



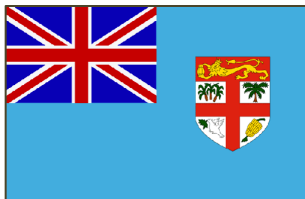
Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Dravuni Island, Fiji, located at 18° S and 179° E. This is the second of our two stops in the Polynesian group of islands.
- We have traveled approximately 6,006 miles (9,666 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

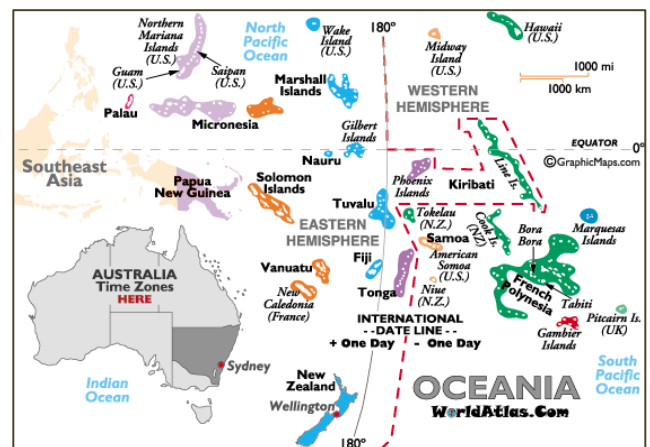
- These islands were first inhabited about 3,000 years ago, with migration moving from Fiji through Tonga and American Samoa. This resulted in a consistent culture throughout the islands, known as Polynesian.
- Dutch and British explorers first charted this area. Tonga was never colonized and has had a series of monarchs since the 13th century.
- Fiji was under British rule for almost 100 years, becoming independent in 1970. The British brought over 60,000 Indian laborers to Fiji in the late 1800s to work the sugar plantations. Today almost 40% of the population is Indian.
- American Samoa is a U.S. territory and the only U.S. possession located south of the equator.
- Over the years countries close to International Date Line (180°) have chosen which side of the date line to be on, based communications and trade with other countries. American Samoa and Tonga are in the same time zone and only 600 miles away from each other but are exactly one day apart in time due to being on either side of the date line.

Did you know?

The International Date Line is an imaginary line that runs through the middle of the Pacific Ocean that approximates 180° longitude.

When traveling across this line, one must lose a day going west and gain a day going east. This is to adjust for the 24 hours that one loses crossing the world, losing one hour for every 15° crossed.

(source: Wikipedia.org)



Relationship of the International Date Line to islands. Click on the picture to see the current time by island color (source: WorldAtlas.com) Update: Samoa just moved west across the dateline, effective this year (2012).



There are over 1,000 islands in the Polynesian group, located in the central Pacific Ocean (source: Wikipedia.org)

Two Samoas

There are two Samoas: Eastern Samoa (now American Samoa) and Western Samoa (now the country of Samoa). Samoa was governed by New Zealand until its independence in 1962.



American Samoa (source: Funtrivia.com)

Nature and Environment

- Polynesian islands are mainly volcanic in nature and surrounded by coral reefs.
- Typhoons are a problem in this area during the months of December to March. Cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes are the same type of storm. The difference is where they are formed:
 - Cyclones - they are formed over the Indian Ocean and Southwestern Pacific Ocean (near Africa and Australia).
 - Typhoon - they are formed in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean (near Asia).
 - Hurricane - they are formed in Atlantic Ocean and Eastern Pacific Ocean (near the Gulf of Mexico and America).
- Fishing is an important part of Samoan life. Tuna is a main export of American Samoa, with 80% of the island's employment coming from two tuna canneries.
- Tonga and Fiji are more agricultural - coconuts, bananas, vanilla beans and coffee are grown on Tonga and sugar and bananas are major Fiji exports.

Our Plans

- As we crossed the International Date Line, we lost a day going west. So we moved from Friday, February 10th to Sunday, February 12th. We visited American Samoa and Fiji in the South Pacific. Our plans also called for us to go to Tonga. However, Cyclone Jasmine was in close proximity to Tonga so we had to cancel that visit.
- After three days at sea from Fiji, we will arrive at the North Island of New Zealand. We will spend most of the week cruising around both islands, visiting locations on each island.
- Thanks for your emails and questions. Perhaps we will include yours (and our answers) in our next update.

"Hello"

Although the islands all stem from the Polynesian culture and language, saying hello is different on each island:

- Fiji: "*Bula*"
- Tonga: "*Malo e lelei*"
- American Samoa: "*Talofa*"

sources: Omniglot.com, iPacific.com, Fiji-island-holidays.com

More Information

- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-tonga-10309.html>
- <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107509.html>
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/16092.htm>
- <http://amsamoa.net/facts>
- <http://www.go-fiji.com/funfacts.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aq.html>

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