

Kadavu Group



Sitting sleepily 100km south of Viti Levu, the ruggedly beautiful Kadavu Group offers a slice of wild and untamed Fiji, with few visitors and even fewer amenities. There is one small town here and next-to-no roads. As your plane from the main island touches down on a tiny airstrip surrounded by luminescent sea, volcanic peaks and intense forest, you'll feel as if you're embarking upon something special. Your flight will likely be followed by a long, and sometimes bumpy, boat ride to your resort of choice, but the feeling of seclusion and the stunning, almost-prehistoric landscape make it more than worthwhile.

Snaking its way around the islands, the Great Astrolabe Reef is justifiably renowned in diving circles. People come from all over the world to sample its underwater delights. Hand-some stretches of long, sandy beach and sheltered coves ring the islands' perimeters. In the interior you'll find all manner of bird life, including the colourful Kadavu musk parrot, thriving in an impossibly green rainforest that's ripe for scrambling up hillsides, splashing about under waterfalls and kayaking through mangroves.

The group is made up of several islands including Kadavu (the country's fourth-largest island), Ono, Galoa and Yaukuve Levu. Kadavu is irregular in shape and is almost split into three by deep bays along its length. At its southern tip sits its highest peak, the impressive, 838m-high Nabukelevu (Mt Washington).

There are some 70 villages in the Kadavu Group, all relying largely on subsistence agriculture and the export, to the main island, of local produce. Each village has its own fishing grounds, which resorts negotiate use of for diving, surfing or fishing.

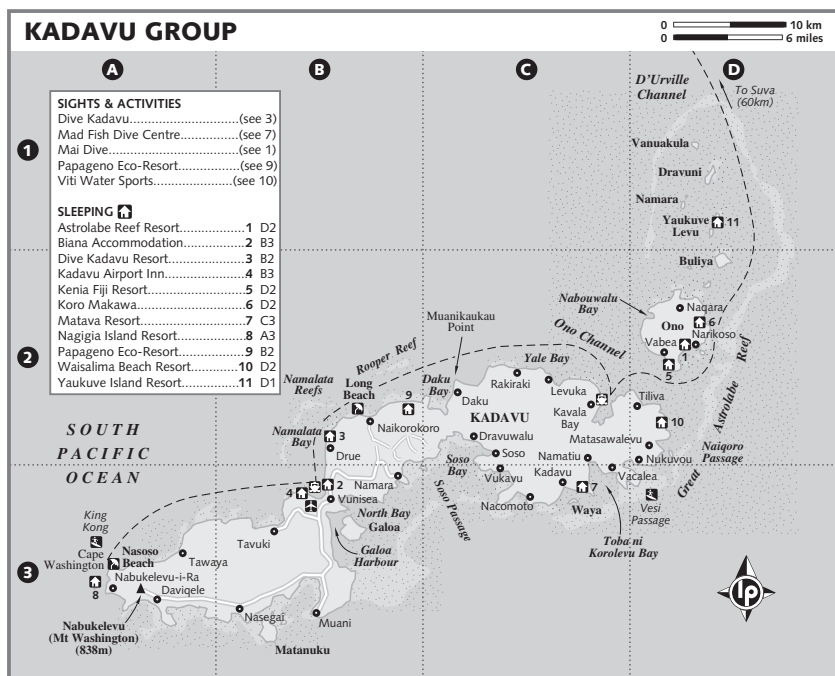
HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience underwater nirvana at the **Great Astrolabe Reef** (p213)
- Grab a guide and head into the interior to look for Kadavu's indigenous **bird life** (p214)
- **Hike** (p213) into the rainforest for a swim in one of the Kadavu Group's many waterfalls or spend an afternoon with the locals in one of Kadavu's many villages, such as **Tiliva** (p213)
- Soak up island paradise at a **top-end lodge** (p215) on Kadavu
- Unleash your inner surfer dude and sample the breaks at **Cape Washington** (p213)
- Dive with the manta rays at **Buliya** (p213)
- **Kayak** (p213) around beautiful Ono island's secluded bays



■ POPULATION: 12,000

■ AREA: 411 SQ KM



ORIENTATION

Most visitors will stay on Kadavu, where you'll find the bulk of the accommodation and the group's only town, petite Vunisea. There's not much to interest tourists here but it's the Group's administrative centre, and is where you'll find the police station, post office and hospital (all on the top of the hill), and airstrip. It is on an isthmus with Namalata Bay to the west and North Bay to the east.

Other islands in the Kadavu Group are Ono, Buliya, Yaukuve Levu, Namara, Dravuni and Vanuakula. Of these, Ono and Yaukuve Levu are the only islands set up to receive tourists.

INFORMATION

Emergency & Medical Services

Hospital (☎ 333 6008) Opened in 1996 with the help of Australian aid, Vunisea's hospital only has limited services. For more serious ailments, you're better off heading back to Viti Levu. Divers suffering from the bends can be transferred to the Fiji Recompression Chamber Facility (see p117) in Suva by Medivac helicopter service.

Police (☎ 333 6007)

Money

Some resorts, especially the more upmarket ones, accept credit cards but check before you fly out. You'll more than likely need cash for the budget resorts. You can't change foreign currency in Vunisea and there's no ATM so bring however much money you'll need.

Post & Telephone

The **Vunisea post and telephone office** (📞 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) is on top of the hill, a short walk from the airstrip. It also sells some groceries, clothes and stationery. Kavala Bay, at the northeastern end of the island, also has a post office.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

The ferry trip to Kadavu from Suva can be rough and the timetable is erratic. It's better to fly instead. The small boats used by budget resorts for transfers to/from the airstrip sometimes don't have covers, life jackets or radios. The Group often falls prey to rough weather and the southeast coast in particular is often assaulted by wind and rain. The weather can be especially rough from April to August.