

Solomon Islands

An unspoilt and largely undiscovered gem of the South Pacific, life in the Solomon Islands revolves all around the ocean – and there's plenty of it, with more than 900 islands making up this group. Start in the capital of Honiara, home to a plethora of crazed and colourful shops, and dive Iron Bottom Sound (the expanse of sea between Honiara and Savo) where warships and aircraft were sunk during World War II.

Head to some of the area's outer islands, such as the western province of Gizo, switch off your mobile phone and head to Fatboys Resort, a short boat ride from the rustic airport. A long jetty leads out to the resort's restaurant, which sits on pylons in the ocean. From here, slide straight off the deck and into the warm waters that are home to

a variety of tropical fish and pristine coral. At night, after you've dined on plentiful lobster plucked straight from these very same waters, watch as the black-tip reef sharks congregate for a feed. Fat Boys also offers incredible adventures where you can

hire a boat and be taken at low tide to a sand bar for sunset drinks, or over to nearby Kennedy Island for your own Robinson-Crusoe type adventure.

It's a similar story at Oravae Cottage, a 20-minute boat ride from Gizo. Here you'll find an open-plan wooden bungalow where you can swim straight off the deck and snorkel with cheeky clownfish.

Over in the protected waters of the Marau Sound sits Tavanipupu Island Resort. Surfers will be pleased to learn there are a few decent waves breaking just off the reef here, and those who love to snorkel are rewarded with yet another straight-off-the-deck experience. Boasting a colourful coral garden, some of the best Solomon Islands snorkelling is just a turn of the tide away.

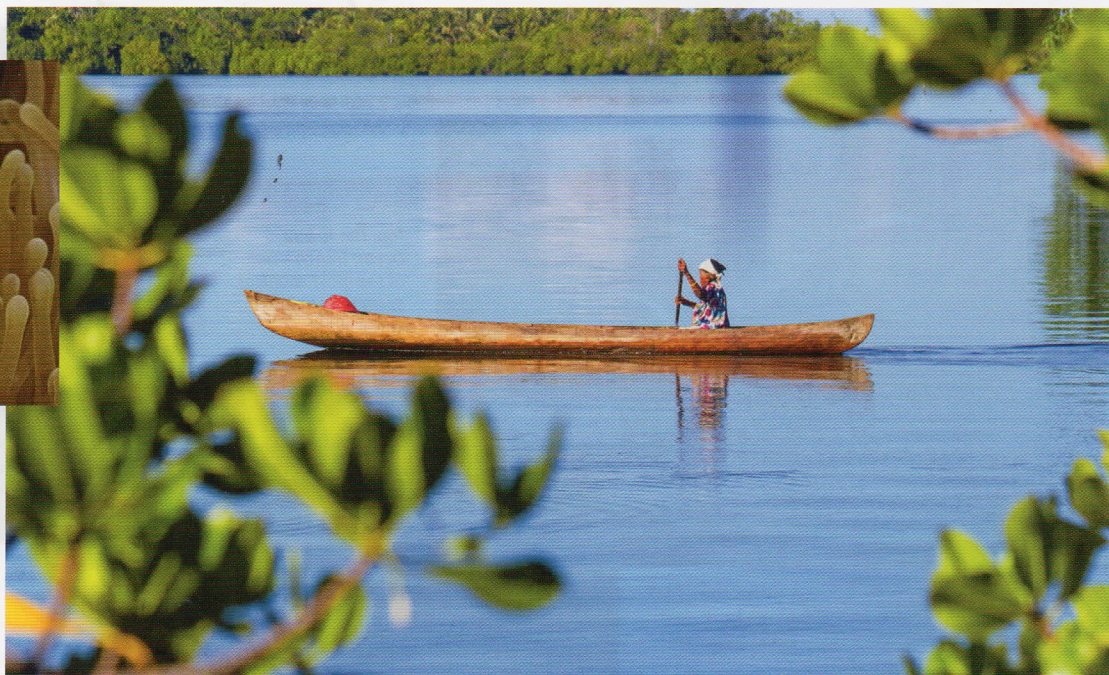
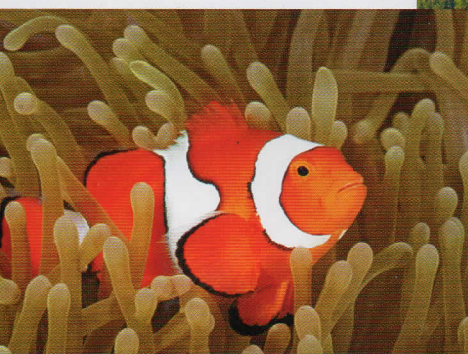
// For more information on the Solomon Islands go to: visitsolomons.com.sb;

Fatboys Resort: solomonislandsfatboys.com.au; Oravae Cottage:

oravaecottage.com; Tavanipupu Island Resort: tavanipupu.com



"The warm waters are home to a variety of tropical fish and coral"



*Clockwise from top:
The legendary Fat Boys;
Tenaru Waterfalls; Pretty
much all the adventure in
these, the 'Hapi Islands'
revolves around water;
The diverse and abundant
marine life means
snorkelling is popular*