



## NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA

The capital city of the only existing South Pacific monarchy. Nuku'alofa is the site of the Tongan Royal Palace as well as the National Museum of Tonga. There are also plenty of beautiful beaches to swim and snorkel in the bathtub-warm waters of the Pacific Ocean

### KEY INFO

**Currency:** Tongan Pa'anga (1 USD = 2.36 TOP) **Languages:** English, Tongan  
**Population:** 23,221 (106,017 Tonga) **Drive on the:** Left  
**Emergency #:** 911 **Pharmacy:** Neeru's Pharmacy, Wellington Rd   
**Drinking water:** Tap water is **not** drinkable **Protection:** Bug Spray & SPF 30+  
**Time Zone:** GMT+13 **Wi-Fi:** Not commonly available  
**ID Requirements:** Photo ID **Post Office:** VR82+Q2H Vuna Rd 

### PORT LOCATION


Ships dock at the recently renovated Vuna Wharf, which is a 5-minute walk from the town centre

**Getting Around:** The city center is pretty compact, so walking around between the main sites is easily achievable. There are two main bus stations in Nuku'alofa, both on Vuna Road, close to the cruise port. One station heads west (Hahake) and the other east (Hihifo). The Vailoa bus operate inner-city services. There's no schedule and you just shout 'Stop' when you're ready to get off. Pay when you get off. City rides are about TOP\$1.

**Taxis:** Have a T at beginning of reg number. Taxi stands are available around the city. Taxis don't run on meters, so agree a price before getting in. Taxis don't operate on Sundays (unless pre-booked). Expect to pay roughly TOP\$300 for a day-hire or TOP\$150 to Ha'atafu Beach.

**Tourist Bus:** There is no Hop-On Hop-Off Bus in Nuku'alofa

**Port Facilities:** None

**Port Address:** Vuna Wharf, Nuku'alofa, Tonga 

### BEACHES ON TONGATAPU

**Ha'atafu Beach:** Hit hard by the 2022 tsunami, this remains one of the most popular beaches on the island. Clean, sandy beach with a fringing reef and safe swimming conditions. 30-min drive | 20km W

**Oholei Beach:** a private resort, and home of the famous Hina Cave. Enter the cave and see the rocky form of Hina lying to rest in wait for her lover to return. Rough for swimming 40-min drive | 22.3km SE

**Keleti Beach:** Formerly a beach resort, now visit for a couple of sandy bays and a fun rocky coastline for scrambling. Safe swimming in the lagoon. 22-min drive | 10km S

## NUKU'ALOFA HIGHLIGHTS

**Royal Palace of Tonga:** The official residence of the Royal Family, although the current King doesn't actually live here. The palace is used for ceremonial purposes. Commissioned by King George Tupou I. Prefabricated in New Zealand, shipped to Tonga, and erected in 1867. 24 hours (external only) | Free  
[www.royalpalace.to](http://www.royalpalace.to)

**Royal Tombs:** Not directly accessible, but visible from the roadside. All modern-era monarchs (post 1893) have been buried here. Best seen from Meteialona Road, Vaha'akolo Road and Taufa'ahau Road.

**Tonga National Museum:** Upstairs of the Queen Salote Memorial Hall is this national museum with ancient Tongan tools, and a fascinating insight into centuries of Tongan life. 10a-3p | \$

**Talamahu Market:** On Salote Road in the city center, the largest market in the country has everything you could possibly want or need. Fruit, veg, wooden crafts, tapa-cloth painting, Tongan clothing, carved jewellery and much more. 8a-5p (Mon-Sat) | Free

**Self-Guided Walking Tours:** Take yourself on a walking tour of the city highlights.

<https://tongapocketguide.com/a-self-guided-walking-tour-of-nukualofa-one-day-itinerary/>

<https://www.theinsidecabin.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Tonga-Walking-Tour-047.pdf>

## CHURCHES IN NUKU'ALOFA

**Sai'one Centenary Church:** Church of the Royal Family

**Basilica of St Anthony of Padua:** The first basilica of the South Pacific. Interior handcrafted from coconut wood, inlaid with mother of pearl. Usually open for visitors.

**Centennial Church, Free Church of Tonga:** Constructed of coral block in 1888. Queen Salote and King Tupou IV were christened here. The church was badly damaged by Cyclone Gita in 2018 and is currently closed.

## NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Mapu'a 'a Vaea Blowholes:** Nicknamed the Chief's Whistles, this 5km stretch of coastal blowholes is a fun place to visit to admire the beauty and power of the Pacific Ocean. 24 hours | Free

**Ha'amonga 'a Maui Maui's Burden:** Sometimes called the 'Stonehenge of the Pacific', this stone trilithon on the eastern part of the island, in the village of Niutōua, was built in the 13th century by King Tu'itātui in honor of his two sons. 24 hours | Free

## TONGAN CUSTOMS

Tonga is a very religious society and locals expect visitors to show respect to their way of life by dressing and acting respectfully, especially with respect to clothing and Sunday activities.

It is illegal to walk around topless in Tonga (for men and women), and even when swimming in the sea it is preferred if bathers wear a t-shirt. If visiting a church, dress conservatively. Only wear an all-black outfit if you are currently in mourning.

On a Sunday it is illegal to go for a run or a swim in the sea. Unless you are swimming in the private area of a tourist resort, it is advisable not to partake in work or pleasure activities on a Sunday.

For more: [www.tongapocketguide.com](http://www.tongapocketguide.com) , [www.thekingdomoftonga.com](http://www.thekingdomoftonga.com)

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