

# Fiji

📄 679 / POP 881,065

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## Why Go?

While Fiji's ludicrously blue skies, perfectly swaying palms and eye-smarting white sands provide the backdrop to many a tropical-paradise daydream, there's much more to the country than languid sun-lounge lying and coconut dodging. With eminently diveable undersea marvels, lush interiors begging to be hiked and a fascinating culture to explore, Fiji's 330-plus islands offer something special for every type of traveller. Billed as 'The Happiest Place on Earth', Fiji is extraordinarily welcoming, with a population as warm as its famous sunshine. It's also arguably the easiest place in the South Pacific to get around, and there's accommodation – from bare-bones *bures* to upmarket resorts – to suit every budget. Whether you're looking for relaxation, romance or rollicking adventure, chances are you'll discover the island holiday of your dreams in Fiji.

## When to Go

### Suva

°C/°F Temp

40/104 –

30/86 –

20/68 –

10/50 –

Rainfall inches/mm

–20/500

–16/400

–12/300

–8/200

–4/100

–0



### Jun–Sep

High season, with costs peaking in June and July.

### May & Oct

Shoulder season and the beginning and end of the dry season.

### Nov–Apr

Expect wet and humid weather.

## VITI LEVU

POP 600,000 / AREA 10,400 SQ KM

Everyone who visits Fiji passes through Viti Levu, the country's largest island, but it's often looked at as no more than an unavoidable stop for those en route elsewhere. Yet there are plenty of attractions to make you linger longer.

Away from the gateway hub of Nadi, the southern Coral Coast offers a lively mix of resorts aimed at families and backpackers, plus a host of adventure sports including scuba diving with massive tiger sharks.

While sultry Suva, the South Pacific's largest city, has a rich cultural heritage to explore, northern Viti Levu's best attractions are on the water, from the dolphin-spotting and kite-surfer paradise of Nananu-i-Ra, to the coral reefs of the Bligh Passage. Tie this in with visits to traditional villages and breathtaking waterfalls, and you'll find that Viti Levu has what it takes to be the centre-piece of any Fijian trip.

### Information

Suva, the country's capital, largest city and main port, is in the southeast. Most travellers arrive in the west at Nadi International Airport, 9km north of central Nadi and 24km south of Lautoka.

Nadi and Suva are linked by the sealed Queens Rd that runs along the southern perimeter of Viti Levu (221km) and contains the scattering of villages and resorts known as the Coral Coast.

Heading north from Suva, the Kings Rd is mostly sealed and travels for 265km through

Nausori (where Suva's airport is located), the eastern highlands, Rakiraki, Ba (on the north coast), and Lautoka. South of Rakiraki is Fiji's highest point – Tomanivi (Mt Victoria) at 1323m.

Three roads head up from the coast to the Nausori Highlands villages of Navala and Bukuya (via Ba, Nadi and Sigatoka).

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Travelling around Viti Levu is easy and safe, and most visitors will encounter a warm reception, particularly in rural areas. Walking around towns during daylight hours is perfectly safe; as soon as night descends, however, this is a no-no. This is particularly pertinent in Suva – from dusk onwards, locals will catch a taxi, even for a distance of 300m, and you should as well. Muggings and sexual assaults are a common risk, especially for solo travellers.

### Getting There & Away

Most travellers arrive in Fiji at Nadi International Airport. Nadi and Suva are both domestic transport hubs, offering flights to many of the other islands, as well as boat services and cruises to offshore islands.

### Getting Around

#### AIR

For those in a hurry or after a scenic flight, there are cheap, regular flights between Nadi and Suva for around \$89.

#### BUS

Viti Levu has a regular and cheap bus network. Express buses link the main centres of Lautoka,

## FIJI IN...

### One Week

From **Nadi** follow the Coral Coast Hwy south to the **Momi Guns**, and **Natadola Beach** for horse riding. Chug into the verdant interior on the **Coral Coast Scenic Railway** or trek to the top of the **Sigatoka Sand Dunes**. Make your way to **Pacific Harbour** for diving with sharks in **Beqa Lagoon**. Don't miss the chance to raft the canyons of the **Navua River** before heading to **Suva**. Complete your loop via the Kings Rd, windsurfing at **Nananu-i-Ra** or scuba diving at **Rakiraki**. Head back to sugar country and visit **Lautoka**, the second-largest city and a great base for exploring the **Nausori Highlands**. If you have an extra night, spend it at the traditional village of **Navala** before heading back to Nadi.

### Two Weeks

Thanks to a high-speed catamaran that weaves daily from **Port Denarau** through the **Yasawas** and back, this chain is readily explored. The boat passes a few of the **Mamanucas** on the way, so these islands are a good place to start. Spend the next few days on the sliver of sand that connects **Wayasewa** to **Waya** before drifting north to **Naviti** to snorkel with manta rays. Dash up to **Nacula**, or **Nanuya Lailai**, where you can paddle in the **Blue Lagoon**. From here, leapfrog back down the chain, stopping at **Matacawalevu** and Naviti once more.