

elevate™ destinations

# FIJI

## COUNTRY GUIDE



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# PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

In this document you will find a plethora of information that will be useful during your journey to Fiji. The information listed in this guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations staff member. We hope that this document proves to be helpful and that you are getting excited for your journey to Fiji!

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Passport

Travelers to Fiji should ensure that the validity of their passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. Note that you will need to renew your passport if you are out of Visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible. We also recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself. This way you always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

### Visa

No visa is required for Fiji for a stay up to four months.

### Travel & Medical Insurance

Elevate Destinations requires travel and medical insurance that covers Covid-related medical expenses and costs associated with quarantine. Proof of your travel and medical insurance is required to enter Fiji and is required to participate in this program.

Below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

- [Yonder Travel Insurance](#)  
Email: [hello@insureyonder.com](mailto:hello@insureyonder.com)  
Phone Number: 855-358-6433 (M-F 8:30-5:00 CT)
- Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennan)  
Email: [dan@travelinsurancecenter.com](mailto:dan@travelinsurancecenter.com)  
Phone Number: 1-866-979-6753 (extension 3621)

Guests may acquire travel insurance through Yonder Travel Insurance, Travel Insurance Center, or any other travel insurance company of their choosing. Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their needs, and inquire with providers about insurance that will cover them for all Covid-related expenses including quarantine costs while abroad.

## **Covid Protocols**

**Covid Vaccination:** Elevate Destinations requires that all travelers are fully vaccinated and up to date on any doses of the the Covid-19 vaccine they are legally eligible for. This means many travelers will need a booster. You will need to submit a copy of your vaccination card to Elevate Destinations prior to departure.

**Entry Requirements and Updates:** As Covid is continually evolving, please check your [Online Trip Portal](#) for the most up to date information regarding entry requirements and health and safety precautions.

## **Immunizations**

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Fiji Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit the [CDC Website for Fiji](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

## **Other Health Considerations**

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

Travel in Fiji can be physically demanding. You must be able to enter and exit a wide variety of vehicles including jeeps and vans. Dust and other air impurities may be present in heavy concentrations, and colds, nasal congestion and sore throat may occur. Although Fiji is a small country, it has multiple islands. Due to this, air travel is often scheduled to reduce travel times between islands, and some extended road or boat journeys may be required.

We recommend a medium level of physical agility, as some of the drives may have sections of unpaved, bumpy roads or boat rides will be on choppy waters. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle on unpaved, bumpy roads for extended periods of time

## Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.

## Communications

*The country code for Fiji is +679. To call numbers in Fiji from the U.S. dial 011 + 679 + area code + seven-digit local number*

**Wifi:** At most accommodation providers you will visit in Fiji, wifi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to. Oftentimes, connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in individual rooms.

**International Calls:** If you are in Fiji and trying to reach a number in the US, dial 011 before dialing the country code and local number.

**Staying connected:** Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when Wifi is available). We recommend that travelers download and create a WhatsApp account prior to their travel.
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are recommended for international travelers as for making calls within Fiji as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please also let us know in advance if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone. To purchase a local SIM card, you will need to provide a copy of your passport.

4. **Call from hotel or internet café:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

## Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to record all of your important information on one sheet of paper, photocopy it, and distribute a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and amongst relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself to have available online anywhere.

*These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:*

- A photocopy of your passport
- Covid Vaccination Card; both the original, a photocopy and a digital copy, which can be obtained through ClearApp (click [here](#)) on your mobile phone
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Address and phone numbers of the hotels where you are staying
- Emergency Contact List - provided by Elevate Destinations
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

## Money

The local currency in Fiji is the Fijian Dollar (FJD). The Fijian Dollar comes in denominations of FJD \$5, FJD \$10, FJD \$20, FJD \$50, FJD \$100. Coins are issued in denominations of FJD \$1, FJD \$2, FJD 5¢, FJD 10¢, FJD 20¢, FJD 50¢.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

**For extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.**

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Fiji can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMS, hotels and banks).

**Cash & Exchanging Money:** Fiji is a primarily cash economy, so you will need to have cash in the local currency throughout your journey. Local currency is recommended for most places, especially smaller stores and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills.

If you exchange money, do so only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels, and exchange only what you think you will spend in-country. Reconversion on departure may be difficult. Coins cannot be reconverted. To see what the current exchange rate is, check online at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

We recommend bringing \$200 - \$300 in USD cash in case of emergency and for personal spending. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)

Banks, and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

\*Note: You will need your passport to exchange money at a bank or Bureau.

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will typically charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction.

**ATM/Debit Cards:** You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs.

\*Note: ATMs in remote areas can be finicky, and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in the case that ATMs are not working for you.\*

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like: Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

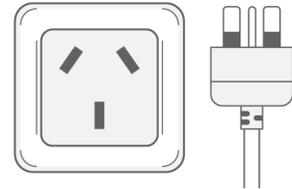
# IN-COUNTRY INFO

## Time

Fiji follows GMT + 12:00. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit will be 16 hours ahead of East Coast time, and 19 hours ahead of West Coast time.

## Electricity

Fiji uses a standard of 240V, 50Hz, and plug Type I. The following images show the type of plugs, sockets, and adapters you can use while traveling in Fiji. To keep your electronics working safely, we suggest purchasing a universal plug.



## Water & Food Safety

Tap water is not safe to drink in Fiji. We strongly recommend not drinking tap water anywhere in Fiji unless boiled or filtered. Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with bottled water, but this is up to personal preference based on how hardy you feel your stomach is. Do not use ice unless you know it was made from bottled water. Clean drinking water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals and water will be available in the van. Be wary of fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in tap water.

Similarly, we recommend travelers eat foods that have been cooked well. Fresh vegetables and fruits bear the risk of having been washed in contaminated water. Fruits you can peel are usually safe (e.g. bananas).

## Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in remote parts of the country, you may be encouraged to throw the toilet paper into the bin provided and not into the toilet itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.

## Waste Disposal

Keep in mind that other parts of the world, waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. Recycling is often unavailable. To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.

- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Fiji has banned plastic bags. It is illegal to produce, sell and use plastic bags. Please back reusable, eco-friendly bags for your trip.

## Local Cuisine & Drink

Like its neighbors in the South Pacific, Fijian food has traditionally centered around a few staple ingredients that are readily available on the archipelago. Rice, sweet potatoes, taro (a tropical root vegetable), coconuts, cassava (a starchy shrub), breadfruit, and of course, fish, have made up the majority of the Fijian diet for centuries. Traditional recipes have been passed down from generation to generation, with many dishes remaining relatively unchanged for centuries. Some must-try traditional meals in Fiji include:

**Lovo:** Lovo is Fiji's answer to the barbecue. The traditional feast of fish, meats and vegetables wrapped in banana leaves is cooked in a makeshift underground oven that is dug into the earth, lined with coconut husks and covered with stones. Lovo meals are traditionally prepared to celebrate significant events in the village, like a wedding or a festival. Today, most resorts offer regular lovo feasts for their guests to enjoy.

**Kokoda:** Just like the Peruvians have ceviche, the Fijians have kokoda - a delicacy made of raw fish marinated in coconut cream, onions, tomatoes and lime. Kokoda is now a staple in any resort restaurant with access to fresh mahi mahi fish (also known as dorado or dolphin fish). Just like if you were eating sushi or sashimi, travelers should make sure that the fish used in kokoda is freshly caught and prepared hygienically.

## Weather Conditions

The Fiji islands boast some of the best weather in the world year-round. Mild and pleasant temperatures of around 25-30 degrees celsius (77-86 degrees Fahrenheit) are common in any given month. While not a drastic change, temperatures can be cooler during the July and August, which are considered winter in the Southern Hemisphere. With cool east winds, temperatures do not become scorching. However, the island's ideal location also prevents the weather from becoming too cold.

As in most places in the tropics, Fiji has a wet season, though it is not as drastic as other areas in the South Pacific and differs by island. Typically, the Fiji islands get the most rain from November to April.

The annual rainfall on the most popular islands is usually around 2540mm (100 in). Some of the smaller islands can receive as little as 1524mm (60 in) of rain per year.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Fiji.

- **Formal Greetings:** A handshake is the normal greeting between people. Indigenous Fijians tend to shake up and down once and then hold the person’s hand for a prolonged time while they exchange pleasantries. During introductions, expect to be asked many questions about your personal life and status as a Fijian gets to know you. Expect a Fijian woman to greet a man verbally and wait for him to extend his hand before offering hers.
- **Respecting Elders:** Chiefs or Fijians that have a high status may have the title “Ratu” for men or “Adi” for women. Address them using the title followed by their first name.
- **Social Norms:** Fijians tend to speak at a softer volume and with a calm tone. It’s uncommon to hear someone raise their voice because they are emotional. People usually only shout to signal and catch someone’s attention across the street, and not in conversation. The head is considered to be the most sacred part of the body. Therefore, it is inappropriate to touch someone else’s. Do not pat or stroke anyone’s head – including children. Fijian women tend to be relatively comfortable touching one another. However, apart from that, there is generally no physical contact between people during interactions. It is generally considered inappropriate for couples to show public displays of affection (especially outside of urban areas).

## Language

In Fiji, the official language is Fijian. however, English and Hindi (a variety much different from that which is spoken in India) are heavily spoken in Fiji. Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it’s always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Fijian. Below are some examples to get you started:

<i>English</i>	<i>Fijian</i>
Hello	Bula (means ‘health’ or ‘life’) - informal
How are you? (informal)	Vacava tiko?
I’m fine	Set Tiko
See you later	Sota tale
Goodbye	Moce (mothay)
Sorry	Vosoti au (vo-so-chee-ow)
Thank you	Vinaka (vee-naka)

Welcome or you're welcome	Sega na lega (senga-na-lenga)
Please	Kerekere (kerry-kerry)
Yes	Io (ee-yo)
No	Sega (senga)
Excuse me	Tulou (too low)
My name is _____.	Na yacaqu o ...
Nice to meet you	Ia bula
Have a good journey!	Vanuinui vinaka e nomu volau
Good morning / afternoon /evening	Yadra / Bula / Moce
I don't understand	Au sa seqa ni kilā
What is your name?	O cei na yacamu?
Where are the restrooms?	I vei na vale lailai

## Photography

Fiji is a beautiful country, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, ["Nine questions to help decolonize your photography"](#).

## Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A "child" is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report

anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email [protect@ecpat.net](mailto:protect@ecpat.net) to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate's values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at [www.elevatedestinations.com](http://www.elevatedestinations.com). Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

## Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [SouthPole Flight's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is not really customary in Fiji and could be considered rude outside of handicraft markets. If a good is priced expect to pay that price. Consider buying from women-led ventures such as Rise Beyond the Reef and Island Handcrafted.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for donations. We try to discourage giving away money or items as it

can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Additionally, children that receive money, gifts, and sweets from you are encouraged to stick around for more, rather than to be in school. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all. If you want to help, consider giving to a trustworthy charity, non-profit, or local school.

- **Tip your housekeeping staff:** Many of the the staff cleaning hotel rooms are on the bottom of the economic pyramid. Please consider leaving a tip before you checkout. The equivalent of \$2 dollars a day is appropriate. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.