

American Samoa

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Best Places to Stay

- » Moana O Sina (p304)
- » Tee's Place (p305)
- » Vaoto Lodge (p309)
- » Tisa's Barefoot Bar (p305)
- » Le Falepule (p303)

Best Beaches

- » Ofu Beach (p308)
- » Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (p302)
- » Alega Beach (p302)
- » Aava Beach (p302)

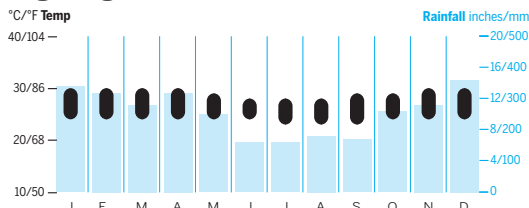
Why Go?

Stick 'American' in front of a name and people think of McDonald's and shopping malls. While that hamburger chain does a brisk business in these islands, this is not what they're about. When you visit American Samoa, any preconceived notions are overridden by the country's exceptional beauty. Imagine steep, geometric peaks to rival French Polynesia, a natural harbour worthy of a New Age artist's daydream, and villages that some locals claim live more-traditional lifestyles than in independent Samoa next door. There may be fewer traditional *fale* here but this is because people have more money – can you blame them?

Pago Pago is a working fishing town but hike the lush trails of the National Park of American Samoa, visit the rest of spectacular Tutuila or get way off the beaten path to the dazzling Manu'a Islands and you'll find a Polynesia that's authentic, adventurous and virtually untouristed.

When to Go

Pago Pago



Dec–Jan Peak holiday period when Samoans living abroad visit home.

May–Oct Dry, cool season with minimal to no risk of cyclones.

Oct Festival month and whale season.

AT A GLANCE

Currency US\$

Language Samoan, English

Mobile phones Prepaid SIM cards are US\$20.

Money ATMs are found in commercial areas of Tutuila only. There's no ATM at the airport.

Visas Free entry to US citizens with a return ticket. Australian, New Zealand and UK citizens get 30-day visas on arrival; all other nationalities must apply for an entry pass.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 197 sq km
- » **Capital** Pago Pago (on Tutuila)
- » **Country code** 1-684
- » **Emergency** 911
- » **Population** 63,500

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| Australia | A\$1 | US\$1.00 |
| Canada | C\$1 | US\$1.00 |
| Europe | €1 | US\$1.25 |
| Japan | ¥100 | US\$1.25 |
| New Zealand | NZ\$1 | US\$0.80 |
| UK | UK£1 | US\$1.55 |

For current exchange rates see www.xe.com.

Set Your Budget

- » **Main course** from US\$10
- » **Night in a midrange hotel** US\$135
- » **Nine holes of golf** US\$3
- » **Ferry to Aunu'u** US\$1
- » **Car hire** from US\$70 per day

Connections

American Samoa's only internal flight is between Pago Pago and Ta'u in the Manu'a Islands. A boat also plies this route twice a month, and makes additional stops at the group's two other islands (which are linked by a bridge), Ofu and Olosega. There is no regular transport between Ta'u and Ofu and Olosega so the only option is to get a local fisherman to take you; they charge US\$150 each way.

ITINERARIES

Two Days

Begin with breakfast in **Pago Pago** and then spend the day exploring the eastern end of Tutuila. Stop for a swim at **Alega Beach** and lunch at **Tisa's Barefoot Bar** before catching the ferry to **Aunu'u** for the afternoon. Head back to Pago Pago Harbor for dinner. Start the next day at **Mom's Place** to fuel up Samoan-style before hiking the **Mt Alava Trail** – here you'll get a taste of all the landscapes Tutuila has to offer, from forest to reef. That night catch the *fiafia* (traditional dance performance) at the **Equator** restaurant at the Tradewinds Hotel in Tafuna.

Four Days

Take the supply boat to **Ofu** and spend the first two days snorkelling, lying around the beach and exploring **Olosega** by foot. Head back to Tutuila (via chartered boat and flight from Ta'u) then fill your last two days as above.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Palolo** Considered the caviar of the Pacific, these blue-green sea worms rise only twice per year and are considered a delicacy. The flavour is between crab and mussels and they have the texture of warm pudding. Ta'u is the place to get them.
- » **Palusami** Calorie bombs of coconut cream wrapped in young taro leaves and cooked in a stone oven. Rich and delicious.
- » **Fast food** Everything from Pizza Hut to Carl's Jr can be found blighting the landscape.
- » **Kimchi** The Korean population has waned as the fishing fleets have moved elsewhere, but there are still enough people to support a healthy selection of Korean and Japanese restaurants.
- » **Sashimi** Found on most menus, thinly sliced raw tuna is served on a bed of shredded cabbage with a side of soy sauce and wasabi.
- » **American home-cooking** Pasta, burgers, fish and chips, steaks and Mexican dishes are found on many menus, usually in ridiculously large servings.