

Tonga Marine Tourism Briefing Video/Info

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www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4 to do
www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf

All information is from my observations as a resident of Vava'u (since 2007) and citizen of Tonga (since 2015), it is given freely to improve tourism and improve safety at sea.. I have sailed since I was 12, attended Outward Bound Anakiwa at 21. I have about 150+ days of blue water sailing, Sunburst to yachts to Tall ships.NZ to Tonga 13 times. I am a Padi Divemaster. Voluntereed for NZ coastguard, Vava'u SAR for 10 years with VERA. I do not rganise rallies but I am port officer for OCC, ICNZ, PCA, SSCA, CA, Noonsite, RCC, Trans Ocean, World Arc, Pacific Posse. I give SAFE information rather than to benefit a commercial business that a rally may promote.

Do not rush through Tonga, you are not doing it justice to spend less than 2 months here. Come back next year and enter in Ha'apai or Vava'u. A lot of people spend 5 years going through the Pacific before going to Australia and West.

Tonga

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The strategic location of Vava'u at the crossroads of several sailing routes, as well as the reputation of the main anchorage, Refuge Harbour, as a safe hurricane hole, has turned it into a busy yachting centre – Jimmy Cornell

Population 108,000, Vava'u 16000.

176 islands, 34 inhabited, 5 Island groups. Christianity in constitution. Modesty and Sabbath rules apply.

13 hours ahead of GMT. Be aware of dateline changes!

Named Friendly Islands by Capt cook in 1773. SIDS small island developing state.

Direct flights from Nukualofa to NZ, Australia, Samoa, and Fiji. Vava'u direct to Nadi, Fiji April to Feb, and Samoa. Vava'u international airport development starts 2025., finish 2028.

One way crew letter from immigration \$34.50 or <https://onwardticket.com/vavau> Visa for approved countries upon arrival at customs, other countries you must apply at immigration upon arrival – pre application is not required.

Trade winds April to December SE or E. spring tide 6 foot, average 4 to 5 foot

Cyclone season November to march. Most common cyclones jan, feb

Whale swim 1 July to October

VHF 26, 60 repeater, not much traffic on 16,

ANOA, 12 months boat visa. Human Visa 6 months max, requires exit to another country to reset.

Medical is varied but improving, recommend health insurance.

Large Christian based constitution. Conservative dress standards, Sunday rules apply.

Vava'u boatyard monohulls 50ft, 25 tonns. Cats 58ft, 25 tonnes. Draft max 7ft. You can, import duty free, non consumable parts for yachts.

Shipping routes via Auckland and United State SF every month. Couriers 2 weeks +. Duty free for boat parts, require TIN from revenue.

Pets – quarantined on vessel for a term, vaccination paperwork.

Starlink is approved.

Ciguatera is a very small issue. Certain reefs and fish.

15/1/22 HTHH Underwater Volcano caused Tsunami. Largest Volcanic event in 100 years. Biggest impact on Tongatapu, then Nomuka.

Then Ha'apai, very little impact on Vava'u.

Social Media resource <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals>

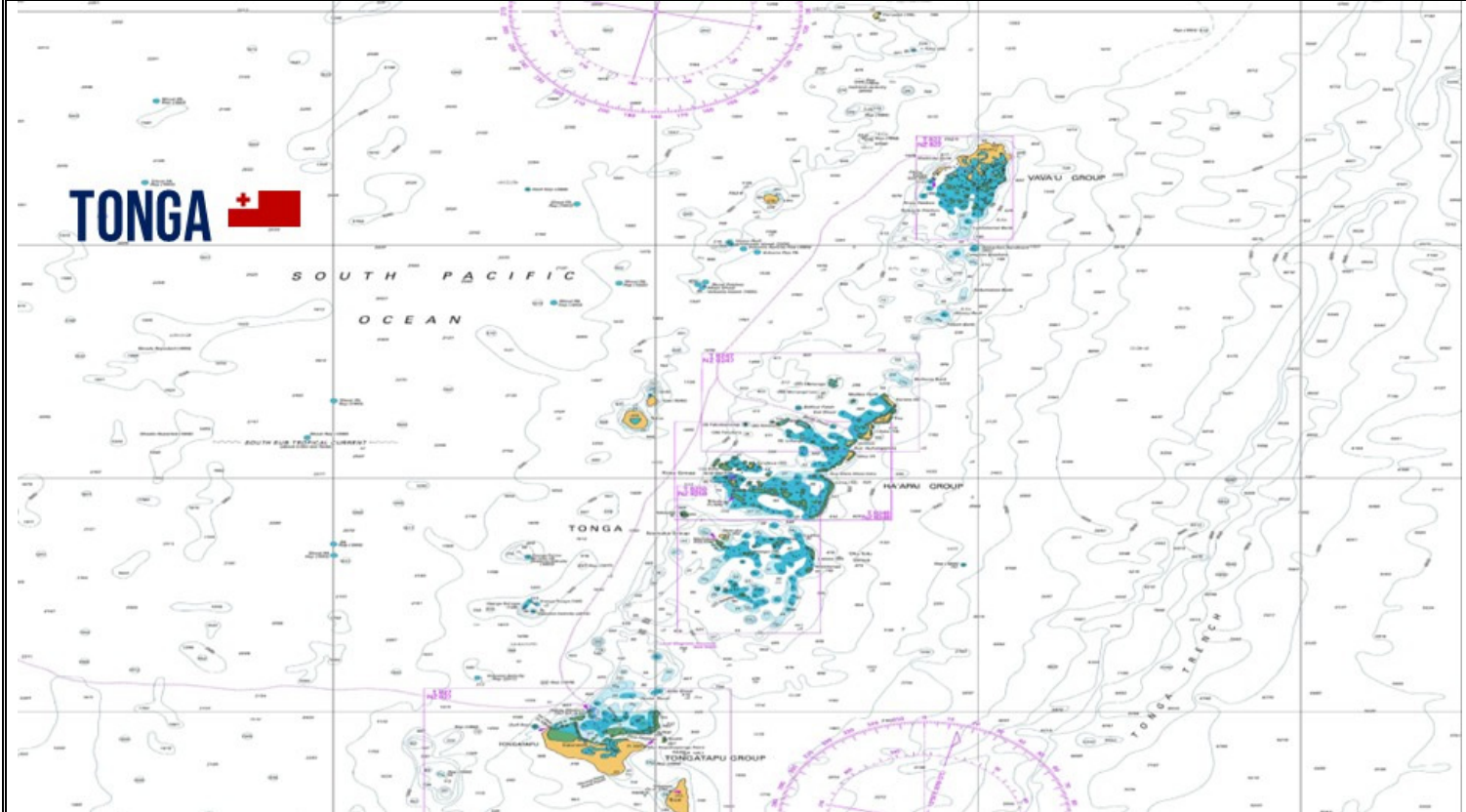
Social Media <https://www.facebook.com/vavaucruisersnet>

GPS mapping and info www.sailingtonga.com

Whatsapp **Whatsapp group "Sailing to Tonga " Admin Help/information sailing to, and in, the Kingdom Tonga, from someone based in Tonga that will help with options rather than just clipping your ticket**

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGN> X

Info www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf always up to date



Niuas Island Group. [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

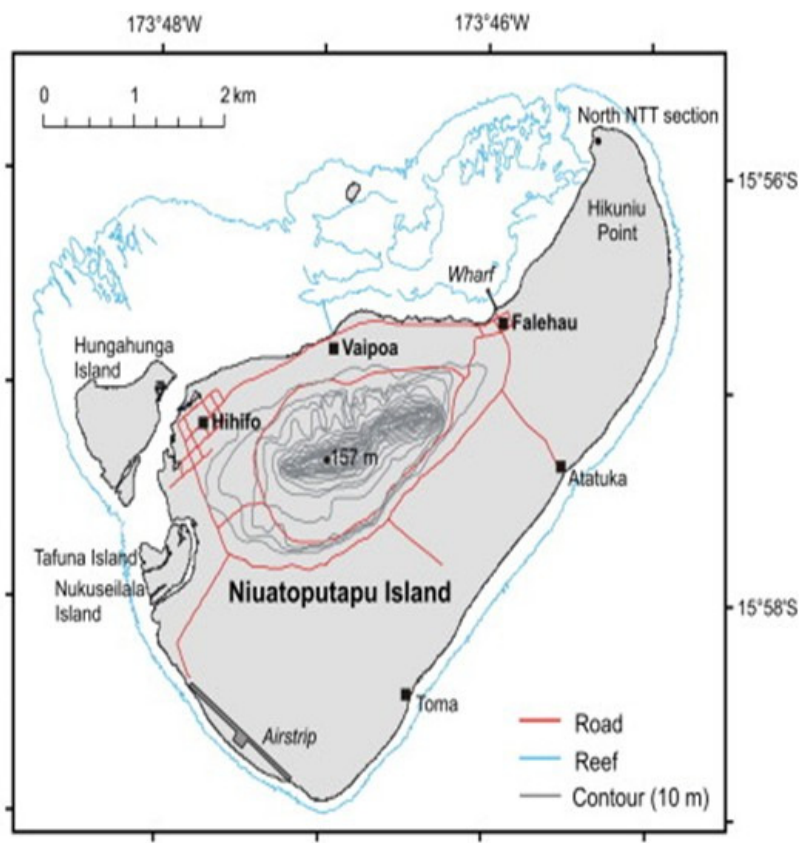
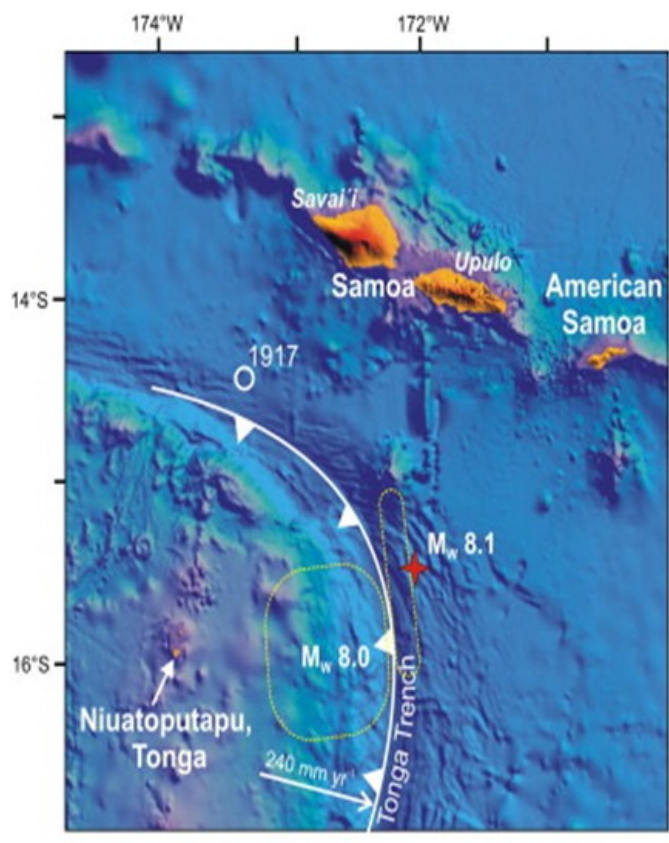
Furthest Northern Group. Entry/exit port Niutoputapu. Main islands Niutoputapu (sacred Island), Niufo'ou (many coconuts) and Tafahi (Side Island). Cannot extend visa!

Niutoputapu has a good walk to the peak, freshwater spring. Snorkelling, diving and beaches are unspoilt. Whalewatch from a beach or the peak august, September. A ferry comes monthly or bi monthly from Nukualofa, Vava'u... shopping is limited, fuel and repairs are limited. Amazing local honey.

Niufo'ou Has Vai Lahi (Big lake) in middle of island

Tafahi is an extinct Volcano, it has a spectacular crater. Hire a local fishing boat and guide most days from Niutoputapu. Fish with a local can be educational

<https://tongapocketguide.com/the-complete-guide-to-the-niuas/>
https://www.vavau.to/Cruising_Guide3.pdf From page 14 onwards.





NIUATOPUTAPU



NIUATOPUTAPU

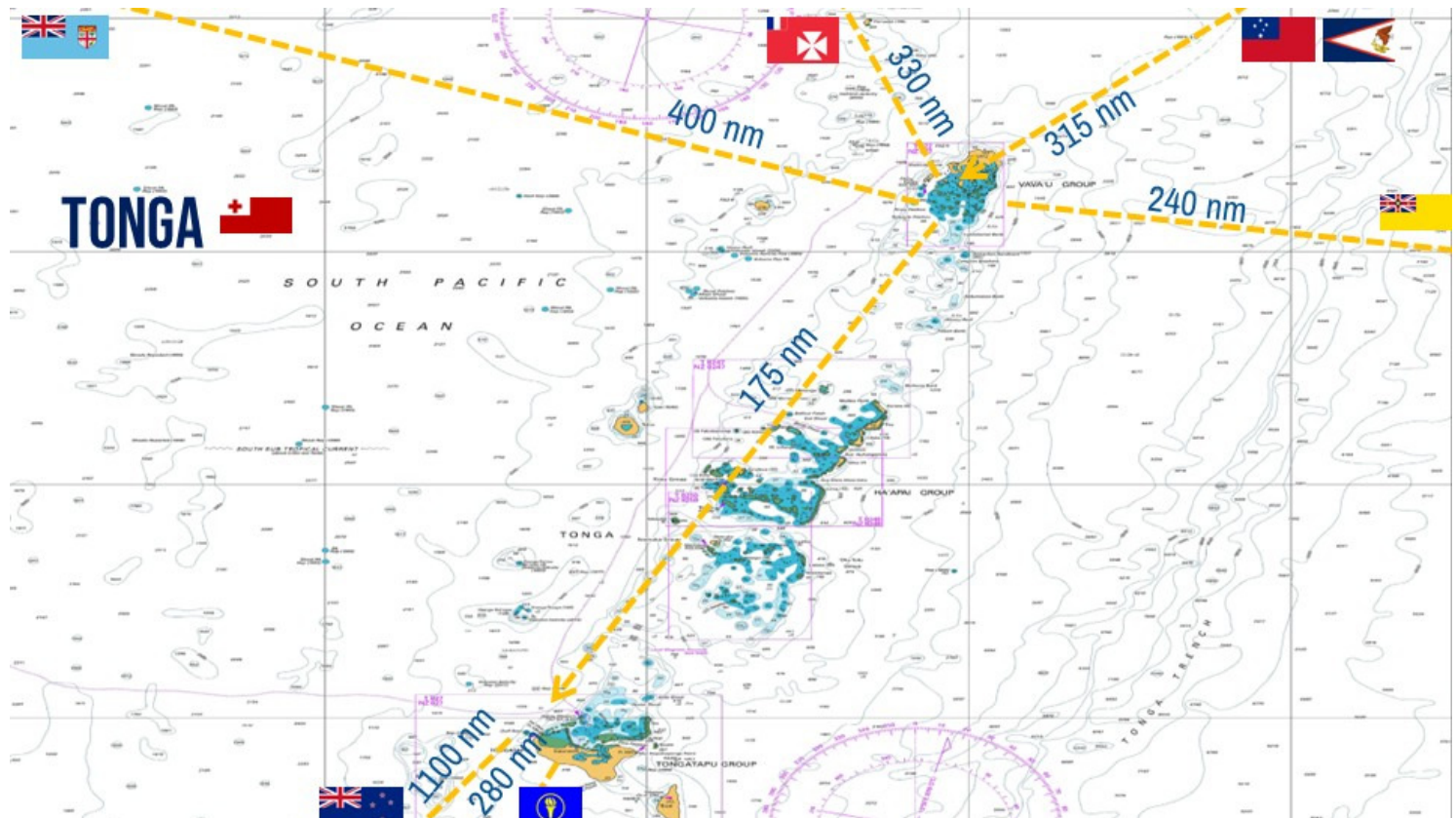
Vava'u Island Group

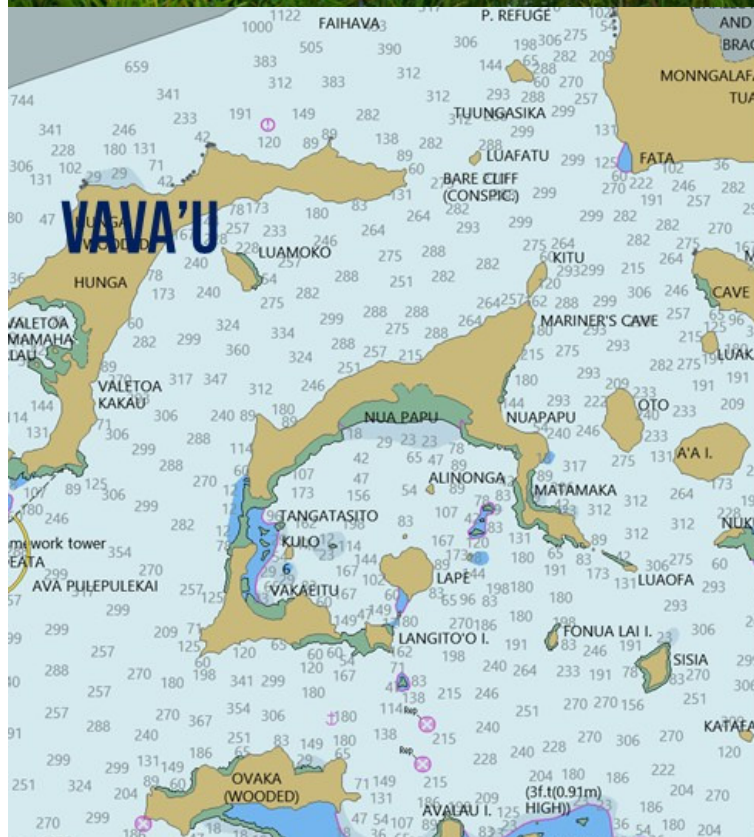
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Capital Neiafu. Entry/exit point. The pearl of Tonga. Anchorage are close together. Diving, snorkelling. 50+ moorings. Good provisioning, café, restaurant. Duty free fuel at wharf if you are departing Tonga. LPG refilling. Crew change flying into Vava'u via Fiji and Samoa, True International airport completed by 2028 – private enterprise. A new Hospital is being built from 2025 by UN/Australia. A new Tongan Navy base begins 2025 onwards. Paradise Hotel is also being rebuilt probably 2026.

Pronounced Vavaoo.

Traditionally yachts depart to NZ in October per cyclone insurance, weather is more stable the later you can leave. With the Vava'u boatyard this opens up staying all or part of the off season and have the option to haulout if required. Cruise without the maddening rush. If you are departing to NZ it is common "kiwi" practice to depart directly from Vava'u to Minerva. Vava'u allows you to fully provision and depart quickly if a weather window opens. Bear in mind swell and weather patterns frequently are uncomfortable to go through Ha'apai and Nukualofa, unless you have to collect crew in Nuku'alofa. 2022/3/4 bad storms went through Nuku'alofa, Ha'apai was unpleasant at times. You may also depart from Ha'apai. If you return next year enter in the Ha'apai, and go further north as you wish.





Ha'apai Island Group

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Capital Lifuka. Very little wind cover, sandy bottom. Good drift diving. Basic provisioning, refuelling and LPG is an issue. Entry/exit point – cannot extend visa!

Check in/Out Mornings ONLY

<https://tongapocketguide.com/the-complete-guide-to-haapai/>

www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf

https://www.vavau.to/Cruising_Guide3.pdf From page 14 onwards.

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Passage planning/weather routing [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#) to be completed and peer reviewed, also NZ to Tonga passage planning to be done

www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.mp4 to do
www.vavau.to/passageplanningtonz.pdf

www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf
www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4 to do

It is well worth the money to get Passage planning for your vessel

Qualified Meteorologists

www.metbob.com bob@metbob.com Bob McDavitt NZ Meteorologist.

NZD10 per 5 minutes. 2 x Departure prep 10 minutes, voyage 1 x forecast 35 minutes, 3 x underway updates 15 minutes ballpark NZD120

brucetheweatherman@gmail.com Bruce Buckley, Perth Australia Meteorologist.

Dependent on ports. 10 to 30 minute per forecast. Pacific to NZ ballpark AUD450, long term client discounts around 20%

clouds@ozemail.com.au Roger Badham, Australia Meteorologist. No pricing info.

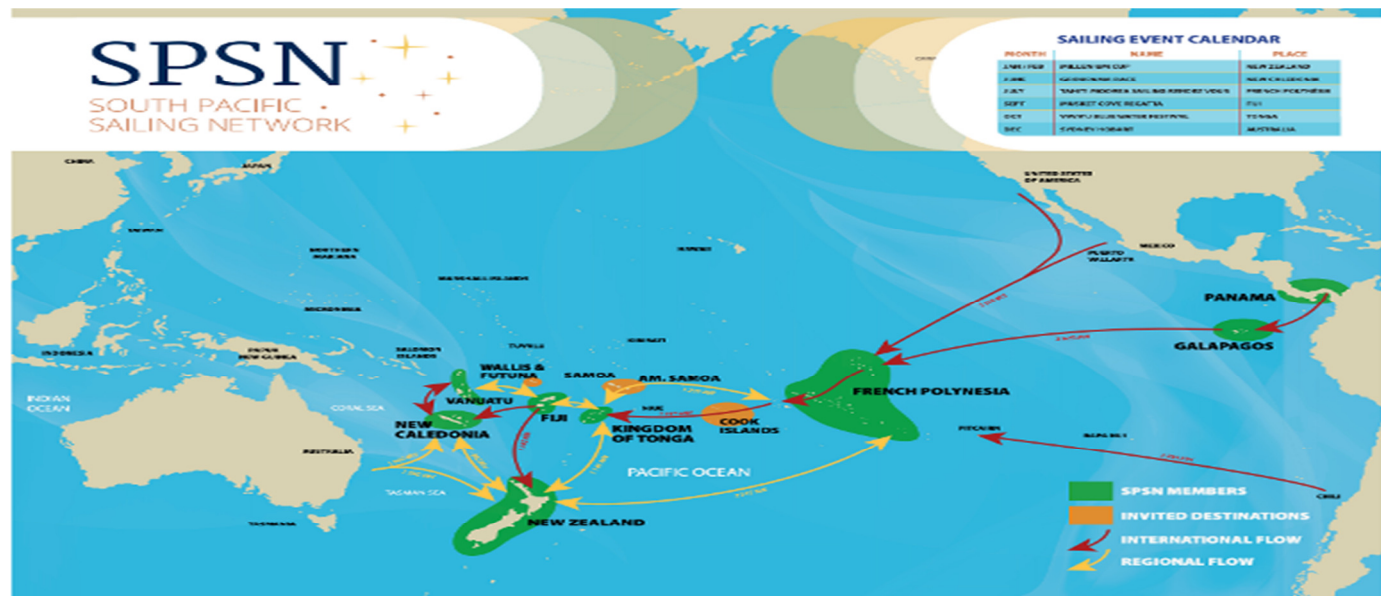
App/Non-qualified Meteorologists

www.passageweather.com Free

www.predictwind.com \$0 to USD499 per annum

www.coastalandoffshorecruising.com/ocean-tactics-2/ John Martin Single Routing – \$250USD for C&OC members \$297USD for other associated club members (\$347USD, non members). for a single passage, up to 3000nm, longer passages by negotiation. Making more than one passage in one cruising season? Then our Season Pass** may benefit your needs. \$550USD for C&OC and Ocean Posse members. \$597USD for other associated club members (\$650USD, non member)***.

<https://passageguardian.nz> Passage monitoring



NZ to Tonga and vice versa
Tonga to Vanuatu and Australia.
Tonga to Fiji and vice versa
Samoa to Tonga
French Poly to Tonga

Quarantine: [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Protecting Tongas plants and animals. Yacht rubbish clearance. Please also contact them regarding procedures for clearing in animals prior to arriving into the county. www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg

At this time no restrictions on fruit, veg, food or meat. Best to declare fruit and veg though in case of issues. If you have crew they can bring in frozen meat in an insulated bag, with a receipt,.. Declare it on arrival and pay a very reasonable duty fee.

Bear in mind below regulations as we tend to follow pacific trends.

Fiji has increased biosecurity quarantine standards, no pork, labelled vac packed NZ meat, honey, eggs.

Animals bonded to private yachts, can come ashore after quarantine. NO Government vet in country so this is not a quarantine safe country to take pets to NZ/Fiji (6 months). NZ you must now fly animals in for quarantine. Fiji pets are now not allowed on or off the boat.

Alcohol: list everything! It may be bonded and duty paid on consumed portion

Aus – no pork with bone, meat in cans only, no honey, cheese, eggs

Fiji - labelled nz meat only, no pork

NZ – labelled nz meat only, no honey, eggs, no veg, no pork

[Communications/Internet: \[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Tonga had the HTHH volcanic explosion 15/1/22 which created a Tsunami. This destroyed our submarine fibre cable. Tongatapu link was fixed in a few months, Ha’apai and Vava’ were replaced in 7/23. Both Telco’s relied on Satellite with Digicel invested in long range Microwave.

Starlink also donated 50 units to Tonga, most were clustered in Government Ministries and Schools in the CBD of both outer Islands, these were supposed to be free to all public. Cable was repaired 2023, an earthquake early 2024 took the cable out again –no word on timeframe to repair. A 6 month interim approval for Starlink was granted 6/24, Full licence issued 12/24

E-sims are active with TCC only in 2024, Digicel is set to follow.

Voicemail options exist on cellphones, but not widely used or understood, suggest not leaving a message... it will probably not be listened to.

Turn data saver on. Android/Apple: search settings for “data saver” and activate it. Data is not cheap here or fast, this will save a considerable amount of data and give you more speed. It turns off autoplay, auto audio, drops image quality a little on facbook and youtube, it also stops autosync for backups, app polling. PC’s turn on “metered connection” www.vavau.to/reducingdata.pdf

Digicel – owned by Telstra since 2022. GSM phone and internet services. 8nnnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 day, \$50 for 22gb over 30 days, \$70 for 35gb over 30 days. Make sure you opt out of the off bundle casual rate, by sending Y to 515, or your money will disappear if you do not have a data plan active. International plans \$4 30 min, \$10 90 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$12 2500 mins and texts to Digicel only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to TCC. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using My Digicel app, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 123 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours *120# money Balance, *130# Plan summary *777# Sim number *123# plan purchasing My Digicel App for data balance. Starlink reseller

TCC – government owned. Landline, GSM phone and Internet services. 7nnnnnn number sequence. Internet top20 for 7gb over 30 days. No opt out of the off bundle casual rate. International plans \$3.45 40 min, \$2.30 15 mins. Monthly local calling/texting \$10 1000 mins and texts to TCC only otherwise 50 cents per min/text to Digicel. Resellers all over, online credit card charging using TCC Mobile/Bing apps, Cafe Tropicana is a reseller. SIM cards \$5 through TCC shop ONLY. Also opt out of text ads – they get annoying. Call 800 222 and ask to remove text ads, takes 24 hours. TCC app does not work very well. Starlink reseller

WANTOK – PNG/Local partnership just starting up, in Tongatapu only currently. Starlink reseller

Niua only has TCC services, limited power/solar.



Responsible Cruising [\[Return to Table of Content\]](#)

Respect local ecosystems

Tonga has introduced marine reserves (SMAs and FHRs) to encourage conservation and village-only fishing areas.
 Special Management Areas (SMA): NO fishing allowed and fees for anchoring, snorkelling may be charged by the Village.
 Fish Habitat Reserves (FHR): NO anchoring, NO fishing.
 Just because it says Anchorage, does not mean you can anchor, check the following charts for details on the zones..
 An old tonga sma/fhr map is available https://vavau.to/Tonga_SMA-flier.pdf
 Individual island updates here <https://vavau.to/vavausma2024.jpeg> <https://vavau.to/haapaisma2023.jpeg>

Whaleswim/watch: protected industry for your protection as well as the whales protection. Go with a trained/licenced operators, human vs Whale... you will lose everytime!! Don't be a dick!!! \$10,000 fine. Season 1 July till Octoberish



Anchorage and mooring fields

Speed limit in Neiafu Bay is 5 KNOTS. You are responsible for your wake. Be aware of swimmers, spear fishermen, and pearl farms.

Tongans spear fish, hunt for sea cucumbers and tend pearl farms in anchorages and mooring fields DAY and NIGHT. At night they MAY use flashlights.

Anchor only in sandy bottoms and float your chain to protect coral. Damaged coral takes upto 75 years to regrow: don't be a dick. Tahiti is now anti yachts because of damage to coral and loss of fish... be respectful of someone's backyard. If you are anchoring in front of a village or resort, please ask where to anchor as you might be in the way of village/resort tenders or affect the aesthetic view for guests.

Do not empty holding tanks close to a village!

Return rubbish to town, do not throw in the bush, overboard. Remove any fishing net, lines, plastic you find in the water – save the sea life and stop micro plastics entering the food chain

www.vavau.to/biosecurityinvasivespecies.jpg

Respect cultural traditions

Sundays are a day of rest, quiet day – no noise, no exercise (swim, run, bike). Go for a walk, eat, rest

Do not fly drones over villages, **without permission**, especially Sundays.

Trade or barter for fish, fruit, vegetables. School supplies are a priority trade item. Do NOT trade alcohol. Most villages are dry by choice. Respect the village traditions, history and culture.

Show interest in the village and people. You might learn something.

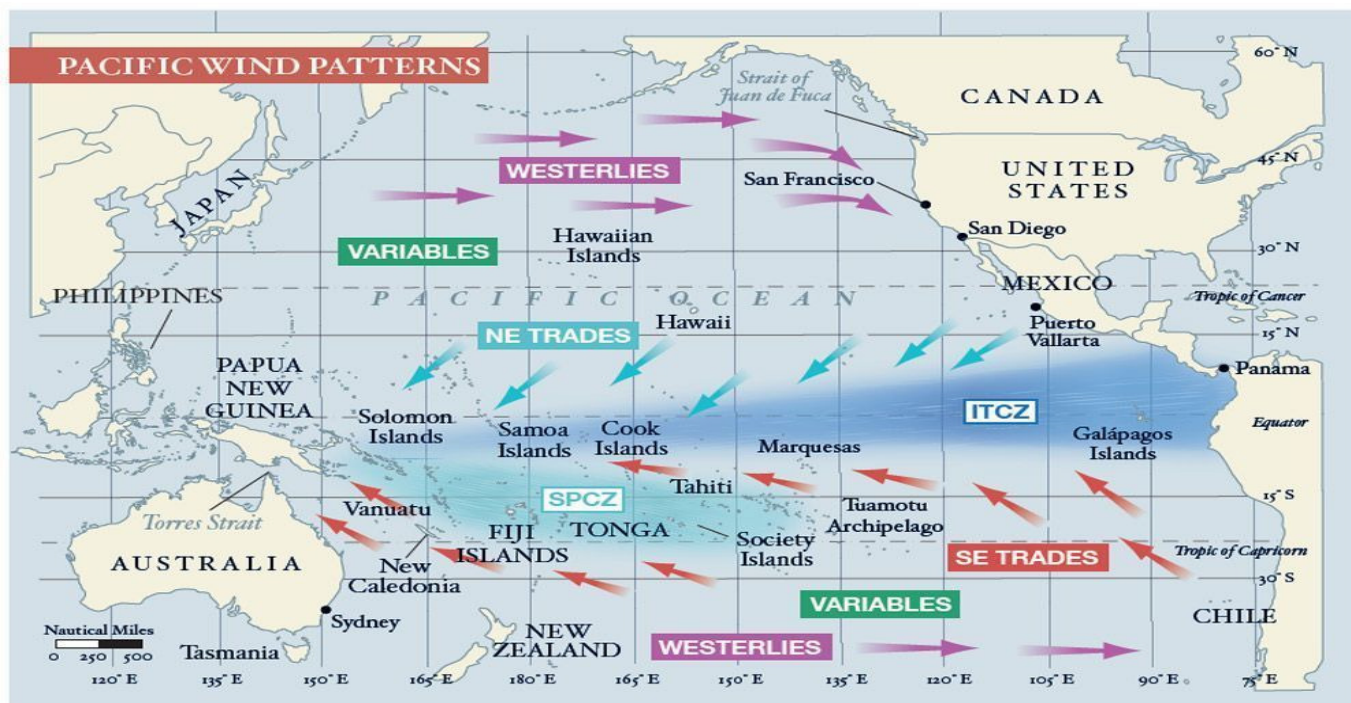
Absolutely no nudity – on your yacht, swimming etc. People can probably see you and may call the Police as it is illegal and offensive.

All land is owned by someone. If you see a sign saying "private property" please respect it. Do not start bonfires on beaches without permission of the village or resorts, embers could blow and start a fire!

Marpol 73/78 Convention 1978

Tonga enacted "Marine Pollution Prevention Act" in 2020. It applies to ALL vessels in Tongan waters and enforces Marpol 73/78 as a result.

- Holding tanks for raw sewage, dumped at least 3 miles offshore, or pumped at an approved station.
- No rubbish dumping or oil dumping at sea.



Start east and then go west.

NZ to Tonga: be an EASTern bunny

Vava'u anchorage guide

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The Moorings chartering company numbered anchorages to make it easy for chartering its fleet. It continues to this day, see Cafe Tropicana who produce Chartlets with navigational info as well. Chartlets for Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Minerva, Fiji, Neiafu as well.

This is a very brief summary, refer to cruising guides or compendium for your vessels safety, or wait till it's rewritten as a website.

https://www.vavau.to/Cruising_Guide3.pdf From page 14 onwards.

If anyone has updated comments please email greg@vavau.to

Electronic navigational charts were quite a few miles out early 2000, make sure you update to the latest version and ensure you spot check them!

Night sailing is not recommended, even if you know these waters well!

Be aware of Fisheries regulations that affect anchoring in SMA/FHR zones.

SMA – special management areas – anchoring fee paid to community

Taunga (21,22, 24) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Otea (6) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight

Falevai (7,8) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Ovaka (38,39,40) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Nuapapu (15) \$10 anchor and \$10 overnight

Hunga (9,13) \$20 anchor and \$20 overnight

Matamaka (15) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Makave (25) \$10 anchor and \$20 overnight

Ofu (28) Donation

FHR – no anchoring, no fish, no take, some allow guided snorkelling

Refer to more extensive cruising notes/guides

[Chartlet pic/drone](#)

[Bottom/reef. Hold, anchoring/mooring tips Moorings/fees. SMA/FHR exposed to winddirection. Swell.. Suitable ☺fair weather, wind warning, gale force\) environmental..](#)

[Cell reception Digicel/TCC](#)

[inHabitated? Villages, close business?](#)

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[Neiafu 1](#) (Knee AH foo) The safest yachting harbour In Tonga, Friday night races have largely failed as not many people wish to race the house and the yacht club is in name only. This is not “port of refuge”. Wreck MV Clan Mcwilliam 18° 40' 15" S., 173° 59' 27" W.

Paradise Hotel access is stopped until renovation gets underway. Cafes and restaurants, fruit, veg, arts markets. Shopping. LPG, fuel. Fuel tanker minimum 250 litres. Duty free if last Tongan port. Very quick drop off to 40m+ from shore

[Pangai 2](#) (PAHNG-eye)

[Pangaimotu Causeway 3](#) (PAHNG-eye-MOH-too) Hoping at some stage this will be turned into a low bridge to flush the harbour and allow dinghies to the eastern side.. Sandy Bottom. Ano Beach and Hinakaeua Beach.

[Vaipua Lagoon 4](#) (vie-POO-ah) 18°38.663S / 173°59.907W. 4 moorings+ closest to yard is only for boats waiting haulout not overnight. \$15 per night. Protection from SE. Reefs on either side, be aware of scope length. Villages Vaipua, Taua, Vai Malo. Business Vava’u Boatyard.

[Lotuma Island \(Vauleleva Bay\) 5](#) (loh-TOO-mah) 18°30.746S /174°00.484W Protection from E/SE. Bottom mostly rock. Not nice in NE. Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. Book first. www.thetonga.com Lotuma is a Tongan Navy Island, access is currently permitted.

[Mala 6](#) (MAH-lah) 18°41.446S /174°01.666W Good protection from SE. Shallow bommies. Shallow through pass, do not attempt. Japanese gardens snorkelling. SMA.Dinghy to Tongan Beach Resort for drinks/food. www.thetonga.com Book first.

[Port Maurelle 7](#) (Port more elle)_Fangakima(FAHNG-ah-KEE-mah) 18°41.980S / 174°01.788W Well protected except NW. SMA. Swallows Cave 18.6824° S, 174.0473° W . Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W No Digicel

[Nuku 8](#) (NOO-koo) Belongs to Falevai Island. SMA. Snorkel tour \$7 - \$10 per person

[Luamoko day only 9](#) . (LOO-ahMOH- koo) Sandy bottom, fine weather holding only. SMA. Mariners Cave 18°41.451S / 174°04.492W

[Aisea’s or Lisa Beach 10](#) (eye-SAY-ah) 18°41.833S / 173°59.892W Protected N to SE 6.5km walk to town.

[Tapana 11](#) (tar par nar) 18°42.432S / 173°59.169W Sand bottom. Good protection SE to NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. Café Tropicana owns several moorings – please pay if you use them.

[Tapana South 12](#) (Ta Paan Ah) 18°72.398S / 174°98.929W, Good protection except NW. The Ark/anchorage closed. *

[Hunga 13](#) (hoo n g a) 18°41.59S / 174°07.69W Beware of bommie coming into Hunga Lagoon. Hunga Haven/anchorage closed. Ika Lahi closed. SMA/FHR

[Foeata Island “Blue Lagoon” day only 14](#) (FOH-ay-AH-tah)18°42.609S / 174°08.321W. Day ONLY. SMA/FHR

[Nuapapu and Matamaka 15](#) (New a Pap OO) 18°42.355S / 174°5.546W Protection N to NW. Feasts are sometimes available. NO protection in S or SW wind . Protection N to SE SMA

[Vaka’eitu 16](#) (vark eh A2) 18°43.356S / 174°6.003W mostly Sandy with some coral. Protection N to SE Coral Gardens snorkelling sites.. Feasts sometimes available on Island during season.

[Lape Island 17](#) (LAH-pay) 18°42.929S / 174°5.015W. This has great SE protection and good holding. Better protection than it looks like it would be on the chart. There are no moorings remaining. Ok Digicel. SMA. Cultural tour Kolio 7513154

[Fonua Lei day only 18](#) .(foh-NOO-ah-LIE)

Sisia day only 19 (sis e ah) 18°43.910S / 174°03.257W Rocky. Protection E

Katafanga day only 20 (car ta far na)

Taunga overnight 21 (ta oong a) 18°44.4S / 174°00.6W. Protected S and W. Ngau island is good snorkelling and diving. SMA

Taunga Day Stop 22 (ta oong a) Exposed to Westerlies. SMA

Ngau Day Stop 23 (Now) 18°45.316S / 174°00.627W Diving and snorkelling. Wind protection N to NE, SE. SMA/FHR

Ngau Day Stop 24 (Now) 18°44.0S / 174°00.4W Protection from W and NW. SMA/FHR

Old Harbour / Makave 25 (mah-KAH-vay) 18°39.247S / 173°58.28527W coral bottom – float your chain. good protection NE to SE. Kilikiletufua Wall in Makave. SMA

'Olo'ua 26 (OH-loo-OO-ah) 18°40.206S / 173°57.473W protected in NE and S SMA

Mafana 27 (mah-FAH-nah) protected in N and E. Mafana Backpacker closed. SMA

Ofu 28 (OH-foo) 18°41.918S / 173°55.768W protected in NE and SE. Sand and rock. Good Digicel. SMA

Eueiki Day stop 29 (E wa icki) Treasure Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned island. No anchoring, may have mooring for rent VHF 26. FHR

Kenutu 30 (keh-NOO-too) 18°41.730S / 173°55.737W Uninhabited. Sand. Good protection from E and SE

Maninita Island 31 (MAH-nee-NEE-tah) 18°51.400S / 173°59.866W. Good weather only. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary

Euakafa 32 (AY-wah-KAH-fah) 18°45.194S / 174°2.117W

Fuamotu Day only 33 (foo ah mo 2) 18°47.421S / 174°00.417W. Uninhabited. RAT free, permission must be given to go ashore

Lua Ui 34 (LOO-ah OO-ee)

Lahiapo (Luahaipo) daytime only 35 (LOO-ah-hee-AH-poh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

Fonua' One'One 36 (foh-NOO-ah-OH-nay-OH-nay) 18°48.935S / 174°03.918W. Sandy bottom. Good protection from SSW through E. Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore.

Fangasito day only 37 (FAHNG-ah-SEE-toh) Uninhabited. RAT free, check dinghy and any belongings to make sure no rats come ashore. Bird Sanctuary.

Ovaka 38 (oh-VAH-kah) Day Stop 18°45.935S / 174°05.206W Sandy bottom. Feast 7530552. Tavake Island Market day Thursday morning. Snorkel guide tour \$10 per person guide in FHR. Heavens Touch Gardens owned by Sergei from France

Ovaka day only 39 (o var ka) 18°45.145S / 174°05.172W

Ovalau 40 (oh-vah-LAHW) 18°44.985S / 174°04.844W Uninhabited sandy at 4m. Large sandy beach Protected SE to E. SMA/HR

Mounu 41 (moh-OO-noo) 18°45.01S / 174°04.3W. Sandy, call for anchoring instructions based on weather. VHF 77

www.mounuisland.com Mounu Island Resort, bookings only, privately owned.

Mou'mua (Mu'omu'a) day only 42 (moo a moo a) 18°45.436S / 174°02.613W (MOO-oh-MOO-ah) Inhabited, private Island. Mike is the lease owner. Wind protection NE to E.

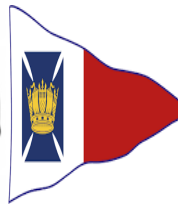
North Shore 18°37.418S / 174°01.894W Sand 60ft Wind protection NE to SE

Suggested anchorage and land itineraries [3, 7, 14 30, 60 days to do KMZ to do](#)

This guide is not supported by Government, Aid or any Tongan business other than Café Tropicana. Please support us if you are in Vava'u or donate via <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana> Or

[paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com](https://www.paypal.me/greg.just@windowslive.com)

Download the full SailingTonga Port Officer guide for full information www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf

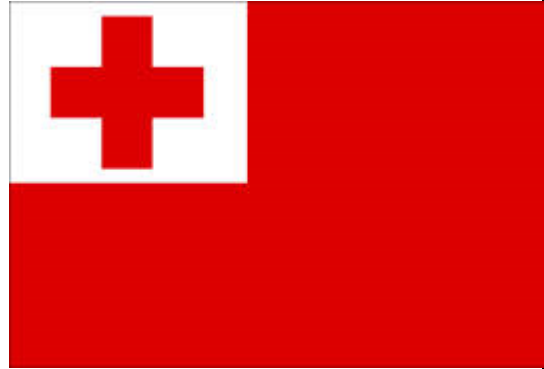


OCC ICNZ PCA SSCA CA NOONSITE RCC TRANS OCEAN

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga, South Pacific **Café Tropicana**

GPS Coordinates of location: Lat: **18°41' 60 S** Lon: **174°1' 60 W**

Version 2025/1



Description of geographic area covered:

The Vava'u Island group in the Kingdom of Tonga is a spectacular tropical island paradise in the Pacific Ocean. It has a year-round climate suitable for swimming, snorkelling, diving and sailing. Some islands are ringed by white sand beaches while others have tropical forests, sea-level caves, and dramatic limestone cliffs with breath-taking vistas.

Remote and truly unspoiled, the waters around Vava'u are crystal clear with visibility exceeding 100 feet. Most of the islands are uninhabited, a few have villages, and a few have very small unique resorts with exceptional food. There is abundant sea life with over 100 species of colourful tropical fish, giant clams, manta rays, sea turtles, spinner dolphins, and July–October the Humpback whales! Truly a paradise with the only Polynesian Monarchy this is a truly remarkable place to explore.

Port officer's name: *Greg Just*



Email: greg@vavau.to
 Twitter: @tongamazingweb
 Instagram: tongamazingcom
 LinkedIn: tongamazingcom
 Whatsapp +676 8812347
 Whatsapp group "Sailing to Tonga" Admin
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGNX>
 Viber: +676 8812347
 Facebook: [m.me/gregjustnz](https://www.facebook.com/m.me/gregjustnz)
 Phone +676 71322 VHF Ch: 26 "Tropicana"
 Mobile: +676 8812347 or +676 7512347
 Home Address: Mt Talau Citizen: NZ/UK/Tonga
 Divemaster IT Manager BA/ITIL/PMP/CCNA
 Yachtie Master Drycleaner (nz) Treasury Analyst
 Website: www.vavau.to/tropicana
 Agent www.tongasuperyachts.com
 Menu/Deli <https://cafetropicnavavau.business.site/>
 Media www.offloop.net/media password tropo
 Stuff For Sale <https://cafetropicana.company.site/>
www.vavau.to
www.haapai.to
www.tongatapu.to
www.whaleswim.to Booking site, whale info
www.sailingtonga.com online cruising guide
www.tongamazing.com Hold All
www.cruiseshiptonga.com Cruiseship info/booking
www.tongaholidays.com
www.buymeacoffee.com/vavaucommunitytrust NGO
www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf UPDATED frequently–
 please download regularly
 Show your support for this information by donating
<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/tropicana>

Services available from Cafe Tropicana:

- Offshore assist via offshoreassist@vavau.to
- Advanced Notice forms – Fiji/NZ/Australia.
- Courier package assistance/advice on request
- Snail Mail/Courier arrangements
- Yacht in transit SY Yacht Name c/- Café Tropicana
Fatafehi Rd (or Private Bag 34 for Postal Service) Neiafu, Vava'u
Kingdom of Tonga +676 71322
- Charts/Chartlets/Courtesy flags for the area
- Receiver of used oil/lead battery/dirty fuel
- Fully licenced bar
- Provisioning for whales/picnics/passage.
- Pre shop of supermarket provision items
- Ice cubes and 2kg solid ice blocks – rain water
- Solar powered USB/12v recharging points 2024
- Vava'u Deli: meats, delicatessen items
- Resell TCC/Digicel phone credit, Digicel Sms
- Gift Vouchers. Games (chess, poker ...
- LPG tank refill– most adaptors/Fuel refill service
- AIS host via www.marinetraffic.com ADS-B via www.flihtadar24.com
- Laundry: the only frontloading rain water and gas laundry in Tonga. Max 9kg per load.
- Shopping holding service (and frozen) while you shop intown.
- Espresso Coffee/Café/Bread/all day breakfast/lunch/Dinner
- Drinking water: potable filtered rain water, your container or our 20 litre loan container, free car ride to your yacht at wharf or small boat marina. Hot shower.
- Retail Store – carvings/maps/soaps/postcards/ magnets/iron on flags/lapel pins/cuff links... Vava'u vanilla/coconut oil
- Harbour wifi provider SSID "Vava'u Net" Free info, weather etc. via a Walled Garden service. Musical instruments (guitar, harmonic, mandolin etc)
- Resell Kingdom Koffee. Beans (Ground (to order). Free cruisers welcome regular coffee – complete online survey
- Free booking and information service. Go to guy for help... Visa and one way letter agents
- Famous in Vava'u "Blue" comedy wall and "cyclone" wall
- Huge free book swap and reference library. Free 120gb ebooks/audio books.
- TV 800+series (11TB) and 10TB Movie (8000+) Documentaries, Concerts, Music, Comedy, Children, Fitness, Christian, Wiki offline). www.offloop.net/media password tropo Research, basic shopping cart. Series from 1978, hard to download over 5 years old series. Netflix drops older series. Working on tidying file order and gaps.
- Rentals – mountain bikes, kayaks, snorkel gear, tents, cars, scooters
- Local news/info feed Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals
https://www.vavau.to/Cruising_Guide3.pdf being updated,, but useful info
- **No credit card facilities** – only a few restaurants accept, no supermarkets.
- Spare parts (pc/electrical) and a huge range of loanable tools
- Agents for Boat House Apartments in the harbour www.vavau.to/compendium.pdf useful landlubber information source
- Qualified Massage Therapist, Portable massage table, TENs unit, heat pad, Massage Gun, Swedish and Rock,
- Please advise corrections/suggestions to greg@vavau.to

- 08-17 SAR coordinator
- 14 on ADS-B / AIS Host
- 14-17 Formed Vava'u Blue Water Festival, gifted to VTA to manage 2018 on, 2024 name change
- 15 on created 650+ FB POI
- 16 on, 2 rubbish bins in town and Mt Talau
- 14 to 19 wrote Cruising guide for Tonga, assist SV Soggy Paws
- 18 on, free reading glasses for locals, supplied by NZ
- 18 on formed PCA
- 20 on, formed Vava'u Community Trust NGO Youth sailing, education, employment Trust CT-199
- 23 on www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf
- 24 whatsapp Sailing To Tonga
- 25 IAB Internet in a box wiki wifi
- 25 www.sailingtonga.com
- 25 www.cruiseshiptonga.com
- 25 www.whaleswim.to

THE BEST BARN CAFÉ IN VAVA'U,

THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF CAFES

Fatafehi Rd, Neiafu, Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga
Private Bag 34, Neiafu, Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga
Email tropicana@vavau.to VHF 26 "Tropicana"
Website www.vavau.to/tropicana SSID "Vava'u Net"
Ph +676 71322 Mob +676 8812347 or +676 7512347

[Port Officer, MP4, Facebook, Whatsapp](#)



Ocean Cruising Club
Port Officer

Whatsapp group "Sailing to Tonga " Admin
Help/information sailing to, and in, the Kingdom Tonga ,
from someone based in Tonga that will help with options
rather than just clipping the ticket
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CMOnBCOYvcgKPZg63ZKGN>



Island Cruising New Zealand
Port Officer



Seven Seas Cruising Association
Port Officer

Video/info to promote Tonga Marine Tourism
www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.mp4
www.vavau.to/tongabriefing.pdf



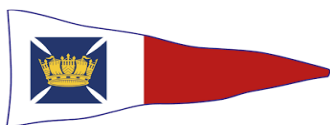
Cruising Association
Honorarv Local Representative

Video/Info Passage planning to NZ
www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.pdf
www.vavau.to/passageplanningtotonga.mp4



Pacific Cruising Association
Port Officer/Secretary

Pacific Puddle Jump (not rally) - Facebook admin
www.facebook.com/groups/pacificpuddlejump



The Royal Cruising Club
Port Officer

Vava'u Cruisers Net - Facebook admin
www.facebook.com/groups/vavaucruisers
www.facebook.com/vavaucruisersnet



Trans Ocean
Port Officer

Tonga Expats and Locals - News portal - admin
www.facebook.com/groups/tongaexpatsandlocals



Noonsite
Ambassador

Future home of this and other Tongan cruising guides
www.sailingtonga.com



Oyster Rally
rally landbase

Sailingtonga.com - Facebook admin
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sailingtonga>



World Arc



Pacific Posse

Pay it Forward

This guide will move to its permanent home www.sailingtonga.com with a lot more content when I can, an

automatic redirect to the new page for www.vavau.to/portofficer.pdf. It will have a translation tool into other languages, searchable by subject, hosted on wifi and a few other surprises when it is converted to a web page. **TO DO**

All information is from my observations as a resident of Vava'u (since 2007) and citizen of Tonga (since 2015), it is given freely to improve tourism. I have sailed since I was 12, attended Outward Bound Anakiwa at 21. I have about 150 days of blue water sailing. I have sailed with VERA (SAR). Began Vava'u Blue Water Festival 2014, donated to Vava'u Tourism Association 2016.

information@customs.gov.to

I encourage yachts to join a Cruising Association of your choice, for those unforeseen events, sense of community, encourage the industry. Often I have been called blunt, this information is not to promote myself or my business, but to help you and Tonga. It is not a comparison and recommendation of providers (as some compendiums have done in 2023– if you wish to compare then use every provider, if you list a comment from one then talk to the other providers!). Although I have placed **WARNING** notices on a few things/business – too many confirmed complaints to ignore. Ask if the operators recommend others, if they don't or won't help that gives you an indication of the persons character. This information is to be shared... Fair winds, following Seas. Leave only your wake and footprints in the sand, give more than you take...

I will add additional information on Ha'apai, Tongatapu, Eua, Niu when I can afford to travel, or get information from these Islands that is pertinent. I own a struggling Cafe with a TOP113k+ loan since COVID, no time, and can no longer sail. If you wish to help with projects to help cruisers, like the following for example, come in and see me

SurveyMonkey questions. Assist zuluwaterways.com with info. Drone/pic of POI. Passage plan to Fiji/Aus. Pacific cruising calendar openstreetmaps.com/google earth gps info. Edit promo vid for Tonga. sailingtonga.com create wordpress.

Repair SY Lobo (sail school). Start sailing school. Convert PO guide to html. Help complete AID applications for various projects.

Complete Anchorage guide. Create Stopover in Tonga online pdf. Gather missing info from Ha'apai/Nukualofa.

Suggest itineraries sailing/activities. Build online app for SailingTonga. Review PO guide content ideas. Get Yacht Stats 2008 on.

Donate www.buymeacoffee.com/vavaucommunitytrust and state Cruising ONLY, or fund a project Other projects – see greg

We get little help from government like French Polynesia or AID to help with this type of work Any questions or suggestions for content are welcomed. greg@vavau.to SY Two Moons

[Tonga Government Fee summary for yachts](#)

Ministry Health

Practique \$100 – first entry port ONLY. Phone health officers rather than waiting
\$20 per hour OVERTIME.

Marine and Ports, outward payment per port

Vava'u: \$0.45 per gross tonne per month.
Nuku'alofa: \$2.45 per gross tonne per month.
Ha'apai: \$0.80 per gross tonne per month.
Niuatoputapu: \$100 anchorage. Free on wharf though? Go into Marine and ports for receipts. TOP only, NO BANKS! Do not pay in WINE!! **WARNING**

Maff/Quarantine

Clearance fee per boat \$22
Rubbish \$0.40 per kg
Overtime \$20 per hour

Revenue

TIN application for importing capital items for yachts – FREE. Take passport, yacht papers

Police

Fines of upto \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for swimming with whales on your own. Enforcement of Whale regulations.
Don't drink and drive, do not drink on public streets.
Do not park a car on the right hand side of the road, Random check points...

PLEASE ASK FOR RECEIPTS EVERYTIME **WARNING**
UPDATED frequently – please download frequently, content suggestions are appreciated greg@vavau.to

Tonga Government Fee summary for yachts

Customs

After hours clearance \$140 – Saturday
Do not come ashore unless cleared by customs, fly Q flag
\$20 per hour OVERTIME
Entry/Exit ports – Nuku'alofa, Lifuka (Ha'apai), Neiafu (Vava'u), Niuatoputapu
Boat visa 4 months, extend to 12 months on application - FREE
Inter Island Movement forms - FREE

Immigration

Non Visa country \$69 1 month
Schengen Country free 3 months
Visa waiver country free 1 month. Apply once you arrive, don't bother trying before hand.
Additional 31 day visa \$69 (max 6 months in total). A 15 day adult visa \$57.50. Children 31 day visa UNDER 16 \$11.50
ONLY Nuku'alofa and Neiafu can do visa extensions!!
One way crew fee \$34.50 (fly in, sail out crew). Immigration.
One way crew visa \$34.50 (Nuku'alofa, Neiafu processing a week).
Visa expired/other breach fine \$1150. DO NOT LET THIS LAPSE **WARNING**
Overtime \$20 an hour

Fisheries

Vava'u use of Fisheries wharf during clear in/out, refuelling \$20, a receipt should be given. Enforcement of SMA/FHR Act (marine reserves).

Check in, Check out ports. Nuku'alofa Tongatapu, Lifuka Ha'apai, Neiafu Vava'u, Niuatoputapu.

Fees are required to be paid at the time of entry, I suggest you carry some Tongan cash, if you ask Customs they may permit someone to go to the ATM to get local currency in Nuk'ualofa, Ha'apai and Vava'u.. They may take foreign currency also, but you might not get change... **WARNING**
Niu'toiputapu DOES NOT HAVE BANKS, take Tongan cash! WARNING



Tonga Customs Advance Notice of Arrival (small craft)

Fax to: +878 24124 or email: information@customs.gov.to

Section 12, Customs & Excise Management Act 2007

PERIOD OF ADVANCE NOTICE AND OTHER ADVICE

This form or the information on this form must be provided not less than 24 hours before the estimated time of arrival (ETA) of the craft in Tonga. Where it is not possible to give such notice electronically (e.g. by email or fax), the notice may be given by some other means (e.g. by telephone).

To avoid delays in processing, in addition to providing this Advance Notice of Arrival, you should contact Maritime Radio on VHF channel 16, prior to arriving at your nominated Customs port to update or confirm your ETA. Please ensure that Customs continues to be updated via Maritime Radio or directly to Customs at the port of arrival.

PART A: CRAFT DETAILS

Name of craft		Value of craft	
Name of person in charge		Contact details	
Name of owner		Owner's address (Street number, street, city, country)	
Name of charterer (if applicable)		Charterer's address (Street number, street, city, country)	
Country of registration	Port of registration	Registration number	Total number of persons on board
Gross tonnage	Hull number	Home port	Radio call sign
Craft type: Yacht <input type="checkbox"/> Motor launch <input type="checkbox"/>		Shore station or radio contact details	
Other (Specify)		Draft metres	Hull colour
Length (overall) metres		Superstructure colour	
Yacht rig: Cutter <input type="checkbox"/> Sloop <input type="checkbox"/> Ketch <input type="checkbox"/> Yaw <input type="checkbox"/> Schooner <input type="checkbox"/>		Hull type: Mono <input type="checkbox"/> Catamaran <input type="checkbox"/> Trimaran <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (Specify)		Other (Specify)	

PART B: VOYAGE DETAILS

Port of arrival	Estimated date and time of arrival	Port arrived from and date of departure
-----------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

LIST PREVIOUS OVERSEAS PORTS (Please list in sequence, last port first)

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.

PART C: CREW AND PASSENGER DETAILS (PERSON IN CHARGE FIRST)

(Family name in block letters)				(Attach any additional details of crew members on a separate sheet)			
Family name		First name(s)		Family name		First name(s)	
Nationality		Date of birth	Gender Male / Female	Nationality		Date of birth	Gender Male / Female
Passport number		Place of issue (City)		Passport number		Place of issue (City)	
Date and place joining craft				Date and place joining craft			
Family name		First name(s)		Family name		First name(s)	
Nationality		Date of birth	Gender Male / Female	Nationality		Date of birth	Gender Male / Female
Passport number		Place of issue (City)		Passport number		Place of issue (City)	
Date and place joining craft				Date and place joining craft			

PART D: COMMERCIAL CARGO (please record on a separate sheet and attach if additional space is required)

List all goods carried in or on the craft from a point outside Tonga, whether in the course of international trade or for sale or supply in those goods, but excludes the personal effects of crew and passengers and stores for craft.

PART E: OTHER DETAILS

FIREARMS		ANIMALS ON BOARD	
YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Number of animals	Kind of animals	Country and port where loaded

