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BACK TO NATURE AT TAVANIPUPU ISLAND RESORT

JANUARY 27, 2016 ([HTTP://WWW.FLIGHTCENTRE.COM.AU/TRAVEL-NEWS/2016/01/27/](http://www.flightcentre.com.au/travel-news/2016/01/27/)) BY [TODD STURM](#)

Australians are pretty savvy at scoping out a hot slice of tropical sand (<http://www.flightcentre.com.au/holidays/beaches>) or beautiful coral coast. Fortunately, there's one spot just far enough away to make work-weary Aussies feel like they are on a true overseas adventure without battling through lengthy flights and jet lag.

We're talking about the Solomon Islands; a paradise comprised of dozens of lush tropical islands.

Whether you're an outdoor adventurer looking to hit the surf, a couple dreaming of a romantic getaway, or a family embarking on a relaxing sun-filled holiday, there's one island resort that ticks all the 'must-have' holiday boxes: Tavanipupu Island Resort.

After a 30-minute flight from Honiara to Marau, on Guadalcanal's sparsely populated east coast, we touched down on a tiny grass airstrip – a beautiful sight to behold from above. Flanked by the bright blue ocean on one end and towering palms on the other, the pilot headed for the clearing and into paradise.



A picturesque descent into paradise

Once landed, there was no need for a trip to the baggage claim area. We collected our luggage right next to the zippy nine-seat Islander plane as it sat on the grass. It was here where Tavanipupu Island Resort manager, Sean Tiesman, greeted us.

An Aussie with a contagious smile, Sean escorted our group to the nearby jetty where he helped us board the resort's speedboat, which would take us on the 10-minute ride to Tavanipupu.

Multi-talented with a can-do attitude, Sean assumed management of the property after its short closure in early 2015.

With visions of turning the former private island resort into a welcoming retreat for families, weddings, conferences and eco-stays, Sean has set about building new cottages, adding new restaurant facilities and improving on the extensive outdoor activity options already available.

Known for hosting Prince William and Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, during their 2012 visit to the Solomon Islands, Tavanipupu Island Resort is continuously improving on its holiday offerings.

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The resort welcomes you with friendly hosts, stunning water and a feeling of utter luxury

“We’re building additional bungalows this year,” said Sean, “and we expect to spend over \$1.2 million on other resort updates, accommodation improvements and facility expansions. That will include a new restaurant, day spa facilities and new meeting and conference rooms.”

Nature lovers of course love this resort. Just metres off the long jetty we found fantastic swimming and snorkelling conditions with crystal clear, coral-filled waters offering hours of enjoyment.

There’s really no better place, outside the Great Barrier Reef, to experience the colourful beauty of coral than off the pier at Tavanipupu.

Whether it’s hand-line fishing off the jetty or shore, or a deep-sea fishing expedition on one of the resort’s very own speed boats, this popular sport was available upon request.

It is also one that Sean looks to expand in the future. “There’s no commercial fishing here, and going more than five minutes without a hit on your line is rare,” said Sean.

From giant trevally to Spanish mackerel and yellowfin tuna, the best fishing spots were just minutes away. Even surfing was a possibility with some breaks not far from the resort.



Simply walking around the island offers enough bliss

There were plenty of on-land activities, too. The 30-minute hiking trail circuit offered close-up views of the island and its bird and plant life, while resort mountain bikes offered an invigorating way to cover even more ground.

Just a 10-minute walk from the main bar and restaurant area, a lookout provided stunning views out to sea from a beautiful hilltop vantage point.

Fittingly, the thatched roof bungalows provided an air of tropical charm. With a mix of traditional, family and executive bungalows, there were plenty of options to choose from depending on our needs.

My personal favourite was the executive bungalow, with a wide-open back patio and refreshing outdoor shower!

In the early evening, the rhythmic beat of a drum called us to dinner. Each night the resort's chef served up a delectable menu of locally-caught seafood, fresh meats and desserts that highlighted the many fresh fruits found nearby.



Delicious local treats

As evening approached, the setting sun offered a show like only Mother Nature could provide. Hues of orange and yellows reflected off the water as resort staff went about their nightly ritual of lighting the pathway tiki torches and lanterns.

If you like your holidays in untouched and non-commercialised natural surroundings, a trip to the Solomon Islands and Tavanipupu needs to be added to your travel list.

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