SOUTHWEST PACIFIC:

Samoa & Fiji

&

NEW CALEDONIA EXTENSION

July 17- 30, 2027
July 30 - August 3, 2027

The southwest Pacific is a remote part of the world, dotted by small, often uninhabited islands sometimes thousands of miles apart. Unique avifauna and human cultures have evolved here over time, leaving a rich and highly diverse array of island inhabitants. This tour will provide participants a rare insight into this incomparable part of the world. Samoa and Fiji represent two of the larger and more diverse island groups in the region. As such they offer some of the best birding, as well as a high standard of lodging and transport. A visit to either island is memorable—but on this compact, comprehensive tour, we're fortunate to experience both.

Many-colored Fruit-Dove is one of the fantastic species of doves featured on this trip © Max Breckenridge

We will start our island odyssey on Samoa, focusing on the beautiful island of Upolu where all of Samoa's realistic endemic birds can be found. We will enjoy two full days of relaxed-pace birding around the island's forests and coasts looking for a gorgeous selection of island specialties like Blue-crowned Lorikeet, Samoan Myzomela, the strange Samoan Triller, and hopefully Mao – a species of large endemic honeyeater.

Our exploration of the Fijian islands will include the main island, Viti Levu, as well as two endemic-rich islands just a short flight away—Kadavu and Taveuni. Some world-class birds exist in Fiji, with the Golden and Orange doves both needing to be seen to be believed. We will spend ample time on each island, making excursions into the montane rainforests and along stunning coastlines in search of new birds every day. Some of the highlights include the dazzling Azure-crested Flycatcher, enigmatic Taveuni Silktail, wattled and giant honeyeaters, a variety of beautiful shining-parrots, songful shrikebills, and cute parrotfinches.

July 17-19, Days 1–3: Travel to Nadi, Fiji; Flight to Apia, Samoa

There are several indirect flights from the U.S. to the Samoan capital of Apia (airport code APW). Most flights from the U.S. reach Apia via Honolulu or Nadi (Fiji). Upon arrival at Faleolo International Airport you will be met by a representative from the local transfer service and transferred to the hotel (45 min drive from the airport to Apia). We will have our first meeting on the evening of July 20th at the hotel with birding to follow the next morning.

NIGHTS: July 17-18, in transit

NIGHT: July 19, Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalows, Apia

July 20, Day 4: Birding at Malolo'lelei Watershed Reserve

Our first morning of birding will likely be spent in the vicinity of the Malolo'lelei Watershed Reserve on the southern edge of Apia. The reserve is located at 2,000 feet and the temperature is notably more pleasant away from the coast. An open picnic area here allows for easy birding along the edge of the native forest and most of the species should be quite confiding. Species likely to be encountered include White-throated Pigeon, Crimson-crowned Fruit-Dove, Pacific Imperial-Pigeon, White-rumped Swiftlet, Blue-billed White Tern, Common Noddy and White-tailed Tropicbird overhead, Flat-billed Kingfisher, Blue-crowned Lorikeet, Mao, Eastern Wattled-Honeyeater, Polynesian Triller, Samoan Whistler, Samoan Fantail, Samoan Flycatcher, Samoan form of Pacific Robin, Polynesian and Samoan starlings, and potentially Royal Parrotfinch.

We will return to our hotel for lunch and a siesta (as will be the case for most days during this trip) before an afternoon session searching for the strange and sometimes scarce Samoan Triller as well as any other species missed in the morning.

NIGHT: Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalows, Apia

July 21, Day 5: Birding around Apia

This morning we will enjoy some beautiful scenery along the Coastal Walk in the O Le Pupu-Pue National Park. The lava cliffs here are very reminiscent of Hawaii and we should see small numbers of Bridled Tern, as well as several other species of tern and boobies. Samoan Flycatcher and Samoan Myzomela are also a good bet in the coastal forest, and there is also a chance to see the Shy Ground-Dove along the entrance road.

Later in the day guests may choose to visit the home, now-turned museum, of Robert Louis Stevenson. Alternatively, we can spend more time birding along the coast or relax and enjoy the comforts of our pleasant resort.

NIGHT: Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalows, Apia

July 22, Day 6: Fly Apia to Nadi and on to Taveuni

Today we will depart Samoa for Fiji. It is roughly a two-hour flight between the two islands. We will depart Apia on flight FJ252 (subject to change), arriving in the Fijian hub of Nadi, before transferring to the outer island of Taveuni via another short flight aboard FJ151 over some stunning tropical seas. We should have plenty of time to enjoy our lovely resort and do some local birding along the western coast of Taveuni. There is decent snorkeling just off the beach in front of our hotel.

NIGHT: Garden Island Resort, Taveuni

July 23, Day 7: Taveuni

Today we will explore the endemic-rich island of Taveuni, starting along the upper altitude road below the Des Voeux Peak (3,900 feet). Here in the early morning, we will search for several species only

found on Taveuni - the cosmic Orange Dove, Yellow-billed Giant-Honeyeater, Northern Wattled-Honeyeater, strange Taveuni Silktail, and the stunning little Azure-crested Flycatcher. The forests on Taveuni are also a good place for the beautiful Many-colored Fruit-Dove, Barking Imperial-Pigeon, raucous Red Shining-Parrot, Collared Lory, 'Taveuni' Fiji Streaked Fantail, Fiji Shrikebill, 'Taveuni' Fiji Island Thrush, songful Fiji Bush-Warbler, and Fiji White-eye.

The stunning Orange Dove is only found on the Vanua Leva islands © Max Breckenridge

In the afternoon, we can bird along the coastline or around the resort for species such as Wandering Tattler, Lesser Frigatebird, Buff-banded Rail, Fiji Goshawk, Pacific Kingfisher, Sulphur-breasted Myzomela, Fiji Woodswallow, Vanikoro Flycatcher, Pacific Swallow, or some rarer seabirds and waders. If time and sea conditions allow, there may also be the option of visiting the nearby island of Qamea where the fruiting trees in a small village often allow for great looks at Orange Dove and sometimes Pacific Imperial-Pigeon.

NIGHT: Garden Island Resort, Taveuni

July 24, Day 8: Taveuni to Suva

After some morning birding, we will transfer to the airport for our short flight (1 hour) to the Fijian capitol, Suva, on the southern side of Fiji's main island Viti Levu. After arriving at Suva-Nausori Airport, we will transfer (40 min drive to Suva from airport) to the wonderful, historic Grand Pacific Hotel. We can spend the afternoon at our leisure or visit Suva Point, close to our wonderful hotel, in search of waders, seabirds and some of the more common Viti Levu species.

NIGHT: Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva

July 25-26, Days 9-10: Suva

The forests around Suva provide some of the best birding on Viti Levu. We will have two full days to search for a number of specialties, while also enjoying the relaxing pace of life here and the stunning scenery. We will bird a variety of sites during our time here in the company of an excellent local guide. Two of the trickier to find, but much sought-after species here are the Pink-billed Parrotfinch and Long-legged Thicketbird. Both are vulnerable and endemic to Viti Levu but will take some effort and luck to see. There are many other wonderful species we expect to encounter during our time around Suva, not least the unbelievable Golden Dove, but also Masked Shining-Parrot, Fiji Goshawk, Duetting Giant-Honeyeater, Western Wattled-Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Fiji Whistler, Fiji and Black-throated shrikebills, shy Chestnut-throated Flycatcher, Polynesian Triller, lovely Pacific Robin, Polynesian Starling, Fiji Island Thrush, and Fiji Parrotfinch.

NIGHTS: Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva

July 27, Day 11: Suva to Kadavu

Today we will visit our second outer Fijian island, Kadavu (pronounced “Kan-da-vu”). This is a true tropical island experience, as we stay at a remote, but well-serviced island resort where most of the specialty birds can be found right around the grounds.

NIGHT: Papageno Resort, Kadavu

July 28, Day 12: Kadavu

A full day on Kadavu will allow us to really soak up the place and enjoy some relaxed birding with the option of snorkeling just offshore from our beachside resort. During our time on Kadavu we will be on the lookout for a number of new species, including four endemics: Whistling Dove, Shining-Parrot, Kadavu Fantail, and Kadavu Honeyeater, as well as White-throated Fiji Whistler which is only found on smaller islands in the Fijian group.

NIGHT: Papageno Resort, Kadavu

July 29, Day 13: Kadavu to Nadi

After a final morning around our resort, we will depart beautiful Kadavu and begin our transit home (or on to New Caledonia) by flying to Nadi. We will enjoy a final meal together in Fiji at our airport hotel.

NIGHT: Novotel Nadi Fiji

July 30, Day 14: Departure

Airport transfers provided for return flight departures today. Participants may make arrangements to fly out of Nadi International Airport or continue on with the New Caledonia Extension.

Azure-crested Flycatcher from Taveuni © Max Breckenridge

NEW CALEDONIA EXTENSION

July 30 - August 3, 2027

Grand Terre is the main island in the French island territory of New Caledonia. The remarkable Kagu will be high on our list of targets, but there are many more beautiful and little-known endemics to enjoy in New Caledonia. The rare and strange Crow Honeyeater, Horned Parakeet, stunning Cloven-feathered Dove, tool-using New Caledonian Crow, and the scarce New Caledonian Thicketbird are just some of the great birds on offer. During our time in New Caledonia, we will be birding alongside the island's premier local guide and we will stay in fine lodgings and enjoy French cuisine with a tropical backdrop.

Kagu © David Jeffrey Ringer/shutterstock

July 30, Day 1: Fly to New Caledonia

Upon arrival at La Tontouta International Airport (NOU) on August 27, we will be transferred to our hotel in the capital Noumea (45 min drive). In the afternoon we can visit the waterfront here and familiarize ourselves with some of the more readily observable species in New Caledonia like Silver Gull, Coconut Lorikeet, Gray-eared Honeyeater, and Green-backed White-eye.

NIGHT: Hotel Le Lagon, Noumea

July 31, Day 2: Birding at Parc de la Rivière Bleue (Blue River NP)

There is of course one very special bird we have in mind for our first full day, but alongside the infamous Kagu, there is also a fantastic supporting cast to be found in the protected forests of Blue River National Park. Amongst the dry rainforest, dominated by houp and araucaria trees, we will search for the gorgeous Cloven-feathered Dove, New Caledonian Imperial-Pigeon, "New Caledonian" Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, the striking New Caledonian Goshawk, Horned and New Caledonian Parakeets, the rare Crow Honeyeater, Barred Honeyeater, New Caledonian Streaked Fantail, New Caledonian Cuckooshrike, the strange Southern Shrikebill, Melanesian Flycatcher, New Caledonian Whistler, cute Yellow-bellied Flyrobin, Green-backed White-eye, Striated Starling, and the beautiful Red-throated Parrotfinch.

NIGHT: Hotel Le Lagon, Noumea

August 1, Day 3: Birding at Le Parc des Grandes Fougères

Today we will venture farther into the country, following the beautiful southern coastline from the capital to the wonderful Le Parc des Grandes Fougères. Home to giant tree ferns and a good diversity of New Caledonian specialties, we will search for any species missed the previous day. Some of the more widespread species we hope to see today include Pacific Emerald Dove, White-throated Pigeon, 'New Caledonian' Sacred Kingfisher, Satin and White-rumped swiftlets, Whistling Kite, Coconut Lorikeet, New Caledonian Myzomela, Gray-eared Honeyeater, New Caledonian Friarbird, and Fan-tailed Gerygone. Other species such as South Melanesian Cuckooshrike, Rufous Whistler, Gray Fantail, Silvereye, the tool-using New Caledonian Crow, and cute Red-throated Parrotfinch are also possible.

In the afternoon we will transfer to our lovely beachside resort where we will spend the night.

NIGHT: Le Domaine Deva, Bourail

Cloven-feathered Dove from New Caledonia © Max Breckenridge

August 2, Day 4: Bourail area

This morning we will be searching the nearby upland grasslands specifically for the New Caledonian Thicketbird. With a bit of patience, we should have a good chance of seeing our target. Later, in more coastal forest we also have a good chance of seeing the beautiful Red-bellied Fruit-Dove.

In the afternoon we will transfer back to Noumea for a final dinner and chance to reflect on a wonderful exploration of the Southwest Pacific.

NIGHT: Hotel Le Lagon, Noumea

August 3, Day 5: Departures for Home

Airport transfers provided for return flight departures today.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 6 tour participants.

TOUR LEADER(s): This tour is led by **Max Breckenridge** and **Local Leader**

Born in the UK and raised in Sydney, Australia, Max Breckenridge discovered his passion for birds at age 12 during a 10-week family journey across Australia. That formative trip sparked a lifelong fascination with wildlife and wild places. After finishing school, he drove solo from Darwin to Broome, birding along the way, and spent a month volunteering at the renowned Broome Bird Observatory.

Max earned a Bachelor of Biodiversity & Conservation from Macquarie University in 2018 and has since explored nearly every corner of Australia, developing an exceptional eye—and ear—for its avian life. His adventurous spirit has taken him deep into remote regions such as Iron Range National Park on Cape York, where he camped under a tarp for two weeks in the wet season to study rare migrants from Papua New Guinea.

Passionate about conservation, Max has worked extensively with BirdLife Australia, contributing to the recovery of the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater through monitoring and captive-release programs. When not guiding, he continues to travel widely throughout the Old World in pursuit of birds and new experiences. Max now lives on Lake Macquarie, north of Sydney, with his partner, Fernanda.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: $10,335 per person based on double occupancy or **$10,760** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from Dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 14, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is **$1,000** per person. At 180 days VENT will

collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (April 2, 2027) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, $5 to $10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) $15 to $20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "***Force Majeure***" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances;

(h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour**. This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive **Ripcord** plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit**.** With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: **Ripcord Travel Insurance;** or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The "pay as you go" approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to "pay as you go," you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: $50 domestic; $75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag.

Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Nadi, Fiji is required.

VISAs: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to **Fiji, Samoa or New Caledonia**. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of August 18, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

CLOTHING: General clothing information

- **Pants & Shorts:** A couple pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable. Shorts can be useful in warmer locations or when relaxing around hotels.
- **Field Clothing:** Pants and long-sleeved shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular. These provide useful protection from the sun and occasional biting insects.
- **Hat:** Wide brimmed hat is ideal.
- **Swimwear**
- **Light Coat or Jacket**

FOOTWEAR: We recommend a good trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions, which do occur. A lighter shoe, like an athletic shoe, will come in handy when relaxing around the lodges.

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

- **Daypack**
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick – A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking**
- **Umbrella**
- **Reusable Water bottle**
- **Tissue packs**
- **Small flashlight or Headlamp**
- **Small folding stool**

Binoculars: We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: You will be visiting the Southwest Pacific in the austral winter. Generally, the tropical climate is warm and humid with temperatures ranging from the low 60s to the lows 90s (°F), although it can be certainly cooler at the higher points on Fiji. The dry season runs from June through December, with the hottest, driest conditions likelier later in the year. July is cooler than December, with greater chances for rain. Some rain should be expected, especially around Suva.

FOOD & WATER: Food and drinking water is safe for consumption in the major cities and hotels in New Caledonia and Fiji. Water served in restaurants is always safe.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: Your tour fee includes all necessary expenses; however, you will want to carry credit cards and/or a supply of cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as gifts, laundry, gratuities, meals on your own, and personal items. If bringing cash, it is best to carry small denominations as the places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills.

If you plan to extend your vacation in either country beyond what is offered in the program, you'll want to consider obtaining local currency. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or a city bank upon arrival in either country. The best exchange is always from automatic teller machines as opposed to changing at dealers. Please note that U.S. Dollars are not accepted in Samoa or New Caledonia. In Fiji, U.S. Dollars may be accepted, but it is recommended that your dollars be converted to Fijian Dollars. Major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) are accepted at most locations. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas. The official currency of Samoa is the Samoan Tala (WST); Fiji is the Fijian Dollar (FJD); New Caledonia is the CFP Franc (XPF). Exchange rates are subject to change. You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: http://www.xe.com/.

ELECTRICITY: Standard voltage in Samoa and Fiji is 240V/50H. Electrical outlets are of the I-type, with three flat pins in a triangular pattern. Standard voltage in New Caledonia is 220V/50H. Electrical outlets are of the F-type, with two round pins. A plug adapter will be needed, and we strongly recommend a voltage converter to protect sensitive electronic equipment.

INTERNET ACCESS: Wi-Fi availability at most or all hotels and lodges.

LANGUAGE: Samoan and English are both spoken in Samoa. Fiji has three official languages: Fijian, Fijian Hindi, and English. French is the official language of New Caledonia, but Kanak languages (family of Austronesian languages) are widely spoken.

TIME: Apia is 18; Nadi is 17; and Noumea is 16 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available at all the hotels in our itinerary.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases.

Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

TYPHOID– VENT recommends vaccination against Typhoid, a bacterial disease endemic to Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia. Typhoid, or Typhoid Fever, is caused by *Salmonella Typhi*. It is transmitted through consumption of contaminated food and water, typically when someone who is infected uses the bathroom and does not wash their hands. Symptoms may include high fever, weakness, stomach pain, headache, diarrhea or constipation, cough, and loss of appetite.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

DENGUE & ZIKA– Dengue and Zika are viral diseases transmitted by mosquitos. Both are present to some degree on Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia. The best way to avoid these illnesses is by avoiding getting bitten by mosquitos. We recommend wearing long sleeve shirts and pants when in the field, and applying insect repellent to your clothing and areas of exposed skin. A stick-style repellent is easier to apply to the face and hands, while a pump-style container is ideal for clothing. Please refer to the Insect Repellent section below for more information on the use of repellents.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin)**: is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend **www.amazon.com** which has a wide selection; **www.buteobooks.com** and **www.nhbs.com** which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and **www.abebooks.com** for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds-Samoa & Fiji

There are currently no readily available field guides for Samoa or Fiji. The best option is to use the Merlin Bird ID application and download the pack for Polynesia. Dutson, G.

Birds of Melanesia: Bismarcks, Solomons, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Helm Field Guides, 2011. This is the best available field guide for New Caledonia and this region of the Pacific, also covers many species possible in Fiji, but not the endemics.

CLO Apps

eBird. **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files.

Merlin Bird ID. **Cornell Lab of Ornithology.** Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "***VENT***") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on August 18, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses

associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "***Airline***") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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