



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

Cultural Etiquette in the Pacific

Guidelines for staff working in Pacific communities





*Tropic of Cancer
Tropique du Cancer*

**NORTHERN
MARIANA
ISLANDS**

GUAM

**PALAU
(BELAU)**

**FEDERATED STATES
OF MICRONESIA**

**MARSHALL
ISLANDS**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

NAURU

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

**SOLOMON
ISLANDS**

**WALLIS
FUTUNA**

VANUATU

**NEW
CALEDONIA**

FIJI

AUSTRALIA

**NORFOLK
ISLAND**

*Tasman Sea
Mer De Tasman*

**AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND**

HAWAII

*Pacific Ocean
Océan Pacifique*

KIRIBATI

KIRIBATI

TOKELAU

**COOK
ISLANDS**

SAMOA

**AMERICA
SAMOA**

NIUE

**FRENCH
POLYNESIA**

TONGA

**RAPA NUI/
EASTER ISLAND**

**PITCAIRN
ISLANDS**



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Look out for these symbols for quick identification of areas of interest.

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Protocol

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremonies



Farewell ceremonies



Kava ceremonies



Other ceremonies

Daily Life



Religion



Gender



Dress



In the home



Out and about



Greetings



Meals

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Cover: Tuvalu couple (Photo: SPC)

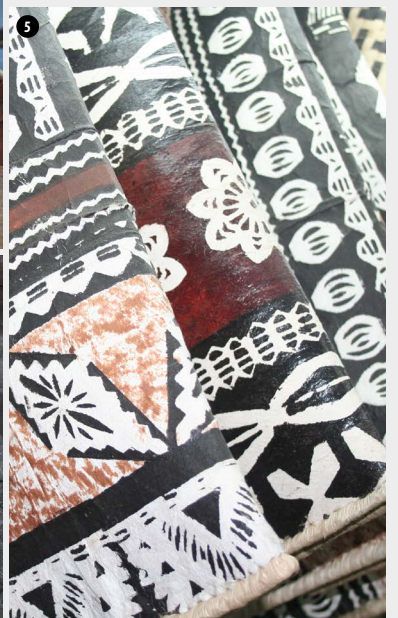
Inside cover: Dance group from New Caledonia, 10th Festival of Pacific Arts, Pago Pago, American Samoa, 2008. (Photo: Carla Appel)

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present this second edition of *Cultural Etiquette in the Pacific*.

As a member of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), SPC has proudly served the region for over seven decades, using science and innovation, and respect for Pacific contexts and cultures, as a basis for interventions that respond to our members' own needs and priorities. The diversity of this region requires that our staff are equipped with relevant competencies and knowledge, including of Pacific peoples and their cultures. This, in my view, can take us a long way towards building reciprocal relationships and strengthening our engagement with our members.

Communication is a key element of these relationships. This booklet will assist us to communicate in ways that are culturally appropriate, including the sharing of ideas and experience, and facilitate a deeper understanding of how Pacific societies operate. Our responsiveness as a service provider is dependent on that understanding because it must inform our approaches and ways of working with our 26 member countries. That said, we do not claim to be experts on Pacific cultures – this resource is aimed at educating us on what we consider to be a fundamental part of providing effective service to Pacific communities.

I thank our team in the Social Development Programme for producing this second edition of *Cultural Etiquette in the Pacific* and trust that as regional public servants, we will make good use of it.

Dr Stuart Minchin

Pacific Community Director-General

PREFACE

Culture is a key area of work for SPC, and the Social Development Programme (SDP) has lead responsibility for the portfolio. Part of this work is to develop organisational capabilities that include knowledge of Pacific cultures and their critical relevance to our work with our members.

This guide is not all encompassing, but rather aims to equip us with some basic cultural knowledge of the Pacific countries and communities we serve. The first edition of *Cultural Etiquette in the Pacific* was launched in 2005 and the production of this second edition is timely as we navigate our way into the new decade. We acknowledge the leadership of our Director-General, Dr Stuart Minchin, in supporting this undertaking and recognising the value of this resource in our role as a CROP agency.

This revised edition has been made possible through the engagement and contributions of ministries and departments responsible for culture across our membership, and technical support from SPC's Information Services. We hope you find the guide useful in your work and we welcome your feedback on how we can improve it in future.

Soifua ma ia manuia,

Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara
Director, Social Development Programme

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) have distinct cultural protocols and practices, but also many similarities in terms of appropriate behaviour, dress and speech. These shared aspects are described in the following general guidelines, while specific information for each PICT can be found in the Country Guidelines section.

Language

In addition to their own language, PICTs use either English or French as an official language, and communications between SPC and member governments are most often in English or French. Learning some commonly used terms in the language(s) of the countries in which you work shows respect for the culture and helps to create rapport with country representatives. Terms that are frequently used during both social and formal occasions are listed in the Country Guidelines.

Leadership and Protocol

All Pacific Community members have a formal government structure, including ministries, departments or divisions with authority for specific issues or resources. SPC's official contact and focal point is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or its equivalent. However,

SPC contacts within PICTs go beyond Foreign Affairs, extending to all the sectors in which SPC engages, including agriculture, education, climate change, culture, energy, fisheries, gender, geoscience, human rights, maritime issues, public health, statistics and youth. Most member countries and territories also have traditional governance and leadership systems at local, provincial and national levels. A wide range of issues may be addressed by traditional processes including land use, legal affairs, cultural practices and language. Communications regarding in-country work should always be directed to SPC's official contact or focal point, who can provide advice on correct procedures and will typically facilitate interaction with relevant areas of government, including traditional leaders where needed. Although not all contacts with countries, or visits, will involve the traditional leadership,

SPC staff should be aware of and respect protocols. Staff ought to familiarise themselves with these protocols before they travel, and should ask local focal points and contacts for advice on special procedures that should be followed in conducting a particular project.

Ceremonies

Some ceremonies have strict rules governing seating, dress, and how certain individuals should be addressed. If a ceremony is held to welcome you or the SPC project or programme you are involved in, you may be called on to give an address. In general, you should be sure to acknowledge (as appropriate) three groups of people:

- government officials
- traditional leaders
- religious leaders

Before you make an address, find out who should be acknowledged and in which order, and their correct names and titles. The same advice applies when any in-country meetings are organised by SPC staff.

Kava ceremonies (as opposed to casual gatherings where kava is served) are customary in some countries and have their own special protocols and rituals. Seek guidance from a local contact if you are invited to a kava ceremony as the protocol can be complex. Social consumption of kava is acceptable in some countries, e.g. Fiji, but is not common practice in others, e.g. Samoa. In Tonga, the *faikava* is a male cultural space for discussion, and in Vanuatu, the *nakamal*

is a place in which kava is consumed in an atmosphere of quietness or silence.

If food is served at a ceremonial function, there may be rules governing who eats first (generally the chief or other traditional leader). Take your cue from the Country Guidelines, or from a local contact, and be aware of what others at the ceremony are doing.

Daily Life



Religion

Religious beliefs are an important aspect of life for many Pacific Island people and numerous faiths and beliefs are represented across the region. Christianity is the most widespread, and Christian beliefs and practices exert a strong influence in many Pacific Island communities. Staff should be respectful of personal beliefs and community structures relating to religion. In many Pacific Island communities, saying grace before meals and offering a prayer at the start and end of meetings are normal practices.



Dress

Most Pacific Island societies have modest standards of dress. These standards may not apply or may not be strictly followed in urban areas or tourist resorts, but this varies according to the country. Across the region, a certain standard of formality is expected when attending meetings, ceremonies and church services.

The following rules commonly apply:

- **Dress standards**

- i. Dress is generally casual and informal, although somewhat conservative.
- ii. Informal wear includes a sarong, also called a *lavalava* (Samoa), *sulu* (Fiji), *pareo* or *pareau* (Cook Islands) or *tupenu* (Tonga).
- iii. Men typically wear shirts and long shorts or pants. Women wear a skirt or dress (below the knee) or a *lavalava*. Women in some countries may also wear pants or long shorts. If wearing shorts in rural areas, it is advisable for women to carry a *lavalava* to cover their legs when entering a village. Very short shorts and miniskirts are generally frowned on across the region.
- iv. Blouses or dresses typically cover the upper arms, though this may not apply in urban areas.
- v. When meeting villagers it is polite to remove your sunglasses as the eyes should be seen.

- **Communication**

- i. Expectations around gender roles and norms, cultural status and age are important factors to be aware of as these vary across the Pacific. Learn the correct term or reference for people with titles or chiefly status in communities.
- ii. Pointing at someone, or pointing in general, is often considered rude.

- iii. Pay close attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication cues and expectations. These cues include tone and volume of voice, gestures used and body language, and indications of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behaviour.
- iv. Obtaining pointers on cultural diplomacy, e.g. how to politely express a different opinion or viewpoint, is recommended.
- v. Learn how to pronounce commonly used words and terms, e.g. *bula* (mbula), Kiribati Kiribas), and Samoa (Sāmoa).

- **Meetings, ceremonies, church services**

- i. Dress is more formal.
- ii. Men wear pants (not shorts) or a formal *lavalava* and a buttoned shirt.
- iii. Ties are not usually worn at regular church services or most meetings.
- iv. Women wear long skirts or dresses, as above.
- v. Hats are customarily worn in some countries.

- **Swimming**

- i. In tourist areas, swimwear can generally be worn.
- ii. Away from tourist areas, women in most countries swim in shorts and t-shirts, and men in longer swim trunks.
- iii. Swimwear should never be worn into villages.
- iv. Men can swim without shirts but should otherwise wear a shirt.



In the home

All Pacific Island cultures are welcoming of visitors, and invitations to visit people at home are not uncommon in most societies. These invitations may be informal and issued on the spur of the moment, or they may be more formal, in which case it may be appropriate for a guest to bring a small gift. Be aware, however, that in some societies reciprocal gift giving is the norm – by giving a gift you may obligate your host to respond. Check the Country Guidelines, and if in doubt, ask a local contact what is appropriate.

The custom of removing your shoes when entering a home is almost universal. Removing hats or caps is also a sign of respect in certain cultural spaces or homes. Seating may be on chairs or mats. Your host may need to unroll a mat, so follow their cue as to when and where to sit. When seated, your legs should generally not be stretched out. It is polite for men to sit cross-legged and for women to sit with their legs tucked beneath them or to one side. Women should also take care not to expose their thighs when seated (a *lavalava* is useful for this). In many countries, it is considered rude to stand above people who may be seated or to walk over them. Check the Country Guidelines for an appropriate apology or other way of handling this type of situation.

In many societies, it is common for drinks (and often food) to be offered to visitors as a matter of course, even if the visit is brief or casual. In some societies, you may decline

politely, but in others it may be considered rude (see the Meals section below).



Out and about

The norms, and cultural nuances, governing social behaviour in village spaces vary between countries. For example, there may be rules about walking through a village, including whether it is acceptable to walk in front of or behind houses and which door or entrance to use in different contexts.

Many areas (including beaches) are owned or managed by a community or clan. Often these are not marked in any way. Unless you are in an urban area or travelling along a public road, ask a village resident for permission before you walk, swim, and so forth. Permission is rarely refused.

Villages in most Pacific Island societies are essentially private places where you should be courteous and aware of your dress and behaviour. This is true even though the borders of a village may be obscure, with paths or public roads passing through the village. Be especially mindful of your behaviour on Sundays and at certain times of each day (e.g. during evening prayer).

Food and fruit crops may appear to be plentiful and growing wild, but these crops will almost invariably belong to a family (or clan). The same is true for fish and other marine resources. Always ask permission before picking fruit, flowers or any crops on land, and before fishing

or collecting any shellfish (unless you know that the marine area is open to the public).

Areas that are considered sacred or private may be marked by a sign reading *kapu* or *tabu* or *tapu*, or denoted in some other way. These signs or markers may also indicate that harvesting certain resources (e.g. fish) is prohibited. Always respect such taboos.

Taking general photographs in urban areas, or of landscapes or at public events is usually acceptable, but always ask permission before photographing people (individuals or small groups). You should also ask permission before taking photos in villages, or taking photos of ceremonies or sites that are considered sacred.



Greetings

Across the Pacific, friendliness and respect for others are highly valued, and a friendly demeanour will smooth your way. When you interact with others, offer a greeting and a smile before anything else. Always be polite and respectful, and include elderly people and children in this approach.

Forms of greeting vary across the region, but in all countries using the local language to greet someone is appreciated.

In many Pacific Island societies, looking directly into the eyes of the person you are meeting or speaking to is considered rude. Try to be conscious of this when interacting with others.



Meals

In some Pacific societies, an offer to share food may simply be an expression of hospitality. In countries where this is the case, the offer may be declined courteously. If your host is serious in inviting you for a meal, they are likely to insist and then it is appropriate to accept. Refusing such an invitation may be considered rude, so tread carefully. Raw seafood, such as fish, clams and occasionally octopus, may sometimes be served – in many countries, these are considered delicacies.

Meals in many communities begin with a prayer. In general, you should not begin to eat until everyone has been served and you have been invited to start. If in doubt, follow the lead of others present.

Practices regarding finishing the food on your plate (whether to eat all that is offered, or leave a small portion) vary from country to country, but picking at food or obviously wasting it is universally considered ill-mannered. Make sure you express appreciation to your hosts for the food and their hospitality.

In most countries it is considered impolite to eat while standing or when walking through a village.

COMMONLY USED TERMS

As you read through this manual, you will be struck by the cultural and linguistic diversity of Pacific Community members. Where Pacific language terms are used, they are italicised, with the English meaning in brackets.

To make these guidelines easier to use and read, we employ several standard terms (e.g. kava and taboo) that are commonly used throughout the region (along with the local term on first use in the Country Guidelines). In the table below, the common terms used in the text are in bold letters, with their equivalents in some of the other Pacific languages listed underneath.

<p>Kava Yaqona 'Ava Sakau</p>	<p>A traditional drink with mild relaxant and tranquilliser qualities. Made from the root of the plant <i>Piper methysticum</i>, it was traditionally used in rituals or for medicinal purposes by men, primarily chiefs in some Melanesian and Polynesian societies. In some countries, kava is also drunk in less formal settings.</p>
<p>Betel nut</p>	<p>A nut from the tree <i>Areca catechu</i>, which is eaten mixed with lime and pepper leaves. The mild tranquilliser and relaxant effects are short term.</p>
<p>Lavalava (Samoa), sulu (Fiji), pareo or pareau (Cook Islands) and tupenu (Tonga)</p>	<p>A garment made of a long piece of fabric, which is worn by both men and women. Women tie it around the waist, bust or at the neck. Men wear it around the waist, extending to just above or below the knee.</p>
<p>Taboo Tabu Kapu Tapu</p>	<p>Sacred, forbidden. Today this term is often posted on private land to forbid trespassing. It is also used to indicate that fishing, or gathering of other food, is prohibited.</p>
<p>Toddy</p>	<p>A sweet drink made by tapping the young flowers of coconut palms. Toddy may be consumed fresh, as a fermented or 'sour' (alcoholic) toddy, or boiled to make a syrup.</p>

AMERICAN SAMOA

Samoa

• Swains Island

TUTUILA

PAGO PAGO

C. Malatula

Aunuu

Pago Pago Harbour
Port de Pago Pago

Leone
Bay

Otu • Olosega

MANUA ISLANDS
ÎLES MANUA

Tau

Rose •

5

PRINCIPAL
ISLANDS

2

ATOLLS

PARTITIONED IN

1899

Country Information

American Samoa consists of five principal islands and two atolls. It shares a common history, language and culture with Samoa, and has been inhabited for about 3000 years. The Samoan islands were partitioned in 1899, and today American Samoa is an unincorporated territory of the United States of America (USA).

The majority of American Samoans live in rural communities on the main island of Tutuila; the greatest concentration of population is around the capital, Pago Pago. American Samoans are nationals of the US and have free entry to the US.

Language

Samoan is the primary language in American Samoa, but most residents also speak English, which is used for business and government affairs. The Samoan language is closely related to Hawaiian and other Polynesian languages.

TERMS	SAMOAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Talofa Mālō	Hello Hi
Appreciation	Fa'afetai	Thank you
Farewell	Tōfā soifua Fā	Goodbye Bye

Leadership and Protocol



Background

American Samoa is a self-governing territory of the United States and elects a non-voting representative to the US Congress. The Government of American Samoa is typical of that used by American states, with an elected Governor, Lieutenant-Governor and legislative assembly (the American Samoan *Fono*). The *Fono* consists of a Senate of 18 members and a House of Representatives of 21 members. The senators are *matai* (chiefs), chosen by 12 county councils in accordance with Samoan custom. They serve a term of four years. The representatives are popularly elected and serve two-year terms.

Fa'a Samoa, which means the Samoan way, is frequently used to describe the lifestyle of both American Samoa and Samoa. The inherent flexibility of *fa'a Samoa* has allowed the people to withstand, or absorb, the influences of foreign cultures. The Samoan way of life is structured around the *aiga* (extended family) and their *matai*. A village may have any number of *matai*, depending on the number of related families in the village.



Protocol

When addressing groups in a traditional manner, address the leaders politely, and then the group.

Ceremonies



Kava ceremony

Kava (*ava* in Samoan) ceremonies are an important part of local custom, as are council meetings and long speeches. If you are invited to a traditional kava ceremony, be prepared to bring a monetary gift as reciprocity is traditional. There are many rules governing a Samoan kava ceremony, including the need to have a speech ready, particularly if the ceremony is being held on your behalf. You should discuss the procedure beforehand with your Samoan host and, if possible, have someone to accompany you and lead you through the ceremony.

Daily Life



Religion

In villages in American Samoa, *fa'a Samoa* and church services are the focus of everyday life. Prayers are said before every meeting. A priest or minister is accorded a privileged position in the village community, equal to the status of a respected *matai*, and can make village rules affecting the conduct of villagers on Sundays.



Dress

Modest dress standards apply; see the General Guidelines.



In the home

Shoes should be removed when entering a *fale* (traditional Samoan house). It is courteous to wait until the host has laid out floor mats to sit on before you enter and then to sit where your host indicates. Legs should never be stretched out in front when seated on a mat. It is impolite to speak in a home while standing.



Out and about

Avoid walking through villages during the evening prayer curfew (usually between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.). The prayer typically lasts for 10 to 20 minutes, and the beginning and end is often marked by a bell or the blowing of a conch shell. If you unintentionally enter a village during evening prayer, sit down and wait quietly until the all-clear is sounded.



Greetings

A simple handshake is appropriate for initial greetings or farewell, while kissing on the cheek is common among close friends and family members. It is acceptable to remain seated while shaking hands. It is customary to say *tofa soifua* (goodbye) rather than *talofa* (hello) when passing by someone in the evening.



Meals

Eating in Samoa is a social activity. People tend to eat together and share their food. When dining with others, wait until everyone has been served before starting your meal. A short prayer before eating is also customary.

If food is placed before you, it should not be refused. Even if you are not hungry, you should eat a small amount so that the host is not disappointed. Simply accept graciously and eat as much as you can. You are not required to eat everything on your plate to please your hosts, and finishing your meal completely may be considered a sign that you are still hungry, resulting in an offer of more food.

Most Samoan foods are eaten with the fingers. During or after a meal, a bowl of water is often provided for washing hands. As it is important that hands are clean before eating, you may request a water bowl before the meal if one is not offered.

AUSTRALIA



6
STATES

3
MAINLAND
TERRITORIES

HOME TO THE
**WORLD'S
OLDEST LIVING
CULTURES**

Country Information

Australia is the world's smallest continent and the sixth largest country in terms of area. It has six states, three mainland territories and seven external territories. Australia is home to the world's oldest living cultures – over 75,000 years old. Australia's Indigenous peoples include Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Both groups were involved in trade and exchange with Pacific Island people for many hundreds of years prior to European settlement.

European settlement of Australia began in 1788, and Australia became a federated nation of states within the British Commonwealth in 1901. Indigenous self-government was not recognised in either phase of colonisation.

On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia found the common law should recognise that Australia was inhabited at British settlement and that the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in land had existed at that time and had continued to exist thereafter. The Court also held that native title could continue to exist in land where it had not been 'extinguished' by events that had happened since the British arrived and broke the continued traditional connection with the land, ultimately overturning the myth of *terra nullius* that had prevailed for over 200 years. Edward Koiki Mabo, a Meriam man from the island of Mer (Murray Island) in the Torres Strait Islands, was a key plaintiff in this significant land rights case, today referred to as the 'Mabo Case'.

As at May 2020, approximately 50 per cent of all land in Australia has a recognised Indigenous interest (39.2 per cent is recognised through native title rights and interests, and 15.2 per cent through statutory land rights, with an overlap of 3.6 per cent between the two categories).

Language

The predominant language used in Australia is English. An estimated 250 Indigenous languages were spoken at the time of European settlement, but only a small fraction remain in use and all are considered endangered languages. Significant immigration from around the world over the last 50 years has transformed Australia, with a multicultural society now replacing the predominantly white, English-speaking colonial population.

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Australia has a federal system of government with an elected two-chamber parliament. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state and is represented by a Governor-General. The national government is formed by the party or coalition with the majority of seats in the national parliament. The government nominates a Prime Minister, who establishes an executive cabinet and ministry.

There are also six state and two territory parliamentary governments. Local government structures or services in each state and territory comprise a third level of government.

On 27 May 1967, a referendum was held in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous Australians. The referendum also gave the Commonwealth Government the power to make special laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Protocol

Prior to European colonisation, Australia was home to over 500 Aboriginal nations and territories. European colonisation and settlement, and government policy, have resulted in the loss of much cultural knowledge and the interruption of many traditional practices, but all Indigenous Australians nevertheless retain their innate right to claim, control and enhance their heritage.

Indigenous protocols are built on respect. As the First Peoples of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their laws, customs and protocols, should be acknowledged, recognised and respected. Visitors should be sensitive to the lands they visit and to the connections that exist between the land and Australia's Indigenous peoples.

The protocols to be used by visitors and non-Indigenous people who wish to visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and lands vary from region to region. In remote areas (particularly in northern Australia), Indigenous peoples have retained or regained legal ownership of their lands and, in many cases, continue long-standing

cultural practices. Prospective visitors must gain permission before entering these Indigenous lands and communities. Indigenous Australians in other areas also appreciate the courtesy of a request to visit their lands and communities. Native title organisations and Indigenous Land Councils represent many Indigenous communities in matters relating to land and business and can help identify Indigenous people and lands in any geographic area. (The names of the elders of a community may not always be on the public record, however.)

In Australia, the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous, Indigenous Australians, First Nations and First Peoples are used interchangeably depending on how people wish to be recognised. At a local level, people also identify themselves by their nation or language group, e.g. *Ngunnawal* (Canberra), *Palawa* (Tasmania) and *Noongar* (southwest Western Australia). It is respectful to take time to identify the local group or groups whose lands you are visiting. There are also regional groupings such as *Murri* (Queensland) and *Koori* (New South Wales and Victoria) that people use to identify themselves.

The owners or custodians of the land should always be acknowledged when speaking in a public gathering. A speaker from outside the community should begin by acknowledging the Indigenous people, or traditional owners, of the place on which the meeting is being held and pay respect to the elders, both past and present. A speaker may wish to personalise the acknowledgement, or add some of their own cultural background to the protocol.

The Torres Strait Islands have a distinct Indigenous culture and history that differs from that of Aboriginal communities in Australia. Torres Strait Islander peoples have their own beliefs, stories, songs, artworks and dances. You need permission from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council and Prescribed Body Corporate to visit different islands. For religious reasons, dress is more conservative in the Torres Strait Islands. Some remote Aboriginal communities also prefer conservative dress.

Photographing Indigenous peoples is a sensitive issue and considered by some to be culturally inappropriate and offensive. Reproducing the name and image of deceased individuals is considered equally offensive. For this reason, informed consent for photography is required and the refusal of a request must be respected.

Ceremonies



Indigenous communities are diverse, and cultural practices, including ceremonies, vary from region to region. When different communities come together for national or international events, participants may perform ceremonies that are associated with their lands, seas, stories and customs and that are appropriate for public viewing. Indigenous Australians visiting other peoples and lands will show respect for the people and land they are visiting.

In return, as a gesture of respect for visiting Indigenous Australians, it is appropriate for the host nation to acknowledge and recognise each of the following: the different groups that make up the delegation; their elders and senior people; and the areas they come from.

If you wish to visit one of the Torres Strait Islands or communities, it is important to contact the respective Council Divisional (island) Office in advance, advise them of your intentions and obtain current information on the community, services and accommodation available, and any cultural protocols you should follow. As mentioned above, there are strict protocols around conservative dress and clothing as many Torres Strait Island communities are religious, following contact with early English missionaries.



Welcoming

It is appropriate to show respect for and acknowledge the traditional owners or custodians of the land and the elders of the community. It is also common in public gatherings to be welcomed to country by the traditional owners. The welcome may be given by a single speaker or may include cultural performances. There is usually a fee for a welcome-to-country ceremony, which is a higher-level protocol than the acknowledgement to country described above. A welcome is carried out by the Indigenous people of the place, while an acknowledgement is carried out by speakers from outside the group.

Daily Life



Religion

Indigenous Australians are deeply spiritual people and have a strong connection to their land, their sea and to their family heritage (sometimes referred to as kinship). Many Indigenous Australians follow an introduced (particularly Christian) faith, while retaining their traditional spirituality, custom and lore.



Gender

There are protocols in place in some communities for what is considered 'Men's Business' and 'Women's Business'. It is necessary to understand whom you should talk to about certain issues, and to be introduced accordingly.



Out and about

A simple handshake can be appropriate for an initial greeting or farewell. You should not be offended, however, if a handshake is either not offered or not accepted. Extended eye contact is not considered appropriate by some Indigenous Australians.



Meals

Sharing of food is considered a great virtue among Indigenous Australians. It is important for your hosts to feel that their hospitality is appreciated.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

• Farallon de Pajaros

• Maug

• Asuncion

• Agrihan

• Pagan

• Alamagan

• Guguan

• Sarigan

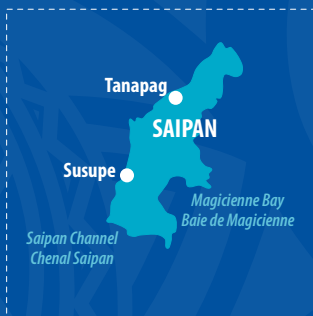
• Anatahan

Farallon de Medinilla •

SAIPAN

• Aguijan • Tinian

• Rota



15
PRIMARY ISLANDS

5
ISLANDS ARE INHABITED

4000
YEARS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Country Information

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) comprises 15 primary islands, of which five are inhabited. Evidence of human settlement dates back some 4000 years.

Geographically the island chain includes Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands share Guam's history of over 300 years of colonial occupation by Spain.

The islands were also colonised by Germany and Japan, and were administered by the United States until 1986, when CNMI gained its current status of internal self-government. Residents of CNMI have US citizenship and non-voting representation in the US Congress. They do not vote in US presidential elections.

The main inhabited islands are Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The capital is Saipan — there is no 'capital' village.

The two major indigenous groups are the Chamoru people, who are native to the Mariana Islands, and Carolinians, who are from the Caroline Islands in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Other ethnic groups residing in CNMI include people of Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, German and Spanish descent.

A typically Western family structure has generally been adopted, but many Carolinian communities (of which there a number on Saipan) retain their matrilineal social structure.

Language

A majority of inhabitants speak Chamorro and Carolinian at home. English is the official language and is widely spoken.

TERMS	CHAMORU	ENGLISH	CAROLINIAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Hafa adai	Hello or welcome	Tiroow woomi	Hello
Appreciation	Si yuus maase	Thank you	Ghillisou	Thank you

Leadership and Protocol



Background

In CNMI there are no village leaders. Traditional leaders are limited to family groups, and their influence does not affect the community on a broad scale. Political leaders that SPC staff should be aware of include the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Senate President and House Speaker; the resident CNMI representative in Washington; and island mayors. The authority of these leaders is electoral, and their community roles are restricted to general governance.



Protocol

Visits to traditional leaders are not typically required in CNMI. Visits to government leaders are expected, but the official contact varies depending on the project in question. The relevant authority can be determined through consultation with the SPC focal point or government agency contact.

Ceremonies



Ceremonies may be held for SPC-related activities, or activities in which SPC plays a significant role, and are typically hosted by an island (and in some cases a particular village) to acknowledge a major service that has been performed. Normally both welcoming and farewell ceremonies are held.



Welcoming ceremonies

Welcoming ceremonies tend to be more elaborate, and usually involve an opening prayer, speeches, an exchange of gifts, special performances and a meal. Farewell ceremonies are similar but simpler, with the emphasis often less on ceremony and more on celebration. If the ceremony is held to acknowledge work performed by SPC, then an SPC staff member will likely be requested to give a brief address.

If SPC staff make visits to authorities or attend receptions and dinners, they may be called on to say a few words, particularly if a reception is in their honour. Small gifts are also appropriate.

Daily Life



Religion

Most residents of CNMI are Catholic, but churches of various denominations are present. If attending a church service, general island wear (or traditional dress from your own country) is appropriate. Fiestas call for casual clothes, while special masses or services, weddings, baptisms and other special ceremonies may call for men to wear a tie and white shirt, or possibly a suit. Black or dark grey is usually worn at funerals.



Dress

For meetings, long pants and a buttoned or polo shirt are generally worn. State events require ties and jackets. All other dress is casual, and the dress code does not differentiate between men and women. Topless bathing is illegal, but there are few other taboos. Ensure you are modestly dressed when meeting or visiting with elders.



In the home

In the home, general courtesy applies. Visitors should follow the lead of their host.



Out and about

Depending on the time of year, there are several village fiestas and special community events, which visitors can attend.

At restaurants, tipping of 15 to 20 per cent is the norm.



Greetings

A kiss on the cheek, a handshake, a light hug and a smile are all appropriate means of greeting local people. Often, young Chamoru and Carolinian people will kiss the hands of elders on arrival at a gathering or meeting. However, this practice is limited solely to these communities.



Meals

Offers of food should be accepted, although an offer to eat can be graciously declined without causing offence. When visiting local families, remember that prayers are often said before meals. Eating with the fingers is appropriate for many foods in CNMI, which are often prepared *pika* (very spicy).

COOK ISLANDS



15
ISLANDS

SETTLED ABOUT
2000
YEARS AGO

SELF-
GOVERNING
STATE

Country Information

Cook Islands comprises 15 islands and is a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand. The capital, Avarua, is located on the island of Rarotonga. Cook Islands, which is in Polynesia, was settled about 2000 years ago; some Māori (Cook Island people) trace their ancestry back to Samoa and Raiatea (in French Polynesia). There is also a strong connection between Māori in Cook Islands and Māori in New Zealand.

Language

Most people are bilingual, speaking Cook Islands Māori and English, which are both official languages. There is a strong similarity between the Māori languages of Cook Islands, New Zealand and Tahiti.

TERM	MĀORI	ENGLISH
Greeting	Kia orana	Hello
Appreciation	Meitaki maata	Thank you very much
	Kia manuia	Good luck or best wishes
Farewell	Ka kite	See you again (informal)

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The Parliament of Cook Islands has 24 members, who are popularly elected. The Cabinet of Ministers, which controls the executive government, comprises the Prime Minister and ministers appointed from among the members of parliament. The holders of traditional chiefly titles from the various islands form the House of *Ariki* (chiefs), which considers issues relating to the welfare of Cook Island people, and advises parliament on matters affecting custom and traditional practice. A second traditional body, the *Koutu Nui*, gives *mataiapo* (heads of clans) and *rangatira* (subchiefs) of each of the tribes an opportunity to take part in decision-making. Issues relating to the development and management of the *vaka* (the three main districts on the island of Rarotonga) and the outer islands are addressed by island councils and mayors.



Protocol

If you are holding a workshop in Cook Islands, it is courteous to invite both elected and traditional leaders to any formal ceremonies (leaders include the member of parliament, mayor and traditional leader of the area). Ask your local counterpart for advice on the protocol.

Ceremonies



If you are acknowledging representatives and leaders, do so in the following order: government officials; traditional leaders; religious leaders. All formal occasions in Cook Islands, including workshops and celebrations involving food, open and close with a prayer.

Daily Life



Religion

Many of the northern (and some southern) islands observe strict religious practices. These include restrictions on Sunday activities, such as a ban on fishing or swimming in the lagoon, and avoidance of work-related activities. If a death occurs in the community, most activities, such as sports, are deferred for several days until community leaders give permission for them to recommence. Conservative dress is appropriate if attending church services, particularly in the northern Cook Islands.

Women should not wear a *lavalava* to church, but rather a skirt or dress. It is customary for women to wear hats in the Cook Islands Christian Church, though this is not compulsory for visitors. Flowers are not worn to church.



Dress

Dress standards are typically relaxed in urban areas, but this does not hold true for meetings, workshops and conferences, when dress is more formal; see the General Guidelines regarding dress. Standards of dress are more conservative in the outer islands than on Rarotonga and Aitutaki.



In the home

When invited to a private home, guests are not traditionally expected to bring a gift (under the custom of reciprocity the host would then be expected to give a gift in return). This practice is fading, however, and whether it applies may depend on the nature of the invitation. When visiting, observe general courtesies as described in the General Guidelines.



Out and about

Tipping is not practised or encouraged in Cook Islands. In marketplaces and shops, bargaining for a 'better price' is considered offensive.



Greetings

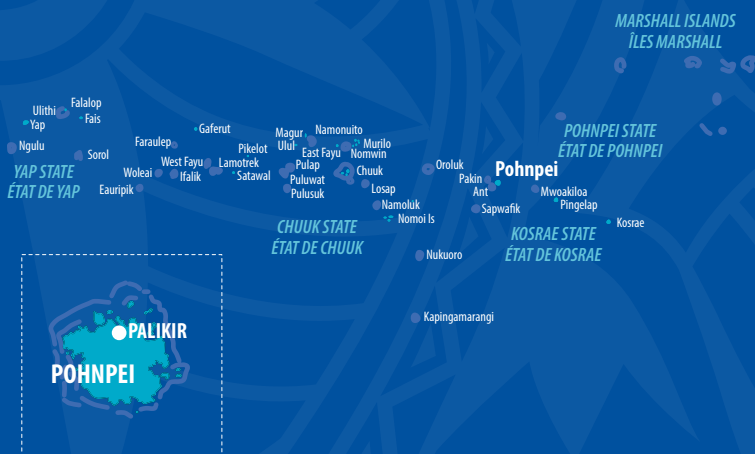
Greetings between men and women, or between two women, are often accompanied by a kiss on the cheek and a handshake at both official and informal functions. Between men, *Kia orana* and a firm handshake is the norm.



Meals

Celebrating with food is common. If you are budgeting for workshops, your local contacts may submit large costs for catering as serving food is a customary way of hosting opening and closing functions. You can negotiate if costs seem too high. Often, participants contribute money for closing events, and this can be mentioned during informal workshop discussions.

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA



>600
ATOLLS &
ISLANDS

DIVIDED
INTO **FOUR**
SEMI-
AUTONOMOUS
STATES

17
RECOGNISED
INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGES

Country Information

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) comprise more than 600 atolls and islands located north of the equator in the western central Pacific. FSM is divided into four semi-autonomous and geographically distant states (Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae). Kosrae consists of just two islands, but the other states have numerous islands and atolls. Each state has its own history, culture, language and traditions, and the people are likely to regard themselves as Yapese, Chuukese, Pohnpeian or Kosraean. They prefer to be called Micronesian.

In addition, people of Polynesian and Melanesian descent inhabit the atolls of Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi in FSM. Their language and cultural practices are closely akin to those of other western Polynesian

islands. There are also people of European and Asian descent living in FSM, and people from other Pacific Island countries.

The capital, Palikir, is located on Pohnpei. FSM is an independent nation with a Compact of Free Association with the United States, which assumes responsibility for defence-related issues.

Language

FSM has 17 recognised indigenous languages, with Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese and Kosraean being the most spoken. English is taught in all schools in FSM and is used as a common language between different groups. The Nukuoroan and Kapingamarangese languages are a blend of western Polynesian and Melanesian languages.

TERM	POHNPEIAN	KOSRAEAN	CHUUKESE	YAPESE	ENGLISH
Greeting	Kaselehlie	Len wo	Ran annim	Mogethin	Hello
Appreciation	Kalahngan	Kulo	Kilisou	Kammagar	Thank you
Apology	Kupwur mahk	Sisla koluk	Ormusano tipis	Siro'	Sorry
Farewell	Kaselehlie	Fwasr kuht fa osun	Ran annim	Kefel	Goodbye

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Yap State has two councils of chiefs – the Council of *Pilung* (Yap proper) and the Council of *Tamol* (outer islands). In Yap, the paramount chiefs control politics and relationships between villages, including property and land issues. They are descendants of the ruling families and the title is passed down from father to son. In Pohnpei, the traditional leaders are referred to as *Nahnmwari* and *Nahnken* (paramount chiefs). The *Nahnmwari* and *Nahnken* are the descendants of the majority ruling clans and the title is passed down through the women's clans to sons. There are five *Nahnmwari* in Pohnpei Island and two in the outer islands. The *Nahnmwari* have a spiritual role and ensure peace among the clans, and equal distribution of resources and goods among all the people. The authority of the *Nahnmwari* and *Nahnken* varies, but essentially they preside over the *Soumas en Kousapw* (section chiefs) and other subordinate titles. Chuuk State does not have paramount chiefs, but it does have lineage heads. Kosrae once had a similar political system to that of Pohnpei, but the system has been replaced by church leaders, heads of small families and modern government leaders.



Protocol

Ceremonial protocol varies from state to state. In Pohnpei and Yap, traditional leaders are recognised before the state's head of government. Ranks for traditional leaders are

similar to those used in government. Seating arrangements are according to protocol rank (Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Speaker, Chief Justice), with a special place of equal honour designated for traditional leaders. More detailed information can be obtained from the committees coordinating such ceremonies.

The protocol followed by FSM's national government is similar to that of the states. The President, Vice President, Speaker and Chief Justice are followed in rank by diplomats and traditional leaders. The same ranking applies to seating arrangements, but traditional leaders are given a special place of equal honour. The national government has been flexible in adopting US protocol practices, which require that the head of state, who is also the head of government, is accorded the highest honour.

The structure of FSM's government is similar to that of the US. Cabinet-level appointments are referred to as secretaries, not ministers as is common across the Pacific. Cabinet members are nominated by the President and confirmed by the legislative branch. The national legislative branch – the Congress – is a unicameral body of elected officials. Each state elects one senator as its at-large representative to serve a term of four years. Ten other senators are elected for a two-year term (the number of senators for each state is in proportion to its population). The legislative branch elects the President and Vice President from their membership for four-year terms. In addition, each state has its own constitutional government with an executive branch headed by a Governor

and Lieutenant-Governor. The judicial system is composed of a Chief Justice and Associate Justices.

Ceremonies



At certain occasions (such as weddings, funerals, special services, tributes to a *Nahnmwari*, or the inauguration of a president or governor), a *sakau* (kava) ceremony may take place. Follow the instructions of your hosts. You may be instructed to stand and deliver a presentation but should wait until you are asked. In Yap, Chuuk and Kosrae, the *sakau* ceremony may be associated with food, betel nut chewing and socialising. In Kosrae, it may also include singing and prayers.

Daily Life



Religion

The people of FSM are overwhelmingly Christian and observe strict religious practices. It is illegal to fish, work or swim on Sunday in Kosrae. If attending a church service, dress should be conservative. Men should not wear shorts; women should cover their shoulders, and wear a skirt or dress, preferably with the hemline at or below the knee.



Dress

Dress is generally casual, but it is considered courteous for women to cover their thighs; see the General Guidelines.



In the home

The people of FSM are generous and welcoming towards visitors. In the home, general courtesies apply, and staff members should follow the lead of their host. Gifts are not expected but are always appreciated when attending cultural events, funerals or weddings; a gift from your homeland is appropriate. If no chair is offered, then sit cross-legged on the floor.



Out and about

Betel nut is chewed in Yap, while the use of *sakau* and betel nut is common on Pohnpei. Tobacco or tobacco soaked in vodka is often added to the betel nut mix. In both places, people normally share these. It is always advisable to accept a small amount if offered, unless you have very good reasons for not doing so.



Greetings

If meeting people for the first time, a smile and handshake are sufficient.



Meals

Offers of food should always be accepted. Prayers are often said before meals. Eating with your hands is an accepted practice in FSM, especially if cutlery is not offered.

FIJI



>320
ISLANDS

FIRST SETTLED
3500
YEARS AGO

1970
BECAME
INDEPENDENT

Country Information

Fiji is an independent nation made up of more than 320 islands, of which one third are inhabited. Archaeological evidence indicates that the islands were first settled some 3500 years ago. Fiji became a British colony in 1874, at which time sugar plantations were established. Some 60,000 indentured emigrants from India were brought to Fiji to work the plantations. Today, Fiji's rich and diverse culture includes indigenous Fijians, Indo-Fijians, Europeans, Chinese and people from many other Pacific Islands.

Fiji gained political independence from Britain in 1970 and became a republic in 1987. The capital, Suva, is located on the island of Viti Levu.

Language

Fijian (*iTaukei*), Fiji-Hindi and English are all official languages. Most of the population speak English in addition to speaking Fijian or Fiji-Hindi.

TERM	FIJIAN	ENGLISH	FIJI-HINDI	ENGLISH
Greeting	Bula Yandra	Hello Good morning	Namaste lap Kaise hai	Hello (formal) How are you? (informal)
Response to Greeting			Namaste Tik	Hello Fine
Appreciation	Vinaka (vakalevu)	Thank you (very much)	Dhanyabad	Thank you
Apology	Vosoti au Tilou/jilou	I'm sorry (Said when standing up or above another person for a brief period)	Aap mughe maaf karne	Forgive me
Farewell	Moce	Goodbye	Namaste Fir milega	Goodbye We'll meet again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Fiji is divided into 14 provinces. Each province is aligned to one of Fiji's three traditional confederacies — Kubuna, Burebasaga and Tovata. A province is divided into several districts, and each district into officially recognised villages made up of a number of clans or tribes that have distinctive traditional roles and responsibilities. Villages, districts and provincial councils all have a role in Fiji's local government system, particularly in relation to the interests and concerns of indigenous Fijians, including land. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs oversees the iTaukei Affairs Board, which is responsible for the administration and affairs of the 14 provincial council offices.

Each confederacy, village, and clan has a distinct head. Visitors should respect the roles of these traditional leaders, who retain significant power and importance. The *vanua* (state), *yavusa* (tribes), or *mataqali* (clan) bestow chiefs with the authority to lead, guide, govern and protect the people. Traditionally, chiefs were regarded as *tabu* (sacred) because they were the epitome of the *kalou-vu* (ancestral gods).



Protocol

The head of government in Fiji is the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party in the national legislature (parliament), which has around 50 elected members. The President, who is Fiji's head of state, is appointed by the parliament.

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the iTaukei Affairs Board, and the provincial council offices, should be contacted for advice and assistance regarding protocol, which will vary depending on the nature of your work. In rural areas, it is customary for visitors to pay a call on the village chief on arrival and to present a *sevusevu*, seeking permission and approval before beginning work in the community. The *sevusevu* is a gift of dried or powdered *yaqona* (kava) root. It is advisable for SPC staff to give advance notice of their arrival. You should ask during the welcoming ceremony (see below) for an explanation of any special village protocols.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremonies

Ceremonies may be simple and informal (e.g. a visit to the chief, during which the visitor offers a *sevusevu* and explains the nature of their visit and work), or elaborate with a formal *yaqona* ceremony. If a more formal welcome is to be held, a visitor should be accompanied on arrival by a *matanivanua* (orator), who will perform the traditional ceremony of *isevusevu* to the chief. Prior to the *isevusevu*, the accompanying orator will perform the *tama* (announcing the arrival of visitors to the chief). A gift of *yaqona* plant should be ready for presentation at the *isevusevu*. (The preferred protocol is to present the whole plant rather than powdered *yaqona*, though in a contemporary setting the latter is an acceptable substitute.) When shaking hands with the chief, use both of your hands. After shaking hands, sit down and *cobo* (clap with cupped hands) at least three times.



Farewell ceremonies

At a minimum, the visitor should visit the chief, acknowledge the village's hospitality and present another gift of *yaqona* as the *iTatau* or farewell. There are no formal 'farewell' ceremonies culturally, as in 'to leave for good', even when one passes away. *iTatau* essentially is taking leave to depart, but one's spiritual connection is always there. Welcome ceremonies are longer and more detailed, to establish a permanent connection. (Even funeral ceremonies are more like a 'send-off' than a farewell.)



Yaqona ceremonies

Yaqona is central to Fijian culture and is ritually served on important occasions. A daily *yaqona* drinking ritual was an integral part of the old religion of Fiji and only chiefs, priests and important male elders took part. Today, *yaqona* drinking is a social gathering of families and friends, and an instigator of discussions or *talanoa*. If invited to a *yaqona* drinking session, remember that seating is governed by seniority and rank, so sit where you are asked. In particular, do not sit in front of the *tanoa* (*yaqona* bowl) unless you are invited to do so.

Much of Fijian protocol is learned by observation, so follow the lead of your guide and learn from the example of those seated around you.

Daily Life



Religion

The majority of indigenous Fijians are Christian. Most Indo-Fijians are Hindu, with a Muslim minority. Conservative dress (see the General Guidelines) is appropriate when visiting a church, temple or mosque. Shoes should be removed before entering a mosque. You may wish to seek advice from a local adherent before visiting a Hindu temple or a Muslim mosque.



Dress

Local dress varies. Often people refer to *bula* attire, which is Fiji's equivalent of the *aloha* dress code of Hawai'i. In a Fijian village or Fijian home, there are codes of conduct or behaviour that should be observed. For instance, you should take off your hat while walking through a village, where only the chief is permitted to wear a hat. Women should dress appropriately and if wearing pants, should cover them up by wearing a *sulu* (as Fijians call a *lavalava*). It is also important to note the appropriate dress code when participating in a formal kava ceremony or social kava drinking space.



In the home

Take off your shoes before entering a *bure* (traditional house) and stoop as you walk around inside. It is polite to greet everyone inside by shaking hands but remain in a low crouched-down position to show respect.

Fijians traditionally do not wear shoes for a ceremony. An elder (particularly a woman) may place their cheek on yours and breathe deeply. This is an exceptional way of being greeted. If you need to stand up in a house to get something when other people are sitting down, first ask permission. When you sit down again, *cobo* (clap with cupped hands) a few times. When moving to another place in the house, crawl or walk in the same stooped way. Avoid unnecessary noise and movement.

Sitting with outstretched legs is unacceptable – men should sit cross-legged, and women with their legs to the side. Never walk in front of someone seated on the floor; instead, pass behind them and say '*Tilou*'.

Never place your hand on another person's head as the head is considered the most respected part of the anatomy, and do not sit or stand in doorways. When you give a gift, hold it out with both hands, rather than using just one hand. There are special ways of presenting gifts, depending on the occasion and the area of Fiji.



Out and about

Fijian villages are private property, so do not enter one unless you have proper permission.



Greetings

It is a Fijian custom to smile and greet a stranger, particularly in small communities. An apology is always appreciated and may

be used frequently, especially when making your way through a crowd, touching a part of someone's body (especially the head as mentioned above), or passing behind or in front of someone who is seated.



Meals

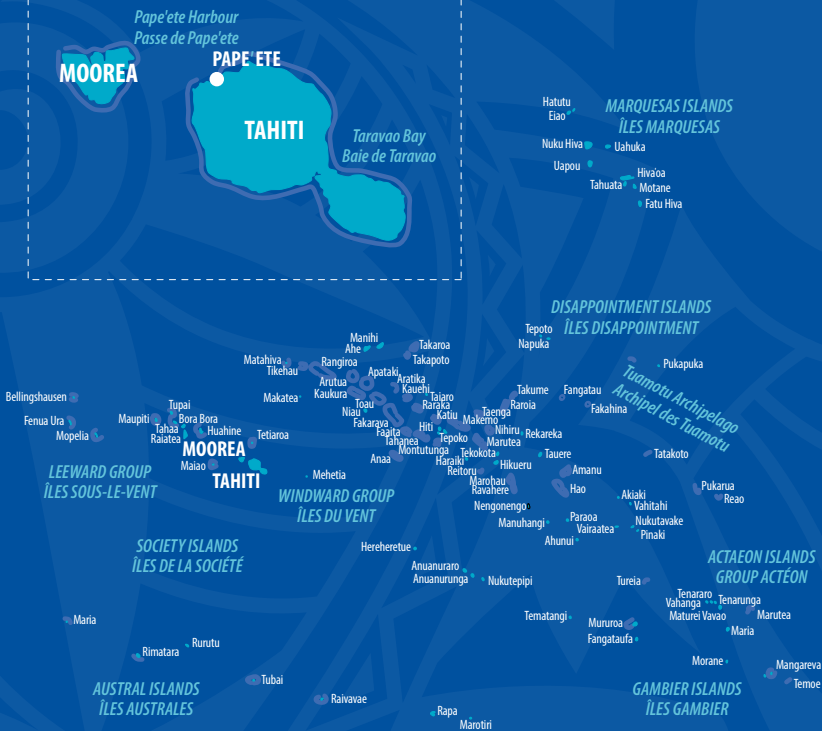
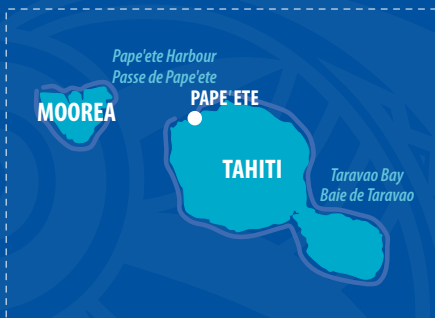
An invitation to share a meal may be simply an expression of hospitality in Fiji. Whether or not you are hungry, politely decline an initial offer. If your host insists that you eat, do not refuse. It is considered rude to eat while standing or walking about the house.

While a family is eating, it is a Fijian custom to invite anyone who passes to come and eat, even if that person is a stranger. You are not obliged to eat – a smile and '*Vinaka*' will suffice as a reply to mean 'No, thank you'.

A typical Fijian meal may consist of a root crop with boiled vegetables, or with boiled, fried or baked fish, chicken or pork. Seafood is often eaten, and may be raw, boiled or marinated. Stews, curries and Chinese food are also part of today's Fijian diet. Try to eat what is offered – if you are unable to eat a particular food, simply let your host know.

It is part of Fijian culture to look out for visitors and guests and you may be encouraged to eat more, or food may be constantly piled in front of you. If you cannot eat what is offered, you could ask to take some food away. In that way, the host's generosity is acknowledged.

FRENCH POLYNESIA



OVERSEAS
COUNTRY OF
FRANCE

FIRST
SETTLED SOME
1700
YEARS AGO

5
ISLAND
GROUPS

Country Information

French Polynesia is an Overseas Country of France. It consists of five island groups: the Society Islands (including the Windward Islands and Leeward Islands); Austral Islands; Gambier Islands; Marquesas Islands; and Tuamotu Islands. The islands were first settled some 1700 years ago.

French colonisation began with annexation of the Marquesas Islands in 1842. Tahiti became a French colony in 1880.

Language

Tahitian is the preferred language of communication for French Polynesians. Each island group has its own language. All these languages are taught at school and Tahitian is taught at both senior secondary schools and the University of French Polynesia. The official language is French.

TERM	TAHITIAN	ENGLISH	FRENCH	ENGLISH
Greeting	la ora	Welcome (formal)	Bonjour	Good morning
	la ora na	You are welcome	Bonsoir	Good evening
	Eaha te huru?	Everything is fine?	Comment allez-vous?	How are you? (formal)
	E aha to'oe huru?	Are you fine?	Comment vas-tu?	How are you? (informal)
Response to greeting	Maita'i	Fine or good	Très bien	Very well
Appreciation	Mauru'uru Mauru'uru maitai	Thanks	Merci Merci beaucoup	Thank you Thank you very much
Apology	E hape mau	What a mistake	Excusez-moi	Excuse me
Farewell	Parahi	Goodbye	Au revoir (formal)	Goodbye
	Nānā (informal)	See you. Bye		
To say goodbye to someone who is leaving	Nānā (informal)	Bye	Au revoir (formal)	Goodbye
	Te aroha atu nei la maita'i'oe tere	Have a good trip		

There is no Tahitian equivalent of the French word 'vous' (the polite form of 'you'), but use of 'vous' is common practice in official relations conducted in French.

Leadership and Protocol



Background

French Polynesia is a parliamentary democracy with an elected 57-member assembly. Executive powers are held by the Council of Ministers appointed by the President. The President is chosen from among the members of the assembly and is elected by the assembly members. The Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Council, which is a purely advisory board, is the country's third most important body. French Polynesia uses its own flag, seal and anthem in conjunction with the national symbols of France, and can appoint foreign representatives.

France is represented in French Polynesia by a High Commissioner, who is currently responsible for justice and police, monetary policy, local government, tertiary education, immigration, defence and foreign affairs.

Ceremonies



Public meetings often begin with prayers. When organising or conducting a meeting, check with your focal point to see if a prayer should be included. Seating at ceremonies is governed by seniority or rank. Wait until you are told where to sit. If a speech is given in your honour, it is courteous to respond. Always address the officials first, then the elders and then the host. You may offer a gift to your host but never in a monetary form.

Daily Life



Religion

Most French Polynesians are Christians, with many denominations represented on the islands. On Sundays, most businesses are closed, but there are no prohibitions on activities, particularly sporting events. When attending church services, modest dress is the norm. Women commonly wear white dresses and hats, but this is not an obligation.



Dress

Casual island wear is common, including dresses, *pareu (lavalava)*, shorts, t-shirts or buttoned shirts. When swimming, normal swimwear is allowed, but women should avoid going topless.



In the home

Houses generally have a formal room reserved for greeting guests. Otherwise, you may be greeted in the garden or on the veranda.

Accepting an offer of food is considered good manners. Your host will show you where to sit.



Greetings

A polite way to greet people is a simple '*la orana*' or '*Bonjour*', together with a smile and nod of the head. You can shake hands or kiss people on both cheeks when you meet them. Follow their lead. If someone is working and has dirty hands, they may extend a wrist or an elbow instead of a hand.



Meals

Meals are important and an invitation to share a meal should be appreciated. The traditional meal is cooked in an *ahi ma'a* or *umu* (earth oven) and is eaten with the hands. Utensils are used for other types of meals. You are not obliged to eat everything on your plate.

GUAM



INHABITED
FOR
>3000
YEARS

UNINCORPORATED
TERRITORY
OF THE **UNITED**
STATES

INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE ARE
CHAMORU

Country Information

Guam is part of the Marianas archipelago and is located in Micronesia. It is an unincorporated territory of the United States and the people of Guam hold US citizenship. The capital is Hagatna (formerly Agaña).

Guam has been inhabited for over 3000 years. The indigenous people are CHamoru, who comprise almost half the population of some 160,000 people. Other inhabitants include people of Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese descent. There are also substantial numbers of Micronesians from nearby islands. Guamanian is the accepted term used to describe residents of Guam but, in general, people of CHamoru descent prefer to be called CHamoru rather than Guamanian.

Language

CHamoru and English are official languages.

TERM	CHAMORU	ENGLISH
Greeting	Håfa adai	Hello, how are you?
Appreciation	Si Yu'us ma'åse'	Thank you
Apology	Despensa yu'	I am sorry or forgive me
Farewell	Adios	Goodbye
Response to Farewell	Esta ki umali'e' hit ta'lo.	Until we meet again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Guam was claimed by Spain in 1565, and the island remained under Spanish control for over 300 years until seized by the US Navy in 1898. Those centuries of Spanish (and Catholic) influence continue to distinguish Guamanians culturally from their Micronesian neighbours, although today US customs predominate. Guam is highly developed compared to many Pacific Island countries. Social life centres on the family, the church and politics.

Guam's legislature has 15 members who are elected by popular vote every two years. It is empowered to enact legislation on local matters, including taxation and fiscal appropriations. Executive power is vested in a civilian Governor who is elected by popular vote every four years. There are 19 villages in Guam, each of which has its own mayor. The mayor is the village representative and political leader. Families who have long resided in a village gain recognition and generally take a leading role in community activities. Church activities normally dictate what happens in the village.

Ceremonies



In general, traditional ceremonies and functions are not part of visits to community and government leaders in Guam.

Daily Life



Religion

Catholicism is the primary religion in Guam, but many other churches are also present. If attending a church service, general island wear is appropriate.



Dress

Dress is usually casual; see the General Guidelines.



In the home

Offers of food should always be accepted in Guam. Prayers are often said before meals.



Out and about

Once a year, each village in Guam has a fiesta in honour of its patron saint, which culminates in a procession through the village and into the parish church for Mass. The celebration, which often starts on Saturday evening and continues into Sunday, usually includes an array of local delicacies, music and good cheer. This village-wide celebration is a time when CHamoru families reunite and although it is considered a family occasion, outsiders may attend on invitation. For detailed information about a village fiesta, contact the mayor's office or village administrative centre.

Tipping (15 to 20 per cent) is the norm when eating in restaurants in Guam.



Greetings

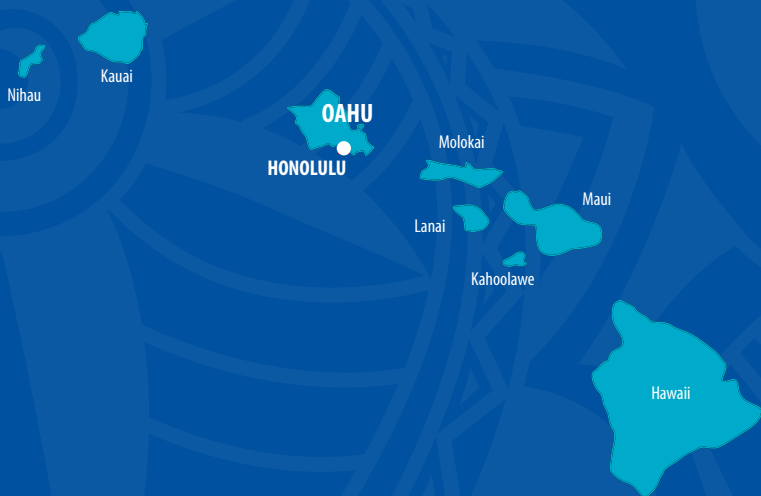
For visitors, a handshake and a smile are the recommended way of greeting local people. The *manninge* is a traditional greeting still practised among CHamoru and by those who are affiliated with CHamoru culture. It is done in the same fashion as kissing someone's hand, except instead of kissing the hand, the recipient brings the hand towards the nose and slightly brushes it. As a sign of respect, and to breathe in an elder's wisdom, CHamoru youth may greet elders in this way and then with a kiss on the cheek, if desired, to obtain a blessing.



Meals

Food is an important part of CHamoru culture. Showing appreciation for hospitality by bringing a gift in the form of a contribution to a gathering is always welcomed. There are no special practices relating to specific foods. Once food has been served, guests, children and elders are usually invited or expected to eat first. Eating with the fingers is sometimes acceptable depending on the food being served.

HAWAI'I



8
MAJOR
ISLANDS

>100
SMALL ISLANDS,
SHOALS AND
REEFS

1959
BECAME THE
50TH STATE
OF USA

Country Information

The Hawaiian archipelago consists of eight major islands – Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, and Ni‘ihau – and over 100 small islands, shoals, and reefs, stretching over 1600 miles in the north central Pacific. Originally populated by Polynesians almost 2000 years ago, Hawai‘i was united under one government in 1810 by Kamehameha I.

Hawai‘i was an independent nation with a constitutional monarchy and numerous treaties with world powers until 1893, when United States interests, with the support of US troops, overthrew the Hawaiian government. Illegally annexed to the US in 1898 and incorporated as a territory in 1900, Hawai‘i became the 50th state of the US in 1959. Many Native Hawaiians continue to oppose their present relationship to the US and seek a redefinition of that relationship and some form of Hawaiian sovereignty.

The population of Hawai‘i is concentrated in the capital, Honolulu, on the island of

O‘ahu, where over 68 per cent of the state’s 1.4 million people live. Hawai‘i’s indigenous people make up 10 per cent of the state’s total population. Other large ethnic groups include Caucasians, Japanese, Filipinos, Chinese and Koreans. No single ethnic group makes up a majority of the state’s population. Although a Westernised social structure is prevalent, many Native Hawaiians retain the extended family or *‘ohana* family system, which is especially strong in rural areas.

Language

‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian) and English are the official languages of the state. English is spoken throughout the islands, with Hawai‘i Creole English (pidgin English) also widely spoken. The Hawaiian language, which was on the verge of extinction 40 years ago, has been revived through Hawaiian language immersion schools, *hālau hula* (schools of traditional dance and knowledge) and other institutions. Today, there is a continuing renaissance in the study and use of the Hawaiian language in schools, government, print media, music, and many other aspects of Hawaiian society.

TERM	‘ŌLELO HAWAII‘I (HAWAIIAN)	HAWAII‘I CREOLE ENGLISH (PIDGIN)	ENGLISH
Greeting	Aloha	Howzit	Hello/Goodbye
Response to greeting	‘Ae, aloha nō	Eh, howzit	Yes, hello indeed
Appreciation	Mahalo	Thanks ah	Thank you
Apology	E kala mai	Sorry ah	Pardon me
Farewell	Aloha, a hui hou	Take care	Goodbye, until we meet again
Response to farewell	‘Ae, a hui hou aku	Shoots	Yes, until we meet again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Hawai'i participates in the US national government by electing two senators and two representatives to the US Congress. On a state level, Hawai'i has three branches of government, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Political leaders include the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senate President and Speaker of the House. The constitutionally created Office of Hawaiian Affairs, governed by a nine-member elected board of trustees, receives funds from ceded lands – lands owned by the Hawaiian kingdom before the 1893 overthrow – for educational, cultural and other programmes for Hawai'i's native people. The state government also administers a Native Hawaiian homesteading programme, originally established by the US government, on 200,000 acres of ceded lands. Hawai'i has four counties with elected mayors and councils, and one other county with administrative responsibility for a small area on Moloka'i.

Although a small number of *kānaka* (Native Hawaiians) hold both elected and appointed positions in the governing bodies named above, *kānaka* often look to Native Hawaiian organisations for information, direction and leadership. Native Hawaiians also recognise traditional leaders including *kūpuna* (elders), *kahu* (priests), and cultural practitioners such as navigators, *kumu hula* (hula masters) and *kahuna lā'au lapa'au* (medicinal experts). Finally, some Native Hawaiians recognise

the symbolic leadership of members of the Kawānanakoa family, descendants of the last surviving heir to the Hawaiian throne.

Ceremonies



Hawaiians have retained, revived or reinvented a wealth of ceremonies relating to many aspects of life. Their ceremonial practices are not uniform, often varying from occasion to occasion, group to group, and location to location.

With respect to ceremonial greetings and departures, Hawaiians are flexible hosts and take pride in making their guests feel an immediate sense of worth, welcome and ease. For that reason, these ceremonies are often conducted after consultation with the visiting parties. In such cases, the framework of the ceremony is mutually agreed on. In the absence of prior consultation, the *mea kipa* (guest) can expect to be met with a chant of welcome followed, perhaps, by a dance and speech of greeting. The visitor may respond in the manner they deem most appropriate (a response is not, however, required). They are then presented with the *lei* and *honi* (a traditional greeting in which two people touch forehead to forehead, nose to nose), which signal an end to the formalities. Some hosts may provide a guide to aid guests through the ceremony and offer chants or speeches on their behalf.

Daily Life



Religion

Many residents of Hawai'i are Christian, with a wide variety of denominations represented throughout the islands. Some Native Hawaiians continue to recognise and honour traditional *akua* (gods) as well as family *'aumākua* (beloved ancestors who take the form of particular animals or plants and offer protection, advice, and counsel). Current Hawaiian spiritual practices also include asking permission of and giving *ho'ōkupu* (offerings) to the appropriate deity before using a resource, offering *oli* (chant) in honour of and supplication to the *'aumākua* and *akua*, and upholding hula traditions related to specific *akua* and to specific places associated with the *akua*. In recent years, ceremonies such as the *Makahiki* celebration, honouring *Lono* as the god of peace, fertility and agriculture, have been revived.



Dress

Dress in Hawai'i is usually casual and takes into account the warm climate. Tank tops, t-shirts, shorts and sandals are standard wear, although business and formal occasions call for dressier attire. For men, a polo or aloha shirt with long pants and shoes is always appropriate. Variations of the traditional *mu'umu'u* worn with sandals or shoes are equally appropriate for women. It is important to note that this generally relaxed dress code

does not extend to places of historical or sacred significance, such as *heiau* (pre-Christian places of worship). In the absence of more specific guidance from your host or guide, visitors to such sites are advised to dress modestly, step carefully and behave respectfully.



In the home

Hawaiian custom requires that guests are warmly invited into the home, fed and refreshed, and made to feel comfortable with conversation and kind attention. Footwear should always be left outside the door, neatly lined up in a row. Although not required, a *makana* (gift) shows respect for your host; a small gift from your homeland is appropriate.

Native Hawaiians are sensitive to the handling of their possessions, particularly items of traditional significance including dance instruments, musical instruments, mats, paddles, clothing, adornments and fishing gear. Guests are urged to avoid touching these items unless invited to do so.

Despite a general openness, guests should be aware of the Hawaiian disdain for behaviour that is *nīele* or *maha'oi* – idly curious or exploring spaces or topics to which you have not been invited.



Out and about

Native Hawaiians are often passionate guardians of the few sacred places left to them. 'Sacred', moreover, is a term that a Hawaiian is as likely to apply to a boulder or field of broken lava as to a *heiau*. A related term is *kapu*, which can be understood as both taboo and precious. Visitors are asked to seek information, advice and a knowledgeable guide before venturing into areas of possible significance. If in doubt, approach a space with the respect with which you would treat a sacred space in your own homeland.

Native Hawaiians are sensitive to body language and may take offence, however quiet and unexpressed, at someone hiding their hands behind their back, placing their hands on their hips, or folding their arms across the chest. Hawaiians also consider the individual's head to be sacred; patting a child's head, though deemed affectionate in some cultures, is viewed with considerable discomfort by many traditionally raised Hawaiians.

Native Hawaiians revere their elders and make every effort to ensure their comfort, seek their instruction and counsel, and demonstrate their respect and affection for them. The visitor is advised that time, itinerary and agenda rarely apply to *kūpuna* (elders). You should listen with full attention for as long as a *kupuna* cares to talk, defer to their wishes and adjust to their schedule. For traditionally raised Hawaiians, the senior elder is always allowed the last word. Traditionally raised Hawaiians measure themselves and their

guests by the respect shown to *kūpuna*. Gatherings of all kinds – meetings, parties, weddings, dance competitions, concerts, canoe races – frequently begin and end with a prayer offered by a *kupuna*.



Greetings

Hawaiians nod, smile, and raise their eyebrows in recognition of one another. Hawaiian greetings take a variety of forms: a handshake, hug, kiss, *honi*, or combinations of the four depending on the mood and familiarity of the participants. The handshake is often viewed as the most Western and therefore least affectionate of greetings. Hugs and kisses are more common in Native Hawaiian exchanges, although the *honi* is now practised regularly in formal circumstances. The visitor is advised to be observant and follow the lead of others.



Meals

The people of Hawai'i are known for their hospitality and love of food. An offer of food should generally be accepted, even if one is not hungry; it may be declined, but with grace and humility. Traditional Hawaiian dishes such as *lau lau* (pork and fish wrapped in taro leaves), *poi* (pounded taro), *ōpihi* (limpets), and *poke* (raw fish with seaweed) are today difficult to obtain and often require much preparation, so you should feel honoured and attempt to partake wholeheartedly if these dishes are served. Hawaiians usually pray or otherwise offer gratitude before eating; the visitor should avoid starting before the food is blessed.

KIRIBATI

Makin
Butaritari
Abaiang
Marakei
Tarawa
Maiana
Kuria
Abemama
Aranuka
Ngonouti
Beru
Tabiteuea
Tamana
Nikunau
Onotoa
Arorae
Banaba

GILBERT ISLANDS
ÎLES GILBERT

Howland (US) (É.-U.)
Baker (US) (É.-U.)

PHOENIX ISLANDS
ÎLES PHOENIX

Kanton
McKean
Birnie
Oroma
Enderbury
Rawaki
Manra
Nikumaroro

Palmyra (US) (É.-U.)

Teraina
Tabuaeran

NORTHERN LINE ISLANDS
ÎLES DE LA LIGNE (NORD)

Kiritimati

Jarvis (US) (É.-U.)

CENTRAL LINE ISLANDS
ÎLES DE LA LIGNE (CENTRE)

Malden
Starbuck

COOK ISLANDS
ÎLES COOK

Penrhyn

Vostok
Caroline

SOUTHERN LINE ISLANDS
ÎLES DE LA LIGNE (SUD)

Flint



1 ISLAND
32 ATOLLS

SETTLEMENT
BEGAN ABOUT
2000
YEARS AGO

1979
BECAME AN
INDEPENDENT
REPUBLIC

Country Information

The Republic of Kiribati comprises 32 atolls and one island in two main groups: the Gilbert Islands, and Line and Phoenix Islands (the latter group combines the former Phoenix Islands and Line Islands). All the islands in Kiribati are situated near the equator, but thousands of kilometres separate the easternmost of the Line Islands from the Gilbert Islands in the west. All the atolls are low-lying, rising no more than three to five metres above sea level.

Settlement of the islands began about 2000 years ago. The islands were declared a British protectorate in 1872. Kiribati became an independent republic in 1979. The capital is situated on the atoll of Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. The people of Kiribati are Micronesian and are referred to as I-Kiribati.

Language

Kiribati (also called Gilbertese) and English are both official languages. In isolated areas, many people speak only Kiribati and the services of an interpreter may be required.

TERM	KIRIBATI	ENGLISH
Greeting (informal)	Ko na mauri	Blessings/hello
	Ko na aera	Where are you going?
Appreciation	Ko bati n rabwa	Thank you very much
Farewell	Tiabo	Goodbye

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Kiribati has a 45-member *Maneaba ni Maungatabu* (House of Parliament), elected every four years. The *Beretitenti* (President) is elected from among three or four candidates nominated by the *Maneaba ni Maungatabu* from its ranks. The *Beretitenti* also chooses a 14-member cabinet from the *Maneaba*.

The family occupies a central role in society. Large families are highly valued and I-Kiribati typically live in extended families. Adoption of children by relatives is common. The oldest man heads the household, and elders are treated with respect. Authority throughout the islands is invested in the *unimwane* (the councils of elders), who are the decision-making body of each village.



Protocol

A meeting should be held with the traditional leader of the island where you are working. Contact the island's *unimwane* to arrange the meeting, which is typically informal (seated on a mat) and does not involve an exchange of gifts. The purpose is to talk and exchange ideas. An interpreter will probably be required.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

Whether or not a welcoming ceremony is held for SPC staff members on their arrival in a village depends on the nature of the project and size of the team. Such ceremonies are not typically held for individuals. If a ceremony is held, it may be formal or informal and may include speeches (by elders), a prayer, a feast and dancing. An appropriate response is a speech and a gift (a gift of cash in an envelope is suitable).



Other ceremonies

Special occasions are celebrated with a *botaki* (feast) held in a *maneaba* (meeting house).

***Maneaba* are the centre of community life and there are strict traditions regarding their construction, seating arrangements, and members' duties. Every village, most churches and even some family groups have a *maneaba*.**

A celebration held in a *maneaba* requires a written invitation, delivered a few days in advance. When visiting one for the first time, it is the convention to bring a *mweaka* (a customary gift of a tin of tobacco) to be divided among the older men. For some occasions, a cash donation is expected. An amount of AUD 20–50, placed in an envelope, is generally appropriate, but check with your host. If a ceremony is being given in your honour, it is likely that a formal speech will be given and you will be expected to respond. Always stand and direct your response to the *unimwane*.

Daily Life



Religion

The majority of inhabitants of Kiribati are Catholic or Protestant. Other churches are also represented. Attendance at services is not expected but is always appreciated. Conservative dress is expected, but it is not necessary for women to wear a hat or men to wear a tie.



Dress

Dress standards in Kiribati are informal but modest. I-Kiribati women usually wear a *tibuta* (a locally sewn blouse with gathered short sleeves and neckline) with a *lavalava*. Women visiting Kiribati may wear a shorter skirt than is typically worn by I-Kiribati. However, you should carry a *lavalava* to wrap around your legs and feet when sitting. Small or revealing tops are not acceptable. Men

typically wear loose-fitting shirts and shorts; it is permissible for men to remove their shirts.

Swimwear for both men and women is modest; women usually swim in t-shirts and a *lavalava* or long shorts.



In the home

The home is for casual visiting, conversation or card playing but not usually for formal entertaining. If you are invited to a home, the host may put down a clean mat and tell you where to sit. A host might also call to a passer-by to join the group – it is considered rude not to immediately accept such an invitation, even if you have something else planned.

By accepting offers of refreshments, guests demonstrate their appreciation of the host's hospitality. A cigarette (hand-rolled tobacco in a pandanus leaf) is often smoked. This may be shared between the group or one may be offered to each guest individually. It is not impolite to refuse.

The length of a social visit depends on the host's preparations. Visits may last from a few minutes to a few hours over a pot of tea. Be aware that some hosts go to a great deal of trouble to be hospitable and leaving prematurely may be considered impolite.

Arriving unannounced for a casual visit is common and is a part of daily life. On southern islands, before approaching the doorway or the *buia* (a raised platform with a thatched roof but no walls), it is customary to call out from a distance for the male of the household.



Out and about

Members of the opposite sex do not display affection in public, but people of the same sex often hold hands or put their arms around the waist of a friend while walking or talking together.

To get someone's attention, I-Kiribati call out *neiko* (woman) or *nao* (man), even if the person's name is known. People address each other by their first names in informal situations. This tradition extends to children, who address their parents in this way. A person's family name is often their father's or grandfather's first name. In more formal situations, the titles *Nei* (Miss or Mrs) and *Ten* (Mr) are used before a person's first name to show respect.



Greetings

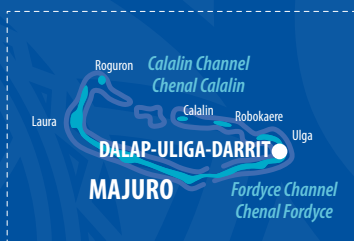
People do not usually shake hands when they greet each other, except at official gatherings. Instead, they nod their heads upward while saying '*Mauri*'. Handshakes are used to send someone off (such as to study overseas) or between people who have not seen each other for some time.



Meals

I-Kiribati sit cross-legged on pandanus mats to eat. The mats are either placed on the ground or on the family's *buia*. Bowls of food are passed around and spoons and fingers are used for eating. Grace is offered before meals. Traditionally, men eat first and women and children eat in a separate area after the men finish. It is good manners to eat all the food on your plate and is considered a compliment to the cook to accept a second helping. People converse freely during a family meal, but in the *maneaba*, they refrain from conversation until the dishes have been cleared and everyone is relaxing.

MARSHALL ISLANDS



29
ATOLLS

5
SMALL SEPARATE
ISLANDS

FIRST
SETTLED ABOUT
2000
YEARS AGO

Country Information

The Republic of the Marshall Islands comprises 29 atolls (which include many islets), and five small separate islands. The islands were first settled about 2000 years ago. They have been ruled by Germany, Japan and the United States. Today, Marshall Islands is a self-governing republic with a Compact of Free Association with the US. The capital is Majuro, located on Majuro Atoll. Kwajalein Atoll is the site of a large US Army base. The island of Ebeye, located within Kwajalein Atoll, is also a major population centre. The indigenous peoples are referred to as Marshallese and are of Micronesian descent. Many Marshallese also have German, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese and American ancestry.

From 1946 to 1958, Marshall Islands served as the Pacific proving grounds for the US. Sixty-seven nuclear tests took place on various atolls

including the test of the world's first hydrogen bomb, at Enewetak Atoll on 1 November 1952.

Nuclear testing began in 1946 on Bikini Atoll after residents were evacuated. In 1954, the 15-megaton Castle Bravo hydrogen bomb test produced significant fallout in the region. Since testing ended in 1958, just one island has been cleaned by the US government, and people are still waiting to receive USD 2 billion in compensation as assessed by the Nuclear Claims Tribunal. Many of the former inhabitants and their descendants live in exile because the islands are contaminated with high levels of radiation.

Language

Both Marshallese and English are official languages. Marshallese is used in daily life and during parliamentary sessions, while English is spoken widely in schools.

TERM	MARSHALLESE	ENGLISH
Greeting	lakwe/lökwe	Hello (common usage)
	lakwe/lökwe in jibon	Love (literal meaning)
	lakwe/lökwe in ralep	Good morning
	lakwe/lökwe in jota	Good afternoon
	*Note: You can also just say lakwe/lökwe for all greetings throughout the day.	Good evening
	lakwe/lökwe, Ejet am mour?	How are you?
Response to greeting	lakwe/lökwe, kommoöl emman ao mour	Hello, thank you, I'm fine.
Appreciation	Kommoöl	Thank you
	Kommoöl tata	Thank you very much
Apology	Jolok ao bwod / Jolok bwod	I'm sorry
Farewell	Bar lakwe/lökwe	Goodbye
	Bar loe eok	See you again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The *Nitijela* (legislature), which is elected every four years, has 33 members, who in turn elect the President. There is also a 12-member traditional advisory council made up of *iroij* (traditional leaders) called the Council of Iroij (or council of chiefs). The council addresses custom and land issues. There are 24 local jurisdictions, each comprising a mayor and local government council.

Marshallese land rights are governed by the *jowi* (clan). In traditional terms, the *iroij* (chiefs) have ownership of the land, while the *alap* (senior member of the clan) ensures the *rijerbal* (workers) are carrying out daily work on the land, including clearing, farming and construction. Marshall Islands has a matrilineal society with land ownership passed down by women to their children.



Protocol

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is typically the focal point for contact with international and regional organisations and generates meeting schedules as requested. SPC staff are encouraged to meet with focal points to coordinate meetings before carrying out work or requesting local support and authorisation. For initiatives targeting outer islands, focal points can coordinate with either the local senator or the mayor, who will inform and gather together the appropriate leaders and communities.

Ceremonies



Before attending formal ceremonial occasions, it is always best to inquire about and be mindful of the protocol relating to traditional leaders. During ceremonies, traditional leaders, then church leaders are recognised and addressed ahead of government officials. Prayers are normally offered when opening and closing ceremonies, meetings, events and meals. Visitors may be invited to local feasts, Sunday church and gatherings, birthdays, funerals, weddings or local council meetings. Follow your host's lead and ask questions beforehand if you need information.

During formal ceremonial occasions, visitors are expected to sit quietly and listen. If you wish to ask questions or speak aloud, request permission and then wait for the appropriate time to begin. If a speech is made on your behalf, it is appropriate to give a speech in return. When making a speech, a visitor can sit or stand, depending on what seems appropriate. Out of courtesy, convey an apology for standing up to make your remarks. Groups will generally sing and give guests local gifts to show their appreciation for visitors. It is considered rude to stand above people who are sitting, or to walk over them. This is particularly the case for women – it is considered rude for women to stand before men and/or leaders (traditional, church or government leaders) and to walk in front of them. Out of respect, when walking in front of traditional, church or government leaders, bend down or lower your head saying '*Jolak bwod*'.

Daily Life



Religion

Most Marshallese are Christian. Sunday is a day of rest, so refrain from work, recreation or loud activities. Prohibitions on activities are not as strictly followed on Majuro, but most people still recognise this day of rest. To attend church services, women should wear long dresses or skirts that are below the knee, and blouses that are not short sleeved; men should wear long pants and a buttoned shirt.



Dress

Dress is casual but modest. In some instances, when women wear trousers in formal or informal settings, it is considered appropriate to wear a modest long blouse or top that reaches mid-thigh; see the General Guidelines.



In the home

When guests are invited to a private home, they are not expected to bring gifts; the setting is generally informal.

Remove your shoes before entering a home and behave with general courtesy.



Out and about

Marshallese always appreciate visitors taking an interest in their customs and way of life. Ask focal points or hotel staff about daily events and local attractions. If you wish to swim, ask a focal point or hotel staff about swimming spots to avoid trespassing on private beaches. Be courteous and aware of your dress and behaviour.



Greetings

It is appropriate to greet people with a handshake, a wave or verbally.

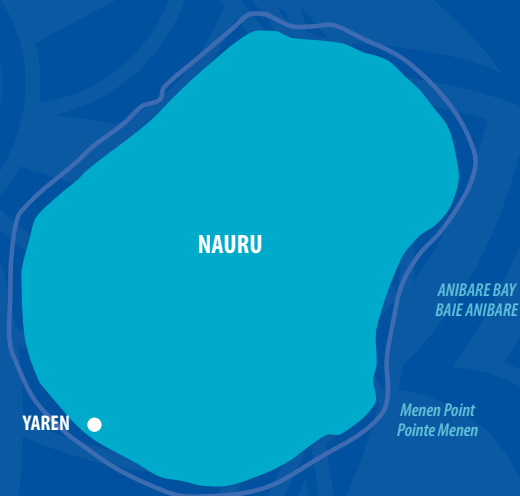


Meals

Prayers are always offered before meals. Accept food if it is offered; if not hungry, then eat just a small amount and take the rest with you.

The act of sharing food is regarded as a sign of great respect. It is considered offensive for commoners to refuse food and any other gifts from traditional leaders.

NAURU



18
KILOMETRES IN
CIRCUMFERENCE

BECAME
A MEMBER OF THE
COMMONWEALTH IN
1999

**WORLD'S
SMALLEST**
INDEPENDENT
REPUBLIC

Country Information

The Republic of Nauru is situated in the central Pacific, about 42 kilometres south of the equator. The island is only 18 kilometres in circumference and has a total land area of 21 square kilometres. It is the world's smallest independent republic.

The Nauruan people, who are of Micronesian origin, inhabited their island for many hundreds of years before it was first sighted by Europeans in 1798. Whaling ships began visiting in the 1830s, seeking fresh water and food supplies. Germany took formal control of the island in 1888. Its administration was taken over by Australia in 1914, and the island was under joint Australian, British and New Zealand control until independence in 1968, except for a brief period of Japanese administration during the Second World War. Nauru became a member of the Commonwealth in 1999.

Phosphate mining, which was formerly the cornerstone of the Nauruan economy, has left most of the land uninhabitable and unsuited for other purposes.

Mining has also had an impact on the Nauruan culture and economy, effectively transforming the culture into one that is compatible with a cash economy.

Language

The Nauruan language is widely spoken. English is the official language and most Nauruans are bilingual.

TERM	NAURUAN	ENGLISH
Greetings	'Mo yoran	Good morning
	'Mo yekwo	Good afternoon
	'Mo yemero	Good evening
	W reit ed?	How are you?
Response to greeting	Omo kor	Very good
Appreciation	Tubwa kor	Thank you very much
Farewell	Ang baeon	Goodbye
	Ang	See you
	tarowong	

Leadership and Protocol

The Parliament of Nauru has 19 members elected for a three-year term. The President, who is both the executive and head of state, is elected by the members of parliament. The island also has a Local Government Council whose members elect a head chief. The council has significant responsibilities and serves as a second tier of government. Nauruan society is matrilineal, with tribal affiliations passed down by mothers to their children.

Daily Life



Religion

Both the Catholic Church and various Protestant denominations are represented in Nauru.



Dress

Casual attire (e.g. shorts, shirts and singlets) is acceptable, but very short skirts are not considered appropriate. Walking in public in swimwear is not acceptable.



Out and about

It takes about three hours to walk around the island, following the main road that encircles the island along the coast. The best time to take a walk is early in the morning or late in the evening to avoid the hot sun. Hire cars are available at various outlets.



Meals

All food (apart from fresh fish) is imported, primarily from Australia. Supplies are brought to Nauru on regular cargo ships and via Air Nauru.

NEW CALEDONIA



ESTABLISHED
AROUND
6000
YEARS AGO

28
DISTINCT KANAK
LANGUAGES

3
PROVINCES

Country Information

New Caledonia includes the main island (Grande Terre), a group of offshore islands (Loyalty Islands), and various smaller islands located within the large barrier reef, including the Belep Islands and Isle of Pines. New Caledonia was established around 6000 years ago by Melanesian people, the Kanak people, and was annexed by France in 1853.

New Caledonia has a special status of broad *sui generis* autonomy established in 1999 by the Noumea Agreement, and is one of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) associated with the European Union. It has its own identity signs, which are used alongside the national emblems of France (an anthem, a motto and a specific banknote script).

The motto of the country, 'Land of words, land of sharing', signifies that New Caledonia is a land of welcome for all the communities (French, Arab, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Tahitian, Wallisian and Futunan, West Indian, Reuniones and ni-Vanuatu, for the main) who have settled there since its colonisation. New Caledonia is administratively divided into three provinces (Loyalty Islands, Northern and Southern), eight customary areas containing 341 tribus (Kanak communities) and 33 communes. The capital, Noumea, is located in the Southern Province.

Language

There are 28 distinct Kanak languages and 12 dialects spoken in New Caledonia. French is the official language of New Caledonia and is widely spoken. A limited number of people speak English (it is used primarily in the tourist industry). In addition, Tahitian, Wallisian, Futunan, Indonesian and Vietnamese are also spoken, mainly in Noumea.

TERM	FRENCH	ENGLISH
Greeting	Bonjour	Good morning
	Bonsoir	Good evening
	Comment allez-vous?	How are you? (formal)
	Comment vas-tu?	How are you? (informal)
Response to greeting	Très bien	Very well
Appreciation	Merci	Thank you
	Merci beaucoup	Thanks very much
Apology	Excusez-moi	Excuse me
Farewell	Au revoir (formal)	Goodbye
	Tata (informal)	See you later
	Bonsoir	Good evening

Leadership and Protocol



Background

There are four levels of government in New Caledonia: state (France, through the High Commissioner of the French Republic); national (Government of New Caledonia); provincial (executives and provincial assemblies in each province); and municipal (mayors and municipal councils). In addition, the Sénat coutumier (customary senate) works in an advisory capacity on issues relating to Kanak culture and identity. Each customary area elects its council, which nominates two representatives to sit in the Sénat coutumier.



Protocol

Showing respect for traditional authority is still the practice in New Caledonia and it is important to always have authorisation from the local *tribu* before working in tribal areas or using tribal resources. On entering a village, you should meet first with the village chief. For formal events or visits, welcoming and farewell ceremonies are typically held.

When an event such as a training programme is planned over two days or more, it is accepted that those coming from town will bring some food (e.g. rice, Sao biscuits, frozen chicken, etc., and soft drinks, but no alcohol). When asking permission to step on the land, the spokesperson will mention the food very briefly in their speech.

During meals, visitors may observe that women do not sit at the men's table (visitors are not asked to follow this custom). Sisters and brothers abide by this rule and avoid being in the same room at the same time. If this cannot be avoided, a woman may decline to speak in front of her brother. This should be kept in mind when running training programmes or meetings. You should not hold your head higher than an elder's, and to show respect you should stoop when walking close to an elder.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

In a welcoming ceremony, a committee (composed of chiefs and elders) gathers, usually to one side of the meeting house. The visitor stops a few metres from the group at a distance that allows each group to be heard when addressing the other. The visitor sits on the floor (usually on a mat) and presents gifts as a sign of respect for the land and its people. Traditional gifts include pieces of cloth, tobacco (raw or cigarettes), rolling paper, boxes of matches and one or more bank notes (not mandatory). SPC staff should be aware that the Sénat coutumier encourages people to avoid giving tobacco or cigarettes; an alternative is to offer gifts representative of your own culture. Note also that the amount of money given should not be large as the recipient may feel obliged, albeit unable, to respond appropriately.

Visitors first seek permission to enter and speak, and then state the reason for the visit. Before

responding to the speech, the welcoming group typically lays a piece of cloth on top of the gifts, and then answers. At the end of the speech, a visitor will pick up the fabric offered by the hosts, and the hosts will pick up the gifts offered by the visitors. The welcoming committee will then form a receiving line and the guests move along the line shaking hands.



Farewell ceremony

The hosts will make several farewell gestures: a piece of cloth to put over your shoulders (to avoid catching a cold on your way home), some cigarettes to smoke on the way home (to help think over what was said during the encounter), and a bank note (to buy a drink, which helps to remember the pleasant time spent together). When responding to this farewell gift, those leaving should include in their speech special thanks to the women and men who worked hard to prepare food for everyone.

Daily Life



Religion

There are many Christian denominations in New Caledonia and a respectful attitude towards the church is expected. Visitors are not required to attend services, but it is appreciated, particularly in rural areas. There are no restrictions on Sunday activities in urban areas, but in more traditional rural areas it is customary to refrain from work or noisy activities.



Dress

Outside of Noumea, the General Guidelines on dress should be followed.



In the home

It is good manners to remove your shoes before entering a Melanesian home. General courtesy applies; follow the lead of your host.



Out and about

Land is important to the Kanak people and all land is owned by someone. It is important not to enter any private land without first asking permission from the owner.



Greetings

In rural areas it is common courtesy to wave and greet passers-by, even if you are in a vehicle passing pedestrians. Greet people by shaking hands, but out of politeness avoid staring into the eyes of the person you are meeting.

Do not be offended if people do not look at you when talking to you, as it is bad manners to look directly into the eyes of others.



Meals

Wait until everyone is present before eating and remember that prayers are often said before meals. Kanak people are happy if you eat well and enjoy their hospitality.

AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND



AOTEAROA
MEANS THE **LAND**
OF THE **LONG**
WHITE CLOUD

2
MAIN
ISLANDS

POPULATION
4.7
MILLION

Country Information

Aotearoa (the Māori name for New Zealand) means the land of the long white cloud. It lies in the southern Pacific Ocean and consists of two main islands and a number of smaller islands.

The population of Aotearoa is currently 4.7 million (2018 census). The majority of residents are of European descent. Indigenous Māori, who settled New Zealand at least 1200 years ago from eastern Polynesia, represent about 16.5 per cent of the population (2018 census) and belong to over 50 *iwi* (tribes or clans).

There is also a large population of other Pacific Island people (6.8 per cent of the total population). Auckland has the largest Māori and Pacific population in the world, and there is an increasing number of immigrants from Asia and other parts of the world.

Language

Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and English are official languages. English is the common language. More than one dialect of Te Reo Māori is spoken in Aotearoa.

TERM	MĀORI	ENGLISH
Greetings	Kia ora	Hello
	Mōrena	Good morning
	Tēnā koe	A formal hello to one person
	Tēnā kōrua	A formal hello to two people
	Tēnā koutou	A formal hello to three or more people
Farewell	Haere rā	Farewell (to someone who is leaving)
	E noho rā	Farewell (to someone who is staying)
	Ka kite anō	See you again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The Government of Aotearoa is a constitutional monarchy, with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of Aotearoa and underpins relationships between Māori and the Crown. New Zealand uses a proportional voting system to elect its parliament of 120 members. Under this democratic system, the government is usually formed by two or more political parties.



Protocol

Māori protocol and ceremonies are observed and practised on *marae*, which are located throughout the country. The *marae* is the meeting place for Māori communities, and is used primarily for formal ceremonies, *tangihanga* (funerals) and cultural and *whānau* (family) celebrations. Traditional protocols differ, with regional and local variations. It is therefore desirable to have a guide from the *marae* you are visiting to give you specific guidance. Visitors to traditional venues and events should dress appropriately.

The guidelines below assume that you are attending a formal Māori gathering and have been informed that you are to be given a *pōwhiri* (ceremonial welcome).

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

Arrangements should be made to alert those at the *marae* of your anticipated time of arrival for the *pōwhiri*. If you are part of a large group, meet together before arriving at the *marae* and only proceed to the *marae* when the entire group is present. If your invitation does not include a specific time, try to arrive just before lunch or dinner, but definitely not at night. If activities are taking place when you arrive (e.g. other visitors are being welcomed), wait at the gateway until informed by one of your hosts that the *marae* is ready to begin the *pōwhiri*. Arrange yourselves with women in front followed by children and then men. Proceed as a compact group to convey the idea that you have a unified purpose. Once the *pōwhiri* begins there should be no talking.

If your leader is of great *mana* (prestige) he or she will be given a *wero* (ceremonial challenge).

Up to three separate male challengers will approach one after the other, execute complicated movements with a *taiaha* (traditional weapon), and kneel and place carved sticks or small branches at the leader's feet. The original purpose of the *wero* was to determine whether visitors came as friend or foe. Today the *wero* serves to demonstrate high respect for a visitor, and the physical prowess of

the warrior (and by implication his *marae*). In response to the challenge, the male leader(s) of the visiting group picks up the dart or branches placed before them, signalling that they have come with peaceful intentions. Visitors continue to wait at the entrance of the *marae* for the *karanga* (ceremonial call of welcome).

The *karanga* is the welcoming call of the *kuia* (mature woman of the *marae*) to visitors. It is an emotional call of welcome and an invitation to come forward on to the *marae*. It is also a greeting and acknowledgment of those who have passed on, and may include a brief history of the *marae* for the benefit of the visitors, or a call about the reason for the gathering.

The *whakaeke* (procession on to the *marae*) is the formal passage of visitors on to the *marae*. Leader(s) of the group move to the front, followed by women, and then men. Walk slowly on to the *marae* and then pause for a time. The pause is to remember the dead, and reinforces the idea that visitors who are welcomed to a *marae* represent many people: they are the living link to their ancestors and descendants to come. Your hosts will then direct you to your seats – male leader(s) in front and women behind them.

The *whaikōrero* (formal speech of welcome usually conducted by men) is a form of poetry, rich with symbolism and allusions. The speech-making always begins with an elder of the host people speaking first. Depending on the protocol of the *marae*, either all the host speakers will speak, followed by the visitors, or the speeches will alternate from one side to the other. As a visitor you may have an opportunity

to speak during the official welcoming ceremony. Women rarely speak at this part of the ceremony and messages should be given to a male in the group who will speak on their behalf. If you are from another country, your speech could include information about the nature and purpose of your visit to New Zealand and to the *marae*, and some information about your country and your work at home. After your speech, it is customary to sing a *waiata* (song).

In the past, people attending gatherings would customarily take a *koha*, a contribution of food or some other gift (such as mats or baskets). Today a donation of money is placed in an envelope and laid in front of the *tangata whenua* (hosts) by the last *manuhiri* (visitor) speaker. The way that this is presented varies from place to place. By giving a *koha* you are showing respect to your hosts.

The *hongi* (touching of noses) is a sharing between *tangata whenua* and *manuhiri* of breath and is an indication that the two participants meet as equals and in peace. Proceed, leaders first, to the front of the hosts' line. Participants in the *hongi* shake hands and, at the same time, lightly touch noses. The ending of all the *hongi* signifies that the protocol of the welcoming ceremony is over: the visitors have been received by the people and have become, symbolically, *tangata whenua* (one with them).

It is usual for refreshments to be served at this point. An elder will first bless the food with a prayer.

When you are on a marae, do not wear shoes inside the meeting house; do not take food, alcohol or cigarettes inside; do not step over people where they are lying (equally they should be aware of this rule and not block your passage); do not, even in jest, touch a person's head, or pass food over a person's head as the head is considered *tapu* (sacred); do not sit on tables, or put hats or other items worn on the head on a table as the table is for *kai* (food).

Daily Life



Religion

Although Christianity is the dominant religion in New Zealand, many Māori belong to the religions of *Rātana*, *Tutekohi Rangī*, *Ringatū* and *Pai Mārire*, which were started by *matakite* (spiritual leaders and prophets, as referred to by some) in response to the changing society of Aotearoa. Members of other ethnic groups in the country follow the religion and traditions of their respective cultures.



Dress

Western-style dress is the norm in Aotearoa. Traditional Māori dress is worn for formal ceremonies and cultural celebrations.



Out and about

The majority of Māori live in urban centres and in *papakāinga* (modern housing developments on multiple-owned Māori or ancestral land). They do not live in traditional whare.



Meals

Māori eat the same range of food as other New Zealanders. The traditional method of cooking food on hot stones under the earth (*hāngī*) is used for large gatherings, hui and celebrations.

A hāngī may include meat (lamb, pork and poultry) and vegetables (potatoes, kumara, pumpkin and cabbage) served alongside fresh seafood, *paraoa* (bread), salads and fruit.

NIUE



A
RAISED
CORAL
ATOLL

SETTLED
>1000
YEARS AGO

1974
BECAME SELF-
GOVERNING

Country Information

Niue is a raised coral atoll (the former reef and lagoon are now about 60 metres above sea level). It was settled over 1000 years ago and became a British protectorate in 1900, after which it was annexed to New Zealand as part of the Cook Islands.

Niue became self-governing in free association with New Zealand in 1974. New Zealand retains responsibility for Niue's external affairs and defence, and Niue people are New Zealand citizens. A small number of Europeans, and people from Tuvalu, Tonga, Fiji and other Pacific Islands also live in Niue.

Language

Vagahau Niue and English are official languages, and most Niue people are bilingual. Business and government affairs are conducted in English and Vagahau Niue, and both languages are spoken in homes and at most social events. Despite being bilingual, Niue people are appreciative when visitors attempt to speak their language.

TERM	NIUEAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Fakaalofa atu	Hello (Love be with you)
Appreciation	Fakaaue lahi	Thank you
Farewell	To feleveia	Until we meet again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The legislative body, called the Assembly, has 20 members (one from each village and six elected from the general population). The Assembly elects one of its members as the Premier; the Premier is head of government and together with the members of cabinet has full legislative and executive power.

Niue has 14 village councils, each with three to five councillors. The councils make most local-level decisions; there are no hereditary ranks or ruling class. The *magafaoa* (extended family) is the centre of Niuean life. Land is owned by the *magafaoa*, not by individuals, and land courts keep genealogical records dating back several generations in order to settle ownership disputes. Oral genealogies in various forms extend back to the first settling of the island. *Magafaoa* membership is patrilineal, and the head of the family is usually a man.



Protocol

Initial inquiries should be directed to the Secretary to Government, who will put SPC staff members in contact with the chair of the village council for the village they will be working in. The village council chair is in charge of meeting coordination and decision-making.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

A welcoming ceremony will typically be organised by the village council. It is appropriate to present a small gift and to make a brief speech or presentation. There are no special ceremonial protocols.

Daily Life



Religion

Religion greatly influences life in Niue. Most social activities are organised by and around churches, and the Sabbath remains important. Boating, fishing, swimming, dancing, sports, business, and broadcasting are either frowned on or prohibited on Sunday.



Dress

Casual dress is the norm, but clothes should not be revealing, short or tight fitting. Women normally swim in shorts and t-shirts.



In the home

It is polite to remove your shoes before entering a Niuean house.



Out and about

As a sign of acknowledgement and respect, it is important to say '*Tulou*' when invading someone's personal space, such as in a crowd, or when passing behind or in front of someone who is sitting down.

When passing in front of someone, crouch down slightly, or at least lower your head while saying '*Tulou*'.



Greetings

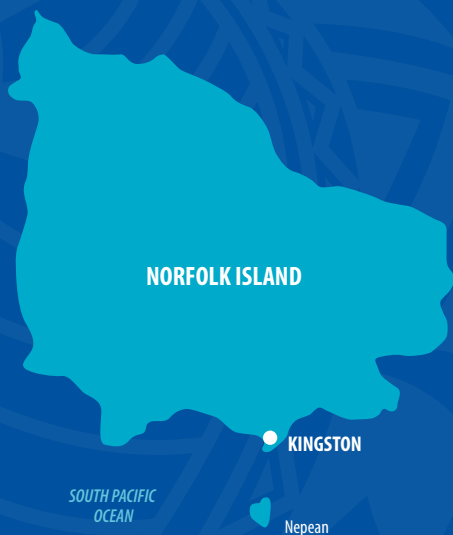
Shaking hands is appropriate when greeting others.



Meals

Eating without sharing is considered rude in Niue, so out of politeness always offer to share food with others. Cutlery is commonly used, although people may also eat with the fingers of the right hand.

NORFOLK ISLAND



ORIGINALLY
SETTLED BY
POLYNESIAN
PEOPLE

NORF'K
LANGUAGE
IS PROTECTED BY
LEGISLATION

AROUND
1800 - 2000
PERMANENT
RESIDENTS

Country Information

Norfolk Island was inhabited by indigenous Polynesian peoples until approximately 1600, when the settlement was mysteriously abandoned.

The island was uninhabited in 1774 when discovered and claimed for the British Crown by Captain James Cook on his second voyage around the world. Because of its ample natural resources and isolated position, the island was made a British penal colony in 1788. The first penal settlement closed in 1814; a second penal settlement was built in 1825 and closed in 1854. Rather than abandon the island, the British government, by Order in Council of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, agreed to relocate the entire small community of Pitcairn Island to Norfolk Island in 1856.

The story of the origins of Pitcairn Island people has been popularised by numerous novels, plays and films of the Bounty mutineers who with their Tahitian companions, in 1790, seeded a new society that against all odds, survives to this day. Her Majesty's instructions to the Governor were that he preserve and maintain the laws and usages of the Pitcairn people. They were to be allowed to continue their self-government, compulsory education and universal suffrage in the same way as they had done on Pitcairn Island in their new homeland, Norfolk Island. This extension naturally included the integrated systems of language, culture, tradition and practice.

A Melanesian mission that was located in Norfolk Island between 1867 and 1920 employed island residents in mission work and opened important cultural linkages and opportunities between many Pacific Islands, particularly New Zealand and Solomon Islands.

In 1914, Australia became the administering authority for the island and there have since been multiple changes to the governance and administration of local affairs. From 1979 to 2015, the island maintained a significant level of devolved self-government under the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly. The Assembly was controversially abolished and replaced in 2016 with a colonial-style lower level of local government as a (Australian) Regional Council.

Today, Norfolk Island remains the homeland of the Pitcairn descendants. The population of around 1800 to 2000 permanent residents also includes free settlers from many other countries, with the majority from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Fiji and Vanuatu.

Language

When the Pitcairners arrived in Norfolk Island they were bilingual in both Pitkern and English. The isolation of Norfolk Island, together with established patterns of language use and transmission, provided the ecological support system for this bilingualism.

From 1914, the New South Wales (Australia) syllabus was introduced to the island school and the attitude to local and mixed 'non-English' languages changed. The education system weakened the culture and Norfolk language by

generating shame among users. Such measures provoked resistance and affirmed for those affected the value of their language as not only a tool of communication, but also a means of expressing identity, social bonding, ecological management and 'memory of experience'.

Legislation to preserve the Norfolk language was passed in 2004 and UNESCO recognised it as an endangered language in 2007. Some progress has been made in developing language capacity through the introduction of written teaching as part of public schooling.

TERM	NORF'K	ENGLISH
Greeting	Watawieh Cushoo	Hello, how are you? Very well, thank you
Appreciation	Prinke	Amalgamation of praise and thank you
Us, our People	Ucklun Sullun Yoryle	Our clan – collectively we, all of us People You, people
Ancestry	Kamfram	Our history and culture The reason we do things the way we do

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The five-member elected Regional Council is chaired by the mayor. An Administrator (who fills a role similar to that of governor) is a senior Australian government appointment and holds some of the delegated functions of the federal minister.



Protocol

The Norfolk Island Regional Council should be contacted for advice and assistance regarding government protocols, which vary depending on the purpose of the visit.

For cultural protocols, the Norfolk Island Council of Elders should be consulted on all matters relating to the protection, preservation and promotion of the identity, values, welfare and well-being of the Norfolk community and its traditional knowledge and expressions of culture. The role of the council was reaffirmed in 2008 by the 12th Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly.

Ceremonies



Government ceremonies are limited and usually relate to hosting visiting dignitaries. These occasions are by invitation only.

Cultural ceremonies mostly relate to celebrating heritage and have both exclusive and open aspects. Anniversary Day includes a local gathering and re-enactment of the arrival of the ancestors, who are honoured at their resting place, followed by family and community activities.

Visiting cultural dignitaries are always received by the President of the Council of Elders under reciprocal cultural protocols that are respected by government and free of political interference.

Daily Life



Religion

Religion is a cultural value of the Norfolk Island community. A number of religions are represented on Norfolk Island and visitors are welcome to attend any of the services. Offerings are taken up during the services. Churches play a role in outreach to young people and the elderly through support services and programmes that promote connection and inclusion.



Dress

Island attire is smart casual dress with appropriate footwear, and more formal dress as occasions require. Generally, hats are not worn indoors. Islanders wear traditional hats woven from local fibres and decorated for special occasions with fresh flowers and coloured leaves.



In the home

You should remove your shoes before entering a home. Hospitality, including food and drink, is freely offered to visitors, and you may accept or decline without offence. Islanders are generous in spirit and revere the opportunity to share their offerings with visitors.



Greetings

Islanders usually greet each other with a warm embrace. For non-islanders, shaking hands is usual, both when first introduced and at formal gatherings. A verbal greeting is appropriate at informal gatherings. People who know each other well are likely to exchange a kiss on the cheek.



Meals

An invitation to share a meal is genuine. It is not offensive to decline politely. Many families continue the practice of grace before meals. Island-style picnics are open invitations and everyone who attends contributes a main dish, salad, vegetable and/or dessert.

PALAU



300
ISLANDS

16
STATES

FIRST
SETTLED AROUND
3000
YEARS AGO

Country Information

Palau, on the western edge of Micronesia, comprises about 300 islands that were first settled some 3000 years ago. It has been administered by Spain, Germany, Japan and the United States and in 1994 became a self-governing republic with a Compact of Free Association with the US.

Most of Palau's islands are enclosed by a barrier reef; nine are inhabited. Palau includes 16 states. Koror is the main urban centre and the capital, Ngerulmud, is in Melekeok State on Babeldaob, which is the largest island. There are two distinct ethnic groups in Palau: Palauans and Southwest Islanders. All indigenous

people are referred to as Palauans. The population also includes people of American, Asian, European or Pacific Island descent.

Language

Palauan and English are the official languages. Palauan is widely spoken in the communities, while English is used interchangeably with Palauan in business and government settings. Schools teach both languages and most Palauans are bilingual from an early age. Other languages spoken in Palau include Sonsorolese, Hatohobei and Japanese (primarily among Palauans born before 1940). The terms Palau and Palauan are typically used in English; Belau is the equivalent in the Palauan language.

TERM	PALAUAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Alii	Hello
Appreciation	Sulang Ke kmal mesulang	Thanks (informal) Thank you very much
Farewell	Mechikung Ak morolung Aki morolung	Goodbye (to one or more people leaving) Goodbye (by one person leaving) Goodbye (by more than one person leaving)
Terms of respect	Omengull Ngerachel Omelengmes Klauerreu	Respect Responsibility To place someone ahead of oneself Caring for one another

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Palau has adopted a democratic constitution, and the government includes executive, legislative and judicial branches. The President, Vice-President and members of the national congress are popularly elected. The *Rubekul Belau* (council of traditional chiefs) advises the President on traditional matters. The *Mechesil Belau* (association of traditional matriarchs), which is the counterpart of the council of traditional chiefs, holds an annual conference addressing issues of culture, custom and modernisation.

The 16 states elect their own governors and state legislators. The traditional chiefs are very much a part of the leadership system. Palauan villages are organised around 10 matrilineal clans. A council of chiefs composed of men from the 10 ranking clans governs each village, and a parallel body for women has a significant role in the division and control of land and money.



Protocol

In addition to following standard protocols established between the Palauan government and SPC, staff who will be working in a village should meet with both the chief and the governor of the state to explain their work. The counterpart Palauan government agency will assist you in making these contacts. Before meeting with a traditional leader, ask the local

contact to brief you regarding the leader's title name. If a title is not known, refer to an elder man (or men) as *Rubak* and an elder woman (or women) as *Mechas*. During the meeting, be respectful and observant. A handshake is a proper greeting for a chief; to greet a matriarch, it is appropriate to bow your head.

Ceremonies



Normally, ceremonies of welcome and farewell are held for visitors working in a village. Public government functions or ceremonies generally combine Western and Palauan protocols; praying and chanting always play a part, and gifts are typically exchanged between the host and the guests. In a farewell ceremony, a village representative will normally present a gift on behalf of the village. The representative may be a woman, a youth or a man, depending on the nature of the work conducted. SPC staff members should make a speech thanking the villagers and present a gift in return. A contribution toward expenses may also be appropriate and will be appreciated. If a chief or a matriarch is present, it is important to know their title name and refer to the title when making a speech. Speeches are normally given first in Palauan and then translated by a village member into English. When participating in a ceremony, observe where the leaders and guests each sit. Do not partake of food before a chief or a matriarch does. Both men and women should avoid putting their back toward *Rubak* and *Mechas*, whether they are sitting or standing.

Daily Life



Religion

Palau is predominantly a Christian society, and several churches are present in Palau. *Modekngai* (a traditional religion) is still widely practised and runs its own primary and secondary schools.



Dress

Dress standards in Palau are casual. Pants (or long shorts) and blouses are commonly worn by women; men often wear t-shirts, and in villages commonly go about their work without a shirt. For meetings or other functions, dress should be more conservative; see the General Guidelines. Women should avoid showing their inner thighs and cleavage when seated in a gathering.



In the home

When approaching a house, always say '*Alii*' (hello). The custom in Palau is to make a guest feel at home, which is captured by the saying '*Mokelii a songerenger, bemtuu*' ('Welcome, my house is your house').

It is polite for visitors to accept offerings of food and drink.



Greetings

Nodding one's head is a common way of recognising others, and people of all ages also simply raise their eyebrows or wave their hands. Handshakes are exchanged when meeting someone for the first time, or if two people have not seen each other for a long time. Congratulations are also given with a handshake. When approaching someone, always say '*Alii*'. If meeting someone you do not know, show respect. Be humble in asking for a stranger's name and do so indirectly. If you do not know their title name, always say '*Alii Rubak*' (for elder men) or '*Alii Mechas*' (for elder women). This applies to all people older than yourself, whether they are a title bearer or not. If you have a meeting scheduled, find out before the meeting who will be there, their titles, and how they should be addressed.



Out and about

When passing people on the road, always step aside and let them pass first. Respect for others is important in Palauan culture. Both men and women recognise people older than they are; in turn, older people recognise youth for showing respect. In Palau it is impolite to point towards a person.

A *bul* is a traditional moratorium on taking and harvesting resources. If there is a *bul* in a village, it will be indicated at the entrance to the village by young half-woven coconut leaves tied to a tree or a pole.

Tipping in restaurants in Palau is voluntary but is accepted.



Meals

When attending village functions, guests are always served first, but be observant of who begins eating first. Typically, chiefs start first, then matriarchs, and then the general public. If you do not wish to partake of a certain dish, politely let your host know that you do not eat that type of food.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



LARGEST
PACIFIC ISLAND
NATION

HOME TO OVER
800
LANGUAGES

19
PROVINCES

Country Information

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the largest Pacific Island nation in terms of both land area and population. It occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and more than 600 offshore islands. The New Guinea mainland was first settled over 40,000 years ago. Suspicions and rivalries, together with the rugged, mountainous landscape, helped to isolate different groups, with the result that hundreds of distinct languages and traditions developed.

New Guinea was colonised by Germany, Great Britain and Australia. It became

independent in 1975. PNG is divided into 19 provinces and the National Capital District, and inhabitants typically distinguish themselves by the name of their home provincial areas (e.g. Kerema, Goilala, Sepik or Milne Bay). The capital, Port Moresby, is located on the southern coast of the mainland.

Language

PNG is home to over 800 languages. Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin) and Motu are widely spoken and regarded as national languages, while English is the official language for both government and education.

TERM	PIDGIN	MOTU	ENGLISH
Greeting	Yu orait?	Oi namo?	How are you?
Response to greeting	Mi orait tasol	(Lau) namoherea	I am fine
Appreciation	Tenk yu tru	Tanikiu bada herea	Thanks very much
Farewell	Lukim yu bihain	Bamahutu	See you later

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Members of the national parliament, which is a single house of representatives, are popularly elected for five-year terms. The national executive council is composed of the Prime Minister and ministers. The independent judicial system includes the supreme court, national court, and local and village courts.

PNG society includes both traditional village-based life, dependent on subsistence or small-scale agriculture and fishing, and modern urban life in all provincial capitals and the national capital. The main cities are Port Moresby, Lae, Madang, Wewak, Goroka, Mount Hagen and Rabaul.

Inheritance of land and other property may be matrilineal, patrilineal or ambilineal, depending on the region. Men may acquire status through performance, such as giving feasts and exchanging gifts. Husbands are generally acknowledged as the authority figure in the household, but exceptions may be made when a husband is absent (through death, illness or separation).

Ceremonies



Traditional ceremonies

Ceremonies for reciprocal gift-giving involving pigs, yams and other goods, and compensation and reconciliation, are common in PNG. SPC staff members are not expected to participate in such traditional ceremonies as many are only relevant to community residents, clans or families. On special occasions, such as the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, the Pacific Games and state visits, gift-giving is appropriate and appreciated but not expected.

Daily Life



Religion

Rituals and traditional practices remain important throughout PNG but differ greatly from one area to another. If attending a traditional ceremony, SPC staff should act in accordance with the instructions of their local guide. Many people are Christians and visitors' participation in local church activities is accepted and welcomed.



Dress

Male visitors to traditional villages should be reasonably dressed, no matter how little clothing village men may be wearing. Men are expected to wear a shirt at all times in public, but this rule does not apply to beaches, where men are usually shirtless.

Women may wear loose skirts or dresses, with hemlines below the knee, and shoulders and chests covered. Sheer clothing is not acceptable. Women usually swim in shorts and a t-shirt, or in normal clothes.



In the home

A visitor will always be directed to a place to sit, whether on a chair or on the floor.



Out and about

It is common to see people of the same sex holding hands in public. It is not considered acceptable, however, for husbands and wives to hold hands in public.

Betel nut chewing is common in PNG, particularly in rural areas. If betel nut is offered, it is acceptable to decline. You may also accept betel nut and not chew it (it can be given to someone else later).



Meals

If invited to a home, your hosts will probably offer food. It is considered polite to accept the food, even if you are not hungry or intending to eat. You can request that the food is packed so you can take it with you when you leave.

PITCAIRN ISLANDS



4
ISLANDS

PITCAIRN
IS THE ONLY
INHABITED
ISLAND

TOTAL
POPULATION
OF AROUND
50

Country Information

Pitcairn Islands comprises four islands (Pitcairn, Oeno, Ducie and Henderson) of which only Pitcairn is inhabited. It is a British overseas territory. The majority of Pitcairn Island people are descendants of British seamen (Bounty mutineers) and their Tahitian partners. Other ethnic groups are of European, Pacific Island and New Zealand descent. The total population is around 50.

Language

Among themselves, Pitcairn Islanders speak Pitkern, a mixture of old English and Tahitian. All speak and understand English well.

TERM	PITKERN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Wut awaye?	How are things?
Response to greeting	I es gud un	I am good

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The official head of government (Governor of Pitcairn) is the British High Commissioner to New Zealand, based in Wellington. The High Commissioner is supported by a Deputy Governor (non-resident) and a Governor's Representative, who is permanently stationed on the island. The local government is managed by a 10-member Island Council. It comprises an elected Mayor, who serves a three-year term; the chairperson of the island's Internal Committee; four elected councillors, who serve one-year terms; the Island Secretary; one

member appointed by the Governor; and two non-voting, advisory members (one chosen by the Governor and one by the council). The Island Mayor chairs the council and serves as the community and island spokesperson.



Protocol

SPC staff should liaise with the Governor and the Island Commissioner (both based in Wellington) and meet the Island Mayor at the beginning of a project.

Ceremonies



Public gatherings and meetings are common on Pitcairn, and most of the adult population attends. Most public meetings (including those of the Island Council) start with the Mayor inviting the pastor or church elder to give a blessing. Visitors arriving to assist the community in any way are normally invited to address a public meeting and to respond to questions that may have arisen. It is not necessary to stand while giving an address.

Public dinners are held frequently, often to acknowledge or to thank a visitor for their contribution. Every household brings a dish of food. The visitor's host family provides the plates and utensils for visitors at these gatherings. The pastor, or an elder of the church, blesses the food before the meal begins. Community members (in no particular order) serve themselves by filling their own plates. Food is typically plentiful and visitors are encouraged to return for more helpings.

A visitor may be presented with a carving or basket at a public dinner as a token of the community's appreciation. Although a reciprocal gift is appreciated it is not expected. The best gifts are items that can be displayed and that reflect the culture of the visitor. If a visitor intends to give a gift, it is best to advise the Mayor well in advance so that a presentation can be allowed for.

Daily Life



Religion

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only church on Pitcairn. Although today the majority of Pitcairn Islanders are not members, most were raised in this faith and many church customs and teachings govern daily life. Saturday is observed as the Sabbath, and no work should be carried out between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday. Most in the community do not work outside their homes during this time; some refrain from activities, including swimming. Sunday marks the beginning of the working week. Although not expected, it is always appreciated when visitors attend a church service. Normal dress applies; see the General Guidelines. Visitors who usually wear the traditional attire of their own country or territory to church are welcome to do so on Pitcairn. An offering is taken up during the service.



Dress

When attending meetings or visiting for an evening meal, men and women dress casually. Footwear is optional during dinners and meetings.



In the home

There are government accommodation buildings on Pitcairn, but most visitors stay with a local family. The host family is normally pre-arranged through the Island Council. The cost of accommodation is typically about USD 35 per night and includes all meals and laundry services. Many Pitcairn Islanders do not close the door to their homes and typically no one knocks when visiting. The normal means of announcing your arrival is to call out loudly while approaching the door. When visiting, it is usual to be offered food and a drink. It is not offensive to decline politely. Alcohol is not consumed in public or at public functions, and many residents prefer not to serve alcohol.

There are few smokers on Pitcairn and most prefer that people do not smoke in their homes. Smoking is tolerated elsewhere.



Greetings

Greet people by shaking hands when first meeting or being introduced. A nod and verbal greeting are appropriate in relaxed settings.



Out and about

Normally people stop to have a chat when passing. Physical contact other than a handshake between those who do not know each other well is rare.

Currently, everyone arriving at Pitcairn comes ashore in either a longboat or runabout. The runabout is used occasionally to disembark passengers from small yachts, but those arriving on larger vessels must climb down the ship's Jacob's ladder to the longboat below. Pitcairners are used to assisting people from the Jacob's ladder into the longboat and it is safest to follow their advice.



Meals

If invited to a meal at a private home, normal protocol is to arrive promptly at 6:00 p.m. to allow time for conversation before being invited to the table. Not all homes observe the practice of saying a prayer before a meal – it is best to pause and take your lead from your host. When the meal is over, the host and others may work on baskets or carvings while carrying on a conversation. They are always willing to explain their techniques and to let visitors participate.

Public dinners are often held in private homes to celebrate a family member's birthday. It is expected that everyone on the island who is able to will attend these occasions. Each family normally contributes a main and dessert dish and gives a small gift to the person celebrating a birthday, particularly a child.

RAPA NUI / EASTER ISLAND



FIRST
POPULATED
AROUND

400 A.D.

FAMOUS FOR
ITS **MOAI**
(LARGE STONE
STATUES)

A **WORLD
HERITAGE**
SITE

Country Information

Rapa Nui (Easter Island) is an isolated Polynesian island of volcanic origin located between the west coast of South America and Pitcairn Islands.

Archaeological studies estimate that Polynesian peoples first populated this island around 400 A.D. The first inhabitants called it *Te Pito O Te Henua* (the navel of the world) and a unique culture developed, as shown by the *moai* (large statues), and *rongo rongo* (tablets) that are evidence of a written language. Beginning in the 14th century, Rapa Nui fell prey to civil war.

The Dutch arrived on Rapa Nui on Easter Day, 1722. It was annexed by Chile in 1888. Today, the country, the native inhabitants and the language (Polynesian) are all referred to as Rapa Nui.

Language

The local Polynesian language, Rapa Nui, is still used by most inhabitants, but it is being replaced by Spanish.

Spanish is the official language of this province of Chile and is used by the government and schools.

TERM	RAPA NUI	ENGLISH
Greeting	la orana	Hello
	Pehe koe	Hello (to one person)
	Pehe korua	Hello (to two or more people)
Response to greeting	Rivariva	Fine or good
Appreciation	Maurú'uru	Thanks

Leadership and Protocol



Background

A local Governor represents the Chilean government. Originally, the island was divided into tribes that had their own lands and their *ahu* (platforms) where the *moai* were erected. Today, most of the inhabitants live together in a single village, Hangaroa, and the land mainly belongs to the Chilean government. The *Alcalde* (mayor) represents the local community. The village of Hangaroa is managed by the *Alcalde* and a municipal council.



Protocol

Show respect for the various local authorities and customs.

Ceremonies



Important people are received by the Governor and/or the *Alcalde* with the presentation of a flower *lei* and an exchange of gifts.

Welcome and departure ceremonies, including dances, songs and speeches, are always held together with the *umu tahu*, the traditional meal cooked in a Polynesian (earth) oven. It symbolises blessings that bring luck to the event and to the people who are arriving or departing.

Daily Life



Religion

A large number of Christian churches are represented on Rapa Nui, but the main one is the Catholic Church. Many people go to church on Sundays and generally refrain from working or taking part in noisy activities on Sundays.



Dress

People wear Western-style or Polynesian-style clothing.



In the home

It is polite to take off your shoes before entering a house. It is normal and thoughtful to bring a gift of food when visiting people who live

outside the village as it may be difficult for them to buy supplies. Other appropriate gifts include feathers, shells and local handicrafts.



Out and about

Land is important to Rapa Nui people. You should always ask the owner for permission to enter land; be aware that land boundaries may not be marked.

The most important places are the *ahu* where the *moai* are located. It is forbidden to climb or sit on them.



Greetings

In rural areas, it is normal to greet people by saying hello and waving, even if you are in a car passing people who are on foot. Handshakes are an accepted greeting; kissing is reserved for close family and friends.

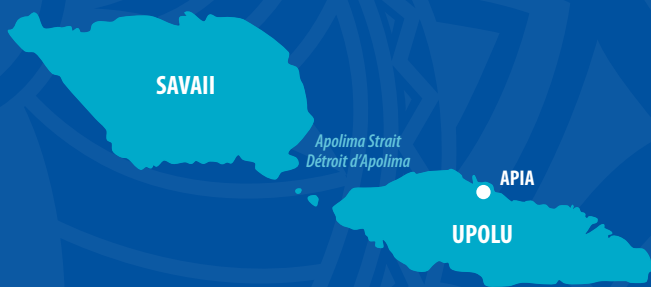


Meals

People generally say grace before meals (either a Christian prayer, or one in Rapa Nui to the god *Make Make*) to give thanks for their guests being there and sharing their meal.

Rapa Nui people prefer eating with their hands from banana leaves, but plates and cutlery are sometimes used. All meals are accompanied by bread, salt and lime.

SAMOA



2
MAIN
ISLANDS

FIRST SETTLED
>3500
YEARS AGO

1962
GAINED
INDEPENDENCE

Country Information

Samoa, officially the Independent State of Samoa, lies south of the equator and to the west of American Samoa with which it shares a common history, language and culture. It has two main islands, Upolu and Savaii, two smaller islands and six islets. Archaeological discoveries indicate that Samoa was settled more than 3500 years ago.

The Tripartite Convention signed in Washington in 1899 between the Governments of the United States, the German Empire and Great Britain divided Samoa and American Samoa between Germany and the United States respectively. In 1914, New Zealand

occupied German Samoa and took control of its administration on behalf of Britain. This situation lasted until Samoa gained its independence in 1962, becoming the first Pacific Island country to do so. (Until 1997, Samoa was known as Western Samoa.) The majority of the population resides in or around Apia on the island of Upolu. Apia is the capital and the administrative and commercial centre of Samoa.

Language

Samoaan and English are official languages. Samoaan is more widely used, but understanding of English is also widespread, even in rural villages.

TERM	SAMOAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Tālofa Talofo lava Mālō Mālō le soifua	Hello Greetings Hi (informal) Hello (formal)
Response to greeting	Tālofa Talofo lava Mālō Soifua manuia	Hello Greetings Hi (informal) Greetings (formal)
Appreciation	Fa'afetai Fa'afetai lava O lau pule lea	Thanks / Thank you Thank you very much Thank you very much (formal, oratorical)
Farewell	Tōfā soifua Tōfā Tōfā soifua	Goodbye / Farewell Goodbye (informal) Goodbye (formal)
Apology	Malie lou fmgalo Ou te fa'amālūlū atu Tulou	My apologies / I apologise I'm sorry / I apologise Excuse me / Pardon me

Leadership and Protocol

Samoa's form of government is a parliamentary democracy that recognises local cultural practices. Executive authority is vested in the Head of State, with the government administered by the cabinet led by the Prime Minister. The legislative branch is composed of a parliament (*Fono*) of 50 members, who are all *matai* (chiefly titleholders). Ten per cent of parliamentary seats are reserved for women representatives. All are elected by citizens aged 21 years and over. Samoa has an independent judiciary, including a Lands and Titles Court to resolve disputes over traditional lands and chiefly titles. All laws passed by the *Fono* require the approval of the Head of State. Under the constitution, the *Fono* elects the Head of State for a five-year term.

At the local level, *fa'a Samoa* (the Samoan way) is a communal system guided by traditional political and social practices. These practices govern, support and guide village development, law and order and social cohesion, and safeguard traditional protocols relating to kinship, genealogy and familial ties. *Fa'a Samoa* is based on traditional mores and Christian values and maintains order in the Samoan community.

A *matai* is the head of an *aiga* (extended family) and is chosen from and by members of the *aiga*. A typical Samoan village is made up of a number of families. Together, the *matai* of a *nu'u* (village) form a council called a Village *Fono*, which meets monthly to oversee the affairs of

the village, consider traditional judicial issues and ensure customs are observed. Each *matai* is responsible for his or her family (extended family), which includes everyone related to him/her by blood, marriage or adoption.

Ceremonies



Kava ceremony

The *'ava* ceremony is Samoa's customary way of honouring, welcoming and farewelling visitors to a village or to the country. It is important to observe the etiquette of a traditional *'ava* ceremony and non-Samoan visitors are usually briefed on this before they attend. Often, a Samoan spokesperson will accompany you on your visit, but this is not mandatory. Discuss the ceremony beforehand with your host.

Daily Life



Religion

Christianity is an integral part of Samoan life. Most public services are closed on Sundays. Visitors should observe Sunday as holy to Samoans and behave accordingly.



Dress

Modest dress is the norm. In Apia and urban areas, this dress code is not as strictly observed. Follow the General Guidelines.



In the home

You should remove your shoes when entering a Samoan *fale* (house) and sit where the host indicates – either on mats in a traditional *fale* or on chairs in modern homes. On a mat, sit cross-legged and cover your legs. Never stretch your legs out in front of you. If you do need to stretch, use another mat to cover your legs before you do so.



Out and about

Avoid walking through villages during the evening prayer curfew, which is usually sometime between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. The prayer typically lasts for 10 to 20 minutes and is often marked at the beginning and end by a bell or the blowing of a conch shell. If you unintentionally enter a village during evening prayer, sit down and wait quietly until the all-clear is sounded.



Greetings

A simple handshake is appropriate for initial greetings or farewell. It is acceptable to remain seated while shaking hands. Close friends and family members often greet each other with a kiss on the cheek.



Meals

People tend to eat together and share their food. When dining with others, wait until everyone has been served before starting your meal. Grace before eating is customary.

Samoan hospitality is especially generous where food is concerned. Do not be offended if they force you to have more food or take some away with you. You are not obliged to eat if you are not hungry, but food offerings are a part of a Samoan welcome, acceptance and show of gratitude all in one.

Traditional Samoan foods are eaten with the fingers although generally that is no longer the norm. During or after a meal, a bowl of water will often be provided for washing hands. As it is important that hands are clean before eating, you may request a water bowl before the meal if one is not offered.

SOLOMON ISLANDS



900
ISLANDS

FIRST
SETTLED SOME
10,000
YEARS AGO

63
DISTINCT
LANGUAGES

Country Information

Solomon Islands consists of some 900 islands, including a double chain of six large islands. The islands were first settled some 10,000 years ago. Solomon Islands became a British protectorate in 1893, at the urging of missionaries, and became an independent nation in 1978. The main islands are Guadalcanal (home of the capital, Honiara), Malaita, Santa Isabel, Choiseul, Makira and the New Georgia Group.

Melanesians make up the majority of the population, and there are also smaller Polynesian, Micronesian, Chinese and European communities. At the local level, Solomon Islanders prefer to describe themselves by their provincial or tribal name (e.g. Bellonese or Malaitan). They also accept being called Solomon Islanders.

Language

There are 63 distinct languages in Solomon Islands, with numerous local dialects. Solomon Islands Pijin is the lingua franca for the majority of people and English is the official language.

TERM	SOLOMON ISLANDS PIJIN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Yu hao?	How are you?
Response to greeting	Oraet nomoa	Just fine
Appreciation	Tanggio	Thank you
Farewell	Lukim iu moa	See you again

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The national parliament comprises 50 members elected for a four-year term. The Prime Minister is elected by an absolute majority of members of parliament. In addition to the national government, there are nine provincial assemblies, each led by a Premier.



Protocol

SPC staff members should make initial contact through the national government. The national or provincial government will provide staff with appropriate contact information for village leaders, and advise on protocols for contacts with traditional leaders, which vary between provinces.

Make arrangements to see village leaders before arrival if possible. If this is not feasible, ask to see or talk to the local leader on your arrival. Depending on the situation, this may be a chief, church pastor, priest or village elder. The village leader may decide to consult with other influential villagers before making a final decision on important issues affecting the village.

A small gift (such as food) is appropriate when meeting the leader.

Ceremonies



Welcoming

A meeting or gathering may be called to welcome a visitor; the type and size of the ceremony will depend on the importance of the visitor or the project to the lives of villagers. Your host will indicate where you should sit. You are expected to respond to any welcoming speeches or remarks.

Daily Life



Religion

There are various Christian churches in Solomon Islands. Some Solomon Islands people adhere to traditional beliefs. Visitors are welcome to attend church services, but it is not required. Saturday and Sunday are set aside as days of worship and rest and limited activity is the norm, but protocol varies from one village to the next. Inquire locally regarding appropriate behaviour on Sunday for the area you are in.



Dress

Casual clothing, such as shorts, shirts and sandals, is generally acceptable throughout Solomon Islands. For more formal meetings, pants and casual buttoned shirts are suitable for men, and long skirts or dresses for women. In general, a woman's clothes should cover the knees. Tight-fitting or short clothing is considered disrespectful and will attract unwanted attention.



In the home

When visiting a home, follow the lead of your host or guide. Sitting on the floor rather than on chairs is common, especially in rural areas or in settlements. Sit as directed. It is disrespectful to step over someone's outstretched legs, especially those of an older person. Excuse yourself when passing, giving them an opportunity to shift for you. If you are invited to stay in the home of a Solomon Islander, a suitable gift might include *taiyo* (canned tuna) and rice. Any food purchased should be left with your host on your departure.



Out and about

Once you have been introduced to a village community, you may wander freely, but it is recommended that a guide or local person accompany you. It is common to see people of the same sex holding hands. In public, moderate forms of affection such as hugging and holding hands with your partner are acceptable.

Do not take photographs of people without first asking permission. This does not apply when taking general photographs of public events, market places or festivals. However, if you want to take a photo of an individual at such an event, you should ask permission.



Meals

Sharing food is an important part of daily life. Be gracious and polite when accepting food and do not begin eating until those around you have started, unless you are invited to eat first. Always wait to see if a blessing will be offered before starting. It is polite to eat everything on your plate, but feel free to say 'I'm full'. If you cannot eat everything, offer your leftovers to your host.

TOKELAU



3
SMALL
ATOLLS

SETTLED SOME
1000
YEARS AGO

TOKELAUANS
ARE
**NEW ZEALAND
CITIZENS**

Country Information

Tokelau comprises three small atolls, Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu. Settled some 1000 years ago, the islands became a British protectorate in 1889, with New Zealand assuming administrative responsibility in 1925. Today Tokelau is a non-self-governing territory under New Zealand administration. Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens.

Tokelau is one of SPC's least accessible member countries and can be reached only by ship, with services departing from Apia, Samoa.

Language

Tokelauan, a Polynesian language similar to Samoan, is the official language and is spoken in everyday life. English can be used for basic necessities, but if making a presentation in Tokelau it is best to use an interpreter.

TERM	TOKELAUAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Talofa ni Malo ni	Hello Hi
Request	Fakamolemole	Please
Appreciation	Fakafetai	Thank you
Apology	Tulou	Excuse me
Farewell	Tofa	Goodbye Bye

Leadership and Protocols



Background

There are a number of decision-making bodies in Tokelau. Each of the three atolls is governed by the *Taupulega* (council of elders). Collectively, the islands are governed by the General *Fono*, which is composed of 22 elected delegates from the three atolls. When the *Fono* is not in session, the islands are governed by the six-member Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau, which is made up of the *Faipule* (leader) and *Pulenuku* (village mayor) of each of the three atolls. These officials are elected for three-year terms.

Faka-Tokelau, the Tokelauan way of life, is centred on family and community. The social and economic order is based on the values of community and sharing, and *Faka-Tokelau* remains strong despite the pressure of external influences. The *Taupulega* for Nukunonu and Atafu are composed of representatives of village families (*matai*), while for Fakaofu, membership of the *Taupulega* is by invitation to elders 60 or more years of age. They are the highest village authority and play a large role in community development, customary practices and local village issues.



Protocols

When addressing members of the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau, use the title of Minister, *Faipule* or *Pulenuku* before their names, according to their respective status. When addressing an individual elder, you can use *Toeaina* (elder) and *Taumatua* for the most senior elder in the *Taupulega*.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

A formal welcoming ceremony will almost certainly be held in your honour. You will be told where to sit, normally at the front of the gathering, and presented with a green coconut and a garland. When everyone has a drinking coconut, a prayer is offered and you can then drink your coconut. A welcoming speech from an elder normally follows. You will be prompted when to respond before the conclusion of all the welcoming speeches. When making a speech, it is acceptable to remain seated on your chair or mat. It is common practice on Fakaofu and Nukunonu atolls to begin a welcome by offering guests a kava ceremony (*kava o kava* or *hua* respectively).

During ceremonies, always sit cross-legged on the mat.

Daily Life



Religion

Religion is a large part of Tokelauan life and Sunday service is an important event. On Sunday, depending on which island you are on, residents and visitors may be expected to behave quietly and not work. On Nukunonu atoll, it is possible to go for a picnic or play games on a Sunday. If attending a church service, women should wear a skirt reaching at least below the knees, rather than pants. Men should wear a collared shirt.



Dress

Skimpy clothing, especially shorts for women, is not acceptable in villages and causes offence. Shorts should be covered or replaced by a *lavalava*. Most Tokelauans wear clothes that cover their thighs when swimming.



In the home

Visitors should not enter a Tokelauan home unless invited. You should remove your shoes when entering a *fale* (house) and sit where the host indicates. If you are seated on a mat, sit cross-legged or cover your legs. In less traditional homes, chairs are used instead of mats. It is impolite to speak to someone in a home while standing.

Young children are taught not to bother adults and are usually supervised by older children. Any adult may freely scold or discipline any child when necessary. Discipline within the home is generally strict; children are taught to respect authority and the elderly.



Out and about

Avoid walking through villages during the evening prayer curfew (usually sometime between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.). The prayer typically lasts for 10 to 20 minutes and is often marked at the beginning and end by a bell or the beating of a *lali* (wooden drum). If you unintentionally enter a village during evening prayer, sit down and wait quietly until the all-clear is sounded.



Greetings

A simple handshake is appropriate for initial greetings or farewell. You can remain seated while shaking hands. Close friends and family members often greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. It is customary to say '*Tulou*' (to excuse yourself) whenever walking through groups of people or walking near people who are sitting.

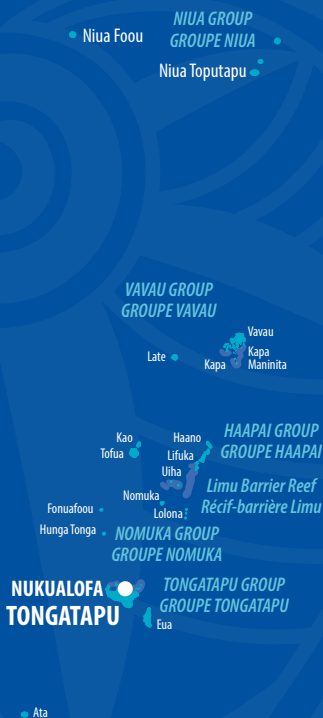
Always ask permission before taking photos.



Meals

Eating in Tokelau is a social activity and people tend to eat together and share their food. When dining with others, wait until everyone has been served before starting your meal. A short prayer before eating is also customary. If food is placed before you, accept graciously and eat as much as you can.

TONGA



3

MAIN ISLAND
GROUPS

177

SMALLER
ISLANDS

A
CONSTITUTIONAL
MONARCHY

Country Information

The Kingdom of Tonga consists of three main island groups and about 177 smaller islands. Tonga has been inhabited for close to 3000 years. The country declared itself an independent constitutional monarchy in 1875 and retains that status today, making it the oldest (and last remaining) Polynesian monarchy.

Tonga is the only Pacific nation that has never come under foreign rule. The capital, Nuku'alofa,

is located on the island of Tongatapu, where about 75 per cent of the people reside. About 98 per cent of the population is of Tongan descent, with small minorities of other Pacific Island people and Europeans.

Language

Tongan is the primary language, but English is widely taught in schools and used in government, and is understood by a majority of the population.

TERM	TONGAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Mālō e lelei Fēfē hake?	Hello How are you?
Response to Greeting	Sai pē, mālō	Fine, thanks
Appreciation	Mālō 'aupito	Thank you very much
Apology	Fakamolemole/Kātaki/Tulou	Sorry/Please/Excuse me
Farewell	'Alu ā Nofo ā	Goodbye (to someone leaving) Goodbye (to someone staying)

Leadership and Protocol



Background

The Tongan government is highly centralised and tradition plays an important role. The reigning monarch (King Tupou VI) is advised by a Privy Council, whose members are appointed by the monarch. The Legislative Assembly includes 17 elected representatives of the people and nine representatives of the nobility (hereditary chiefs). The Prime Minister is appointed by His Majesty the King, after being nominated and elected by the representatives of the Legislative Assembly from amongst the representatives. At a local level, district and town officers are elected every three years. Their powers are limited and devolve from the central government.

In Tonga, the basic social unit is the extended family. Its members assist parents in rearing children and children may have several places to call home.



Protocol

The standard procedure for SPC staff working in Tonga is to first contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An officer will introduce you to the CEO of the government ministry involved in your project, who will then make introductions to appropriate community leaders.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

A ceremony is typically held to welcome SPC staff to a village. It will include a prayer by a minister and words of welcome from local leaders. An SPC staff member will be expected to give a speech, but gifts are not necessary.

Ceremonies involving royalty

When in the presence of royalty who are standing, courtesy requires that you physically lower yourself to demonstrate respect. If a member of the royal family is attending an event, everyone else must be seated before they arrive. Once they are seated, no guests may be admitted or seated. In this case, punctuality is absolutely necessary. To address royalty, you must have a degree of competence in the language used for nobility if conversing in Tongan, but English is an acceptable (and easier) alternative.

Daily Life



Religion

The Christian faith is important in Tonga, with various forms of the Wesleyan (Methodist) Church being the most popular denomination. Tongan churches enjoy a strong influence over their congregations. Sundays are legally proclaimed to be a day of rest and the primary activities of the day are attending church, eating and sleeping. Modest, conservative dress is appropriate when attending church.



Dress

Modest dress is required by law. There are expected standards of dress for different occasions, e.g. formal (not casual) for meeting a minister, black for funerals, etc. Ask your host for guidance.



In the home

Unexpected guests are usually welcomed (although if a family feels their house is not adequately furnished or cleaned, they may be reluctant to invite a visitor in). Visitors should remove their shoes on entering a house and are often directed to the best seats. In a traditional home, men sit cross-legged on the floor and women sit with both legs tucked behind them to one side. Children are kept out of the way as much as possible. Hosts usually offer refreshments such as water, coconut, *ótai* (a mixture of cut fruit) or soda. A complimentary speech from departing guests is welcomed and appreciated by the family.

Tongans generally enjoy giving and receiving personal compliments. Guests may compliment the home or family but should avoid admiring any one object too specifically (the host may feel obliged to offer the item as a gift). Tongans welcome but do not expect gifts from guests, and gifts are not opened in front of the giver.



Greetings

It is appropriate to greet people with either a handshake or a verbal greeting. Men often hold the handshake for several seconds during a brief conversation. Tongans customarily call acquaintances by their first names. People meeting for the first time often use titles and family names to show respect. If professional titles are not used, *Tangata'eiki* (Mr), *Fine'eiki* (Mrs) and *Ta'ahine* (Miss) are appropriate.

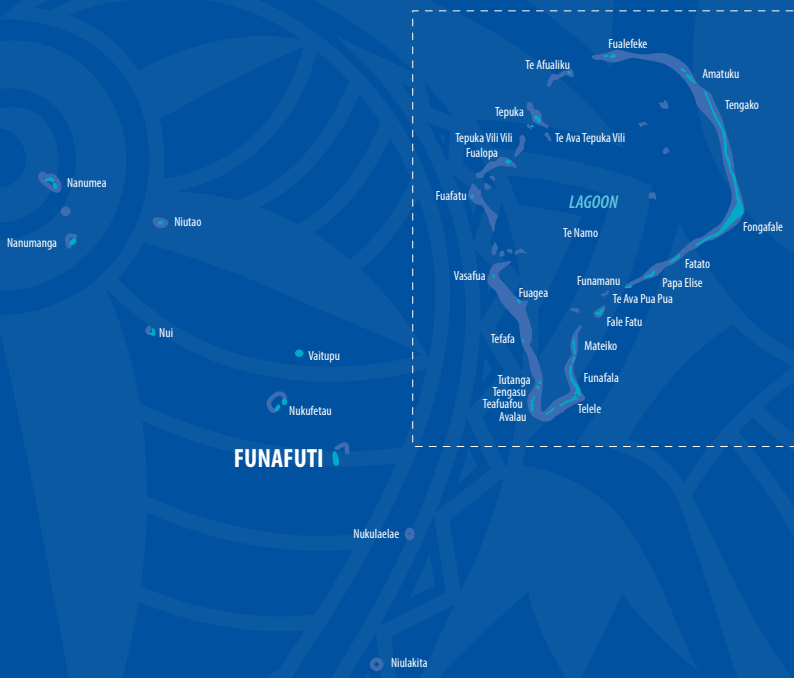


Meals

Urban households often have dining tables and other furniture, but on outer islands sitting on woven mats is more common. People traditionally ate with their fingers and while some still do, knives and forks are now commonly used.

Flowers are suitable gifts on special occasions such as weddings or funerals, but other items may be more appropriate when visiting a home socially. Honoured or new guests may be given a gift by hosts when they leave. It is an insult to decline such offers, which may include fruit, tapa cloth or handicrafts.

TUVALU



8
ISLANDS

26 km²
LAND AREA

60%
OF POPULATION
LIVES ON FUNAFUTI
ATOLL

Country Information

Te Atū Tuvalu, commonly known as Tuvalu, means a group of eight islands standing together. Tuvalu is an archipelago of atolls and islands situated midway between Hawai'i and Australia. Legend and historical evidence suggest that the early settlers probably came from Samoa, Tokelau, Cook Islands, Tonga, Futuna, the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati), and beyond.

Tuvalu was part of Britain's Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony until 1975 and is today an independent state and member of the Commonwealth. With a land area of 26 square kilometres, it is one of the world's smallest and most isolated independent nations. Sixty percent of the total population lives on the capital island, Funafuti Atoll.

Language

Tuvaluan, which is spoken on all the islands, has two groups of dialects, based on the dialects spoken in the northern islands (Nanumea, Nanumaga and Niutao), and southern islands (Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti and Nukulaelae). The Nui dialect is influenced by migrants from Kiribati, immediately to the north of Tuvalu and is therefore linked to the I-Kiribati language.

Tuvaluan is closely related to Samoan and also distantly related to most of the other Polynesian languages.

TERM	TUVALUAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Talofa	Hello
Response to greeting	Talofa	Hello
Appreciation	Fakafetai	Thank you
Apology	Tulou	Excuse me
Farewell	Tofa	Goodbye

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Tuvalu has a parliament with 15 members, who are elected through a general election held every four years. The Prime Minister is chosen from among them by a majority of members. Tuvalu's head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, who is represented by a Governor-General appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The *Falekaupule* – the traditional assembly of elders on each island – operate in accordance with Tuvaluan customs and traditions to bring peace, harmony and security to the community. They have an elected six-member executive arm, called the *Kaupule*, and provide local government on each island and are also consulted on bills proposed by the national government. The *Falekaupule* system is a fusion of traditional and democratically elected governance. Communal living in Tuvalu still functions under the hierarchical leadership of the *kaiga*-*aliki* (council of chiefs) supported by *matai o kaiga* and their family members. Tuvaluan communities are not homogeneous and there

are marked differences in the organisation of their traditional governance systems.



Protocols

The contact in Tuvalu for any official visit is the Ministry of Justice, Communication and Foreign Affairs. The ministry in turn notifies the appropriate ministries for support and assistance.

If an SPC staff member wants to meet with an island's traditional leaders or *Falekaupule*, the Ministry of Local Government and Agriculture is responsible for contacting the relevant *Kaupule* Secretary regarding the visit and a programme of meetings and appointments if required.

If you need to meet with the chiefs and elders of the *Falekaupule*, it is culturally acceptable to present a gift to the *Falekaupule* but not expected.

Ceremonies



When a visitor is invited to a *Falekaupule* feast, it is appropriate to present a small gift (money is acceptable). If the feast is held in honour of the visitor, they will be presented with a traditional gift and, in this case, a more impressive reciprocal gift is appropriate.

By custom, people sit cross-legged in the *Falekaupule* and everyone is requested to comply if they are able. Anyone who has difficulty sitting in that position, especially

in the case of women, may sit with their legs to the side – either to the right or left – but covered with a *lavalava* (that also applies to those sitting cross-legged).

It is bad manners to stretch your legs out in front of you during the formal part of a gathering or meeting, especially if seated within the inner posts of the *Falekaupule*, unless allowed by the *Tukumuna* (master of ceremonies).

When there is a meeting or function in the *Falekaupule*, you may walk past or watch from a reasonable distance. However, it is disrespectful to ride or drive a vehicle close to the *Falekaupule* during these events. If you are in a village during a traditional celebration, you will be welcomed and encouraged to join in the festivities.

Daily Life



Religion

Religion is a major part of Tuvaluan lives. It could be said that community life, especially on the outer islands, revolves around religion. The *Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu* (EKT) is the predominant religion and the EKT pastor is a prominent figure on each island.

A typical village day begins and ends with family devotions. The morning reveille begins at 5:00 a.m. and the evening call for devotion, which is usually a curfew, starts at 7:00 p.m. in most cases.

Sunday church services are held at various times and are well attended. Virtually no work is performed on Sundays and people are expected to behave reverently and respectfully.



Dress

Modest dress is appropriate; see the General Guidelines.



In the home

Tuvalu's traditional timber-framed houses do not have permanent walls but instead have shutters that can be lowered. The open design means visitors rarely need to knock to announce their presence. It is customary to first remove any footwear and then to enter and sit down on the *mekei* or *papa* (pandanus mat). If there is no mat, a visitor should wait for one, or an alternative, to be laid down. If it is necessary to walk past someone who is sitting or lying down, say '*Tulou*' to apologise for being above the level of the person's head. Also say '*Tulou*' when reaching for something above another person's head. Hosts normally offer guests fresh toddy, or share green drinking coconuts or tea. If it happens to be mealtime, guests are normally invited to have some refreshments or to eat. If you do not wish to eat or drink, it is acceptable to say you have already eaten.



Greetings

The Tuvaluan people have an open, respectful relationship with visitors. When greeting locals, a simple '*Talofa*' is adequate and appreciated. Shaking hands is appropriate but is considered a more formal way of greeting people. Kissing the cheek is regarded as a foreign custom and is frowned on (especially in the outer islands) unless the person being greeted is an acquaintance or associate.



Meals

It is acceptable to politely decline an invitation to eat if you have already eaten or do not want to eat. If your hosts insist, then accept graciously. If a friend or relative passes by the house during mealtime, someone in the house might call out '*Vau o kai!*' or '*Vau o Inu!*' (Come and eat or drink). It is polite to pause and chat briefly and carry on your way if you do not want to eat or drink. You may also politely decline and mention you have a prior commitment.

If you do share a meal, it is customary for your host to say grace or a prayer before eating. As a guest, you will normally be invited to start eating first with the men or head of the family. Coconut juice is an essential beverage during meals and is commonly offered to visitors. Toddy made from coconuts is a primary source of vitamin C, especially when fresh. It can also be made into syrup for cooking or fermented as an alcoholic beverage. These are also offered during meals.

VANUATU



12
LARGE
ISLANDS

70
SMALLER
ISLETS

AROUND
105
LANGUAGES

Country Information

Vanuatu is an archipelago of 12 large islands and 70 smaller islets. The islands were settled some 3200 years ago. For most of the 20th century, the islands were administered by a joint French-British condominium, which saw the use of two official languages (French and English) and dual administrations. Independence was declared in 1980.

The people of Vanuatu are mostly Melanesian, although there is significant Polynesian influence on many islands, including on language and social structure. Vanuatu's population also includes people of Chinese, European, other Pacific Islander and Vietnamese descent. Citizens of Vanuatu are called ni-Vanuatu (meaning 'of Vanuatu'). The capital, Port Vila, is situated on the island of Efate.

Language

Vanuatu is linguistically diverse, with at least 105 local languages. Bislama (an English-based pidgin influenced by French), English and French are all official languages.

Most ni-Vanuatu speak Bislama along with their mother tongue, except for those in remote areas or young children who only speak their mother tongue.

TERM	BISLAMA	ENGLISH
Greeting	Halo Olsem wanem, yu oraet?	Hello How are you?
Response to greeting	I stret! I gud!	I'm okay/ I'm fine I'm good/fine
Appreciation	Tankiu tumas	Thank you very much
Apology	Sori tumas	Very sorry
Farewell	Lukim yu	See you

Leadership and Protocol



Background

There is an elected assembly (parliament), which in turn elects the Prime Minister, who holds executive power. The head of state is the President. Vanuatu is divided into six provinces, which are made up of three or more islands. The *Malvatumauri* (national council of chiefs) is elected by district councils and has its own president. This body has the power to discuss all matters relating to custom and tradition and to make recommendations relating to the preservation of ni-Vanuatu language and culture.

Women can attain significant status in their communities, and in some islands in the north of Vanuatu can become chiefs. A ni-Vanuatu chief acts as a justice of the peace and as a spokesperson for each village. Most chiefs are chosen by consensus or elected, although in some areas the position is ascribed or inherited. Chiefs are the head

of their communities and also the gateway to the community for all outsiders.



Protocol

SPC's official contact in the Government of Vanuatu advises the *Malvatumaori* of confirmed projects and informs the appropriate authorities in the provinces. On arriving in a village, SPC staff should meet first with the chief, or in some areas the assistant to the chief, who advises on matters of protocol and accompanies a visitor when meeting with the chief. The chief may refer staff to village experts if special knowledge of a certain issue is required.

Ceremonies



Welcoming ceremony

The chief of the village will gather people into a *nakamal* (meeting house) or community hall and briefly inform them of your visit and project. Your hosts will give you time to stand and speak, so observe and wait for your cue. Expressions of gratitude and acknowledgement are appreciated. On this occasion it may be appropriate to present the chief with a small gift that should in some way represent you or your people or institution. In a traditional welcoming ceremony, kava or coconut juice is normally offered to guests. You are under no obligation to drink it, but it is considered polite to do so. In some communities, there are restrictions about women entering the *nakamal* so follow the advice of your guide; the general recommendation is that women only enter when invited.



Farewell ceremony

The village usually holds a ceremony involving food, and you may receive a gift. The chief will deliver a speech of thanks, and you should respond with appropriate acknowledgements and thanks. Another gift may be appropriate.



Kava ceremony

The kava ceremony is an important part of Vanuatu custom. If you are invited to a ceremony, it is customary to drink the kava all at once. If you feel you cannot finish your share, you can discreetly tip it out to the side. If you do not drink, you should touch the cup of kava to indicate that you have symbolically drunk it. In some rural communities, women are prohibited from drinking kava so follow the advice of your guide.

Daily Life



Religion

Nearly all large villages have their own church. In some areas, an entire village belongs to one particular denomination. If a village follows two or more faiths or religions (e.g. two Christian denominations, or a Christian religion and a traditional religion), it is usual for the village to be physically divided, usually spatially, so that the different groups worship in separate areas. Most denominations worship on Sunday, although Seventh-day Adventists worship on Friday evenings and Saturdays. You should respect the restrictions

on work or recreation on the day relevant to the community you are visiting. There is no obligation to attend church services, but as a visitor you are welcome to participate.

Prayers may be said before or after a ceremony or village activity, so you should follow the lead of the host. This practice varies – in villages where traditional religion is followed, there is less emphasis on prayer.



Dress

In villages, men may remove their shirts when working or when it is hot. Wearing of shorts by women in villages was formerly prohibited but is now more common; it is still frowned on by some elders, however. Female visitors are advised to wear dresses and skirts. Bathing suits, shorts and skimpy clothes should be restricted to designated tourist areas. Shorts and t-shirts or halter tops are appropriate swimwear in rural areas.



In the home

Visitors are generally welcome in the home unless particular ceremonies or practices are taking place. If this is the case, follow the advice of your guide. Men may opt to sit on a chair or stool or any object that takes the form of a seat. Women usually sit on the ground, but this varies depending on the village. Your host will normally guide you on where to sit. When sitting on the ground, you may sit in the position that is most natural and comfortable for you. Gift giving is not expected but is

appreciated in any form. If food is offered, try to eat what you are given; it is appreciated.



Out and about

Once a village community has accepted your presence, you are free to wander around. It is recommended, however, that you are accompanied by a guide or local person for the first few days and when you are visiting other villages.

Sticks set in the ground and bearing the leaves of the *namele* plant (a cycad, which is a symbol of peace, and is depicted on Vanuatu's flag) indicate a *tabu*. If you encounter this sign, always ask about the *tabu*, which is a local method used to preserve or restrict access to fruit trees or bush localities, or marine areas in some places.



Greetings

A simple handshake, together with a smile and a few words, is appropriate for an initial greeting or farewell.



Meals

In Vanuatu, prayers are always said before meals, so it is best to wait for the host before beginning a meal. Generosity in providing food is considered a great virtue and it is important for your hosts to feel that their hospitality is highly appreciated. Utensils and plates are always provided; however, it is polite to eat with your hands when food is served on leaves.

WALLIS AND FUTUNA



2
GROUPS OF
ISLANDS

AN
**OVERSEAS
COLLECTIVITY**
OF FRANCE

66%
OF INHABITANTS
LIVE ON WALLIS

Country Information

Wallis and Futuna comprises two groups of islands of volcanic origin, located about 240 kilometres apart in the central Pacific. The Wallis group consists of the main island of Wallis (Uvea) and more than 20 surrounding motu (small islands on the barrier reef). The highest point of Uvea is only 145 metres above sea level. The Futuna group includes Alofi (currently uninhabited) and the main island of Futuna, which rises some 700 metres above sea level. Futuna is today an important pilgrimage site for people who come to pray to the first Catholic martyr saint in the Pacific Islands, Father Pierre Louis Marie Chanel.

Wallis and Futuna is an overseas collectivity of France. The people of Wallis and Futuna are Polynesian – Wallis has cultural ties

with Tonga, and Futuna with Samoa.

Two thirds of the inhabitants live on Wallis, and the other third on Futuna. Mata-Utu, the territory's political, business and administrative centre and largest urban area, is located on Uvea. In the 2018 census, the resident population was 11,562. Many thousands of Wallisians and Futunans live in New Caledonia.

Language

The indigenous languages, Wallisian and Futunan, are widely spoken. Wallisian is closely related to Tongan, while Futunan shares many linguistic characteristics with Samoan. French is the official language. English-speaking staff will need interpretation assistance if they do not have a working knowledge of French or Wallisian or Futunan.

TERM	WALLISIAN	ENGLISH	FUTUNAN	ENGLISH
Greeting	Malo te ma'uli	Hello (until noon)	Malo le ma'uli	Hello (until noon)
	Malo si'l kataki	Hello (rest of the day)	Malo le kataki	Hello (rest of the day)
Apology	Silou or Tulou	Excuse me/ pardon me	Tilou or tulou	Excuse me/ pardon me
Farewell	Alula	Goodbye (to one person leaving)	Anola	Goodbye (to one or more leaving)
	Olola	Goodbye (to two or more leaving)	Nofola	Goodbye (to one or more staying)
	Nofola	Goodbye (to one person staying)		
	Nonofola	Goodbye (to two or more people staying)		

Leadership and Protocol



Background

Executive power lies with the French government. The Territory of Wallis and Futuna is governed by the Prefect, who is the Chief Administrator and head of the territory. The Prefect is assisted by the Territorial Council. The three kings of Wallis and Futuna serve as ex officio members of the council. As Chief Administrator, the Prefect is also the head of the three administrative districts corresponding to the three kingdoms of Uvea, Alo and Sigave. Matters related to defence and maritime affairs are under the direct jurisdiction of the French High Commission in New Caledonia.

Legislative power lies with the Territorial Assembly, which has 20 members who are elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. The head of government is the President of the Territorial Assembly. One Deputy and one Senator represent the territory in the French National Assembly and Senate.

The traditional chiefs hold customary power. The *Hau* or King of Uvea has the title of *Lavelua* and is assisted by a council of chiefs called the *Fa'u*. On Futuna, the *Tuiagaifo* of Alo and the *Tuisigave* of Sigave, also called the *Keletaona* or *Tamolevai*, are each assisted by a *Fa'u* composed of five customary chiefs. The members of the *Fa'u* are now called customary ministers. The customary institutions retain considerable power in the territory's social life and organisation, and customary law is enforced by the customary chiefs. The French

government guarantees the populations of Wallis and Futuna liberty in the practice of their religion and respect for their beliefs and customs as long as these are not in contradiction of French law. In addition, French law applies in the territory in legal matters and there is a tribunal of first instance in Mata'Utu.



Protocol

Protocol visits are important for SPC staff working in Wallis and Futuna. Visits to both the appropriate government official (in the office of the Prefect or administration) and the traditional leadership are always appreciated. Any visits relating to fisheries, land, agriculture, etc. must include presentations to the traditional rulers. Women are usually not present during discussions and meetings unless they are part of the visiting group or directly involved in the issues being discussed.

Ceremonies



Kava ceremony

District and village festivals provide an opportunity to keep traditions such as the kava ceremony alive. This ceremony can only be held if it is accompanied by a traditional presentation of food items. Once the ceremony is over, the items are distributed to the chiefs and the people attending the ceremony. No moving in or out, smoking or noise are allowed during the ceremony and hats should not be worn. When paying a courtesy visit to the one of the kings or chiefs, you should bring a kava root or other gift.

This physical item symbolises your respect and opens the door of the chief's dwelling to you.

Daily Life

The social life of Wallisians and Futunans centres on a system of mutual exchange that allows people to live together as a community on the basis of reciprocal aid, sharing and respect.



Religion

The Catholic Church is the main denomination in the country. Modest dress should be worn when attending services or taking part in religious ceremonies.



Dress

Modest dress standards apply; see the General Guidelines. Swimwear should not be worn when walking about on the islands, in the hotels or any other public places.

Wallisians and Futunans wear both traditional dress, mainly *manou* (*lavalava*), and Western-style clothes.

Garlands, made in the traditional way by women, are worn every day and garlands of fragrant local flowers are used to welcome guests.

As a sign of respect, during official ceremonies or when visiting chiefs, Wallisians wear a belt of plant fibres called a *ta'ovala* around their waists.



In the home

Unexpected guests are always welcome. It is common practice to welcome and meet visitors on the veranda of a house.



Greetings

When greeting each other, men shake hands. Men and women greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. When meeting people, visitors are expected to shake hands with everyone present. If a man is working and has dirty hands, he may extend his wrist or elbow. A smile and nod of the head are also acceptable. (Note that the official greeting protocol is different for the King of Wallis.)



Meals

Families usually eat their meals together. When invited to a meal, it is common practice to bring a gift.

The guest is served first, and the host last. You should wait until the blessing has been said before beginning to eat.

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