



⌚ 6 years ago · ⚑ Darren McLean

Tokelau Travel Requirements

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Tokelau Travel Requirements

Welcome to the taste2travel **Tokelau Travel Requirements** guide!

Revision Date: February 2024

Introduction

Note:

Fully revised in February 2024, information for this guide has been provided by Margaret Pedro, the manager of the **Tokelau Liaison Office**, which is located in Apia, Samoa.

Important Update (May 2024):

Currently, **the three atolls have a ban in place for all visitors.**

This is a remnant of the Covid-19 era.

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I've received feedback from several travellers who have requested visit permits for the atolls and these have been refused due to Covid-19 travel restrictions.

The advice received from Tokelau is that the ban will remain in place until the end of 2024.

I have received today (8th of May 2024) the following email from Margaret Pedro, the Station Manager at the Tokelau Liaison Office in Apia:

Malo Darren

Great to hear from you, and that you have updated your website to reflect that our borders are currently closed.

Unfortunately, due to other pressing priorities on each of the three respective villages, they have closed their borders until further notice

Hope this helps

Margaret Pedro

Manager Support Services – Department of Transport & Support Services

The aim of this post is to outline the process for **obtaining a travel permit** to visit the remote New Zealand territory of **Tokelau**. The application process is long and convoluted (1-2 months) and would discourage all but the most dedicated of travelers. I arrived in Samoa thinking I could jump on the next boat but, once briefed on the process, realised this would not be possible with even the one month I had. I plan to visit in 2019.

The information contained in this post is based on a meeting I had at the **Tokelau Apia Liaison Office** in Samoa with **Margaret Pedro**, the **Manager of Support Services** for the **Tokelau Department of Transport & Support Services**. The Support Services team is responsible for the processing of all tourist permit applications.

The **only people exempt** from this process are **New Zealand passport holders** (who are not Tokelauan), who can remain in the territory for up to 10 days without a permit.

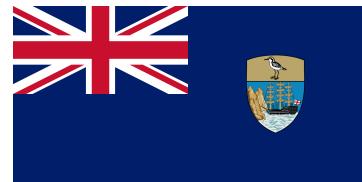
The only way of reaching Tokelau is on board the **MV Mataliki** passenger ship, which sails two or three times per month from its home port of Apia, Samoa – 500 km south of Tokelau.

It's important to stress that you cannot show up in Apia and expect to sail to Tokelau on a whim. **The approval process** (once you have submitted the required documents and paid the required fee) **can take up to one month!**

The requirements listed here are current as of February 2024.

Did you know?

- The first people to settle on Tokelau were **Polynesians**.
- Tokelau has **fewer than 1,500 inhabitants**, the fourth-smallest population of any sovereign state or dependency.
- Tokelau came under the **administration of New Zealand** in 1925.
- Tokelau is a **self-administering territory** of New Zealand.
- The **Government of Tokelau** website provides a wealth of information and news on Tokelau.
- The **highest point** on Tokelau is **five metres** above sea level.
- The atolls of Tokelau are at risk from **rising sea levels** caused by global warming.



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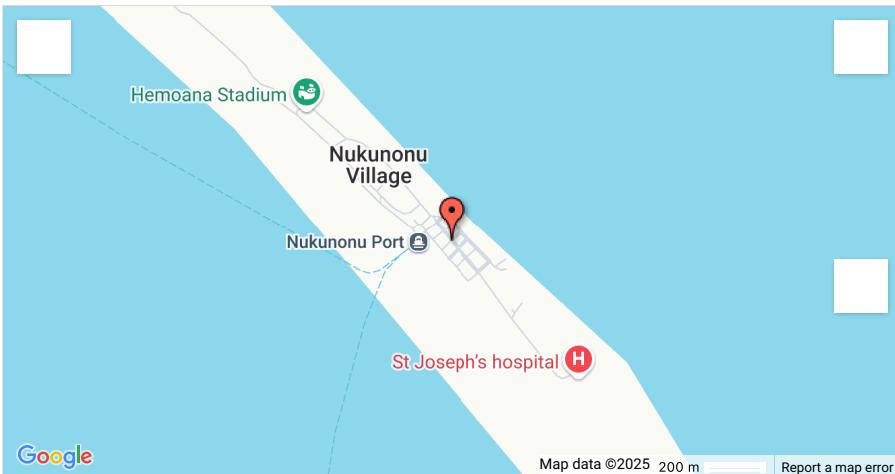


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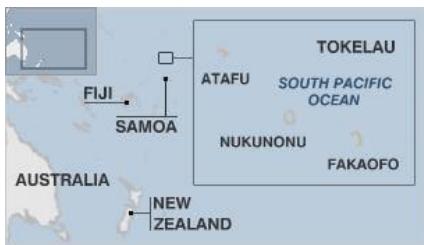


- Internet and telephone services are provided through **Telcel**, a monopoly, government-owned operator.

Location & Geography



Tokelau is located halfway between **New Zealand** and **Hawaii**. Other nearby islands include **Samoa** and **American Samoa** (507 km to the south); **Tuvalu** (1,178 km to the west); **Tonga** (1,379 km to the south) and **Kiribati** (733 km to the northeast).



A map showing the remote location of Tokelau.

Source: BBC

The territory consists of three atolls, with the most northern being **Atafu**, then **Nukunono**, to the southeast, then the most southern atoll of **Fakaofo**. Nukunono atoll is 4.7 sq. km in area, while Fakaofo is 4 sq. km and Atafu is 3.5 sq. km.

Flag



The flag of Tokelau.

The flag of Tokelau depicts a Tokelauan canoe sailing towards the Southern Cross constellation.

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Tokelau Apia Liaison Office

The Tokelau government does not maintain diplomatic missions anywhere in the world, however, the closest such thing is the **Tokelau Apia Liaison Office** and it's here where you'll find the very helpful and friendly **Support Services** team, which is part of the **Tokelau Department of Transport & Support Services**.

All visitor enquiries should be direct to **Margaret Pedro**, who can be emailed at:
m.pedro@tokelau.org.nz

Contact details for Support Services:

- **Manager:** Margaret Pedro
- **Office Address:** Fugalei street (opposite Savalalo road), Apia, Samoa
- **Postal address:** PO Box 865, Apia, Samoa
- **Direct Phone:** +685 20822 / 20823
- **Mobile Phone:** +685 7774 464

Visitor Permit Process

When you wish to apply for a Visitor's Permit, you should email **Margaret Pedro** who will confirm the current requirements.

You will need to supply various documents as outlined in the '**Visitor Permit Application Requirements**' document below.

You will also need to complete and submit the '**Visitor Permit Application Form**' which is included below.

The processing time for an application is 30 days!

Visitor Permit Application Requirements

You can view the current requirements (as of February 2024) in the following document:

[Tokelau_Permit Application Requirements](#)

Visitor Permit Application Form

You can download the current **Visitor Permit Application Form** here:

[Tokelau_Visitors n Work Permit approval from TK](#)

Application Processing Fee

At the time of document submission, the Support Services team will provide bank details of an account where you'll need to deposit the **application processing fee of NZ\$100**.

Ferry Bookings

The **Tokelau Transport Officer**, Pio Alainuuese, is responsible for booking ferry tickets to Tokelau.

Pio will consult with you to make tentative **ferry bookings**. Once your application has been **approved**, your bookings will be finalised.



p.toafe@tokelau.org.nz

Application Review

Once you've paid your processing fee and submitted all completed documents, the **Support Services** team will forward your application to the **Council of Elders (Taupulega)** on each atoll you wish to visit.

Each of the three atolls are governed separately, with each **Taupulega** making its own determination regarding immigration matters, hence if you apply to visit all three atolls, you'll need approval from all three councils. The application process requires the council to meet and discuss your application and **can take up to one month**.

Approval

Once your application is approved, the Support Services team will liaise with you to finalise your ferry and accommodation bookings. Then you're on your way!

Accommodation

Limited accommodation options are available on all three islands. If you wish to stay on one, or more, of the islands, you must organise your accommodation directly with the respective Taupulega Offices (Administration Offices) on each of the islands on which you intend to stay.

Contact details are:

- **Atafu** – Director – Mika Kalolo; mika.kalolo@tokelau.org.nz
- **Fakaofa** – General Manager – Hina Kele; hinakele@gmail.com
- **Nukunonu** – Secretary to the Taupulega – Taáse Perez; taasesio5364@gmail.com

Important: When booking accommodation, you should first consult the sailing schedule for your particular voyage. This will determine the duration of your stay on Tokelau.

Getting There & Away

MV Mataliki

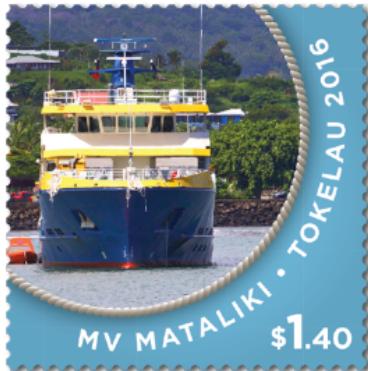


The "MV Mataliki", seen here docked in Apia harbour, was donated to Tokelau by the NZ Government in 2016.

published **sailing schedule** is available online, but is subject to change and does change.

On average the ferry makes two or three round trips each month from Apia.

The **Support Services** team will confirm sailing dates once you are ready to book a ticket. Boats are often booked-out in advance and priority is given to locals. It's best to be flexible and book well in advance.



A Tokelau stamp featuring the MV Mataliki.

Travel time from Apia to the various atolls ranges from 24-32 hours. The ferry leaves Apia in the early morning on the day of departure, arriving the following morning (24 hours later) on the southern atoll of **Fakaofa**. After a 4 hour transit stop, the ferry continues onto **Nukunonu**, arriving later the same day. After another 4 hour transit stop the ferry sails to the most northern atoll of **Atafu**, arriving the next morning. After another 4 hour transit stop, the ferry sails back to Apia, without stopping, arriving the following day.

It is possible to travel on the ferry from Apia back to Apia, spending just the transit time on the islands, however, you will still be **required to obtain a visitors permit** for those islands you wish to set foot upon.

The Support Services team have advised that, the only tourists that will be allowed to board the ferry in Apia are those who have an **approved Visitors Permit for Tokelau** (whether staying on the islands or not).

The **return fare** (which includes all meals) **is NZ\$286**, which can be paid to the Support Services team at their office in Apia.

MV Kalopaga



Tokelau's "MV Kalopaga" cargo ship, seen here docked at Apia harbour.

The 2nd ship in the Tokelau government fleet is the [MV Kalopaga](#), a cargo ship which was built in Malaysia and launched in March of 2018. Dangerous freight and other cargo is shipped to the atolls aboard this ship.

That's the end of this report on Tokelau.

Safe travels!

Darren

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Author: Darren McLean

Darren McLean is an Australian, full-time, digital nomad who has spent 37 years on a slow meander around the globe, visiting all seven continents, 189/ 193 UN countries and 241/ 251 UN+ countries and territories.

He founded taste2travel to pique one's curiosity and inspire wanderlust.

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13 Comments

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Doug says:

⌚ January 10, 2024 at 11:16

Thanks for the informative report.

Do Tokelaun descendants need travel permits if they will be staying with family?

[Reply](#)



Darren McLean says:

⌚ January 12, 2024 at 01:35



Hi Doug,

Thanks for contacting me.

Unfortunately, I cannot advise on the current visa requirements for Tokelau descendants visiting Tokelau.

I would contact the liaison office in Apia (email addresses are in my report) who could provide current information.

Good luck!

Darren



Alex says:

⌚ April 15, 2024 at 01:37

Just letting you know about the latest news: we tried to apply for Tokelau permit using your instructions (thanks for posting them!). Unfortunately, two out of 3 atolls refused because their borders are currently closed until further notice and they don't accept tourists until at least the end of the year. The 3rd atoll hasn't responded yet but I suspect it'll be the same outcome. But we are waiting to hear from Apia office about it soon. I guess rules and border status in Tokelau keeps changing by the day. This is the info as of April 2024.

[Reply](#)



Darren McLean says:

⌚ April 17, 2024 at 12:29



Hi Alex,

I hear you! I have also received the exact same news from a friend who also applied and was refused.

I sent the following email to Margaret Pedro just yesterday:

—
Hello Margaret,

How are you?

A friend recently applied to visit the three atolls on Tokelau but was refused permission to visit.

She received a reply from Elsie (please refer to the attachment) to say that there are still restrictions in place regarding visitors and that a ban will remain in force until at least the end of this year.

Can you please confirm that Covid restrictions are still in place?

I will then add an update to my Tokelau guide!

Many thanks,

Darren McLean

Once Margaret responds, I'll add an update to my guide.

It's all very frustrating. Seems it's still 2020 on Tokelau.

Regards,

Darren

[Reply](#)



Alex says:

⌚ April 17, 2024 at 19:13

Hi Darren,

Yes, we talked to Margaret and Elsie too.

The 3rd island's response is still pending.

Maybe they will approve or maybe not.

We'll see. We were told to get back to them at the end of the year for the other two.

I'm still hoping we'll hear back from the 3rd island. The first two said "no" right away, but the



Alex

[Reply](#)

Jodie says:

⌚ May 2, 2024 at 15:53

Hi,

Has anyone heard any further information about the islands & if they are open?

I've emailed Margaret, but haven't had a reply as of yet. I need to change my whole travel plan if I can't get to Tokelau this year.

[Reply](#)

Darren McLean says:

⌚ May 5, 2024 at 00:05



Hi Jodie,

Latest updates are that the islands are closed to visitors until the end of 2024.

I've heard from two travellers in the last month who have had visit requests denied.

I've also emailed Margaret and I'm still awaiting a response. Apparently she is away on leave.

Once I receive an update from her, I'll add an update to my Tokelau article.

Regards,

Darren

[Reply](#)

Jodie says:

⌚ May 21, 2024 at 04:48

Thanks For all your hard work Darren! It's greatly appreciated🙏

[Reply](#)

Alex says:

⌚ May 5, 2024 at 00:34

I'm afraid Tokelau doesn't care if you need to change your travel plans or not and tourism isn't their main priority, so consider yourself lucky if you get to visit it and don't book any other trips during that trip until you get your Tokelau permits.

We were trying to get permits to three different islands (you need a separate permit for each island). Two of them immediately said "no" because they are closed to tourism until at least the end of the year. The 3rd island hasn't responded yet and we are awaiting their response. They usually have to respond within 30 days and it will be 30 days in 6 days since we've applied for the permit. So if I don't hear from them after 6 days I'll get back in touch with them and will then let you know what they said. There's still a chance the 3rd island might give a permit, even if slim.

[Reply](#)

Jodie says:

⌚ May 21, 2024 at 04:47

Thanks champ 👍 I've changed my trip to go to Europe instead this year



Darren McLean says:

⌚ May 8, 2024 at 11:13

A message to anyone wishing to visit Tokelau in 2024.

I have just received the following email from Margaret Pedro, the Station Manager at the Tokelau Liaison Office in Apia:

Malo Darren

Great to hear from you, and that you have updated your website to reflect that our borders are currently closed.

Unfortunately, due to other pressing priorities on each of the three respective villages, they have closed their borders until further notice

Hope this helps

Margaret Pedro

Manager Support Services – Department of Transport & Support Services

↳ [Reply](#)



Tony filipo says:

⌚ May 13, 2024 at 06:53

Hi

when is the next boat to Samoa in May.

↳ [Reply](#)



[Darren McLean](#) says:

⌚ May 13, 2024 at 06:59



Hi Tony,

You will need to contact Margaret Pedro at the liaison office in Apia.

She can provide this information.

Regards,

Darren

↳ [Reply](#)

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