



# Fiji Dawasamu

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## Arrival

Please note that arrival logistics may be altered at short notice – check for updates regularly to ensure you are aware of any late changes.

## Visa Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa for your trip.

The staff will arrange for your visa upon your arrival in country, however, in order to assist with this process you will need to provide the necessary paperwork which will be listed on the Immigration Letter email including a copy of your passport, an original copy of your official Criminal Record Check, visa fees (which will vary depending on the length of your program and will be indicated on the Immigration email), flight itinerary -all volunteers must provide a paper copy of their onward flight itinerary - this flight itinerary must be to your country of origin, so if you are travelling to another country after Fiji, e.g Australia or New Zealand, then you will need to provide the full itinerary all the way back to your home country. The copy of your itinerary must also include an E-ticket number, if you can't find this then ask your travel agent or airline for confirmation.

Upon arrival in Fiji, you will need to fill out an arrival card. On your card, you need to check 'Business' as the reason for your trip as volunteering is classed as work in Fiji. You will receive a 14-day stamp on your passport, if you do not see 14 days written on your passport, please ask to speak to the Immigration Official and explain that the NGO is filing for your visa on your behalf. If you have any questions, please contact your CountryExpert.

## Living Conditions

Facilities will be more basic than you are accustomed to – please travel with an open mind and a willingness to adapt to local conditions.

Accommodation on base is in shared (mixed sex) facilities with shared bathroom facilities. Flush toilet facilities are available, and participants share base duties, including cleaning and other chores.

## Food

Volunteers take it in turns to prepare meals for the group. Food is a basic, mostly vegetarian diet consisting of local produce subject to in-season produce and locally available products. Breakfast could be porridge, eggs and beans, fruit or pancakes, lunch may be rice dishes, vegetables, pasta and sauce, etc. and atypical evening meal may include pasta, beans, rice and vegetables in a variety of sauces and flavors.

Please note, Silana is a "dry" village, no alcohol is permitted.

## Electricity

Supply: 240V 50Hz

Source: Mains, or at times only generators in the evening

Sockets: Australian (IEC type 1)

## Laundry

You can wash your clothes on base (hand washing) or arrange for them to be washed locally. Cost is around\$15 FJD per bag

## Getting Around and Exploring Further

### Exploring Further

In your down time you will be free to travel in the local area and you will be free on the weekends. In this time you could do day trips such as dolphin watching, visiting other islands, scuba diving, or relaxing in a near by resort. After your program there are countless attractions that can be reached after a day or two of travelling.

You could travel to the capital city of Suva, take a ferry to Taveuni - 'the garden of Fiji' or explore the interior of VitiLevu—the possibilities are endless!

### Finance

Local currency:Local currency: **Fijian Dollar**

Participants typically spend approximately FJD\$100 per week for phone credit, snacks, souvenirs and entertainment etc. and you may want to bring additional funds to allow for extra activities and travel (such as scuba diving FJD\$200-300 two-tank dive, resort visits FJD\$90+ including food, or meals off base FJD\$25). For those who want to travel further in the island group, before or after the program, we suggest an approximate figure of US\$40-50 per day. We recommend that you travel with cash as your main source of funds, although having a credit/debit card as a backup is wise.

### Background Check

A background/police check is required for this program

### Health & Safety

The nearest emergency medical facilities are located in Korovou Town (50 minutes away from base by car). For major emergencies, volunteers are taken to Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva. We have emergency procedures for all-foreseeable events, the staff are first aid trained and you will receive a safety briefing on arrival. Please note that the NGO cannot provide specific medical advice. Please consult your primary care provider (doctor, GP, etc.) or visit a travel clinic for further information. Please be forthcoming about any health issues before you begin the program as failure to do so may have serious consequences for you, the staff and other participants, including your removal from the program.

### Pre Departure Training

Staff in the field will provide training on the skills required, but you may benefit from learning more about local history, culture and customs before you travel.

### Packing List

#### Essential Equipment

- 1 Large Rucksack (Backpack) or Suitcase: for carrying the bulk of your gear to base.
- 1 Daypack (Backpack): (25+ litres)
- Sarong/Sulus (required for both men and women). These can be purchased after your arrival and a stop will be made on the way to base to ensure that you have enough *sulus* (pocketed sulus for men) as this is the required attire for school and events in the village. For women especially, 90% of your time will be spent wearing a sulu.
- Shirts that cover the shoulders for women (always necessary in the village and at school); Bula shirt (short sleeve patterned button-up) or equivalent for men
- Shorts (knee-length). Board shorts are great, quick drying items.
- Light, long, cargo trousers especially for Community Expedition Program
- Swimming trunks / costume / bikini
- 1 pair of sandals (flip-flops / thongs). Sandals that can be easily slipped on and off are more useful than strappy sandals
- 1 pair of trail running shoes/ walking boots / trainers / sneakers. If on Community Development Expedition Program ensure you have a comfortable, closed toe shoe
- Hat
- Sunglasses make sure they offer 100% UV protection and preferably polarized. Cheap glasses can cause more damage than good
- Waterproof jacket / Poncho; one or two long sleeved tops for cooler nights
- Casual clothing for weekends
- Bed Sheets (fitted sheet (~6ft x 3ft), ordinary sheet, pillow case) / cotton sleeping sack (not a sleeping bag)
- Towel
- Sun cream high factor, at least SPF30+ (available in country)

- First Aid Kit - If you suffer motion sickness on boats, we recommend you bring Dramamine - consult with your Doctor first to ensure you have no contraindication against it. We also recommend including: bandages, micro-pore tape, cotton wool, plasters, gauze, antiseptic cream, ear drying drops, anti-fungal cream, anti-bacterial cream, antibiotic cream, re hydration salts, paracetamol and ibuprofen, laxatives, Imodium, antihistamines, anti-itch cream, tweezers
- Good quality flashlight/torch and a headlamp
- Re-usable water bottle - because the planet doesn't need any more plastic to deal with!
- Toiletries – preferably biodegradable (most items available in Fiji but not all brands). *Please avoid microbeads!*
- Mosquito Net (box/canopy style recommended)
- Insect repellent (low deet)
- Photocopies of important documents
- Spare batteries – for head torch and other devices (available in country)
- Any prescribed medication you need during your trip. Make sure it bears your name and description of reason and dosage

## Recommended Equipment

Electronics- Many volunteers bring phones/mobiles, portable speakers, laptops, cameras, go-pros, e-readers, solar-powered chargers/battery banks etc. However, keep in mind that the environment and tropical location can be hard on electronics and replacement parts are expensive and difficult to find.

- Dry Bag to keep cameras and other valuables dry during boat crossings if necessary
- Electrical adaptor to convert both socket style and voltage if necessary
- Mask and snorkel
- A light blanket for months April- August as the nights can be cooler
- Books
- Vitamins and supplements if required
- Special dietary foods (gluten-free foods for example are difficult to access)
- Sewing Kit/safety pins
- Travel games / Playing cards/
- Clothing pegs
- Pen Knife / Leatherman
- Money belt
- Reef/Aqua Shoes or sandals
- Weekends can be spent away from base in Suva and resorts, casual/smart clothes can be worn.

## Additional Information

### Dress code

It is important to take into account cultural considerations when packing for your program. In the villages, women must wear a full length sulu (Sarong) or skirt & cover their shoulders at all times. It is perfectly fine to wear short sleeved shirts as long as shoulders are covered. It is acceptable for volunteers to wear long work trousers during construction work though during all other times women should wear sarongs. Men should wear sarongs and short sleeved shirts to village functions and on Sunday's but at other times it is acceptable to wear trousers or shorts.

Whilst working at the school volunteers need to comply with the teachers dress code. Men and Women should wear collared polo shirts/shirts or the t-shirt (provided on arrival). This should be worn with a sarong or for men a more formal pocket sulu. We would also recommend volunteers purchase traditional clothing when they arrive in Fiji, either before deploying to the base or it is also possible to have these made whilst living in the village and support local income generating initiatives. For women this would be a Sulu Chamba which is a patterned sarong and matching fitted top (approx 20-30USD) and for men a 'bula shirt' (approx 10-15USD) – a colourful patterned, short sleeved button up shirt, similar to what many refer to as a 'Hawaiian shirt'.

### School Resources

Cyclone Winston destroyed the NGO library at the local school resulting in the loss of three years' worth of education resources. The education project is now up and running again and a base level of resources have been accumulated. If you would like to bring a contribution for the growing supply of resources any additions would be thoroughly

appreciated. PE, Music, Art and Craft resources as well as general stationary and reading books of varying levels would all be of great assistance in delivering a fun and effective education program to the children of Dawasamu.

Ideas:

- pencils/crayons/felt- tip pens
- paint, paintbrushes
- stencils/rulers
- reading books of different levels
- cones/bibs/sashes
- balls, bats, nets
- sport sets
- musical instruments
- song books
- percussion instruments

Hints on Buying Kit

The climate is hot and humid and shorts and T-shirts are essential. You won't need very many clothes but do pack a few items for those evenings out. Sandals or flip flops/thongs are also strongly recommended. Even outside the rainy season, short bursts of rain are not uncommon and so some form of lightweight waterproof clothing is also recommended. It can also get cold in the evenings in the winter months so a fleece or jumper is recommended. As in all tropical countries, insects can be a nuisance in Fiji, especially in the evening. Long sleeved shirts and trousers offer the best form of protection. We also recommend bringing either trainers or walking boots to help cover your feet in the evenings to protect them from the mosquitoes and sand fly bites. Walking boots are recommended if you want to do any off road walking or trekking. Before setting off in search of your essential kit, compile a list of everything that you need. When buying your kit you may find that by mentioning to the store assistants (or ideally the manager) that you are joining a volunteer project enables you to negotiate a discount on your purchases. Often stores are authorized to offer a discount (typically 10-15%) at their discretion, so it is always worth mentioning that the kit is required in aid of a good cause. Shop around for kit.

Remember that clothes will get damaged and very dirty!

**Visa:**

Bula, I hope you are looking forward to joining us here in Fiji very soon. Before you get started on project you need to make sure you have the correct visa for your time with us. To help you with this process we have compiled a list of guidelines and requirements, which will help navigate the requirements of Fiji immigration. So that you can head straight over to base, one of our Fiji staff will submit this documentation on your behalf at the immigration office in Suva. Please read the guidelines and requirements carefully and make sure you have all documentation and fees ready to hand over at your pick up.

### **Immigration Guidelines**

1) Arrival in country - On the plane you will be given an arrival card, when answering the question about why you are visiting Fiji – you must tick the business box. We know this sounds strange but in Fiji volunteers are currently classed as working. You will then be issued a 14-day visitors permit. Please make sure the immigration official has handwritten 14 days on the stamp. If you do not receive this then please ask to speak to a senior immigration officer to update and explain that NGO will be applying for a work permit on your behalf.

2) Documentation - Depending on the duration of your project, there are 2 types of permit that you can apply for as a volunteer in Fiji, the Limited Authority to work permit (max 3 month) or the Short-Term work permit (max 6 months). For your application you will need to provide the following documentation and fees.

Flight Itinerary - All volunteers must provide a paper copy of their onward flight itinerary - This flight itinerary must be to your country of origin, so if you are travelling to another country after Fiji, e.g Australia or New Zealand, then you will need to provide the full itinerary all the way back to your home country. The copy of your itinerary must also include an E-ticket number, if you can't find this then ask your travel agent or airline for confirmation.

Criminal Background Check - All volunteers are required to have a CRB check before joining Fiji. Please ensure you have a hard copy of the document with you. This must be an up to date original hard copy of the document (they will not accept copies or scans) and it needs to be in English.

Passport Photocopy - Please arrive with a paper copy of your passport photo page

Fees (Please have these ready for collection at your pick up). The limited Authority to Work visa (Max 3 month) is \$190 FJD. The short term work permit (Max 6 month) is \$667 FJD.

Have a good trip and we will see you soon in the Pacific.