

SOLOMON AIRLINE'S COMPLIMENTARY INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 67



# Solomons



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**Ron Sumsum**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## 52 years older & wiser

We have graduated from a small but effective domestic airline with minor regional links to an internationally recognised airline certified as an IATA carrier and to IOSA standards recognised by other world airline partners.

This year specifically has been more of a challenge than other immediate past years as we have lost and been affected by RAMSI army ending mid-year of 2013 with ancillary travels of family and friends as well as this year with the floods, Tsunami warnings and the earthquakes.

All combined, as well as heeding the advisory from SIVB (SI Visitors Bureau), the arrivals into Solomon Islands has not only softened but has gone negative comparable to other years. This has had a roll on effect to our plight to maintain dominance in the Australian and New Zealand markets especially, but we have been investing in 'new age technology' to place us back to the top of market share with our new website and 'flexi-pricer' CRS system allowing clients to now search a seven day profile for the right flight and airfare to book online. We are happy with this new system and already see positive results for those wanting to just search for a competitive price and pay online to save seeing travel agents to do business. We will be trying to offer innovative promotions online in the future and are fastidiously working to get the new capabilities right even with sending staff to Sydney for further training. We naturally hope to 'get wiser' as we invest further in our journey of developments.

WELKAM FRENS

To all our valued customers

## Fiji

Sadly, at the time of pen to paper, I do not have anything specific to add to the now sad tale of our Fiji impasse. We are working diligently to find a solution that will encompass "fairness and equitability" into the equation of air service rights between the two countries and carriers. I am hopeful that solutions are inevitable by year's end as we continue to grasp with cancellations of USA tourists including the dive market and others. We sincerely apologise to all those who are affected.

## Stories ahead

We continue to ensure our stories are either rich in culture or with a tourism twist and are enjoyable to read whilst you travel or just want to show those who are close friends or neighbours even, that you have visited our Hapi Isles and that it met your expectations.

Read on to enjoy the following-

- The steam vents and hot springs on Savo Island
- Diving with the Dolphins in spectacular settings.
- A cultural frontier - Kwaio
- The charm of Kohove River in West Honiara

Great reading for all and trust you will take an extra magazine to pass on to friends and neighbours to entice their travelling taste buds so as to experience our Hapi Isles.

Be safe in whatever you do when travelling and if you see potential for our airline's improvement, please write to our Operations & Commercial team at [gkraus@flysolomons.com](mailto:gkraus@flysolomons.com) and he will ensure we take on board valuable advices to keep us at the top of our game in being the "Best Little Airline in the Pacific."

Tengiu tumas.

**Ron Sumsum**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



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Email: [reservation@kitano.com](mailto:reservation@kitano.com)

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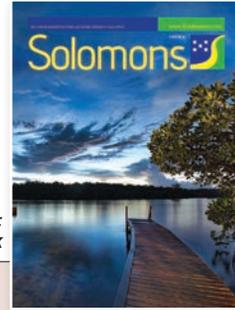
# Solomons



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2014

Cover photo:  
**Don Silcock**



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# OUT & ABOUT



## One Kiwi & a Solo Man

Also known as One Kiwi and a Kui is George Samuel and Alibaba, Honiara's musically inclined ebony and ivory. Between their shared talent for singing in harmony and playing just about any music instrument, the gurus of music covers have always had a love for strumming up a tune. George and Ali have a no-practice policy, sing any genre, and commit to enjoying the moment whenever they perform. Alibaba is an established Solomon Island musician and also plays in a string band called Cool Breeze. You can catch One Kiwi and a Kui some Sundays at the Point Cruz Yacht Club. Check with the Yacht Club for details on performances. The Point Cruz Yacht Club is situated on the Honiara waterfront within walking distance from prominent town-based hotels. ■



## Titiru Eco Lodge

TripAdvisor review from contributor Jonnya93 who stayed at Titiru in June 2014 and had an "amazing stay" says: "As a 20 year old I am not fussy with where I stay as long as it's good value with good food. After 18 months of travelling, Titiru was definitely in my top three for best places to stay. From the minute you arrive into the lagoon, you see the cheerful workers eagerly awaiting your arrival and from then on it's either pure relaxation or an action packed stay."

Location: Munda, Western Province. This tourism outfit prides itself on protecting its flora and fauna including its wild mangroves and fishing grounds. Activities are numerous and include: Hiking Rendova peak; eel fish feeding/sighting; view bats, snakes, and crabs in their natural habitat; visit tabu sites, or simply enjoy the day snorkeling in Titiru's outdoor swimming 'hall'.

Contact: Titiru Eco Lodge, T: 8593230, E: titiru.eco.resort@gmail.com, Facebook: titiru.ecolodge, www.titiruecolodge.com ■



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or email [info@cbsi.com.sb](mailto:info@cbsi.com.sb)



**Central Bank of Solomon Islands**

RAMSIT 201



## Papatura Recycling

Interested in environmentally conscious tourism properties in Santa Isabel? Check out Papatura Island Retreat. Papatura is doing something about its empty aluminum cans and is also passing on the culture of recycling to village communities and schools. Peter Blanche of Papatura Retreat said they were concerned about their aluminum waste and that of their community neighbours.

A goodwill partnership between Papatura, Solbrew, BJS, and freight company IBC meant an outlet for crushed cans in Honiara, a cleaner Santa Isabel environment, and a little monetary payback for participating communities. All in the name of charity Papatura offer can crushers, BJS want the crushed cans, Solbrew provides the bags, and IBC offers freight.

"We have two can crushers operating now at Buala and one has gone to Kia. If any school wishes to keep their village clean, they can call us and we'll gladly get a crusher to them." Papatura had purchased some 10 can crushers from Bunnings (Australia); one crusher was given to Baolo Primary School. For collecting and providing the crushed cans, Baolo Primary received their first cheque of SBD\$1,280.

Contact: Pete Blanche at Papatura, E: [info@papatura.com](mailto:info@papatura.com)



## Proton Creation

Gifts you can buy from the Solomon Islands range from natural fiber handicraft to island-print clothing to a fusion of art and craft. Proton Creation produces handprinted fabrics for men and women and an array of jewelry made from sea glass, beads, and local materials (mulberry tree vines and wood).

Proton Creation is a husband and wife team of Selwyn and Frances Do'oro. They prefer to create designs people can relate to and that means sourcing inspiration from their surrounds. Frances says: "We love sharing ideas and coming up with styles we can call our own. Our design mostly depicts Solomon Islands traditional designs and tattoos from where we come from." Frances is from Guadalcanal, part Western (Shortlands) and Selwyn is from Malaita. Contact: Frances Do'oro on mobile 7785964, E: [frances.dooro@gmail.com](mailto:frances.dooro@gmail.com)

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# 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

*Papatura Surf Comp (Isabel Province Between 6-16th Jan)*

*Dolphin Migration (Honiara)*

*Isabel Second Appointed Day*

*Reef Booming (Beginning of best Snorkelling Season)  
Eastern Fun Run*

*Spear Festival (Makira Province)*

*Vaka Tepe (War Canoe Festival/Western Province)*

*Central Province 2nd Appointed Day*

*Temotu Province 2nd Appointed Day*

*Banana (Huki) Festival, Makira  
Akuila Talasasa Arts Festival, Gizo*

*Independence Day (National Day)*

*Thavinago (Harvesting of Food & Fruit/Isabel Province)*

*Renbel 2nd Appointed Day*

*Malaita 2nd Appointed Day/Cultural Week*

*WWII Commemoration - 70th anniversary*

*Gizo Half Marathon*

*Flysolomons Marathon (Guadalcanal)*

*Chief Festival (Isabel Province)*

*Stunt Mullet Fishing Competition (Lola, Western Province)*

*Beginning of Green Turtle & Leatherback Turtle Season (Tetepare, Western Province)*

*Birdwatching Season (Oct - Nov/Malaita Province)*

*Flysolomons Marathon*

*Surfs Up*

*Land Crabbing Migration*

*Lagoon Festival (Munda, Western Province)*

*Carol in the Islands (Honiara)*

*Gizo Mile Run (Western Province)*

*Western Province 2nd Appointed Day*

## ... and connect with Solomon Islands on the Internet



The excitement of Solomon Islands is now on the Internet. Sites featuring diving, fishing, holidaying and travelling in our islands are appearing on the World Wide Web. Here's a sample, not in any particular order.

If you've any sites you recommend we add to this list, e-mail editor@ibi.com.fj with the URL for the site.

*Share the excitement of the Solomons*

### Solomon Islands Web Directory

#### GENERAL

Solomon Airlines  
www.flysolomons.com  
Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau  
www.visitsolomons.com.sb  
Immigration – Entry Requirements  
www.commerce.gov.sb/Divisions/Immigration/  
Immigration\_Requirements.htm  
Customs – Duty Free Allowances  
www.visitsolomons.com.sb/travel-infor/customs

#### ACCOMMODATION

**HONIARA**  
Heritage Park Hotel  
www.heritageparkhotel.com.sb  
Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel  
www.kitanomendana.com  
King Solomon Hotel  
www.kingsolomonhotel.info  
Pacific Casino Hotel  
www.solomon-hotel.com  
Raintree Cafe Bed & Breakfast  
www.raintreehoniara.com

**GIZO**  
Gizo Hotel  
www.gizohotel.com  
Sanbis Resort  
www.sanbisresort.com

Fatboys Resort  
www.fatboysgizo.com

#### MUNDA

Agnes Lodge  
www.agneshotel.com.sb  
Zipolo Habu Resort  
www.zipolohabu.com.sb  
Tetepare Eco-Lodge  
www.tetepare.org

#### MAROVO LAGOON (SEGHE & GATAKAE)

Uepi Island Resort  
www.uepi.com  
The Wilderness Lodge  
www.thewildernesslodge.org  
Matikuri Lodge  
www.matikuri-lodge.com

#### ISABEL ISLAND (FERA & SUAVANAO)

Papatura Island Retreat  
www.papatura.com  
Kagata Village Stay  
www.kagatasurfingfrens.com

#### MARAU

Tavanipupu Private Island Resort  
www.tavanipupupu.com

#### ACTIVITIES/TOURS

##### HONIARA

Tulagi Dive – Honiara Diving  
www.tulagidive.com.sb  
Travel Solomons – Tours  
www.travelsolomons.com  
Extreme Adventures – Diving and Day Trips  
www.solomonadventures.com

##### GIZO

Dive Gizo – Gizo Diving & Tours  
www.divegizo.com  
Kolombangara Island - Birdwatching  
www.kolombangara.org

##### MUNDA

Dive Munda – Munda Diving  
www.mundadive.com  
Go West Tours – Tours  
www.agneshotel.com.sb

#### MAROVO LAGOON (SEGHE & GATAKAE)

Kayak Solomons – Kayaking Uepi  
www.kataksolomons.com

Solomon Dive Adventures – Diving Gatakae  
www.solomondiveadventures.com

#### LIVE ABOARD DIVING

Bilikiki Cruises  
www.bilikiki.com

#### OVERSEAS TRAVEL AGENTS

##### AUSTRALIA

Dive Adventures  
www.diveadventures.com.au  
Go Tours  
www.gotours.com.au

Allways Dive Expeditions  
www.allwaysdive.com.au

Adventure World  
www.adventureworld.com.au

Coral Seas Travel  
www.coralseas.com.au

Battlefields Tours  
www.battlefields.com.au

Diversion Dive Travel  
www.diversiondivetravel.com.au

Wotif Group  
www.wotif.com" www.wotif.com

World Hotel Link  
www.solomonislands-hotels.travel

New Zealand

Dive Fish Snow Travel  
www.divefishsnow.co.nz

Adventure World  
www.adventureworld.co.nz

Wotif Group  
www.wotif.com

World Hotel Link  
www.solomonislands-hotels.travel

#### OTHER SERVICES

Foreign Investment Board  
www.commerce.gov.sb/Divisions/Investment/default.htm

Solomon Islands Business Directory  
www.businessadvantagesolomons.com

Solomons Telekom – phone & internet services  
www.solomons.com.sb

Bemobile – mobile phone services  
www.bemobile.com.sb



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**KIMBE** Ph (675) 983 5144 - Fax (675) 983 5144  
**HONIARA** Ph (677) 30 274 - Fax (677) 30 692

## CALL 131 228

Hastings Deering



# Diving with Dolphins

BY PAULINE CLAYTON

It was a first in 25 years.

My dive buddy and I were joined underwater by a pair of dolphins at around five metres off a coral encrusted reef wall just out of Gizo Harbour in the Western Province.

Even a seasoned local dive instructor was envious.

The dolphins appeared alongside, smiling as they do, allowing us follow them for a short distance before they quickly darted to the surface and out of sight.

When we surfaced we could see a large pod a few metres away, and it was apparent two had peeled off to take a close-up underwater look at a pair of unsuspecting scuba divers.



*The dolphins appeared alongside, smiling as they do, allowing us follow them for a short distance...*

Their boats are reliable, staff well trained, in fact, many have been with Dive Gizo since its inception, to be joined as it has grown, by brothers and cousins. The fact the staff call Kerrie ‘mummy’ says it all.



**I KEEP COMING BACK TO THE SOLOMONS,** in particular the Western Province, because frankly, I have not found a better place in the South Pacific or the Americas for rich and varied reef and wreck diving.

The Solomon’s remain virtually untouched by development and industry, a fact that can irritate the occasional tourist expecting air conditioning and endless hot showers.

But this lack of modern (so-called) advancement has meant the waters remain a tropical marine paradise, and the coral reefs easy to access.

And you can drink the water as it comes direct from the clouds.

American-born Danny Kennedy and his Australian-born wife Kerrie have spent the past 25 plus years building up Dive Gizo to be one of the top 10 dive operations in the South Pacific.

Danny is now a citizen and a retired elected minister of the Solomon Island Western Provincial government.

Settling in Gizo, they built a house, raised a family and established the PADI licenced dive operation and a tourism hub to assist travellers seeking accommodation in the region.

Their boats are reliable, staff well trained, in fact, many have been with Dive Gizo since its inception, to be joined as it has grown, by brothers and cousins.

The fact the staff call Kerrie ‘mummy’ says it all.

The boat drivers can all navigate back into Gizo harbour in the dead of night without the benefit of satellite navigation or marker bouys.

Several are qualified dive instructors, and all can produce a mouth-watering barbecue

on a deserted island between dives.

You take one dolphin fish (mahi mahi), chop into cubes, cook over an open fire on a metal plate, add a touch of oil, soy sauce and serve on a large, flat kerosene tree leaf.

Side dish, sweet potato chips, onions, aubergine, fried rice and freshly cut pineapple, bush ripened which means juicy.

As one Irish medical student commented, “I couldn’t afford a meal like this in the United Kingdom.”

Nor would you get the view.

Pristine golden beaches, turquoise waters lapping over coral, and the glorious and luxurious sounds of silence.

For Yumi Endo, a Japanese tour guide, who spends her working life in major cities of the world, the glittering starry night sky was an event in itself.



PHOTO CREDIT: NIGEL MARSH

*...a Hell Cat fighter aircraft which crashed in these waters during WWII*



**As a result along with the sheer beauty of the lagoon, the proximity to the dive operation at Munda, Zipola attracts cruising yachties, fly-in holiday makers, orchid fanciers, bird and butterfly watchers, expats living and working around the islands and adventurers from all walks of life.**

“It is the first time in my life I have ever really seen the stars,” she said.

Danny Kennedy first took me diving on the Japanese wreck Toa Maru in 1986.

He has ear-marked many more stunning dive sites over the last two decades.

Some years ago Danny tracked down the family of the pilot of a Hell Cat fighter aircraft which crashed in these waters during WWII.

Lying in just nine metres and out of the way of swirling currents, it is still in good shape and makes for an easy dive.

For divers and snorkelers the greatest (in my humble view) addition to the Western Province has been the construction of Fatboys on the island of Mbabanga an easy canoe ride from Gizo and the recently sealed, Nusatupe airport.

Fatboys is a restaurant, bar, hammock,

couch, sun deck, meeting and eating place.

Constructed on piles well out into the lagoon, and connected by a long jetty to the island and accommodation cabins, this is a popular pull-in spot for cruising yachties, and those who want a true tropical island experience.

Fatboys famously started out with a waste disposal system which utilised a dingy parked under the lavatory.

Today a modern home sewerage treatment plant does the job.

Tucked under the trees overlooking the lagoon the custom-style cabins there is a well-tended vegetable and herb garden, this is after all, a culture of subsistence farming.

Thus when we sat down to an entrée of king fish Sashimi with wasabi, the spring onions came with a tangy just-picked, fresh flavour.



PHOTO CREDIT: TOM PERRY

As did the bush lime drink.

Further down the lagoon and closer to the major village of Munda is the island of Lola, home and the well-known (by fishing enthusiasts), Zipolo Habu Resort.

Joe and Lisa Entriikan established this originally as a fishing resort, back in the early 1980s, and it still attracts professional and amateur line-throwers.

Joe and Lisa have employed traditional tradesmen to handcraft several leaf huts.

They have also embraced some modern technology with a satellite dish, and a large and effective hot water system.

Water on this island comes from a spring.

As a result along with the sheer beauty of the lagoon, the proximity to the dive operation at Munda, Zipola attracts cruising yachties, fly-in holiday makers, orchid fanciers, bird and butterfly watchers, ex-pats living and working around the islands and adventurers from all walks of life.



## LOCAL DESTINATION >>

Back in downtown Gizo a notable difference since my first few visits, is the invasion of mobile phones and that western habit adopted by young people, of walking around with a vacant look and ear plugs connected to a music machine.

Even with the advent of satellite communication, (one channel television), chocolate ice cream, canned chilli tuna, the Solomon Islands is still a third world nation, constantly under threat from northern nations anxious to expand or extend fishing and logging rights.

Locals know full well, the power supply is unreliable at best and because they are expert at subsistence farming, fishing, hut and boat building, their lives aren't seriously affected if they cannot get the internet.

Thus a trip here is one with a difference – Solomon time.

What can be done tomorrow, maybe done the day after.

You don't need hot showers, as it is hot in both summer and winter.

The ocean waters a comfortable 28 to 30 degrees, the rain when it falls, heavy, but the

storm clouds move fast and blue sky appears again within minutes.

The vines are heavy with richly perfumed flowers.

The food is fresh. Frozen storage virtually unheard of in these parts.

A couple of bars, a couple of little eateries, but other than that, the daily Gizo street market is the hub off life here.

Is there a downside? Yes.

Western culture, introduced rubbish, that's what.

Non-biodegradable plastic bags and containers float throughout the islands to land on the pristine, golden sand beaches.

Aluminium cans litter the street.

But even then is hard to mar the absolute tropical beauty of these islands.

Nor does it diminish the friendship of the islanders. >>

### Further Info:

[www.divegizo.com](http://www.divegizo.com)

[www.solomonislands-hotels.travel](http://www.solomonislands-hotels.travel)

[www.Fatboysgizo.com](http://www.Fatboysgizo.com)

[www.Zipolohabu.com.sb](http://www.Zipolohabu.com.sb)

[www.Flysolomons.com](http://www.Flysolomons.com)



PHOTO CREDIT: GRAHAM SIMMONS

*The ocean waters a comfortable 28 to 30 degrees, the rain when it falls, heavy, but the storm clouds move fast and blue sky appears again within minutes.*

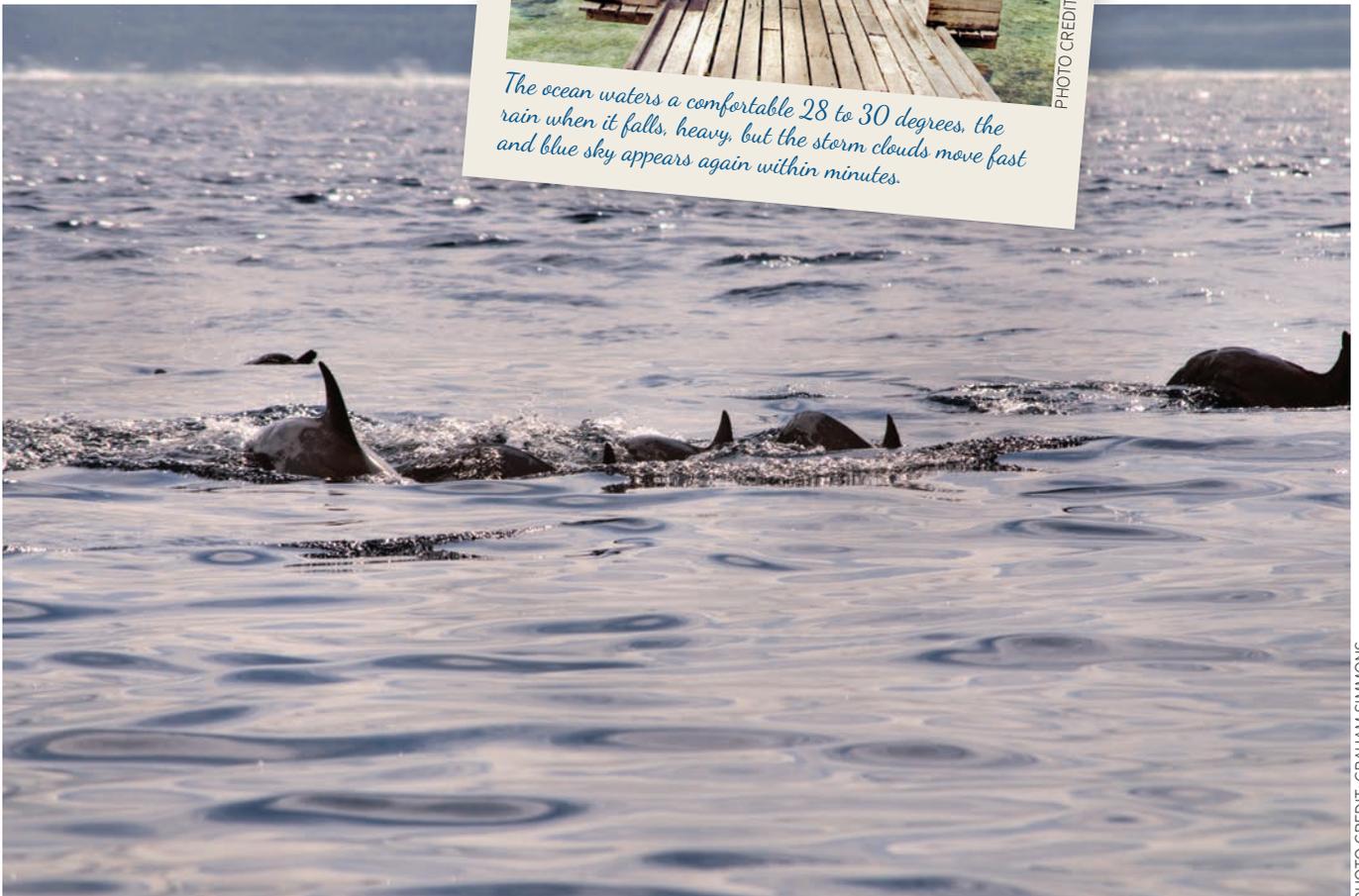


PHOTO CREDIT: GRAHAM SIMMONS

# Our people are our strength

We take pride in our people and their abilities and encourage our employees to reach their full potential.

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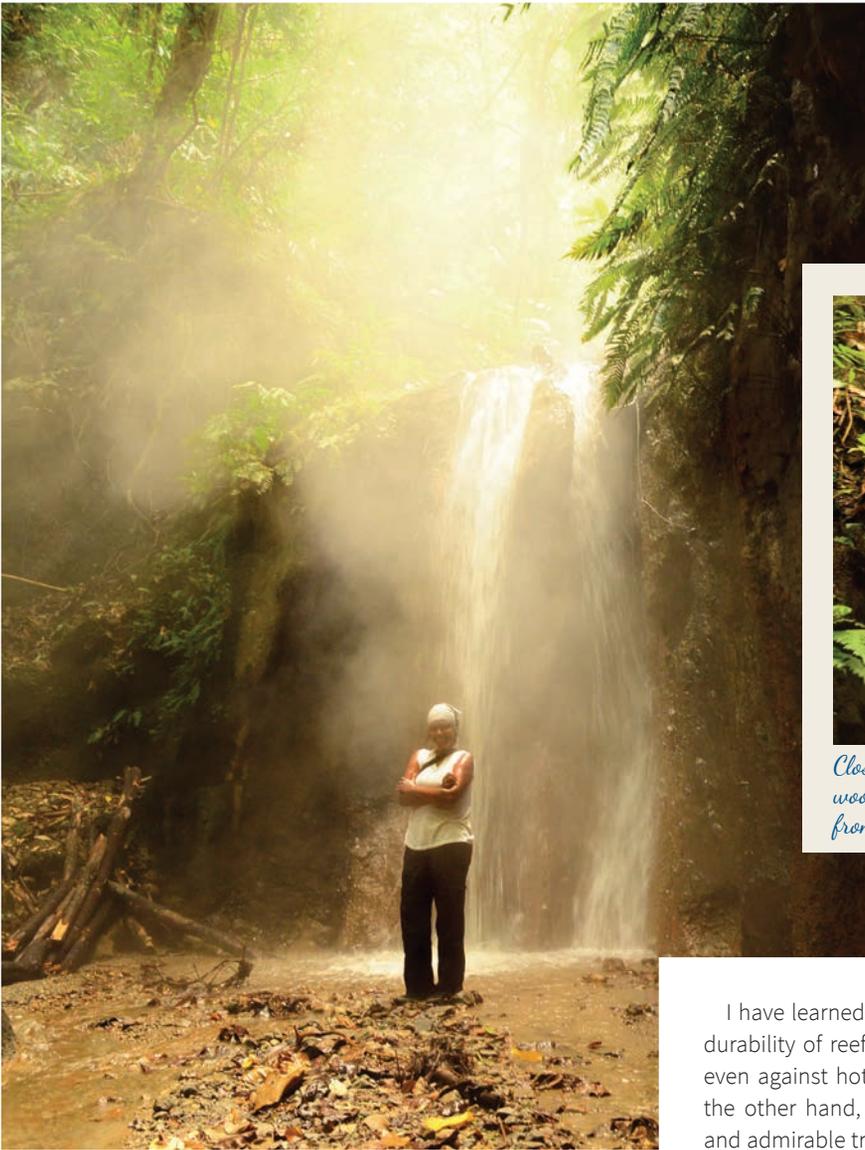


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*Closer to the crater summit, a steady makeshift wooden ladder is the gateway to the upper reaches from the base of a thermal cascade.*

**THERE IS MOVEMENT ON THE VOLCANIC ISLAND** of Savo in the Central Province. Not an eruption, thankfully! The activity is of a development sort to transform the island's naturally-occurring thermal energy into consumable power.

But before all that, I'd known the volcano as just a trek for eager wanderers. Two trek options – a short walk and the longer trek that takes about three hours each way depending on speed and stops. The terrain for both is for all levels of fitness.

Fueled with a breakfast of eggs (chicken not megapode), sausages, buns, pineapple, coffee and bush lime juice, my barefoot guide John Toksy and I set out from Sunset Lodge to conquer steam vents and hot springs. A brief outboard motor boat trip takes us to the trek start point.

The walk takes us through bush and into the forest. It felt like entering the mythical land of Narnia, except that we exit glassland, open terrain and enter a forest of gurgling streams with varied degrees of cool and hot, boulder obstacles, steamy earth, a thermal cascade, and bird calls.

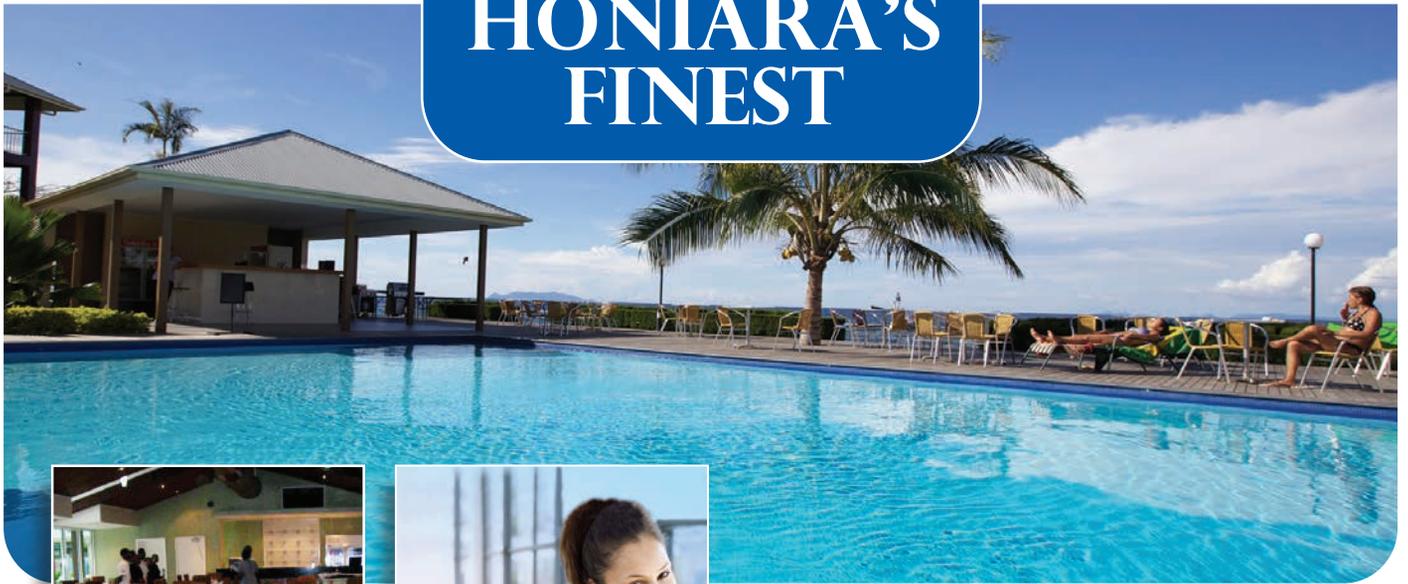
I have learned to equip my feet with the incredible lightness and durability of reef shoes for dry and soggy hikes. They held up well even against hotter ground near prominent steam vents. John, on the other hand, walked from natural strength to strength (typical and admirable trait of Solomon Island guides) with naked soles into hot streams and over jagged rocks and hot earth. I asked him about barefoot walking over hot earth and water; John waved his hand nonchalantly and said it was nothing really: "I'm used to it."

John joins my list of excellent guides in the Solomons. The list includes Moffat Fanerii (Kolombangara, Gizo), Joachim Belei (trekking Kohove River, west Honiara), the Arnavon rangers (Arnavon Islands), John Tai (Aotaha, Bellona), and Anita Emmett and her animated crew (Ko Kama Rafting via Lunga River).

The upside about Savo travel is that you can take a day trip from Guadalcanal or overnight, do the hike, enjoy a snorkel (aquarium-type fish are abundant) and return the next day. From Guadalcanal's western end at Vila, Savo looms north and is some 45 minutes by outboard motor.

We maneuver over boulders and tree trunks. Closer to the crater summit, a steady makeshift wooden ladder is the gateway to the upper reaches from the base of a thermal cascade. The waterfall is where we decided to get drenched on our return. The brief onset of dry skin days later was the price I paid for that rewarding power shower. I'm glad to report that daily moisturising with pure coconut oil zapped the dryness and brought back the luster.

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## LOCAL DESTINATION >>

Sun rays peek through breaks in the leafy canopy above. At the summit, steam rises from the soil creating a haze against the sunlight. The rocks emit heat. It feels warm.

“Oh no!” John exclaims. “What’s wrong?” I ask. John pauses then reluctantly replies: “I forgot the egg.” The forgotten egg was supposed to have been cooked in one of the heated pools. In 2011 I had done the shorter volcano walk from Kaogele Village and the children, who had tagged along, cooked cassava wrapped snugly in leaves over steam vents. In 15 minutes we were eating the perfectly cooked staple.

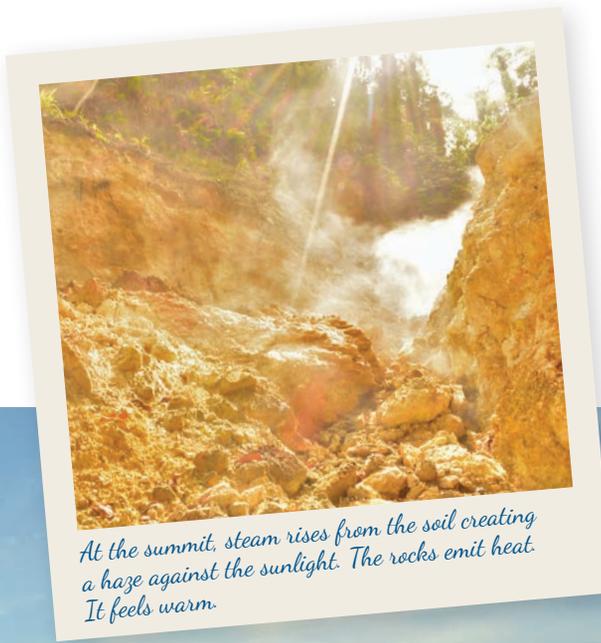
While Tinakula volcano on Santa Cruz and underground volcano Kavachi (Western Province) remain active, the Savo one has

been dormant for years. But it continues to declare its presence with steam from its core. Literature on Savo says the volcano has, on record, erupted three times, last erupted in the 1800s.

Aside from trekking, you can visit the megapode (Melanesian Scrub Fowl) nesting beach. They say early morning is best to observe nesting activity. Savo is a natural megapode nursery, but bird statistics today have dropped. The eggs are collected for household consumption and most are destined for the Honiara municipal market, where the cooked delicacy still intact in shell can be bought for SB\$10. The earthy heat as a result of volcano presence probably makes for excellent megapode egg incubation.

### Savo Geothermal Energy Project

- Geodynamics ([www.geodynamics.com.au](http://www.geodynamics.com.au)) is the company currently responsible for backing the clean energy project; joint venture partnership with Kentor Energy (subsidiary of Kentor Gold).
- Stakeholders include the people and chief landowners of Savo, Solomon Islands Government, Solomon Islands Electricity Authority, Geodynamics, Kentor Energy.
- Geodynamics’ Solomon Islands representative Mal Kuper said: “We’ve completed our ground exploration and there are indications the thermal resource could be over 30 MW.”
- “The current electricity demand for Honiara is around eight to nine megawatts, peaking at around 14 MW. There are new economic developments that will add pressure to power consumption, but we believe the Savo project will be able to sustain demands.”
- “The plan is to run a deepsea cable from Savo to White River on Guadalcanal, a distance of some 35 kilometers. The whole idea of the project is to boost energy needs, at the same time bring energy costs down. [Year] 2018 is when we hope to be up and running.” >>



*At the summit, steam rises from the soil creating a haze against the sunlight. The rocks emit heat. It feels warm.*



## FACT BOX

**Where to stay:** Savo Sunset Lodge

**Contact:** Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau,  
Telephone: 22442

**Getting there:** Savo Sunset Lodge provides point-to-point transfers (vehicle Honiara-Vila-Honiara, boat Vila-Savo-Vila, & boat transfers on Savo)

**Geodynamics' Solomon Islands rep:** Mal Kuper,  
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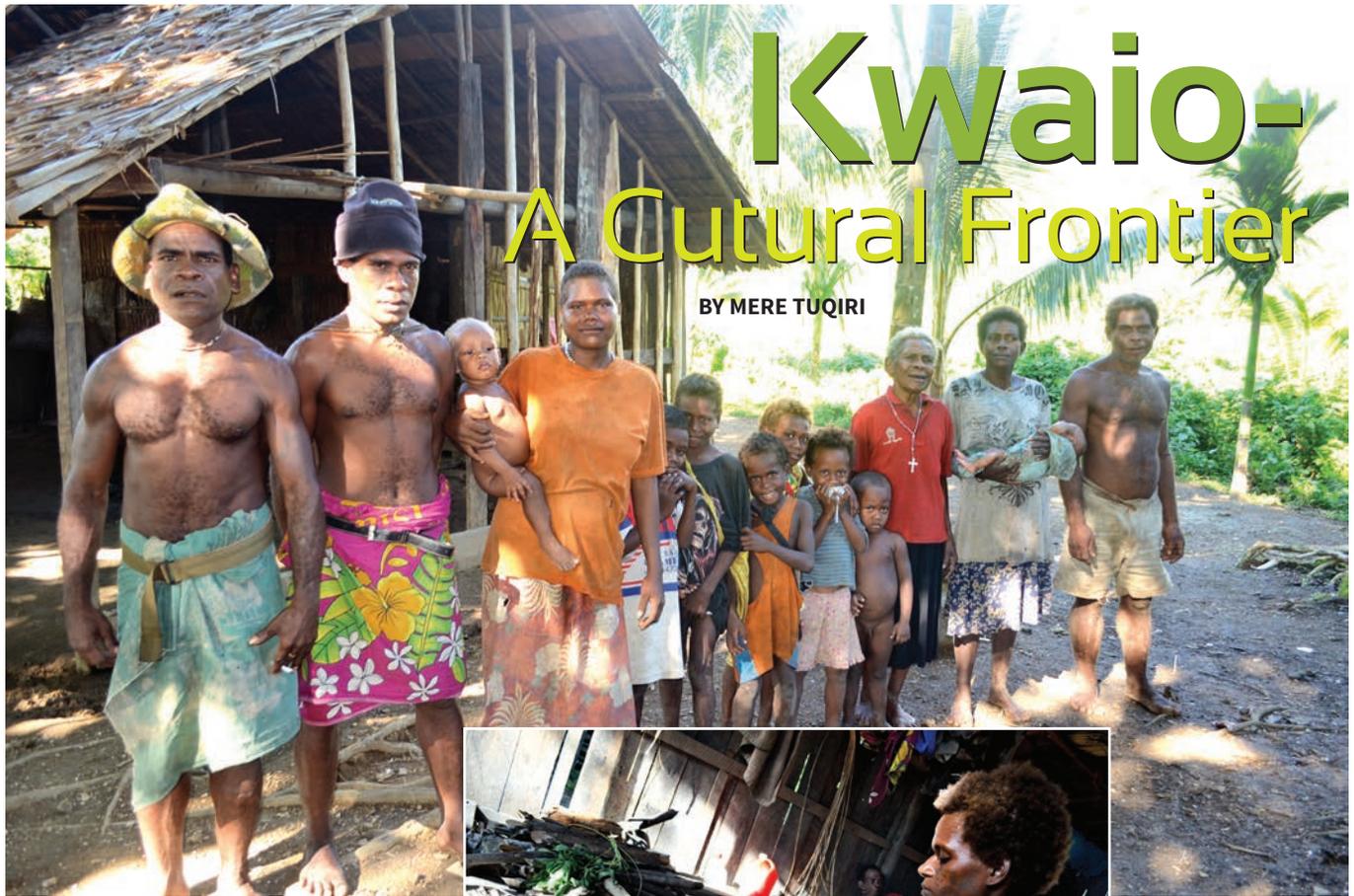
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WITH ONLY A SKY BLUE coloured cloth hanging from her waist and a red collared t-shirt, slightly hunched and barefoot Koko'ogeni (grandma) Guasuka took my hand and led me to the side door of the common house. That was my introduction into her family fold. I was ushered in and promptly made to sit on a palette. Koko'ogeni is a chatty woman of small stature, very kind, and respected by the extended family.

The floor of the central house is hard soil. A simple bed in one corner, bows and arrows tucked away in the ceiling, and piglets roam freely. The men congregate on one side of the house, women and young girls on the other. A cooking pit covered with rocks is at the other end of the pallet.

Koko'ogeni Guasuka; her sons Ledi, Tome, Tagobeu; Tome's wife Mete; and children together totaling 10 live in a hamlet in the hills above Sinaragu in East Kwaio, Malaita. The family belongs to the Tete tribe and had made the decision in 2009 to relocate from their highland dwelling to live closer to coast.

As they had always done in the highlands,



the family, like their mountain-dwelling relatives, still practice ancestral worship. They also tell me that their daily living is still ruled by the customs of their forefathers because that's what Koko'o and her family want even though modernisation is creeping in. I spent one day and one night with them. They prefer to be called highlanders even though they've moved to a more accessible region.

The boat ride from Atoifi to Sinaragu is dotted with spotless white beaches. Tourism development (lodges or resthouses) is non-existent along this stretch. My base was Sinaragu at William Akomae's family home. Sinaragu sits along Sinaragu Harbour, also known as Port Diamond. To get to Koko'ogeni's, it takes a dugout canoe ride

along the channel and into the mangroves, a short hike, and then the trek flattens out towards the commune.

I almost broke a taboo. I made a beeline for the lop-sided plank bench outside with the intention of sitting. Tome's eyes widened. He shook his head indicating no and with polite firmness said I wasn't allowed to sit on the bench. If you're female living among highland Kwaio folks, men and women (young and elderly) abide by firm rules. Although briefed about what I could and couldn't do, I momentarily forgot. To break a custom, I'm told, is a serious matter with severe consequences. It may invoke the fury of ancestral spirits; sickness, an accident perhaps.

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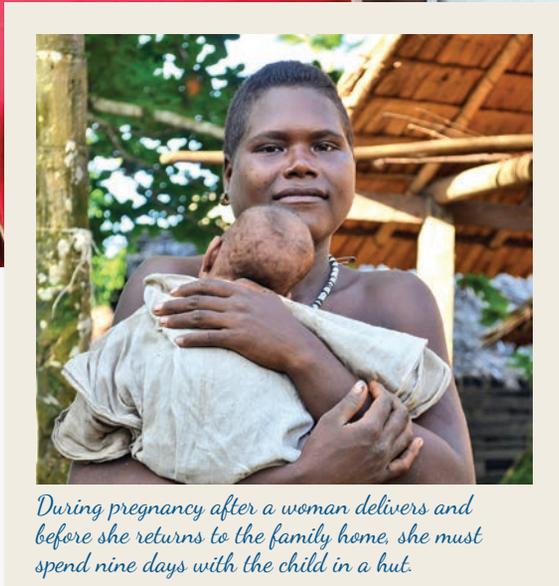


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*During pregnancy after a woman delivers and before she returns to the family home, she must spend nine days with the child in a hut.*

of her period here. When she exits the menstruation house she must spend an extra night outside before she is said to be fully cleansed and ready to rejoin her family.

I'm told that every act women are required to follow/abstain from whether it's during food preparation, in the garden, from periods to pregnancy, and even using the toilet is to appease the supernatural realm. To relive themselves, all female folk must shed their clothing at the entrance of the forest. No tissues allowed. It must've been psychological for me because I didn't feel the need to go at all.

During pregnancy after a woman delivers and before she returns to the family home, she must spend nine days with the child in a hut removed from the main house. Before she returns to the family circle she must also shave her head as Mete, Tome's wife did.

A shaved head is akin to being cleansed. Tome and Mete's baby looks healthy; no processed baby food, he eats what the family eats.

## Rules for Women

It's a strictly patriarchal society. While the male folk have freedom of movement, their women (including female visitors) must abide by customary rules. For instance women are: forbidden to sit on any elevated furniture and enter the men's house (those are for men only); mustn't eat what men eat (and vice versa); mustn't hang their washed clothes where men do; mustn't cross the demarcated boundary in the common house separating men's space from the women (unless the lady is married to one of the men and, of course, Koko'ogeni).

There are five houses. The common or central house brings everyone 'together' for meals, conversation, meetings, rest. Behind the common house is Koko'ogeni's hut. Adjacent to the common house is Tome and Mete's home, next to that is the men's house. The fifth is the menstruation hut. It sits remotely from the main congregating area and is at the entrance of the forest area the women use as their toilet.

Koko'ogeni, though a translator, tells me everything, but I wished I understood her indigenous Kwaio language. Menstruation house: A woman must spend the duration

## The Night

Dinner was splendid. Sweet potato and sandpaper cabbage (amou) stuffed into bamboo tubes and sailfish wrapped in leaves cooked by Haru'a in the common house pit. That smoky taste in the fish and sweet potato – divine! Compliments to the chef! The sailfish (fifiru) was longer than Tagobeu, the fisherman and family priest. The men didn't eat fish that night. As I am not male and was offered a raw chunk of fifiru by Koko'o as a food gift, only the women ate. Men and women cannot eat the same food. It's taboo.

The night was pleasant, yet chilly. The piglets settle around the cooking pit for a snooze. A fire was lit and stoked by Koko'ogeni. She covered the palette with her mat for me to sleep on. It was now question and answer time. The men of the house wanted to know about my culture, my country, whether movies were real, and host of other questions.



*Sweet potato and sandpaper cabbage (amou) stuffed into bamboo tubes and sailfish wrapped in leaves...*



*That smoky taste in the fish and sweet potato – divine!*



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## LOCAL DESTINATION >>

Michael, a nephew, had trekked down from the mountains to visit his uncles. That night he needed answers to a problem. The solution required an intervention by his uncle Ledi and I was asked whether I minded sitting through a custom ritual. Of course not, I replied. In this ritual, Ledi wore a wig made from tree roots and sat over the cooking rocks, Michael beside him. Certain long leaves plucked from outside were softened over the fire. Silent chants followed and Ledi proceeded to pull at the leaves interwoven around his hands. Let's just say that Michel was a satisfied customer – he was told who the non-human troublemaker was, what it wanted (a pig sacrifice), and in return it would fix the setback that confronted Michael. We all have our belief systems that take us from day to day and this was theirs.

Western lifestyle has crept into their lives. Solar panels and a bulb, a radio, watch, mobiles, and to my amusement the children sing bits of an English pop tune. Tome says they are mindful of the changes, but still prefer to keep to their age-long customs. Are they concerned it might disappear one day? It depends on the younger generation, says Tome, whether they want to change. I was gifted the sago palm mat that Koko'ogeni had woven. I gave her my torch, which she seemed to appreciate. >>

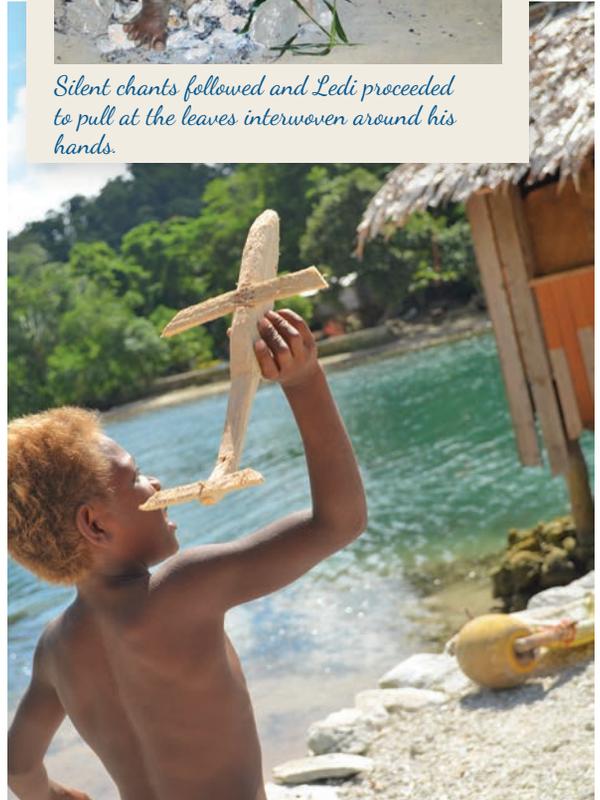
If you wish to make a similar visit, contact:  
Rex Akomae, M: 7581150, E: rexyroses@gmail.com

### Getting there

Via Solomon Airlines to Atoifi.  
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*Silent chants followed and Ledi proceeded to pull at the leaves interwoven around his hands.*



### Pikinini Entertainment

Kwaio children have fun too. Lighter than a mechanical helicopter, Walter is content with pitching his version made from a sago palm trunk. It lasts only a few days before withering, but not before Walter maxes out the fun factor from it.



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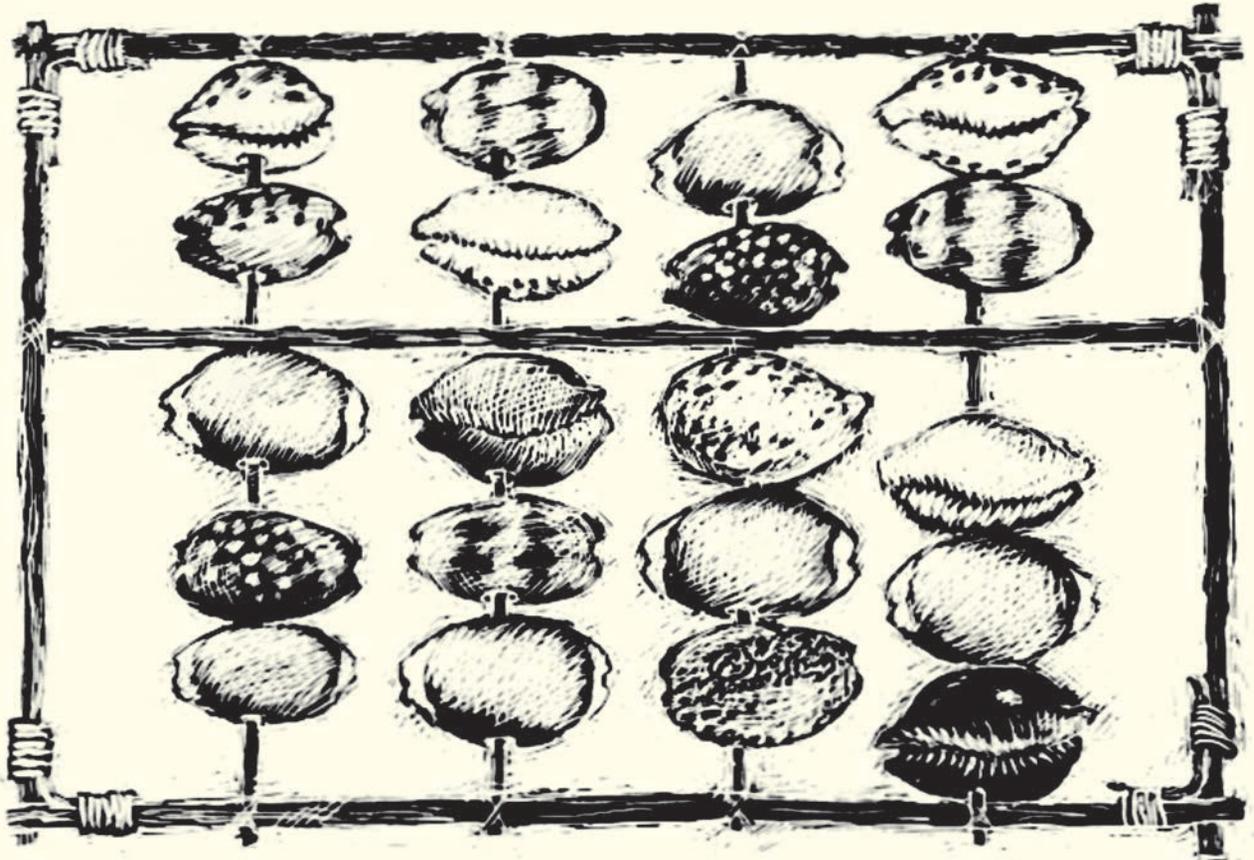
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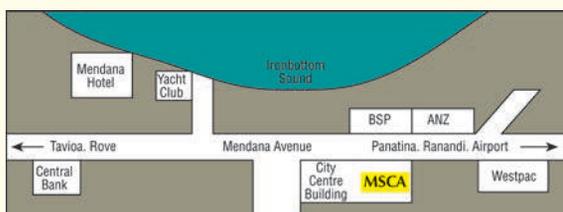
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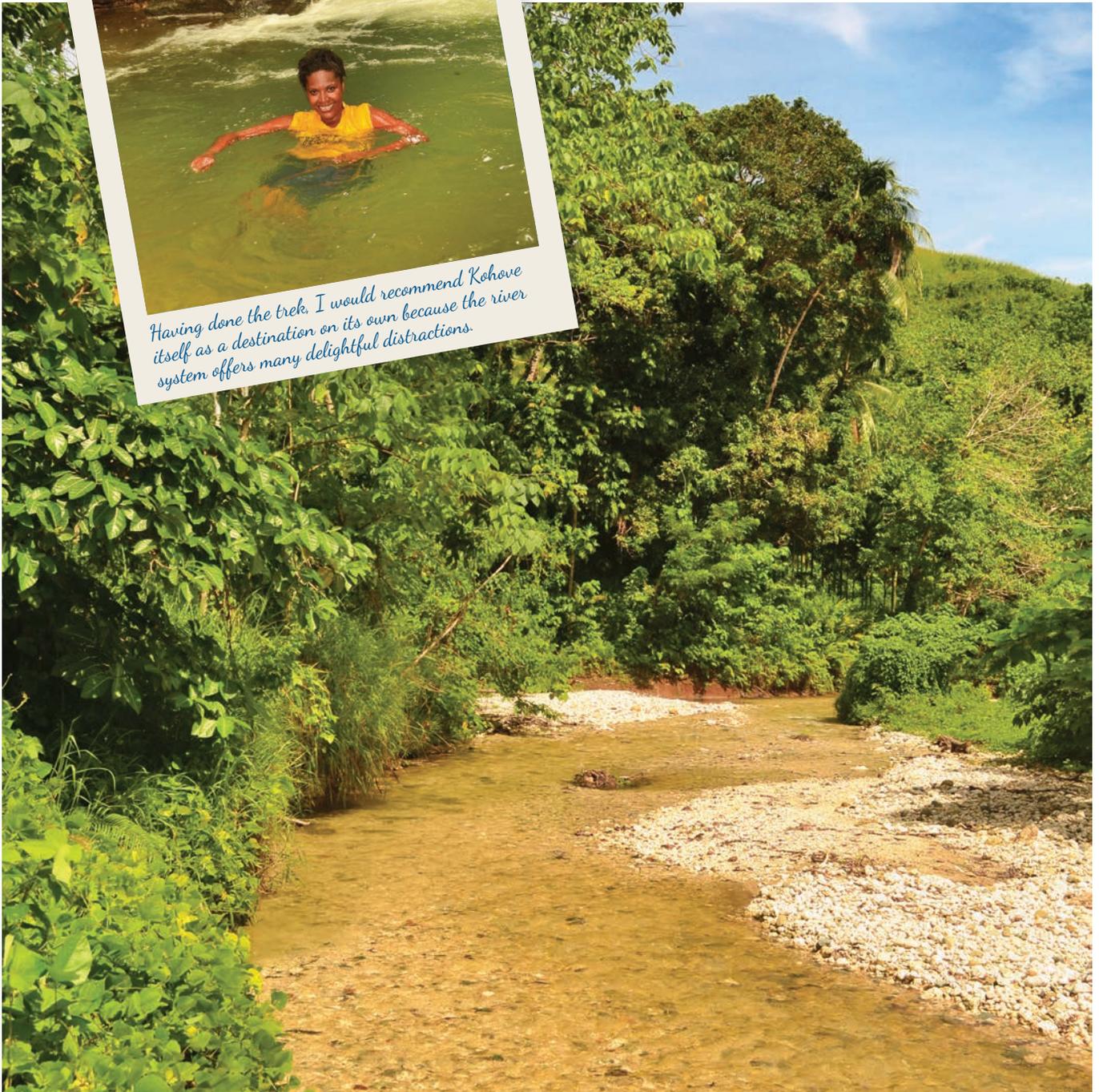
LOCAL DESTINATION >>

# The Charm of Kohove River

BY MERE TUQIRI



*Having done the trek, I would recommend Kohove itself as a destination on its own because the river system offers many delightful distractions.*



The water was chilly and foamed around me, a natural spa in the wilderness. Along the breadth of the Kohove River are many pool pockets like this surrounded by tall walls of rock and primary vegetation.

Kohove is more like a really long gurgling stream than a river, although when the skies open up the rain gates, the river shows its true status. The clear waters follow the contours of fallen boulders and tree trunks that have been loosened by the rains and eroded from either side of the river.

They rest on Kohove's watery bed forming centrepieces for miniature waterfalls and pools, shallow in places and bottomless in others. Kohove River is located west of Honiara. I started the walk from Lumatapopoho Village with my guides Joachim Belei and Francine Jaki.

Kohove River trek is packaged around the Vera Tapopoho Cultural Village and Barasai Waterfall activities. Dreadlocked Joachim was keen to show me Barasai. The long and often challenging Kohove River takes you there.

Having done the trek, I would recommend Kohove itself as a destination on its own

because the river system offers many delightful distractions. Trek on to Barasai if you wish, but you will find the river worth the walk.

The cultural village wasn't well established when I'd done the activity through Sightsee Solomon Island Tours. Hopefully you get a better opportunity to experience cultural activities like the tatalonga ceremony (traditional welcome), traditional ways of fire making, and food prep demonstrations.

Boulders along the river will slow you down, but patience and good-footing will get you around the obstacles. Once or twice we detoured up the slopes to progress. Returning to base, we took a different route to save time. Instead of retracing our soggy steps to the village, we ascended the steep slope to the top of open-air Tahile Trek, metres above Kohove. Along Tahile you have a 360 panoramic view of ocean, grassland, pockets of houses in the distance, and Honiara's water catchment site (Kongulai). All is quiet except for the squishing sound of wet shoes and small talk.



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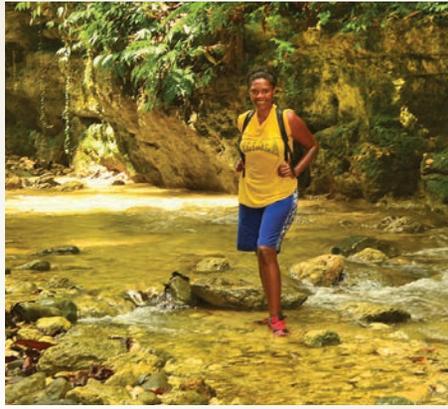
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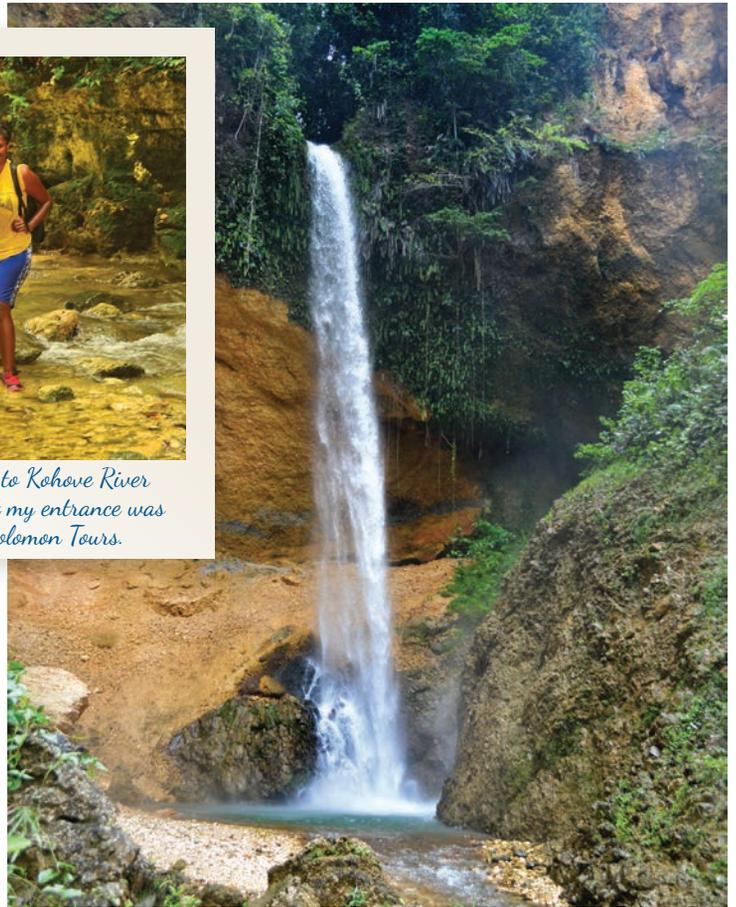
If you think you'd want to take the Tahile route back to the village, you may need bug repellent. But if the route has been cleared off tall grass then you should be fine. Whatever you do don't trek Tahile as an entry point to Kohove because you will surely miss the beauty of the river. Begin your trek from the village and let the river mesmerise you.



*There are other ways to get to Kohove River and Barasai Waterfall, but my entrance was possible through Sightsee Solomon Tours.*

There are other ways to get to Kohove River and Barasai Waterfall, but my entrance was possible through Sightsee Solomon Tours. They are your liaison with the village community and will pick/drop from your hotel to village site. See them also for cost information.

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# Eco-tourism and the Solomons Islands

BY DR JOHN SCHENK (*Forest Ecologist*)

**MUCH CAN BE SAID FOR THE BEAUTY** and wonder of the natural unspoilt environments of the Solomon Islands. During my childhood in these islands I learnt much from the people about the forest animals, plants, custom medicines and custom ways of doing things and this took me on an education journey into the intricate and very interesting field of ecology.

In the past I worked here doing environmental education and consulting as an expert witness for the High Court of the Solomon Islands as well as being the forest ecologist for the 'Solomon Island Forest Resources Inventory'. In 1994 the inventory work resulted in a paper called 'Forest Ecology and Biogeography in the Solomons' that is still used today.

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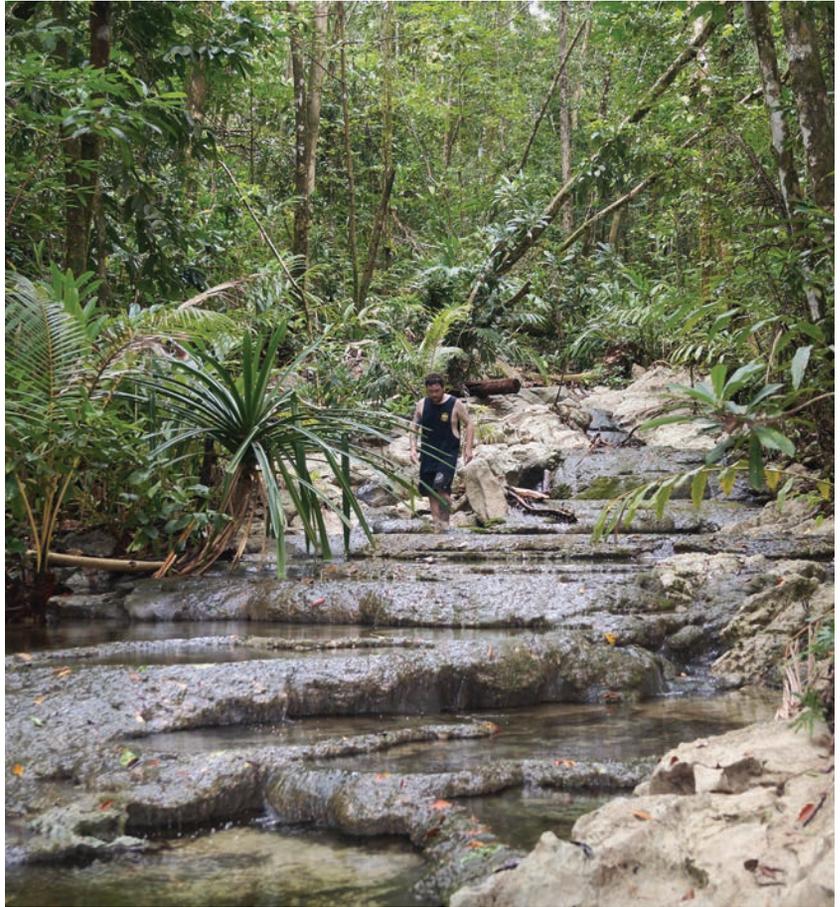
I also produced environmental radio programmes on the SIBC (Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation) and education materials and displays in the Honiara Museum, which was funded by the South Pacific Commission (now Secretariat of the Pacific Community). Since these early days I returned to Australia for further education and finally received my Doctorate in ecology after many years, many degrees and much hard work. I now hold qualifications and much experience in agriculture, horticulture, physical geography, teaching, plant biology, plant geography and ecology.

Now I return, not only to start and encourage eco-tourism through Papatara Island Resort on Isabel, but also undertake environmental consulting and possible assistance to the government with sustainable resource use. The Solomons requires an alternative to the destructive non-sustainable practices of large scale logging and eco-tourism provides us with a way of doing this which preserves the environment and culture of the people. This must be done in a way that does not destroy the delicate ecology of these beautiful islands and I hope that this will be so. Through having a strategy in place to preserve this ecology and culture the people can gain an income from the forests without having to destroy the forest for logs. What this means is that an income from eco-tourism, done in the proper manner, will be a sustainable business for the people.

I am now embarking upon a project called Tropologic that will eventually offer accredited courses in eco-tourism and island ecology for Solomon Island people. The project at Papatara will, I hope, provide a model which can be reproduced elsewhere in the Solomons. So far we have undertaken preliminary ecological survey work on 11 islands including Amona, Papatara Faa, Papatara and surrounding smaller islands and the Pasegeri, Rakata and Mamaghi rivers in the Papatara area on Isabel, to establish eco-tourism potential.

These sites are of very high to excellent eco-tourism potential with orchid and frog species previously not recorded in the area is very exciting as an eco-tourism topic. Training is required for anyone who wishes to start such a business and may even result in students from other countries coming to the Solomons to obtain qualifications. Many benefits will result including small books that can be used by Solomon Island eco-tour guides. This is a first in the islands for tourism and I hope will encourage interest and thinking in sustainable resource use.

I look forward to working with government, the people and other conservation groups within the country so we can learn together the methods and ways that are required.



### FACT BOX

**Contact:** Dr John Schenk

**Email:** tropologic@gmail.com or Papatara Island Retreat,

**Email:** info@papatara.com.

**Note:** Nick and Peter Blanche, owners of PIR, were first approached by Dr John with his suggestion to establish an ecology/training programme in this part of the Solomon Islands, and to invite students to research and discover the delicate and rare beauty these islands have to offer.



John happy to find an interesting fly pollinated fungus.



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# Heroes of the Solomons

## Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington

BY RODERICK EIME



If ever there was a larger-than-life, comic book-worthy action hero, it was US Marine Corps fighter ace, 'Pappy' Boyington.

Boyington was born in Idaho on 4 December 1912 and took his first flight at the tender age of six. Not with some rogue barnstormer, mind you, but with Clyde Pangborn, a man who would later perform numerous daring feats including a trans-Pacific flight in 1931.

Clearly impressed with this experience and naturally drawn to military service, Boyington was an aviation cadet with the Marine Corps Reserve at the age of 23. By 28 he was a first lieutenant instructing at Pensacola, Florida.

A noted wrestler at college, he soon became known as a hard-drinking but likeable roughneck always sailing close to the edge of trouble. He had a certain charm, especially with the ladies, and a knack for upsetting his superior officers.

**It wasn't until September that Boyington put together a team of hand-picked, unassigned pilots and reformed Marine Fighter Squadron 214. The first suggested name of 'Boyington's Bastards' was dismissed by the USMC's PR and instead became known as 'The Black Sheep Squadron.'**



Looking for an escape as much as an opportunity, Boyington signed on with the famous volunteer air force, the 'Flying Tigers', and was soon in the air flying missions in P-40s over Burma under the command of "Colonel" Claire Lee Chennault. Many will remember John Wayne playing Capt. Jim Gordon in the famous, Oscar-nominated 1942 movie about the covert American operation. But Boyington, despite a (disputed) tally of six Japanese kills, was up to his usual antics and fell foul of

Chennault who threw him out of the Flying Tigers. The two would never reconcile.

Even with such a chequered record, the US Marine Corps needed combat-ready fighter pilots and by early 1943, Boyington was on Guadalcanal as Executive Officer (XO) of Marine Fighter Squadron 122. It wasn't until September that Boyington put together a team of hand-picked, unassigned pilots and reformed Marine Fighter Squadron 214. The first suggested name of 'Boyington's Bastards'

was dismissed by the USMC's PR and instead became known as 'The Black Sheep Squadron'.

Astride the potent F4U Corsairs with their new black bar insignia and pre-ordained reputation, VMF-214 set about tearing up the Japanese invaders, which they did with great aplomb. In less than three months, the renegade unit destroyed or damaged over 200 Japanese planes, half of them in air-to-air combat, as well as sinking ships and bombing shore installations.

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## HISTORY >>

A Presidential Unit Citation was quickly bestowed on them for extraordinary heroism in battle and they became a minor sensation, grabbing headlines back home in the US. They even bet major league baseball players they could down a Zero for every cap they were sent.

After this first triumphant tour of duty in which Boyington had amassed over a dozen kills, the 26 pilots left their base at Munda and headed for Sydney and the once famous Australia Hotel for a period of serious R&R. The ornate and prestigious hotel opened in 1891 and once stood where the massive MLC Centre now stands in Martin Place.

Doubtlessly hung over, they returned to the Solomons for a second tour but just five days before it too was over, Boyington was ambushed by overwhelming numbers of Japanese fighters near Rabaul and shot down. He recalls this moment in his autobiography, 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'.

I threw everything in the cockpit all the way forward - this means full speed ahead - and nosed my plane over to pick up extra speed until I was forced by water to level off. I had gone practically a half a mile at a speed of about four hundred knots, when all of a sudden my main gas tank went up in flames in front of my very eyes. The sensation was much the same as opening the door of a furnace and sticking one's head into the thing.

With his aircraft hopelessly damaged and he himself wounded by the explosion, Boyington baled out. Despite efforts by his men to locate him, he was plucked from the sea by a Japanese submarine and packed off as a POW through a series of camps, ending up in Yokohama at war's end.



*Boyington was ambushed by overwhelming numbers of Japanese fighters near Rabaul and shot down.*

**I had gone practically a half a mile at a speed of about four hundred knots, when all of a sudden my main gas tank went up in flames in front of my very eyes.**





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'Pappy' Boyington was repatriated after the war and received the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross in his new rank as a colonel, but it wasn't long until he was creating mayhem again, bouncing from job to job and drinking too much. Also a heavy smoker, his run of good fortune expired on January 11, 1988. Gregory Boyington, fighter ace and flawed American hero was dead at the age of 75.



*...his run of good fortune expired on January 11, 1988. Gregory Boyington, fighter ace and flawed American hero was dead at the age of 75.*

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His autobiography, written in 1958, attracted the attention of NBC television producers and a series of the same name was aired between 1976 and 1978 with Boyington played by co-director Robert Conrad. The series was set on a fictional island called Vella la Cava, which obviously referred to their one time base at Vella Lavella (Barakoma) where traces of the airfield can still be seen.

Apart from Barakoma airfield on Vella Lavella, VMF-214 under Boyington was also based at Banika Island in the Russell Islands Group, Henderson and Munda before moving to their final location on Bougainville. >>

For visits and WWII tours of Munda, contact:  
**Agnes Lodge Ltd** [www.agneslodge.com.sb](http://www.agneslodge.com.sb)  
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OUR DESTINATION >>

# Key to the City: LONDON

BY RODERICK EIME



**LONDON, WITHOUT TOO MUCH ARGUMENT**, is one of the great cities of the world. With lashings of great architecture both old and new, lots of history and a famously visitor-friendly atmosphere, London is attracting visitors like never before.

In fact, the Mastercard-commissioned Global Destinations Cities Index rates London as the world's favourite tourist destination ahead of such perennial favourites as Paris and Bangkok. London tourist numbers are expected to approach 19 million visitors annually. Imagine eight out of every ten Australians going to London in a year.

Most tourists will prefer the warmer, slightly drier months between June and September, but no matter when you visit, there will always be tourists around. Timing your visits to key attractions as well as transport and accommodation choices should be considered in advance.

## Arrival and Transfer to London

When travelling with FlySolomons partner, Emirates, you will arrive and depart from Heathrow's Terminal 3.

Transport into London itself can be by rail or road, all with varying convenience and price. If you have already pre-booked your hotel, consider one of the door-to-door shuttles that will deliver you to the hotel for a fixed price and at a fraction of the cost of a taxi.

## Getting Around London

Depending on where you have chosen to stay, you'll find London a relatively easy city to get around with many of the most popular sites within walking distance of each other. While taxis are plentiful and convenient, they are not always the most economical. If you are keen to see as many of the sights as possible, then think about one of the hop-on-hop-off bus services offered. Buy a ticket for the desired length of time, and use the service as often as you like, usually with either a live guide or pre-recorded commentary. Otherwise, the famous London Underground is fast and efficient.

## Seeing the Sights

Many of the key London attractions like museums, galleries and parks do not charge entry fees. But if you have your heart set on seeing some of the premium attractions like the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey or Windsor Castle, a multiple entry card like London Pass could be useful. The best value for one of these passes is for two or three days.





## The Top 10 Spots

Here is a brief summary of the most popular attractions plus a couple of 'hidden gems'. *Source: www.visitlondon.com*

### British Museum - free entry\*

The world-famous British Museum exhibits the works of man from prehistoric to modern times, from around the world. Highlights include the Rosetta Stone, the Parthenon sculptures and the mummies in the Ancient Egypt collection.

### National Gallery - free entry\*

Dominating Trafalgar Square, London's National Gallery is a vast space filled with Western European paintings from the 13th to the 19th centuries. View works by masters such as Van Gogh, da Vinci, Botticelli, Constable, Renoir, Titian and Stubbs.

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**Tate Modern** - free entry\*

This grand building on the banks of the Thames is Britain's national museum of modern and contemporary art. Its distinctive shape is due to its former life as a power station. The restaurants offer expansive views across the city.

**London Eye** - entry fee

You cannot miss this major feature of London's skyline. It has some of London's best views from any of the 32 capsules, each weighing 10 tonnes and holding up to 25 people. Hailed as a breathtaking experience with an unforgettable perspective of more than 55 of London's most famous landmarks, a single rotation takes just 30 minutes.

**Science Museum** - free entry\*

Learn the future of space travel or ask that difficult question: "who am I?" This enthralling museum will challenge and educate you at the same time. See, touch and experience the major scientific advances of the last 300 years and view screenings in the eye-popping Imax cinema.



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**Victoria and Albert Museum** - free entry\*

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**Tower of London** - entry fee

One of the world's most famous buildings, you can take a tour with one of the Yeoman Warders and discover its 900-year history as a royal palace, prison and place of execution, arsenal, jewel house and even a zoo. Gaze up at the White Tower, creep through a medieval king's bedchamber and marvel at the Crown Jewels.

**Royal Museums Greenwich** - free entry\*

Visit the world's largest maritime museum, see the historic Queen's House, stand astride the Prime Meridian at Royal Observatory Greenwich and explore the famous Cutty Sark. All this is part of the Royal Museums Greenwich

**Madame Tussauds** - entry fee

Here you'll come face-to-face with some of the world's most famous personalities, heroes and villains. From Shakespeare to Lady Gaga you'll meet influential figures from showbiz, sport, politics and even royalty. Challenge Usain Bolt, get close to popsters One Direction or receive a personal audience with Her Majesty the Queen.

\* While entry is free, some special exhibitions or spaces may require a special fee



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## Tucked Away

Not all fascinating attractions are larger than life. Try these 'secret' sights.

### Sherlock Holmes Museum

Located at 221B Baker Street (of course!). In this historic building, see Holmes's apartment, an exhibition featuring life size waxworks from the legendary detective's most famous adventures and pick up some souvenirs and antiques in the shop.

### Churchill War Rooms

Part of Imperial War Museums, explore the original Cabinet War Rooms, the underground headquarters that sheltered Churchill and his wartime government during the Blitz. These hidden rooms once buzzed with strategies and secrets. Includes the Churchill Museum.

### It's Show Time

London is famous for its hundreds of theatres, small and large, where you can see concerts, recitals, plays or lavish musicals.

The most famous theatrical district, the West End, is like New York's Broadway where the most famous productions take place in venues such as Her Majesty's Theatre, Lyceum or Palladium.

Although you might find it tricky to get seats for the most popular shows, many 'last minute' ticket services offer late bookings at reduced rates. Savings can also be made by purchasing a dinner and theatre package. >>

### Further Information

Research and explore all London has to offer at the official web site, [www.visitlondon.com](http://www.visitlondon.com) - London Pass [www.londonpass.com](http://www.londonpass.com) - Hop-on Hop-off buses [www.bigbustours.com](http://www.bigbustours.com) or [www.theoriginaltour.com](http://www.theoriginaltour.com)

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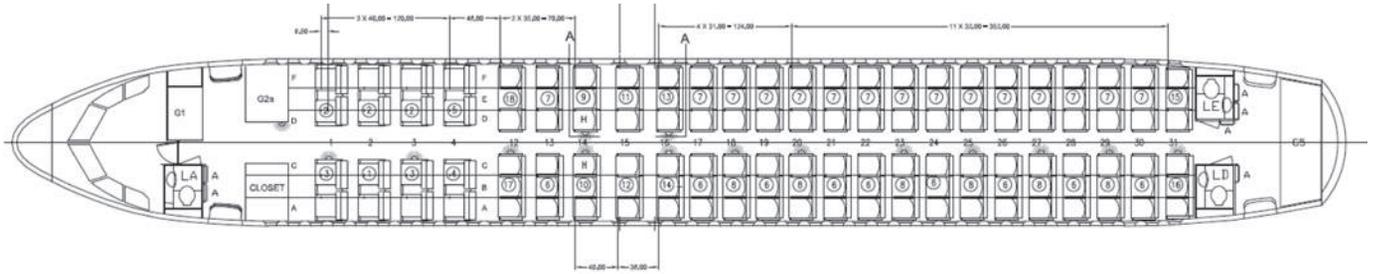


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**Configuration:** Business:16 Economy: 120  
**Current Routes:** Brisbane, Nadi, Port Vila



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**Cruising Speed:** 490 kph  
**Seating capacity:** 36  
**Crew:** 3 Crew including 1 cabin crew  
**Current Routes:** Honiara; Seghe: Munda; Gizo; Kira Kira; Santa Cruz  
**Aircraft in Fleet:** 1

**AIRCRAFT: Twin Otter**



**Length:** 15.77 m  
**Wing Span:** 19.81 m  
**Range:** 4 hrs 10 minutes  
**Cruising Speed:** 338 kph  
**Seating capacity:** 16  
**Crew:** 2  
**Current Routes:** All Ports in the Solomon Islands  
**Aircraft in Fleet:** 2

**BNI: Islander**



**Length:** 10.86 m  
**Wing Span:** 14.94 m  
**Range:** 5 hrs  
**Cruising Speed:** 257 kph  
**Seating capacity:** 9  
**Crew:** 1  
**Current Routes:** All ports in the Solomon Islands  
**Aircraft in Fleet:** 1

**SOLOMON AIRLINES  
GENERAL INFORMATION**

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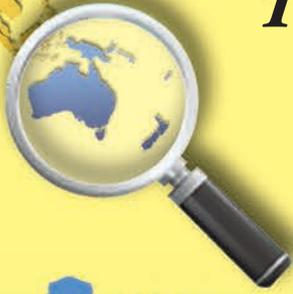
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# International & Domestic CONNECTIONS



## International Connections



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### The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

Province	Area	Population	Highest Point	Capital
Guadalcanal	5,336 km <sup>2</sup>	141,403	2,447m	Honiara
Central	1,000 km <sup>2</sup>	27,928	510m	Tulagi
Western	5,279 km <sup>2</sup>	81,214	1,661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km <sup>2</sup>	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaita	4,234 km <sup>2</sup>	159,923	1,303m	Auki
Makira	3,188 km <sup>2</sup>	40,386	1,250m	Kirakira
Temotu	926 km <sup>2</sup>	24,412	923m	Lata
Choiseul	3,294 km <sup>2</sup>	25,870	1,060m	Taro
Rennell & Bellona	276 km <sup>2</sup>	3,025	220m	Tingoa

Country	Land	Population	Capital	Products
Solomon Islands	29,785 km <sup>2</sup>	530,669	Honiara	Agriculture, fisheries and forestry
Australia	7.6 million km <sup>2</sup>	19.6 million	Canberra	Agriculture, mining, manufacturing, services and tourism
Fiji	18,300 km <sup>2</sup>	850,000	Suva	Agriculture, clothing, fisheries, sugar and tourism
New Caledonia	18,576 sq km <sup>2</sup>	200,000	Noumea	Nickel, agriculture, fishing
New Zealand	264,000 km <sup>2</sup>	3.8 million	Wellington	Agriculture, forestry, services, manufacturing and tourism
Papua New Guinea	463,000 km <sup>2</sup>	6.1 million	Port Moresby	Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and mining
Vanuatu	12,180 km <sup>2</sup>	204,000	Port Vila	Agriculture, fisheries and tourism



## Domestic Connections

## Solomon Islands

### Solomon Islands Offices

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### Provinces

The Solomon Islands is made up of 992 islands which are divided into nine provinces:

- Choiseul** - Provincial capital: Taro
- Central** - Provincial capital: Tulagi
- Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala
- Rennell/Bellona** - Provincial capital: Tigoa
- Guadalcanal** - Provincial (& national capital): Honiara
- Makira/Ulawa** - Provincial capital: Kira Kira
- Malaita** - Provincial capital: Auki
- Western** - Provincial capital: Gizo
- Temotu** - Provincial capital: Lata

### International Airport Information and Allowances Guide

	HONIARA	BRISBANE	PORT MORESBY	PORT VILA	NADI
Airport	Solomon Islands	Australia	Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu	Fiji
Distance to City	10km	10km	8km	6km	8km
Bus Fare	SBD10.00	AUD6.00	PGK10.00	VUV100	FJD1.00
Taxi Fare	SBD70.00	AUD30.00	PGK30.00	VUV800	FJD20.00
Duty Free	2 litres	2.250 litres	2 litres	1.5 litre	2.25 litres
Allowance	200 cigs	250 cigs	200 cigs	250 cigs	200 cigs
Exchange Rate	1 USD=8SBD	1AUD=7SBD	1PGK=3SBD	100VUV=7.48SBD	1FJD=5SBD

\*Airport Tax for Honiara SBD100.00

\*Information as shown is to be used as a guide only and is subject to change without notice.

# “Aviation- Key Symbiotic Partner for Tourism Development- The case of the Solomon Islands”



**AROUND 200 PARTICIPANTS** from all tourism stake holders in the country assembled at the Heritage Park Hotel at the Ohara conference centre on 29th August 2014.

The day long Our Telekom sponsored National Tourism Forum started at 8am with opening remarks by the Minister of Culture & Tourism Hon Samuel Manetoali on the importance of tourism as not only an alternative but a sustainable industry. Further re-emphasising the industry’s importance was the Director of Tourism and the way to do it is simply “taking a step change,” a theme that obviously held all participants in unison given the huge potential the industry has in the economic development of Solomon Islands yet it is still by far the least developed of all.

Given the importance aviation plays in tourism, one cannot help but pose for a moment if for whatever reason it becomes a hindrance be it for political or natural reasons; how can tourism thrive? As one of the keynote speakers out of 12 other presenters covering topics from accessing finance to marketing during the forum, Solomon Airlines General Manager for Commercial & Operations Mr Gus Kraus gave an insightful presentation on why aviation will always be a key symbiotic partner for tourism development for Solomon Islands.

Solomon Airlines has weathered the storm 52 years on despite the complexities of the aviation industry which never ceases to develop, evolve and demand the highest consideration in terms of safety and security, innovation and technology not to mention being at the mercy of the fluctuation of the SBD & world fuel prices in order to be in business. Yet so much has been demanded of Solomon Airlines to provide the best service with competitive prices with all the trimmings however, one doesn’t have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that given the



*Solomon Airlines' GM Commercial & Operations - Gus Kraus addressing the Q&A session at the Our Telekom National Tourism Forum at the Heritage Park Hotel in Honiara.*

limitations on infrastructure, which is none of their own making, such as poor airport runways, airport land disputes, demand to service uneconomical routes coupled with social and political factors as well as a highly competitive market internationally, Solomon Airlines continues to do its best besides the usual barrage of undertones to do more with cheaper fares.

Put simply; with about 80 percent coming in as business tourist and 20 percent as leisure tourists, room occupancy rates averaging at 80% for all hotels on any given week, filling up bums in seats remains a challenge when infrastructure on the ground simply cannot support the influx in tourist numbers. A step change to help address this challenge couldn’t be more profound and therefore; action to support more and specifically identified infrastructure is the way to go. Commented one of the speakers – “Just Do

It” was a profound statement that should be considered.

In summing up, Mr Kraus reiterated Solomon Airlines’ commitment to be partners with all tourism stake holders is at the forefront of its business plans and by doing so it can help grow the country’s tourism potential. A testament to that was signing of the MOU with the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau at the beginning of this year which is by far the most important arrangement yet between two of the major tourism stake holders to date. An arrangement that has to date helped to bring travel writers, travel wholesalers into Solomon Islands, with the resolve to increase the country’s profile overseas especially in Australia and New Zealand.

Tourism can be a lose word used by everyone but that can only be “realised through the action of many.” After all... Tourism is everyone’s business!



# GAME CHANGING ASSESSMENTS



*Participants of the Investigation into Risk and Change Management Processes in Honiara in July.*

**SOLOMON AIRLINES CELEBRATES** its 52nd anniversary on 7th October 2014 and with a long history of various ownerships along its path, it also brings continuous demands for regular reviews of its management in every facet of its operations.

To be in tune with current aviation standards on managing safety, a workshop on Investigation into Risk and Change Management Processes was held at the Solomon Airlines training centre involving 16 staff on 31st July 2014 and conducted by an IATA certified trainer, Jose J Castellanos of VP Aviation Division, QSL Consultants.

With its second IOSA audit also scheduled for November of this year, it couldn't be timelier. This is particularly so under current conditions of continuous growth in air transport demand,

frequent scarcity of airport and infrastructure capacity, and thus permanent and increased pressure on the system components. There is also the growing public and operators' awareness of these and other system external factors such as air pollution, noise, land use, water/soil pollution and waste management, and congestion.

Together, this calls for a need to assess aviation safety risk factors as a means of increasing the effectiveness of safety risk management system by developing and implementing, effects and criticality analysis, estimation factors based on their importance, how hazardous they are, their detectability, probability, criticality, and frequency.

The Manager for Corporate Safety, Security and Audit, Mr. Napoleon Padabela, stated after

the workshop "As we approach our 52nd year of service to this country and internationally, the need to be 'updated and refreshed' calls for a more vigorous and proactive approach in addressing safety issues."

The CEO Captain Ron Sumsum, a stalwart of safety both as a pilot and CEO says "we need to ensure we do what we say and we say what we do as per documented company procedures."

"Safety has been Solomon Airlines uncompromising stand and will always remain so going forward.

"Historically, in 1968 we became the smallest international airline in the world, and going forward, we intend to become the "Best Little Airline in the Pacific" through our safety policies and practices." 



# Solomon Star

*Your Solomon Star Guide to the Solomon Islands*

**CLIMATE:** Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28C. April to November tends to be drier, and November to April wetter.



**WHAT TO WEAR:** Light and casual. Keep brief beachwear for beaches.



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

**HONIARA:** The capital is eight kilometres from Honiara International Airport.

**AIRPORT TAX:** All relevant taxes are inclusive of ticket cost.

**HEALTH:** Malaria is 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 or tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.



**CURRENCY:** \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 are Solomon Islands notes; coins are \$2, \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c.

**BUSINESS HOURS:** Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturdays 8am - noon.

**BANKS:** Bank South Pacific opens Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm; and ANZ Banking Group and Westpac open Monday to Friday - 9am to 4pm.



**TELECOMMUNICATIONS:** Local and international calls may be made from Our Telekom public card phones which are in prominent locations in Honiara and provincial centres or GSM Mobile services. Telephone and internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our Telekom offices. GSM prepaid and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and planned deployment to all other provincial centres. Breeze Rifil cards are available for prepaid mobile top-ups. Our Telekom also provides ADSL broadband internet service through landlines or you can access the internet through Bumblebee wireless broadband hotspots located at major hotels, international airport terminal and Panatina Plaza.

**TIPPING:** Not expected and not encouraged.

**TRANSPORT:** Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars: Avis, Economy, Travel Car Solomon, Budget Car Rental and Kosol Car Rental.

**INTERNATIONAL AIR:** Solomon Airlines, Fiji Airways, Air Niugini and Pacific Blue serve Honiara International Airport.



**DOMESTIC:** Solomon Airlines operates services to most parts of the country.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220-240 volts in Honiara and some outer island centres.

**RADIO:** PAOA FM broadcasts from transmitters at Honiara, Guadalcanal (97.7) and Malaita (101.7), Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation has medium wave and FM services. ZFM and religious stations broadcast in Honiara area. Radio Australia and BBC local relays are on FM in Honiara.



**NEWSPAPERS:** The English-language Solomon Star is the only daily newspaper and covers local, regional and international news. Other newspapers - Island Sun.

**TELEVISION:** Has one TV service ONE TV which is locally owned.



**HONIARA ACTIVITIES:** River rafting, golf, tennis, scuba diving, walks, battlefield tours, swimming, sailing, bush

walking and fishing.

**SOUVENIRS:** Solomon Islands law forbids unauthorised export of war relics retrieved from land sites or sunken wrecks. Consult the National Museum of the Solomon Islands for advice.



**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Rotary Club meets at the Flamingo Lounge, Honiara Hotel, at 5.30pm every Tuesday. Soroptomist International of Solomon Islands meets on the first Mondays of each month at the Mendana Hotel at 5.15pm.





# SUPREME CAR RENTAL



Supreme Car Rentals offers a variety of cars with feature you need for safety & comfort. For Business, we know how to treat your business with the services you need to keep your business on the move and within budget. For individual Renters, we have personal services to make your travels with us easier & more enjoyable.



Kukum Highway, P.O. Box 1298 Honiara, Solomon Islands  
Located in Pacific Casino Hotel

Email: [carrental@solomon-hotel.com](mailto:carrental@solomon-hotel.com) • Tel: (677) 25009 ext 306 • Fax: (677) 25220

# OCEAN VIEW

**We Accept booking for the following:**

- SPECIAL FUNCTIONS
- COCKTAIL PARTY
- BUFFET

## *Restaurant*

“SPECIALIZED IN WESTERN CUISINE”



Kukum Highway, P.O. Box 1298, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Located in Pacific Casino Hotel

**Tel: (677) 25009 et 305**

**Opens at 6:30am to 10:00pm daily**

**Email: [oceanview@solomon-hotel.com](mailto:oceanview@solomon-hotel.com)**



# Pacific Casino Hotel

Kukum Highway, PO Box 1298, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Tel: +677 25009 Fax: +677 22880 Email: [reservation@solomon-hotel.com](mailto:reservation@solomon-hotel.com) Website: [www.solomon-hotel.com](http://www.solomon-hotel.com)

## CONVENIENT LOCATION

Located in the middle of Honiara CBD and from Honiara's International Airport – It's the perfect location with a mile-long compound for business and tourist travellers alike!

## WELL-SET FACILITIES

Pacific Casino Hotel offers 170 spacious, comfortable and fully air-conditioned rooms with Satellite TV and 24Hr movie channels, private refrigerators and coffee/ tea services, with all Suites Room boasting separate seating lounges and private balconies. Keeping with total comfort, convenience and ease of access in mind for the international traveller, International Direct Dialling (IDD) in all rooms and Internet hotspots are available in various locations. Other services extended are laundry, Internet Cafe, Car Rental and Conference room facilities. For the leisure facilities are Swimming Pool, Billiard Room and Gym & Fitness centre.

## VARIOUS CUISINES FROM WESTERN TO ORIENT - 6 RESTAURANTS CATERING TO ANY TABLE PALETTE!

The famous Ocean View Restaurant serves the finest of Western cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, while on an outdoor dining balcony, taking in the spectacular ocean view backdrop. For the best authentic Asian cuisine, Jina's

Restaurant offers the best in Chinese cuisine, which is located between the hotel and the casino. Want more? Pacific Seafood Restaurant, the Korean Restaurant and Fun Cafe all host extensive wide range of international Asian cuisines – all at your choice.

## WONDERFUL ENTERTAINMENT – BARS, NIGHT CLUBS & KARAOKE LIGHTS UP YOU NIGHT LIFE

Cowboy's Grill Bar & Restaurant newly established, specializing in Western cuisine, is all about convenience and fun for an unforgettable star experience. The very popular Captain's Bar provides a wide selection of cocktails, vintage wines, spirits and appetizers, located on the 1st floor of the Hotel which opens daily till late night. For more fun time, the Top 10 and Top Star Karaoke night clubs give the best in international and local beats for those not of the faint-hearted!

## FAMOUS & BIGGEST CASINO – CLUB SUPREME

As a guest, presentation of the room key allows a free entrance to the members-only Club Supreme, the biggest and the best Casino in Solomon Islands. It's that simple! So why not try your hand in Blackjack, Roulette, Baccarat or Pacific Poker? Or go for the Pokies Centre for a brilliant night with your luck.

Relax, enjoy and indulge at the Pacific Casino Hotel – a place where you can have it all !!!

