

OCEANIA · ISLANDS · BEACHES · CULTURE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH

 Tuvalu

Tuvalu is a scattering of nine low coral islands whose highest point is only about 4.6 m above sea level. Few visitors make it: Funafuti's huge lagoon, the protected islets of its conservation area and village life on a strip of land you can cross in minutes are the draw. Flights from Fiji are limited, so plans must stay flexible.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Tuvalu and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 March 2026.

 CAPITAL Funafuti	 CURRENCY Australian dollar (AUD) £1 ≈ A\$1.91	 LANGUAGE Tuvaluan, English	 BEST TIME Apr–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £70–£220 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type I 220V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 34h via Fiji (Suva), plus a long-haul hub ~£2,000–£3,300 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+12 standard time

Tuvalu is the world's fourth-smallest country, around 26 square kilometres of land spread across nine low coral islands, and almost every visit centres on Funafuti, the atoll that is home to more than half of its roughly 11,000 people. Days revolve around the lagoon: a boat trip to the Funafuti Conservation Area's uninhabited islets for snorkelling and seabirds, a swim from the lagoon shore, and evenings when the airstrip turns into a sports ground. The outer islands are reached only by infrequent government ships, so few visitors go beyond Funafuti.

This is not a tourist destination in any conventional sense: there are a handful of guesthouses and one government-owned hotel on the lagoon shore, almost no organised tours, and the pace is set by church, family and the flight schedule. Costs are higher than you might expect, as almost everything is imported. Visitors come out of curiosity, for the satisfaction of reaching somewhere so remote, or to understand the rising seas that threaten the atolls. Expect warmth, few distractions and no sense of being marketed to.

Top 5 highlights

- 1** WILDLIFE

Funafuti Conservation Area

Set up in 1996 along the atoll's western rim, it protects six uninhabited islets with their reef and lagoon waters. A boat trip brings snorkelling over hard corals among reef fish and turtles, with noddies and terns nesting ashore.
- 2** BEACH

Te Namo, Funafuti Lagoon

Funafuti's vast lagoon, ringed by more than 30 islets, is the country's playground: swim from Fongafale's lagoon shore, paddle at sunset or charter a boat to empty sandbars. The ocean side is rougher and best left alone.

3

BEACH

Funafala islet

A small island community at the southern end of the atoll, reached by boat from Fongafale, where people go for picnics, swimming and a taste of slower outer-island life without a long ship voyage.

4

CULTURE

Fatele dancing

Tuvalu's signature dance, performed in the maneapa (community hall) at celebrations and on national days: rows of singers and dancers start slowly and build to a thunderous climax of clapping and drumming on a wooden box.

5

CULTURE

Funafuti airstrip at dusk

When no plane is due, the runway becomes the town square: at dusk families gather to play football, volleyball and rugby, and on hot nights some sleep on the tarmac for the breeze. A siren clears it before flights.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Funafuti

≈ 6,600 people

Fongafale islet holds the capital, airstrip, government offices and most guesthouses; rent a scooter, the islanders' main transport, to ride its single main road from end to end.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Vaitupu

≈ 1,500 people

The largest island by land area and home to Motufoua, the national secondary school; reaching it means a slow, irregular government ship, and accommodation must be arranged in advance.

Tuvalu has no cities: Funafuti atoll holds more than half the population, and Vaitupu is the most populous of the outer islands.

When to go to Tuvalu

Best time: **Apr–Oct**.

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

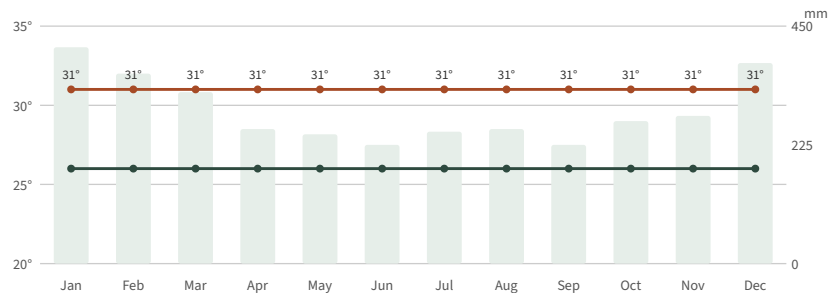
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Funafuti

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan, Dec	Christmas and New Year The most important time of year for many families, with long church services, community feasts and fatele competitions in the maneapa, and many people travelling home to their islands.
Oct	Independence Day Tuvalu marks independence from Britain, gained on 1 October 1978, with parades, sports competitions, feasting and fatele performances in Funafuti over several days.

How much does Tuvalu cost?

SHOESTRING £70 per person / day ≈ A\$134 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £130 per person / day ≈ A\$248 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £220 per person / day ≈ A\$420 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
--	---	---

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Raw fish in coconut cream Fresh reef fish or tuna marinated in lime juice and coconut cream with onion; a staple of Funafuti feasts and the simplest way to eat the day's catch.	Pulaka Giant swamp taro grown in pits dug down to the water table, now threatened by saltwater; baked or boiled and served with coconut cream.	Kaleve Sweet sap tapped from coconut palm flower stalks each morning and evening, drunk fresh or boiled down into a syrup used in puddings and drinks.
--	--	--

Getting around

Fiji Airways, flying as Fiji Link, runs ATR turboprops to Funafuti from Suva about three times a week, often full with officials and returning islanders. On Fongafale, rent a scooter or motorbike through your guesthouse; there is essentially one main road along the narrow islet. Boats to the conservation area and Funafala are hired privately, and government ships reach the outer islands on irregular, multi-day voyages.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  I 220V — bring a UK-to-I adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Ambulance: 999 Hospital: (+688) 20749 Fire: 000 Police: 911 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +688	TIME ZONE UTC+12 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Not customary; a sincere thank-you is enough, though a small gift for a family who hosts you or a boatman who takes you out is appreciated.

ETIQUETTE

Greet people with 'talofa' and thank them with 'fakafetai'. Sunday is for church and rest, so keep noise down, dress modestly away from the water, and wait to be invited into a maneapa.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Funafuti International Airport (FUN), Funafuti

Visas & entry for Tuvalu

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Tuvalu without a visa for up to one month.

To stay longer than one month or to work, study, travel for business or other reasons, you must get an extension from the Department of Immigration in Funafuti.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Bat Lyssavirus

Tuberculosis

Typhoid

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Tuvalu

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026

Christmas Day

Sat 26 Dec 2026

Boxing Day

Mon 28 Dec 2026	Boxing Day (observed)
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Mon 10 May 2027	Gospel Day
Sat 12 Jun 2027	King's Birthday
Mon 2 Aug 2027	National Youth Day
Fri 1 Oct 2027	Tuvalu Day
Sat 2 Oct 2027	Tuvalu Day
Mon 4 Oct 2027	Tuvalu Day (observed)
Mon 11 Oct 2027	National Children's Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Bring plenty of Australian dollars in cash: card payments are rarely accepted and foreign cards cannot be relied on at local banks or ATMs.

Book flights well ahead and keep plans flexible: the few weekly flights from Suva fill with officials and returning families, and weather or aircraft problems cause delays.

Arrange accommodation before arrival, as there are only a handful of guesthouses and one hotel, and pack reef shoes, sun protection and any medicines you need.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.