

# Vanua Levu & Taveuni

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Moody's Namena (p162)
- » Maqai Resort (p179)
- » Dolphin Bay Divers Retreat (p173)
- » Taveuni Palms (p174)
- » Naveria Heights Lodge (p156)

## Best Dive Sites

- » Namena Marine Park (p155)
- » Great White Wall (p167)
- » Nasonisoni Passage (p155)
- » Rainbow Reef (p167)
- » Dreamhouse (p155)

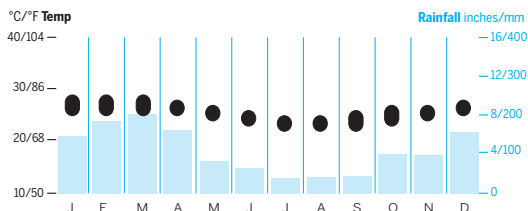
## Why Go?

Vanua Levu (Big Island) and Taveuni look like a surrealist rendition of a mountainous, waterfall-lush rainforest lined with cerulean coasts. Vanua Levu's main settlement Labasa is a dusty patchwork of sugar cane and copra plantations but other than that, nature reigns. Most visitors stay around colonial-feeling Savusavu, where sailboats float in the shelter of slightly offshore islands, or in one of Taveuni's botanical-garden-like villages. Everyone, from the locals to the numerous expats, smile and act as if they've just awoken from a long sunny nap – and they probably have.

All around the islands you'll find traditional villages and calm, relaxing resorts. The Rainbow Reef and Namena Marine Reserve have some of the best dive sites in the South Pacific and non-water babies can head into the rugged interior for hiking, rafting, plunging into waterfalls and birdwatching.

## When To Go

### Savusavu



**Apr–Dec** Sailing season, when Savusavu Bay is thick with sailboats from around the world.

**Jul & Sep** Usually the months with the best dive visibility.

**Nov–Mar** The rainy season; Taveuni is the wettest Fijian island so expect daily showers.

## VANUA LEVU

POP 130,000

The few who make it to Fiji's second-biggest island smile smugly – they know they're onto one of the tropic's best-kept secrets. It's another world over here from the bustle of Viti Levu. Many roads on the east and west sides are rutted dirt and Labasa, the island's largest 'city', is a one-road strip of shops. Still, the island's few settlements are hard-working places filled with folks farming sugar cane and copra. Outside the small pockets of relative hustle are remote villages, mountain passes streaming with waterfalls, endless swaths of forest and an ever-changing coastline forgotten by the world. Take it slow, keep a smile on your face and enjoy exploring rural Fiji on its grandest scale.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

Flying is the best way to get to Vanua Levu and Pacific Sun has regular flights from Labasa to Nadi (\$225) and Suva (\$240), and perhaps in the future, Taveuni (check the website). In Savusavu the office of **Pacific Sun** (☎885 2214) is in the Copra Shed and in Labasa, **Pacific Sun** (☎881 1454; Northern Travel Service office, Nasekula Rd) is off the main drag.

The Labasa airport is about 11km southwest of Labasa. There's a bus that passes the airport about every hour, but it doesn't link up with flights and you'll have to go out to the main road to flag it down. A taxi from Labasa costs \$16.

Savusavu airstrip is 3km south of town, but only charter airlines were using it at the time of writing. Labasa is the main airport for Vanua Levu.

#### BOAT

**TO TAVEUNI** A bus leaves Savusavu every morning at 7am, arriving at the pier at Natuva at around 11am where a small boat leaves for Lovinivonu,



### Vanua Levu & Taveuni Highlights

- 1 Making bubbles around the pristine **Namena Marine Park** (p155)
- 2 Exploring the lush beauty of the **Lavena Coastal Walk** (p178)
- 3 Diving the soft-coral wonderland of the **Rainbow Reef** (p167)
- 4 Feeling the Lord's power via booming song at **Wairiki Catholic Mission** (p171)
- 5 Finding the rare, delicate red-and-white *tagimaucia* flower high on the slopes of **Des Voeux Peak** (p172)
- 6 Swimming in all three glorious pools of the **Tavoro Waterfalls** (p177)
- 7 Bumping aimlessly along the rutted dirt tracks of **Vanua Levu** (p152)
- 8 Lounging on white sands, snorkelling and surfing at **Qamea** (p178)
- 9 Having a waterside sunset cocktail with yachties in **Savusavu** (p160)