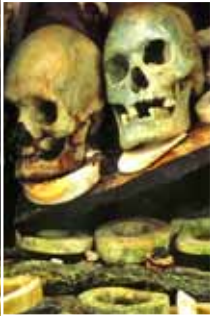


Solomon Islands



DIVE 
ADVENTURES
YOUR DIVING HOLIDAY SPECIALIST

Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is considered the "eco-tourism" destination of the South Pacific. Untouched by many influences of today's modern world, this pristine unspoiled paradise offers the visitor a unique and unforgettable holiday experience.



Solomon Islands are located on the western fringe of the Pacific north-east of Australia. The double chain of islands extend 1667 kilometres in a south-easterly direction from Papua New Guinea, forming the third largest archipelago in the South Pacific. The nation's capital Honiara, situated on the main island of Guadalcanal, is the gateway to your holiday adventure.

History: During the course of WWII Solomon Islands became a key turning point in the struggle by allied forces to repel the Japanese advancement in the South Pacific. One of the most fierce encounters in naval history "The Battle of Guadalcanal" occurred here on 13 November 1942 with both sides suffering heavy losses. Littered with war wrecks and relics, the region became known as "Iron Bottom Sound". These former machines of destruction now resting on the ocean floor are covered in a variety of corals, creating artificial reefs that attract a myriad of marine life.



The environment: Mother Nature has truly woven her magic thread into the tapestry of these stunning islands, producing a variety of exotic landscapes. The 992 islands, of which only 147 are inhabited, range in size from tiny low lying coral atolls

to large landmasses. Most are covered with tropical jungle and lowland rainforest while coconut palms line the sun soaked golden sand beaches and tranquil lagoons.

The people: Solomon Islands has an estimated population of 560,000. The majority are Melanesian, with some of the outer islands home to Polynesians and Micronesians. Solomon Islanders appear shy but are very friendly. Most live a subsistent village lifestyle retaining many ancient, traditional "Kastoms" that can vary from province to province. There are at least 67 indigenous languages and 30 dialects. The most predominant languages are Melanesian and Pidgin English although basic English is also used and understood.

Things to do: The island nation is fast gaining a reputation for having some of the best scuba diving, snorkelling and fishing in the world. The dramatic



outcrops of hard and soft corals, breath taking drop-offs, prolific marine life, WWII wrecks, excellent visibility and water temperatures of between 27°C - 30°C, ensures quality diving all year round. Other activities include: sea kayaking, canoeing, surfing, sailing and bird spotting. Cultural and ecological tours with experienced guides include: village visits, arts and craft viewing, WWII history tours, rainforests treks, visits to waterfalls, volcanoes, cultural shrines and island hopping.



General information:

Passport: Travellers must hold a current passport with a minimum of 6 months validity plus a return or onward travel ticket.

Visas: Commonwealth, US or most EC visitors do not require a visa. Check with your consultant for updated information.

Climate: Tropical average daytime temperatures between 25°C – 30°C. and evenings 19°C. Seasons are not clearly defined however November to April are the wetter months when squalls or cyclones may occur.

Health: As with many tropical areas Malaria is endemic in the Solomon Islands. Appropriate anti-malarial medication should be taken. Consult with your doctor for information a few weeks prior to departure. Bottled water and the boiling of water is recommended for many areas.

Electricity: 240 volts / 50 cycle AC is available in Honiara and major resort areas. Many outer areas are powered by generator. In many outer hotels and resorts there is no hot water.

Language: Melanesian and Pidgin English is predominantly spoken. English is used and understood throughout most of the Islands.

Culture: Varies between provinces. Ask about appropriate behaviour and always seek permission before taking photos of people or places.

Time: 11 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Communications: 24 hour telephone, fax, and limited internet services are available in provincial centres, major hotels and resorts.

Business: Hours are 8am - 12 noon and 1- 4pm.

Currency: Solomon Island Dollar. Banks are located in Honiara, Gizo and Munda - 8.30am -3.00pm Monday to Friday. Credit card facilities are not usually available beyond main centres, hotels and resorts.

Packing Hints: Light casual clothing although not too brief when away from resort areas. Long sleeves and pants recommended at dusk. Don't forget a hat, comfortable shoes, insect repellent, sunscreen and torch.

N.B. Visitors should be mindful that as you move away from the main towns and centres, services and facilities become increasingly limited.



Honiara - Guadalcanal

Honiara is the capital and gateway to the Solomon Islands. Located on the island of Guadalcanal, Honiara is the commercial and business centre for the region. The township offers a selection of restaurants, clubs, banks, tourist information, shops and markets. Honiara overlooks the lagoon known as 'Iron Bottom Sound'. The body of water lying between Guadalcanal and Nggela Islands is the resting place for many ships and aircraft lost in the 1942 "Battle of Guadalcanal".

Activities: Trekking expeditions to villages, flora and fauna, tropical bushland, rivers and waterfalls, local tour operators are recommended.



Diving: "Iron Bottom Sound" is home to a variety of wrecks including troop carriers, transport ships, submarines and planes. All wrecks are National Heritage listed and removal of any items is strictly prohibited.

Some of the popular dive sites

"Hirokawa Maru" (Bonegi I): Japanese transport ship, 6860 tons, length 155 m. Dive starts at 3m plunging to 55m.

"Kinugawa Maru" (Bonegi II) Japanese transport ship, length 132m, resting partly above water with the stern in 27m. **USS John Penn:** For the experienced diver. An American troop ship lying on the sand at 60m covered in black coral growth.



KITANO MENDANA HOTEL

Location: Set amongst lush tropical gardens overlooking Iron Bottom Sound and within walking distance to Honiara's shops, restaurants and commercial area.

Room Amenities: 81 double rooms, 12 twin rooms and

3 suites with garden or ocean views. All rooms are air-conditioned and have en-suite bathroom, fridge, tea / coffee making facilities, IDD telephones, satellite TV and in-house video.

Hotel facilities: Restaurant, café and bar, swimming pool, laundry, souvenir shop, safe deposit box, guest parking and function room.

KING SOLOMON HOTEL

Location: Situated on a terraced hillside with views over Iron Bottom Sound. The hotel is within easy walking distance of the town centre.

Room Amenities: 23 Deluxe Hillside rooms, 30 Seaview rooms and 7 self contained units with garden or water views. The modern rooms are air conditioned and offer private bathroom facilities, ceiling fans, fridge, tea/coffee making, IDD telephone and satellite TV.

Hotel Facilities: Restaurant and nightclub with entertainment and live music, 2 lounge bars, infinity waterfall pool, 24 hour reception,

conference centre, hair and beauty salon, conference facilities, wireless internet, laundry services, tour operator. A land based cable car provides access to the accommodation levels.

Please ask us about other accommodation options available in Honiara.



Tulagi - Florida Islands



The Nggela (Florida) Islands are a small cluster of islands located 35 kilometres north of Honiara. A boat transfer from the Honiara Yacht Club across Iron Bottom Sound takes approximately one hour.

Tulagi Island. Due to its central location and deep water anchorage Tulagi was originally chosen as the colonial capital of the Solomon Islands. However, the Pacific Campaign of WW II were to change this when on 7 August 1942, the Japanese occupation of the island was halted by allied troops, resulting in Tulagi being severely damaged. The number of wrecks in the area has made Tulagi one of the best wreck diving destinations in the South Pacific.

Accommodation:

VANITAS DIVERS LODGE

Location: Waterfront next to Tulagi Wharf.

Room Amenities: Single and twin dormitory-style rooms with share bathroom facilities. 2 double rooms have private bathroom facilities. All rooms have ceiling fans and power.

Lodge Facilities: Restaurant and bar with indoor or outdoor dining, BBQ amenities and a resident dive shop.



Diving:

Many wrecks lie in the harbour only minutes from Tulagi Wharf. Nitrox and limited mixed gas facilities are available for the technical and more experienced divers.

Some of the more popular dive sites
Aaron Ward: Discovered in 1995, is the only dive-able destroyer in the Solomon Islands. Depth 53-73m.

Kanawha: The 14,500 tonne American oil tanker was sunk on 7 April 1943, the same day as the Aaron Ward. Sitting upright on a flat bottom the deck is strewn with artifacts and debris. Depth 40-60m.

Sandfly Passage: A beautiful coral garden studded with big red and yellow fans. An amazing diversity of coral and marine life. Depth 3-40m.



Uepi Island - Western Province



Uepi Island sits on two and a half kilometres of barrier reef surrounding the beautiful Marovo Lagoon on the south-eastern side of New Georgia Island. Comprising some 100 hectares of raised coral reef covered with lowland rainforest, the pristine environment is in an almost undisturbed state. The marine eco-system is extraordinarily diverse and the terrestrial eco-system quite unique.

Uepi is 10 kilometres from the nearest village and 150 kilometres from the nearest point of supply, so the journey to this remote area is quite an adventure in itself. From Honiara, a 60 minute flight brings you to the small airstrip at Seghe. Visitors are met at the airstrip by a representative of Uepi Island and then transported 12 kilometres across the beautiful Marovo Lagoon in an open 22 foot speed boat.



UEPI ISLAND RESORT is located on a small peninsula at the eastern end of the island. The resort fronts a private, sandy beach with the tranquil waters of the lagoon on one side and fringing reefs and ocean drop-offs on the other. The resort is the only property on the island and caters for a maximum 26 guests in a relaxed informal atmosphere. The remainder of the island is undeveloped and covered in tropical jungle with clearly marked walking tracks.

Activities: Spectacular snorkelling, swimming, sea-kayaking, fishing, bush walking, volley ball and cultural visits to nearby islands. Secluded picnic and snorkelling areas can be accessed by boat or by walking tracks throughout the rainforest.

Accommodation: Consists of 6 individual bungalows that are generously separated for personal privacy. Each timber bungalow has a deck area to enjoy the views over the lagoon or mountains. The modern bungalows are clean and comfortable and offer private bathroom facilities,

insect screening, refrigerator, tea / coffee making facilities and a regular supply of fresh rainwater. Owing to the warm climate the water is not heated. Other accommodation options available include; 2 twin share units and 2 guest rooms with en-suite bathroom facilities.

Diving: The resort has a fully equipped dive centre with a limited amount of gear for hire. The diving along Uepi Island passage and barrier reef drop-offs and bays is exclusively a coral reef eco-system. There are over 10 main dive sites with differing structure and bio-assemblage. These include shallow 15m and 30m coral gardens with magnificent drop-offs, ledges and gutters, sharks, an enormous diversity of reef fish and light game fish, turtles, mantas and eagle rays are all common sights, along with the seasonal and friendly hammerheads. There are no wrecks in the immediate area but excursions to the wreck of a P38 fighter plane and a fishing boat which are approximately a one hour boat trip away can be easily arranged.



Some popular dive sites:

Uepi Point: A near vertical reef corner coated profusely with hard and soft corals. At 30m a coral peninsula juts out into the deep blue, and the walls plunge into the abyss. This provides the stage for a spectacular procession of pelagics that include schooling barracuda, jacks, rays and sharks. At various times and tides the point area becomes a hunting and feeding ground. As a result the underwater action can be very exciting.

The Elbow: Is an incredibly steep drop-off. The sheer wall drops to depths in excess of 600 metres and is covered with colourful hard and soft corals.



Dive Charter Vessels



Live-aboard Vessels

The ideal way to experience the diverse range of diving in the Solomon Islands is aboard one of the 2 charter vessels operating out of Honiara. In addition to world renowned diving the Solomons offer a hidden wealth of cultural and natural wonders. During village visits you will be welcomed by the shy, friendly smiles of local people offering hand made souvenirs for sale. **Bilikiki Cruises** operates 2 live aboard vessels "M.V Bilikiki" and "M.V Spirit of Solomons". Both boats offer air conditioned accommodation, unparalleled space and comfort, immense sun decks, plenty of covered deck space. Each vessel has two 21 foot aluminium dive tenders to transfer divers to dive sites and picks them up when they surface. There is no need for lengthy swims back to the vessel.

Gizo - Western Province



FATBOYS RESORT

Location: The small resort consists of 3 traditional leaf and hardwood bungalows and is situated right on the waters edge of Mbabanga Island, a 10 minute boat ride from Gizo wharf.



Room Amenities: The duplex bungalows contain a queen and 3 single beds while the single bungalow has a queen bed. Each bungalow offers a large veranda, private bathroom facilities, DVD player and tea/coffee making amenities.

Resort Facilities: Fatboys Restaurant and Bar is situated at the end of a 100 metre jetty, perched out over the crystal clear waters.

SANBIS RESORT

Sanbis Resort is an exclusive property that caters for the more discerning holiday maker.

Location: The environmentally friendly property is set amidst coconut palms and coastal vegetation, overlooking a tranquil lagoon.



Room Amenities: Each of the 5 individual bungalows has its own secluded beachfront with views over the lagoon. The bungalows contain a modern ensuite bathroom, private veranda and are solar powered.

Resort Facilities: Private beach, restaurant and bar.

Diving: Gizo is renowned for its spectacular and diverse dive sites, 28°C water temperatures and excellent visibility.

Some popular dive sites:

Toa Maru: A 6,700 ton, 140 metre long Japanese transport ship lying on her starboard side in 10-37metres of water. This dive site is worth several visits as you can explore the ships holds containing ammunition, saki bottles and even a two man tank.

Plum Pudding Island: A historically interesting site where the late U.S. President, John F Kennedy and his crew of the PT 109 were shipwrecked.

Japanese Zero and Float Plane: Two easily accessible wreck dives located in Gizo Harbour.

Grand Central Station: One of the best fish dives in Gizo. Park yourself on a 18 metre deep "bench" and watch the multitude of fish life pass you by. Rays, sharks, kingfish and porpoises are all present. The area has an abundance of colourful corals.

Hot Spot: A deep water pinnacle starting at 5-6 m. A concentrated fish dive and home to 7 species of anemone fish, found at the safety stop.



Gizo the capital of Western Province is a 90 minute flight from Honiara. The tropical treasure trove of sun drenched blue lagoons, coral cays, lush forests and pristine waters is surrounded by hundreds of small tropical islands.

Gizo has a population of approximately 4000 people and enjoys a mixture of friendly native customs and cultures. It's almost impossible to contemplate that throughout the 19th century the people of this scenic and peaceful region, specialised in the gruesome sport of head-hunting.

Also embedded in the history of Gizo are memories of the heavy fighting that occurred in the region during WW II. Stories about the rescue of John F Kennedy, (who later became the President of the USA) and the PT 109 crew, the aerial battles that occurred over Vella Lavella and the Tokyo Express "Steaming down the Slot", still abound today.

Activities: include swimming, snorkelling, canoeing, sport fishing, surfing, island tours, nature hikes to waterfalls and volcanoes, picnics on deserted islands, cultural village visits and WW II historical tours.



Accommodation

GIZO HOTEL

Location: Centrally located on the main street of Gizo, overlooking the harbour and just a 5 minute boat ride from the airport.

Room Amenities: The Garden Wing rooms have private bathroom facilities, fridge, tea/coffee making and are fan-cooled. The Poolside and Seaview rooms are air-conditioned and have private bathroom facilities, fridge, IDD phones, tea/coffee making, and a private balcony.



Munda - Western Province

Munda is a destination for adventure seekers who like exploring "off the beaten track places". A 1 hour flight from Honiara, Munda is located near the junction of the Raviana and Vona Vona Lagoons, on the north-eastern corner of New Georgia Island. During WW II Munda was an important military airfield



base and relics from this period are scattered throughout the whole area. The Roviano people have a colourful cultural history of head hunting, animist religions and tribal wars. The area was once the centre for head hunting and some "eerie trophies" from this by-gone era are still visible on Skull Island.

Activities: Snorkelling, diving, fishing, canoeing, treks to waterfalls, bat caves, WW II relics, island picnics, village visits and cultural tours.

Accommodation

AGNES LODGE

Location: Situated on the waterfront overlooking Roviana Lagoon Agnes Lodge was originally a guest house for government officials. Accommodation ranges from budget rooms to individual cottages.



Room Amenities: Cottages contain double or twin beds, private bathroom facilities, lounge area and balcony. Twin share rooms have an en-suite bathroom. All rooms have ceiling fans, tea/coffee making facilities and small fridge.

Resort Facilities: A traditional leaf house building situated right on the waters edge houses the restaurant and lounge bar.

ZIPOLO HABU RESORT

Location: Situated on Vona Vona Lagoon, a 30 minute boat ride from Munda, Zipolo Habu is a classic desert island resort with swaying palm trees and white sand beaches.

Room Amenities: Quaint, individual, rustic bungalows made from traditional Sago palm leaves. Some bungalows offer a basic kitchen with gas stove, fridge and electric fans. Shower and bathroom facilities are in a separate building nearby. There is a new deluxe bungalow on the beach with private facilities.



Resort Facilities: Restaurant and bar facilities.

Diving: The diving is still largely unexplored with new sites being discovered daily. Majestic wall dives and virgin reefs are specialties. The soft coral overhangs of Mushroom Island, the 4km drop off at Shark Point and the amazingly colourful corals of Rainbow Passage are fast becoming renowned as world class dive sites with intense big fish and shark action.



Some popular dive sites:

Mushroom Island: (Tomba-Tuni) is perched on an extinct volcano with soft coral overhangs, fantastic visibility and big fish action.

Custom Shark Cave: An amazing cave system that extends from a fresh water pool at the centre of the island to a cavern that opens onto an 800m reef-wall that's ablaze with soft corals, whips, sponges and a myriad of fish life. **Rainbow Passage:** A colourful dive with an array of corals, gorgonians and invertebrates teeming with fish life that includes sharks and turtles. **Douglas Dive Bomber:** This historical wreck lies intact in 12m of water.

Casi Maru: A 700 ton Japanese freighter lying at 16 m.



SOME OF OUR OTHER POPULAR ADVENTURE DESTINATIONS



DIVE
ADVENTURES

SYDNEY -

Unit 607, 379 Pitt St. Sydney 2000 - Lic. No. 2TA 003537
PH:(02) 9299 4633 FAX:(02) 9299 4644
TOLL FREE BOOKINGS: 1800 222 234
e-mail: sydney@diveadventures.com.au

MELBOURNE -

Unit A 5.2, 63-85 Turner St Port Melbourne VIC 3207 - Lic. No. 31669
PH:(03) 9646 5945 FAX:(03) 9646 8589
TOLL FREE BOOKINGS: 1800 242 724
e-mail: melbourne@diveadventures.com.au

Travel Compensation Fund No. 04589.

BALLAO HOLDINGS PTY. LTD. A.B.N. 65 003 137 586 T/A DIVE ADVENTURES (INCORPORATED IN NSW)

Your Agent: