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LAUTOKA TO PAPEETE LUXURY CRUISE

The beaches of the South Pacific are legendary. But, there is far more to these islands than perfect palm trees and waters so blue they glow. This two-week voyage to Fiji, Tonga, the Cook Islands and French Polynesia delves deep into the lifestyles of the locals. Discover a wealth of island community that tourists don't usually see, swim in the tropical waters teeming with sea life, walk amongst the lush vegetation and learn all about these eco-systems from our onboard biologists.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Pre cruise

Day 2 Lautoka FIJI

It doesn't get much sweeter than arriving on the sun-soaked shores of the Sugar City. Fiji's second-biggest settlement opens up a world of blissful beaches and turquoise seascapes, while its dense jungle lures the adventurous deep into its embrace.

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Step ashore where the first Fijians landed, and you'll understand instantly why they chose to make this island paradise their heavenly home. Experience rich Fijian life, and see dramatic displays like warrior dances, and remarkable local practices like firewalks, which kick up burning embers into the night's sky. Legend says the city took its name after two chiefs faced each other in a duel. A spear pierced one of the chiefs, leading to the shout of 'lau-toka!' or 'spear hit!' Sugar is Lautoka's main trade, but its botanical gardens are a sweet insight into the tropical plant life that thrives here - from pearl white lilies to tall, fragrant orchids. Explore temples, charming cafes and mills - or barter for some of the juiciest mangoes you'll ever taste at the city's lively market. You'll only be able to resist the beaches for so long, and it doesn't get much more stunning than the Blue Lagoon - a heavenly blend of woven together turquoise shades. Remote, wild and unspoiled, these are some of the best tropical beaches in the world. There's more rejuvenating relaxation at the mineral-rich mud pools and spas, fuelled by the volcanic activity below. Savala Island is a teardrop of sand offshore, and another beautiful place to wander with the soft powder between your toes - along sandy spits that peter out into the water. Or swim and snorkel among its envied reefs, thronging with fish life.

Day 3 Levuka, Ovalau FIJI & Leleuvia Island FIJI

Levuka highlights both the historical and natural aspects of Fiji. The small island of Ovalau is located off the east coast of Viti Levu. The quaint town of Levuka has the honour of having been Fiji's very first capital where King Cakobau reigned and where the deed of cession to Queen Victoria was signed in 1874. Many of the old buildings in the town have remained nearly unchanged since the late 1800s. Here one can find Fiji's first government school, the popular Ovalau Club, and the "Cession

Stone" commemorating the signing of the Deed of Cession. Just outside the city, it is possible to hike through pristine rainforest and take in the magnificent natural beauty of the surrounding area. Leleuvia is a small low-lying island southeast of Ovalau with a length of barely 500 meters. Situated between the chiefly island of Bau, Moturiki and Ovalau, almost equidistant from Ovalau and the Central Eastern coast of Viti Levu, this lush, green island hosts a small resort. An easily accessible reef with many colorful reef fish 10 meters off of Leleuvia's western beach invites to be explored. Resident sea kraits are often seen resting ashore north of the small pier. Despite its small size and the resort on its southern side, the island still has quite an extensive forest of tamanu (Alexandrian laurel), lantern trees, fish-poison trees and beach gardenia. There are also local clusters of beach hibiscus, beach heliotrope and Pacific rosewood where Sacred Kingfishers, Orange-breasted Honeyeaters, and Pacific Swallows have been recorded.

Day 4 Vanua Balavu, Lau Islands FIJI

East of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu, Vanua Balavu, the third largest of the Lau Islands, is part of Fiji's Eastern Division. The island is protected by a barrier reef of some 130 kilometres in length. The enclosed lagoon area promises excellent snorkelling while the reef keeps larger ships at bay. Vanua Balavu has a special geological set-up: it has a volcanic part in the south and uplifted coral in the north, even hot springs and limestone caves exist. 17 villages with a total of roughly 1200 inhabitants are found along the shore of the island. Lomaloma is the island's main village with schools, a post office, police station and a small hospital. As the Lau Group was once under Tongan rule, with the Tongan chief Ma'afu residing in the village of Lomaloma, folkloric presentations feature Fijian and Tongan music and



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dance and have formed a special union. There still are some 400 Tongans living in the village of Sawana, the southern part of Lomaloma.

Day 5 Ringgold Isles FIJI & Cobia FIJI

Idyllic and picturesque with possibly the lightest, clearest blue waters on the planet, the Ringgold Isles are an archipelago in Fiji that is mostly uninhabited, but for one small village. Tree-lined hills slope down onto white sandy beaches lined with palm trees and interesting rock outcroppings in some areas. Three reefs form part of this group: the Budd, Nukusemanu, and Heemskercq Reefs. The waters surrounding these islands are favored for snorkeling and scuba diving because of their visibility down to 120 feet. Also known as Thombia Island the crescent moon-shaped Cobia Island in Fiji is part of the Ringgold Isles archipelago. The island is teeming with biodiversity on land and underwater. Cobia Island is part of the Budd Reef and has a submerged volcanic crater with its highest elevation on the west side of the island. Considered a “conspicuous landmark” for seafarers at least as far back as 1899 this tropical island embodies a unique combination of wooded areas tropical vistas and diverse sea life. The island is an important component of Fiji’s Biodiversity and Action Plan due to its unique geological formations and beach forests.

Day 6 Fulanga FIJI

As part of the Southern Lau Group, Fulanga is one of Fiji’s easternmost islands. Fulanga has a large central lagoon with a 50-meter wide pass to the ocean on its northeastern side. The crescent-shaped raised limestone island is famous for its numerous islands, mushroom-shaped islets and many sandy beaches in the calm lagoon. Some 400 residents live in three small villages. The two villages of Muana-i-rai and Muana-i-cake

are quite close together on the southern exterior side with a very narrow passage allowing access to the ocean, while Naividamu, the third village, is on the interior, i.e. lagoon side. Muana-i-cake is the main village and hosts the kindergarten and primary school, a post office and first aid station. Old-style houses made of corrugated iron are predominant with limited solar power for the odd refrigerator and television set. Although many islanders have left Fulanga to look for work in Suva, traditional crafts are still practiced by men and women. The weavers and carvers producing pandanus mats and wooden bowls for kava ceremonies are not only valued on Fulanga. Their products can leave on the monthly supply vessel and is highly sought after in Suva.

Day 7 Uoleva Island TONGA

Uoleva is one of those classic postcards or webpage images of a south sea island. Clean white sand beaches, abundant coconut palms, and clear blue shallow waters with the visible shapes of coral bommies and reefs. It is easy to imagine being castaway on such an island without a care. But as with most natural places, there is always an alternative to relaxing, such as beachcombing, swimming, snorkelling and exploring the island. The coral reef has a rich display of marine life to explore with a snorkel. The warm, clear waters promote coral growth which supports animal life like feather stars, fan worms, sponges and sea squirts. Fish of many shapes, colours and habits provide you with unlimited opportunities to watch their behaviour. Some dart in and out of corals while others sit on the bottom waiting for food to pass by. Many fish gather in schools to search the reef for algae to feed on, while other schools swirl in the water column nabbing passing plankton. The island has some visitor accommodation but is still mainly used by locals for coconut



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growing and pig grazing. If you see a mound on Uoleva it is probably a traditional pigeon snaring trap. The Tongans boat over from the adjacent island of Lifuka, or wade over at low tide. It was at Lifuka that Captain Cook named Tonga the 'friendly islands' after a welcome feast. Little did he know that the feast was part of a plan to slaughter him and his crew that did not quite happen. The name 'friendly' stuck though and is very appropriate today.

Day 8 Neiafu, Vava'u Group TONGA & Euaiki Island TONGA

With a population of 6,000, Neiafu is the capital of the Vava'u Group and the second largest municipality in the Polynesian nation of Tonga (a 169-island archipelago in the South Pacific). The city is situated next to a deep-water harbor (Port of Refuge) on the south coast of Vava'u, the main island of the Vava'u archipelago in northern Tonga. The waters of this region are known for their clarity and beauty, and the area attracts many humpback whales between June and November. A popular destination in Neiafu is the 'Ene'io Botanical Garden, a bird sanctuary that promotes the survival of exotic and native bird species as well as supports and conserves a diverse array of plant life. A typical tropical island in the South Pacific should have white sand, coconut palms, a calm turquoise sea and coral reefs reaching to the shore. Eueiki has all that. The 19-hectare (48-acre) island is one of the Vava'u island group of Tonga and is privately owned, with a small resort. Eueiki is made of limestone laid down by marine life thousands of years ago and later uplifted. Take a walk from the island's beach to the shade of the island's interior. Listen for birds. The names of the Polynesian Triller and the Tongan Whistler (a Vava'u endemic) give away their identity. The 'coos' are made by fruit-eating Pacific Pigeons or Purple-capped Fruit-doves. Screeches identify

Tongan (Insular) Flying Foxes. Fascinating to watch, these large bats are sacred and protected by the King of Tonga. Coral reefs provide great snorkelling, with clear waters giving excellent views of the diverse corals and fish. Healthy corals are mostly green, brown and occasionally blue due to the algae that lives in the flesh of the skeleton-making coral polyps. It is the texture and shapes of the coral that make them fascinating. Some are soft and some are hard. Growth forms include shrubby, finger, plate, massive (round domes) and branched. Small reef fish linger on the reef, none more so than the anemonefish. Small groups of these orange, white, and sometimes black, banded fish find protection amongst the tentacles of sea anemones. Anemonefish are nicknamed Nemos after the Finding Nemo movie. Find Nemo in the word anemone.

Day 10 Date Line gain a day INTERNATIONAL WATERS - Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Crossing the date line (theoretically the 180-degree line of longitude) from the Eastern to the Western Hemisphere seafaring guests will find themselves in the unusual situation of actually gaining a day and prolonging their holiday - at no extra cost! By crossing the (fictitious) line that dissects the planet exactly in half from Greenwich, you travel over time zones and find yourself with an extra day on board. The phenomenon was used by Jules Verne in his novel Around the World in 80 Days when his hero Phileas Fogg finds out he had returned home a full day earlier than calculated having always travelled towards the east. As some countries have decided to change to different time zones than allotted based on longitude, this phenomenon is not strictly linked to the 180-degree line of longitude any longer. Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching,



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catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 11 Palmerston Island COOK ISLANDS

The low-lying atoll of Palmerston is inhabited by three families, all descendants of William Marsters (1831-1899). Members of the community are known to greet visitors and guide small boats and Zodiacs into the lagoon through a maze of coral reef to reach the only inhabited islet –commonly called “Home”. Once ashore, the whole community generally turns out to meet visitors as it is a rare occurrence. The island’s highlights include a church, the oldest house, the cemetery, the school, the underground gardens and “Duke’s Pool,” inviting for a swim or snorkel. In the lagoon’s waters it is possible to find colorful reef-fish, sea cucumbers, rays, and sea turtles. Overhead there is birdlife including tropicbirds, boobies, noddies, frigatebirds and terns.

Day 12 Aitutaki COOK ISLANDS

When Lonely Planet co-founder describes somewhere as “the world’s most beautiful island” you can be sure that you are in for a treat. Incredible Aitutaki, inspiring Aitutaki, unbelievable, idyllic and unimaginable, there are simply not enough superlatives to describe quite how amazing Aitutaki is. Brought to light in 1779 by Captain Bligh, the Mutiny on the Bounty meant that Aitutaki has something of a bloodthirsty history. While European missionaries eventually settled on the island in the 19th century (evidenced by the white, coral-encrusted walls of the many churches) the island’s Polynesian history dates to around 900AD. Traditional songs and dances from this period still exist (although Christian hymns, known as “imene metua” are also popular), and are performed by islanders with gusto

and much pride. The island is part of the Cook Islands, one of the most secluded and romantic archipelagos in the world. With its powder white sand, warm turquoise waters and sense of casual luxury, it is easy to see why the island has earned itself the moniker of honeymooner’s island. However, there is much more to Aitutaki than just fun in the sun. With a reef that completely encompasses a large turquoise lagoon, Aitutaki is considered one of the most spectacular diving and snorkelling destinations in the world. Added to the tropical excitement is that when entering the main village via Zodiac along a narrow channel – travellers will be greeted by a traditional and customary warrior challenge.

Day 13 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you’ve been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 14 Bora Bora (Society Islands) FRENCH POLYNESIA

If you have ever dreamt up your ideal island holiday, we suspect it goes something like this: Soapy blue seas? Check. Sparkling white beaches? Check. Thatched wooden huts, gently sloping palm trees and kaleidoscopic marine life? Check, check and check. And yet, even by ticking every box, first time viewing of Bora Bora still beggars belief. This tropical hideaway less than 12 m2 in the heart of the South Pacific has been topping travel wish lists for years. Long considered the realm of honeymooners – spectacularly romantic sunsets are a speciality – Bora Bora is not just for wandering with your love. If the prismatic shades of blue of the world’s most beautiful lagoon do not fill you up, then



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perhaps underwater scooters and aqua Safaris will charge your batteries. If exploring Bora Bora's lush hinterland is more your glass of tequila sunrise, then trips around the island (often stopping off at the celebrity haunt Bloody Mary Restaurant & Bar) are a must. Bora Bora's peaceful ambience has not always been the case. The island was a US supply base, known as "Operation Bobcat" during WWII. During this time, Bora Bora was home to nine ships, 20,000 tons of equipment and nearly 7,000 men. Eight massive 7-inch naval cannons were installed around the island, all but one of which is still in place. Although little is known of the history of the island, it is known that Bora Bora was called Vava'u in ancient times. This supports belief that the island was colonised by Tongans prior to French annex in 1888.

Day 15 Raiatea FRENCH POLYNESIA & Moto Iriru, Raiatea FRENCH POLYNESIA
Known as the "Sacred Island," Raiatea is a fascinating haunt for archaeologists and historians as it's one of the islands in the Pacific where Polynesian culture can trace its roots. Visitors will find many of the older Polynesian structures still in place and are fascinating places to explore. In the 16th century, Raiatea developed a powerful cult dedicated to Oro the God of War and built a large meeting ground, the Taputaputea Marae, which is still intact. Human sacrifice was practiced until around the middle of the 18th century and visitors should look for the sacrificial stone. Several tour operators run visits to the marae (ancient temples) along with some degree of informed commentary—although in fairness Polynesian storytelling can embellish things a little. The Faaroa River is the only navigable waterway in French Polynesia and it can be traveled by powerboat or outrigger canoe. Running through the Faaroa Gorge it passes some spectacular scenery with steep-walled

jungle foliage holding dozens of bird species and wild hibiscus. Trekking up Mount Temehani, a well-known landmark that's said to be Oro's birthplace, is relatively demanding. Keep a lookout for the rare, five-petal tiare apetahi. Said to be impossible to grow anywhere else, this white, indigenous flower can only be found above 1,300 feet (396 meters). Look, but don't touch. It's against the law to pick them. If the Society Islands were a jewel, Motu Iriru would be one of its tiny pearls. Take your mask, your tuba and your sunscreen. It's time to relax and fully enjoy this matu – Polynesian name for the lagoon's tiny islands. This uninhabited little piece of land is facing the 'sacred island' Raiatea, cradle of the Maori people according to Polynesian mythology. The perfect place to slow down time, to chill and to admire the the horizon joining the sea, which comes in every shade of blue. These glittering emerald waters are home to colourful fishes with a coral garden for playground. Entering the ocean, you'll get the opportunity to get to know inoffensive and friendly baby blacktip sharks, the shallow coastal waters being their favourite.

Day 16 Papeete (Tahiti) FRENCH POLYNESIA

Papeete is the center of the tropical paradise of French Polynesia, where islands fringed with gorgeous beaches and turquoise ocean await to soothe the soul. This spirited city is the capital of French Polynesia, and serves as a superb base for onward exploration of Tahiti – an island of breathtaking landscapes and oceanic vistas. A wonderful lagoon of crisp, clear water begs to be snorkelled, stunning black beaches and blowholes pay tribute to the island's volcanic heritage, and lush green mountains beckon you inland on adventures, as you explore extraordinary Tahiti. Visit to relax and settle into the intoxicating rhythm of life in this Polynesian paradise.



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Day 17 Post Cruise

Please Note:

The excursions are provided as a sample of what may be offered on this voyage and are subject to change.



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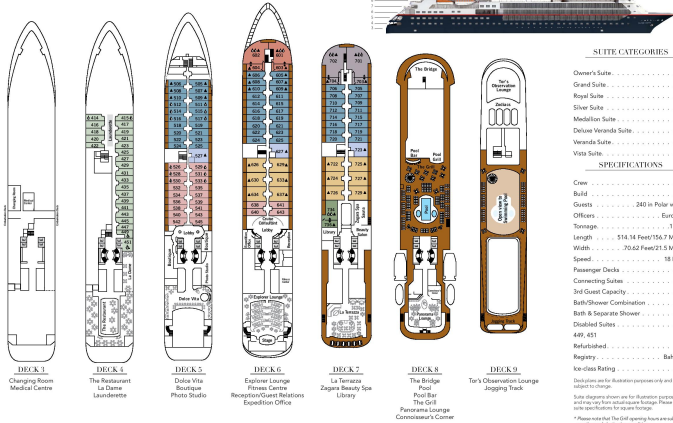


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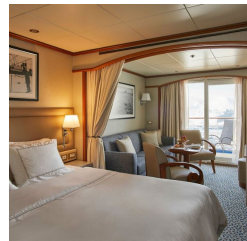
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