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# SOLOMONS

ISSUE 79



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# SOLOMONS

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**Mr Brett Gebers**

*Welkam Frens*

It was towards the end of 2018 when I started to write this column and for me the year end is a time when I look back to see what we have and have not achieved. Our main achievements over the past two years have been to stabilise the finances, improve our general business processes whilst training and developing our people in preparation for future growth.

In October we became full members of the International Air Transport Association or IATA as it is more commonly known. We also signed the United for Wildlife - Buckingham Palace Declaration (UfW-BPD). As a signatory, Solomon Airlines agrees to implement actions under the relevant commitments outlined in the Declaration, such as adopting a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal wildlife trade, increasing awareness among passengers and staff, providing staff training to identify and report suspected illegal wildlife, and engaging the relevant stakeholders.

Solomon Airlines has joined the ICAO driven initiative called the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, or CORSIA. Whilst the aviation industry only produces less than 2% of the world's carbon dioxide, the airlines under the ICAO initiative have committed to reduce these emissions or pay for carbon credits.

As we have reported before, having identified the lack of funding to assist resort owners in the Western Province in 2017, we set up the Solomon Islands Tourist Infrastructure Development Fund (SITIDF). Solomon Airlines provided the initial funding which was then complemented by a generous grant of NZ\$1m made by the New Zealand Government. I am delighted to state that the fund is functioning as intended and has made loans to Agnes Gateway Lodge in Munda and Titiru Lodge in the Morova Lagoon. Other applications from Rekona Lodge in Gizo and Zipolo Lodge near Munda have been approved. We can expect a fair bit of refurbishment from these resorts in the coming year.

We have unfortunately suffered numerous setbacks in the opening of the Munda Airport and the associated commencement of flights from Brisbane to Munda throughout 2018. I am

reasonably confident that by the time you read this magazine that we will be flying a weekly service from Brisbane directly to Munda. The delays were caused by fire equipment not being delivered on time, faulty lighting, delays in building the terminal building and getting the trees that protruded into the approach paths for each end of the runways removed. The flight calibration of the navigation aids and approach lights were due to be completed by the end of the first week in December.

One of the compelling reasons to visit the Solomon Islands is that the outer islands are still pristine and untouched by the waste created by people. Unless a serious effort is made to educate people as to why they must stop throwing rubbish into the streets, creeks and the sea, there will soon be no reason to visit the Solomon Islands. We will be working with all parties to deal with the litter problem in the coming year.

These issues of financing and litter were all raised in the long-awaited Western Province Tourism Investment Needs Assessment sponsored by the Pacific Partnership, which is made up by Australia, New Zealand and IFC and was released at the end of November this year.

I recently spent a week in South Africa on the edge of the Kruger Park and it struck me how much tourism is conducted and managed by private enterprise. One of the biggest reasons is the fact that people will make investment in lodges and hotels because there are currently no land ownership issues. This is an issue that will have to be confronted and dealt with if the Solomon Islands is going to attract any serious investment in tourism. The other pleasing fact was that there was absolutely no litter.

Solomon Airlines had leased another Twin Otter to cover the peak periods over the coming 6 months and allow for the older Twin Otters currently in service to be withdrawn from service so that they can be refurbished in February and March.

We thank you for travelling with us and taking the time to read this magazine.

Tengiu tumas.

**Mr Brett Gebers**  
Chief Executive Officer

# WHAT'S ON WHEN & WHERE 2019

*February*  
Migration of Dolphins

*March*  
Isabel Second Appointed Day

*May*  
Spear Festival - Makira Province

*June*  
Huki (Banana) Festival, Makira Province

*July*  
Independence Day

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# SOLOMONS

Inflight Magazine Issue 79



Cover photo: Gloria Hong

## Contents

Dec 2018-Jan 2019



14



44



17



32



37

- 11 Out and About
- 14 Stories live in carvings
- 17 Splash in Munda style
- 22 A new way to see the Solomons
- 26 Serenity by the cove
- 32 Enjoy a different world at Uepi Island Resort
- 37 Living the culture of Ugele
- 41 Munda's open war museum
- 44 Giving sporty in Brisbane
- 48 Solomon Airlines Fact Sheet
- 50 Route Maps
- 52 Airline Nius
- 54 Island Sun Guide



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# Out & About

## Glamour in Paradise



*Words & Images: By Gloria Hong*

Move aside Paris and Milan, make way for Honiara's Paradise Glamour.

That was the theme of this year's Solomon Fashion Week that received a resounding thumps-up from residents of the capital who attended the event in large numbers.

Famous local labels were all on display, the likes of Bamboo Girl, Vae Tailor, MB Collections



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# Out & About



and Proton Creations. Designers who had models on the runway included Aukeni Mamau, Elaine Maepio, Marilyn Bae and Frances Do'oro.

A nice treat was the designs from three young and upcoming Solomon designers.



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# Stories live in carvings

Words & Photos By Oligao Niniu

In a red tent down at Mendana Avenue, Kenneth Patabae, 50 years old and a father of four and grandfather, has the answer to my soul searching question on how our cultural stories could be preserved for the benefit of our young generations.

He is from Telina village in the Marovo Lagoon, Western Province. Now living at White River in Honiara's west, Kenneth frequents Mendana Avenue to display and market his carvings and those of his friends.

What makes his story stand out is that not only is he one of the Marovo Lagoon inhabitants who are well-known purveyors of the finest artisan arts in the Pacific, Kenneth also represents artists who believe that traditional knowledge and cultural expressions can be preserved in their carvings.

On display at his Mendana Avenue stall were carved human figures, birds, marine lives, and bowls he carved from wood.

According to Kenneth, the carvings of marine lives (fish, clam shells, lobsters, and crabs) are called Tamasa.

"Tamasa, now popularly known as 'the Spirit of the Solomons.' My uncle John Wayne, a local master carver first coined it for the European visitors when they looked at his artefacts", he added.

During head hunting days, the Tamasa was a trap to kill the enemies. The spiritual power of the Tamasa owning tribe could call the marine lives to the surface of the sea and they can form a reef in the middle of the ocean.

"Enemies would then think that they can jump onto the reef to rest, not knowing that they were actually jumping to the deaths."

As he polished a near finished carving in his hand, the Nguzu Nguzu- a human head figure with bird's wings holding a smaller hu-





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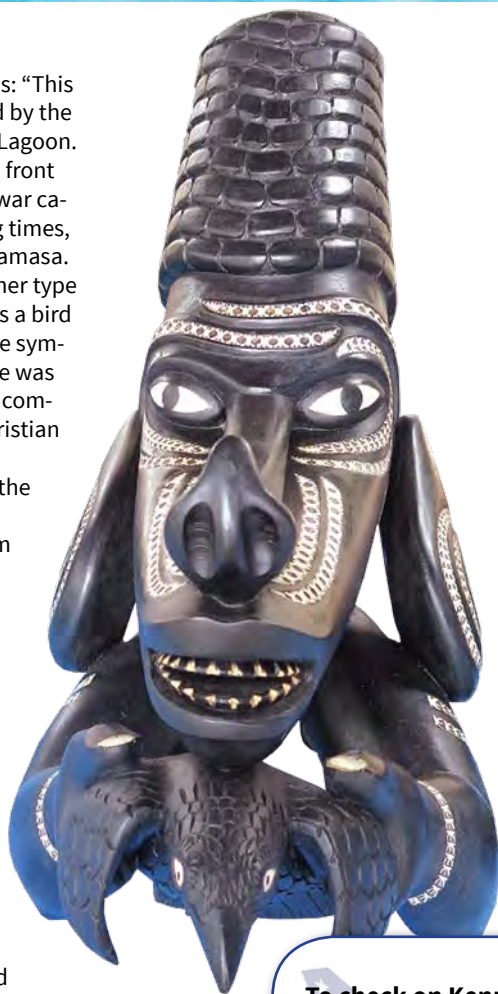
man head, Kenneth explains: “This is a protector, and was used by the head hunters from Marovo Lagoon. Usually it was positioned in front of the Tomoko (traditional war canoes). During head hunting times, it keeps a look out for the Tamasa.

I asked him about another type of Nguzu Nguzu which holds a bird in its hands. He said this one symbolises the time when peace was brought into his traditional communities of Solomon by Christian missionaries.

Like any Marovo boy in the villages, the master carver learnt the carving skills from his father, at the young age of 12. It is now the source of livelihood for his family.

“During my time working as a carpenter in the 1990s and later at the Gold Ridge mine, I continued my carving business as it helps supplement my fortnightly wages,” says Kenneth. “You know, our wages can only meet basic household expenses like light and water bills and groceries.”

On a good day as a carver, Kenneth said he could earn around SBD \$1000. But on slow days, he would be lucky to earn SBD \$200



plus. He also markets his works at nearby hotels like Heritage Park and Mendana Kitano. Now with the frequent calls by cruise liners, business has been good, the father of four said.

Marovo carvers like him are experts when it comes to the quality of the woods they select for carvings. Their hardwood of choice are Kou (Kerosene wood), Ebony (which comes in two types: King Ebony which is whole black and Queen Ebony is black and brown steaked hardwood), and mature old coconut trunk which are good materials for bowls.

Nautilus shell is used for the inlay of the carvings. Carvers like Kenneth prefer this mollusc because of its thinness. They are easy to handle and work with.

“A popular buy is the Nguzu Nguzu. They must have read about the significance of these carvings, which is why they want to buy them.”

## In brief:

**To check on Kenneth Patabae’s works, seek him out at the carvers’ markets on Mendana Avenue near the entrance of Heritage Park Hotel. You can also call him on +677 7468093.**

## Destination

# *Splash it Munda style*

Words & Photos by Gloria Hong

**L**agoon side town of Munda introduced its Munda Challenge in September and what a September to remem-

ber it was.

Hotels and lodge operators in and around Munda participated in the one day event that featured a number of challenges like the original canoe SUP iron men race and 100 metres and 200 metres swims.





# Destination



Munda Challenge organizer and General Manager of Agnes Gateway Hotel Viliame Koyamaibole says a total of 14 operators in the Munda region took part in the challenge.

“Munda Challenge 2018 was introduced as a way of bringing hospitality operators together, to boost morale of staff and get everyone in the industry to work together to make Munda the prime holiday destination,” says Koyamaibole.

“Although this was the first year we had the Munda Challenge, it was very successful and we plan to make this an annual event that our guests can also participate in.”

With men and women working to outmatch one another, the Challenge was a hit for locals and tourists



A romantic scene featuring a man and a woman standing on dark, wet rocks in front of a large, multi-tiered waterfall. The man is shirtless and wearing blue shorts, while the woman is wearing a long, flowing pink dress. They are both looking towards the waterfall, with the woman's arm around the man's shoulder. The background is a dense, green forest. The waterfall is the central focus, with water cascading down dark, jagged rock formations. The overall mood is serene and romantic.

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# Destination

alike. Best sit is on the first floor veranda of the Munda Yacht Club, which also acted as the marshalling area of the Munda Challenge.

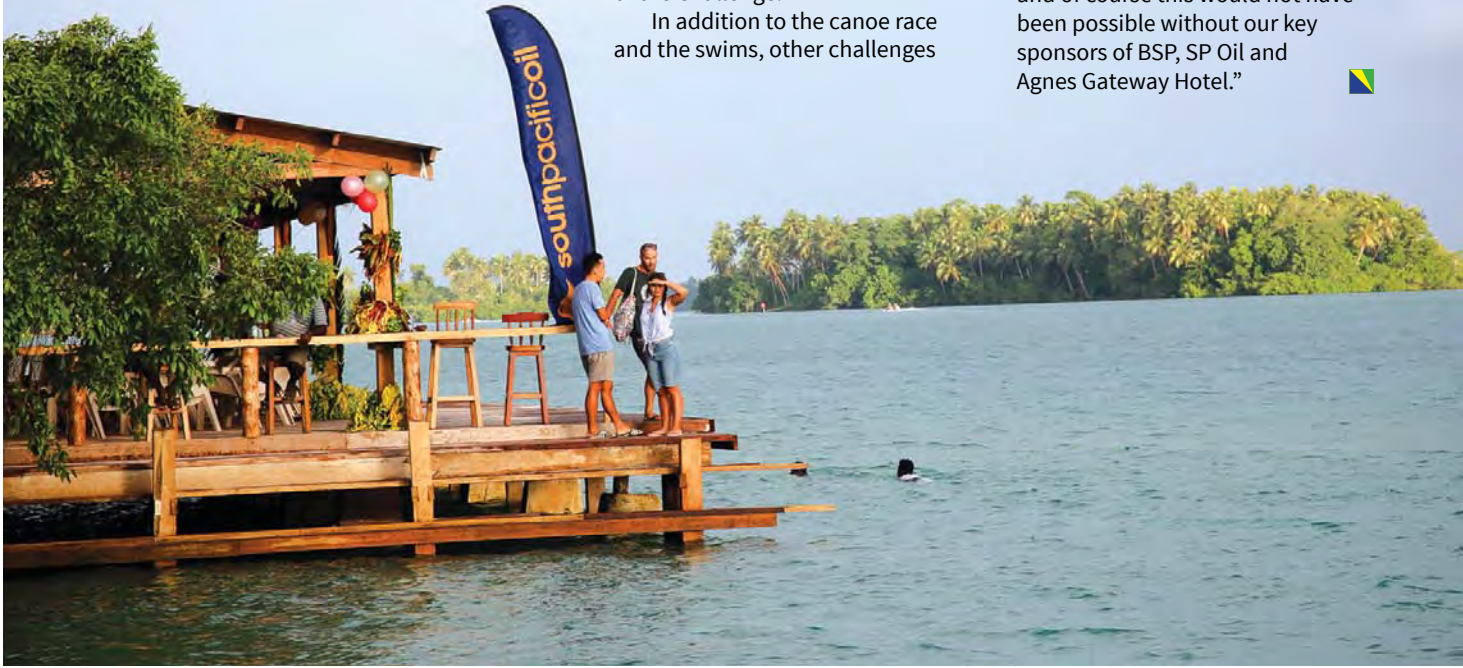
My favourite spot however

was the newly constructed timber boardwalk next to the marina of Agnes Gateway. Order a chilled glass of white from the hotel bar and enjoy the many water activities of the Challenge.

In addition to the canoe race and the swims, other challenges

include volleyball and the spoon and egg relay.

“We are thankful to all the operators for sending their staff to participate in the Munda Challenge, and of course this would not have been possible without our key sponsors of BSP, SP Oil and Agnes Gateway Hotel.”



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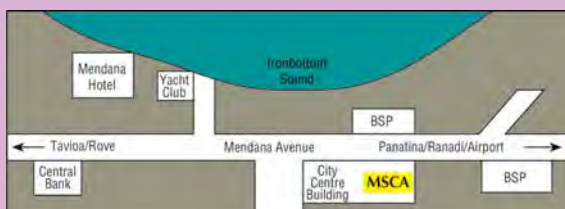
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# *A new way to see the Solomons*



By *Laura Waters*

**J**ustin drives me in a tender to try and track down the manta rays that often congregate in the channel off Mangalonga Island. The boat slows while both of us scan the water for tell-tale wing tips breaking through the surface, at the same time peering over the edge of our rubber inflatable into the crystal clear water running between two islands. Justin knows these waters well and I wait with baited breath to

hear his verdict. Sadly there are no manta rays in the neighbourhood today but as we skim the waters back towards the mother ship, it doesn't seem to matter too much. These islands are like an adventure playground and if one 'ride' isn't working there are plenty of others to choose from.

I'm on the inaugural sailing of Solomon Islands Discovery Cruise (SIDC) from Honiara through the Russell and Florida Islands. It's cruising, but not as we know it. Large ships have been plying the waters of the Solomons for years,

carrying hundreds, if not thousands of people at a time to the main ports of Honiara and Gizo, and while great fun they can only provide a glimpse of all that the islands have to offer.

Rather than try to tackle a chunk of the Pacific, SIDC spend six or seven days cruising more remote areas in the Western and Central Provinces, taking in visits to local villages, experiencing kastom culture, spotting relics leftover from WWII and witnessing extraordinary natural beauty. There are authentic and unplanned encounters with



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## Destination



the locals as dugout canoes and cruise boat meet, casual barefoot barbecues on uninhabited islands and stunning diving for those who venture beneath the surface. And why wouldn't you? A Try Scuba experience is included for anyone without certification. Waters are clear and warm, rarely dipping below 27 degrees Celsius, and the reefs here are renowned for their beauty and richness of fish life, attracting divers from across the globe. In addition, dozens of wrecks are scattered across the ocean floor, a legacy from days of war.

Even from above the surface we spot dolphins daily as they swim in from far and wide to greet us and ride the bow wave. The 30 metre long Taka (a custom built dive live-aboard) cruises between islands clad in lush greenery, offering an ever changing vista. Action packed itineraries blend land excursions with yoga and watersports and there is never a dull moment, however hammocks and sun chairs are always waiting on the upper deck for anyone who feels like they need a little down time.

In contrast with larger cruise ships, our vessel only takes a maximum of 26 passengers and 12 local crew, and it's a factor that fundamentally influences our experience. While I'd been in search of manta rays with Justin, my fellow guests had been spread about doing other things of their choosing with other crew members: snorkelling, stand-up paddle boarding, wake boarding or learning to free dive. This flexibility and freedom is hugely appealing. We are not bound by the restrictions dictated by mass travel but instead feel as though we're travelling with a bunch of friends on a private boat.

I pull on a mask and fins and fall off Justin's tender to sink into the delicious clear water beneath the Taka, moored off Maravagi Resort, instantly spotting barracuda and large schools of fusiliers. Coral gardens buzz with brightly coloured reef fish and it all seems a very good alternative to manta rays. 🇯🇲

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# Serenity by the cove

By Samisoni Pareti

**F**irst impression they say is lasting, and this for me was so true the first time I lay my eyes on Titiru Eco-

Lodge. At full throttle, the speed boat from Agnes Gateway Hotel that I and hotel GM Viliame are in glides beautifully on the calm waters of Rovaro Lagoon, with the boat captain skilfully steering the boat around a point on Rendova

Island to reveal a cove.

Sitting near the bow of the boat, my eyes rest on the 2 or 3 bungalows that appear to be sitting right over the waters of the bay. 'That's beautiful,' I thought to myself. 'Won't mind having a place

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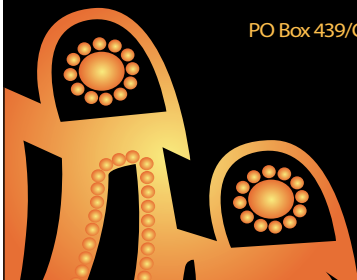
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# Solomon



# Islands



## Destination

like that as a home.'

It's only when the boat captain reduces speed and gracefully turns the boat to starboard that made me realize that what I was day dreaming to be home is actually our first stop for the day: 'Welcome to Titiru Eco Lodge,' a big wooden sign anchored out in the waters confirms that we have arrived at Saqiri Bay.

"Titiru is actually the name of the guardian spirit of my tribe in the village," Kilo Paza explains as Vili and I tuck into a hot cup of tea with 'Titiru pancakes.' Have heard so much about these pancakes in Munda, as they are served with sweet local pineapples as toppings. Delicious.

Kilo and his wife are owners of Titiru. It is hard not to see that the eco lodge is literally their labour of love. Much time and effort have been invested into making the lodge homely, and charming. Gardens of orchids in various specimens and colours grow all around the lodge. Fine pebbles line the walkways that connect bungalows to the eco lodge jetty and restaurant.

The three over the water bungalows (that I had spied from the boat earlier) have their own stories to tell. Being a trained forester, Kilo need not order timber from a supplier in Munda. Instead, he bought a chainsaw and got his male relatives to haul timber from forests belonging to his tribe, high up in the mountains of Rendova.




These hardwood timbers are as sturdy as they look. The piles that are dug into the bottom of the bay are huge and rugged. The houses are A-shaped, with the steep roofs on both sides almost touching the floor. The decking on the veranda adds a beautiful touch. The king size bed is also made from timber lumbered from the island forests, and with mosquito netting above each, slumber is a bliss.

Standing on the balcony, the waters of the bay are crystal clear, you can spend the whole day fish watching from your sun chair if you like. At the family over water bungalow, I spied huge sea cucumbers in the lagoon bed. It tells me that these delicacies are left un-disturbed, in keeping with the eco nature of Titiru.

In between the bungalows and dry land is a mangrove forest, which gives the accommodation a lot of shade and gentle breeze. Timber walkway has been skilfully built atop and around the mangrove high roots to reach the bungalows.

You see the sounds of birds all the time. Bird watching is one of the many activities you can do at Titiru. Or snorkelling, or line fishing, or a village tour to Kilo's Ugele village, a 20-minute walk away. Doing nothing is included in those activities as well.

A good book and legs up on the hammock on the veranda of the over water bungalow, you can read or sleep whole day. If it is up to me, I probably will do more sleeping than reading. 

### In brief:

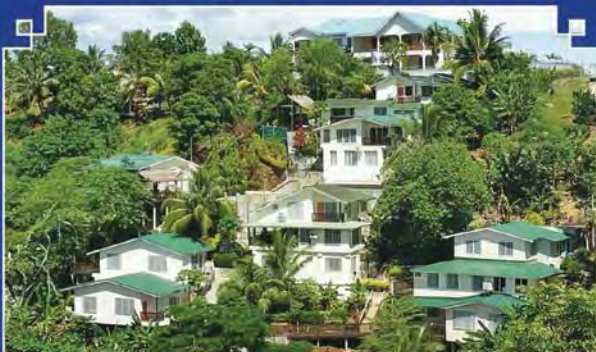
To book your stay at Titiru Eco Lodge, visit [www.titiruecolodge.com](http://www.titiruecolodge.com), or their Titiru Eco Lodge Facebook page, or call owner Kilo Paza on +677 7902696.

Writer travelled to Titiru Eco Lodge courtesy of Agnes Gateway Hotel in Munda.

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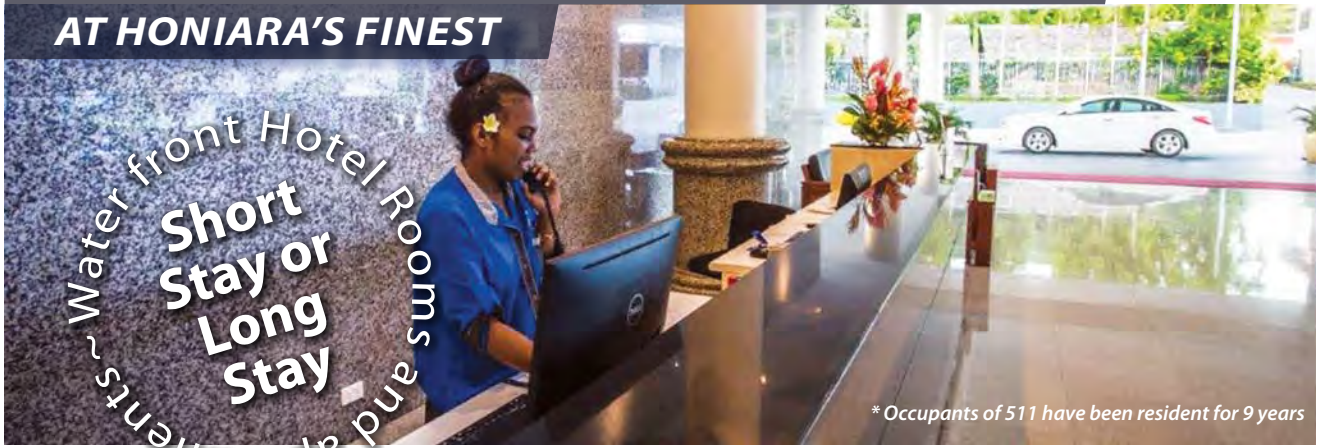
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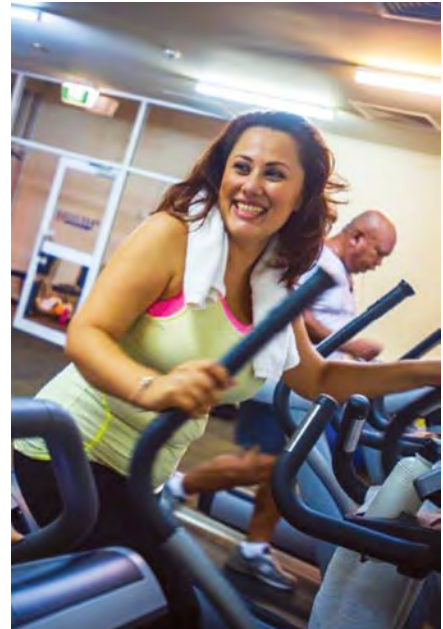
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Lionfish pass by Gorgonian Fans and a Scuba Diver

Photos: Grant Kelly

# *Enjoy a different world at Uepi Island Resort*

By ????????

**A**s you disembark from the Solomon Airlines aircraft onto the warm grass tarmac at Seghe, you will sense that your world is changing. Minutes later as the col-

ourful people and villages of Seghe and Patativa disappear behind you, the fast Uepi transport boat enters Marovo Lagoon. You are faced with a panorama of two major island peaks, 'too many to count' jungle and coconut tree covered low coral islands, glimpses of a few scattered villages ahead, an extended

expanse of blue calm lagoon water with some white capped waves in the distance, under a sky of ultra white clouds set against a cyan background, and there is little doubt your world is changing in front of your eyes.

Half an hour later as you are met at the Uepi welcome jetty by



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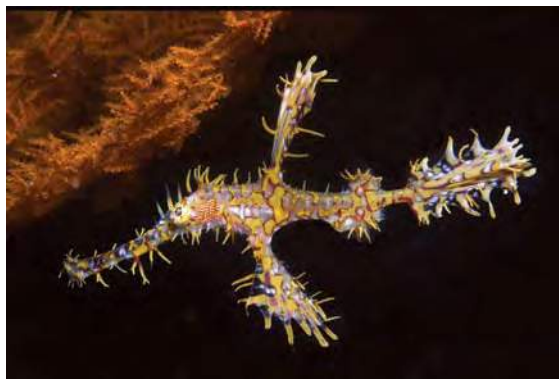
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# Destination



Green Turtle



A rare Ghost Pipefish



School of Batfish

huge Buni trees hanging out over the water, giant clams, vibrant coral, passing sharks, myriads of fish and the broad smiles of the Uepi Managers, your world has changed.

After a brief introduction to the geography around you it is a

short walk past trees, shrubs and orchids to the main house where a cold welcome drink refreshes you. Sitting under the broad expanse of a sago palm leaf roof which shelters the open dining area and bar, gazing at a 180 degree view of the lagoon, you are given vital informa-

tion about the resort, including the many activities you can choose to enjoy. You have probably decided you never want to leave.

A short guided walk through tropical gardens to your accommodation and you know the layout of the resort, the accommodation, the dive shop, the best snorkel access points, the sandy beach, where the sit-on and stand up (SUP) paddle boards and Hobie Cats are available. You have already probably seen or heard many birds, lizards, crabs and fish jumping in the lagoon and smelt the warm sweet aroma of tropical flowers.

The list of activities offered is extensive and all are available right at the resort. As the original Sports Diving operation in Solomon Islands, Uepi has a long history of attracting SCUBA divers and snorkelers from all over the world. Situated on the outer barrier reef edge of the magical Marovo Lagoon, Uepi Island is uniquely placed to offer brilliant tropical diving habitats; coral gardens, sheer drop off walls, points with huge fish schools, big fish and sharks, small macro life, huge sea fans, caves, swim-throughs and drift dives.

The Uepi Dive Shop, located on a 700m long deep-water channel connecting Marovo Lagoon to New Georgia Sound (2000m deep) provides immediate access to a very complex home reef equal to any in the world.

Uepi Island itself is in the centre of many great dive sites, so the majority of sites are 1 to 15 minutes from the dive shop with a few selected sites up to 30 minutes away. An extended day trip is an awesome alternative.

Geographically located within the "Coral Triangle" Uepi Island



Enjoying Sunrise with a Cup-of-tea



*Spine-Cheek Anemonefish*



*Manta Ray*



*Great Hammerhead Shark*

is an inherent part of the best and most diverse diving in the world. Decades of active protection of Uepi Island reefs has maintained the quality and populations of the marine life at Uepi Island and the adjoining islands' dive and snorkel sites. With water temperatures of 29C-30C and decades of local dive experience, diving is comfortable and safe with all dives being supervised by the internationally qualified Uepi Dive team consisting of 6 Instructors, two Dive Masters and a Dive Guide.

Even the Scuba Divers spend a lot of time snorkeling at Uepi it is so easily accessible. Just walk a short distance from your accommodation and you can with minimal effort, enjoy world class snorkeling whenever you choose. Add in trips to other outstanding nearby sites where even Manta Rays are often seen and you could snorkel your life away at Uepi. And the kayak paddlers and SUPers spend so much time just off the beach looking at turtles and rays and tiny baby sharks and eels and Nemo Clownfish.

The marine environment is the biggest attraction at Uepi but the island itself is an outstanding habitat. The major portion is an undisturbed thriving eco system of plants and animals. With trapped fresh ground water the forest has huge trees and masses of vines, shrubs and flowers. About 35 birds frequent the forest and reef areas including Hornbills, Osprey, Pigeons, Lorikeets, Parrots, Frigate Birds and Kingfishers. Other animals include bats, many lizards including large monitors, snakes (harmless), coconut crabs and Cuscus (Possum). A network of walking paths provides access to stunning lookout views and to the intense experience of being in a dense, humid

rainforest. Guides are necessary for some walks.

Whilst the diving is well known around the world the biggest secret is probably the healthy and delicious food. Based on locally grown ultra fresh vegetables and fruits supplemented by hydroponic green salads and herbs in combination with fresh local chicken, fish, crab and crayfish the in-house trained Uepi chefs produce remarkable meals. Some red meat dishes are included. The bar stocks its own range of select Australian and New Zealand wines. The Honiara brewed "Solbrew" beer is very highly regarded and almost makes a small selection of top Australian beers redundant.

The Marovo wood carvers are renown, even within the Solomons, for their creativity and outstanding

quality. Every week they attend the Uepi carvers market, displaying a vast array of carvings that must be seen to be fully appreciated.

A visit to a local village where the friendliness and hospitality is so warmly and naturally given reveals a different world again.

Uepi Island Resort has remained loyal to its original concept of providing access to an amazing environment to people who will really appreciate it. This is reflected in the layout of the accommodation where each house or "Vanua," to use the Marovo name, has its own space and privacy, set apart either on the beachfront or a short distance back in the rich gardens. All have external leaf decks and views of Marovo Lagoon.

The emphasis is on harmony and interaction with nature, which



*A Sea Kayak Expedition departing Uepi*

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## Destination



Manta Ray and snorkellor

is all around you at Uepi. A place to engage in activity, become waterlogged most days, totally unwind and relax, have the time to think about life, read that novel at last, and most likely, fall asleep in a hammock.

Its time to enjoy a different world. 

### In brief:

- Facebook: Uepi Island Resort
- Instagram: #UepiIslandResort
- Website: [www.uepi.com](http://www.uepi.com)
- Email: [info@uepi.com](mailto:info@uepi.com)
- Call: 03 9787 7904 / +61 3 9787 7904

To fly to Uepi Island Resort from Honiara, book your flight to Seghe Airport in West Province on [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)

## Destination

# Living the culture of Ulgele



Words & Images: Samisoni Pareti

After passing a few houses in the village, our guide signals that we take the path that veers out right to the bush. After a brief walk, we come across a clearing that reveals a stream. We jump over a small pool of water only to realise that we are not alone. An elderly woman is bathing his 4 year old grandson in the river.

“Before we got plumbing in our homes, this is how we take our shower,” the guide explains. “We don’t use soap, but rub ourselves with a particular red clay that cleans our skins, just as you can see the grandmother doing to her grandson now.”

That the little boy is shivering tells me that the water is pristine and chilled. In no time, the boy is out of the river, onto

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# Destination



dry land where a fire has been lit. From the cold river water to the warmth of the bonfire, the young man is ready for another new day.

We are at Ugele Village on Rendova Island, doing a cultural tour that is offered by Titiru Eco-Resort. Owners of Titiru are from Ugele so the culture tour fits into the eco-

nature of the island accommodation that Titiru offers.

From the stream, it's a short walk back to the village. This time, we meet a mother preparing a warm bath for her toddler. The bath tub is the bark of what I suspect is the sago tree. Its large enough to store water for a baby. From a

fire lit beside it, the young mother, using a stick spoon, take two hot stones from the fire and submerged them in the sago bark tub. Water is instantly warmed and the toddler takes his bath, and got dried in no time with towels made from tree barks.

Next stop is the village's toy

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# Destination



store. Any children in the tour will find this stop the highlight, no doubt. On display are all sorts of toys to delight any child: trumpets, wind vanes, sun glasses, sail boats, hats, rings, fans and a lot more: all weaved from green strips of leaves of the coconut tree. Even the store owner is herself decked with her own hand weaved coconut leaves mega sun glasses.



The beauty about Ugele's Living Culture tour is that it is as long as you want it to be. If you have limited time, then the tour is adjusted accordingly. Mine was a short one, as I have a few more stops to do before I head back to Agnes Gateway Hotel in Munda.

My last stop was the Carvers Market, a spot at the waterfront, not far from the village school. Along the way, on the shades of a huge banyan tree, a man using a big chisel head, works on a piece of timber. He said it's a wooden bowl he's carving and it usually takes two to three weeks to carve.

This was to be our final stop and immediately I regretted not bringing cash with me from Munda. Figurines, fish heads, bowls in assorted shapes and colours, carved from Ebony, or kerosene wood were on full display. Some of the carvings were taste fully decorated with pieces of pear shells. Even fish hooks made from pearl shells were on sale too.

A nice way to wrap up your living the culture tour at Ugele. A win win for all – you as the visitor need not travel far to find some of the best wood carving in Oceania, and the carver need not leave his family to go sell his wares out in a strange town or city.



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### In brief:

To book a culture tour at Ugele, book through Titiru Eco Lodge.





## Munda's open war museum

By Samisoni Pareti

In Munda, the entire island is a living museum reminiscent of a war that cost hundreds of lives of soldiers on both sides and littered the landscape with the remains of the tools and machines of death.

For almost a good part of the village there, the remains of a concrete bunker stand to this day. Some even use the concrete as floor of their homes. Not far from Munda Airport is Bloody Hill, scene of one of the bloodiest battles to take place between the advancing Americans and the retreating Japanese troops during

World War II.

Off land, in the calm waters of Roviana Lagoon, remains of fighting jets as well as battle ships litter the lagoon floor, now a source of wonder for divers who flock to Munda.

Just a handful of these war remains can be viewed at the Peter Joseph WWII Museum in Munda, part of the private collection of local war buff Alphi Barney Paulsen. Mess tins, ammunition, bayonets, buttons, dog tags, belt buckles, first aid kits, field radios, helmets and guns of all sorts take prominent locations in the Peter Joseph Museum.

"Peter Joseph was the name on the first dog tag



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## World War II

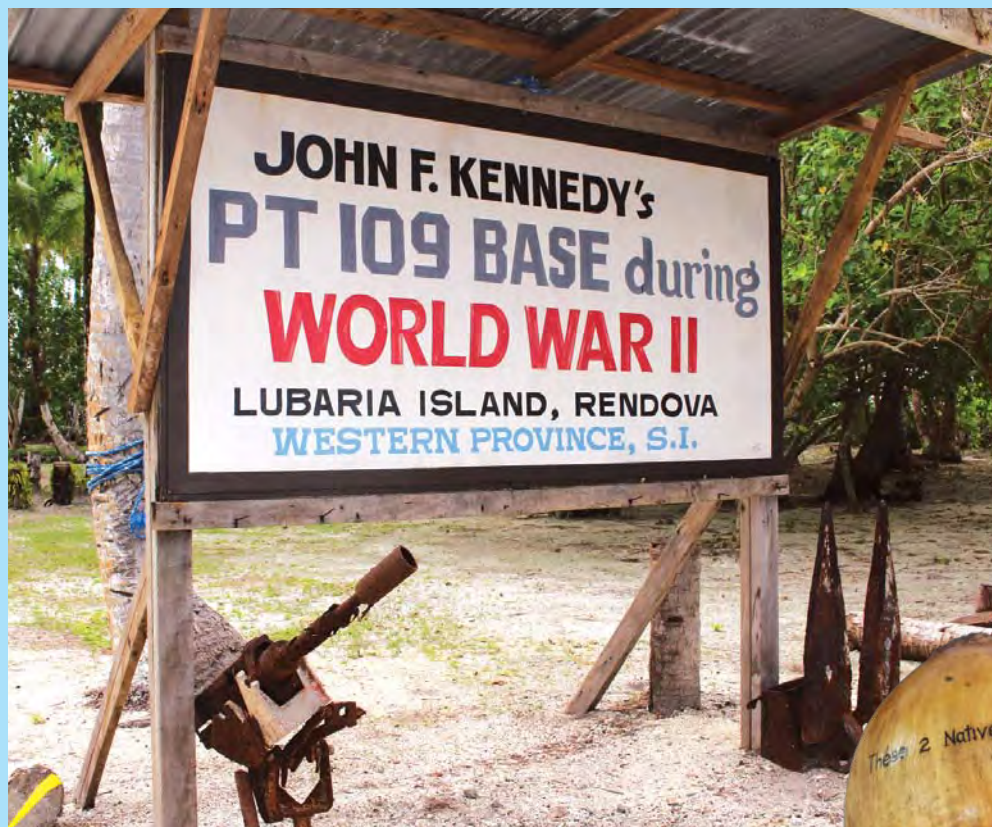
that I found and brought to my museum,” explains Alphi. “So I decided to name my private collection in his memory.” His museum now has lots

of those tags on display.

According to him, an army veteran from the US had offered to track down Peter Joseph after visit-

ing the museum in Munda. He later made contacts with Alphi to report that the man is living in his twilight years in the United States.

# J F Kennedy's base



Off Rendova Island is a small sand circled island where a museum is taking shape. It is Lubaria Island, which during World War II was the base for the American torpedo boats.

One of the commanders of these boats was a young navy lieutenant by the name of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who on the night of 1 August, 1943 lost his boat and two of his crew when it was rammed by a Japanese destroyer.

Kennedy and his remaining 10 crew had to swim and hid themselves in a small uninhabited island near Gizo town.

Their dramatic rescue brought about by the bravery of two locals, Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana. Kennedy had to eke out a message on a coconut that the two men were to deliver to his Lubaria Island base.

Owner of Lubaria, Nicely Soga has begun work to display his war collec-



tions. Remains of a concrete stand to one part of the island, not far from the beach.

He has also identified the mess and where the bakery once stood.

Shortly before his 25th birthday, Kennedy was given command of motor

torpedo boat PT-109. He would lead 30 missions against Japanese shipping off New Georgia.


That came to an abrupt end on August 1, 1943, when his boat was rammed and sunk by the destroyer Amagiri. Two of his crew were killed but Kennedy and 10 other survivors swam 5km to a small island. After reaching Kasolo – now universally known as Kennedy Island – the future president swam to a larger atoll and gave a message, carved into a coconut, to native coast-watchers to pass on to US forces. A patrol boat rescued the survivors more than a week after the sinking.

A short plane hop north of Munda, Kennedy Island is a must-see for visitors interested in history, and a local entrepreneur is building a bar and barbecue pits, having already located some rusting machine guns around the teardrop-shaped isle.

Far fewer people make the journey to Lubaria Island, across the lagoon to the west of New Georgia, where PT-109 was based. Palm trees break up the concrete foundations of a handful of buildings that once stood here. A short distance away is what remains of an expansive bunker made of large oil cans filled with sand. Skipping once more over the ultramarine waters of the lagoon in an open whaleboat, my guide gestures to the left and right to indicate where other reminders of the war lay virtually untouched on the shallow seabed. And more, he says, are being discovered every year.

Two aircraft engines, or parts of the engines, are lined up on the wall of the Museum, outside. "I brought these from the lagoon out there," says Alphi.

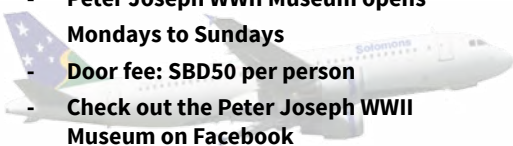
"You can see that I am also losing out of space too and I also want to build a better and more secure building to those all these war collections."

The owner of Peter Joseph Museum is not only a keen collector of war relics, but he is also a good record keeper of its history. On my recent tour of his Museum, he spoke of a research he is doing in the jungle of Munda. He said the area was the site of another fierce battle between the Allied and Japanese troops. So many soldiers died at that spot too, said Alphi. 



### In brief:

- Peter Joseph WWII Museum opens Mondays to Sundays
- Door fee: SBD50 per person
- Check out the Peter Joseph WWII Museum on Facebook



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# Going sporty in Brisbane



??

By Samisoni Pareti

Judging by the calendars of major sports in Queensland, 2019 is looking to be a mega year for athletes as well as their fans. Whether it is soccer, rugby union or rugby league, or netball or even cricket or swimming interests you, Brisbane has something for you in the coming 12 months.

For rugby union, 2019 is a big year as it is the Rugby World Cup year, with Japan hosting the world tournament for the very first time from 20 September to 2 November. Australia of course is the reigning rugby world cup champion, and other Pacific island nations such as Fiji, Samoa and Tonga will also feature in the championship.

What this means for Brisbane is that there will be a feast of rugby games very early in the new year. Sanzaar, the organising body of Super15 rugby, have already released its 2019 schedules. Queensland





## Destination - International



Reds of course the sunshine state's team in the 15-team competition and their first home game is confirmed to be played at the prestigious Suncorp Stadium in the Brisbane City suburb of Milton on 22 February.

Suncorp is one of the most

beautiful and spectator friendly sports stadiums in the world today. Its central location means the stadium is easily accessed by fans all over the city, as it Milton is located just 3 kilometres from the city's CBD, and 15 kilometres from Brisbane Airport. Its convenience is



enhanced by free transportation to Suncorp in public trains and buses. All you need to show the driver is your Suncorp games' ticket.

I have watched several of the Reds' games at Suncorp with my little nephew and his father and for me, Suncorp has its own atmosphere. Just so special.

Suncorp Stadium is also the home ground for another of Queensland's great sporting ambassador, the mighty Queensland Broncos. All their home games are hosted at Suncorp. The much awaited and hotly contested State of Origin games between New South Wales and Queensland are also hosted by Suncorp when the match is hosted in Brisbane. And who is a rugby league fan if he or she does not know Mel Meninga, one of Queensland's favourite sons.

Soccer is big in Solomon Islands so some of you readers no doubt know that the city's impressive soccer team, the Brisbane Roar also listed Suncorp Stadium as its home ground. I am told that the Brisbane Roar has won Australia's domestic soccer title three times, and it currently holds the longest unbeaten record of playing 36 league matches without defeat. It competes in the A League, Australia's premier competition and also fields a youth and women's team.

This is indeed the versatility that Suncorp Stadium offers. Its 50,000 seating means it is quite capable of hosting any public event. The much publicised boxing match between Anthony Mundine and Jeff Horn in early December was actually hosted at Suncorp Stadium.

Then in January, 2019, the sports complex is down to host English artist's Phil Collins's concert as part of his Not Dead Yet tour. Then one month later, Suncorp is the official venue of the Women's Football Cup of Nations championship.

What about the Queensland Firebirds? This is the state's top performing netball team and plays some of its home games at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre. Currently ranked number four in the Australian Suncorp Super Netball League, the Firebirds have been premier champions on three occasions.

The Brisbane Bullets also plays



its home games at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, or at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. This is Queensland's top professional basketball team and competes in Australia's national basketball league.

For cricket lovers, the place to be will be the Gabba, another name for the Brisbane Cricket Ground. It is so called the Gabba as abbreviation of the long name of the suburb it is located called Woolloongabba. Queensland state's first eleven can be found here, the Queensland Bulls. Two members of the champion Australian cricket team are from the Bulls.

The Brisbane Aquatic Centre at the Sleeman Sports Complex is the place to be if swimming is the sports of your choice. Queensland is actually the leader when it comes to national swimming competition and did you know that in the 2018 Commonwealth Games that Queensland hosted at the Gold Coast, out of 70-strong contingent of the Australian swimming team, 40 or nearly 60% were from the sunshine state.

When debating whether Melbourne or Brisbane is the sporting capital of Australia, sports column-

ist Peter Baulderstone once wrote:

"Maybe that's the thing about Queensland. It boasts a generous climate that encourages participation in an eclectic range of sports. Little wonder that Greg Norman, Karrie Webb and Adam Scott all came from lush Queensland links. That Rocket and Emo perfected their forehands on neighbourhood

grass courts until the sun set or mum called them in for supper. That Susie O'Neill and Kieren Perkins frolicked in its waves. That Cathy Freeman had the space to pursue her field of dreams. What Queensland kid wouldn't want to spend most of their time hitting, kicking or chasing their dreams?"



### In brief:

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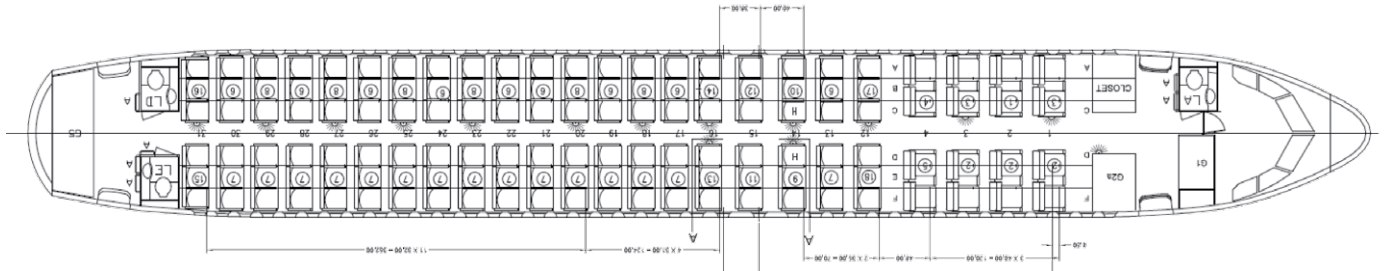
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**Seating capacity:** 16  
**Crew:** 2  
**Current Routes:** All Ports in the Solomon Islands  
**Aircraft in Fleet:** 2

*Website: [www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)*

# fact sheet



With an elegant leather finish, our luxurious cabin is specifically configured for space and comfort. Our 16 business class and 120 economy seat configuration provides all our customers with more personal space and privacy. Our traditional in-flight full service is second to none and allows customers to enjoy simplicity in a sophisticated modern setting.

## BELAMA CLUB

**Membership Types:** Belama Plus, Corporate, Family, individual

- Benefits:**
- Priority Check in and Express Clearance (Brisbane)
  - Additional baggage allowance/ Priority baggage
  - Preferential seating
  - Belama Club Lounge access for all members (Honiara)
  - Brisbane, Qantas Lounge access (Belama Plus Members)

*Our Point of Difference!*

Join the club  
for exclusive  
benefits



flysolomons  
belama club

Our exclusive club caters for Corporate Executives, Individuals & Families. Annual membership fees range from \$8,990 SBD (Belama Plus) to \$3,940 SBD (individual) and are streamlined to a standard calendar year.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Head Office:

Henderson Airport

- P.O.Box 23, Honiara, Solomon Islands
- Ph: +677 20031 • Fax: +677 20232

### Travel Centre:

Hibiscus Avenue

- Ph: +677 20152 • Fax: +677 23992
- Email: corporate.travel@flysolomons.com.sb

### Australia:

Brisbane International Terminal, Level 1

- Ph: +61 7 38605883 • Fax: +61 7 38604351
- Toll Free: 1300 894311 (Aus)  
0800 424980 (NZ)
- Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

### Fiji:

Nadi Airport, Office 27, First Floor

- Ph: +679 6722831 • Fax: +679 6722140
- Email: solomon@connect.com.fj

*Email: [belama@flysolomons.com](mailto:belama@flysolomons.com)*



# International Connections



**AUSTRALIA**  
 Australia Cargo GSA  
 Aircraft Loaders & Packers  
 Unit 3c, 17 Sugarmill Road  
 Eagle Farm  
 Ph: 07 3260 2603  
 Fax: 07 3260 2959  
 Mobile: 0419796065  
 Email: rob@qldcargo.com, or  
 alp@qldcargo.com  
 www.aircraftloaderspackers.com.au

**NEW CALEDONIA**  
 Access Travel, 22 Rue Duquesne,  
 Espace Moselle,  
 Quartier Latin, Noumea  
 BP 336, 98845, Noumea  
 Tel: (687) 286 677  
 Fax: (687) 274 050

**NZ PASSENGER GSA**  
 Airline Marketing New Zealand  
 Level 9, 120 Albert St, P O Box 6247  
 Wellesley St, Auckland 1141  
 Ph: DDI: (64 9) 969 7610  
 Mobile +64 274167562  
 Email: flysolomons@airlinemarketing.co.nz

**NZ Cargo GSA**  
 GSA Cargo Services New Zealand Ltd  
 Carolyn Evans | Director  
 PO Box 107 027, Auckland International  
 Airport, New Zealand 2154  
 Phone: +64 9 2758767  
 Fax: +64 9 2758707  
 Mobile: +64 21757400  
 Email: carolyn@cargogsa.com

**UNITED STATES**  
 Solomon Airlines  
 North America Sales & Marketing  
 5000 Birch Street -# 3000  
 New Port Beach  
 California 92660  
 Tel: (949) 752 5440  
 Fax: (949) 476 3741  
 Email: flysolomons@gmail.com

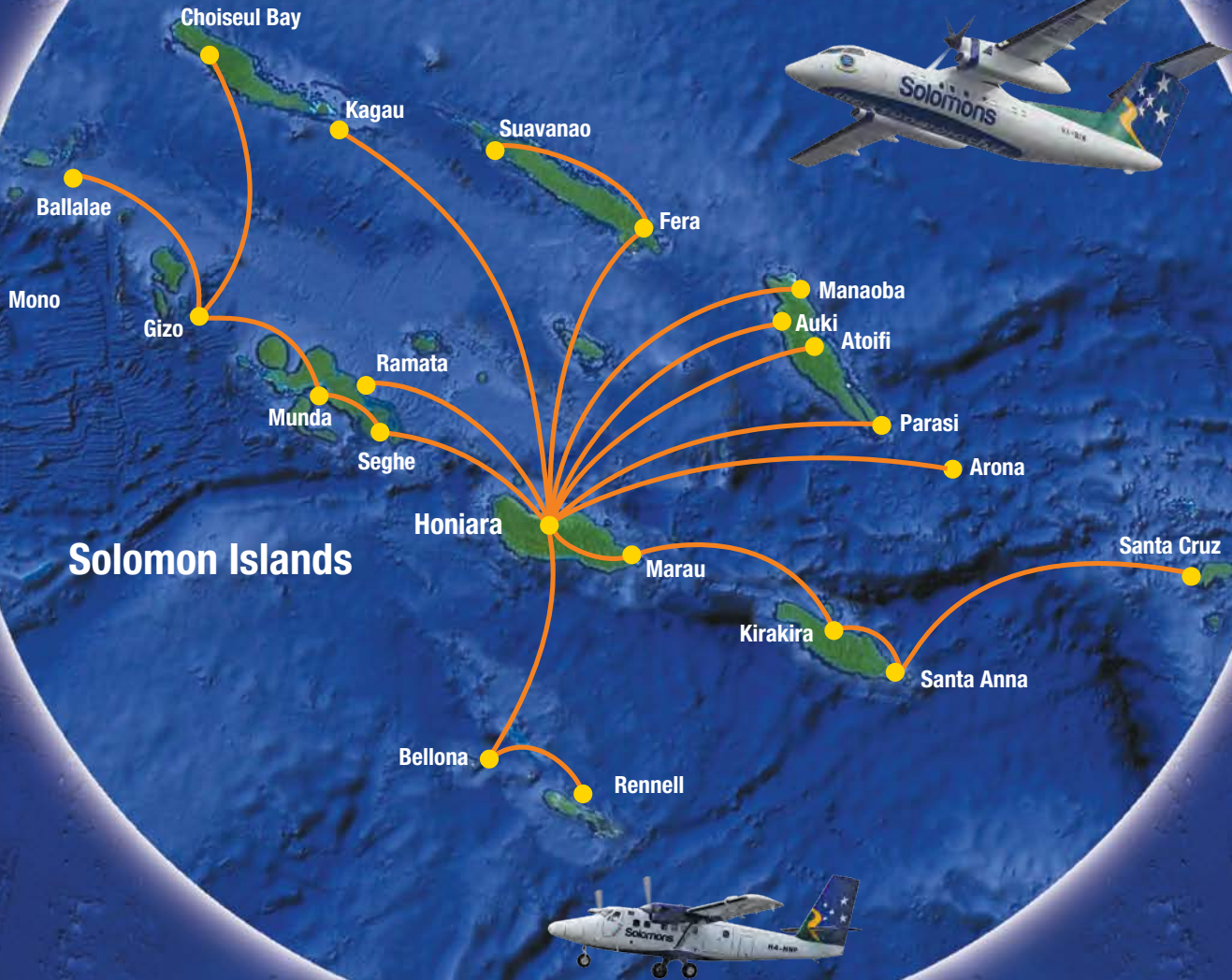
**UNITED KINGDOM**  
 Solomon Airlines  
 Flight House  
 Fernhill Road, Horley  
 Surrey, RH6 9SY  
 United Kingdom  
 Tel: +44 (870) 443 0757  
 Fax: +44 (870) 240 2208  
 Email: web@solomonairlines.co.uk

**VANUATU**  
 Surata Tamaso Travel Limited  
 La Casa D'andrea,  
 Lini Highway, Port Vila  
 Tel: (678) 22666  
 Fax: (678) 24275  
 Email: tamaso-tours@vanuatu.com.vu

**VANUATU Cargo GSA**  
 Ridley Daniel  
 Right Freight Services  
 PO Box 1407, Port Vila, Vanuatu  
 Phone: +678 24690  
 Mobile: +678 7744690  
 Email: rfs@vanuatu.com.vu

For all bookings, ticketing and flight enquiries:

# Domestic Connections



## Solomon Islands Offices

**Head Office**  
**Administration**  
**Finance**  
**Sales & Reservations**

P O Box 23, Henderson Airport, Honiara, Solomon Islands  
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232  
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 20232  
 Tel: (677) 20031 • Fax: (677) 23992  
 Reservation - 177 (Local calls)

## Airport Offices

### HONIARA

Operations  
 Engineering  
 Cargo  
 International Terminal Traffic  
 Domestic Terminal Traffic

Tel: (677) 36048 • Fax: (677) 36244  
 Tel: (677) 36104 • Fax: (677) 36040  
 Tel: (677) 36071 • Fax: (677) 36372  
 Tel: (677) 36077 • Fax: (677) 36076  
 Tel: (677) 36048/36251 • Fax: (677) 36244

**SANTA CRUZ Sales & Reservations**  
**GIZO Sales & Reservations**  
**MUNDA Sales & Reservations**  
**KIRAKIRA Sales & Reservations**

Tel: (677) 53159 • Fax: (677) 53092  
 Tel: (677) 60173 • Fax: (677) 60202  
 Tel: (677) 62152 • Fax: (677) 62152  
 Tel: (677) 50070

## Overseas Administration Offices

### AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport

**Administration** Solomon Airlines, Level 1, International Terminal,  
 Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm, QLD. 4007  
 Tel (Aust Wide): 1300 894311 • Tel (Outside Aust): 617 3860 5883  
 Fax: 617 3860 4351 • Email: reservations@fysolomons.com

**Operations** Solomon Airlines, Level 1, International Terminal,  
 Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm, QLD. 4007 • Tel (Aust Wide): 1300 894311  
 Tel (Outside Aust): 617 3860 5883 • Fax: 617 3860 4351  
 • Email: reservations@fysolomons.com

### F I J I - Nadi

Solomon Airlines  
 P O Box 10229, Nadi International Airport, Fiji • Tel: 679 672 2831  
 • Fax: 679 672 2140



## RESERVATIONS & ticketing essentials

When things get financially tight in business, often employee training is the first thing to go. However, this is not necessarily a sound strategic move for any organisation in a competitive industry.

Speaking during a brief ceremony at the staff Social Club Haus to present certificates to staff members who have successfully completed training on reservations, fares and ticketing essentials, Solomon Airline CEO Brett Gebers stressed the need to continuously train



and upskill employees.

This is important he says to help staff member adapt to the ever unstable business environment so we can continuously respond to techno-

logical advancement in a rapidly changing social and economic landscape. He urged the graduating staff to put to good use the skills and knowledge gained and hoping that will help the company's growth in the long term.

Present during ceremony was the trainer Patricia Cotterell and airline

Manager Commercial Colin Sigimanu who were also acknowledged by the CEO for their tireless efforts in ensuring the 8 month long training ended successfully.



## **SOLOMON** Airlines boosts domestic fleet with fourth Twin Otter

Honiara, Solomon Islands – Meeting traditional increased demand for domestic air services across the Solomon Islands archipelago during the festive season, Solomon Airlines has augmented its domestic fleet with the delivery of a DHC - Twin Otter.

The aircraft, registration H4-MAX, arrived in Honiara after a nine-hour journey ex-Cairns via Papua New Guinea with Solomon Airlines captain Lyndah Tito at the helm, accompanied by first officer, Donovan Tanabose and engineer, Clement Ramoi.

H4-MAX has been pressed into immediate service on the airline's extensive domestic network which is seen as a vital lifeline for the 992-island archipelago.

Solomon Airlines has leased the aircraft for six months to provide relief coverage for the traditionally busy December/January period and additionally, an anticipated increase in domestic traffic in the lead up to the national general election scheduled for next March.



## Your Guide to the Solomon Islands

### Things to know as visitors to our shores:

**Climate** ... Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28C (82.4F). April to November tends to be drier and November to April wetter.

**What to wear** ... Light and casual. Keep brief beachwear for the beach.

**Immigration** ... Commonwealth, United States and most European visitors do not need holiday visas but need return or onward tickets. People intending to work must have a work permit.

**Honiara** ... The capital is eight kilometres (4.97 miles) from Honiara International Airport.

**Airport Tax** ... SB\$100 payable by passengers (12 years and over) boarding international flights, and these are generally added onto your air ticket.

**Health** ... Malaria is a problem. Take anti-malarial medication a week before arrival, once a week during your stay, and for four weeks after departure. Consult your chemist or doctor about an appropriate brand of tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.

**Currency** ... \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2 Solomon Islands notes. Coins are \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

**Business Hours** ... Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am – noon.

**Banks** ... Bank South Pacific opens Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm; ANZ Banking Group open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and its Panatina Plaza branch opens 10am to 1pm on Saturday. Bred Bank Opens 9am - 4pm

**Telecommunications** ... Local and international calls may be made from Our Telekom public card phones which are in prominent locations in Honiara and provincial centres or from GSM Mobile services. Telephone and Internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our Telekom offices and bmobile and Vodafone outlets. GSM prepaid

and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and in some provincial centres.

**Tipping** ... Not expected and not encouraged.

**Transport** ... Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars are also available from Avis, Economy, Travel Car Solomon and Zome.

**International air** ... National airline, Solomon Airlines operate out of Honiara International Airport. Other carriers include Fiji Airways, Virgin Australia, Air Niugini and Air Nauru.

**Domestic** ... Solomon Airlines operates services throughout the country.

**Electricity** ... 220-240 volts in Honiara and some outer island centres.

**News Media** ... The country has a vibrant media business offering choice in both English and Pidjin languages. Radio services are offered by state radio, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation and private operators and some religious bodies. Our Telekom relays BBC and other satellite TV networks while The Island Sun and Solomon Star are the two daily news papers, with a couple of monthly business and lifestyle magazines

### Provinces

The Solomon Islands is made up of 992 islands which are divided into nine provinces:

**Choiseul** - Provincial capital: Taro • **Central** - Provincial capital: Tulagi

• **Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala

**Rennell/Bellona** - Provincial capital: Tigoa • **Guadalcanal** - Provincial (& national capital): Honiara

**Makira/Ulawa** - Provincial capital: Kira Kira • - Provincial capital: Auki

**Western** - Provincial capital: Gizo • **Temotu** - Provincial capital: Lata

**Malaita**

### The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

Province	Area	Population	Highest Point	Capital
Guadalcanal	5,336 km <sup>2</sup>	141,403	2,447m	Honiara
Central	1,000 km <sup>2</sup>	27,928	510m	Tulagi
Western	5279 km <sup>2</sup>	81,214	1661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km <sup>2</sup>	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaita	4,234 km <sup>2</sup>	159,923	1,303m	Auki
Makira	3,188 km <sup>2</sup>	40,386	1,250m	Kirakira
Temotu	926 km <sup>2</sup>	24,412	923m	Lata
Choiseul	3,294 km <sup>2</sup>	25,870	1,060m	Taro
Rennell & Bellona	276 km <sup>2</sup>	3,025	220m	Tingoa



Our Subsidiary

 **Sun Printing Ltd**

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SUPREME CASINO

Phone No: (677) 25009

Email: [reservation@thepch.com](mailto:reservation@thepch.com)

P.O. Box 1298, Kukum Highway, Honiara



WeChat QR Code

