

# *Solomon Islands*



Guadalcanal • Florida Islands • Marovo Lagoon • Gizo • Munda



# Solomon Islands



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**Solomon Islands.** Untouched by influences of the modern world the Solomon Islands are considered the eco-tourism destination of the South Pacific. Located on the western fringe of the Pacific, north-east of Australia, the Solomons comprise of 992 islands, extending some 1,667 kilometres south-east from Papua New Guinea. Rich in culture, this pristine paradise is one of the Pacific's best kept secrets and offers the visitor a unique and unforgettable holiday experience.

**The environment:** The islands range in size from tiny, low-lying coral atolls to larger landmasses and offer a diversity of geography from tropical jungles and lush rainforests to waterfalls and volcanoes. Most islands are surrounded by coral reefs with tranquil blue lagoons and sun-soaked white sand beaches, lined with coconut palms.

**The people:** Only 147, of the 992 islands, are actually inhabited. The estimated population of 560,000 are predominately Melanesian, while some outer islands are home to Polynesians and Micronesians. The local people appear shy but are very friendly. Most live a subsistent village lifestyle retaining many traditional and ancient customs.

**History:** During WWII, the Solomon Islands became a key turning point in the struggle by the allied forces to repel the Japanese advancement in the South Pacific. In November 1942, one of the fiercest encounters in naval history occurred here, with both sides suffering heavy losses. The Battle of Guadalcanal left the region littered with sunken ships and downed aircraft and the area became known as Iron Bottom Sound. Over time the wrecks have transformed into artificial reefs attracting a variety of corals and a myriad of marine life.

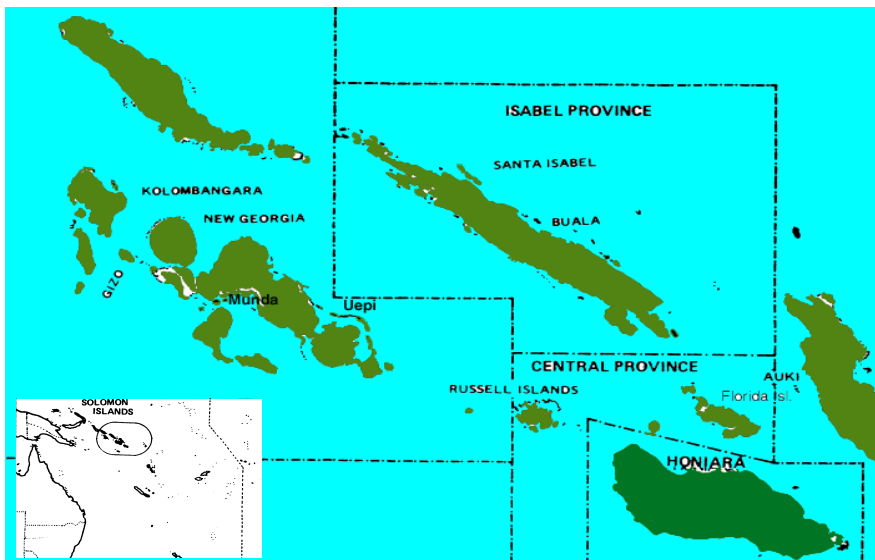
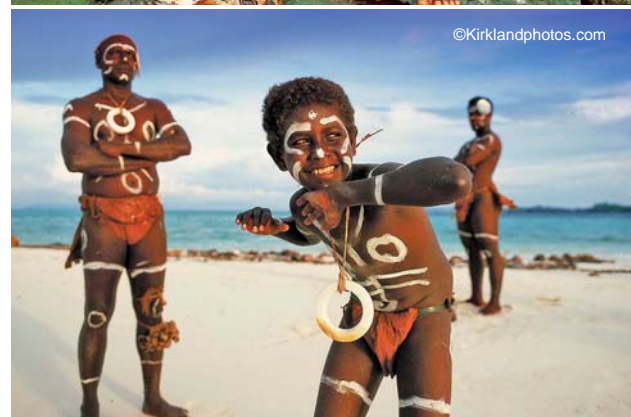
**Things to do:** Solomon Islands are renowned for having some of the best diving in the world. The crystal clear waters with temperatures ranging between 27-30°C, provide a plethora of water based activities. Snorkelling, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, surfing and big game fishing can all be enjoyed. Land based activities include a range of unique cultural, ecological and historical tours. Visit custom villages, cultural shrines, historical WWII sites, view arts and crafts, take rainforest treks to waterfalls, do some bird spotting or even visit a volcano.



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# Guadalcanal - Honiara



**Honiara**, located on the island of Guadalcanal, is the capital of the Solomon Islands and the international gateway to your holiday adventure. The town overlooks the large lagoon known as "Iron Bottom Sound". This expansive body of water is the resting place of the many ships and aircraft that plummeted to its depths, during the WWII Battle of Guadalcanal. Honiara offers a good selection of hotels, restaurants, clubs, banks, general stores and market place and is the springboard for the many tourist activities available throughout the region.



## Kitano Mendana Hotel

**Location:** Set amongst tropical gardens, overlooking Iron Bottom Sound, Kitano Mendana Hotel is within walking distance to the town centre.

The hotel offers 100 Garden or Sea View rooms, 14 Executive rooms and 4 Executive suites.

**Room amenities:** All rooms are air-conditioned and have a private en-suite bathroom, fridge, tea / coffee making facilities, IDD telephone, satellite TV and in-house video, wi fi internet access.

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



## King Solomon Hotel

**Location:** Situated on a terraced hillside with views over Iron Bottom Sound, the hotel is within walking distance of the town centre and features 23 Deluxe rooms, 30 Seaview rooms and 7 self contained units (1 or 2 bedroom) with kitchen and laundry facilities.

**Room amenities:** All rooms offer air conditioning, ceiling fans, private bathroom facilities, fridge, tea / coffee making, IDD phone and satellite TV.

**Hotel facilities:** Restaurant, 2 bars, café, infinity waterfall pool, gym, massage parlour, hair salon, conference centre, gift shop, wireless Internet.



## Honiara Hotel

**Location:** Perched on a hill, overlooking Honiara and Iron Bottom Sound, Honiara Hotel is located close to the local markets and shops. The hotel offers Budget, Deluxe, Executive and Self Contained rooms.

**Room amenities:** All rooms are air-conditioned with en-suite bathroom, fridge, satellite TV, in-house video, IDD telephone, tea/coffee making facilities. Ocean wing and self contained rooms have a balcony.

**Hotel facilities:** Business centre & conference facilities, wireless Internet, 3 restaurants and bar, gym, massage centre, swimming pool, coffee shop, gift shop, laundry service.



## Heritage Park Hotel

**Location:** Close to the central business district, Heritage Park Hotel sits on 5 acres of landscaped gardens. The waterfront hotel has 48 executive rooms and 27 serviced apartments all with private balconies.

**Room amenities:** All rooms feature air conditioning, private en-suite bathroom, hairdryer, refrigerator, mini-bar, safe, wireless Internet access, LCD TV, telephone, iron and board and tea/coffee making facilities.

**Hotel facilities:** Business centre, conference facilities, Internet, restaurant, terrace & poolside dining / bars, nightclub, gift shop, swimming pool, kids pool, gym, room service, baby-sitting service and laundry facilities.

**Things to do:** Honiara offers a range of water and land based activities, guided historical and cultural tours.

**Scuba Diving:** Iron Bottom Sound is the resting place of a variety of wrecks including troop carriers, transport ships, submarines and planes

**NB:** All wrecks are National Heritage listed and the removal of any item is strictly prohibited.

**Snorkelling:** A snorkelling trip will provide the opportunity to view the variety of marine life and hard and soft corals.

**Fishing:** The Solomon Islands are virtually unspoiled by commercial fishing. The big fish action is amazing. You can troll for Spanish Mackerel, Wahoo and Dog-tooth Tuna. Serious fishermen can pursue Pacific Sailfish, Yellow-fin Tuna and blue, black and striped Marlin.

**Golf:** Honiara Golf Club has an 11-hole course. The club sits on the former site of the US Army Air Corps airfield.

**Hiking:** If you enjoy jungle treks, then a guided trip to the Mataniko Falls and caves is highly recommended. The tour is a leisurely 4-5 hour round trip. It offers different routes, allowing the return trip to be either on foot or to swim or float back down the river on a rubber tube.

**World War II tours:** Guadalcanal was a major turning point in the Pacific Campaign of WWII. Many relics from the battles can be found on land as well as underwater. This tour takes the visitor to view relics, museums, and monuments of great significance to both the Japanese and US Allied Forces. Areas of interest include Bloody Ridge, US Memorial, Vilu Outdoor War Museum, Bonegi Wreck, Vouza Monument, Henderson Air Field and Memorial Garden.

**Cultural village tours:** Solomon Islanders are proud to introduce visitors to their unique way of life. A village visit is a great way to gain insight into their everyday village life. Experience their unhurried way of life, learn about their customs and cultural history, enjoy traditional singing and dancing and view cooking, weaving and handcrafts.

**Island day trips:** Enjoy a day trip to the Florida Islands. Explore the islands, laze on a beach, swim in the calm, crystal clear water, play beach volleyball, paddle a canoe or just kick back in a hammock with a book and cool drink.





## Guadalcanal - Florida Islands

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

**Tulagi Island:** Due to its central location and deep water anchorage, Tulagi was originally the chosen site for the “colonial capital” of the Solomon Islands. However, during The Pacific Campaign of WWII, Tulagi was severely damaged when the Japanese occupation of the island was halted by allied troops. There is a vast number of wrecks in the surrounding waters, making Tulagi one of the best wreck diving destinations in the South Pacific.



### Vanitas Lodge

**Location:** Situated on the waterfront opposite Tulagi Wharf.

**Room Amenities:** The lodge offers a selection of single and twin share dormitory-style rooms with shared use of bathroom facilities. There is also 2 double rooms with private bathroom facilities. All rooms have ceiling fans and power. There is no running hot water available.

**Hotel Facilities:** Restaurant offers indoor and outdoor dining with bar facilities. BBQ facilities are available.

### Things to do:

**Diving:** The area is a magnet for WWII wreck diving enthusiasts.

**Fishing:** The waters of the Solomon Islands are renowned for big game, reef, wreck, beach and estuary fishing. The action is unparalleled and the waters are virtually unspoiled by commercial fishing.

**World War II:** There are many battle sites and relics of the war to be found throughout the Florida Island group.

## Marovo Lagoon - The Wilderness Lodge



**The Wilderness Lodge** is located on Gatokae Island in Western Province. This eco-friendly lodge caters for a maximum of 12 guests in traditional style accommodation designed to blend into the surrounding rainforest and ocean. Explore the incredibly diverse marine and terrestrial ecosystems around Gatokae. The lodge has access to the 3 uninhabited islands of Bulu, MaleMale and Kicha, the 2,900 foot jungle-clad Mt. Mariu and ancient fortified villages. People of all ages, walks of life, levels of fitness and interests will find a visit to The Wilderness Lodge a rich, cleansing, and memorable experience. Wilderness is accessed by boat transfer from Seghe Airfield, an exciting 90 minute ride through the incredible scenery of the Marovo Lagoon. Airport transfers are not available Friday and Saturday in respect of the village rest day.



### Things to do:

**Diving:** Over 50 sites to choose from displaying the diverse array of fish life and healthy, colourful corals.

**Snorkelling:** Snorkel off the Lodge jetty or take a boat trip to the nearby islands.

**Fishing & spear fishing:** Experience fishing as it was meant to be. The lagoon is home to a host of pelagics including dog-tooth tuna and Spanish Mackerel.

**Freediving:** Freedive vertical coral walls or into the deep blue in warm water.

**Village tours:** Learn about the unique culture and history of the area. Peava Village is the most culturally intact village in Marovo Lagoon with many tambu sites from the headhunting culture which persisted into the 20th century.



### The Wilderness Lodge

**Location:** Set amongst lush vegetation on a coral lagoon by Peava Village.

**Room Amenities:** 2 Oceanfront bungalows offer Queen size beds and a sofa bed, ensuite bathroom, kitchenette and deck area. The Lodge comprises of 2 rooms with 2 double beds and 1 single bunk in each room and a solar power system with AC power inverter for running ceiling fans and charging cameras etc.

**Facilities:** Bar and dining facilities. Tariff includes all meals featuring local organic produce and seafood. Small dive centre. Satellite phone is available.





# Marovo Lagoon - Uepi Island Resort



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**Uepi Island Resort** sits on two and a half kilometres of barrier reef island, on the edge of the magnificent Marovo Lagoon, on the south-eastern side of New Georgia Island in Western Province. Comprising some 100 hectares of raised coral reef, covered with lowland rainforest, this pristine environment is in an almost undisturbed state. The marine eco-system is extraordinarily diverse and the terrestrial eco-system is quite unique. A 60 minute flight from Honiara brings you to the small airstrip at Seghe. Visitors are met at the airstrip and transported the 12 kilometres across the beautiful Marovo Lagoon in an open 22 foot speed boat, making the journey to this stunning, remote area an adventure in itself. Hospitality and privacy are just part of this tropical island paradise getaway.



## Uepi Island Resort

**Location:** The resort fronts a private sandy beach with tranquil waters of the lagoon on one side and fringing reefs and ocean drop-offs on the other.

**Room Amenities:** The resort caters for a maximum 26 guests in 6 private bungalows, 2 units and 2 guest rooms. All bungalows offer private bathroom facilities, insect screening, refrigerator, tea / coffee making facilities. Each bungalow has a deck area to enjoy the views over the lagoon or mountains.

**Facilities:** Dining area and bar. A fully equipped dive centre with a limited amount of gear for hire.



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## Things to do:

**Snorkelling:** Enjoy spectacular snorkelling straight from the island.

**Diving:** Dive sites include shallow coral gardens, magnificent drop-offs, ledges and gutters and a diversity of reef fish.

**Fishing:** Large schools of yellow finned tuna, barracuda, trevally and mackerel are often found.

**Kayak Tours:** Solomons Sea Kayak Expeditions operate tours in and around Marovo Lagoon, the largest saltwater lagoon in the world.

**Village Tours:** There are no villages on the island. Day trips to the nearby villages and rivers may be booked at the resort.

**Other Activities:** Self guided bush walking, wakeboarding, kite boarding, paddle boarding and island picnics.



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## Kayak Solomons Marovo Lagoon Sea Kayak Expeditions

Kayak Solomons is based at Uepi Island Resort and offers a variety of fully guided kayaking trips around the scenic Marovo Lagoon.

**Dawn Paddle:** a 1.5 hour paddle circumnavigating either Uepi or Charapoana Islands.

**Chachole River:** Vangunu Island. Prolific birdlife, small rapid areas and the opportunity to learn about village life along the river banks makes this a safe, exciting and interesting excursion. Half or full day.

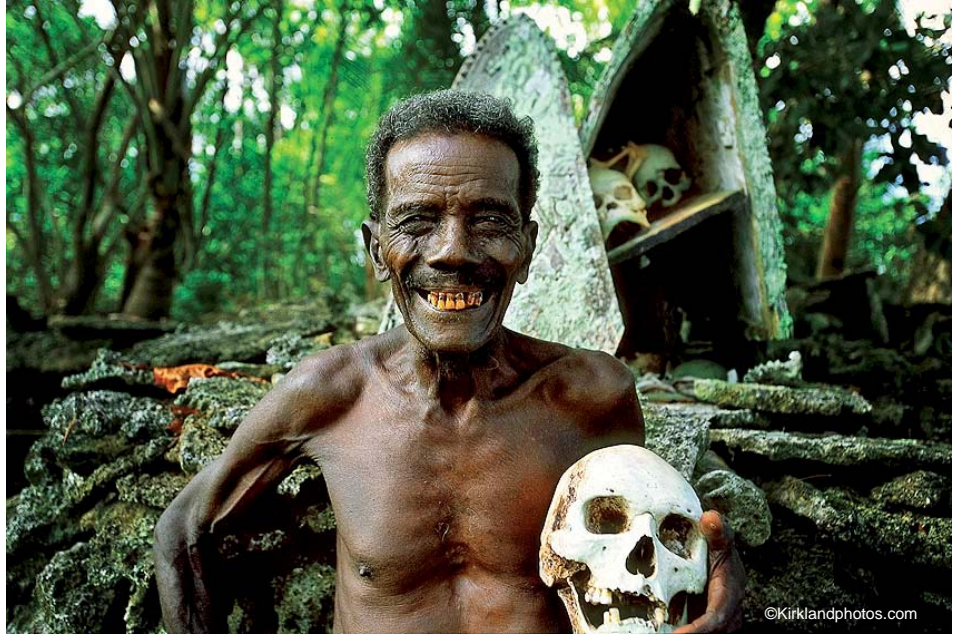
**Rarusu Keoro:** a sandy beach lining the fringing lagoon of an untouched barrier reef island with time for snorkelling on the coral gardens or over the deep water reef edge.

**Overnight Sea Kayak Expeditions:** offers you the opportunity to experience genuine Pacific island hospitality and culture staying at Eco-lodges within the villages dotted around the lagoon. Each expedition is tailored to suit the groups level of expertise, fitness and interests. The kayak expeditions start in Marovo Lagoon, bounded on one side by a tropical barrier reef and on the other by two mountainous islands, and may extend to Nono Lagoon or into outer ocean areas. Minimum 3 night expeditions required.



## Munda and Lola Island - Western Province

**Munda** is located near the junction of the Roviana and Vona Vona Lagoons, on the north-eastern corner of New Georgia Island. A one hour flight from Honiara, Munda is a destination for adventure seekers who like to get "off the beaten track" and experience the culture and diversity of the region. Munda is a vibrant community made up of a number of small villages. Roviana Island has a colourful history. It was once the centre for head-hunting, animist religion and tribal wars. Eerie trophies from this bygone era are enshrined on nearby Skull Island. During WWII, the Japanese built an airstrip to serve as a staging point to Guadalcanal. The main village of Lambete has a store, bank, post office and medical services.



**Lola Island** is situated in Vona Vona Lagoon, a 20-30 minute boat ride from Munda. Lola Island is a lost paradise hideaway surrounded by a stunning blue lagoon and white sandy beaches with swaying palm trees. Covered with lush vegetation, the island is for the traveller or fisherman who wants to experience a "Robinson Crusoe" adventure getaway. The surrounding region offers an array of full or half day adventures to local villages and uninhabited islands.



### Things to do:

**Snorkelling:** Clear water and a variety of marine life to explore.

**Diving:** The diving is still largely unexplored with new sites being discovered daily. Virgin reefs and wall dives are specialties.

**Fishing:** (Lola Island) The resort offers a unique diversity of fishing from salt-water fly to deep sea.

**Surfing:** (Lola Island) There are 3 surf breaks 5 - 20 minutes from Lola Island. The best season is November to April.

**World War II:** During WWII Munda was an important military airfield base and relics are scattered throughout the region.

**Skull Island Tour:** Skull Island is one of the most sacred places in the region. There are many shrines displaying human skulls from the days when headhunting was considered part of the custom.



### Agnes Lodge - Munda

**Location:** Overlooking Roviana Lagoon, Agnes Lodge was originally a guest house for government officials.  
**Room Amenities:** Agnes Lodge offers a range of accommodation from suites and cottages to budget rooms and backpacker dormitories. The guest rooms have twin or double beds and all rooms have their own facilities. All rooms have ceiling fans, tea / coffee making facilities, a small fridge and mosquito netting.  
**Facilities:** A traditional leaf house building situated on the water's edge houses the restaurant and lounge bar. There is also a dive shop.



### Zipolo Habu - Lola Island

**Location:** A deserted island getaway set on a blue lagoon with swaying palm trees and white sand beaches.  
**Room Amenities:** Individual, rustic bungalows made from traditional sago palm leaves, lawyer cane and wild beetle nut tree. The bungalows have 240v power, basic kitchenette with gas stove, fridge, tea/coffee making facilities and electric fans. Shower and bathroom facilities are in a separate building nearby. Two waterfront deluxe bungalows have private facilities.  
**Facilities:** Waterfront Restaurant and bar.





## Gizo - Western Province

**Gizo** is the capital of Western Province and one of the most visited regions in the Solomon Islands. Gizo is a tropical treasure trove of sun-drenched blue lagoons, coral cays, lush forests and sparkling, crystal clear water. The main island is surrounded by dozens of smaller tropical islands, ringed by coral reefs. Apart from its beauty, Gizo is rich in culture and has an interesting history. Embedded in Gizo's history is the heavy fighting that occurred in the region during WWII. Stories about the rescue of John F Kennedy and the PT 109 crew, the aerial battles that occurred over Vella Lavella and the Tokyo Express, still abound today. Flights to Gizo depart Honiara daily and take approximately 90 minutes. Gizo offers a good selection of accommodation and a number of restaurants, bars and banks.



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### Gizo Hotel

**Location:** Situated close to the town centre. The hotel offers 51 rooms in a range of categories.

**Room amenities:** All rooms feature a private bathroom, ceiling fans, refrigerator, phone and tea/coffee making facilities. The poolside and sea view rooms have air-conditioning and private balcony.

**Resort facilities:** Restaurant, bar, café, nightclub, conference facilities, cultural entertainment, swimming pool, gift shop, Internet facilities, safety box at reception, tour desk, wheelchair access, room service, babysitting and laundry services.



### Sanbis Resort

**Location:** Located on a secluded island, 7 minutes by boat from Gizo. This exclusive Go-Eco resort has only 6 leaf-house villas and is limited to 12 guests at any one time, maintaining privacy.

**Room amenities:** Each bungalow has solar powered lighting, a modern en-suite bathroom and a veranda overlooking the lagoon and private beach.

**Resort facilities:** The chefs at Sanbis create exotic seafood delicacies, spicy island BBQ's, western-style meals and wood-fire pizzas. The bar stocks a good selection of wines. There is a dive centre at the resort.

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### Fatboys Resort

**Location:** Situated on Mbabanga Island, a 10 minute boat ride from Gizo. The 4 bungalows and 1 self contained unit, constructed from traditional tropical hardwood, are situated right on the waters edge with views over Kennedy Island and Mount Kolombangara.

**Room amenities:** Each bungalow features quality bedding, imported furniture, 240 volt power, private bathroom and tea / coffee making facilities.

**Resort facilities:** Room service, gift shop, tour desk, fax and mobile phone service. The restaurant and bar is perched overwater at the end of the 100 metre pier.

### Things to do:

**Diving:** Access to wartime wrecks and reefs makes Gizo a desirable diving destination.

**Snorkelling & Beaches:** There are a number of great beaches and picnic spots.

**Surfing:** All surf breaks in Western Province break on coral and most require a boat to get to them. The best time to surf is November through to April.

**Fishing:** Reef and deep-sea fishing are available with dedicated guides.

**Island Tours:** Full or half day Island trips and cultural trips are available. Bush walk, climb the volcanic crater, kayak, snorkel, beach comb, visit cultural shrines and villages.





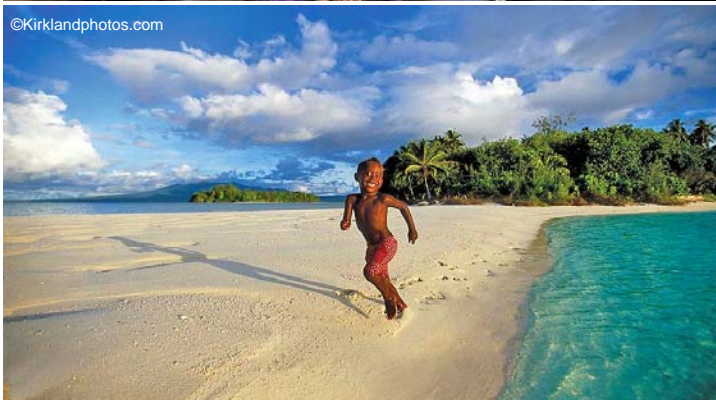
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## Travel Tips

**Passport:** Visitors must hold a current passport with minimum 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 with average daytime temperatures between 25°C – 29°C and evenings 19°C. April to November is the most popular time to visit as the climate is very pleasant with little rain.

**Health:** Like many tropical regions malaria is endemic in the Solomon Islands. Anti-malarial medication is highly recommended. Consult your doctor several weeks prior to departure. Bottled or boiled water is recommended.

**Electricity:** 240V AC is available in Honiara and major resort areas. Generator powers most outer areas.

**Language:** Melanesian and Pidgin English are predominant although English is used and understood throughout most of the islands.

**Culture:** Culture varies from province to province. 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 and fax. Limited Internet services are available in provincial centres, major hotels and resorts.

**Business:** Hours of business are from 8am - 12 noon and 1pm - 4pm.

**Currency:** Solomon Island Dollar. Banks are located in Honiara, Gizo and an ATM at Munda Post Office. Banking hours are 8.30am - 3.00pm Monday to Friday. Credit card facilities are available on the main land. Currency exchange is recommended prior to travelling to outer islands.

**Packing Hints:** Casual, lightweight clothing (not too brief in public places). Cover up at dusk and dawn to prevent mosquito bites. Don't forget comfortable shoes, hat, sunglasses, insect repellent, sunscreen and a torch.

**Note:** Visitors should be mindful that as you move away from the main towns and centres the services and facilities become increasingly limited.

A family or village privately owns many beaches and land areas in the Solomon Islands. Always enquire and seek permission before entering such areas. You may be asked to pay a small fee.

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Lic. No. 2TA003537

Unit 607, 379 Pitt St. Sydney NSW 2000 Australia  
Ph: +61 2 9299 4633 Fax: +61 2 9299 4644  
Toll Free Bookings: 1800 222 234  
Email: [info@diveadventures.com.au](mailto:info@diveadventures.com.au)

Visit us on the web  
[www.diveadventures.com.au](http://www.diveadventures.com.au)

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