

Vanuatu

Includes »

Efate	476
Port Vila & Around.....	476
Epi.....	489
Tanna	490
Mt Yasur & East Tanna.....	492
Malekula	496
The Maskelynes	500
Ambrym	501
Santo	504
Remote Northern Islands	514
Pentecost	515
Understand Vanuatu....	517
Survival Guide.....	522

Best Places to Stay

- » Rocky Ridge Bungalows (p495)
- » Havannah (p487)
- » Oyster Island Restaurant and Resort(p513)
- » Traveller's Budget Motel (p481)

Best Places to Eat

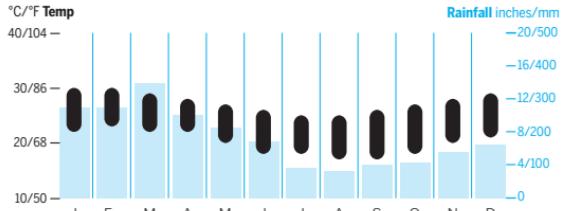
- » Mangoes Restaurant (p483)
- » Deco Stop Restaurant (p510)
- » Jill's Cafe (p483)
- » Kelsorn's Exotic Thai Kitchen (p483)

Why Go?

Where else can you jump from a tropical fish- and coral-filled blue hole into a 4WD truck to watch an active volcano spit out lava high above you? Contrasts like these make Vanuatu a country well worth taking the time to explore. The ni-Van take life in smiling strides, and as you adjust to their early mornings and dark evenings, you'll wonder why you've ever lived life in a rush. It's all thatched-roof accommodation in the outer islands but glitzy resorts abound on Efate and Santo. These islands also boast great roads, giving you round-island access on Efate and smooth access to stunning beaches and blue holes on Santo. Add to that scented balmy breezes and several best-in-the-world experiences that few people know about: a luxury liner shipwrecked in clear waters, gigantic banyan trees, pounding waterfalls, an ancient living culture with extraordinary ceremonies and picture-perfect beaches.

When to Go

Port Vila



Late Sep–Oct
Avoid Australian school holidays and enjoy warm weather without the rain.

Apr–Jun Cyclone season is over. Pentecost's land diving is in full swing.

Nov–Dec Christmas time; accommodation is plentiful.

Connections

Regular passenger ferries head north weekly from Port Vila and cost two-thirds the price of an airfare. Cargo ships stop at most villages on their route, and are often more comfortable and cheaper than truck travel along rutted roads. Most villages have speedboats, and interisland travel is possible (for example, between Ambae, Maewo and Pentecost).

Air Vanuatu flies to 26 airports, and Air Safaris and Air Taxi fly charters (see p524).

ITINERARIES

One Week

Take the morning flight from Port Vila to **Tanna**. Cross the incredible ash plain by 4WD truck and find your tree-house haven beneath rumbling **Mt Yasur**. Climb the active volcano before dusk then witness the fireworks. Back at **Port Vila**, explore the **cascades** then head to northern Efate to **Pele** or **Nguna** for some rustic island time. Return to Vila and visit one of its three islands for lunch, dinner and snorkelling. Fly north to **Santo** to explore Million Dollar Point and relax at **Oyster Island**, taking a day trip to stunning **Champagne Beach**.

Two Weeks

As above, with more time to enjoy Port Vila's organised activities. Fly to **Ambrym** to hike its two volcanoes, witness a Rom dance and stock up on local carvings. Between April and June, head to **Pentecost** and witness the famous land diving. Enjoy the isolation and beauty of the **Maskelynes**, off Malekula, before heading up north of **Norsup** to see original cannibal sites.

Keeping Costs Down

Flexibility is the key to travelling Vanuatu's islands cheaply.

Catch passenger ferries and the odd cargo ship and always go with the regular transport (both speedboat and truck) instead of expensive charters.

Shop for fresh food at local markets and self-cater in Port Vila and Luganville.

AT A GLANCE

Currency Ni-Vanuatu
Vatu (VT)

Language Bislama,
French

Mobile phones Local SIMs can be used in unlocked European and Australian phones.

Money ATMs are only found in Luganville and Port Vila. Travellers cheques can be cashed on some islands, but cash is preferable.

Visas 30-day visas are issued at the border for most nationalities. Extensions are available.

VANUATU

Fast Facts

- » **Capital** Port Vila (Efate)
- » **Country code** 678
- » **Emergency** ambulance 25566; police 22222
- » **Land area** 12,200 sq km
- » **Population** 234,000

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	94VT
Canada	C\$1	90VT
Europe	€1	116VT
Japan	¥100	116VT
New Zealand	NZ\$1	73VT
UK	UK£1	144VT
USA	US\$1	20VT

For current exchange rates see www.xe.com.

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 3500–8000VT
- » **Two-course meal** 4500VT
- » **Museum entrance** 700VT
- » **Bottle of beer** 500VT
- » **Transport ticket** 150VT