Dream Destination
Vanuatu

your person introduction to the most beautiful islands in the South Pacific

Martina & Jörg M. Schwartzte
Introduction

Jörg and Martina fell in love with Vanuatu the moment they set eyes on the beautiful tropical island, with white, sandy beaches and turquoise waters of the South Pacific. Now residents of Vanuatu, Jörg and Martina created the Tropicana Lagoon Resort & Restaurant, CoCo Beach Resort & Restaurant and Ocean View Apartments with the new restaurant The Lookout in Port Vila, on Efate Island.

Jörg and Martina want other people to explore their paradise, which is the reason for this book. Revealing insider knowledge and information that only a long time resident could know, Jörg and Martina are dedicated to expanding your horizons and tweaking your interest in finding luxury, comfort and the benefits of living in a place like Vanuatu.

So, be prepared to learn something about one of the most enchanting chain of islands you've probably never heard of. Located off the northeastern coast of Australia, the Vanuatu Islands are truly one of the most beautiful, unspoiled, and friendly group of island chains you could ever have imagined.

For years, Vanuatu has been a dream destination for seagoing adventurers, from fishing, to diving and

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snorkeling. It's also one of the most peaceful locations for those seeking to "get away from it all".

We would like to take this opportunity to literally take you by the hand and guide you through our world. We guarantee that you'll find even our photographs of the islands beautiful, enticing, and awe-inspiring. The people here are extremely friendly and good-natured, and make everyone, whether they were born here or in Timbuktu, feel welcome.

We hope that this book will help entice your curiosity to discovering more about this little loan chain of islands that offers unique opportunities and diversity for global travelers. We want to show you Vanuatu, and her people, customs, and the best places to eat, sleep and best of all, where to have fun.

We want to focus this book on those interested in vacationing or finding adventure in these islands, as well as those looking for investments in real estate as well as a unique opportunity to create and grow unique businesses.

Finally, we want to wish you an open-arms and open-door invitation to visit Vanuatu. We'll have a cocktail together at our Lagoon Bar at the Tropicana Lagoon Resort to kick start your unique vacation on one of the most beautiful islands in the world.

Welcome to our world!

A Brief Background –

Jörg is managing various tourism and hospitality investment projects in Vanuatu. He secured some of the most beautiful resort locations on the island for his projects, like the Tropicana Lagoon Resort or CoCo Beach Resort in Port Vila.

From August 2011 to April 2013 Jörg was a director in the board of trustees of the Vanuatu National
Provident Fund (VNPF). He was nominated for this position by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu.

Since May 2013 Jörg is the first Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany in Vanuatu. In charge of managing the building and maintaining operations of over 60 holiday beach apartments, fares and villas over all resorts, Jörg Schwartz and his wife Martina strive to offer their visitors and guests exquisite island hospitality, comfort, and friendliness.

Jörg Schwartz didn't always live in Vanuatu, but visited often from his adopted Australia. He made a permanent move to the island in 2008. Born in Germany, Jörg Schwartz is no newcomer to real estate and commerce, and since emigrating from Germany to Australia, spent years in property development projects and was executive and non executive director of different corporations in Australia. Jörg is passionate about economic growth and business development in his adopted country of Australia, and now, Vanuatu.

In addition to his other qualifications, Jörg is a business entrepreneur who has founded and managed a number of successful businesses and real estate projects in Europe, Australia, and Vanuatu.

Jörg's capabilities don't stop there. He also sails and flies, is a senior flight instructor and sailor. He circumnavigated the world in a three-year tour on a 57-foot sailing yacht and was rewarded with the Trans Ocean medal.

Jörg's wife, Martina is an equal partner and support for Jörg in their endeavors. She left a career in her own management consulting firm behind, when she moved from Germany to Australia. She is also a passionate fitness trainer with the highest education in her field.
Now that we’ve told you a little bit about them, their background and their travel history, we would like to invite you to explore the Vanuatu archipelago, which Martina and Jörg most humbly dubs Paradise on Earth.

Please always click the links to get more information.
Vanuatu has been named "the happiest country in the world" by the Happy Planet Index.

Vanuatu and surrounding islands are prime locations for diving, snorkeling, and deep-sea fishing in the South Pacific.

**Part One - The Vanuatu Archipelago – Paradise on Earth**

Vanuatu means "our land forever" in the local language of the islands. Located in the beautiful waters of the South Pacific, northeast of Queensland Australia, there are few destinations that offer as much beauty, scenic vistas, and cultural diversity as Vanuatu. With over 80 islands, the island chain has been claimed "the happiest country on the planet" by the Happy Planet Index. Like us, we know that you'll be awestruck by this lush, tropical and accessible playground rich with sandy beaches, beautiful and lush rainforests, rumbling volcanoes, and quaint, peaceful and friendly villages.

The capital city of Port-Vila on Efate Island is the focal point and major city in the Vanuatu Islands chain. Here, visitors find some of the most welcoming and luxurious tourist facilities in the world. Vanuatu is indeed a hidden gem nestled in the South Pacific, one of the few island chains in the region that has not been overrun by tourists.

The people call themselves "Ni-Vanuatu", a deeply rooted people that honor and respect their culture while at the same time embracing the future. The natives love nothing better than to show visitors a piece of their paradise.

The island nation of Vanuatu consists of over 80 islands known as an archipelago, or chain or cluster of islands in the South Pacific. Because Vanuatu doesn't occupy merely one landmass but a collection of islands, the opportunities for growth, the ultimate indication destinations, and business opportunities are endless.

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Just the Facts...

- The full name of the island chain is the Republic of Vanuatu.
- Total area of the islands is just under 5000 mi.$^2$
- More than 100 dialect languages or spoken in Vanuatu, but three official languages are common: French, English, and Bislama, a pidgin English.
- The religious breakdown is 84% Christian and 16% for others.
- Believe it or not, bargaining or tipping are not common practices.

During the colonial period, the island group was named the New Hebrides. It's located west of the Fiji Islands, and south of the Solomon Islands.

Vanuatu is only a short 2.5 hours flight from Brisbane, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand.

The islands were first discovered in the early 16 hundredths, and Europeans first settled the island chain in the late 1700s. Famous British explorer James Cook arrived on the islands during his second South Pacific voyage and christened the island group the New Hebrides.

The island chain extends approximately 1300 km. While 14 of the Vanuatu Islands are over 100 km$^2$ in size, most are smaller. The largest islands in the chain include:

- Espiritu Santo
- Efate
- Epi
- Malekula
- Erromango
- Vanua Lava

During World War II, Efate and Espiritu Santo islands were used as allied military bases.
Ambae  
Pentecost  
Gaua  
Maewo  
Tanna  
Anatom  
Malo  
Ambrym

Please click the links & logos to get more information

As we mentioned, the national capital (Port Vila) as well as the largest town is located on Efate. The second largest town, Luganville is located on Espiritu Santo Island.

Altogether, the island group occupies a total surface area of approximately 12000 km². Vanuatu is a part of Melanesia, a sub-region of Oceania that also includes the Fiji Islands, the Solomon Islands, and New Caledonia.

We were excited to find out that Vanuatu is officially recognized by the Worldwide Wildlife Fund as a terrestrial eco-region known as the Vanuatu Rain Forest, which comprises all the islands of Vanuatu and the Santa Cruz islands of our neighboring Solomon Islands.

Let’s Talk About the Weather!

The climate in Vanuatu is, in one word -- exquisite. Temperatures remain fairly constant throughout the year, due to our proximity to the equator. Our warmest month is in February, and the coolest is in August. Along the coastal beaches, daily temperatures average 26°C (78ºF), with an average maximum of 30°C (86ºF).

Nighttime temperatures have never dipped below 13°C (55ºF). In winter, Port Vila experiences an average temperature of 25°C, with August ranging around 23°C. and February around 27°C.

Shall we talk about rain? Like any tropical location, we get quite a bit of rainfall in the warmer seasons. However, predominant southeast wind patterns

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saturated with moisture contribute to a variable rainfall pattern. Glorious, warm afternoon showers are common features in Vanuatu.

We get good ocean breezes, averaging roughly 5 to 10 knots during our summer time, which ranges between November and April. Predominant wind flows during the summertime from east to southeast. During winter, (May through October), southeasterly winds average roughly 10 knots.

During the depth of our winter season, open water wind speeds can reach between 25 and 30 knots. Tropical cyclones and weather depressions occur only occasionally during the summertime when water temperatures reach 28°C (82ºF) or above.

A good source for the local weather forecast, latest satellite charts and all weather warnings is the VMS (Vanuatu Meteorological Service).

**The Low-down About Cyclones And Hurricanes**

Okay, we understand that anybody visiting the South Pacific is naturally going to ask about the prevalence of tropical storms, cyclones or hurricanes in our area. To be honest, during the hot and wet season, typically ranging from November to April, we know a cyclone season. However, our geographical location is occasionally crossed by storms, with winds ranging from 34 knots to 120 knots. On average, the Vanuatu islands and the surrounding seas experience two to three cyclones every year.

Not bad really, considering the number of earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes that commonly cause extensive damage in other parts of the world. While we do get cyclone warnings once in a while, most are mild to moderate, with three to five every decade having the potential to cause more serious damage.
Several areas around the islands are especially prone to cyclone activity, especially for sailors out on the open ocean. For that reason, we want to tell you about cyclone-proof moorings in our area.

The first is on the east coast of Santo, at Peterson Bay along the west side of Oyster Island, where Alex and Jörg will install some real cyclone moorings for yachts up to 60 foot for the cyclone season 2012 - 2013. The second anchorage is south of the island of Malekula, A safe mooring point in Port-Vila harbor on Efate also offers cyclone-proof mooring behind Iririki Island, as well as safe anchorage in Havana Harbor on the northwest end of Efate.

We also regularly experience earthquakes, mostly with minimal damage and upset.

Vanuatu has the oldest living reefs in the world, approximately 17,000 years old.

While it's certainly interesting, we don't want to take up much of your time going into an in-depth history of Vanuatu. Suffice it to say that it's been around for tens of thousands of years. Archaeological evidence goes back nearly 4,000 years on the island.

One of the oldest living reefs in the world is located just off the coast of Espiritu Santo - Vanuatu, at the little island Urelapa.

Pottery fragments have been found dating back to 1300 B.C.E. You can see these at the National
Museum of Vanuatu in Port Vila, where such items, and many others are on display.

One of the first islands in the chain found by the Europeans was also its largest – Espiritu Santo. Discovered by a Portuguese explorer in 1606, it wasn't inhabited by Europeans until the mid-1700s. Infamous Captain Cook named the islands the New Hebrides in the 1770s, and the islands continued to be known by this name until 1980, when they gained independence.

By the early 1830s, large numbers of farmers from Australia, the Fiji and Samoan Islands and nearby New Caledonia needed excessive workers to maintain their farmlands, and resorted to underhanded trickery and kidnappings, much like what occurred in San Francisco during the 1800s. Well known as “shanghaiing” in the United States, the practice in the South Pacific was known as “black birding”. Unfortunately, this practice drastically reduced the population for many years.

Today, Vanuatu's main economic stability is based on fishing, agriculture, and tourism. Cattle ranches and offshore financial activities are also popular. One of the greatest benefits of Vanuatu is that it serves as a tax haven and a major offshore investment destination for businessmen, companies and entrepreneurs around the world.

A Bit about History

During the 1800s, Vanuatu experienced an influx of missionaries and settlers throughout the islands. A large number of inhabitants in Vanuatu are Christian in background, with a heavy influence of Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian and other Anglican groups.

The background, and customs, religion, and influence from political and religious leaders were heavily influenced by Britain, as an occupying power in the South Pacific at that time.
After that, the French came, and in 1882 created the French Caledonian company of New Hebrides, which is Vanuatu’s “old” name. Soon, the French outnumbered the British and with that came expected clashes. In the early 1900s, France and Britain agreed to play nice and to share joint leadership of the island group. They even gave it a special name, "the British French Condominium" which offered native as well as transplanted islanders two distinct government systems that worked together and joined courts.

This system of governing, lawmaking and courts remained on the islands into the 20th century, until the Republic of Vanuatu gained its independence in 1980.

**Vanuatu Today**

Today, Vanuatu is a parliamentary democracy with a president who serves as head of the republic, and a prime minister who serves as the head of government. Vanuatu is comprised of six autonomous provinces, each with their own provincial councils or local governments.

You’ll need to know this when engaging in business or investment opportunities in Vanuatu:

- **Malampa** - this province includes the centrally located islands of Malekula, Paama, and Ambrym
- **Penama** - this province combines the central eastern islands of Pentecost, Maewo and Ambae.
- **Sanma** - this province includes Espiritu Santo, the largest island in the country, as well as a small companion called Malo.
- **Shefa** - this province includes the Shepherd group of islands as well as the island of Efate (Port Vila is located on Efate island)

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• Tafea - this island province includes Tanna, Anatom, Aneityum, Futana and Erromango.

• Torba - this province consists of the northern Banks and Torres island groups.

Now that you know a little bit about how the islands are grouped and governed, it's time to move onto the people and customs of Vanuatu, which we fondly refer to as the friendliest place on earth.

**Vanuatu Economics**

Vanuatu offers unique opportunities for those with diverse backgrounds, ideas and imagination. Did you know that sandalwood was discovered in the early 1800s in Vanuatu and triggered a rush of opportunists similar to the California gold-rush of 1849? For five years, sandalwood became a major export and led to an increase in the population of Vanuatu.

Today, Vanuatu derives its economic stability mainly through tourism. International companies and offshore investors also benefit from favorable labor laws in the country.

Perhaps one of the greatest opportunities to be found in Vanuatu today is investment in real estate. We'll delve more deeply into this topic in a little bit, but first, a little background. Because there are no income taxes on company-generated income, on employee's income, and no capitals gains taxes, the Vanuatu Islands offer extensive investment incentives to individuals interested in investment opportunities.

Because of its proximity to Australia, New Zealand, and other major seaports in Southeast Asia, Vanuatu is growing as a base for foreign investors.

The growing tourist atmosphere and industry in the Vanuatu Islands, as well as the convenience and excellence of our telecommunications services,
places the Vanuatu Islands as a strategic investment opportunity for investors and business people hoping for diversification and expansion in their local regions as well as those targeting international communities.

Expectations for Growth

Unlike other regions around the world, Vanuatu's economy has not been hit as hard as other locations by the global financial crisis. Construction and valuation of real estate has remained relatively consistent while other economies around the globe have experienced extreme hardships.

Investors, mostly from Australia and the New Zealand, are looking at Vanuatu's real estate sectors with increased interest, and investments and rental properties are expected to grow.

We're excited to watch the growth and development not only on our island, but surrounding islands. Developments on Santo and developments throughout Port Vila on Efate show an exciting growth of expansion, resort environments and residential lots.

Local institutional investors like VNPF (Vanuatu National Provident Fund) sometimes invest together with private investors in Vanuatu real estate and in key properties in Port Vila.

Caillard & Kaddour and Island Property are the oldest Real Estate Agencies in Port Vila. The principal Douglas Patterson and property specialist Rod Neilson with their sound knowledge are a good source of information.

Also some well known franchise real estate companies from Australia and New Zealand established offices in Port- Vila.

While we don't want to bore you with data, we do want to emphasize that land is undervalued in

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Vanuatu. Therefore, the island offers extremely good values and potential for attractive quality of life for anyone interested in investing in an increasingly attractive and growing retirement location.

Says First National real estate proprietor Neil, "as people become disillusioned by the cyclic ebbs and flows of economies, doom and gloom media and lack of self-sustainability, small island nations with their favorable climate, friendly people and more down to earth living, have become increasingly sought after."

In general, you can expect fair information from all of the real estate agents, but be aware that there can be also black sheep … as everywhere.

We took advantage of this opportunity of the growing market several years ago, and can't tell you how happy we are with our decision. Vanuatu has not only offered us financial stability, but has given us a way of life that we never thought we would enjoy. We feel that our quality of life, our contentment, and our sense of well-being has increased since our move, and we encourage others to visit our islands and find out for themselves the magic that Vanuatu offers.

The Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort is just one example of the growth and development underway in the real estate industry in the Pacific Islands. The boutique resort features 22 apartments and villas and a beautiful over-the-water restaurant.

These kind of construction projects take advantage of the tropical climate and island design in terms of architecture, offering island style indoor/outdoor living utilizing outdoor decks, outdoor showers, high ceilings and shaded patios.

A South Pacific Financial Center

Vanuatu residents, investors and business people enjoy an offshore financial center status in Vanuatu, an extremely popular focus for Australian and New
Zealand expats as well as individuals traveling from Europe and the United States.

Some of the world’s most successful and recognized financial representatives can be found in offices in Port Vila. Because of its tax haven status and no exchange controls, Vanuatu’s finance sector contributes in equal parts with tourism to Vanuatu’s gross national product.

Can You Hear Me Now?

Gone are the days where internet access and cell phone coverage wasn't available in the Vanuatu Islands. Today, mobile phone coverage envelopes most of the islands and international moguls can pick up on local networks. Internet cafés on main street and in Port Vila hotels and wireless hotspots throughout the islands offer local, regional and international connectivity.

IT solutions in Vanuatu have grown to encompass nearly all of the 65 inhabited islands of Vanuatu. Digicel Vanuatu became a strong competition in telecommunications since 2008 and has provided upgrading of main exchange systems and internet access has drastically improved, ensuring connectivity to the other side of the island or to the other side of the world.

You never really learn to appreciate the advances in telecommunications, internet access and mobile-to-mobile connectivity until you have to do without it. However, we're happy to say that Vanuatu has truly and fully embraced 21st-century technology these days, thanks to tvl (Telecom Vanuatu ltd). They continually improve their IT services and communication technologies.

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Why are we talking about this? Because even though the most attention on Vanuatu has been focused on vacationers, honeymooners, or global travelers, we were surprised when, after our arrival, IT communications and access offered us better opportunities that we thought we’d have.

Yes, we did want to, to some degree, "get away from it all" and get more back to basics in regard to our lifestyle. However, as we became more and more involved in investments in real estate opportunities throughout Vanuatu, we appreciated the excellent mobile connectivity.

We take it for granted that every place in the world has a computer these days, or that your mobile phone will work everywhere. We’re happy to say, that in Vanuatu, this also is the case.

Vanuatu continues to grow and develop, and yet still offers, and will always offer, the South Pacific atmosphere that many of us look forward to on vacations or business trips. There's nothing quite like sinking your feet and wiggling your toes in pristine, warm, white sand, sipping a tropical drink, and watching gorgeous sunsets over the ocean.

**Visiting Vanuatu**

When is the best time to visit Vanuatu? The easy answer -- anytime! Vanuatu is a year-round destination. It's a bit warmer, with a little more rain between December and April, and while rainfall can be heavy at times, it never lasts long.

Invariably, at the end of our brief rains, you'll enjoy a beautiful rainbow. At the end of that rainbow, which seems to fall over the very islands of Vanuatu itself, you'll find a literal pot of gold in the beautiful, lush rain forest atmosphere, surrounding seas, and in one of the most exciting, yet calming, places on earth.

Please click the [links](#) & logos to get more information
Even our so-called "wet season" is filled with plenty of sunny, dry days, perfect for sunbathing, sailing, snorkeling, or just plain relaxing on the beach.

Your best source for accommodation advice is Tripadvisor, the world biggest feedback website.

**Visa Requirements**

Visas are not required in Vanuatu for most international travelers staying up to 30 days. For visitors, either an onward or return ticket is required. As is recommended for travel anywhere, make sure your passport has the least six months of validity and two empty pages.

For specific information regarding updated entry requirements, and requirements for entry regarding sailing vessels, contact:

**Vanuatu Mission to the United Nations**
42 Broadway, Suite 1200-18
New York, NY 10004
212-425-9600

Visitors may also contact the National Tourism Office of Vanuatu at:

**National Tourism Office of Vanuatu**
P.O. Box 209
Port Vila, Vanuatu
(678) 22515/22685/22813
e-mail: info@vanuatu.travel

Travelers from the United States heading to Australia or Vanuatu must receive an ETA (Electronic Travel Authority) or Visa for Australia. Such documents are available from travel agents and airlines at the time of ticket purchases. Visitors may also receive an ETA from the:

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Australian Embassy
1601 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-797-3000

At this time, there are no pre-arrival visa entries required for citizens of Australia, British Commonwealth countries, European Union members, New Zealand, the United States or Japan. This also includes Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. However, it's always a good idea to check with the Vanuatu Embassy or Consulate in your country before traveling.

Extensions to visas may be renewed for a maximum of four months, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. Visitors are cautioned against seeking employment or engaging in business activities on Vanuatu, again unless business visas or other prior arrangement and approval has been obtained.

Completing Your Visa

You can access a Visa from the Vanuatu Immigration Service at:

www.vanuatu.travel/Vanuatu_Visa_Application

The application is offered in French and English. A fee of 2500 Vt should accompany your application. Keep in mind that these are not refundable. Be prepared to offer:
Obtaining a visa for Vanuatu is a snap!

- Personal information such as name, date of birth, religion and your marital status as well as your current and original nationality
- Your permanent address, telephone number, profession, address of your work place, as well as the name and contact information for your employer
- Passport information including where it was issued, when it was issued, its expiration date, your passport number, and the town and country of its issuance.
- If you’re not a tourist, be prepared to provide details as well as the purpose of your visit
- Information of where you’re going to stay in Vanuatu
- Your expected date of arrival and departure
- You’ll also be asked how much money you’re bringing into the country. Check immigration or Visa information for Vanuatu to know the limit of money you can bring to Vanuatu upon arrival

This may seem like a lot of very personal information, but most visa applications, regardless of the country of destination, do ask for such information.

In the event you’re coming from a country that isn’t listed among the countries exempt from visa requirements, you must apply for a visa before you leave your country and travel to Vanuatu. Follow these simple steps:

- Download and complete the visa application
- Email the application to the Vanuatu Immigration Office:

Principal Immigration Officer
Immigration Department Vanuatu
Private Mail Bag 0092
Port Vila
Vanuatu
Ph: (678) 22354
Fax: (678)25492
Email: earukelana@vanuatu.gov.vu

info@vanuatu-escape.com
• Attach any included documentation requested on the application or during the application approval process - this may include a photocopy of your anticipated travel itinerary, and include details regarding return flights
• Attach a passport sized photo
• Provide a copy of the first page of your passport with your identifying information
• Don’t forget to send along the required visa application fee - you can do this through Western Union. Western Union will provide you with a code following the deposit of funds. Give this code to the immigration office so that the funds can be accessed
• You’ll receive an e-mail or a facsimile of your visa via e-mail or fax.

Regarding Residency and Long-Term Permits

Residency and long-term permits are also issued, although such permits are subject to provisions found in the Vanuatu Immigration Act. Residency permits are often issued for one year, subject to renewal.

Long-term permits are typically issued to investors or those engaged in business, who need to spend longer periods of time in Vanuatu.

Note - investors must receive approval from the Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority known as a VIPA prior to arriving in the country.

Retirees are permitted to take up residency in Vanuatu, but must be able to demonstrate financial stability.
When traveling to Vanuatu, pay attention and follow **customs requirements**. When arriving in Vanuatu, personal effects are duty free. However, limitations on certain items should be made aware of in advance. For example, individuals over 15 years of age are allowed to bring into the country:

- Up to 250 g of tobacco, 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, or 100 cigarillos
- 2 L of wine or 1 1/2 liters of alcohol
- Approximately 500 US dollars in unused goods (approximately 50,000vatu)

Like other countries, certain items are prohibited in Vanuatu, including firearms and ammunition, pornographic or obscene videos and publications, and narcotics not on the approved medical prescription drug lists. Again, check with your local embassy for additional information.

Don't attempt to bring fresh fruits or vegetables, fresh meat, any type of bird, reptile or animal into the country.

**About Vaccinations**

Nobody likes to get poked, but it's a good idea to consult your public health department or primary care physician regarding recommended vaccinations or inoculations before visiting the South Pacific. In some cases, your public health department or doctor may recommend anti-malaria medications, especially if you venture into the rain forests, or outside of Port Vila and larger Efate Island.

**It’s Safe!**

The public drinking water system in Vanuatu is safe, and you don't have to worry about water purification tablets, boiling water, or avoiding water altogether, like you do traveling to other countries. The [Stay-Vanuatu](#) managed resorts [Tropicana](#), [Ocean View](#)

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and CoCo Beach using on top of this special reverse osmosis systems which create drinking water of highest quality.

**About Medical Care**

There is a private hospital in Port Vila, the Vila Bay Health Center. There are also a few other good private medical health centers available. The resort guests who stay at the Stay-Vanuatu managed hotels are privileged to have a doctor on standby by their special agreement.

Medical care in Vanuatu can be paid for with cash or credit cards. Travelers from Australia can get reimbursed. There’s also a public hospital on Tanna and Espiritu Santo Islands, as well as a new private family clinic on Efate Island, not far from the Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort. The clinic is run by a French doctor, although every few weeks, a specialist guest doctor from New Caledonia provides his services on the island.

For more serious medical conditions that occur, cardiovascular services are available nearby in New Caledonia. A cardiovascular specialist is also one of the regularly scheduled guest doctors who stay at the Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort.

For very serious conditions, or emergencies, trauma or surgeries, visitors and residents are flown out to Brisbane, Australia.

That brings us to the topic of health insurance. Most residents of Port Vila have private health insurance. Such insurance is also recommended for travelers. Purchase medical travelers insurance that includes medivac or medical evacuation, which usually occurs to Australia, New Zealand or New Caledonia, or more specifically, Brisbane or Sydney, Auckland, or Noumea.
For travelers, international medical travel insurance is easy to find. One of the most popular includes:

- **HTH Worldwide** – [www.hthtravelinsurance.com](http://www.hthtravelinsurance.com)
- **AAA Travel Insurance** – [www.aaaz.com](http://www.aaaz.com)
- **World Wide Medical** – [www.worldwidemedical.com](http://www.worldwidemedical.com)
- **Travel Guard** – [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com)

Whether you're planning on staying a few days or several months or a year, protect yourself and your family with very affordable international medical travel insurance. Choose an option that allows you to receive emergency medical care, medical evacuation services, or med flight travel from Vanuatu to either New Caledonia, New Zealand or Australia.

For tourists, also choose an international medical insurance plan that offers transportation back to your country of origin in case of an illness or an accident that unexpectedly shortens your vacation or business travel.

**Dental Care**

Dental care is also available through a variety of dental clinics throughout the islands. One of them is called "Pacific Smiles" and is operated by a highly trained, experienced and certified dentist from Australia. Another one is [Novodental](http://www.novodental.com) operated by a Brazilian dentist. Just between you and me, the equipment in those clinics is of higher standard than most dental clinics in Australia.

**Plugging In**

The electrical current is 230 V or 230/50 V/hz. Travelers should obtain plug adapters prior to travel. Appliances from the United States operate within a 100 to 125 V range, and plugging your laptop, hair

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dryer, or razor into plugs in the 230 V range will damage your appliance and may cause a fire hazard.

Prior to visiting Vanuatu, check to make sure you have the right type of converter or plug adapter that will protect your laptop and travel accessories.

Hint - if you’re electrical cord or laptop power cord or appliance lists 110, 115, 120 or 125 V, it is not considered a dual voltage appliance.

Don’t take chances with your electrical appliances or laptop. Verify the voltage requirements for such accessories before traveling. Standard Australian plugs are your best bet. Australian style or standard RJ 11 phone jacks are typical.

**Currency**

Vanuatu uses the **Vatu** as currency, more commonly known as VUV. Check out the comparable value of your monetary value below to give you an idea of what to expect for your current monetary type.

To determine the current exchange rate in Vanuatu, visit a currency exchange converter on the internet. Here’s just a sampling of how far your money will go in Vanuatu:

- **50 US $ = VUV 4,300** value exchange rate.
- **50 Euro** conversion offers approximately **VUV 6,400**
- **50 AUD** = approximately **VUV 4,300**
- **50 NZ $** will get you approximately **VUV 3,700**

Shopping, dining, and entertainment are just a few of the things that draw thousands of travelers to Vanuatu every year. Be prepared to enjoy your time in the sun and in the water, and plan ahead for how you’re going to pay for such entertainments and amenities.

While many of us have gotten accustomed to using our debit or credit cards in a variety of travel locations, remember that Vanuatu is a relatively small
group of islands and many places do not have the conductivity or technology to process such transactions.

While we understand that many people don’t like to travel with large amounts of cash, do take the time to anticipate costs, and utilize ATMs or banking facilities as well as exchange vendors at airports and in Port Vila to obtain cash advances for daily use when traveling around Vanuatu.

In most restaurants, hotels and shops in the capital city of Port Vila, Australian dollars are also accepted. Travelers can exchange their money at the international airport as well as banks on the islands of Efate and Espiritu Santo.

ATMs are also available, most commonly found at the National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV), Westpac Banks, ANZ banks and Bred Bank. the National Bank of Vanuatu has ATMs in Lenakel on Tanna Island, in Lakatoro on Malekula Island and Luganville, Santo Island. Major credit cards and traveler-checks are accepted, but whenever possible, remember that some smaller vendors or businesses may not have the capability of performing such transactions.

When traveling through the Vanuatu Islands, opt for cash advances on your Visa or Master Card at a local bank before traveling outside of Port Vila, as Australian dollars may not be accepted out of the capital city.

**Getting to Vanuatu**

Now that you have your passport in hand, and have received your visa, you're ready to travel to Vanuatu. You can reach Vanuatu by air or boat. To give you an idea how long you may have to sit on a plane to reach Vanuatu, we’ll show you a few average flight times for major cities around the world to Port Vila. This list is by no means inclusive.

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### Access to neighboring islands is available through Air Vanuatu

Major airlines from around the world fly to Vanuatu. The national air carrier of the Republic of Vanuatu is Air Vanuatu, which operates an international network throughout the southwestern Pacific, Australia and New Zealand as well as domestic networks between the islands.

Here are just a few of the wonderful locations between the Port Vila Airport on Efate Island to neighboring islands and airports:

#### Malampa:

- Craig Cove (Ambrym island)
- Lamap (Malekula Island)
- Norsup (Malekula island)
- Paama (Paama island)
- South West Bay (Malekula island)
- Ulei (Ambrym island)
Penama:

- Longana (Longana Airport)
- Maewo (Maewo-Naone Airport)
- Redcliff (Redcliff Airport)
- Sara (Sara Airport)
- Walaha (Walaha Airport)

Sanma:

- Luganville (Santo-Peko International Airport)

Shefa:

- Émaé (Siwo Airport)
- Lamen Bay (Epi island)
- Port Vila (Efate island)
- Tongoa (Tongoa Airport)
- Valesdir (Epi island)

Tafea:

- Anatom (Anatom Airport)
- Aniwa (Aniwa Airport)
- Dillon’s Bay (Dillon’s Bay Airport)
- Futuna Island (Futuna Airport)
- Ipota (Ipota Airport)
- Tanna (White Grass Airport)

Torba:

- Gaua (Gaua Airport)
- Moto Lava (Moto Lava Airport)
- Sola, Vanua Lava (Vanua Lava Airport)
- Torres Islands (Torres Airport)

As you can see, business travelers and investors have superlative access to major and neighboring islands within Vanuatu. Flights are scheduled regularly and offer the greatest in convenience for travelers, whether you’re a tourist or looking around the islands for excellent investment opportunities.
International routes from Port Vila, Efate also travel to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in Australia, as well as to Nouméa, New Caledonia and Auckland, New Zealand. Flights from Espiritu Santo also fly to Brisbane, Australia.

Here is a tip, just for you. Virgin Australia is our second recommended airline for visitors traveling to Vanuatu. The airline is based in Queensland, Australia. It’s a low-cost airline operating throughout the Southwest Pacific and often has comparatively pleasant times of departure and arrival.

Also check out the website of Unity Airlines for our favorite over-night tours to the Volcano on Tanna island and the land diving on Pentecost.

Cruisin’ Into Vanuatu

Of course, you can also travel to Vanuatu by sea. Cruise ships enter regularly the port of Port Vila on Efate island and Luganville on Espiritu Santo. Other major ports of call include:

- Champagne Bay
- Mystery Island (Aneityum)
- Wala
- Lamen Bay
- Pentecost
Major car rental companies operate in Vanuatu, so getting around is a breeze!

Driving Around

Oh! Before we forget, now might be a good time to let you know that vehicles drive on the right side of the road. Rental cars and cars for hire are available through a variety of companies in Vanuatu, many of whom lease out 4-wheel drive vehicles and station wagons.

Some of the major car rental companies in Vanuatu include our recommendation of:

Discount Rentals - having been in business for over two decades, discount rentals are Port Vila's most experienced car rental firm. They offer a wide range of vehicles in different sizes to accommodate travelers and business people.

Discount Rentals run numerous deals throughout the week. With favorable long-term rates, you're sure to find the right wheels to see your needs with Discount Rentals.

A member of the Vanuatu Tour Operators Association, they do accept credit cards. For more information visit their website at www.discount-rentals.com.vu

info@vanuatu-escape.com
Other rental companies in Vanuatu include:

- Avis
- Hertz
- World Car Rental
- Budget

Before traveling, contact these rental car companies’ websites for prices and car models available during your expected time of travel to the islands.

Of course, taxis and buses are also available throughout Vanuatu. Our buses are considered minivans that seat roughly 10 people. Expect to pay 150 Vt for any destination within the city. Buses designed for public transportation have a certain license plate, and public transport minivans are designated with a red letter "B".

**Shopping in Vanuatu**

Don’t worry, we’re not going to list every store, business, shop or vendor in Vanuatu, but we do want to let you know approximate business hours in Port Vila and in most other locations throughout Vanuatu.

Most businesses open at 7:30, and close between 11:30 to 1:30 for a lunch break. However, banks, cafés and restaurants remain open at this time.

The normal workweek in Vanuatu is Monday through Friday, and many shops are open on Saturday morning. Large stores as well as supermarkets are open seven days a week.

When you’re in Port Vila, make an effort to go by the Mama’s Market, which specializes in locally grown vegetables and fruits. It’s open nearly 24 hours a day from Monday morning to Saturday at lunchtime. Everything here is organic and extremely affordable, so don’t miss it!
Fun in the Sun in Vanuatu

There's nothing quite like the South Pacific to envision yourself in the perfect vacation destination. Whether you've come to Vanuatu for business or pleasure, take advantage of the beauty, the accessibility, and the friendliness of the people surrounding you.

Vanuatu offers visitors a variety of things to do and see throughout the islands. While space constraints prevent us from mentioning every single activity or place to visit, we'll try to give you a rundown of a few of the main attractions found throughout Vanuatu that you can enjoy. Best of all, many of the most exciting things you can do or see on Vanuatu are free! It doesn't get much better than that.

Let's start with Efate Island!

Efate Island

Port Vila, located on Efate Island, is chock-full of things to do. Whether you're an indoor or outdoor person, a shopper or snorkeler, there is something to do on Efate Island.
Enjoy a fun cruise from Port Vila Sea Wall behind Westpac Bank. Cruise Away is the tour-operating company that belongs to Stay-Vanuatu. Cruise Away offers swimming-, snorkelling-, beach- and harbour cruises. Travellers can book private charters or romantic Sunset- & Dinner Cruises on their comfortable pontoon boats.

Jörg and Martina created these tours for all families, friends & couples to explore their paradise and have fun on the water.

On their private Sailing Catamaran “S/Y Tropicana”, groups of up to 30 can enjoy the peaceful harmony of wind and water.

One of their pontoon boats is moored at the Tropicana Lagoon Resort where you can enjoy a lagoon cruise on 2nd Lagoon or if you like to you arrive in style by water for lunch or dinner at one of Vila’s well known restaurants situated around the lagoon:

Vila Chaumieres, Tropicana Lagoon Restaurant, Sunset Bungalows and Starfish Cove.

Unique is Cruise Away’s water taxi service. Departing from its own jetty at the Sea Wall behind Westpac Bank in Port-Vila, travellers or locals can jump on one of their boats and drive to CoCo Beach Resort & Restaurant for lunch or dinner or just to enjoy swimming and snorkelling in the crystal clear water.
For all cruise ship guests, Cruise Away offers a direct service from the cruise ship terminal to Port Vila or to CoCo Beach Resort.

**Diving Adventures in Vanuatu**

Hundreds of visitors come to the Vanuatu island group every year, and it's not difficult to understand why. The beautiful, warm waters surrounding the archipelago offer some of the most exciting, diverse and beautiful dive locations in the world.

**Nautilus** is our favorite diving school in Port Vila. They are a five star PADI dive school and bring you to the best diving spots around Port Vila. Check out their [website](mailto:info@vanuatu-escape.com). All cruise ship guests can use the Cruise Away water-taxi-service to have a water transfer to Nautilus.

**Big Blue Scuba Dive**, located along the sea wall in Port Vila. This PADI five-star dive school offers friendly and professional service to divers of all experience levels. Big Blue Diving is one of the newest scuba diving operations in Port Vila, and benefits from the instruction of one of the longest serving instructors and dive masters in the islands.

We're happy to recommend Nautilus as well as Big Blue to those looking forward to some open and deep water dives as well as advanced divers. Some of the most popular dive sites that you'll visit include but are not limited to:

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• **Bougainville Reef** - the dive features beautiful coral and anemones along a flat reef that measures 12m to 14m in depth

• **Awesome Reef** - the name of this reef says it all! The reef and dive is located at Paradise Point. The reef drops to a depth of approximately 60m and is chock-full of fish, coral, and fascinating sea creatures

• **Gotham City** - you won't find Batman here, but what you will find is batfish, which love to accompany snorkelers and divers as they explore the area

• **Pink Panther** - no, you won't find the Pink Panther here either, but the dive site is very well known for its unusual and beautiful pink anemones

• **The Cathedral** - this dive spot, also located at Pango Point, it is a huge underwater cavern which opens onto awesome reef. Diving in this region offers you one of the most awesome sites that you can imagine -- shafts of sunlight streaming down onto the ocean floor, creating a heavenly world unto itself

• **Twin Bommies** - this dive site offers both snorkeling and diving enthusiasts the opportunity to completely explore the top of a reef that comes to within 6m of the water's surface

• **Konanda Wreck** - this dive site is extremely popular with divers and snorkelers who love to explore shipwrecks. This 45m ship used to be in Island trader that worked around New Zealand. Badly damaged during Cyclone Uma in 1987, the Konanda was rendered safe and sound as a dive wreck.

• **Semle Federesen Wreck** - this inter-island trading cargo vessel was also deliberately sunk
for divers back in 1985. Measuring approximately 30m in length, Cyclone Uma was strong enough to move the wreck to its present location.

That's just the tip of the iceberg for popular diving spots around Efate Island. When you're finished with your snorkeling or dive tour, check out the Round Island Tour.

**Round Island Tour**

The Round Island Tour is a full day excursion around Efate Island. You'll venture from the understated sophistication of downtown Port Vila and into the depths of untamed, tropical surroundings, with glimpses of small native villages on the other side of the island. Tour providers take visitors up from their hotel in Port Vila and take their time driving around the island. We recommend the tour as a good value for money, and you'll have plenty of time for swimming in the morning and again later in the afternoon.

Such tours offer visitors a unique glimpse into the everyday life of the Islanders that can only be related from those who live there. You'll learn lots of local knowledge and interesting facts passed on to you by your friendly guide.

**Lelepa Island Tour**

If you’re up to more adventure, check out the Lelepa Tour to Lelepa Island. Lelepa Island is located just a half hours drive from Port Vila on the northwest side of Efate Island. Lelepa island is composed of over 160 acres of natural, unspoiled tropical forest surrounded by pristine white beaches and majestic palm trees glowing gently in the constant ocean breeze. You can get to the island across Havana Harbor on a “banana boat”. Let's be honest -- how many of you have been on a banana boat? Why, if

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you're visiting the South Pacific, you absolutely, positively must get a ride on a banana boat!

Lelepa Island offers you a chance to get out and about and stroll through the rainforest. You'll see plenty of flora and fauna that the locals use for medicine, as well as beautiful and unique trees and brush that fill the air with wonderful aromas and delight your senses with their variety of colors. Take the opportunity to inspect interesting creatures and native insects.

While you're there, take the time to spend a couple of hours snorkeling. You can also go fishing or just chill out on the beach and enjoy the white, sand and beautiful vistas as your guide prepares your lunch.

This wonderful tour is operated by Lelepa Island Tours. They offer departures every day except Saturdays. Tours include a delicious barbecue lunch, soft drinks, and snorkeling gear. You'll also enjoy morning and afternoon refreshments along with the laughs and history provided by your friendly guide.

Cascade Waterfalls

You haven't seen a beautiful tropical waterfall until you've laid your eyes on the Cascade Waterfalls. The waterfalls are located a mere 15 minutes outside of Port Vila. You'll have to climb to the waterfall, but it's not difficult. Take our word for it -- you'll be greatly rewarded for your efforts. Get up close and personal with the waterfalls. Stick your feet in the water and take the opportunity to swim under the waterfall itself.

The Cascade Waterfalls overflow from an underground spring. The water is always clear, cool, and extremely refreshing. There are five pools located at the top of the waterfalls that you can jump into and play in. You can walk back down to your starting point at the stream or on the hiking trail. If you take the hiking trail up and back, plan on spending between one hour and an hour and a half
for your hike plus whatever time you spend in the water. If you take the stream back down, give yourself a couple of hours and take a pair of shoes that will protect your feet against the pebbles on the stream bed.

Of course, enjoying such an adventure may be the highlight of your day, but the waterfall itself is no slouch. It is literally one of the most restful, exotic, and peaceful locations that you can imagine. If you take the hiking trail, you'll be within easy access of a great waterhole for cooling off when you get down to the bottom.

A series of pools created by the waterfall lead up to an approximately 50m drop. The waterfall pools can be swum in and are a comfortable temperature year-round. There's even a hidden cave under one of them. The colors of the flowers and shrubbery surrounding the pools and the waterfall itself are exquisite and the view from the top simply amazing.

You can visit Cascade Waterfalls by yourself or with a tour. Be sure to pack a bathing suit if you want to swim, and waterproof shoes or swimming shoes. In order to reach the top waterfall, you'll need to wade in the water, so don't forget the swimming suit unless you don't mind wading in the water in your clothes.

**Day Tour to Tanna Island: Mt. Yasur**

Wouldn't you just love to tell your friends and associates that you actually hiked to a volcano? Mt. Yasur is a relatively small volcano at just about 360m above sea level. It's also regularly active. Tanna is a small island located south of Port Vila and Efate Island.

If you take the overnight-tour to visit the volcano, we recommend that you stay at the Yasur Camping Site for the night. The camping site is located near the base of the entrance to the volcano, but you can't get much closer than that.

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You can reach the volcano by traveling through jungles in 4x4 vehicles for about an hour and a half. It's a bumpy ride, but a fun one! The site is quite spectacular during the day and is simply awesome after dark. Vapor clouds hang over the mouth of volcano most of the time.

If you stay at Yasur Camping Site near the entrance, you can't enjoy multiple visits, as the volcano rim is only 30 minutes walking distance from the campsite. This is beneficial to travelers who arrive on the island in the later afternoon. Of course, you can also stay at more modern accommodations on the island, but if you do, be prepared for the 90-minute drive to the volcano and back.

You can also see the volcano during a day trip with Unity Airlines. Unity Airlines offer a Tanna Island **Yasur Volcano Day Safari**, which usually departs from Port Vila Airport around nine o'clock in the morning, arriving back in Port Vila at about five o'clock in the evening. The scenic one-hour flight to Tanna gives you the opportunity to not only appreciate the spectacular view of Port Vila Harbor and south Efate Island, but also Erromango and its beautiful coastline as well.

You'll be taken to the volcano by the four-wheel-drive safari staff, who will welcome you at the airport and take you to a local resort for refreshments. The tour typically begins around 11 o'clock in the morning. Along the way to the volcano in your 4-wheel drive vehicle, enjoy local villages, beautiful scenery, and surround yourself with the aroma, sights and sounds of the area. The closer you get to the volcano, the more you'll begin to see volcanic ash plains.

Visitors typically reach the top of the summit at about noontime. A 10-minute walk from the parking area to the rim of the crater will give you a glimpse into the immense power of one of the world's most accessible yet active volcanoes.
Imagine the stories you can tell your friends!

The fun doesn't stop there. Try your hand at kayaking around Efate Island. Check out [www.kayakingvanuatu.com](http://www.kayakingvanuatu.com), a member of the Vanuatu Tour Operators Association. You don't have to be in great shape to enjoy a kayaking adventure, coupled with snorkeling in the beautiful and crystal-clear waters of lagoons surrounding the island. Half-day tours are available, and *Kayaking Vanuatu* won the best adventure eco-tour for three years running from 2008 through 2010.

Semi-submerged submarine and snorkel tours are provided by *Reef Explorer*. Snorkeling gear is provided as you join tour operators on a custom-built semi-submersible vessel called the Reef Explorer. Also a member of the Vanuatu Tour Operators Association, enjoy a quarter-day tour and marvel at the colors of the fish, sea creatures and coral. Visit their website at [www.thereefexplorer.com](http://www.thereefexplorer.com) for more information regarding scheduling and fees.

One of the most fun adventures you can have in Port Vila includes high-speed water tours. *U-Power Sea Adventures* offers you the opportunity to drive your own legal sports craft, following a guide through the beautiful waters of the Port Vila Bay area. Tours are offered in 30 and 60 minute rides. Along the way, you'll discover pristine beaches, hidden coves and unexplored sites in and around Port Vila. The Company is located on the Sea Wall in Port-Vila next to *Cruise Away*.

You'll start your journey at the Port Vila Anchorage and then drive your Zego boat with a companion in tandem. Experienced and friendly guides lead you through the water on a safe and friendly tour. Along the way, you'll likely encounter sea turtles or a dugong (this adorable mammal looks like a manatee). Check out this exciting opportunity at *U-Power Sea Adventures* at their website, [www.upowerzegovanuatu.com](http://www.upowerzegovanuatu.com)

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More Fun in the Sun

There are so many fun things to do in Vanuatu, we wish that we could mention them all, because they are nearly endless, and each one offers excitement, laughter, and the beauty and excitement of being outdoors in Vanuatu.

Try a horseback ride at Club Hippique on 2nd Lagoon, or horseback rides through acres of forests to deserted beaches. Or, enjoy a Congoola Day Cruise to Moso Island. Stroll through a turtle sanctuary and end your beautiful day with a beach barbecue.

Reef and remote island fishing, half or full day fishing tours and deep-sea fishing for dogtooth tuna, marlins and wahoos offer a fisherman’s dream. Tour operators, in standard with the eco-friendly atmosphere of the islands, tag and release their catch and less they're given to local villages for food.

Enjoy a cultural tour with the Namo Nana Tradi-Cultural Village experience, which will include activities like rainmaking, weaving, gardening and fishing. Watch an authentic kastom dance and listen to the village string band.

National Museum of Vanuatu

The National Museum of Vanuatu is located on Rue d’Artois Nambatu. We suggest stopping in at the museum to familiarize yourself with the history and culture of the islands. The National Museum is a beautiful architectural building that offers visitors a wide selection of historically significant artifacts from Vanuatu, ranging from musical instruments to Vanuatu's cultural headdresses and beautiful pottery. The museum also offers videos and beautifully framed photographs for a glimpse into the history, culture, and way of life of the people of one a lot too.

Regardless of your tastes in outdoor adventure or indoor activities, Vanuatu and its neighboring islands offer some of the most exciting and unique activities,
sightseeing adventures and sites that you can imagine.

Whether you've come for business or pleasure, give yourself an extra day or two to explore our beautiful islands. De-stress and relax on our beaches, warm waters, or bask in the scents and tranquility of our rainforests.

There are so many things to do in Vanuatu that will please all preferences, tastes, physical fitness levels and desires. Your imagination is the only limit to with a wealth of activities and adventures you'll find on our islands.

**Espiritu Santo Island Fun**

Espiritu Santo is the Spanish word for the "Holy Spirit", named by Spanish explorer Pedro de Quiros sometime in the 17th century. At the time, the explorer thought he had discovered Australia, but instead he discovered the largest island in the Vanuatu archipelago. Today, the island is simply called Santo.

Santo Island is a place of magical beauty and never ending tropical paradise scenery and beautiful lagoons and lush vegetation. Diving locations surrounding Santo are world-renowned. On land, visitors can explore amazing caves, trek through dense jungles, and sit and watch cattle grazing contentedly in their natural habitat.

Santo Island is one of the few in the world where you can actually be by yourself on a deserted beach, or snorkel with thousands of colorful fish, as well as enjoy explore tribal and ritual mystic cultural heritage sites.

When you're done exploring and having fun during the day, finish your day off with a dinner on a pier overlooking the South Pacific Ocean.
Santo Island also happens to be the location of Vanuatu's highest mountain peaks including:

- Mt. Tabwemasana
- Mt. Kotamtam
- Mt. Tawaloala
- Santo Peak

Resort facilities on Santo Island are in one word - fabulous. The island and the resorts located here attract travelers from around the world. The capital city of Santo Island is Luganville, designed with a wide main street stretching along the waterfront. Luganville is a small town with not many things to do but an excellent base for exciting dive adventures.

You can get to Santo Island by flying into Luganville’s Pekoa Airport. The airport is also a feeder airport for many destinations in the northern islands of Vanuatu including:

- Pentecost
- Torres
- The Bank Islands
- Epi
- Ambae
- Ambrym
- Malekula
- Paama

One of the easiest ways to get onto Santo Island is to fly to Port Vila and then take a connecting flight with Air Vanuatu operators. Air Vanuatu operates return flights between Port Vila and Santo Island on a daily basis. Air Vanuatu also flies visitors direct to Santo Island from Brisbane, Australia. Those arriving to Santo Island via the sea on yachts or boats can dock at the main wharf. The safest anchorage on the island for yachts is at Aore Island, which offers 40 m depths.

**Getting around Santos Island**
Santo Island is equipped with a good road that connects the capital city of Luganville to the north, east and southwestern coast of the island.

Minibuses are plentiful on the island and are available for runs between the airport and the capital city. Taxis are also available. Taxis charge approximately 600 Vt while a minibus charges around 200 Vt. To catch a minibus, just stop, raise your hand and hail it, and you’ll be picked up and dropped off at your destination with no problem.

Santo Island also offers a variety of car rental firms. Several include:

- Hotel Santo Car Hire
- Lahore Rentals
- Espiritu Car Rentals

Accommodations on Santo Island

We’re warning you right now that you’ll have a tough time picking an accommodation on Santo Island, because of their so many good ones. And, in true Vanuatu tradition, at every one, you'll be warmly greeted and received, as well as pampered during your stay on Santos Island. Some of the most visited hotel facilities available in the capital city of Luganville include:

- Village de Santo
- The Espiritu
- Hotel Santo
- Deco Stop Lodge
- The Beachfront Resort

If you really want to get out and about and experience the true Santo Island, we recommend that you stay out of town at any one of the following facilities:

- Ratua Private Island Resort
- Oyster Island Resort

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Santo Island offers some of the best diving and snorkeling in the world!

Of course, we don't have room to tell you about every single resort on the island, but we do want to share our experiences at the Oyster Island Resort with you. In our opinion, the Oyster Island Resort is one of the best facilities where you can stay while on Santo Island.

Here, you'll experience the Melanesian way of life first-hand while at the same time enjoying the natural beauty of this exquisitely private sanctuary island. The hotel resort is located only a few minutes from the mainland and can be reached by boat along the eastern shoreline of Santo Island.

Oyster Island Resort offers unforgettable experience for families vacationing in the South Pacific, as well as retirees, honeymooners, or those celebrating a special event such as a graduation or golden anniversary. Actually, Oyster Island Resort is a hidden gem and getaway where anyone can just get away from it all and enjoy the ultimate in South Pacific beauty, hospitality and serenity.

The waterfront bungalows are designed using local materials in true Island fashion and construction. Every room has a private seafront balcony and hand back!

The restaurant at Oyster Island Resort offers a French Pacific menu that includes, of course, oysters straight from the sea. It's no wonder that this facility is often fondly referred to as "the Pearl of Santo".

For more information regarding Oyster Island Resort, visit their website or contact them at: www.vanuatu-escape.com
Activities on Santo Island

Santo Island offers a variety of activities for all age groups, preferences, and activity levels. One thing that is common to all individuals is that the word "boredom" won't be found in your vocabulary while you're visiting this exquisite island. Actually, there's so much to do on Santo, but it's hard to know where to begin. However, we'd like to offer you a brief list of "must-dos" on Santo Island.

SCUBA Diving and Snorkeling

Santo Island is a prime snorkeling and diving location, and offers some of the best snorkeling and diving locations and sites in the world.

Diving the Coolidge Wreck

The Coolidge is a 600-foot long sunken luxury liner. It can be explored by divers during shallow and deep-water dives. The ship was built in 1931 and converted to a troop carrier during the Second World War. She was carrying Allied reinforcements to US Pacific bases when she was hit by two mines close to Santo Harbor in 1942.

The captain ran the Coolidge aground, and all but two of the 5,000 troops and crew aboard walked to shore before she slipped off the reef. Unlike many wrecks in this vintage, the Coolidge is mostly intact and offers more than a dozen different dive sites for diving enthusiasts, many of them more than 100 feet in depth.

Divers will be able to view the largely intact luxury cruise liner/military transport ship at one time. Swim through numerous holds and decks (be careful...
though, as earthquakes have collapsed several sections). On the ship, you'll see jeeps, trucks, cannons and guns. You'll even view a beautiful statue called "the lady" which is a porcelain relief of a woman riding a unicorn. You'll also see a mosaic tiled fountain and beautiful chandeliers.

ship, and among the coral, sea turtles, moray eels and a few. The Coolidge lies on the shipwrecks of this size and type in the world. The wreck site is one of the most desirable dive sites due to its relatively shallow side, visibility, and easy beach access.

Always taking care with depth, recreational divers can explore large parts of the wreck without needing specialized equipment. The massive size of the wreck itself, combined with its gradual downward slope means that more experienced divers must nevertheless use care when monitoring their depth, as well as their horizontal frame of reference.

The President Coolidge wreck is considered one of the top 10 wreck diving sites in the world, and one that you should not miss if you're a diver and are in this area of the world.

Game and Sport Fishing

Santo Island is also home to some of the best fishing in the South Pacific. Whether you're hunting for marlin or wahoo, you're likely to find what you're looking for and more. Keep in mind that whatever you catch is either tagged and released or donated to local villages. Several charter companies operate some of the best fishing spots on Santo Island.

While on the island, take advantage of other opportunities to get a bird's eye view of the island
including island tours, golfing, horseback riding or hiking.

Sites to See

Santo Island offers some interesting sites, including World War II remnants. Santo Island used to be a US military harbor. At Million-Dollar Point, you'll find reefs of coral covering military equipment, always a magnet for divers. The military equipment was dumped into the sea by the US military at the end of the Second World War.

Another major attraction on Santo Island are the Lysefsepsep natives. They live deep in the jungles and the mountains, and visitors often go to great lengths to catch a glimpse of them. These people are ancestors of the first inhabitants on Santo Island and you can learn more about their culture and the Lysefsepse Culture Park.

Other things to see on the island include:

- The Coconut Oil Factory
- Rotary Park
- Unity Park
- Palikula Park

Regardless of how long you stay on Santo Island, you'll be inspired and awed by its beauty, and that's a guarantee.

Tanna Island

The island is home to one of Vanuatu's most visited sites, the Mt. Yasur volcano. As one of the most popular tourist attractions, Tanna Island is also one of the most populated islands in Tafea Province, with a
population numbering in the neighborhood of 20,000 people.

The small town of Lenakel is the provincial administrative capital, located on the west coast line of the island. Tanna Island is approximately a 60-minute flight from Port Vila via Air Vanuatu, which flies to Whitegrass Airport on a daily basis.

We've talked a little about Mt. Yasur volcano, but not much about its geographical significance. It's located near sea level and situated on the coastline near Sulfur Bay, to the southeast of a taller mountain called Mt. Tukosomera.

The glow of the volcano was what attracted Captain James Cook to the island in 1774. Visitors can climb up to the rim of the volcano, which provides some of the most stunning and awesome photo opportunities you've ever experienced.

Because Mt. Yasur volcano is active, the local government has created safety levels as follows:

- **Level 0** - low activity - access to the volcano crater is allowed
- **Level 1** - normal activity - access to the volcano crater is allowed
- **Level 2** - moderate to high activity - lava "bombs" may land beyond the crater's rim and access to the crater is limited
- **Level 3** - severe activity - access to the summit zone is closed
- **Level 4** - major eruption - all access to the volcano's vicinity is closed
As mentioned earlier, we recommend Unity Airlines for day- or overnight trips to Mt. Yasur from Port Vila.

**Accommodations on Tanna Island**

Tanna Island offers mainly basic accommodations. Some of the most popular in include:

- **Banyan Castle Bungalow** - this very basic bungalow accommodation is located within easy walking distance from the Mt. Yasur volcano
- **Blue Reef Resort and Tours** - experience true island living with local people here
- **Friendly Bungalows** – one of the better but still basic beachfront location on Tanna Island, only 6 km from the Mt. Yasur volcano
- **Hidden Treasure Bungalows** - this location offers lush vegetation in a secluded, tranquil location. Here, visitors can take and spectacular views of the ocean, stunning sunrises and sunsets, and stroll along warm, sandy white beaches
- **Lenakel Cove** - just five minutes walk from town, Lenakel Cove Bungalows are situated along a plateau just 250 m from the Pacific Ocean.
- **Samana Starlite Bungalows** - clean, tidy and basic
  - **Sunrise Bungalows** - Nice basic bungalows are a 20 minute drive from the volcano
- **Sunset Bungalows Tanna** - these accommodations are close to shops, markets and the wharf, as well as a 20 minute drive away from Whitegrass Airport
- **Tanna Evergreen Resort and Tours** – one of the best options to stay on Tanna. These
accommodations offer a literal gateway to the ultimate Tanna experience

- **Tanna Holiday Haven** - this is a relatively new yet established self-contained bungalow on the island
- **Tanna Island Dream Bungalows** - located in a small island close to Port Resolution Bay, this grouping of family-owned bungalows offer panoramic views of Mt. Yasur volcano, Mt. Mellon and Aniwa Island
- **Tanna Lodge** - located on eight acres of landscaped tropical gardens, the rain forest creek meets the volcanic beach in this pleasant island setting
- **Tanna Melanesian Bungalows** - these bungalows are a family-owned and run business located at Loanengo
- **Uma Guesthouse** - this guest house is located near the sea and within walking distance of a handful of beautiful beaches
- **White Grass Ocean Resort** – the best hotel on the island. A stunning example of South Pacific grace, charm and architecture, the White Grass Ocean Resort is a perfect place for families or couples
- **Yasur Tribe Bungalows** - these bungalows will help visitors truly get back to nature, constructed from bamboo, cane and leaf thatching design.

Whether you want to go all out or are watching your budget, Tanna Island offers a variety of accommodations, dining and cuisine opportunities, and things to do. Now it's time to hop over onto Pentecost Island.

**Pentecost Island**

Pentecost Island is best known around the world for its land-diving (the original bungee jumping). Fly-in day-trips and overnight accommodations on Pentecost Island are available for those wishing to
witness a land diving ceremony firsthand. However, only a very few tourist facilities are available on the island. Two of these include:

- Nagol Bungalows
- Waterfall Bungalows

Other islands throughout the Vanuatu archipelago offer plenty of things to do and see. For example, Maewo Island, located in Penama Province, is located approximately 100 km east of Santo Island. Maewo Island measures the highest rainfall in all of Vanuatu, registering more than 2500 mm a year.

Maewo Island is naturally covered in lush, green vegetation and offers a plethora of waterfalls and fresh water sources. A natural hot springs is also located in the center of Maewo Island.

Some of the best things to do on Maewo Island include:

- Bird watching
- Walking along black sand beaches
- Visiting the hot springs
- Watching traditional dances
- Learning about ancient secret societies

Accommodations on Maewo comprise of basic island bungalows. One such bungalow locations available for overnight stays on the island includes the Asanvari Yacht Club Bungalow.

**Malekula Island**

Malekula Island is the second largest island in Vanuatu. It was named by James Cook, that comes
from the French phrase “mal au cul” - freely translated as "pain in the ass".

The island got its name due to the presence of cannibals, active volcanoes, and other nasty attributes at the time Cook discovered it. The island itself is separated by other islands within the Vanuatu chain by the Bougainville Strait. The capital city of Lakatoro is located on the eastern side of the island and is one of the largest communities on the island itself.

Visiting Malekula Island, visitors can explore old cannibal sites, engaging cultural tours to the “small- and big nambas tribes” and while away the hours with bird watching. Some of the simple but better accommodations on the Island include:

- Tam Tam Bungalows
- Amel Toro Bungalows (great French food)

And no, there are no cannibals left on the island.

**Ambrym Island**

Ambrym Island is well-known for its active volcanic activity and includes lava lake formation. Measuring approximately 700 square miles on its surface, this is the fifth largest island in Vanuatu. Several times every century, the volcano on the island offers an eruption with often destructive results. The summit of the volcano itself contains a desert like area called a caldera, which covers an area of nearly 100 km².

Main sites to see on Ambrym Island include:

- Benbow and Marum active volcanoes
- The annual cultural festival, featuring Rom dancing and sand drawing. This takes place around mid-July every year

The island also offers a number of historical sites and some very basic accommodations, which include:
• Sam’s Bungalow

The Banks Island and Torres Island

Considered among the most northern Vanuatu’s islands, the largest of the Banks Islands is called Gaua, followed by Vanua Lava. Other islands of significant size include Ra and Mota Lava.

Some of the most amazing sights to see include:

• Mt. Sere Ama, an active volcano  
• Selva River  
• Kwakea Island  
• a number of waterfalls and of course, beautiful rain forests and stunning beaches

Epi, Aneityum and Erromango Islands

Epi Island is located at the northern end of the Shepherd Islands and relatively close to Port Vila. The main attractions on Epi Island include swimming with friendly dugongs (sea cows) at Lamen Bay. This is an unforgettable and heartwarming experience.

Accommodations on the island include:

• Epi Paradise Sunset Bungalows  
• Epi Island Guesthouse  
• Nikaura Sunrise Bungalow

Aneityum Island

Aneityum Island is the southernmost island in Vanuatu, surrounded by coral reefs and beaches. The interior portion of the island is covered wet, dark and mountainous forests. The island is a popular cruise ship destination, and Mystery Island is great for private as well as quiet retreats. Among the few accommodations on this island include:

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• Island Breeze
• Mystery Island Bungalows

**Erromango Island**

Erromango Island is the largest island in Tafea Province, though it’s sparsely populated. It used to be one of the major sources for sandalwood, but heavy logging depleted much of it. Today, the island is considered an ideal location for hiking and bushwalking, while the Kauri Forests are a well-known attraction. Accommodations on this island are limited to a single bungalow and a single guesthouse at Upongkor Village.

Now that you know a little bit about the accommodations throughout our many islands, we invite you to explore our region, our islands, and our opportunities on your own. We’re very sure that you won’t be disappointed; we’re sure that your interest and attraction to Vanuatu will increase the more you learn about our beautiful islands.

**Life on Vanuatu**

As we mentioned in the introduction, the people of Vanuatu are among the friendliest on the planet. In order to benefit the most from your visit (or stay) on Vanuatu, it will help to know a bit about the people, their culture, and their customs.

While information contained herein is by no means inclusive, it will give you a better idea of the type of people who live on the islands, who are excellent hosts and even more wonderful neighbors.

Customs on Vanuatu have been shaped by foreign influence as well as local regional variations, depending on the island. As mentioned earlier, the word Vanuatu means "Our Land Forever" in the local dialect.
The name the natives have given their island(s) demonstrates their intense pride in their homeland, as well as their dedication to maintaining its tranquility and beauty. While the people of Vanuatu have proven friendly to a variety of foreigners, and to some extent have been influenced by them, the customs of the people of Vanuatu have remained largely intact over the centuries, despite that foreign influence.

Let's start with the basics. The people of Vanuatu are considered Melanesian. Melanesia is a sub-region of Oceania. Oceania itself includes Polynesia, New Zealand, Australia and Micronesia. Linguistics among the islands displays the unique diversity and cultural development of the Melanesian people. Among the Ni-Vanuatu people are found over 100 tribes or clans, each with their own distinct history, cultural traditions and dialects.

**Island Culture**

Because of its vast diversity, the Vanuatu Islands offer an extremely rich cultural heritage. Among the Islands, you'll find three major regions of cultural development.

In the **northern islands**, wealth was (and still is to a vast degree) based on varying levels of philanthropy. For example, domestic animals and livestock are used as a measurement of wealth, as they are among other cultures around the world.

The Native Americans judged wealth by how many horses a man owned, as horses were a very valuable commodity to the American Indian. The same goes for the people of Vanuatu, but instead of horses, the measure of wealth was/is determined by how many pigs a man owned or owns. The larger a person’s pig herd, the more wealthy he is.
Within the central islands, traditional Melanesian cultural systems are dominant. In the traditional culture of Melanesia, tribal or clan leaders were chosen on personal qualities rather than through inheritance. For example, a person who is good in combat, or even-tempered, employs diplomacy and persuasion is considered a good candidate to lead a tribe.

Among the groups considered a part of Melanesia include New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, the Maluku Islands, the Torres Straits Islands and New Caledonia. The region has been inhabited for thousands of years and relies mainly on agriculture for sustenance. Spaniards and the Portuguese were among the first Europeans to occupy Vanuatu, followed by the Dutch in the Fiji Islands and the British to New Caledonia by the mid-1700s.

Cultural values and behavior in the central islands relies heavily on their Melanesian background, with extended families, with a prevalence toward preservation of respect for their elders within the family unit, and a unity among the family where resources are shared. In Melanesian culture, the family unit is the source of spiritual and emotional support for all its members.

In the southern islands, foreign influence such as a complex system of title land grants are in place, brought to the territory of the southernmost islands by the Dutch, French, Spanish, English and Portuguese over centuries. These influences helped shape the attitudes, behavior and expectations of its indigenous people.

Growing up in Vanuatu

In Vanuatu, one of the most important rites of passage for a young man is to be circumcised. In most parts of Vanuatu, a group of village boys are circumcised at the same time, without an anesthetic! Following the procedure, coconut oil or herbal leaves
and concoctions were (and still are) used to help reduce discomfort and promote healing.

During the period of healing, the newly circumcised boys are not allowed near women, nor are they allowed to interact with women. They stay in a village "clubhouse" called a **nakamal**, for up to three months until they are completely healed. While this practice makes many men around the world cringe, it is considered a very important ceremony to young men of Vanuatu and is one of the ways in which they acquire recognition and stature within their society.

**Bungee Jumping**

Another rite of passage for young man in Vanuatu is called **Nagol**. This ceremony may very well be considered the original form of what is known today as bungee jumping. On the islands, it's also called land diving. It's the most famous ceremony that takes place in Vanuatu, and has been televised around the world.

The first televised appearance of native boys land diving on Vanuatu was filmed in the 1950s by British film director David Attenborough. The land diving ritual was filmed on Pentecost Island.

Why did this tradition start?
According to local legend, a man called Tamale beat his wife. Naturally, she ran away. She hid in a tall tree and this incensed Tamale and he climbed up the tree after her. When he tried to grab her, she leapt from the tree and Tamale leapt after her. However, Tamale didn't know that his wife had outsmarted him by first tying vines to her ankles. The vines broke her fall, while Tamale, who hadn't thought to tie vines around his ankles, crashed to the ground and was fatally injured. Ever since then, men and boys, even as young as seven years of age, have leapt from the platforms as a sign of strength and as a symbolic statement to women that they will never be fooled again.

Well, we don't know about that, but we do know that the Nagol ceremony is still highly revered in the culture of the Vanuatu Islands. It used to occur once or twice a year between the months of April and June. Typically, the land diving began when the first yam crop began to show the first signs of germination, as the ceremony was believed to help ensure a good crop.

In order to be eligible to participate in the ceremony, boys or men must be circumcised. The men jumped from specially constructed towers with two elastic vines fastened to their ankles. All the men of the village typically go through the ritual. Today, the towers are built on slopes with a moderate bias in order to reduce the work needed to build the structures as well as to lessen the chance of serious injury in the event of an accident.

The towers themselves can range in height from 16 to 35 meters. To date, there have only been a very few cases of a man or boy being seriously injured from this ritual. Unfortunately, the government of Vanuatu banned the ritual in 1995 because of over-commercialization. It was believed that such commercialization reduced the cultural value and meaning of the ritual itself.
However, there are still two locations on Pentecost Island that have been set aside for tourists who would like to see Nagol land-diving. Locals from throughout the Vanuatu Islands are only allowed to participate in land diving from these two locations.

By 2010, it was decided that the Nagol ceremony was to be limited to customary jumps by the natives, and jumps designed for tourists were banned. Because of this, tourists are able to see only a limited number of Nagol ceremonial jumps as they occur, and not as part of a tourist attraction. Since then, the tradition and rite of passage has returned to its traditional and cultural roots, away from the commercialism of widespread tourism.

**Drinking Kava**

Only after young men have been circumcised are they allowed to participate in the preparation of a drink called kava. Kava is an indigenous concoction, and intoxicating drink, that contains anesthetic as well as sedative properties. Throughout Melanesia, kava is consumed for religious, social and recreational reasons.

Kava is prepared from the root of the kava plant. The active ingredient found in the kava root includes a class of lactose compounds. The traditional method for preparation of kava involves pounding or grinding the roots into a fine pulp. The pulp is then added to cold water and the mixture is drunk as soon as possible in order to retain its active properties.

Pieces of the kava root can also be chewed, but doing this is quite a bit more potent. Kava tastes rather pungent and the aroma it produces depends on whether fresh root or dry root is used when making the concoction. The color of kava ranges from a gray to tan and even a greenish color. In most cases, the drink is consumed in the village clubhouse or Nakamal, which traditionally serves at a meeting place for men of the village.
Language

As we mentioned earlier, there are over 100 dialects and languages spoken in the Vanuatu archipelago. Vanuatu is considered one of the most linguistically exciting places on the planet, where scholars and language experts can compare the number of languages spoken to the size of their environment. However, throughout Vanuatu, visitors and residents speak mostly French, English, or a page in language called Bislama.

Bislama is a language that tried to simplify the form of language developed between the indigenous people of the area with various colonizers including the British. Bislama is a combination of Melanesian vocabulary and grammar that has been literally bastardized with English vocabulary and grammar to create a specific language.

Below you will find some of the most commonly used phrases in Bislama and its English translation. We challenge you to wrap your tongue around some of these vowels without tying it into knots!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bislama</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olsemwanem?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gud Aftanun</td>
<td>Good afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanem nem blong yu</td>
<td>What is your name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nem blong mi…</td>
<td>My name is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu blongwea?</td>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi blong…</td>
<td>I am from…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ale lukimyu</td>
<td>Okay, see you around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas long emia?</td>
<td>How much for this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi wantem em…?</td>
<td>I want to buy…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanem nem blong hemia…?</td>
<td>What is the name for this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tankiutumas</td>
<td>Thank you very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olbigwan</td>
<td>Big ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olsmolwan</td>
<td>Small ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wan, tu, tri, or fopis…</td>
<td>One, two, three or four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas long wan?</td>
<td>How much for one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emia I fres?</td>
<td>Is this fresh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wea?</td>
<td>Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long wea?</td>
<td>From where?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you having fun? Then try these too!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long</th>
<th>At</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olsemwanem</td>
<td>How</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klosap long</td>
<td>Close to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

info@vanuatu-escape.com
There! Now you’ve learned to speak some Bislama—and are ready to come visit our beautiful islands and blend right in with the natives!

**Villages in Vanuatu**

In the older days, villages were divided between male and female sections. The clubhouse, known as the village clubhouse or Nakamal, was typically reserved for men as a place to meet and drink their shell of kava.

Today, visitors have the opportunity of seeing villages much as they looked hundreds of years ago. Villagers continue to hold onto their traditional way of life. For example, approximately 15 minutes from Port Vila and only 10 minutes from our very own Tropicana Lagoon Resort is a cultural village called Ekasup.

It's a beautiful location where visitors can watch traditional building and farming firsthand. You're invited to look inside traditional bamboo huts, watch the women preparing food, and get the chance to watch a village holy man in action. The village holy man serves much as the medicine man did an ancient American Indian culture, protecting his people from the curses of enemies, curing illness, and acting as a wise man who is a respected individual within the tribe unit.
At the end of visitor's tour of Ekasup, you'll be invited to join in traditional song and dance. You may even opt to wear a grass skirt costume and join in the fun. Purchase all types of crafts made by the natives, which help to support their lifestyle.

Crafts include baskets, woven bags and other small handicrafts. If you're interested in doing something like this, just give Martina Schwartz a call and she'll book you on the next cultural feast and tour. You can reach her at +678 77 77 111.

Now is as good a time as any to talk about some of the native and heritage of arts and crafts of the Ni-Vanuatu. Known for their prolific and beautiful weaving, women on the island use a wide variety of materials dyed in different colors to create bags, baskets, and other handicrafts.

We haven't even begun to talk about the exquisite musical instruments produced on the islands. The people of Vanuatu are very musical. Traditional musical instruments are composed of vibrating sounds that can be compared to today's modern guitars. Other musical instruments of the island include drums, rattles, and gongs.

The natives of Vanuatu have developed quite an industry manufacturing musical instruments and the music of Vanuatu itself has earned a place of distinction in South Pacific island music since the late 1990s, as tourism has increased and more people around the world are introduced into the beautiful sounds, rhythms and lyrics of the islands.

However, visitors to the islands will also find modern genres including reggae, zouk and reggaeton, a variation of the modern and extremely popular hip-hop sound, with its own unique island beat.
Let’s Talk about the Food!

The food on the island of Vanuatu is to die for. Well, not literally, but visitors are continually amazed by the rich diversity of spices, preparation styles, aromas and flavors of food served in Vanuatu.

One of the nicest things about Vanuatu is the many different choices you have for tasting international cuisine. Diners can choose from Australian, American or British-styles of food, or try delicious traditional Melanesian ground-oven cooking styles. You can also delight your taste buds with Italian, French, Chinese, Vietnamese and other Asian cooking styles, or awaken your senses with the diversity of Indian dishes and flavors. Vanuatu is loaded with restaurants, bistros and cafes, with a majority of them found throughout Port Vila and its surroundings.

Many hotels and resorts in Vanuatu have more than one restaurant or bistro to choose from, so you'll never grow hungry or bored with the food here. We’ll talk more about restaurants in just a bit!

Staple dishes on Vanuatu include fish and roots. Roots such as yam and taro, a perennial, tropical plant grown mainly as a root vegetable, offers an edible, starchy corn-like flavor.

The traditional dish of the Ni-Vanuatu is called laplap, a type of root vegetable cake made by combining sweet potato, taro or yam shaved into the middle of a banana leaf, along with cassava and island cabbage and sometimes even with a chicken wing on top.

Makes your mouth water, doesn't it?

Most people in Vanuatu are called subsistence farmers who grow their own food on very small plots. It's extremely rare to hear of any kind of food
shortage among the islands because most households are self-sufficient.

The islands are rich with sweet potatoes, paw paws, mangoes and pineapples, and you'll find these fruits and vegetables mixed into a wide variety of dishes. In addition, coconut milk and cream is used to flavor many of the dishes on the islands. The most predominant method of food preparation on the island is through boiling or steaming foods over hot stones. Food on the islands is rarely dried.

One of the best things about eating in Vanuatu is that the food is mostly organic. Even the cattle on the island are grown in an organic environment and the beef is so tasty and tender you'll never want to eat store-bought beef again.

We'll talk more about the favorite dishes served on Vanuatu, but first, we want to introduce you to the main market in Efate, where shopping for food can be a fun, unique and interesting experience.

The main food market in Efate is open 24 hours a day from Monday through Friday. It closes at noon on Saturday. The market place is beautiful, exciting and full of colors and aromas. You'll find Ni-Vanuatu women dressed in what we call "Island" dresses. Food is also very cheap and it's not uncommon for us to purchase huge grapefruit and other assorted fruits at prices as low as 25Vt.

Just so you know, here are a few examples of very inexpensive fruits in season:

- Passion fruit - March to May
- Wild raspberries – September
- Mangoes – November

While you're at the market, take the time to watch women prepare a variety of interesting and mouthwatering meals. Remember, don't bargain, and don't expect to be hassled when making a purchase. Everyone is more than happy to let you make your

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choices in peace. Quite a change from Western environments, wouldn't you say?

We want to talk about Port Vila, on Efate Island, for just a minute before we move onward with the laid-back lifestyle in Vanuatu. As you have already been informed, Port Vila is the capital city of Vanuatu. It's located on the southern coastline of Efate Island in Shefa Province.

It's the heart of all business activity and government in Vanuatu. Over 90% of visitors who come to the country entered through Port Vila. The main airport is Port Vila Bauerfield Airport (VLI), located just 15 minutes out of town.

We've also mentioned, that because Vanuatu Island is a tax haven, Port Vila serves as a very important offshore financing destination. However, the mainstay and main focus of support for the Vanuatu Islands economy continues to be fishing, agriculture, and tourism.

Efate Island is very well known for its variety of dining options, accommodations and opportunities. Not only is the island famous for its diving destinations, but for open sea game fishing, and for those looking for the ultimate escape, a relaxing island atmosphere.

Port Vila offers visitors dozens of tours that include everything from a luxury cruise to a tall ships sail, to kayaking and abseiling. Accommodation facilities throughout Port Vila are simply exquisite, and visitors will revel and fill their tummies with a wide range of regular feasts that are celebrated in the city.

Whether you want to explore the back streets of Port Vila or our museums, visitors are guaranteed to learn about the rich diversity and friendliness of the Melanesian culture. Local produce is mainly organic, and even the cattle are free to roam the beaches, munching on nothing but natural green grass and foliage.
We guarantee that within an hour you'll be smiling for no apparent reason, except that everyone else is smiling at you. The people here are extremely friendly and their smiles are extremely infectious. Kids are welcome to the islands and they'll have a ball, just like you will. Port Vila and our islands offer an unforgettable experience for any age group.

**Festivals and Holidays on Vanuatu**

The people of Vanuatu love to party. They also love their public holidays. As a matter of fact, we think that Vanuatu has even more public holidays than most other countries in the world!

It can be said that the Parliament sometimes invents holidays without any advance notice, creating pleasant surprises for visitors and natives alike. We're going to offer a list of some of the most popular public holidays each year. The best thing about holidays in Vanuatu is, each one gives you a day off of work!

Not all holidays are celebrated on each island specifically. For this reason, will provide a list, specifying the date, the celebration, and which island is celebrated on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Celebration</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>New Year's Day</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Custom Chief’s Day</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March or April</td>
<td>Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April to May June</td>
<td>Nagol (land diving)</td>
<td>Pentecost Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 5  
Ascension Day  
Nationwide

June  
Fete de la Musique  
Port Vila, Santo, Tanna and Malekula Islands

July  
Kiwani’s Race Day and Charity Ball  
Port Vila

July 25  
Children’s Day  
Nationwide

July 30  
Independence Day  
Nationwide

August 3-8  
Vanuatu Golf Open  
Port Vila Golf and Country Club

August 15  
Assumption Day  
Nationwide

October  
Napuan Music Festival  
Port Vila

November 29  
Unity Day  
Nationwide

December 25  
Christmas Day  
Nationwide

December 26  
Family Day  
Nationwide

Public Safety

Even during holiday and celebrations, Port Vila and Vanuatu in general is a very safe environment. Crime rates in Port Vila and the surrounding islands of Vanuatu are extremely low compared to the average crime rates in cities around the world.

While visitors, and natives, should all be aware of their surroundings at all times for safety’s sake, you’re very unlikely to get mugged on the street. Burglaries or house break-ins are extremely rare. However, like any other location at home or abroad, always be aware of your surroundings.
The people of Vanuatu are very warm and friendly. When they try to speak to you, don't be suspicious. They're actually quite genuine, unlike other tourist destinations around the world where visitors are often the targets of scams, trickery, and deceit.

Oh, and while we're at it, we want to take a moment to mention that there aren't any poisonous snakes in Port Vila or in the Vanuatu Islands in general. The same goes for poisonous spiders or insects. Efate Island and others are considered safe for swimming and snorkeling at any time of the day.

Vanuatu is a very safe destination. There is nothing here that should cause parents any real concern. If you happen to be traveling with children, one of the things you'll notice, and very pleased to see, is that Vanuatu hotel and resort staff at hotels and other accommodations love children and generally tend to get along with them.

Most facilities on Vanuatu allow children. However, there are a few that don't allow children under the age of 15. When calling to make reservations or when you're planning a vacation around a specific resort, call to confirm whether children are allowed when making your reservations.

About Mosquitoes, the Ocean and Bottled Water

It's relatively rare to get bitten by a mosquito in Port Vila, or just about anywhere on Efate Island. However, even if you do happen to get bitten, malaria is rare on the island, so you don't have anything to worry about. You might want to protect your skin against mosquito bites by purchasing mosquito repellent to apply before you visit more rural areas around the islands.

When it comes to playing in the ocean, there are no dangers lurking in the shallows. You don't need to worry about things like sharks and jellyfish. The
lagoons around Vanuatu are very safe for diving, snorkeling and other water-based activities.

When it comes to the water, we've already mentioned that it is safe to drink. The local water supply in Port Vila is excellent for human consumption. However, when traveling to rural areas around the islands, we suggest that you pack some bottled water.

**Planning Special Events on Vanuatu**

What can be more special than planning a wedding or a honeymoon or even a wedding anniversary, a special moment in your life, or a child's graduation from a university? Make such occasions even more special by scheduling them on one of the most beautiful islands in the South Pacific.

Vanuatu is fast becoming a popular wedding and honeymoon destination, with people flying in from all over the world. As one of the most beautiful island groups in the South Pacific, it's the ultimate romantic destination that will provide you with unforgettable memories, beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and quiet strolls along the beach for the duration of your visit.

Where you decide to stay on your honeymoon, to plan your wedding, or to attend a special event in your life depends upon your personal budget and preferences.

We'd also like to take the time to point out that Vanuatu is an ideal location for businessmen and women engaged in conferences and seminars. Because of its proximity to Australia, it offers a unique opportunity for individuals engaged in business, real estate and business and finance. Whether you're coming from the western coast lines of South America, the United States, Europe other Pacific Island regions, New Zealand, Australia, and of course, India or Southeast Asia, Vanuatu offers a central and convenient location. As a bonus, the beauty and atmosphere of Vanuatu will certainly help
further friendly and cooperative business plans and negotiations!

Moving right along, we would like to take this opportunity to mention our Tropicana Lagoon Resort, Ocean View Apartments and CoCo Beach Resort, located in Paradise Cove, Port Vila’s newest hotel resort attraction. We'll talk more about our own holdings in just a bit.

For now, let's just say that we consider the Tropicana Lagoon Resort and CoCo Beach Resort, located near Port Vila, as an exceptional and excellent location for just about any honeymooning couple or a couple celebrating their wedding anniversary.

The social ambience, stupendous views, and the breathtaking scenery, sights, sounds and smells as well as activities in the area will keep you and your loved ones busy, we guarantee it. Watch beautiful sunsets while sipping champagne, or relax by our romantic poolside. Rates are extremely fair for this exquisite slice of heaven.

However, if you would like to choose a different location for your special wedding, honeymoon, graduation celebration, anniversary or any other event, there are a handful of locations on Efate Island that will meet your needs.

We're going to recommend the top five, but we also encourage you to get online and research the wide variety of locations, accommodations, and islands for you to celebrate your special event or occasion.

The Havannah

This five-star hotel is located 30 minutes away from the airport, and offers its own little chunk of paradise to visitors. If you're looking for luxury accommodations on Vanuatu, The Havannah is definitely the place you want to look at. It's one of Port Vila's newest luxury retreats. The hotel property
overlooks the intensely beautiful waters of Havana Harbor on the northern side of Efate Island.

The waterfront view is awesome and in a word, mesmerizing. Each of the rooms are well laid out and spacious. Staff is extremely friendly, welcoming and helpful. The Havannah Resort is a wonderful place to relax and unwind and offers a serene and tranquil atmosphere. The location is perfect for newly wedded couples, honeymooners, or those celebrating a golden anniversary, or merely a chance to get away and enjoy one another’s company.

With a 270° view of the water, and sightings of dugong, dolphins and turtle in the area, visitors to the area will be delighted with not only the exquisite beauty, but also the plethora of nature that surrounds their very doorstep.

Accommodations at the Havannah include:

- Air conditioning
- balcony with ocean or pool views
- complementary toiletries, bottled water, and bathrobes, coffee and tea makers
- double sinks in the bathroom
- flatscreen TVs with satellite channels
- King sized beds
- Minibar
- open-air bath
- private Infinity Edge plunge pools (some rooms even have their own private spa!)
- Wireless Internet
- Refrigerators

Other amenities outside of your room at The Havannah include:

- 24-hour shuttle service to the airport
- a bar and lounge
- gardens
- gourmet restaurant
- outdoor tennis court
There are lots of other resorts with different standards on Efate Island.

Each of these hotels, clubs, bungalows or resorts offers something to every individual, depending on your budget and your interests.

Let's Eat!

As far as restaurants go on Vanuatu, you'll always find something that suits just about anyone's tastes and palates. No matter what your preference, you'll find good eats in Vanuatu. Keep in mind that most of the major restaurants are located in Port Vila, so give yourself an extra day or two to explore some of the best!

If you prefer self-catering, many of our hotels and resort locations offer kitchenettes where you can prepare your own locally-grown and chosen foods. Don't forget to find some of the best organic foods at the Port Vila market!

As we mentioned earlier, restaurants in Port Vila offer a surprisingly wide selection of foods from around the world. In addition to those mentioned above, we also have Tex-Mex, Thai, Japanese, and standard European and international foods from countries around the world.

info@vanuatu-escape.com
Of course, we also have plenty of gastro delights from our own islands with traditional Ni-Vanuatu foods and meals that will have your mouth watering for more!

In regard to restaurants, we'd like to offer a few recommendations (and yes, we've tried them all!) These restaurants are all found in Port Vila.

**Ideal for:** Families with children, romance, outdoor seating, private parties, receptions, and naturally, scenic views

**Vila Chaumieres** - French, International & Seafood  
*Telephone: +678 22866  
*Email: vilchaum@vanuatu.com.vu  
*Website: [www.vilachaumieres.com/](http://www.vilachaumieres.com/)

**Location:** second lagoon next to [Tropicana Lagoon Resort](http://www.tropicanalagoonresort.com/)

**Options:** Lunch, Dinner and Desserts

**Reservations:** Recommended

**Ideal for:** Romantic dining, outdoor seating, special occasions, entertaining clients and wonderful views. We recommend this as another option to our own Lagoon restaurant. It is also part of [Cruise Away`s Lagoon boat tour](http://www.cruiseaway.com/lagoonboattour). Vila Chaumieres is one of the oldest restaurants in Vanuatu. Quite pricy, but you shouldn`t miss it.
The Lookout – Exotic Thai Restaurant

 Telephone: +678 7731751>
 Email: >info@stay-vanuatu.com

 Location: on the property of Ocean View Apartments located downtown Port Vila

 Options: Lunch and Dinner

 Ideal for: Romantic dining, special occasions, client dining and entertainment. Jörg and Martina won Kesorn, the best Thai chef in the country, for their restaurant “The Lookout” to secure the best Thai food for you. You will enjoy stunning views over Port Vila Bay, watching the cruise ships leave while sipping a sun downer.

The Tropicana Lagoon Restaurant – International & Seafood

 Telephone: +678 77 222 02 & +678 222 02
 Email: reception@tropicanalagoon.com
 Website:  http://www.tropicanalagoon.com/ulmenu-main-menu-limenu-item-106/

 Location: Tropicana Lagoon Resort, Teouma Road, Second Lagoon, Port Vila

 Options: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

 Reservations: Recommended

 Ideal for: Romantic candle-light over-water dining, magnificent views, fabulous lunches, birthdays, themed parties and wedding parties and receptions
Harbor View - Chinese

Telephone: +678 23668  
Email: harborviewrest@vanuatu.com

Location: Along the road to the airport, Sokapo area, Port-Vila

Options: Lunch & Dinner

Reservations: Recommended

Ideal for: Families with children, large groups, business/client entertainment, outdoor seating, special occasions.

Kanpai - Japanese

Telephone: +678 26687

Location: Wharf Road, Port Vila

Options: Lunch & Dinner

Reservations: Recommended

Ideal for: Families with children and nice views
CoCo Beach - International & Seafood

Telephone: +678 77 222 00 or +678 20 222

Location: Paradise Cove, Pango, Efate
Website: www.stay-cocobeach.com
Email: Gerry@stay-coco-beach-resort.com

Options: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Reservations: Recommended

Ideal for: Romantic dinners, fabulous lunches on the beach and the most amazing views!

This is Jorg and Martina’s latest restaurant creation. Gerry Smelik is in charge of the resort and restaurant. She has earned her credentials in Vanuatu for the last 25 years in hospitality and the warm welcome to all her guests that she rather calls friends.

Enjoy the drive to CoCo Beach by boat with Cruise Away from the Sea Wall behind Westpac Bank in Port Vila. The drive takes about 25 minutes and will be part of your unforgettable dining experience.

These are just a few of the wonderful options for dining you'll find on Efate Island in Port Vila. We encourage you to get out there and explore.

We guarantee that you'll find plenty of good food around here, and you'll find everything you're looking for, if not more! There are literally dozens more restaurants and café’s that you'll discover just by strolling around the streets of Port Vila, all of them emitting wonderful aromas that will make your mouth water and your stomach rumble.

Come hungry!

info@vanuatu-escape.com
Weddings in Vanuatu

If you'd like to have your wedding in Vanuatu, prepare early! The location is growing increasingly popular for wedding parties, so we suggest that your wedding coordinator or wedding planner starts early, especially in regard to planning a wedding date and a location on the island.

We suggest that you book a location at least two months in advance of your proposed wedding date, but if you can do it sooner, do so. Your wedding coordinator or planner will need to request some documents that must be filled out and forwarded back within four weeks before the wedding date.

Such documentation is required to file your application with the Vanuatu government. Here are the following documents you'll need to get married on Vanuatu:

- photocopies of birth certificates of both the bride and groom
- photocopies of passports, showing the photo page, of both the bride and groom
- if either the bride or the groom were previously married or had another name, send photocopies of divorce papers or name change papers
- a completed notice of intention to marry form.

Vanuatu offers a variety of marriage coordinators and wedding planning agencies, who are able to provide witnesses if you're traveling alone with your soon-to-be-spouse. Stay-Vanuatu Group also has its own wedding coordinator, who would be happy to help you to organizing your wedding celebration in one of our resorts or on Cruise Away’s luxurious sailing catamaran “S/Y Tropicana”

Be advised that couples are expected to arrive in Vanuatu three days before their wedding.

Stay-Vanuatu can take the stress out of the big day, and help you pull off the tropical wedding of your dreams!
Planning Business Events, Conferences, or other Events in Vanuatu

In addition to planning weddings, wedding parties, or honeymoons on Vanuatu, the island is also an increasingly popular destination for business meetings, conferences and seminars.

It’s an ideal location for organizations or companies that want to hold a conference or seminar, while at the same time offering guests a unique and rare opportunity to enjoy and unwind in a beautiful tropical location. What can be better than the South Pacific?

Most destination management companies are able to provide expert advice regarding planning a business conference, seminar or event in Vanuatu. Just ask us from Stay-Vanuatu. We can organize every event for you.

Plan your next business event in Vanuatu! There is a variety of facilities to choose from, for any budget.

info@vanuatu-escape.com
Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort

There are a number of very nice accommodation facilities in Port Vila, and as you have seen, they include various top-end resorts, locally owned bungalows and budget facilities. In addition to that, there are also self-catering lodges for those who prefer complete privacy and seclusion.

The one thing that most accommodations in Vanuatu have in common is that the atmosphere is peaceful and friendly.

Okay, now it's time to explore something very near and dear to our heart - our resorts here on Efate Island. While we're less than five-minutes-drive from Port Vila, Tropicana Lagoon Resort & Restaurant is one of the most romantic and peaceful resorts on the island.

While we don't mean to toot our own horn too loudly, we do want to share with you what others have said about our lovely location, accommodations and surroundings. You can check these and more out on Trip Advisor, where we’re very proud to say we’re rated with the Certificate of Excellence 2013.

If you've stayed with us before, we thank you very much for your visit, and if you haven't, we'd love to have you come by and visit, anytime!

"The hotel is right on a beautiful, safe lagoon, with a white sand beach and a lovely pool. A lane (about 200 meter) leads from the main road down to the hotel. We hardly used the pool, because the lagoon is so beautiful - both the emerald water and the tropical vegetation around it. In fact, we spent hours on our balcony just looking at the lagoon. It's great to see the locals on the other side (especially the kids) having fun in the water, swimming and snorkeling, and
locals travelling up and down the lagoon on anything from traditional outriggers to modern boats."

Here's another - "Staying at Tropicana Lagoon is like staying with good friends. Jörg and Martina couldn't do enough for us. Our apartment was just perfect, overlooking what seemed like our own private lagoon."

And this one - "A fantastic place to stay in Port Vila. The apartments are all only a couple of years old so every room is modern with nice local touches. It's nicely located on the edge of a quiet lagoon, where the water is beautiful and clear & you can use one of the kayaks to have a nice trip down the lagoon. The staff there are probably the best I have seen in 10 years of travelling. The owners Martina & Jörg are there to assist with anything you need & can book all your activities for you which makes life so much easier."

**Tropicana Lagoon Resort** is located at the edge of a beautiful lagoon, bordered by white, sandy beaches where the water is calm, beautiful, and clear. Every room has a balcony or veranda with a beautiful view over the tranquil emerald waters of 2nd Lagoon (Emten Lagoon).

The apartments are new and stylish with lots of tropical hardwood and a delightful tropical ambience. So each room is ultra-modern although offers beautiful creative local touches.

We spent quite a bit of time determining the potential needs of all our guests, and we decided on a clean, sleek, island-style design that pays homage to the purity of these islands while at the same time offering the comforts most travelers are accustomed to. We do believe we have succeeded! At least, feedback from clients leads us to believe we've hit a home run here with the Tropicana Lagoon Resort.

[info@vanuatu-escape.com](mailto:info@vanuatu-escape.com)
Our apartments are tastefully furnished with tropical-style interiors, warm timber flooring, deluxe bathrooms, well-equipped kitchens, WiFi, SAT TV/DVD, A/C and other amenities including built-in safes.

You'll also have use of a private BBQ. The property itself is surrounded by tropical palms, plants and flowers, offering not only visual stimulation, but aromas that will delight your senses.

We also know how important customer service is. We hire only the friendliest staff, whether it's front-desk, helping with tours, or maid services. We love it here and we want you to love it too.

Staff at Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort is very welcoming and most visitors feel like they're staying with good friends. Their happiness is simply infectious and nothing is too much trouble. Trips and reservations are booked on time, transport arranged and visitors always have fresh bread in the morning.

If you like to snorkel and kayak, this is the place to be, as the lagoon is naturally suited for these activities. Of course, you can simply lie around the pool and enjoy our beautiful weather. We also offer the use of an over-water deck on the property for sunbathing, barbecues and small gatherings.

At our resort, we believe in comfort! We want you to be able to kick back and relax while you're here. We know you may be busy with business or wedding plans or even a Golden Anniversary, but regardless of what brought you to Vanuatu, we want you to soak in the rays, enjoy the sound of gently lapping water, and above all, re-lax!

That's why we've gone to great lengths to design our sleeping accommodations for not only practicality, but soothing and island-friendly comfort. No matter which type of room you choose, we want you to sleep like a baby!
Tropicana Lagoon Resort offers three different types of accommodations:

- **Deluxe Beachfront Studio** - these self-contained studio apartments feature a balcony, terrace or beachfront access. You can choose between one queen bed or two single beds, or one queen bed and one single bed in the room. Maximum room capacity is three.

- **Deluxe Beachfront Two-Bedroom Apartment** – this type of self-contained apartment features a spacious area with large balcony or terrace. This apartment offers one queen bed and two single beds. The maximum capacity of this type of apartment is five.

- **Villas** – We have 2- and 3-bedroom villas, just 75 m away from the lagoon. All villas have a secure fully enclosed, private courtyard with their own plunge pools. Bedrooms and living areas are equipped with air conditioning, large kitchens and washing machine. The Villas are perfect for holiday rental or long-term stay. Ask us also for our corporate rates.

**Tropicana Lagoon Resort** also offers private amenities including:

- air conditioning
- electronically locked safety deposit box in every apartment
- flat screen SAT TV with DVD player
- free parking
- free WiFi plus high-speed secure internet
- kitchen or kitchenettes in each apartment includes fridge, stove and microwave
- private balcony or veranda

The apartments are self-contained. Facilities at Tropicana Lagoon Apartments Resort include:

 info@vanuatu-escape.com
• 24 hour security
• swimming pool
• over-water restaurant
• beach bar
• barbecue
• convenience store
• kayaks, snorkel- & fishing gear
• free DVD library
• laundry service
• overwater sun deck
• lagoon cruises

Tropicana Lagoon Resort also offers a variety of outdoor activities both on the property and off, including diving, snorkeling, kayaking, and of course, sunbathing under our tropical skies.

Sometimes, we look at each other and shake our heads in amazement, still at times disbelieving that we actually sit on a small piece of paradise. But then, in true island fashion, we want to share our little bit of paradise with everyone, including you.

We have worked hard to create our wonderful resorts and do everything possible to make your stay most comfortable and enjoyable. After all, you can look outside your window and see paradise, so we want to offer you paradise inside too!

As we mentioned earlier in the book, we moved to Vanuatu island years ago and found it not only luxurious, but a peaceful haven that sank deep within our souls and has offered us more peace and tranquility in our lives than we could ever have imagined.

Tropicana Lagoon Resort
Reservation: +678 55 59 87 2
Resort: +678 35 902
tina@tropicanalagoon.com
www.tropicanalagoon.com
Still.... as they say, "Wait, there's more!"

**CoCo Beach Resort & Restaurant**

CoCo Beach Resort & Restaurant is the newest addition to Vanuatu’s top boutique resorts. Jörg and Martina finished this little paradise in September 2013.

Situated on a beautiful private white sand beach with crystal clear waters and surrounded by lush tropical gardens, CoCo Beach Resort offers 15 luxurious bungalows, stunning views of the calm Pacific Ocean, delicious over-water dining, fantastic swimming and snorkeling in the warm and calm Pacific Ocean right on your doorstep.

An 18m wide and 100m long channel let the boats moor directly at the jetty, which is an extension to the restaurant. The boats of Cruise AwayTours will pick you up at Port Vila Sea Wall (at the back of the Westpac Bank in town) and bring you on a lovely 20 minute drive to CoCo Beach Resort as a returning in-house guest or as a day guest to enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner. It’s not a secret, so we can tell you, this service is unique to Efate.

CoCo Beach Resort further features a swimming pool surrounded by a timber deck with sun lounges and one of Port Vila’s finest restaurants right on the water, run by Gerry Smelik who is well known in Port Vila. Gerry is a legend in our country as she has always run the most acknowledged restaurants and resorts on our island.

Activities include kayaking, snorkeling, swimming, nature walks to villages and deserted beaches. Enjoy happy days full of activities or pure relaxation in one of the island’s most beautiful locations.

CoCo Beach Resort is facing the west side of the island. That means that the water is most of the time

**info@vanuatu-escape.com**
calm and perfect for snorkeling and swimming. Also, the most spectacular sunsets are waiting for you.

All 15 Deluxe Farés are beautifully furnished with handcrafted, tropical style interiors, screened hardwood louvered windows, ceiling fan and air conditioning, high speed internet, TV, DVD, in-room safe, sofa bed, wicker lounge chairs with coffee table, minibar, outdoor settings and a beautiful coral & hardwood bathroom with hairdryer.

CoCo Beach Resort is only 15 minutes to town by free shuttle bus or 20 minutes by our comfortable boats.

Contact Info:

CoCo Beach Resort
Reservation: +678 55 59874
Resort: +678 35 904
info@stay-cocobeach.com
www.stay-coco-beach-resort.com
Ocean View Apartments & Restaurant – stunning views over Port-Vila Bay

Ocean View Apartments & Restaurant are the perfect accommodation for all guests that prefer to stay in town but don’t want to miss comfort and the great feature of the views.

Jörg and Martina managed the renovation and extension of the three story building for the last 12 month. Now there are 23 comfortable, modern and affordable apartments and a new swimming pool. All apartments are fully self-contained, have large balconies with outdoor furniture and stunning views over Port Vila Bay.

There are now 10 x studios, 7 x 1-bedroom apartments, 6 x 2 bedroom apartments, one big new build studio with own private garden and a new build 1-bedroom apartment with own private garden.

They are ideally located and self-contained equipped for business- holiday travellers alike.

Ocean View Apartments are easy walking distance to Port Vila CBD. Also buses, shopping and pubs are only meters away from your doorstep.

Jörg and Martina where very happy when they could win Kesorn for their team. Kesorn is a lovely Thai lady and by far the best Thai chef in Vanuatu. Her delicious cuisine can now be enjoyed at “The Lookout” restaurant & bar.

Jörg and Martina built “The Lookout” restaurant as an open island style faré next to the Ocean

info@vanuatu-escape.com
OceanView Apartments. After only 2 month the restaurant became so popular with the local community, that all car park in front of Ocean View and The Lookout are always occupied. The Lookout Restaurant offers you great lunch specials and dinner. Or just simply sit on the deck, have a cocktail and watch the cruise ship leaving Port Vila at sun set.

As a traveller, it is a must to come to the Lookout and try and enjoy.

Contact Info:
Ocean View Apartments
info@stay-oceanview.com
www.stay-oceanview.com
Reservation: +678 55 59870
Resort: +678 35 900
Restaurant: +678 77 31 751

Budget-Friendly Accommodations in Port Vila

Travellers Inn – fully self-contained

Other accommodations in Vanuatu are catered to a variety of needs and budgets. For those looking for budget accommodations, Travellers Inn is a great value for money. This city accommodation is located at the south side of Port Vila has 10 x 1-bedroom apartments and two studios. The apartments are all tidy presented, have balconies and a laundry room. They offer amenities such as:

- private bathrooms
- ceiling fans
- open kitchen equipped with microwave, stove and fridge
- television
- work desk

The tourism sector is a major earner of foreign currency for Vanuatu and is recognized by the government as a key sector of development.
• free high-speed Internet

The spacious lobby goes over into the swimming pool and garden area. Travellers Inn also has a conference room, a little bar with convenient store and very fast, complementary internet / WIFI.

Travellers Inn is managed by Stay-Vanuatu and is an excellent and economic choice for budget long-term stay.

Travellers Inn
info@travellers-vanuatu.com
www.travellers-vanuatu.com
Reservation: +678 55 35 903

Other accommodations in Vanuatu are catered to a variety of needs and budgets. For those looking for budget accommodations, try the Travelers Budget Motel. It’s a nice little spot, well maintained and situated close to the city's center.

The owner, Janelle is living on site and she is a fantastic host. The rooms offer air conditioning, refrigerators, ceiling fans, televisions and a microwave. They also have a swimming pool set in a small garden and a common kitchen with full cooking facilities beside the pool.

Contact Info:
Traveler’s Budget Motel
Avenue Du Stade
P.O. Box 3164
Port Vila, Vanuatu

info@vanuatu-escape.com
Investing in Vanuatu

Not only is Vanuatu a wonderful and tranquil place to live regardless of age, it's also a wonderful place to invest in business or real estate. We mentioned earlier that Port Vila is not only the seat of Vanuatu's government, but also the heart of the economy of the Republic of Vanuatu. It's a major financial services hub and one of the leading tax havens in the world.

Port Vila is the first port of call for tourists visiting Vanuatu and earns the bulk of tourism revenue. In addition to its vibrant tourism, Port Vila also offers a financial service sector.

Real estate in Port Vila and throughout the island is extremely sought after and investors from mainly New Zealand, Australia, New Caledonia and lately also China are interested in Port Vila- and additional Efate Island real estate, not only because of the tax advantages, but because the island is becoming an increasingly popular destination.

We’d like to take this opportunity to introduce some of the most exciting information regarding investing and purchasing real estate in Vanuatu.

Investment Incentives

What can be better than no personal or company taxes? Nothing, really. No personal or company taxes are levied in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu’s main tax income is Value Added Tax (VAT) of 12.5% on top of the sales prices of most of the goods.

Even so, a primary incentive for investing in Vanuatu is its tax haven status, which gives businessmen and
women around the world relief from income taxes, estate duties, non-capital gains taxes and corporate taxes.

**Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA)**

The Vanuatu people and the Government welcome foreign investment to Vanuatu. Other than in Australia for example, there are no general restrictions for foreigners to buy and sell any real-estate within the Vanuatu leasehold system.

Business investments in general are also welcome. On the other hand the government also has the obligation to protect the interests of Ni-Vanuatu citizen investments in certain sectors of the economy. To achieve this goal these investments are restricted by minimum investment conditions or they are completely reserved to Ni-Vanuatu. We call these “reserved businesses”.

Certain restrictions of minimum investments exist in the category of tourism and other personal restrictions exist in the category of services, for example public bus and taxi service, coastal shipping of less than 80 tonnes or fishing.

The **Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA)** is the responsible government authority for approval. Every foreign investor has to lodge an application to obtain a foreign investment approval certificate (FIAC). The FIAC is connected to the personal name of the foreign investor and specifies all business activities in any enterprise he may be involved within the country, along with the geographic location of these activities. The FIAC is issued for a period of one year and has then to be renewed every year. If other investment activities will be added, a variation application has to be lodged.
Apart from the fact that the investor has to be a proper person, a business plan for the purposed activity has to be lodged.

New applications must go to the **VIPA Board** for consideration and approval. **VIPA** is committed to providing a response for all applications within 15 working days of accepting a complete application.

A few privileges of the **VIPA** approvals are:

- **Zero corporate and personal income tax!**
  Not long ago a good friend, who is a former Prime Minister of Vanuatu and the designer of the Vanuatu constitution, asked me “do you know why Vanuatu was voted twice the happiest place on earth?” … answering my surprised look he said: “because we don’t pay income tax, that makes us smile all the time … “.

- **Guaranteed minimum of two residency permits for shareholders in the foreign investment who intend to reside in the country to implement their investment.**

- **Access to work permits for at least two key positions requiring professional, technical or managerial expertise.**

- **Freely able to repatriate funds without condition.**

For more information regarding investment considerations, government policy, repatriation of capital and profits, restrictions on foreign investment or investment protection, contact either the office of **Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA)** or the Director General Ministry for Trade, Tourism and Business Development.

**Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA)**
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Phone: (678) 24096
Fax: (678) 25216
Vanuatu
The Pacific`s Premier Offshore Financial Center

Port Vila is more than only a banking center. Genuine in-depth financial, investment, banking, accounting and legal expertise has been developed in Vanuatu. The industry employs over 400 people and its executives have the expertise of decades of experience.

Vanuatu`s tax system provides the fertile ground for every investor:

• Zero corporate and personal income tax!
• No capital gains tax
• No estate or death duties
• No tax treaties with other countries
• International banking services

info@vanuatu-escape.com
• freely able to repatriate funds without condition.

The legal system is based on British and French law. The Companies Act, Banking Act and Trust Companies Act, which form the framework for the operation offshore financial centre, are based on English law.

Communication in form of telephone, fax and internet are provided mainly by the two companies Digicel and TVL via Satellite. By the end of 2013 a fiber optic submarine-cable, run from Fiji to Vanuatu will make Vanuatu “the place” for all communication-based business and data centre.

The majority of the cable will be proudly owned by the people of Vanuatu. Practically, there will be no difference if your business is based in New York, Frankfurt, Paris or Port Vila. Port Vila will be connected to the world.

First of all, there are a number of banks that serve Port Vila, but we suggest either overseas banks such as ANZ-Vanuatu or Westpac Bank Vanuatu and the local bank National Bank of Vanuatu. Our personal experience with all three banks has been very positive.

Westpac, ANZ, the French BRED Bank and NBV are investor-friendly banks in Vanuatu.

As we also mentioned earlier, our experience is that Forex businesses tend to offer better exchange rates than the banks. Goodies Vanuatu offers the best exchange rates in town,
and they have three different locations on the Main Street:

- Olympic Court
- Location opposite Westpac Bank
- Location beside the ANZ Bank

Vanuatu as a Tax Haven

If you're looking for an excellent place to invest, you couldn't have chosen a much better location than the Republic of Vanuatu. Remember, there are virtually no taxes in Vanuatu, specifically:

- No income tax on company income
- No income tax on employee income
- No capital gains tax
- Freedom to repatriate capital

The only tax levied by the government is the Value Added Tax, which we mentioned earlier, which is basically a tax on consumption.

In addition to its tax haven status, Vanuatu also offers highly attractive investment environments, and we speak from personal experience here. The infrastructure is good, there is easy access to financial services, and the Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority known as VIPA, is enthusiastic in providing professional support to investors.

The costs involved in incorporating a company and the annual fees for doing so are among the lowest in the world. However, let us offer you six specific steps that foreign investors need to follow to set up a business.

**Step One** - Apply for foreign investment approval with the Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA).

**Step Two** - Apply for a Residence Permit from the Immigration Department (if you're staying!)

info@vanuatu-escape.com
**Step Three** - Incorporate the company at the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission (VFSC).

**Step Four** - Apply for a business license from the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue. If your business is located outside Shefa Province, you'll need to make an application through the relevant provincial council.

**Step Five** - Register for VAT with the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue.

**Step Six** - Register as an employer with the Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF).

That's it! However, you'll also need to take out Worker's Compensation insurance from a private insurer and comply with operational requirements related to your specific industry, for example, with building codes.

The entire process is relatively simple and takes about six weeks for most types of business. Of course, the processing of forms and applications may take a little longer depending on the nature of your business and or specific activities.

The Vanuatu Investment Promotion Agency is located in Port Vila:

**Vanuatu Investment Promotion Agency**
Port Vila, Vanua
Laguna Building
Central Business District, 2nd floor
Port Vila

Phone: +678 24 096 or 24 441
e-mail: investment@vanuatu.com.vu
website: www.InvestInVanuatu.com

**A Bit of Friendly Advice**
At this point in time, we'd like to offer a bit of advice. Before investing in Vanuatu, be informed and seek the services of a professional investment advisor. Doing so will help you appreciate the business environment in the islands, as well as to help keep you informed regarding the best industry or industries to invest in.

Investment consultants and tax accountants in Vanuatu are available for consultations, considering that Vanuatu is a major offshore investment destination.

However, we want to recommend “Law Partners” and “Barrett & Partners”, both belong to Vanuatu’s well established internationally connected firms of chartered accountants, business advisors and auditors. They’ve been doing business here for decades and can assist you with a wide range of business services and extremely fair rates.

We strongly encourage our readers to read more in-depth information regarding:

- Local companies in Vanuatu
- Vanuatu’s Offshore Financial Center
- Foreign Investment, Residency and Work in Vanuatu

Reading such information, you'll learn more about the Foreign Investment Act and the standard application form required for business development on Vanuatu. You'll also read about operating a business and investing in Vanuatu.

Just a few of the advantages of utilizing Vanuatu's offshore financial center include but are not limited to:

- No estate or death duties
- No exchange controls
- Guarantee of no taxes for international companies (for 20 years following incorporation)

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• Convenient location within the Asia Pacific region
• Flexible, modern International Companies Act
• Full international banking and professional services

This is just the tip of the iceberg regarding the benefits of doing business, creating business, and investing in Vanuatu.
Real Estate Investments in Vanuatu

Real estate in the Republic of Vanuatu has experienced significant growth in recent years. Even with a very minimal slow-down after 2009 resulting from the global economic crisis, investments throughout the islands still offer confidence to investors.

The recent completion of the Efate Ring Road and the east road on Santo is expected to spur additional growth in the real estate market as well as improve overall economies.

Specific opportunities in the real estate sector include but are not limited to:

- Rental properties for both, the long-term and holiday market
- Rental for corporates and Non-Government Organisations in Port Vila
- Sale of waterfront properties
- Sale of retirement homes
- Sale of commercial properties
- Sale of commercial tourism properties

If you've are interested in investing in real estate, we would recommend that you consult with a real estate agent. Personally, we have used Jude Leske, a very trustworthy real estate agent with LJ Hooker Real Estate, and have been impressed with her deep knowledge of Vanuatu’s real estate market.

Vanuatu’s Land Tenure System

Another thing you should know before diving head first into real estate investment in Vanuatu is that you should understand the "land tenure system", which is quite unique. In a nutshell, land in Vanuatu is categorized into two classes - urban land and rural.

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Rural land is owned by “custom land owners” who have to claim the land first and get a lease registered. There is a legal procedure for the custom land owner to obtain this lease before it gets signed by the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources and registered at the title office.

The lease will be registered for 75 years. During this time the lease can be sold and mortgaged.

The government owns all urban land, including Port Vila and Lugarville on Santo. The government of Vanuatu leases out this land to companies and individuals 75 years. Leaseholders pay a premium when they obtain the lease and a small lease amount every year.

After 75 years, the lease can be renewed for another 75 years, or it goes back to the landowner. In this case the land owner has to pay for all improvements on the property (all houses, landscaping etc.).

There are no restrictions for foreign investors to purchase real estate in Vanuatu.

We don’t want to get into a full-blown discussion of property tenure laws, security of title registration, purchase costs, or other costs involved in business or real estate transactions, because, to be honest, they can be rather dry and boring. However, we encourage you to research a complete listing of Vanuatu laws in regard to real estate and investing in Vanuatu by accessing www.paclii.org/databases.html#VU.

There are four main classes of lease in Vanuatu: Residential, Agricultural, Commercial, and Industrial.

Renting (leasing in Vanuatu) a residential property may return as much as 10% to 15% annually on your investment.
There, you'll find all types of information regarding the Land Lease Act of 1984, and how to register a lease or transfer a lease at the Lands Record Office.

**Obtaining a Lease**

At this time, we would like to describe the basic process for obtaining a lease from a custom land owner.

A Certificate of Negotiation has to be signed by the Minister of Land and is the result of this following procedure. The procedure itself may take between four to 12 months when no land dispute regarding ownership is involved.

1. If the land you are interested in, has no registered lease title you might work through the process with the Ni-Vanuatu person who has the right to claim landownership.
2. Apply at the Lands Department for a certificate of negotiation, enclosing a sketched map of the property.
3. Collect a form and bring it to the chief of the village to certify that the custom owner has the right to claim the property.
4. Bring the completed form back to the Lands Department to get a Certificate of Negotiation with your name in it.
5. Have the land surveyed.
6. Obtain a lease with the attached survey plan of the property.
7. Register the lease to obtain property or land title.

Take your time and confer or consult with a local investment company or individual to make sure that all forms and steps are properly followed. Doing so facilitates a smooth transaction.

There is so much potential for future investment in real estate development throughout Vanuatu. We hope that you'll take advantage of such opportunities and research the islands as a major investment opportunity.

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As Vanuatu becomes more popular as a travel, tourist and retirement destination, more accommodations, retirement communities and residential properties will be required.

Growing numbers of cruise ship lines have made Vanuatu a must-stop in the South Pacific, creating benefits for all business owners in Port Vila. As of 2009, P&O Cruises (Carnival-owned) increased their visits to Vanuatu from 100 to 220 in 2013, and the demand continues to grow.

The FAQs and Nothing But the FAQs

We realize that there is a lot to consider regarding investing or even moving to Vanuatu. While we can’t possibly cover every aspect of business or investment development in this book, we do want to break down some of the most commonly asked questions and offer you some answers. Think of it as a cheat-sheet.

In response to some of these most commonly asked questions we’ve received, we’ve put together a brief list regarding answers to such questions. However, we again invite you to explore your options and requirements for investing in Vanuatu, because we believe that you’ll be strongly rewarded for your time and efforts.

- Foreigners can buy property in Vanuatu. There is no distinction made between citizens and non-citizens buyers.
- You do not need a Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA) Investor’s Certificate or a business license to purchase property in Vanuatu. However, if you are purchasing an existing business, or one that requires a business license, then you do need VIPA-approval as well as a business license in your local company’s name or your name.
More than 98% of all land in Vanuatu falls under the "customary land" category. The government owns about 2% of all land in Vanuatu, referred to as "public land".

- You do not have to live on Vanuatu in order to own property here.
- Commercial banks do accept leasehold titles as security for loans. Mortgages and "cautions" are registered on the leasehold titles as they would be on any freehold land leasehold titles in other countries.
- The amount of time it takes to complete a transaction depends on conditions involved in that particular transaction. Remember that any transfer of a property title requires the lessor’s "Consent to Transfer".
- Normal buyer’s costs include a 2% Stamp Duty and a 5% Title Transfer Registration fee. The total fees are 7%. If you purchase an existing company, there is only to pay the stamp duty of 4% on the share transfer value.
- The best places to buy right now on Vanuatu include residential properties in Port Vila, along the harbor front, in the First- or Second Lagoon and outside Port Vila in Havanah Harbor. Some of the best commercial properties include CBD, Main Street and the central harbor front. The best agricultural properties are available on Malekula and Santo islands.
- There are a number of excellent property management experts and our company has been offering property management of houses and commercial buildings for nearly 2 decades. Typical costs max out at 7% of gross income plus VAT. Certainly is Stay-Vanuatu one of the management companies who are able to help you.
- When building a home in Vanuatu, you don't need any permission, approval or a business license if you're building for yourself on your own land title. However, you'll still need to

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obtain planning permission and building permits and need to register as an employer with the Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF) if you hire any workers.

For all other questions regarding property, restrictions, selling or purchasing of land in a rural area with no registered title owner, or any other questions regarding properties and investments, we strongly urge you to contact an investment or legal company to help answer your questions and concerns.

Taking the Plunge

We certainly hope that you have enjoyed reading about this gem in the South Pacific known as Vanuatu. We have found it to be one of the most beautiful places on earth that has not only afforded us personal peace and tranquility but financial stability.

We urge you to schedule a vacation to our beautiful islands, and chances are that the scents, sights, and spirit of Vanuatu itself will make its way into your bloodstream, never to leave. Vanuatu receives thousands of repeat visitors a year, as well as a growing number of residents who have decided to make Vanuatu their ultimate retirement home and private paradise. Who knows, you might be one of them!

At the end of this book, you'll find a number of useful links regarding information and resources on Vanuatu. In addition to those resources, we urge you to get online and explore more of what the Republic of Vanuatu has to offer to you and your family.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you have regarding the information you have found in this book. Martina and I will be more than happy to welcome you with open arms as you step into the most unique, diverse, and friendly South Pacific environment.
Ale lukimyu!
We hope to see you soon!

Best Wishes,

Jörg and Martina Schwartze

Handy Links

We thought you might like a short list of some instant access to information about life and events and resorts in Vanuatu. This list is by no means all-inclusive, but we hope they may prove interesting!

About Vanuatu

- Happiest Country (http://www.happyplanetindex.org/list.htm)
- Vanuatu - A Small Guide to a Tropical Paradise (http://www.vanuatutoz.com)
- Vanuatu Tourism Office (http://www.vanuatutourism.com)
- Lonely Planet Guide Vanuatu & New Caledonia
- Trip Advisor (http://www.tripadvisor.com)
- Santo Tourism (http://www.espiritusantotourism.com)

Banking and Finance

- ANZ (http://www.anz.com/vanuatu/)
- BRED (http://www.bred.vu)
- Westpac (http://www.westpac.vu)

Business Links

info@vanuatu-escape.com
- Vanuatu Daily Post (http://www.dailypost.vu)
- Vanuatu Government (http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/)
- The Independent Newspaper (http://www.vanuatunews.com)
- Vanuatu Meteorological Services (http://www.meteo.gov.vu)
- News (http://www.news.vu)
- Vanuatu Online Directory (http://www.vanuatu.net.vu)
- VIPA - Vanuatu (http://www.investinvanuatu.com)
- White and Yellow Pages (http://www.vatu.com)