

NIUE – Undiscovered, Unspoiled, Unbelievable!

# DIVE ADVENTURES

# NIUE



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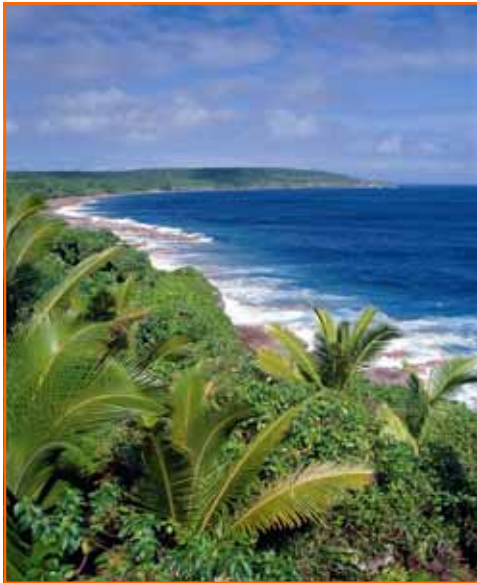
**DIVE**   
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**NIUE**  
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# Niue

**Niue** is the world's largest, single, coral island. Affectionately known as "The Rock" of Polynesia, Niue sits alone, right at the heart of the ancient Polynesian Islands of Tonga, Samoa and The Cook Islands in the south-west Pacific Ocean.



Niue is different from your usual, Pacific island destinations. It doesn't have long stretches of sandy beaches, there are no high-rise tourist resorts with raging discos and nightclubs or exotic duty-free shopping. Niue is a destination for the explorer who likes to get out and make their own discoveries, for the diver seeking clean, clear water brimming with coral and fish and for the traveller who simply wants to get away and relax in a laid back, peaceful and unspoiled natural environment.

## The Environment:

The upraised, coral atoll has a total land area of 259 square kilometres rising steeply from the ocean to 30 metres, then it rises again to 70 metres. The land is protected by a fringing skirt of limestone reef that allows access to the ocean, before plunging off to abyssal depths, right on the edge of the Pacific Plate.

The surge of the Pacific Ocean, against Niue's unique, geological make-up, has created a spectacular, rugged coastline of soaring arch-ways, deep chasms, cathedral sized sub-terranean caves, fascinating grottoes, reef pools and intimate swimming coves.

The interior of the island is the remains of a shallow lagoon. The land is flat with lush, tropical, first generation rainforests rich in a diversity of spectacular flora and fauna, bird-life and butterflies are everywhere. The entire island is laced with a myriad of magnificent, limestone caves, grottos and giant caverns. These systems formed the basis of ancient Niuean homes, food storage and burial sites. Many caves are still being formed with stalagmites and stalactites in all various stages of development.

There are no rivers or streams on Niue. When it rains the water filters through the porous coral rock, out into the warm waters of the Pacific, completely devoid of any silt run-off. The surrounding, pristine ocean has some of the cleanest, clearest water in the world with underwater visibility often exceeding 40 metres. Niue enjoys a long, dry season from April to November with average temperatures of around 24 degrees Celsius. From December to March temperatures are around 28 degrees Celsius, with higher humidity and rain fall.



## Cultural History:

The Niueans are descendants of Polynesian seafarers who visited and stayed over past centuries. From 1846-1900 Niue was administered under the London Mission Society until 1901 when it became annexed to New Zealand. In 1974 Niue gained full independence in "free association" with New Zealand and is said to be the world's smallest self governing country.

## The People:

The Niueans are friendly, hospitable people who welcome visitors with open arms. The population of just 1800, live in one of 14 villages found along the 67km road that circles the island. Although they live a "traditional" village lifestyle they do enjoy the use of many modern day facilities. The people are well educated and bilingual in Niuean and English. They take great pride in their many traditions and cultures with subsistent farming of plantations, land hunting and fishing supplementing incomes. The Niuean women are highly re-

spected for their craft of quality weaving. Individually woven articles such as hats, baskets, mats and other crafts can be purchased from the women on market days.



## General Information:

Niue has a small selection of supermarkets, general stores, restaurants and cafes. The currency of Niue is the New Zealand dollar. Although there are no "eftpos" facilities there is a Bank of South Pacific and major credit cards are readily accepted. The island also has its own hospital. There is no public transport system, cars, vans, motorbikes and mountain bikes can be hired. A local drivers licence must be obtained from the Police Station in the capital Alofi. The island boasts a 9 hole golf course. The golf course is a little underdeveloped but the clubhouse is well stocked and friendly. Sundays are considered a day of worship and rest. All visitors are asked to consider protocol.



# Niue - Diving

## Diving Niue

Niue is an underwater photographers dream. The isolated location and lack of rivers, results in stunning clarity of the surrounding ocean. Visibility is usually well over 40 metres with water temperatures between 27 degrees Celsius in Winter to 30 degrees Celsius in Summer.



Explore drop-offs, canyons, caves, tropical sea life and corals. As there is no lagoon, dives are made directly into the pristine waters of The Pacific. The reef is predominately made up of hard corals and drops down to around 40 metres, it then levels off for a short distance, before heading off to the vastness of the abyss. Most dives are less than a ten minute boat ride away, with the longest trip taking 30 minutes to reach. Only metres off-shore, you swim over canyons or through caverns, to deep drop-offs. No special training is required for the cavern dives, all are easy to access and have natural light sources. The depth range for most dives is from 5 metres to 30 metres. Niueans still use



traditional fishing methods on the reef so tropical fish are plentiful. The fish have not yet learnt to shy away and hide from divers. Along with the usual reef dwellers you will encounter reef sharks, barracuda, maori wrasse, surgeon fish, moorish idol, regal angelfish, large fin



banner fish, the comical anemone, long nose butter fish, the crown of thorns starfish and the elusive ribbon eel.

Spinner dolphins are in attendance all year. One of Niue's best kept secrets is that it is the ideal place to see and dive with Humpback Whales. Each year, between June and November, the migrating Humpback is a common sight. The adults and their young can be seen frolicking around the bay and breaching close to the shore. You may even come face to face with these magnificent, gentle giants of the deep, whilst diving the drop-off at Alofi. In the crystal clear waters of Niue, this makes for an unforgettable, life time experience.



## Some of Niue Dive's favourite dive sites are:

**Limu;** A twin cavern system connected by a tunnel. Depth range 8-28 metres. Regular sightings of lion fish, ribbon eels, white tip reef shark, schools of trevally and midnight sea perch.

**The Maze;** A series of passages and swim-throughs in the shallows where parrot fish and sea snakes hang out.

**The Dome;** This dive is for the adventurous. It involves a 30 metre swim into a cave system under the island. You surface in a large air filled chamber which has the start of some stalactites.

**The Chimney;** Descend down a vertical shaft into a medium sized cavern with an exit out at the seabed (around 28 metres). A side chamber houses several painted crayfish.

**Bubble Cave;** A favorite with photographers. A shallow cave system with lots of natural light and where sea snakes lay their eggs. Surface in a small air filled chamber with stalactites. Look out through a large hole in the cliff.

**Egypt;** Swim through a series of large columns, like ancient temple ruins, taking you back to the shallows of the sea cliffs. Turtles, parrot fish, eels and white tip sharks feature here.

**Snake Gully;** One of Niue's most popular dive sites. A cave and a cavern at less than 20 metres crammed with painted crayfish and dozens of sea snakes with streams of light coming through. Schools of barracuda, turtles, sharks and maori wrasse make regular appearances.



## Activities and Excursions:

**Snorkelling;** There are several stunning in shore swimming areas and coral pools like Matapa Chasm and Limu that offer a gentle introduction to the marine world beyond the outer reef.

**Fishing;** Niue is legendary amongst the know fishermen. The steep drop off to the abyss on the edge of the Pacific Plate provides fishing just metres off shore.

**Caving;** Niue is laced with caves ranging in size from wormholes to giant caverns. Guided cave tours and expeditions are graded from easy to challenging dependent on visitors needs and abilities.

**Forest Walks;** A guided tour with a botanical expert will enhance your senses and knowledge of the ancient forest.

**Mountain Biking;** The mainly flat terrain and lack of traffic makes biking a relaxing and fun pastime. Well maintained bikes can be hired.

# Niue

## Accommodation and Facilities

Although limited, Niue has a range of accommodation options from budget to superior. Two of the more popular properties accommodating divers are;

### Matavi Resort

Matavi Resort is Niue's premier accommodation. The resort is perched cliff-top blending into the rugged landscape of coral outcrops, coconut palms, rainforest and tropical flowers. The resort's restaurant and bar open up onto a large deck that boasts 180 degree views out over the Pacific Ocean. From here you can witness fabulous sunsets, pods of



Matavi Resort

spinner dolphins frolicking and in season, Humpback Whales cruising by. The 24 well appointed guest rooms offer en-suites, ceiling fans, colour TV, in house movie channel, IDD telephone, refrigerator, min bar, hair drier and tea and coffee making facilities. The resort has 2 freshwater swimming pools, complimentary use of mountain bikes, tour desk, gift shop and accepts major credit cards.



Matavi Resort



Namukulu Motel

### Namukulu Motel

The new Namukulu Motel is situated just 10 minutes drive from Alofi in totally tranquil tropical surroundings and has 3 fabulous fales (units) of superior quality, each with magnificent panoramic sea views. The timber interior and Italian tiled floors ensures a light, airy, comfortable atmosphere. Each unit has a separate bedroom, large bathroom and spacious kitchen/living area as well as a generous deck area outside on which visitors can relax and enjoy a drink while watching the spectacular sunsets. Appointments include fridge, cooking facilities, ceiling fans, radio, TV and insect screens. The freshwater swimming pool has views of the sea.

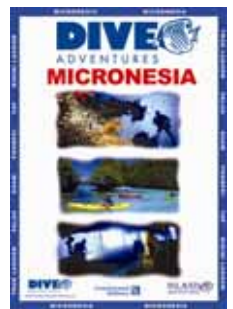
### Getting there

There are regular flights from Australia to Niue via New Zealand. A current valid passport and onward ticket is required. Stays of more than 30 days require immigration approval.



Photo Credits go to the following photographers: Charles Cooper, Auckland, N.Z. Darryl Torckler, Wetstock, N.Z. Paddy Ryan, David Hyde, N.Z. Glenn Jowitz, Steve Dickinson N.Z.

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