the Solomon Islands Government, representatives of diplomatic corporations, Solomon Islands Tourism Board, and key tourism and private sector stakeholders.

“I want to acknowledge Grace’s significant achievements,” said Australian High Commissioner, Rod Hilton who was present for the launch of the tours.

“Creating value-added products in Solomon Islands creates more jobs and more economic opportunity for Solomon Islanders. Mrs Fekau is leading the effort to make this shift to value-added products for her community.”

“A big priority for Australia is working with Solomon Islands to strengthen our economic partnership by delivering jobs and economic growth for Solomon Islanders.”

There is significant potential to boost rural economies through the link between tourism and agriculture — and help resilience in to build sustainable development in both. The tours are believed to be the first example of agritourism in the Solomon Islands, a branch of tourism which is continuing to increase in popularity across the planet.

Tours of Amazing Grace can be organised by calling Strongim Bisnis on (677) 799 3290. You can also contact Amazing Grace directly at (677) 786 8429, or on email at kokoatours@amazinggrace.com.sb
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- **Range**: 2040 km
- **Cruising Speed**: 490 km/h
- **Seating capacity**: 36
- **Crew**: 3 crew including 1 cabin crew
- **Current Routes:** Honiara, Munda, Gizo; Kirakira, Santa Cruz

**Twin Otter**

- **Length**: 15.77 m
- **Wing Span**: 19.81 m
- **Range**: 1350 km
- **Cruising Speed**: 338 km/h
- **Seating capacity**: 16
- **Crew**: 2
- **Current Routes:** All airports in the Solomon Islands

**Twin Otter H4-SIC**

- **Length**: 15.8 m
- **Wing Span**: 19.8 m
- **Range**: 1540 km
- **Cruising Speed**: 296 km/h
- **Seating capacity**: 19
- **Crew**: 2
- **Current Routes:** All airports in the Solomon Islands

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Phone: (679) 6722831
Fax: (679) 6722140
Email: solomon@connect.com.fj

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**Emergency Exits**

- Toilets
- Galleys
- Belana Club

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**Solomon Airlines Contact Information**
RECOGNISING OUR WOMEN ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

Solomon Airlines has marked International Women’s Day by proudly highlighting the diverse achievements of the airline’s female staff.

The national carrier invited female representatives from various departments to take part in a public parade in Honiara on March 8, to celebrate and recognise the achievements of Solomon Islands women.

The parade and ongoing International Women’s Day celebrations highlight this year’s IWD theme of ‘Equal opportunities/equal access to digital technology’.

“We were proud to celebrate and to stand with other Solomon Islands women to highlight equality and also the important subject of equitable access to digital technology,” said Solomon Airlines Human Resources Manager, Mrs Monica Utukana.

“It’s time that we truly embrace equity in Solomon islands to ensure that women are fairly recognised in all areas, including in the home, in the community and in the workplace place,” she said.

International Women’s Day (IWD) is a global day observed annually on 8th March, to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity and equal opportunity.

MILESTONE

ANNOUNCEMENT

ADJUSTING PORT VILA FLIGHTS TO ENHANCE REGIONAL AIRLINE CONNECTIVITY

Solomon Airlines is leading a new phase of regional airline co-operation between Pacific Islands carriers, to improve air access and flight connectivity between Pacific nations.

“We are seeing renewed and more comprehensive partnerships with our neighbouring Pacific Islands and other national carriers in our region, and as such we can maximise opportunities together,” said CEO of Solomon Airlines Mr Gus Kraus.

“Regional connectivity is not easy to achieve, and requires longer term commitments, however it is very beneficial for our collective customers and brings operational efficiencies for airlines,” he said.

Among the changes effective from 25 March until 28 October 2023, Solomon Airlines Port Vila services will shift from weekend operations to mid-week departures. The timings are planned to enable same day connections from Port Vila via Honiara to Port Moresby and onwards to other international destinations.

Honiara to Port Vila flights depart at the new time of 2.20pm Tuesdays as IE722 arriving in Port Vila 4.20pm. Port Vila to Honiara will depart as IE723 on Wednesdays at 8.15am arriving in Honiara 10.15am.

Adjustments have been made to the timing of flight IE706 operating between Honiara and Brisbane on Wednesdays and Sundays, to now depart Honiara at 11.15am arriving Brisbane at 1.30pm allowing for improved connectivity via the airline’s Brisbane hub. Domestic schedules to Honiara on these days will also be adjusted, to ensure connections are maintained to the retimed Honiara to Brisbane services.

Services to and from Fiji will also be refined, with the introduction of Saturday direct flights between Honiara and Nadi with flight IE702 departing at 2.20pm, arriving Nadi at 6.15pm. Nadi to Honiara direct flight IE703 will operate on Sundays departing Nadi at 8.15am arriving Honiara at 10.15am.

For booking assistance, call Solomon Airlines Reservations on 377 (local Solomon Islands call), (677) 23506 or (61) 7 3860 5883, or email reservations@flysolomons.com

January 2024

ANNOUNCEMENT

RELAUNCH OF POPULAR IUMI TUGEDA HOLIDAYS

Solomon Airlines recently confirmed the relaunching of the popular Iumi Tugeda Holidays program, together with industry partners and tour operators, to offer a new range of attractive and affordable holiday packages across the provinces.

In collaboration with Tourism Solomons and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the national carrier has recommenced the joint-venture initiative to support local tourism operators as part of post-pandemic tourism recovery efforts.

Flight and accommodation packages from the outer Provinces to Guadalcanal are planned for those wanting to travel to Honiara, and a range of accommodation-only offers in Guadalcanal and Central will be available for booking via Tourism Solomons.

“We are very excited to again be part of Solomon Islands largest ever domestic tourism initiative,” said Solomon Airlines CEO Gus Kraus.

“Iumi Tugeda Holidays benefits all, creating a platform to grow the local economy through our accommodation providers and tourism operators, as well as offering our domestic market new opportunities to explore our own backyard through very attractive holiday packages” he said.

Prior to the impact of COVID and suspension of all domestic passenger flights from Honiara, iumi Tugeda Holidays had recorded its highest ever volumes of travellers, with hundreds of Solomon Islanders taking the opportunity to see new parts of the country.

For further information or to book iumi Tugeda Holidays visit flysolomons.com/iumitugeda, call (677) 36362 or email holidays@flysolomons.com

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Climate
Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28°C (82.4°F). April to November tends to be drier and November to April wetter.

What to wear
Light and casual… take it easy!

Health
Malaria can be a problem. Take anti-malarial medication a week before arrival, once a week during your stay, and for four weeks after departure. Consult your chemist or doctor about an appropriate brand of tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.

Immigration
Commonwealth, United States and most European visitors do not need holiday visas but need return or onward tickets. People intending to work must have work permit.

Honiara
Our capital is eight kilometres (4.97 miles) from Honiara International Airport.

Airport Tax
SB$305 payable by passengers 12 years and over boarding international flights, and these are generally added onto the cost of your air tickets.

Business Hours
Government and business general hours are Monday to Friday, 8am to 4:30pm, with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am to 12 noon.

Tipping
Not expected and not encouraged.

Currency
The Solomon Islands dollar (SB), $100, $50, $20, $10, $5 and $2 Solomon Islands notes, while coins are $1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

Banks
ANZ Banking Group open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and the Hyundai Mall main branch opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Bank of South Pacific opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Transport
Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars are available from Economy car rental and Elite Vehicle Rental Ltd.

Electricity
220-240 volts in Honiara and some outer island centres.

Telecommunications
Local, international calls and internet services are available through Solomon Telekom Company Limited (Our Telekom) and Bmobile networks. 4G network is available in Honiara, Auki, Munda, Noro and Gizo whilst all other provincial hubs are equipped with their 3G networks. SATSOL is also another internet service provider (ISP) in Honiara, other regional and provincial areas in Solomon Islands.

Domestic Air
Solomon Airlines operate services throughout the country.

News Media
The country has a vibrant media landscape, offering choices in both English and Pidgin. Radio services are offered by state radio, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, private operators and religious bodies. Our Telekom relays BBC and other satellite TV networks while Island Sun and Solomon Star are the two daily newspapers, with a few monthly business and lifestyle magazines.

International Air
Solomon Airlines operate out of Honiara International Airport, while other carriers include Fiji Airways and Air Niugini.

Things to remember before your trip to the Solomons

Destination Guide
Munda is located in the Roviana Lagoon in Solomon Islands Western Province, and is made up of five traditional zones of Lambete, Kindu, Dunde, Soe and Ilangana. Renowned for its bloody World War Two history and once home to fearsome headhunting tribes, Munda is now a tourism hub offering world class diving and several accommodation offerings.

**Where to stay in Munda?**

**CASTAWAY LAGOON RESORT**
Located on Hobupeka Island in the Roviana Lagoon just a couple of minutes by boat from Munda, the resort offers four bungalows with private facilities and a lodge that can sleep twelve with shared facilities.

**QUA ROVIANA**
Offering clean and comfortable rooms overlooking the centre of Munda Station – some with shared facilities and others with private bathrooms, the hostel is just a short walk from the airport, Qua Roviana is a great base for the adventurer looking to explore this beautiful region.

**AGNES GATEWAY HOTEL**
The museum Agnes Gateway Hotel is the oldest accommodation provider in Munda offering a variety of rooms, from airconditioned units and bungalows to backpacker dorms.

**Destination Guide**

**Munda’s Best Bits**

**LEARN TO SCUBA DIVE WITH DIVE MUNDA**
Multi award winning dive outfit, Dive Munda is located in the centre of Munda and is run by Belinda Botha and her friendly and enthusiastic staff of local dive instructors, including ‘Chicks that SCUBA’ Ambassador, Euna.

Learning to Scuba with Dive Munda is an amazing experience, swapping what would otherwise be boring introductory pool sessions anywhere else in the world for the magnificent reefs of Pata Qopo or Susu Hite, which are just a few short minutes boat ride from Munda.

**VISIT THE PETER JOSEPH WAR MUSEUM**
The museum is about a kilometre away from Munda’s central district, and is named for Infantryman Peter Joseph Palatini, whose Dog Tag was the first ever find for the museum’s owner and curator, Barney Paulsen, who came across the tag in 2002.

Paulsen has an impressive but somber collection of tags, weapons and personal items including model cars and medals belonging to troops of both the US forces and Imperial Japanese Army.

**TAKE A TOUR WITH GO WEST TOURS**
Operating out of Agnes Gateway Hotel, Go West Tours has been in operation for over a decade. Managing Director Derek Kera often steps in as guide in his free time, happy to share his love and passion for Munda, it’s history and its beautiful location.

Go West Tours offer World War Two programs, sunset cruises on the Roviana Lagoon, visits to Eco Lodges including Titiru Eco Lodge, and village visits to Ughele Cultural Village. The company also offers excursions to eerie Skull Island, home to shrines and skulls harking back to the headhunting days.

For more information contact Tourism Solomons, email info@tourismsolomons.com.sb or call (677) 224442
Welcome to Pacific Crown Hotel

Pacific Crown Hotel offers a convenient location just 5km from the International Airport & 3km to Point Cruise (Honiara’s CBD).

Our suites include private balconies, lounge areas, mini-bar, WiFi, satellite television and air-conditioning.

Sip on cocktails and dine in our famous Garden Bar & Restaurant of Malaysian Chinese cuisine!

Let us show you the warmth of Solomon Island hospitality!

Support our talented local live bands from Wednesday to Saturday at canoe bar. Happy hour 4-8pm daily.

Try our motu (Solomon dish) on our cultural nights every Thursday and watch our beautiful tamure dancers share a mix of local and international dance stories.