

# SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

## BLUE LAGOON MINI ADVENTURE

### FIVE DAY TRIP WITH FOUR DAYS SEA KAYAKING

Fiji is an island nation comprised of 322 islands spread over 230,000 square kilometers. The Yasawa group is a chain of 16 islands located north-west of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. We spend our time in the Yasawas kayaking to different islands from our base camp, camping amongst coconut palms, exploring wonderful beaches and bays, snorkelling the coral reefs and getting to know the friendly locals. This is a trip that will appeal to all your senses, giving a well-earned break from the stress of modern life. We use expedition kayaks with spray skirts, not sit on top kayaks.

#### A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive Yasawas, transfer to base camp, begin sea kayaking.	D
Day 2-4	Island kayaking from base camp.	BLD
Day 5	Trip finishes after lunch, transfer to Yasawa Flyer.	BL

#### MEETING PLACE AND TIME

We will pick you up from the Awesome Adventures boat (Yasawa Flyer) in the Blue Lagoon opposite Nanuya Resort at approximately 1.30 pm. Alternatively, you can make your way to our base camp on Tavewa Island at 1 pm on Day 1.

#### HOW TO GET THERE

Flights to Nadi can be booked through a travel agent or through airline websites. Nadi international airport is about 10kms from Nadi town, a taxi ride is approximately \$15 Fijian. You can book your boat transport from Denarau Marina to Tavewa with Southern Sea Ventures or book directly with Awesome Adventures on their website <http://www.awesomefiji.com>. If you would like to do some island hopping before or after our trip, Awesome Adventures sell an island pass which includes one return journey to the Yasawas and then hops between resorts and islands as often as you like for the consecutive number of days designated. Passes are valid for 7, 14 or 21 days from the first day it is used.\*\*Please note the kayaking cannot be booked through Awesome Adventures. The boat transfers between Nadi and the Yasawas is **not** included in your trip cost.

#### SEA KAYAKING

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience can be useful. The degree of difficulty of the trip **will depend on the weather** we encounter. The sea and weather conditions in the outer islands are predominantly stable but in windier conditions we may require a full day's paddling. An "average" paddling day will range from 3-5 hours and we mix in as much snorkelling and exploration walking as possible. We ask that all participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and control and ideally suited for this remote trip. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts. We use a combination of double and single kayaks. Our guides are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional wilderness guides. On the first day you will be given a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayaks. We generally limit our group size to a maximum of 10 clients.

In general, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling, so it's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip.



If you have not paddled before we highly recommend some kayak tuition before your trip and we may be able to suggest a local operator near your home.

## **PROPOSED ITINERARY**

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.

Pre Day 1: Arrive in Fiji.

Day 1: If you are traveling from Nadi today we can meet you from the Awesome Adventures boat, the "Yasawa Flyer", on arrival into the Blue Lagoon. You should depart the boat at the Tavewa Island/Nanuya Island Resort stop. The "Flyer" arrives at approximately 1.30pm into the Blue Lagoon. We will then transfer you by small boat to our base on Tavewa Island.

Alternatively, if you are already in the Yasawas, meet us at 1:00 pm at Henry Murray's (our base) on Tavewa Island.

Lunch is not provided this day but over *Afternoon Tea* we will have a trip briefing and set up camp, our home for the next four nights. Our Fijian hosts will make us comfortable, providing a dining bure and grassy campsites. After customizing our kayaks and getting acquainted with our expedition gear, it's time to get on the water! We'll have an instructional paddling session before a short excursion in the lagoon. Watching the sunset from the beach in front of our tents is a great way to end the day followed by a wholesome tropical dinner.

Days 2-4: Day paddles to surrounding islands exploring hidden bays, mangroves, beautiful white sandy beaches, caves, lagoons and the best snorkeling sites in the area. . The combination of reefs, close island grouping and shallow waters create the stunning aqua colours for which this area is famous. We will visit a traditional Fijian village and experience a *sevu-sevu*, a kava welcome ceremony. Operating from our base camp is ideal. We are able to paddle empty kayaks without having to repack each day, giving us more time to explore this tropical paradise.

Day 5: Our last morning can be as busy or as lazy as you like! There is time for a scuba dive, an island massage, fishing excursion or a last morning snorkel. The trip concludes after lunch on Tavewa and if departing this day, your transfer is included to the Yasawa Flyer.

## **END OF TRIP**

We finish the trip after lunch and include a local boat transfer from our base on Tavewa Island to the Yasawa Flyer at 1 pm. Alternatively, you may choose to extend your stay in the islands at one of the resorts. Accommodation on Day 5 is not included in your trip cost. A few suggested Nadi hotels and Yasawa resorts are listed at the end of these notes.

## **THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE**

The many islands of Fiji are spread around the reef-strewn Koro Sea in the southwest Pacific Ocean. About 100 of over 300 islands are inhabited and range from large mountainous wooded landmasses to coral cays that you can walk across with a few steps. Its population of 836,000 is made up of 45% Indians and 50% native Fijians. The remaining population is made up of Chinese, European, Rotuman and other Pacific islanders. Native Fijians are Melanesians with some Polynesian traits. Fiji's main island, Viti Levu, covers 10,388 sq. km. and its highest peak, Mt. Victoria, is 1323 meters high. It has 80% of the population and is the major centre for air and sea communication in the southwest Pacific. The Yasawas are a chain of 16 volcanic islands with summits ranging from 229 to 579 meters. The Yasawas are strictly populated by native Fijians.

Fiji has three official languages, Fijian, Hindi and English, but there are some 300 communalects (variations) in the Fijian language. English is widespread and most young people have a good working grasp of English.



## **CLIMATE**

Generally you will experience a mild tropical climate from May to November. The weather is generally drier than on the main island of Viti Levu. Nights will be cool, perhaps 16-20 degrees celsius with some spells of cloudy weather and rain. The days are generally hot and dry with humidity increasing in October and November. The trade winds blow from May to November.

## **TRIP ORGANISATION**

The sun sets quickly in the tropics so paddling days will start early to take advantage of cooler temperatures. It is important to understand that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members.

On the kayaking trip the food is mainly fresh. We will try to supplement this with freshly caught fish! (N.B. for vegetarians and those who have special dietary requirements, we are happy to make the necessary arrangements).

We return each afternoon to our base camp so we do not have to set up tents each day. Your guide will ensure an active holiday but there will also be time to relax and settle into Fijian island rhythm.

## **EXPEDITION STAFF**

Your kayak guide will be one of our most experienced leaders. The guide's role is to co-ordinate the expedition and ensure the safety of the group. They will answer questions and inform you of the objectives and program for each day. They will decide on safety matters, administer the medical kit and liaise with the local villagers on your behalf. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

## **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures is not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and Southern Sea Ventures will do its best to rectify the situation. Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule it is not always possible. We are sure you will appreciate this and accept it as part of the whole Fijian island experience.

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation, due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read your policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

## **AIRPORT TAXES**

These are your responsibility and are not included in your tour costs.

## **TIME & COMMUNICATION**

Nadi is two hours ahead of Australian Eastern standard time. There is mobile phone coverage in the islands.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation is not included before and after the trip. Ensure you are not located too far from Denarau Marina on the night before your island boat transfer as the boat departs daily at 8:30 am. We will stay in two person tents on our island base.



## **FOOD AND WATER**

Nadi is a small town but there are many restaurants to choose from. European, Chinese, Fijian and Indian food is available. As with any change in diet, it is wise to accustom yourself slowly to different foods. It is recommended to wash any fruit bought in the market. Tap water in hotels is chlorinated, and we use boiled or sterilised water during kayaking.

## **CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

It is very important to behave in a respectful way towards both the people and their land. Whilst the islanders will never rebuke you for unknowingly offending them it is desirable to try to respect as many of their customs and beliefs as you can, for example, it is disrespectful for women to wear bathing suits in a village and a 'sulu' or a sarong should be carried by both men and women while kayaking (sulus can be bought in Fiji costing between F\$12-F\$20).

Whilst in a village it is disrespectful to: wear hats, sit on doorways or stand up during a 'sevu sevu' ceremony. Shoes should be removed when entering a Fijian hut. Simple courtesy and a bit of sensitivity will satisfy most of the customs of village life. Swearing is frowned upon. Some basic practices you should observe are:

- ask the locals if they mind being photographed.
- restrict wearing bathing suits to remote beaches.
- In villages use a sulu with a shirt or long pants in the evenings. Shorts are acceptable during the day.

## **GIFTS**

We will be self contained and provide all our own food and camping equipment so as to minimize our impact on the area. If you bring any gifts we would prefer to make a presentation of them from the group rather than to individuals. This helps to reduce jealousy and expectations. If you would like to provide something personally, consider making a donation to the education fund we have set up.

\*\*In 1998 we established an education fund through donations from past clients. Southern Sea Ventures manages the fund in conjunction with the village chiefs. We can transfer donations from our Australian office to Fiji if required. The purpose is to provide some assistance in primary and secondary school fees in the villages we visit as many children do not have the opportunity to complete their schooling. This is something you may wish to consider after you have completed a trip as it is very satisfying to see a donation help put a child through school. Primary school fees are approximately \$60 per annum but secondary fees vary from \$200-\$600, so any assistance we provide is of tremendous help to villagers who often earn less than \$200 per year. The fund has proved very successful and it is great to see more possibilities open up for the younger generation.

## **CONSERVATION**

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc. We have installed composting toilets in each of the villages we visit to dispose of the group's human waste.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

The humidity is always high in Fiji and as we are paddling in a salt water environment the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of Silicon Packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera as there is no opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity during our island stay. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged! Low speed films are fine on the water but in the villages some higher speed films are



useful. We recommend all film be purchased and processed in your home country. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and practice with it before your departure. It is inconvenient to find fault with a camera during a trip.

## **MONEY MATTERS**

### Your tour cost includes:

- Local boat transfers to and from Tavewa Island to the “Yasawa Flyer” boat drop off/pick up point on Day 1 and Day 5 of the trip.
- Double and single expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- 2 person tents.
- Sleeping mats (full length thermarest pads).
- Watertight bags for day use.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 5.
- Group first aid kit.

### Your tour cost does not include:

- Transfers between Nadi and the Blue Lagoon area in the Yasawas.
- Meals or hotels in Nadi.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Airport taxes (if any) on departure from Nadi.
- Travel insurance.
- Airport transfers.
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry.

## **MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU**

F\$100 will be more than enough to bring during the kayaking and it is unlikely you will be able to spend that. The amount required in Nadi for meals and sightseeing will generally be covered by about F\$40-\$60 a day, alcohol would be additional. There are ATM machines at the airport and in the main town centres plus a 24 hour bank at the airport. This is the most efficient way to obtain Fijian dollars. Credit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels but don't rely on being able to use one everywhere. Traveller's cheques and cash can be changed at the airport or banks in the larger towns and cities but can take time.

## **CURRENCY**

The unit of currency is the Fijian dollar. The exchange rate is approximately AUD\$1 = F\$1.45.

## **TIPPING**

Tipping is not expected by the local people for services like taxis or baggage handling.

## **SECURITY**

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline ticket and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. Theft is a consideration in Fiji (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to leave things unattended when in the towns or villages. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewelry and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet. You may also like to look up the contact details of your country's consulate in Fiji.

## **MEDICAL MATTERS**

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

### Hygiene

Be conscious of hygiene. Regularly wash your hands, be wary of uncooked food and wash fruit or preferably peel it (with clean hands!).

### Vaccinations

For entry into the Fiji islands there are no statutory vaccinations at the time of writing. However you should check with your doctor or medical centre for current information.

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

### Medical Supplies

On our trips into more isolated areas we carry a comprehensive medical kit. However, it is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP15)
- Lip protector
- Band-aid strips
- Insect repellent
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness
- A mild antiseptic soap

### Dental

Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a checkup before departure.

## **EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING - WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING**

There is no need to pack a lot of clothing for our tropical island. The boat to the islands has limited storage, so you'll find it easier if you keep luggage to a minimum. We will provide a larger dry bag on arrival at Tavewa but we do recommend you bring your own small 5-10 litre dry bag for items you may need during the day while kayaking. We recommend casual clothes suitable for warm weather, preferably with a high content of cotton (which is cooler and breathes well). Excess luggage can be stored on the island while out kayaking. Keep in mind that water is scarce on some of the islands and there are no shops. We will carry our own drinking water and have cold (tepid) water showers on Tavewa. The list below should be used as a guide when packing but it should all fit into about half a garbage bag in size.

### **GEAR LIST**

- A wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, eg. straw, with a strap to put under your chin, is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck, can be useful too.
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water.
- Light weight rain jacket or spray jacket.
- 1 long sleeve lightweight synthetic shirt. This is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling. Cotton is not very suitable for paddling as it gets stiff with salt and can irritate the skin.
- 2 T-shirts or short sleeved shirts for camp.
- A lycra sun top is useful for snorkelling.
- 1 pair of lightweight, quick drying, full length trousers.
- 2 pairs of shorts and swimwear.
- Sulu or sarong (this can double up as a 2<sup>nd</sup> sheet).
- Very light weight fleece jacket (not a heavy jacket) i.e. Polartec 100 is sufficient, or a sweatshirt.
- Sleeping sheet.

- Sleeping bags are not generally required with fairly mild nights but you might like to bring a small airline size blanket. If you tend to feel the cold easily and if you do choose to bring a sleeping bag, ensure it is lightweight, very compact and zips open.
- 1 pair of running shoes (recommend to get away from wet thongs and sand in the evenings).
- Reef shoes for paddling or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly.
- Lightweight socks to wear with your shoes and perhaps your sandals if sand is irritating your feet.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal, or a medium sized hand towel).
- Minimal toiletries. A bio-degradable soap that will lather in salt water is very useful.
- A headlamp or small torch and batteries (batteries can be expensive and difficult to obtain in Fiji).
- 1 or 2, one litre water bottles. The type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sun screen, glasses, water bottle, etc. (try and avoid day packs with metal zips as they will corrode).
- Snorkelling gear is not provided nor is it readily available to hire. You should bring your own mask and snorkel. Fins are optional. Really keen divers might bring a small but bright waterproof torch for night snorkelling.
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling.
- Pillowcase or very small pillow (eg.airline pillow). A pillow case can give you the flexibility to make for a comfortable sleep.

#### Optional items.

- Camera, spare batteries, film, with waterproof container if the camera is not waterproof.
- Book.
- 10 metres of lightweight clothesline.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash
- Ear plugs – Noisy roosters!!

#### **RECOMMENDED READING**

The Fiji Explorer's Handbook, Suva, Graphics (Pacific) Ltd 1985

Matanitu by David Routledge, Suva, Univ. of the South Pacific, 1985

Say It In Fijian, Sydney, Pacific Publications, 1979

Lonely Planet Guide to Fiji by Rob Kay

Fiji Islands Handbook by David Stanley, Moon Publications 1999

Fiji's Natural Heritage, New Zealand, Exisle Publishing Ltd 2000

The Snorkelers Guide to the Coral Reef, Paddy Ryan, Crawford House Press, Australia 1994

#### **OPTIONAL DIVING**

There is opportunity on the final morning of the trip to fit in a scuba dive before departing at lunchtime. If this is of interest you must bring your PADI certification and advise us so it can be booked. A dive is approximately F\$100.

#### **DELAYS OR PROBLEMS**

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287. The guides local phone number in Fiji during the season will be advised in your final documents.

#### **SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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## **PLACES TO STAY AFTER END OF TRIP**

We finish the trip on Tavewa Island and provide a local transfer to the Yasawa Flyer on Day 5. Alternatively, you may choose to extend your stay in the islands at one of the resorts. Please let us know your arrangements upon booking the trip.

For a comprehensive guide to accommodation in Fiji, take a look at the Fiji Visitors Bureau website, [www.bulafiji.com](http://www.bulafiji.com)

Hotels in the Nadi area

Mercure Nadi- 5 kms from Nadi international airport and 3 kms from Nadi town.

[www.mercure.com/gp/hotel-5930-mercure-nadi](http://www.mercure.com/gp/hotel-5930-mercure-nadi)

Tel: (679) 6722255

Tanoa International Hotel-3 minutes from Nadi International airport.

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

Tel: (679) 6720277

Bluewater Lodge-(budget style)-10 minutes from airport and Nadi town.

No website

Email: [bluewaterfiji@connect.com.fj](mailto:bluewaterfiji@connect.com.fj)

Tel: (679) 6728858

There are a number of 4 and 5 star resorts located in the Denarau area including:

Sheraton Fiji Resort-5 star

[www.sheratonfijiresort.net](http://www.sheratonfijiresort.net)

Tel: (679) 6750777

Radisson Resort Fiji Denarau Island-4 star

[www.radisson.com/fiji](http://www.radisson.com/fiji)

Tel: (679) 6756677

For those wishing to spend more time in the beautiful Yasawas, these resorts can be reached from our base on Tavewa Island (additional transfer costs may apply).

Nanuya Island Resort- lovely resort close to our island base.

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

Tel: (679) 6667633

Octopus Resort-a resort with different styles of accommodation to suit most budgets. From our base on Tavewa Island, a boat transfer on the Yasawa Flyer takes approx. 2 hours.

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

Tel: (679) 6030070

Otto and Fanny's Place-a very simple resort on Tavewa Island.

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

Tel: (679) 6666481