

FREE GUIDE · WANDERLUST

Island Hopping **Fiji**

The Mamanucas and Yasawas, the boat passes, manta season, costs on the ground, packing list and arrival basics.



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1 • THE ISLANDS

Two island groups, one boat

You fly into Nadi on Viti Levu, Fiji's main island. The backpacker islands sit off its west coast in two groups, and the same daily catamaran runs through both.

The Mamanuca Islands

The closest islands to Port Denarau, from about half an hour by boat. Small resort islands and sand cays with calm lagoons. Easy day trips, and the right pick when you only have two or three nights.

- South Sea Island: a tiny sand island with a dorm, a day of watersports, and the first stop on many island hops.
- Malamala Beach Club: a beach club on its own island, done as a day trip.

The Yasawa Islands

A chain of volcanic islands running north from the Mamanucas, with steep green hills, long beaches and reefs close to shore. The Yasawa Flyer takes several hours to reach the far north, so plan more nights the further up you go.

- Kuata (south): the guided reef-shark snorkel and a summit hike for sunset.
- Waya: tall peaks and hill walks, just north of Kuata.
- Drawaqa and Nanuya Balavu (middle): the manta ray channel, May to October.
- Nanuya Lailai (north): the Blue Lagoon, white sand and clear, calm water.
- Sawa-i-Lau (far north): limestone caves you swim into, a day trip from the northern resorts.

2 • THE BOAT AND PASSES

How the Yasawa Flyer works

Coach to the marina. A coach collects you from most Nadi, Denarau and Wailoaloa hotels and takes you to Port Denarau.

The Flyer leaves at 8:45am, every day. It runs out through the Mamanucas and up the Yasawa chain, then turns back and is in Port Denarau at about 5:45pm.

Resort boats meet it offshore. Small boats carry you and your bag to the beach. Expect wet feet.

Book moves a day ahead. To change islands, book your next leg and bed at least 24 hours before, through us or the travel desk on board.

Which ticket?

Bula Pass: the boat only

Unlimited hop-on hop-off travel on the Yasawa Flyer for 5 to 15 days, with hotel coach transfers. Beds and meal plans are booked and paid separately, on board or before you go. Best if you want total freedom or already have beds sorted.

[See the Bula Pass and live prices →](#)

Yasawa Pass: the boat plus a bed every night

The same boat for 5 to 15 days, plus a dorm bed or a private room each night at the resorts you choose (up to four nights at each). Booked before you fly, so you never step off at an island with no bed free.

[See the Yasawa Pass and live prices →](#)

Set packages: islands and activities fixed

A route that's already worked out, with set resorts and the paid activities included (caves, manta swim in season, shark snorkel, village visit, depending on the trip). 3 to 12 days, ages 18 and over.

[See Fiji 7 Days, 4 Islands →](#)

A custom package from us

Tell us your dates and vibe and we put the boat, islands, beds and your Nadi nights together as one package price.

[Plan it on the Fiji trip planner →](#)

3 · ISLANDS BY VIBE

Where to go for what

Mantas

Two or three nights on Drawaqa or Nanuya Balavu between May and October. Sightings depend on the day, so more nights means better odds.

Sharks

A night on Kuata for the guided black-tip and white-tip reef-shark snorkel.

[Kuata shark snorkel overnight →](#)

Blue Lagoon and caves

Head north to Nanuya Lailai, and do the Sawa-i-Lau caves from there.

Learn to dive

An Open Water course takes about four nights on one island.

[Learn to dive in Fiji →](#)

Only a few days

Stay in the Mamanucas and the southern Yasawas (South Sea Island, Kuata) so you're not on the boat all day.

[Fiji 4 Days, 2 Islands →](#)

Social

The backpacker resorts on the Flyer route run evening activities, and on a set package you travel the same route as other guests.

4 • WHEN TO GO

May to October is the sweet spot

May to October: the dry season. Calmer seas for the boat, lower humidity, and manta season in the Yasawa channels. It's also the busiest time, so book beds early.

November to April: hotter, wetter and quieter, and the cyclone season. Leave a spare day in case a boat is held for weather, and take travel insurance that covers it.

The water is warm enough to swim all year.

5 • COSTS ON THE GROUND

What you pay in Fiji

Boat passes and packages are paid before you go. These are paid on the islands, on top. Live prices for every Fiji trip we sell are on [Fiji tour prices](#).

Meal plans are compulsory on most islands

Most Yasawa islands have few or no shops or cafes, so each resort sells a daily meal plan and makes it compulsory. You pay it at the resort. Published rates at the backpacker resorts run from about FJ\$135 to FJ\$209 per person per day (to 31 March 2027). Over a week it's often more than the boat pass.

Fuel surcharge, set monthly

The ferry operator adds a fuel surcharge per person, paid at check-in or online before you travel. It's set each month (FJ\$20 per person in October 2026).

Drinks and activities

Unless your package includes them, manta swims, cave trips, dives and village visits are paid as you go.

Your mainland nights

The night you land and the night before you fly aren't part of the island passes. Add a Nadi or Denarau stay, or a departure pack that includes the airport transfer.

Vegetarian, vegan or another dietary need? Tell us when you book and we pass it on to every resort.

6 • MONEY

Cash, cards and ATMs

- Fiji uses the Fiji dollar (FJD). Prices on the islands are in FJD.
- Take out cash at Nadi airport or Port Denarau before you board. Most islands have no ATM.
- Resorts usually take cards for meal plans and activities, sometimes with a surcharge. Keep cash for drinks, village visits and tips.
- Tipping isn't expected in Fiji.

7 • PACKING LIST

What goes in the bag

- ☐ Swimmers (two pairs: nothing dries overnight)
- ☐ Reef-safe sunscreen, hat and sunglasses

- ☐ Rash vest for snorkelling
- ☐ Reef shoes or sandals that can get wet
- ☐ Sarong or light layer that covers shoulders and knees, for village visits
- ☐ Head torch (island paths are dark at night)
- ☐ Australian or NZ plugs work: Fiji uses the same Type I socket
- ☐ Dry bag for the resort boat transfers (you'll often step off into the shallows)
- ☐ Small daypack and a soft 40–60 L bag (easier than a hard case on the small resort boats)
- ☐ Insect repellent and a small first-aid kit
- ☐ Power bank: power can be limited on small islands
- ☐ Cash in FJD for the islands

8 · ARRIVAL BASICS

Landing in Nadi

Visitor permit on arrival

Citizens of visa-exempt countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US, Canada and many European countries, get a visitor permit of up to four months when they land. Check your own passport on Fiji Immigration's list before you book.

Passport and onward ticket

Your passport must be valid for at least six months from the date you arrive, and you need a return or onward ticket. Have your first night's booking handy too.

Arrival card

You fill in an arrival card on the plane or at the airport.

Getting to the boat

The island boats leave from Port Denarau, about 20 minutes from Nadi airport. The Flyer departs early in the morning, so most people spend their first night in Nadi or Denarau, and the passes include a hotel coach to the marina.

Village etiquette

In villages, cover shoulders and knees and take your hat off. If you visit a village, your guide will help with the sevusevu, a small gift of kava root for the chief.

Entry rules can change. Check Fiji Immigration or your government's travel advice (Smartraveller for Australians) before you fly. Guide updated October 2026.

Want it built for you?

Tell us your dates and the vibe. We put the boat, the islands, your beds and your Nadi nights together and email you one package price.

[Plan my Fiji trip](#)

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