



HA'APAI 11-DAY TROPICAL EXPEDITION

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

FRIENDLY ISLANDS KAYAK COMPANY LTD
9486 Glenelg Avenue, North Saanich, British Columbia V8L 5G9
Phone: +1 778 533 3196
Email: tours@fikco.com • Website: <http://www.fikco.com>

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

- Day 1** Arrival. Orientation talk. Overnight at Evaloni's Guesthouse or Lindsay Guesthouse (subject to availability).
- Days 2-10** Safety briefing. Eight days kayaking and 8 nights camping in the Lifuka Archipelago. Celebratory dinner on Day 9 at Serenity Beaches Resort.
- Day 10** Overnight at Evaloni's Guesthouse or Lindsay Guesthouse (subject to availability).
- Day 11** Trip concludes.

INTRODUCTION

Spread across 700,000 square kilometres of ocean, just west of the International Date Line and east of Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga comprises four major island groups. From south to north these are Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niua. A total of 171 mostly raised coral islands (fewer than 40 of them inhabited) cover a total land area of 747 square kilometres. The population of Tonga is estimated to be approximately 106,465, with two thirds of that number living on the main island, Tongatapu. Tongan and English are the official languages, and Tonga boasts a 98.5% literacy rate.

Tonga is unique in that it is the only Polynesian country never to have been colonised as well as the only surviving monarchy in the Pacific. Vava'u and Ha'apai cover approximately the same land area (119 and 110 square kilometres respectively). The populations of Vava'u and Ha'apai are around 20,000 and 5,500 respectively. Vava'u is the water sports capital of the Kingdom with tour operators offering sea kayaking, scuba diving, snorkelling, whale watching, sailing and game fishing tours. The Ha'apai Conservation Area is the largest in the Pacific. The above activities are also offered in Ha'apai though on a smaller scale. Ha'apai is also known for its laid-back atmosphere, traditional way of life and history. Ha'apai is where the Mutiny on the Bounty took place.

LIFUKA ARCHIPELAGO

Situated roughly halfway between Vava'u and Tongatapu, the Ha'apai Islands are everything you might imagine of a tropical island paradise: Remote, uninhabited atolls; expansive, white sand beaches; towering volcanoes; colourful lagoons; balmy breezes; and warm waters teeming with tropical fish. In Ha'apai you will find not only exceptional natural beauty, but also an

uncanny sense of timelessness and the friendliest folk in the Kingdom. Because *papalangis* or foreigners are rare in Ha'apai they are welcomed with open arms by the locals!

It was in Ha'apai that Captain Cook and his crew were invited ashore by the village chiefs for a feast. Unbeknownst to Cook, the chiefs' intention was to seize his ship and include some of his crew in the feast menu! Fortunately the chiefs couldn't agree on the timing of their gruesome plan, and Cook sailed out of the Ha'apai's naming them the Friendly Isles! Ha'apai is also where the Mutiny on the Bounty took place. Captain Bligh and a few of his crew were forced to set off from Tofua Island in a rowboat on what was to become an epic journey.

Owing to its pristine natural environment and fascinating history, the Ha'apai Island Group is a designated Conservation Area. We feel privileged, therefore, to be granted a license to offer kayak tours in the stunning 45 kilometre long Lifuka Archipelago - the heart of Polynesia.

We paddle along the lee side of the Lifuka Archipelago, occasionally venturing offshore into more exposed waters to access remote islands. We strive for a healthy balance between relaxation and adventure, generally paddling in the mornings, leaving the afternoons free for snorkelling amidst colourful coral; exploring lush tropical bush; and observing the traditional village lifestyle.

FITNESS AND EXPERIENCE

Whilst no experience is required for our sea kayak tours, a moderate level of physical fitness and a sense of adventure are important. A typical day entails two to three hours of paddling interspersed with rest stops. The guides endeavour to balance the group by pairing slower paddlers with stronger, more experienced paddlers. However, the slower paddlers always dictate the pace. Base camps offer the luxury of paddling empty kayaks or a lay day for exploring and relaxing. Paddling into 12-18 knot southeasterly trade winds requires extra effort and can make the distance we travel feel longer. Those who engage in regular exercise such as walking, cycling or swimming tend to derive more enjoyment from their adventure. Physical conditioning exercises and camping experience are recommended.

KAYAK GUIDES

A minimum of one Tongan professional guide accompanies all of our trips. Depending on the group size, there is an additional guide (guide:guest ratio

of 1:6). The guides are responsible for making safety related decisions, coordinating logistics and activities, preparing meals as well as interpreting the natural and cultural features of Ha'apai. Our guides lend invaluable local knowledge and cultural flavour to the experience and also offer outdoor safety, first aid and risk management expertise.

SEA KAYAKING

The concept of sea kayaking is still new to many people, who may have visions of paddling in small unstable kayaks typically used on river trips. In contrast, we use stable, seaworthy double kayaks (Necky Tofino) especially suited to novices and the ocean environment. No previous kayaking experience is required, but a moderate level of fitness is necessary. Non-swimmers are welcome since everyone is required to wear a life vest. The issuing of single kayaks (Necky Arluk III, Quality Kayaks Southern Aurora and Puffin) is at the guides' discretion as this depends not only on the paddler's ability, but also on weather, sea conditions and group composition.

Your guides cover boat handling basics; paddling strokes; use of the foot-controlled rudder; boat entries and exits; and rescue procedures in the protected warm waters of the Port of Refuge. They also cover trip safety and carry a cell phone and flares for emergency use. Sea kayaking is a very safe sport when conducted properly. The expedition always paddles as a group, but there is still ample opportunity for individuals to enjoy their personal space on land if so desired. Certain rules of sea kayaking must be agreed to and observed by all trip participants to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment. We discuss these rules and why they are necessary as well as contingency plans. We do everything reasonable to minimize the risks of this outdoor pursuit to ensure your safety and expect you to do the same.

AIR TRAVEL TO HA'APAI

Flight services to and within Tonga are subject to change and should be confirmed by your local travel/booking agent. Tonga's domestic airline, Real Tonga, has an inter-island flight service to Ha'apai from the main island of Tongatapu. A minimum of 2 hours connection time between your international flights and domestic flight within Tonga is advisable.

Air New Zealand: From Auckland to Tongatapu x 6 flights per week (Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat)

Virgin Australia: From Auckland to Tongatapu x 5 flights per week (Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu)

	From Sydney to Tongatapu x 4 flights per week (Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu)
Fiji Airways:	From Auckland to Tongatapu x 4 flights per week (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat) From Nadi to Tongatapu x 6 flights per week (Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat) From Nadi to Vava'u x 2 flights per week (Wed, Sat) and additional flight(s) if sufficient demand (Tue, Thu)
Real Tonga:	Between Tongatapu/Vava'u/Ha'apai (Mon-Sat) Website: http://www.realtonga.to Email: info@realtonga.to Phone: +676 23777

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Note: The following sample itinerary is subject to alterations and delays owing to weather, sea conditions and/or logistical considerations.

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Day 1: Arrival / Orientation

Meals: On own.

Accommodation: Evaloni's Guesthouse or Lindsay Guesthouse (subject to availability).

A driver awaits your arrival at Salote Pilolevu Airport on Lifuka Island, Ha'apai and transfers you to your accommodation. Shortly after check-in, your guide welcomes you and confirms the time (normally 4:00pm) and venue for this afternoon's 45-minute orientation briefing. It is important that all participants attend this informative talk.

Day 2: Kayaking

Meals: L, D (B on own).

Destination: Uoleva Island.

Paddling Time: 3-4 hours.

Transport departs early this morning (exact time is tide-dependent) from your accommodation property to our launching site. Here, the guides give a safety briefing before departing for the first of eight nights of camping in the Lifuka Archipelago. We paddle along the leeward shores of Lifuka and Uoleva Islands, skirting pristine reefs and beaches. Tonight's camp is at the southern end of Uoleva Island, rated by Outside Magazine amongst the top

ten most beautiful beaches in the world! Here, too, is a magnificent ledge smothered in soft corals - a snorkeller's paradise.

Day 3: Kayaking

Meals: B, L, D.

Destination: Tatafa Island / Uiha Island.

Paddling Time: 2-3 hours.

At slack tide, we paddle across a wide channel to Tatafa, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by locals. Here, we stretch our legs and have a snack before paddling eastward to neighbouring Uiha Island. The view from our campsite on the southern tip of Uiha affords a preview of the alluring southern Lifuka Islands. This afternoon we explore Felemea village, a quaint fishing village, and re-supply with fresh water in anticipation of spending the next few days, weather and other environmental conditions permitting, in the remotest part of the Archipelago.

Day 4: Kayaking

Meals: B, L, D.

Destination: Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp).

Paddling Time: 3-4 hours.

Our paddle plan today is southward along the inside of a fringing reef across shallow aqua waters to Uanukuhahaki Island, nesting grounds for the green turtle. Base camping three nights on Unanuku allows us to fully enjoy the remoteness of this idyllic South Pacific Island.

Day 5: Kayaking

Meals: B, L, D.

Destination: Uanukuhifo Island / Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp).

Paddling Time: 2-3 hours.

We can snorkel for hours on end in the crystal clear waters, a virtual aquarium of colourful reef fish, off Uanuku. This remote, uninhabited island, our favourite in the Archipelago, is definitely not in the guidebooks! Nor is Uanukuhifo Island, a short paddle southward. Whilst paddling, we may be fortunate to sight turtles, dolphins, and humpback whales, the latter of which migrate annually (July through October) to Tonga's warm sheltered waters to breed and calve.

Day 6: Lay Day**Meals:** B, L, D.**Destination:** Uanukuhahaki Island (Base Camp).

Today, Sunday, is by Tongan law a day of rest and worship. Tour operators are not permitted to offer guided physical activities anywhere within the Kingdom on a Sunday. Bathing in the warm sea, beachcombing, reading, eating and socializing are pleasant diversions on this enforced lay day.

Day 7: Kayaking**Meals:** B, L, D.**Destination:** Tatafa Island**Paddling Time:** 4-5 hours.

Retracing our paddle strokes, we return to Uiha Island and re-provision with fresh rainwater. Tonight's camp is on the adjacent uninhabited island of Tatafa, from where your guides may conveniently assess the sea conditions for our channel crossing tomorrow morning. Troll with a hand line for long tom or snapper on the way back to camp. If you or your guides catch fish along the way you can look forward to helping prepare a traditional underground 'umu feast.

Day 8: Kayaking**Meals:** B, L, D.**Destination:** Luangahu Island / Uoleva Island (Base Camp).**Paddling Time:** 2-3 hours.

This morning we break camp and paddle offshore to Luangahu, a tiny uninhabited island visited only by local fishermen and nesting sea snakes whose presence precludes camping on the island! After a picnic lunch, we circumnavigate the island on foot observing makeshift fishermen's shelters and octopus drying trees. Those with sharp eyes may find remnants of whalebone in the sand dunes from Tonga's whaling days. Following a refreshing swim and snorkel, we paddle northward to Uoleva Island.

Day 9: Kayaking**Meals:** B, L, D.**Destination:** Uoleva Island (Base Camp).**Paddling Time:** 1 hour.

Take advantage of today's more relaxed pace to explore Uoleva Island. In the cooler hours of the morning stretch your legs with a walk through low-lying bush to the windward side of the island. After lunch, join an optional

paddle across the bay to Taina's Beach Resort situated at the tip of a beautiful white sand crescent beach. Back at camp, snorkel a reef drop-off at the edge of Auhangamea channel. Confident swimmers may follow the guides on a drift snorkel along this spectacular coral wall. There are also pockets of coral and reef fish closer to shore for the less confident snorkeller. A stroll down the beach takes us to Serenity Beaches Resort, a boutique eco-resort, for sunset drinks and dinner featuring fresh seafood and locally grown organic foods.

Day 10: Kayaking

Meals: B, L (D on own).

Destination: Lifuka Island.

Paddling Time: 3-4 hours.

Accommodation: Evaloni's Guesthouse or Lindsay Guesthouse (subject to availability).

On this final day of paddling, we retrace our strokes and paddle northward skirting Uoleva and Lifuka Islands villages back to Pangai where we started our journey nine days ago. From here, transfer by taxi back to your accommodation.

Day 11: Departure

Meals: On own.

The trip concludes today with a transfer to Salote Pilolevu Airport.

Tour Cost: FIKCO reserves the right to amend the tour cost to reflect significant increases in exchange rates, airport transfers, accommodation rates, meal charges and/or any other ground costs beyond our control. However, once we receive a tour deposit, the tour cost will not alter.

Single Supplement: Applies to single participants if they prefer a private room or if we are unable to pair them with another participant.

CAMP ORGANIZATION

On the first camping day the guides orient participants to the camp kitchen and protocol for erecting and breaking camp. The more assistance with camp duties rendered, the quicker meals are served and the earlier the group gets out on the water each day. We typically aim to be on the water by 9:30 a.m. in order to take advantage of the cool morning hours for paddling and to reach our camp by lunchtime.

On arrival at camp the guides require assistance erecting the overhead tarpaulin; hanging up life vests and spray skirts; and unloading the kayaks. Once these duties are completed, everyone is free to pitch their tents. Assistance with meal preparation and dish washing is not expected but always appreciated. Packing bags and tents prior to breakfast makes the job of breaking camp more efficient.

MEALS ON TOUR

Snacks and three meals per day are provided, beginning with lunch on Day 2 and ending with lunch on Day 10. Our camp food has an international theme so you are likely to find Thai, Indonesian, Italian, Mexican and, of course, Polynesian cuisine on the menu. The meals are predominantly vegetarian supplemented with fresh fish. We try to make extensive use of the delicious tropical fruits and vegetables and fresh seafood caught by our Tongan guides. We also try our best to please every palate. Please let us know well in advance of the tour of any food and/or drink allergies and/or dislikes.

FOOD AND WATER

There is a wide selection of eateries in Tonga. In Nuku'alofa (Tongatapu), we recommend Café Reef, Fakalato Restaurant, Fresh Juice Bar, Friends Café, Little Italy Pizzeria, Lunarossa, Seaview, Taste of India, The Two Sisters and Waterfront Café. In and around Neiafu (Vava'u), the Basque Tavern, Bella Vista, Café Tropicana, Coffee and Tees, Dancing Rooster, Mango Café, Refuge, Tongan Beach Resort, and Vava'u Villa. In Pangai (Ha'apai), Mariner's Café, and on Foa Island, Matafonua Lodge and Sandy Beach Resort.

The tap water in Tonga is treated well water with a high mineral content, giving it a metallic taste. While the tap water is potable, for people unaccustomed to the local water, it is advisable to drink rainwater or bottled water. Both are readily available on request at shops, restaurants and accommodation properties.

We re-provision with water from cement tanks at outer island villages. The water is untreated rainwater collected from roofs and stored in cement holding tanks. We have never encountered a problem on tour with water-borne diseases or infections.

There are no waterfalls, rivers or lakes in Tonga and so on tour we bathe and wash laundry in the sea with biodegradable saltwater shampoo or soap.

Provided there is not a drought, we fill solar shower bags with rainwater from the villages.

ACCOMMODATION

Tour package accommodation is based on double occupancy. A single supplement applies to those who prefer a private fale/room or who cannot be paired with another single participant. Let us know if you wish to upgrade to a beachfront resort and we will provide a quote. If you plan to extend your stay in Tonga and/or need to overnight in Tongatapu, please advise us of your accommodation requirements in advance and we will be happy to book on your behalf. For details and images of our preferred properties please refer to our web site <http://www.fikco.com/tours-accommodation.html>.

Self-inflating mattresses and two-door tents with mosquito screening are provided on the camping portion of the tour.

Contact details for the package accommodation properties are as follows:

Evaloni Guesthouse

Phone: +676 60029

Lindsay Guesthouse

Phone: +676 60107 or +676 60667

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Visitors who observe Tongan codes of behaviour are more likely to be accepted. Respect is extremely important within the Tongan culture. A clean, modest appearance signifies respect for oneself and for others. Women are advised to dress conservatively (i.e. high necklines, covered shoulders, loose skirts, dresses or slacks) in the villages. Low-cut tops, sheer and or tight clothing should be avoided. Swimsuits are acceptable on the beach, but covering up with a *lava-lava* (wrap-around cloth) is a polite gesture to approaching villagers. Men should wear long shorts in the daytime and long pants or a *lava-lava* in the evening. Men are required by law to wear a shirt in public except when on the beach. Footwear is removed before entering a Tongan *fale* (home).

The Tongan way when sitting on the floor is for men to sit cross-legged and women side saddle. Tongans typically eat with their hands - either hand is acceptable. Note that it is considered rude in Tonga to sit with one's knees drawn towards one's chest. As a show of respect to us, Tongan hosts

withdraw while their honoured guests eat. It is also customary in Tonga to provide considerably more food than their guests could possibly eat.

It is advisable to maintain a low profile until outside village areas, especially on Sunday when physical and commercial activities, noise and fishing are prohibited.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In an effort to preserve Tonga's natural environment, Friendly Islands Kayak Company strives to promote environmental sensitivity and minimize our impact on the marine and terrestrial environment. To this end, your guides impart our company's minimum impact guidelines with respect to waste disposal and conservation of reefs, marine life, flora and fauna. We carry out all non-decomposable rubbish.

Snorkellers are briefed on correct use of their fins and the importance of not touching the fragile reefs.

We employ a variety of methods for disposing of human waste. On most islands the guides dig a pit toilet within 50-75 metres of camp. Given that our campsites are not used year 'round we consider this method to be the best compromise. We generally use the inter-tidal zone at night.

CLIMATE

The climate of Tonga is very pleasant, being slightly cooler and less humid than most tropical areas. From June to November temperatures range from 22° to 30°C; the mean humidity hovers around 74%; and the south- easterly trade winds average 12-18 knots - ideal weather for paddling and camping.

During the wetter summer months (December to May) the weather is hotter (25-32 degrees C), more humid and changeable with an increased risk of tropical cyclones. Most cyclones either brush past Tonga leaving little or no damage or miss Tonga altogether.

TIME AND COMMUNICATION

Tonga is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. International phone calls may be placed from Tonga Telecommunications in Pangai township where 'phone cards may also be purchased. There are currently two cell phone networks in Tonga: Digicel and Vodafone. You will need to confirm with your cell phone provider whether your phone is unlocked and if you can use a Tonga SIM card.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The national currency of Tonga is the pa'anga (currency code TOP) divided into 100 seniti. Check for exchange rates either online www.xe.com or with your bank. If you have not already exchanged your money by the time you arrive in Ha'apai, you can do so at Westpac Bank of Tonga in Pangai Monday to Friday 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. and Saturday 8:00a.m. to 11:00a.m. There is no ATM machine in Ha'apai. The larger accommodation properties, tour operators and restaurants accept MasterCard and VISA. A 4.5% - 5% credit card surcharge usually applies. Most other businesses in Tonga accept cash (TOP\$) only.

BUDGETTING

Consider bringing TOP\$50-\$100 in small denominations on the kayak tour for purchasing handicrafts direct from the villagers and drinks at outer island resorts. Budget TOP\$100-\$125 pa'anga per day for meals (not including alcohol) off tour and for taxis in the capital, Nuku'alofa.

PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry to the Kingdom. On arrival you must present an onward ticket in order to be granted a 30-day visitor visa.

VISAS

You do not need a visa prior to arrival if you are a citizen of the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Finland, France, French Polynesia (New Caledonia, Tahiti, Wallis & Futuna), Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kirabati, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland, The Bahamas, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu.

All other nationalities require a visa prior to arrival. This can be obtained by contacting the Immigration Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tonga:

visatonga@gmail.com. You may be able to extend your stay for up to 6 months if you are able to provide evidence of sufficient funds.

AIRPORT TAXES, EXCESS BAGGAGE FEES & SHUTTLES

Airport taxes and excess baggage fees are your responsibility and are not included in the trip cost. Departure tax is included in the cost of all air tickets.

The maximum baggage allowance for inter-island flights within Tonga is 23 kg for passengers holding international tickets valid within 24 hours of travel. Excess luggage between Tongatapu and Ha'apai up to 5kg is subject to a surcharge of TOP\$10 minimum and T\$3 per additional kg and may have to travel unaccompanied. Please refer to Real Tonga's website www.realtonga.to for excess baggage charges on other inter-island routes (e.g. between Tongatapu and Vava'u and between Ha'apai and Vava'u).

The waiting areas at the domestic and international terminals in Tonga can be breezy and cool particularly at night so have a fleece and or windbreaker handy (i.e. in your carry-on luggage). While security guards patrol these waiting areas, never leave luggage unattended.

Local taxis operate a shuttle service between the international and domestic terminals in Tongatapu for every inbound and outbound international flight (including those that arrive/depart at night or in the early hours of the morning). A one-way taxi fare is approximately T\$10 pa'anga per person.

TIPPING

Tipping is not customary in Tonga, but is not considered offensive either. In fact, the local people graciously accept tips. A guideline for tipping guides would be TOP\$4 to \$5 per day per guide.

GIFTS

Tongans are exceptionally generous, and gift giving is a central feature of their culture. If you wish, bring a few small gifts such as T-shirts, postcards, photos, lapel pins, hair ties, hats, watches, yoyos, washable tattoos, kites, lighters, fishing tackle and pocket-sized games. Since educational resources are in short supply in the outer island schools, the children and teachers also greatly appreciate receiving pens, pencils, stationary and primary level readers (books).

SECURITY

Theft is uncommon in Tonga. However, in a culture where "what's mine is yours" and items are "borrowed" indefinitely, unattended personal belongings and valuables are at risk. We recommend you bring your passport and airline tickets in a dry bag on the kayak trip so that, in the unlikely event of evacuation, your guides can readily access these documents.

MEDICAL MATTERS

Medical Forms

Every trip participant must provide an accurately completed medical form. Participants aged 65 years and over must also provide a medical certificate.

Vaccinations

No statutory vaccinations are required for entry into Tonga. However, we require every participant to have a current tetanus vaccination and recommend vaccinations against hepatitis and typhoid.

Dengue Fever & Zika Virus

Dengue fever outbreaks can occur during the summer months (December-May) when the weather is hot and humid and when there is a high prevalence of mosquitoes. Zika virus is also present in Tonga. The symptoms of Zika virus are similar to those of Dengue fever and the same protection measures apply. Pregnant women should take extra care to protect themselves from mosquito bites. So long as our guests take sensible precautions the risk of exposure is minimal. These include regular applications of insect repellent and, where possible, avoiding sheltered areas outdoors and dark corners indoors. Other precautions include covering up as much as possible e.g. wearing long sleeved tops, socks, trousers etc. Our tents and the rooms at our preferred accommodation properties all have mosquito screening. Our guides select breezy campsites to keep the mosquitoes at bay.

Medication

Please advise us of any medication you are taking and any possible side effects. Bring an adequate supply of medication, as certain drugs are difficult to obtain in Tonga. Also consider giving half to your trip leader for safekeeping in case your supply gets lost or wet. Most paddlers are not troubled by seasickness, but if it is of concern to you your doctor can recommend medication to help. Be sure to let us know if seasickness is a problem for you.

Dental

As Tonga's dental facilities are basic it is advisable to have a dental check-up prior to departing your country of origin.

Hospitals

Vaiola Hospital in Tongatapu, Niu'ui Hospital in Pangai (Ha'apai) and Prince Wellington Ngu Hospital in Neiafu (Vava'u) are experienced with cuts, fractures, and tropical disorders. For most other conditions it is advisable to seek diagnosis and treatment in your own country. Ensure that your travel insurance policy includes comprehensive medical cover including evacuation insurance.

Medical Supplies

Although your guides will be carrying a comprehensive first aid kit, all tour participants are encouraged to bring a basic personal first aid kit including the following items: :

- Medication (including pain relief & preventative drugs such as a mild anti-nausea drug)
- Antiseptic swabs and cream
- Anti-histamine cream (for insect bites)
- Antibiotic cream or powder (powder is best in the humid tropical climate)
- Fabric plasters (more waterproof than plastic plasters)
- Lip sunscreen
- Environmentally friendly sunscreen
- Insect repellent (DEET is the most effective)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographic opportunities abound in Tonga! Tongan people are very photogenic and enjoy having their photo taken except when they are eating. Asking their permission first is a polite gesture. A zoom lens is handy especially for photographing whales. However, bear in mind that the humidity and salt water can damage camera lenses and electronics. For this reason, some prefer to leave their expensive camera at home and bring an inexpensive disposable or waterproof camera instead. If you do decide to bring an expensive camera, store it in a dry bag or waterproof case with silicon packs and insure your camera.

GEAR AND CLOTHING

Large dry bags, duffel bags and backpacks cannot be accommodated in the kayak hatches. Please bring no more than 2 medium sized (20L-25L) dry bags per person - one for clothing; the other for miscellaneous items - plus one small (10L) dry bag per person for items you need to access in the cockpit (e.g. wallet, documents, sun screen etc.). A mesh bag containing your snorkelling gear is additional to the above items. Nylon stuff sacs lined with heavy-duty rubbish bags are a more affordable option if you do not already have dry bags. However, a dry bag for the cockpit is essential. Camera and optical equipment should be waterproofed and insured.

Quick-dry clothing is recommended for Tonga's warm tropical climate. Long-sleeved shirts with a collar offer good sun protection. *Lava-lavas* (2 metre wrap-around cloth) may be purchased in Tonga. It is a good idea to bring along two *lava-lavas*, one for wearing over shorts or a swimsuit when entering villages and a clean one for other occasions.

If you have any questions about clothing or equipment, consult your local canoe or outdoor equipment retailer or contact us. Any excess baggage can be left at your own risk at our base, which is unoccupied overnight.

A checklist of recommended and optional personal equipment follows on the next page.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST ✓**Essential Items**

- Passport
- Cash (pa'anga); EFT-POS card
- Basic first aid kit
- Toiletries
- Toilet paper (preferably unbleached)
- Sun screen (SPF15+)
- Lip screen (SPF15+)
- Insect repellent (DEET most effective)
- Sun hat (stiff brimmed) with chin strap
- Sunglasses (polarized) with neck strap
- Pack towel (compact, absorbent, quick dry microfibre)
- Drink bottle (1-2 litres)
- Lycra swimsuit, sports bra & briefs
- Lightweight rain jacket with hood
- Lightweight fleece jacket
- Cotton/quick-dry T-shirts (long & short sleeved)
- Quick dry shorts & long pants
- Lava-lava* (can be purchased in Tonga)
- Cotton socks & underwear
- Cotton bandanna, hankie
- Sturdy sandals
- Sheet, lightweight sleeping bag (June-Oct)
- Snorkelling gear (prescription lenses for mask) & mesh carry bag
- Up to 3 dry bags or nylon stuff sacs per person (2 x 20L-25L and 1 x 10L)
- Heavy-duty rubbish bags (for lining stuff sacs)
- Waist pack
- Ziploc bags (medium & large)
- Flashlight/headlamp, spare batteries

Optional Items

- Binoculars
- Hand sanitizer, wet wipes
- Talcum powder and/or Vaseline (for preventing chafing)
- Camera, spare batteries
- Favourite snacks, drink crystals
- Fishing lures & hand line
- Pocket knife
- Sewing/repair kit
- Reading & writing materials
- Calf-length skirt/dress
- Half wetsuit 3mm (June-Sept)
- Cycling gloves (without fingers)
- Reef shoes or old running shoes (for intertidal walks)
- Rubber sandals/thongs
- Clothes line & pegs
- Lighter

PACKAGE COMPONENTS

Your trip includes the following services:

- Airport transfers & transfers to/from activities
- Two nights guesthouse accommodation
- A 45-minute orientation talk
- 8 days kayaking with professional guides (guide:guest ratio = 1:6)
- 8 nights camping including tents and mattresses
- Snacks and 3 meals per day on tour
- A celebratory dinner at an outer island resort

NON-INCLUSIVE SERVICES

The following services are not included in your trip package:

- International and domestic airfares
- Airport departure taxes
- Visa and passport fees
- Personal travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Airport transfers that are not included in the above itinerary
- Accommodations that are not included in the above itinerary
- Single supplement fee
- Beverages and meals that are not included in the above itinerary
- Clothing, liquor, laundry, postage, medical expenses and any other expenses of a personal nature
- Expenses incurred as a result of delays due to inclement weather, delays of scheduled aircraft, logistical delays, and resultant changes to the itinerary
- Emergency evacuation charges
- Gratuities

ITINERARY CHANGES AND/OR DELAYS

It is possible that route or itinerary changes and/or delays may become necessary for reasons of safety or enhancing the quality of the trip. These disruptions could be due to inclement weather, acts of God, delayed transport, political or cultural considerations, government restrictions, participants' limitations, or any other cause. If our return from the kayak trip is delayed, Friendly Islands Kayak Company will continue to provide all camping and food needs in the outer islands. In the event we are unable to paddle, we will endeavour to offer alternate activities (e.g. snorkelling, bush walks, land tours, village tours).

The trip participant shall be responsible for any additional expenses such as accommodation, meals, transport, prepaid airline tickets, fees for visas, etc. in connection with changes and/or delays to a route or itinerary.

If possible, ensure some degree of flexibility in your travel plans. A sense of adventure and tolerance for the unexpected are essential attributes when visiting developing nations such as Tonga where "Tonga Time" is synonymous with delays and waiting.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Personal travel insurance is not included in the trip cost and is a prerequisite for trip participation. We recommend you purchase a comprehensive policy that includes insurance for flight and trip itinerary changes, delays or cancellations (in particular due to severe weather) and medical cover including evacuation insurance.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS & DELAYS EN ROUTE

In the event of an emergency within Tonga or you are delayed en route, contact Friendly Islands Kayak Company on the following mobile numbers:

Tonga Office: +676 874 8506

Canada Office: +1 778 533 3196

Be prepared to leave your name, a **telephone number where you can be reached** and a detailed message. We will forward your information onto our team in Vava'u and, if need be, get back to you as soon as possible.

FINAL NOTE

There will undoubtedly be further communiqués from us in the months to come as the trip departure date draws closer. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to let us know your concerns, questions and plans.