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Tokoriki Island Resort Review - Fiji's Island Paradise

By [Anne Z. Cooke](#), Editor. Photos by [Steve Haggerty/ColorWorld](#)

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Tokoriki's Infinity Pool Blends Into the Lagoon

TOKORIKI ISLAND, [Fiji](#)- They flock to [Tokoriki Island Resort](#) like bees to a field of flowers. But how do so many world travelers hear about this luxury hideaway in Fiji's sunny Mamanuca Archipelago? What brings them to this distant South Pacific Isle, an adults-only destination for honeymooners, privacy-conscious celebrities and type-A captains of industry.



Sunshine and the Good Life, at Tokoriki Island Resort, in Fiji's Mamanuca Islands

Californians, we thought WE'D come a long way from Los Angeles. But our fellow guests hailed from points farther afield, from Norway, Australia and Germany, not to mention Texas and Colorado. Most were staying for at least a week, the length of time you'll probably need to sample all of **Tokoriki's** different pleasures. These are many, from guided scuba and snorkel trips to Fiji's massive coral reefs and tours of a nearby Fijian village, to island hikes, sunset cruises, kayaking, spa treatments, cooked-to-order breakfasts and romantic evenings with fine cuisine and candlelight.



Your South Seas Bure Overlooks the Lagoon

Imagine it: A narrow beach beside the lagoon, where **Tokoriki's** skiff -- the one that chugs out over the reef to meet the passenger ferry from **Nadi** -- will land you on the shore. Beyond, under the trees, is the lodge, a thatched, peaked-roof South Seas structure plus 34 spacious bures _____



The Lagoon and the Infinity Pool: It's Hard to Tell Where One Begins and the Other Ends

Pampering is always pleasant. But it's **Tokoriki's** staff that you'll remember most. A close-knit community, most have long-time ties to the resort. "We're lucky to have such wonderful people," says Andrew Travers, the resort's general manager. "The half-dozen remarkable Fijian elders you've already met are very special. They've grown up with the local culture and customs and are a wonderful source of knowledge. Their presence makes it possible for our guests to experience the real Fiji," he says.



A Friendly Smile and a Cheerful "Bula," Welcome You, the Arriving Guest

Despite the economic downturn, Travers oversaw the resort's recently-completed renovation, a major project that moved the lodge walls to admit more light, updated the existing bures and built four posh new villas with private plunge pools. A new spa opens in autumn, featuring larger treatment rooms and a meditation lounge.

The resort's infinity pool (you feel as if you're swimming in the lagoon) frees up the original pool for use by the on-site dive school and rental shop. If you've always wanted to learn, this is the place to take a one-on-one lesson. Whether diving or snorkeling, you can count on impressive viewing in the lagoon. **Fiji** is justly famous for its brilliantly clear water and vast coral reefs. It's a truly a **diver's paradise**.



For the Kids at Yanuya Village, Posing for Photos is All Part of the Fun

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For us -- amateur snorkelers -- our most poignant experience was the three-hour trip to **Yanuya**, a traditional Fijian village nearby. The visit was proof of the old saw that **"Fijians are the world's friendliest people."** You'll never encounter so many smiles or say "bula" so often -- or be offered so many cups of kava (it's mildly relaxing) as you will in a Fijian village. But poverty is no stranger to this small beachside community, either. The residents live in dark, one-room cinderblock huts, roofed with thatch or corrugated tin and small windows without glass or screens. Dirt paths do for sidewalks and there are few flush toilets (one is available to visitors). The school is ill-equipped, with few books and fewer supplies. But even this doesn't dampen the infectious enthusiasm of parents and kids alike.





Waterproof Sandals Are recommended for Trips Over the Lagoon

If you play tennis, check out Tokoriki's court in the rear garden, beside 20-odd acres of woods and lawns. A path leads to a pretty stone chapel at the base of the hill, kept busy with weddings and renewals of vows. If you're planning yours, you can also book a reception or banquet, plus bures to house your special guests. The bures are air conditioned and have coffee makers, irons, king beds with a filmy net canopy, inside and outside showers, and patio furniture overlooking the lagoon. But no television or telephone.

"Some guests, when they arrive, say they wish we supplied the latest technology," said Travers. "But there's a reason we don't. When we review the comment cards we get, it turns out that most people were glad to leave all that at home. After a week on this island, they change their minds."



Recreation Director Penioni Sale Posts the Day's Activities



FAST FACTS:

Air Pacific and Continental Airlines fly a 10-hour to **Nadi**, in **Fiji** from the West Coast, leaving late in the evening and arriving early the next morning. Daytime flights to Los Angeles or San Francisco offer time for a leisure dinner, before continuing on.

For more on the resort, find Tokoriki Island Resort at www.tokoriki.com. Email requests for current prices and special rates to marketing@tokoriki.com. Listed rates start at about U.S. \$440 per person, per night, depending on the exchange rate. All-inclusive meal plans are listed at \$137 per person.

Current five and six-night packages are available. One includes a roundtrip ticket for **South Seas Cruise's** 80-minute catamaran ferry ride from Denarau Marina (near Nadi), on Viti Levu, to Tokoriki. Check ferry prices and daily times at www.ssc.com.fj.

SUGGESTED GUIDEBOOKS:

Frommer's South Pacific, by Bill Goodwin, is abbreviated but accurate and informative. Available at most public libraries, and worth reading before you go.

Moon Fiji Guide, from Avalon Press, by David Stanley, is a keeper, to read at home and take with you. Packed with personal information and a fine list of background reading, it offers travel tips, lodging, history highlights and the cultural back story.

Lonely Planet's Fiji Guide, with color photos, by several contributing writers, is slanted toward budget and affordable travel. To see what fits your interests, compare a section with other guidebooks.

Tourism Fiji publishes first-class brochures, pamphlets and maps. In the U.S., email infodesk@tourismfiji.com. Or email the head office, in Nadi, at marketing@tourismfiji.com.fj.



Greet People You Meet with "Bula,"
and Win A Fijian Smile For Your
Trouble

Writer-Photographers Anne Z. Cooke & Steve Haggerty specialize in South Pacific travel..