

The Mamanuca & Yasawa Groups

Includes »

Mamanuca Group	113
South Sea Island	116
Beachcomber Island.....	117
Vomo	117
Navini.....	118
Mana.....	118
Malololailai	122
Yasawa Group.....	123
Waya	128
Kuata & Wayasewa.....	127
Naviti	129
Nacula	134

Best Places to Eat

- » Navutu Stars (p131)
- » Mantaray Island Resort (p129)
- » Nanuya Island Resort (p134)
- » Travellers Tea House (p134)

Best Places to Stay

- » Navini Island Resort (p118)
- » Blue Lagoon Beach Resort (p135)
- » Tokoriki Island Resort (p120)
- » Castaway Island Resort (p120)
- » Wayalailai Eco Haven Resort (p128)

Why Go?

Welcome to Fiji's glittering crown jewels – the Mamanuca and Yasawa Groups.

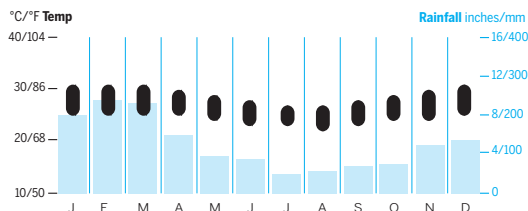
Like a string of pearls the 20 or so picture-perfect coral atolls and islands of the Mamanucas arc west through the large lagoon formed by the Malolo Barrier Reef and Viti Levu. It's a treasure trove of surf breaks, sea turtles, reef sharks and vast schools of multicoloured tropical fish.

The Yasawas pick up where the Mamanucas left off. They're grander in stature, more isolated in location and mellower in temperament. Today a high-speed catamaran threads its way between these rugged volcanic islands, pulling into one blue lagoon after another to share the riches of abundant sunshine, exquisite beaches, stunning coral gardens and creature comforts enough to ward off any hankerings for an early return to 'civilisation'.

Whatever your style – boutique adults-only, family-friendly, laid-back budget or remote Robinson Crusoe – you'll find it somewhere here.

When to Go

Mamanuca & Yasawa Groups



May–Oct Generally sunny dry days, with cool(ish) nights that make for good sleeping.

Oct–Dec Fewer travellers, greater choice of accommodation; evening rainstorms and humidity increase.

Jan–Mar Steamy green wet season; expect some transport delays in stormy weather.

MAMANUCA GROUP

Grab your favourite boardies or bikini, because here they are – the much-trumpeted, widely promoted, photographed and romanticised Mamanuca islands! Wildly popular with visitors, they're valued more for their natural beauty than any contribution they make to the national culture.

Pacific currents sweep nutrients through the passages around the islands and with them come underwater wonders. Above water, with more dive operators, world-class surf, five-star retreats and family-oriented resorts than any other group, the Mamanucas are anything but a well-kept secret.

Each morning a small army of day trippers, fortified with beach towels and factor-15 sunscreen, fan out from the mainland to conquer the white-sand beaches. They meet with no resistance. Most of the habitable islands (and many others that rely on desalination plants or freshwater deliveries) support resorts; this small string of islands forms the backbone of the Fijian tourist industry.

Perhaps because they box so far above their weight when it comes to hauling in the cash, life here bears little resemblance to the harsh realities experienced by most Fijians. Only two resort islands, Mana and Malolo, support Fijian villages but even here tourists outnumber locals. Not that they mind – almost all resorts lease their land from local communities and so, while heavy rain clouds hang over the mainland (both physically and metaphorically), the sun always shines on the magical Mamanucas.



Activities

The Mamanucas are all about water sports and extreme relaxation. Whether you are staying for a week or visiting for a day, nonmotorised water sports (like snorkelling, windsurfing, kayaking and sailing in catamarans) are nearly always provided free of charge. However, the moment an engine is fired you can expect to be billed. Water-skiing, parasailing and wakeboarding cost about \$120 for 15 minutes. Village trips or snorkelling on the outer reef cost between \$20 and \$40 per person, and reef-fishing trips average around \$150 per hour for four people. Island-hopping tours cost anywhere between \$80 and \$180 per person, depending on how many islands are visited and whether lunch is included. But, whatever you do, don't forget your book – hammocks just aren't the same without one.



THE MAMANUCA & YASAWA GROUPS MAMANUCA GROUP

The Mamanuca & Yasawa Groups Highlights

- 1 Waxing up your board – the mighty surf breaks of **Cloudbreak and Restaurants** (p115) await
- 2 Re-enacting your favourite scene from Tom Hanks' *Cast Away* on **Monuriki** (p119), the island where the film was shot
- 3 Treating the kids to a holiday they'll never forget at **Malolo Island Resort** (p121) or **Castaway Island** (p120)
- 4 Frolicking in the **Blue Lagoon** (p133) waters that helped shoot Brooke Shields to fame and then catching a water taxi to the **Sawa-i-Lau Cave** (p136) where she swam
- 5 Island-hopping on the **Yasawa Flyer** (p126) to see if the sand is any whiter at the other end of the island chain
- 6 Diving off a boat and doing your best to keep up with the giant **manta rays** (p130)
- 7 Hanging out with the locals in Naboro during **Friday afternoon rugby** (p128)