



COUNTRY FACTS FIJI ISLANDS



Bula! Welcome to Fiji Islands. A country of fascinating atolls lined with coconut palms on golden sand beaches, jade-colored lagoons encircled by coral reefs. Fiji is an excellent choice for divers and snorkelers, honeymooners and families. Enjoy the rich cultural mix of South Asian and Fijian readily apparent in the food and special event days.

Cities and Towns

Nadi (pronounced Nandi), situated on the western side of the main island, Viti Levu, is the international gateway into Fiji as well as the domestic hub for flights to the outer islands. Suva is the capital and main administrative center. Port Denarau is the main port and departure point for outer island day tours as well as the two multi-night cruise companies.

Vanua Levu is the next most frequented island and is best known for its world class diving sites.

Population and language

The official language of Fiji is English but visitors will also notice that the languages of its two main population groups, Fijian (51%) and Indian (44%) are spoken among themselves.

Money

The Fijian dollar is the basic unit of currency, available in denominations of \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 bills. There is no limit to the amount of money to be brought in. Visitors are allowed to take out currency up to the amount imported.

**Electricity**

The electrical current in Fiji is 240 volts AC 50Hz. Fiji has three pin power outlets identical to Australia and New Zealand. If your appliances are 110 volt you will need to purchase a voltage converter prior to departure

Time Zones

At the "Crossroads of the Pacific" on the 180th Meridian, Fiji is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Climate

Fiji enjoys an ideal South Sea tropical climate. It is thus a perfect holiday destination, especially for those trying to escape the severe Northern Hemisphere winters. Maximum summer temperatures average 31oC seldom reaching above 35°C with the mean minimum of 22oC. Trade winds from the east / southeast bring year long cooling breezes late afternoon and early evening. The season for tropical rains is from December through February coinciding with the warmest and most humid summer months. The winter average maximum is 29oC and the mean minimum is 19oC.

Clothing

Dress is casual and informal throughout the islands. Visitors should bring a light tropical wardrobe including golf shirts, short sleeve shirts, T-shirts, shorts and slacks for evenings. For women, summer dresses and lightweight skirts, slacks and blouses.

The wrap-around sulu (sarong) is Fiji's most distinctive form of dress for women and men.

Food

Besides sampling from the range of restaurants with international cuisine, the visitor should not miss participating in at least one lovo, when traditional food is cooked in an underground oven and presented with cultural entertainment.

Shopping

Local handicraft, perfumes, sulus are some of the items that visitors might like to take home as souvenirs. Stores are usually open from 8:00am to 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday, until 6:00pm on Friday and until 1:00pm on Saturday. Boutiques in resorts may have other hours. A government tax (VAT) of 15% is applicable to all goods and services purchased in Fiji.

Tipping

Tipping is not encouraged in Fiji and it is left to the individual to determine whether to make a gratuity.

Banking

Major credit cards are welcomed by most hotels, restaurants, shops, rental car agencies, tours, cruises and travel agents. There is a 24-hr service at the Nadi airport with most banks normally open from 9:30am to 3:00pm Monday to Thursday and to 4:00pm on Friday. Most major international credit cards can be used in Fiji and travelers' cheques are accepted at hotels, banks and some stores.

Customs and Quarantine

Being an island state free of all serious plant and animal pests and diseases, Fiji must carefully maintain this status and protect itself agriculture and wild life from any disease brought in from outside the country. Importation of vegetable matter, seeds or any animal product is prohibited.

Vaccinations

Yellow fever and cholera vaccinations are only required if coming from an infected area as designated by the World Health Organization. Fiji is free from malaria and other major tropical diseases that are endemic to many tropical countries.

**Medical and Health**

Hospitals are located in the major centers with government clinics in rural areas and a lot of hotels and resorts have a nurse on the premises and a doctor on call. The tap water is perfectly safe to drink. It is recommended that comprehensive medical insurance be purchased prior to your departure.

Passport and visa

Visitors from Canada must have a passport valid for at least three months following their intended departure date from Fiji with no visa required for visits less than 30 days.

Driving Regulations

A bona fide tourist in Fiji may drive if in possession of a valid home country driving license for the same class of vehicle. Driving is on the left side of the road. The maximum speed limit in built-up areas is 50km/h and on the highways it is 80km/h.

Etiquette in a Fijian village

It is important to dress modestly when away from the hotel and especially when visiting a village. Carry a sulu to cover up as appropriate. Remove hats in a village so as not to “insult” the chief. Remove shoes when entering someone’s house and refrain from touching someone’s head (a cultural insult). You may be welcomed with the sharing of kava - a plant-based drink. Your respect for their customs and traditions will not only make you a welcome guest in their villages and homes but also add another welcome dimension to your Fijian holiday.

Duty Free Allowances

Visitors arriving in Fiji are allowed to bring in or purchase 2.25 liters of liquor or 4.5 liters of wine or beer plus 250 cigarettes. Duty free items may be purchased after clearing customs and before luggage pickup.