

Pacific Islands

Adventures like no place on earth



Samoa

Hidden Waters

Although this Pacific nation is fringed by some of the planet's finest beaches, the Samoan island of 'Upolu also features two inland bodies of water worthy of exploration by the intrepid traveller.

Descending a sturdy wooden ladder 20 metres into the To Sua Ocean Trench, I reach a cool haven protected from Samoa's intense sun. Replenished by an underwater tunnel filled by waves crashing on the nearby reef, the still, crystalline waters are framed by a halo of sheer cliffs trimmed with mossy curtains of tropical foliage. Surprisingly large fish linger in the placid waters, while metres away the roiling Pacific Ocean punches energetically through a blowhole.

Confident after negotiating what may be Samoa's longest ladder, I swim through an underwater passage to a second, smaller inland pool. Shimmering Pacific light floods the water, and for a contemplative moment Samoa's renowned beaches almost seem second-best.

Further inland, and high in 'Upolu's mountainous interior, local guide Manu leads me to the island's hidden and mysterious Lake Lanoto'o. After I've spent 45 minutes negotiating a challenging and overgrown track made slippery by recent rains, the compact former volcanic crater is revealed.

It strikes me as an ideal spot for kayaking. In German colonial times there was actually road access right to the lake, and visitors enjoyed the mixed pleasures of a cafe and nude bathing (how very European).

I watch as swiftlets, dragonflies, and even a few fruitbats negotiate the drifting breezes around the lake. The uniform background of green is enlivened by the singular red punctuation of wild ginger flowers.

Samoa's hidden waters are truly something to seek out.



Contact Details

Manoa Tours
Phone +685 777 0007
www.manoatours.ws

Hikes to Lake Lanoto'o cost ST\$80 per person. Hikes around other areas of 'Upolu can also be arranged.

To Sua Ocean Trench
Main South Coast Rd, Vavau
adult/child ST10/5

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🏠 Accommodation

Seaside Inn
Beach Rd, Apia
Phone +685 22 578
www.seasideinnsamoa.ws
dorm/single/double from
ST\$39/90/110

Tanoa Tusitala HoPhone
Beach Rd, Apia
Phone +685 21122
www.tanoahotels.com
double from NZ\$186

👁️ Other Attractions

Lalomanu Beach

Palolo Deep Marine Reserve
Vaiala Beach Rd
adult/child ST3/1

Papase'ea Sliding Rocks
off Maugafolau Rd
adult/child ST2/1
Safest in wet season.

Robert Louis Stevenson Museum & Mt
Vaea Scenic Reserve
Cross Island Rd, Vailima
Phone +685 20798
www.rlsmuseum.com
adult/child ST15/5

✈️ Transport

Air New Zealand
www.airnewzealand.com
Links Auckland and Apia.

Air Pacific
www.airpacific.com
Flies from Nadi in Fiji to Apia.

Pacific Blue
www.flypacificblue.com
Flies from Auckland, Sydney and
Brisbane to Apia.

Manoa Tours can pick up travellers from
accommodation around Upolu.

Funway Rentals
Phone +685 22045
www.funwayrentals.ws
from ST110 per day
Samoa's roads are excellent and a rental
car is a good way to get around.

🚶 Tours

Samoa Scenic Tours
Phone +685 26981
www.samoascenic tours.ws
Sightseeing and cultural tours.

Aqua Samoa
Phone +685 777 4744
www.aquasamoa.com
Diving, fishing and kite-boarding.

🍴 Drinking and Dining

Seafood Gourmet
Beach Rd, Apia
Phone +685 25962
mains ST\$15-40

Swashbucklers
Apia Yacht Club, Mulinu'u Rd, Apia
Phone +685 28584
mains ST\$18-45

Roko's
Ififi St, Apia
Phone +685 20992
mains ST\$15-50

Lupe's Bar & Restaurant
Maninoa Beach, 'Upolu
Phone +685 777 7376

Cappuccino Vineyard
Covent St, Apia
Phone +685 22049

Wildfire
Beach Rd, Apia
Phone +685 28790

🛍️ Shopping

Maketi Fou
Fuageli St, Apia

Janet's Handicrafts
Lotemeau Centre, Vaea St, Apia