

# SOLOMON ISLANDS RUSTIC ROMANCE

By **Danielle L** - December 9, 2015



*Photos: Danielle Lancaster*

In this heady world we live in, sometimes we need a serious digital detox. Precious time away from the monotonous daily grind and the ever demanding digital chores that continually beep and ping at us through our computers and mobile devices demanding immediate attention like a recalcitrant toddler. Relax, we've found the ideal place for you to reboot, recharge and relax away from all the stress of our modern day lives. Where is it? The Solomon Islands.

Prepare to unplug and unwind. This fairy-tale location consists of over 990 islands dotted in the South Pacific, to the east of Papua New Guinea.

In the past, the Solomon Islands was considered a destination for adventure travellers and people who like to explore an off-the-beaten-track destination. Not anymore.

The capital, Honiara (where all international flights land) is located on the island of Guadalcanal and is worthy of an overnight stay.

The best coffee can be found at Lime Lounge and the National Museum and Cultural Centre is the spot for history buffs, with has many interesting displays.

100 years ago, the Solomon Islands was a head hunting nation of cannibals. These days, you are welcomed with the broadest of island smiles, a warm embrace and the assurance you will not be in tonight's stew.





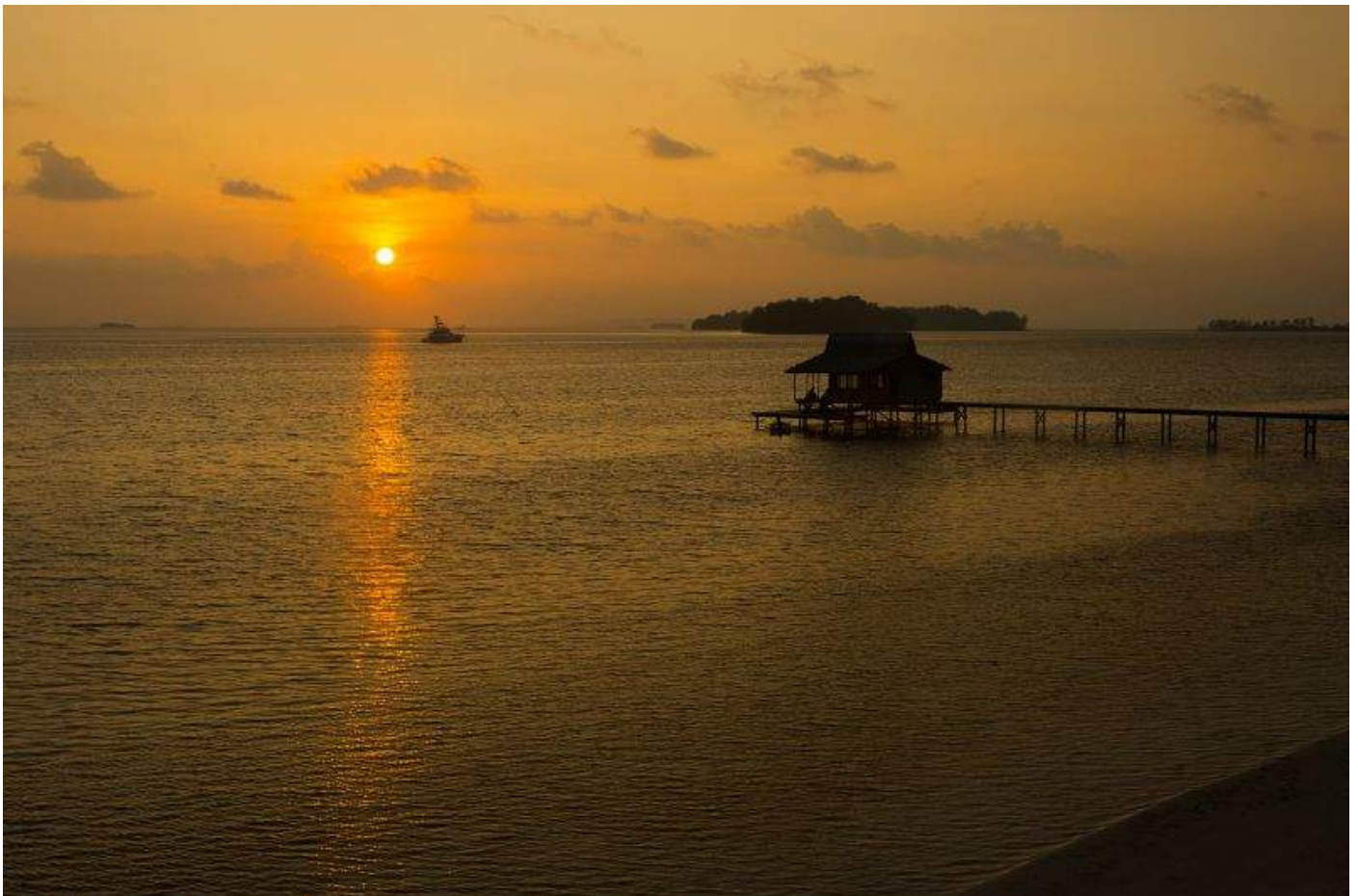
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Take a short flight from Honiara and discover why the Solomon Islands is one of the world's best-kept secret destinations.

Here are three Solomon Islands getaways to re-charge and soak up that well-deserved down-time.

## 1-FATBOYS RESORT

As dawn breaks, I loll in a hammock watching the butterflies flutter their delicate wings above me and drying their wings in the sun's golden rays.



This is just one of the soothing sights at [Fatboys Resort](#). And I pinch myself to make sure I'm really awake.

The one-hour flight from Honiara lands at the Gizo airport on its own pacific atoll. Try and get a window seat for the flight as the view is simply spectacular.

Secure a window seat on the right hand side of the plane from when you are seated.

You'll see the magnificent Marovo Lagoon, short-listed for World Heritage status. The lagoon is not usually viewable from the left side as the plane.

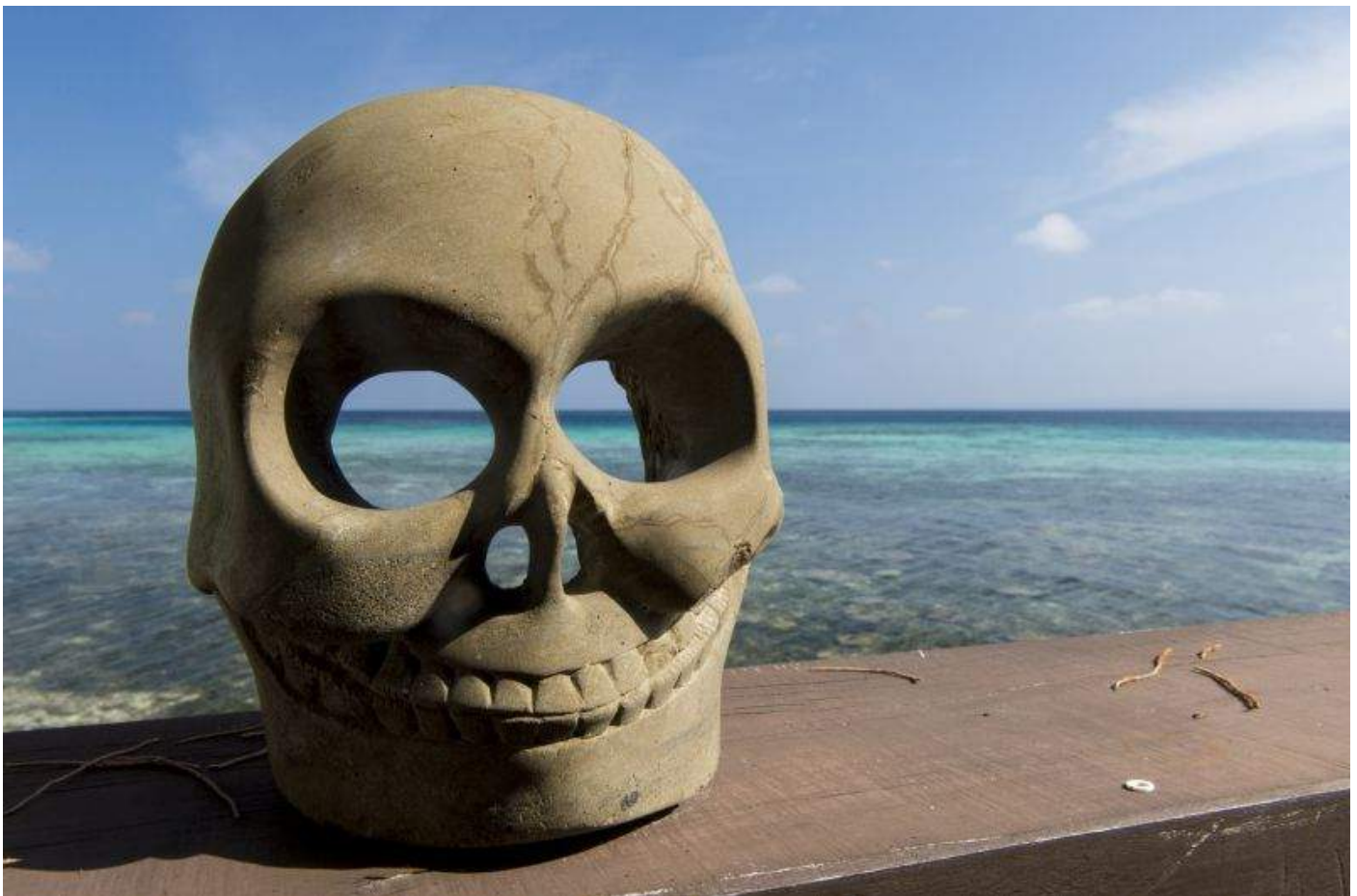
## **WELCOME TO PARADISE**

Fatboys staff will meet you at the airstrip and escort you on a 10-minute boat ride to the resort. Welcome to paradise.

On a clear day, the electric blue water stands out against the sandy beaches and distant rain-forested mountains.

You'll pass fishermen and families paddling in wooden dugout canoes, just like they did a hundred years ago.

In the distance is the town of Gizo, the second largest town of the Solomon Islands and the Western Province's business hub. Mark it for a day-trip (more details below in our next featured resort).



## **MACKEREL AND LOBSTER**



Snorkel around the restaurant, which juts over the South Pacific's azure waters, to encounter tropical fish. This region is one of the finest locations in the world to view hundreds of varieties of tropical fish species.

For landlubbers, the clarity of the water allows amazing viewing of the marine life from the restaurant veranda. There are giant clams, multi-coloured fish and the occasional black tip reef shark after dusk.

Meet the local fishermen as they paddle into the restaurant offering their freshly caught catches. Island staff barter for Spanish mackerel and lobster. There is no question your seafood is fresh.



## **GOD OF PARADISE OR PLUM PUDDING?**

Take the tour to Kennedy Island. The island is known as *Kaso/o*, which means God of Paradise but some locals like to refer to it as Plum Pudding.

The Solomon Islands has a rich World War II history and Kennedy Island is where the 26-year-old US Naval Commander, John F. Kennedy (yes that JFK!) came ashore after his patrol boat was destroyed in 1943.

Go paddle boarding and visit a sandy atoll for sunset. Take a day trip into Gizo for a walk around the local markets with their electric coloured fruits, fish and wears. Or simply grab a book from the library in the restaurant and do nothing but relax and enjoy the view.



## 2-ORAVAE COTTAGE

Solitude awaits at [Oravae Cottage](#) as you have this whole tropical island to yourself!

It's tailored for a romantic retreat or for a group up to 10. There are two secluded tree-house bungalows, each with million-dollar views and a hammock to enjoy the views from.





The main rustic wooden bungalow has three single beds, a double bed, kitchenette as well as indoor and outdoor showers. The timber veranda is an ideal spot for dinner by candle light.

## **MUSIC THROUGH THE COCONUT PALMS**

Stay for a night or more and you will be serenaded by harmonious South Pacific voices drifting through the coconut palms – an absolute delight.

From the darkness, as the moon and stars shine over the ocean, the islands' owners' adult children provide your entertainment. There are songs to sing along to and original family compositions.

The property is powered by the sun and a generator (there is no main power) and is the perfect hideaway to unplug from our modern digital world.





## **KEEP THE DIGITAL DETOX TWITCH AT BAY**

Located close to Gizo, the dive shop offers snorkelling and scuba diving tours. Other activities are fishing, surfing and hiking Kolombangara Island. The Ghizo Island Tour involves visiting local villages and beaches, canoeing in a traditional Oravae wooden canoe as well as exploring the many islands close by.



Take a tip and bring your own snorkel gear, soap and shampoo. The resort is not licensed so stock up on alcoholic beverages in Gizo on the way to the resort. Pack a good book and insect repellent as all areas are unscreened.

## 3-TAVANIPUPU ISLAND RESORT

Travel 30 minutes east of Honiara, across the rugged interior of Guadalcanal Island, to the region known as Marau Sound. The idyllic [Tavanipupu Island Resort](#) is a South Pacific paradise. Resort staff will meet you at the airstrip for the short boat ride to the island.

## PRINCE WILLIAM AND KATE

The resort's guest book boasts high profile names such as Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and his lovely wife Kate along with plebs like me on a limited budget.





Under new management, the resort is being redeveloped.

There's a new jetty for sunset drinks, new bungalows including executive bungalows and a traditional bungalow. Both have water views.

Families are now welcome to this island hide-away and plans are underway for the eastern beach to be dedicated to water sports, with kayaks, paddle boards and traditional dugout canoes.





## SUNSETS AND FISHING TRIPS

Take the short round-the-island walk to the highest point of the island. It's a great location to gaze at the sunset.

Snorkelling and fishing are fantastic.

The manager Sean, a keen angler, will guarantee you'll catch of fish which can be taken back to the resort for your chef to prepare for you. Guided fishing trips start from a very reasonable A\$150 for two hours.

Free activities include bicycling, volley ball, badminton, table tennis, darts, board games, cards and bocce.

Afternoon sunset cruises and village tours are also available.



My best tip is to add an extra night as you won't want to leave.

*Danielle Lancaster was a guest of Solomon Islands [Visitors Bureau](#) and Solomon Airlines*

## DISCOVER SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Solomon Islands is an undiscovered South Pacific paradise that receives around 25,000 international visitors a year.

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**Danielle L**

<http://travel2next.com/danielle-lancaster/>

I'm a photojournalist based on Tamborine Mountain in the hinterland of the Gold Coast in Queensland Australia. My work is forever exciting and rewarding uncovering new adventures, meeting wonderful

people, exploring and then sharing these experiences through my writing and imagery.

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