



*From the MixCache.com library*

SAMPLE COPY

# Visiting Solomon Islands

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** Getting There
- **Chapter 2** Best Time to Visit
- **Chapter 3** Getting Around
- **Chapter 4** Accommodation
- **Chapter 5** Things to Do and See
- **Chapter 6** Culture and Etiquette ("Kastom")
- **Chapter 7** Food and Drink
- **Chapter 8** Health and Safety
- **Chapter 9** Money and Costs
- **Chapter 10** Communication
- **Chapter 11** Packing Essentials
- **Chapter 12** Sustainable Tourism
- **Chapter 13** Useful Resources
- **Chapter 14** Exploring Guadalcanal
- **Chapter 15** Discovering Western Province
- **Chapter 16** The Allure of Marovo Lagoon
- **Chapter 17** The Rich Culture of Malaita
- **Chapter 18** Unique Landscapes of Rennell and Bellona
- **Chapter 19** Choiseul Province and Beyond
- **Chapter 20** Unveiling WWII History
- **Chapter 21** Adventures in Diving and Snorkeling
- **Chapter 22** Embracing Local Festivals
- **Chapter 23** Conservation and Wildlife Initiatives
- **Chapter 24** Engaging with Local Communities
- **Chapter 25** Final Tips for a Memorable Visit

## Introduction

Welcome to the Solomon Islands, a destination often referred to as the "Hapi Isles" due to its breathtaking landscapes and the warm hospitality of its people. Nestled in the heart of the South Pacific, this enchanting archipelago is home to nearly 1,000 islands, each offering a unique blend of stunning natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and intriguing historical sites. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, history buff, or cultural explorer, the Solomon Islands promise an unforgettable journey filled with discovery, adventure, and relaxation.

The islands' vibrant ecosystems range from lush, mountainous rainforests to serene, sun-kissed coral atolls. For those seeking a slice of paradise, the islands offer unparalleled diving and snorkeling experiences, with some of the world's most pristine and diverse marine life. Beneath the turquoise waters, you'll encounter colorful coral reefs, WWII wrecks teeming with sea life, and the haunting beauty of sunken battle sites. Above water, the Solomon Islands' diverse wildlife includes endemic bird species that will captivate any birdwatcher's heart.

Beyond the allure of its natural environment, the Solomon Islands are a cultural tapestry woven with the heritage of Melanesian traditions. The islands boast more than 70 distinct languages, with each community maintaining its unique customs and way of life. Visitors are invited to experience the living culture of the Solomon Islands through interactions with its people, participation in traditional ceremonies, and the appreciation of local crafts such as intricate wood carvings and vibrant woven textiles.

As you explore the islands, you'll also walk through the echoes of a significant past. The Solomon Islands played a crucial role during World War II, and today, they hold poignant reminders of this turbulent time. Explore historic battlefields and visit memorials that honor the bravery of those who fought, providing deep insights into the profound impact of global conflict on this remote part of the world.

Getting to the Solomon Islands is just the beginning of an extraordinary adventure. While travel logistics can be complex due to the islands' remote nature, each step of the expedition is richly rewarding. This guide intends to equip you with practical knowledge and in-depth insights into the local customs and considerations to ensure an enriching and respectful travel experience.

By the end of your journey through the Solomon Islands, the friendly smiles of islanders and the extraordinary beauty of the land and sea will leave an indelible mark on your heart. This guide aims to help you navigate your travels, ensuring that your visit is not only memorable but also contributes positively to the preservation of the

culture and environment of this remarkable tropical paradise.

SAMPLE COPY

## CHAPTER ONE: Getting There

Your adventure to the Solomon Islands, the truly captivating "Hapi Isles," begins long before you feel the tropical sun warming your skin or dip your toes into the turquoise Pacific waters. Reaching this scattered archipelago requires some planning, as it lies off the main international travel highways. Unlike major global hubs, the Solomons aren't typically serviced by dozens of carriers flying directly from Europe or the Americas. Instead, your journey will likely involve connecting through key airports in the Oceania region. Understanding the routes, requirements, and arrival processes is the first crucial step in ensuring your trip starts smoothly, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience in this unique corner of the world. Think of the journey itself as part of the discovery, a gradual immersion into the pace and pathways of the Pacific.

The primary gateway for international visitors is Honiara International Airport, bearing the code HIR. Located approximately twelve kilometres east of the capital city, Honiara, on the island of Guadalcanal, this airport holds a significant place not just in the nation's transport network but also in world history. Many visitors will recognize its former name, Henderson Field, a key strategic battleground during the intense Guadalcanal Campaign of World War II. While the echoes of history are palpable, today HIR serves as the modern entry point connecting the Solomon Islands to the wider world. Don't expect a sprawling, multi-terminal complex; facilities are relatively basic but functional, reflecting the scale and nature of the country. Prepare for a warm, humid welcome the moment you step off the plane onto the tarmac.

Inside the terminal, the atmosphere is usually busy around flight arrival and departure times. The arrivals hall houses immigration counters, baggage claim, and customs inspection areas. It's wise to have your passport, landing card (usually distributed on the flight), and any other required documentation readily accessible to facilitate a smooth passage through immigration. Given the limited number of international flights per day, processing can sometimes feel a bit slow if multiple flights arrive close together, but officials are generally welcoming. Patience and a friendly demeanour go a long way. Once through formalities, you'll find basic amenities like currency exchange counters, perhaps an ATM (though reliability can vary), and desks for car rental agencies or pre-booked transfers.

Securing your flight tickets is perhaps the most significant pre-trip task. Solomon Airlines, the proud national carrier, is the mainstay of international air links. They operate scheduled services connecting Honiara directly with several key regional cities. Brisbane, Australia (BNE) is the most frequent connection, often serving as the primary hub for travellers coming from further afield. Other direct routes operated by

Solomon Airlines typically include Nadi, Fiji (NAN), Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (POM), and Port Vila, Vanuatu (VLI). These routes provide essential links within Melanesia and connect to broader international networks. Booking directly via the Solomon Airlines website or through reputable travel agents specializing in Pacific travel is recommended.

While Solomon Airlines is the dominant player, other carriers sometimes offer services, often through codeshare agreements or connecting flights. For instance, travellers might fly Qantas or Virgin Australia to Brisbane and then connect onto Solomon Airlines. Similarly, Fiji Airways provides connections via Nadi, linking the Solomon Islands to their extensive network across the Pacific and to North America. Air Niugini offers connections via Port Moresby, particularly relevant for those travelling from or through Papua New Guinea or parts of Asia. It pays to explore various airline combinations when searching for flights, but be mindful of separate tickets versus single bookings, especially regarding baggage allowances and protection in case of delays.

Due to the geographical location, most travellers from Europe, North America, or Asia will inevitably need to transit through one of the regional hubs. Brisbane (BNE) in Australia is a very common transit point. It's a large, modern airport with extensive facilities, making layovers quite comfortable. Nadi (NAN) in Fiji is another crucial hub, particularly for travellers coming from the United States or other Pacific Island nations. Nadi offers a good taste of Pacific hospitality even during transit. Port Moresby (POM) in Papua New Guinea serves as a connection point mainly for those travelling within the region or coming from specific Asian gateways. When booking, pay close attention to layover times; ensure you have sufficient time for transfers, especially if changing airlines or terminals, and factor in potential delays.

Booking your flights well in advance is generally advisable, especially if travelling during peak periods like the Australian/New Zealand school holidays (December-January and mid-year breaks) or major local events. The number of seats into Honiara is limited, and popular flights can fill up quickly. While last-minute deals are rare, being flexible with your travel dates by a few days might sometimes yield lower fares. Also, carefully scrutinize the baggage allowances. International allowances on major carriers flying to the transit hub (e.g., Brisbane or Nadi) might differ significantly from the allowance on the final leg to Honiara operated by Solomon Airlines. It's crucial to check the allowance for *each segment* of your journey to avoid hefty excess baggage fees upon check-in for the final flight.

Now, let's navigate the essential topic of entry permissions: visas. The good news for many potential visitors is that the Solomon Islands offers visa-free entry for tourism purposes to citizens of numerous countries. This typically includes passport holders from most Commonwealth nations (such as Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada), the United States, most European Union member states, and several other countries.

Instead of a formal visa applied for in advance, eligible tourists are usually granted a Visitor's Permit upon arrival at Honiara International Airport. This permit allows you to enter and stay for tourism-related activities.

The initial Visitor's Permit granted on arrival is typically valid for a stay of up to 30 days. It's important to note the duration clearly stamped in your passport by the immigration officer. Should you fall completely under the spell of the Hapi Isles and wish to extend your stay, it is possible. Extensions can be applied for while you are in the Solomon Islands, usually through the Immigration Division office located in Honiara. Extensions are typically granted in increments, allowing a total stay of up to 90 days (three months) within any twelve-month period. Be sure to apply for any extension well before your current permit expires, providing justification and proof of sufficient funds for the additional time. Overstaying your permit is a serious matter and can lead to difficulties.

While many nationalities enjoy visa-free entry, it's absolutely critical to verify the specific requirements for *your* passport well before you plan to travel. Immigration rules can and do change, sometimes with little notice. The most reliable source of information is the official Solomon Islands Government, specifically the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI). Check their website or contact the nearest Solomon Islands diplomatic mission (if one exists in your country or region) for the definitive requirements applicable to your nationality and travel dates. Relying solely on non-official websites or outdated information could lead to problems upon arrival. If your nationality *does* require a visa in advance, ensure you apply with ample processing time.

Beyond visa considerations, all travellers arriving in the Solomon Islands must meet standard international entry requirements. Think of these as your essential checklist before heading to the airport. First and foremost is your passport. It must be valid for at least six months beyond your intended date of *departure* from the Solomon Islands. Ensure it's in good condition - damaged passports can sometimes cause issues - and has at least one completely blank page for entry and exit stamps. Authorities are quite strict about the six-month validity rule, and airlines will likely deny boarding if your passport doesn't comply.

Proof of onward or return travel is another mandatory requirement. You must be able to demonstrate to immigration officials that you have firm plans to leave the Solomon Islands at the end of your permitted stay. This usually takes the form of a confirmed airline ticket originating from the Solomon Islands to another country. If arriving by private yacht, you'll need to show your clearance documentation and plans for departure. The rationale is to ensure visitors do not intend to stay indefinitely without proper authorization. Keep a printed copy or readily accessible electronic version of your outbound ticket confirmation.

You must also be able to demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to support yourself financially during your stay in the Solomon Islands. There isn't usually a specific fixed amount required per day, but immigration officers have the right to ask for proof. This could involve showing bank statements, a credit card with a reasonable limit, or a sufficient amount of cash (though carrying excessive cash isn't advisable for safety reasons). Essentially, they need to be satisfied that you won't become destitute and reliant on local resources. Having pre-booked accommodation, especially for the first few nights, can also help demonstrate your preparedness.

Health requirements are a vital consideration. While specific requirements can fluctuate based on global health situations, it's always wise to check for any mandatory vaccination certificates needed for entry. Historically, proof of yellow fever vaccination might be required if arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Proof of measles vaccination has also been recommended or required at times due to past outbreaks in the Pacific. More recently, COVID-19 vaccination requirements have been implemented and then sometimes relaxed; it is absolutely essential to verify the *current* rules through official Solomon Islands health and immigration channels, and also check with your airline, as they enforce these rules at check-in. Don't rely on anecdotal evidence; check official sources just before you travel.

For the adventurous souls arriving by private yacht or sailboat, the entry process involves specific maritime protocols. You cannot simply sail into any lagoon and drop anchor. Yachts must enter the Solomon Islands through designated official ports of entry. Key ports typically include Honiara on Guadalcanal, Gizo in the Western Province, and Noro, also in the Western Province. It's crucial to confirm the current list of designated ports before setting sail. Furthermore, you must apply for your Visitor's Permit(s) for all crew and passengers *in advance* through Solomon Islands Immigration. This cannot usually be done upon arrival by sea.

Upon reaching a designated port, yachts must fly the yellow quarantine flag ('Q' flag) and notify the relevant authorities – typically Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine/Biosecurity – of their arrival immediately. Do not allow anyone ashore or invite anyone onboard (except officials) until the vessel has been formally cleared. You will need to present ship's papers (registration), clearance documentation from your last port of call, crew and passenger lists, passports, and completed arrival forms. Adherence to these procedures is taken seriously, and failure to comply can result in significant penalties or refusal of entry. Planning and communication with authorities prior to arrival are highly recommended for a smooth maritime entry.

Once you've cleared immigration, regardless of whether you arrived by air or sea, the next step is typically Customs and Quarantine inspection. Like all countries, the Solomon Islands has rules about what you can and cannot bring in. You will likely be

given a declaration form (often on the aircraft or vessel before arrival) where you must declare any goods that might be subject to duty, restricted, or prohibited. It is crucial to fill this out accurately and honestly. Prohibited items typically include illicit drugs, weapons, firearms (without specific permits), and certain types of offensive material. Attempting to import these carries severe penalties.

Certain goods are restricted, meaning they might be allowed in but are subject to specific limits, duties, or require permits. This often includes significant quantities of alcohol and tobacco beyond the standard duty-free allowance (check current limits before travel). More critically for an island nation with unique ecosystems, quarantine regulations are strictly enforced to protect local agriculture and wildlife from imported pests and diseases. You **MUST** declare all food items (including commercially packaged snacks, fruits, meats, dairy), plant material (seeds, wooden items), and animal products. Even muddy hiking boots or used camping gear might require inspection and possibly cleaning. Be meticulous in your declarations; it's far better to declare something and have it inspected than to risk fines or confiscation for failing to declare.

Biosecurity officers are vigilant about protecting the islands. They may inspect your baggage, particularly if you declare relevant items or if they have reason for suspicion. Items deemed a risk might be confiscated or require treatment (at your expense). Common items travellers forget to declare include things like honey, certain wooden souvenirs from previous destinations, or even leftover fruit from the flight. Just declare everything you are unsure about. The process is usually straightforward if you are honest. After clearing these final hurdles, you'll officially be admitted into the Solomon Islands, ready to collect your luggage (if arriving by air) and embark on the next stage of your adventure.

Finally, having navigated the international arrival process at HIR, your immediate next step will be getting from the airport to your accommodation in Honiara or perhaps connecting to a domestic flight for onward travel to other provinces. Chapter Three delves into the specifics of "Getting Around" within the Solomon Islands, covering domestic flights, ferries, taxis, and minibuses. However, be aware upon exiting the customs hall at HIR that transport options will be waiting. Taxis are readily available, though fares should be agreed upon beforehand. Some hotels offer pre-booked airport transfer services, which can be a convenient, albeit sometimes more expensive, option. If you're connecting immediately to a domestic flight (operated from the same airport complex), ensure you know the check-in time and location for Solomon Airlines' domestic services. The relative proximity of the airport to Honiara city means the journey typically takes around 20-30 minutes, depending on traffic, allowing you to quickly transition from traveller to explorer.

---

*This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.*

Visit [MixCache.com](https://MixCache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY