# SV Ventura South Pacific Eastbound Passage

## Welcome aboard the ultimate offshore adventure!

Ready to embark on the journey of a lifetime? Our trip begins in the picturesque harbor of Apia, Samoa, and will take us through some of the most stunning and remote locations in the South Pacific. This passage promises excitement, breathtaking scenery, untamed ocean life, enriching cultural experiences, and the camaraderie of a well-prepared sailing crew. Safety is our top priority, and together we will ensure every aspect of the journey is meticulously planned and executed, as a team.

Maintaining Ventura to the highest standards is essential, ensuring that all systems are in top condition. We'll conduct thorough checks of important safety precautions, proactively stock supplies, clean, and carry out regular maintenance to keep everything shipshape. Training sails will be a key part of our routine before we set off, helping you familiarize yourself with the onboard equipment and systems. These practice runs are not just about learning the ropes but also about building confidence and ensuring we all work together smoothly. Keeping the boat in peak condition in every scenario is crucial for a safe passage and a good time for all. There are no passengers onboard, we’re all active participants and everyone has an important role to play.

Navigating around Samoa offers a stunning mix of beauty and challenges, requiring careful planning and awareness of local conditions. Expect generally southeast trade winds, which can be strong and steady or not at all, with swells often coming from the south, southeast, or southwest. These conditions make some anchorages less protected and potentially uncomfortable during rough weather. More sheltered spots provide better protection and happen to come with more reliable facilities. Water depths in anchorages typically range from 10 to 40 feet (3 to 12 meters), with bottom compositions varying from thick mud to sand and coral. *(Ventura needs only 3.4 ft, at absolute minimum.)* Coastal navigation requires extreme caution due to coral reefs and unmarked hazards. It's essential to maintain up-to-date charts and be vigilant about gaining local knowledge. Be aware of tidal changes affect depths and anchoring security, especially when taking kayaks or SUP, or leaving gear unattended on shore.

I routinely check weather updates published twice daily on PredictWind. It’s best if everyone is aware of the forecasts and we collectively share the responsibility for being vigilant, always looking to the next few days for how the weather fits into our plans. Don’t get too attached to an itinerary, it will always shift to match the conditions!

September to October is an excellent time for this voyage, with favorable trade winds and milder weather. We'll track forecast patterns closely to ensure safe and optimal sailing conditions. Our catamaran cruises comfortably at 6-8 knots, allowing us to cover distances efficiently while enjoying a relaxing sail.

## Arriving in Samoa, Upolu Island

The city harbor will be your first stop on the main island of Upolu. Untouched nature is where Samoa truly shines. Just a short drive from Apia you’ll find breathtaking waterfalls everywhere. There’s natural waterslides and swimming holes in cool spring waters. Snorkeling or diving here is like swimming in an aquarium. There are many truly unique experiences, from a freshwater blue hole that's perfect for a swim to spectacular views of the ocean crashing against volcanic rock formations. Trade the rental car for a scooter and race in the open air. Trust me, you’re going to love every moment here!

Wandering through the local markets and shops is fun because there’s always something vibrant and fresh to catch your eye. Samoan art is rich in traditional crafts, intricate wood carvings, fine weaving, and beautiful tapa cloth designs painted on pounded tree bark fibers. Local artisans and growers offer fresh produce, handmade crafts, and traditional foods. Tons of opportunities to find special gifts and souvenirs.

While you’re here, we’ll dive deep into the local culture together. Plan to catch a fiafia night for Samoan dancing and music, a feast for all your senses. And you must try the local foods! An umu feast cooked in an earth oven is the best way to go. A whole pig or fish with deep smoky flavors, seasoned and wrapped in banana leaves, is sure to be the centerpiece surrounded by lu'au (young taro leaves cooked with coconut cream). They’ll also prepare marinated chicken or lamb with rich earthy spices and fresh herbs you may have never seen before! Typical sides include steamed taro and breadfruit, with palusami (taro leaves filled with coconut cream and onions). Don’t miss out on oka (raw fish salad) and fa'alifu fa'i (green bananas in coconut milk). For breads and pastries, there’s panipopo (sweet coconut bread), panikeke (deep-fried banana fritters) and keke pua'a (savory pork-filled buns). And for dessert, fa'ausi (breadfruit or taro in coconut caramel sauce) or keke saiga (sweet dry pastry) is real a treat!

The exchange rate in Samoa is approximately $1 USD to 2.7 WST (Samoan tala). Typical prices for dining out range from 13 to 30 tala for a meal at a local restaurant, while a taxi ride within Apia usually costs around 5 to 15 tala. Locally grown fresh produce is a fraction of the cost you’re used to paying, but imported fruits and vegetables carry sticker shock. Excursions like guided waterfall tours, snorkeling trips, or art/cooking workshops generally range anywhere from paying a local 5 tala cash to walk with you to a trail, or as much as 150 tala for a professional tour, depending on the activity and duration. ATMs charge 15 tala transaction fees, and be sure to check with your bank in advance for any additional international costs. In a pinch, there’s many Western Union locations ready to help.

In Samoan villages we respect local customs and traditions. The chief, or matai, is the ultimate authority and is responsible for the welfare of the community, but churches and clergy also play a crucial role in the tribe. A priest’s influence can rival or even top the chief’s! Churches are central to daily life and all community events. At 6pm a bell will signal time for quiet self-reflection or prayer, people will patiently sit or stand still a full 20-30 minutes until all is clear. Visitors should dress modestly, shoes are never worn indoors, hats and sunglasses should be removed, and women must cover their shoulders and knees. Wait to be invited to participate respectfully in any ceremonies. In cities, modern dress is perfectly acceptable but there’s still never nudity at beaches, even from the boat. People banished from their villages for unforgivable crimes are forcibly relocated to the city, so always be aware of your surroundings and protect any valuables.

### Upolu Island Land Based Attractions

* **Samoa Cultural Village:** Visitor information center, Saturday morning market. Nice area to walk behind the buildings along the coast to the tip. First inland stop on the right, along the bay from the marina.
  + Location: 013°049.767’ S, 171°045.670’ W
* **Fugalei Central Market:** Local growers and artisans selling fresh produce and crafts every day.
  + Cost: Free entry, bring small bills and coins and your own bags for shopping.
* **Local bus transport:** Pimp my ride style monster truck busses operating on Island Time. Look for the destination on the windshield.<https://samoapocketguide.com/taking-the-bus-in-samoa-bus-fares-routes-more/>
* **Museum of Samoa:** Cozy heritage museum (3 rooms) in colonial building with Pacific artifacts and photos.
  + Cost: 10 WST ($3.70 USD)
* **Palolo Deep Marine Reserve:** Excellent snorkeling with vibrant marine life. You can pay at the small fale (hut) or paddle in from the anchorage and tie up to a buoy for free. The return paddle is easy and downwind.
  + Location: 013°049.800’ S, 171°045.428’ W
  + Cost: 5 WST (USD $1.85)
* **Papapapaitai Falls:** Iconic waterfall dropping into a volcanic crater surrounded by rainforest. Postcard view! (No entry fee, no marked trail, no bathrooms, just a roadside parking area.)
  + Location: 013°054.020’ S, 171°044.322’ W
* **Vailima Botanic Garden:** Quick stop to see a variety of local plants with a special threatened species nursery. Short trek leads to a small waterfall and pool, always open for swimming. No entry fee.
  + Location: 013°051.992’ S, 171°045.319’ W
* **Baha’I House of Worship:** Open every day with a special service at 9am Sunday morning. Immense gardens, quiet place, great for meditation, tranquil atmosphere. A place of “spiritual gathering and manifestation of divine mysteries.” No charge for admission.
  + Location: 013°052.742’ S, 171°045.205’ W
* **Tiapapata Art Centre:** Gallery featuring local artists (pottery, collages, lino prints, photographs, paper making). Interesting hands-on workshops with rotation of traveling artists. Excellent menu, lots of fresh vegetarian options with produce directly from their onsite gardens. Volunteer opportunities available too. [www.creativesamoa.com](http://www.creativesamoa.com)
  + Location: 013°054.333’ S, 171°045.253’ W
* **R. L. Stevenson Museum:** Beautiful property, home, and library of the famous traveler and writer transformed into a museum. Guided tour in English, self-guided option with explanatory book. His tomb is on the heights, a short steep path is the quickest way or there’s a longer more accessible 2.5km path. (No public restroom, guests are advised to visit the St. Helena public library next door.)
  + Location: 013°054.000’ S, 171°045.067’ W
  + Cost: Donation encouraged, 10 WST ($3.70 USD)
* **Cape Utumau’u Scenic View:** Brief roadside stop for an amazing coastline overlook.
  + Location: 013°058.287’ S, 171°035.545’ W
* **Piula Cave Pool:** Freshwater blue hole for swimming, a tranquil spot for a refreshing swim in crystal-clear waters and is easily accessible by bus or hitchhiking. Dive down and swim about 10 feet underwater between caves! Bring an underwater flashlight for the full experience. Leuaina Beach Resort has a restaurant nearby.
  + Location: 013°052.393’ S, 171°035.845’ W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Falefa Waterfalls:**  Scenic waterfall accessible for a small fee.
  + Location: 013°053.650’ S, 171°035.370’ W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Fuipisia Waterfall:** Located on a Samoan family’s land. They maintain a beautiful easy path with natural landscaping to the ravine’s edge and then onto the top of the waterfall. Follow it to the top, swim there as close to the edge as you dare!
  + Location: 013°058.687’ S, 171°035.270’ W
  + Cost: 20 WST ($7.50 USD)
* **Sopoaga Falls:** Beautiful waterfall and gorgeous gardens. Coconut opening interactive demonstrations.
  + Location: 014°000.572’ S, 171°035.075’ W
  + Cost: 10 WST ($3.70 USD)
* **To Sua Ocean Trench:** A favorite spot! Giant sinkhole with wooden ladder staircase to a floating platform. White sand beach and nearby lava field with blowholes. Spend a half day here and pack a lunch! Lots of little trails.
  + Location: 014°002.630’ S, 171°033.738’ W
  + Cost: 20 WST ($7.50 USD)
* **Lalomanu Beach:** Stunning white soft sand, views of nearby islands, known as Samoa’s best beach. Restaurant right there on the shore, rent a fale (cabana) from the nearby Taufua Beach Fales Bar & Restaurant with decent shower/toilet facilities across the road. If driving to Lalomanu Beach following directions from Google Maps, the beach appears some distance further past where it’s shown.
  + Location: 014°002.755’ S, 171°026.895’ W
  + Cost: Free (50 WST to rent a fale, $18.50 USD)
* **Lava Field:** Coastal walking path on a lava field in a pandanus forest. About 15 minute walk to the lookout. Easy trail, but good shoes recommended. Drive to Ma Tree first, then take the road down to the edge, not to the Aganoa black sands beach. Bring your camera! No entry fee.
  + Location: 014°002.010’ S, 171°042.422’ W
* **Papaseea Sliding Rocks:** Locally celebrated jungle destination with natural slick rock waterslides and peaceful swimming holes. Long flight of 100 stairs to walk down and back up. Changing rooms available, bathrooms near the parking lot. Watch a other people first so you know which ones you should vs. shouldn’t try. Best with a recent rain.
  + Location: 013°054.758’ S, 171°047.495’ W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Giant Clam Sanctuary:** Snorkel among giant clams about 100m offshore, swim with turtles and fish along the way. Strictly use reef-safe (zinc oxide) sunscreen. Best when tide is near slack and high and sea is calm, be mindful of the currents and don’t go alone. Low tide is too low in many places and can’t walk. No standing on corals so gotta float while adjusting gear, and no swimming on Sundays. Changing rooms onsite.
  + Location: 013°050.200’ S, 171°039.095’ W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Namu’a Turtle Island:** Sea turtle sanctuary and gorgeous beaches. Island is offshore, must hire local boat for transport. Beware, locals may manhandle endangered species. Can be disturbing.
  + Location: 014°001.383’ S, 171°031.167’ W
  + Cost: 10 WST ($3.70 USD) for boat transfer, one way
* **Survivor Samoa Beach Resort:** Gorgeous resort, not yet open. Hosts Survivor production crew while filming.

### Anchorages at Upolu Island, Samoa

These diverse options are safe and scenic stops, secluded or steps from a city, each with unique nearby attractions and varying levels of facilities. Home base will always be Apia and distance/time to return need to be considered with the weather.

**1. Apia Harbor**

* **Location: (013°049.900' S, 171°045.400' W)** Northern coast, middle of Upolu. Anchor south of the yellow mooring. Red/Green channel marks clearly indicate the approach but they don’t necessarily come in pairs. High on shore a single green blinking light is not to be used for navigation at night. Navionics is accurate.
* **Weather Protection:** Well-protected from all directions
* **Water Depth:** 15-25 feet, 5-10 meters
* **Ground Composition:** Thick mud, but boats often lose holding. Not to leave unattended if winds significantly change. (Recently a Chinese fishing vessel came loose, beached, and flipped onto the rocks!)
* ***MUST call Apia Port Control*** *for all vessel movement inside the bay and/or marina areas.* Before leaving the bay, permission must be granted by immigration and the boat must be named in the required cruising permit. Weekly fees are due to the marina or Port Authority prior to departure. Keep a receipt as proof of payment.
* **Facilities:** Full-service marina with floating concrete pontoons, 220V 3-pin shore power, safe freshwater for drinking, floating plastic dinghy dock, toilets/showers, and pay-for-service wifi. Access is controlled by keys available for refundable 50 tala deposit.
* **Nearby Attractions:** 
  + Every weekday morning at 9am the police band parades behind the Color Guard and serenades them as they march to the municipal building to raise the flag. All traffic stops, people stand at attention. Watch near the cultural center for the best view, or near the front steps of the building.
  + There’s excellent snorkeling at the Palolo Deep Marine Reserve right off the harbor to the northeast, an easy 5 min walk from the marina or a challenging kayak paddle there with a downwind return trip. By land, follow the driveway on the left just beyond the Port Authority building. If paddling, check satellite views for best spots to anchor around the deeper blue area. This is a locally owned and operated spot so expect to pay 5 tala per person for entry, on shore.
  + Fiafia happens at Sails every Thursday evening. You can skip the 6:30pm buffet dinner (70 tala) for the 8:15pm show only if you like and pay just 20 tala.
  + Explore the markets, visit art galleries, hands on creative workshops, historical museums, or enjoy local restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. Get to know cruisers and locals around the marina. Taxis are always ready and waiting.
  + The best option for laundry is Nana’s. She will wash, dry, and fold for only 48 tala per load. Same day.
  + Alcohol is not sold on Sundays, and most restaurants, bars, and shops are closed too.
  + **Recommended restaurants:**
    - The Edge overlooking the marina has happy hour. Huge iced pitchers of beer only 23 tala.
    - Kool Shack for ice cream and no-bake cheesecakes. Must try all the flavors!
    - Pacific Jewel Garden Café has best breakfast/lunch, Nourish is great for healthy meals.
    - Avoid the greasy diner at Seafood Gourmet. *(Sailors have reported food poisoning.)*
  + **Recommended grocers:** Lucky Foodtown (all the basics, fresh tofu, nice produce), Farmer Joe’s Supermarket (more fresh produce, diverse products), KK Supermarket (closest option), there are much larger hypermarkets but they require a 15 minute drive or 1.5 hour walk across town.

**2. Albatross Island and Saluafata Harbour**

* **Location: 013° 052.800’ S, 171° 037.260 W** *(North coast, east central)*
* **Distance from Apia:** 10.5nm, 2 hours
* **Weather Protection:** Generally well-protected from prevailing winds, exposed to the NNE
* **Water Depth:** 20-30 feet, 6-9 meters
* **Ground Composition:** Sandy with patches of coral
* **Facilities:** None, must be fully self-sufficient here. Pack it in, pack it out. Dinghy landing on main shore at southernmost point of bay, carefully through the break in the reefs. Best at high tide.
* **Nearby Attractions:** 
  + The bay near Albatross Island offers calm waters and is surrounded by lush vegetation.
  + This is a small, relatively uninhabited island known for its natural beauty and bird populations, especially albatrosses. Less frequented by tourists, its a serene spot for nature enthusiasts.Ideal for bird watching, exploring untouched beaches, and experiencing a peaceful environment.
  + Can walk or hitchhike 1.5mi (2.3km) to the Paula Cave Pool, and Leuaina Beach Resort is nearby with a restaurant/bar.

1. **Faga-loa Bay**

* **Location: 013° 058.500' S, 171° 034.000' W** *(North coast, east side)*
* **Distance from Apia:** 18nm, 3.5 hours directly NE down the topside coast
* **Protection:** Good protection from all but northwesterly winds with a northern swell
* **Facilities:** Limited facilities; primarily a natural anchorage.
* **Water Depth**: 17 feet, 5 meters
* **Ground Composition:** Sand and mud
* **Nearby Attractions:** A mountain rises out of the sea, lush green landscape surrounds the bay, scenic views, peaceful setting. We can visit the nearby village of Taelefaga to experience local culture and hopefully their hospitality. Lots of conservation efforts here, native forests and bird life are earmarked for UNESCO’s world heritage protection.

**4. Coastline west of Mulifanua wharf**

* **Location: 13° 49.0' S, 172° 0.0' W** *(NW tip of Upolu, on the way to Savai’i)*
* **Distance from Apia:** 22nm, 4.5 hours westward
* **Weather Protection:** Good protection from NE through SW, exposed to any northerly wind and swell. Not a long term anchorage but a temporary spot between the islands.
* **Facilities:** Basic facilities are available, including a small shop and access to the ferry terminal.
* **Water Depth:** 25-45 feet, 7-14 meters
* **Ground Composition:** Sand with corals
* **Navigation:** The entrance to this area requires careful navigation through the coral reefs. Its recommended to approach slowly and use satellite images for guidance. Look for markers or natural landmarks to inform the route. The corals can be treacherous, so entering during daylight with good visibility and a dedicated spotter is advisable to avoid underwater hazards. Not recommended for long term stays.
* **Nearby Attractions:** This is the starting point for ferries to Savai'i. Waves roll from the ocean onto the reefs for wraparound views from the backside. Probably best to stay on the boat or paddle around, not go to shore.

## Exploring Savai'i, the other Samoan Island

The big island to the west, Savai'i, is Samoa’s largest island and a treasure trove of natural wonders. It’s exhilarating to feel the waves force massive jets of water through the blowholes of ancient lava tubes! For a more serene experience, visit waterfalls tucked away in the lush rainforest, perfect spots for a swim. Savai'i is all about getting off the beaten path and soaking in the raw beauty of nature. Time moves slower here. This island is less developed and closer to a traditional Samoan way of life. If visiting by land, it might be smart to rent a car on Upolu and ferry it across.

* It’s a good idea to stock up on all supplies on Upolu before making this passage. Very limited facilities on Savai’i. Buy twice the amount of alcohol you imagine you might drink, you probably will and there might not be bottle shops to top up. Same goes for local SIM cards for internet access, get more than you think you’ll use. There’s always local groceries, so no need to go overboard stocking the galley.
* **Most importantly:** be aware that sailing here means waiting for a passing low pressure system or lull in the trade winds long enough to sail back toward Apia. The weather truly will determine our schedule on the boat.

### Savai’i Island Land Based Attractions

* **Falealupo Canopy Walk:** Treetop walk with a bird’s-eye view of the lush rainforest.
  + Location: 013°29'57.6"S 172°45'23.1"W
  + Cost: 20 WST ($7.50 USD)
* **Alofaaga Blowholes:** Spectacular blowholes spouting from the ocean swell crashing below.
  + Location: 013°45'50.0"S 172°16'51.0"W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Afu Aau Waterfall and Swimming Hole:** Beautiful waterfall with a fresh spring water swimming hole.
  + Location: 013°41'57.1"S 172°22'07.9"W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Saleaula Lava Fields:** Eerie landscape of solidified lava from the 1905 eruption.
  + Location: 013°24'32.0"S 172°17'34.0"W
  + Cost: 10 WST ($3.70 USD)
* **Dwarfs’ Cave:** Mysterious underground cave system still waiting to be fully explored.
  + Location: 013°25'52.8"S 172°25'05.4"W
  + Cost: 5 WST ($1.85 USD)
* **Crater Lake:** Hike to and swim in a scenic volcanic crater lake.
  + Location: 013°34'06.8"S 172°27'31.4"W
  + Cost: Free
* **National Park Lava Cliffs:** Dramatic lava cliffs and black sand beaches.
  + Location: 013°36'42.5"S 172°30'45.3"W
  + Cost: Free
* **Aganoa Beach Tide Pools:** Tide pools ideal for spotting vibrant marine life up close.
  + Location: 013°46'13.4"S 172°23'16.4"W
  + Cost: Free

### Anchorages at Savai’i Island, Samoa

* **Matautu Bay**
* **Location: 13° 58.5’ S, 171° 34.0’ W** (Top of the north coast, very tip before turning south)
* **Distance from Apia:** 45nm, 8.5 hours
* **Weather Protection:** Provides protection from the northeast and easterly winds, vulnerable to rare northwesterly swells.
* **Water Depth:** 10-20 feet (3-6 meters)
* **Ground Composition:** Sand and coral
* **Facilities:** Limited facilities.
* **Nearby Attractions:** Situated on the north coast of Upolu, near Fagamalo, this spot is known for its stunning beaches and vibrant marine life.
  + There are a few local beachside restaurants:
    - Barefoot Bar & Restaurant at Savaii Lagoon Resort has a laid back vibe and is a good walk to the northeast
    - Coconuts across the road for pizza and burgers
    - Salvation & Grace to the west on the Coast Road for the cheapest lunch option of meats and chips.
  + The Savaii Dive Center offers guided tours of John Williams ship wrecks and coral reefs. Contact at least one day in advance for booking a tour. PADI diving with gear rentals available. Shop is located across the road from Le Lagoto resort.
  + Local Village convenience store and ATM.
* **Bay near Asau**
  + **Location: 13° 30.967' S, 172° 38.726' W** (North coast, eastern side)
  + **Distance from Apia:** 63nm, 12 hours
* **Weather Protection:** Sheltered from prevailing southeast tradewinds and all but the north, great reef barrier.
* **Water Depth:** 15-30 feet, 5-10 meters
* **Bottom Composition:** Sand and some corals
* **Entrance Advice:** “Entrance is narrow with a minimum of 6.5m at the start of the channel. Keep the lead triangle in the center of the white stakes that mark the middle of the channel. Avoid coming in if there’s a large swell! Once inside, the depth increases to at least 8m. The charts are about half a mile out at around 200’.”Navionics
* **Facilities:** There are shops, post office, local water washing/swimming rock pool, petrol station and police station in the area.
* **Nearby Attractions:** Resort amenities include a restaurant, drinks, and entertainment. Enjoy the beach and Saturday night Samoan cultural shows. A half-day circle-island tour can be arranged, providing a guided glimpse of the island's natural beauty and local culture.
  + Va-i-Moana Seaside Lodge has cheap cocktails. It’s a family owned and operated resort well known for a true Samoan experience. Fales are directly on the water. “Return to Paradise Beach” was filmed here.
  + Extensive reef system, excellent snorkeling on the outer barrier.
  + Village close by welcomes yachties. Bring gifts.

## Passage Routes and Waypoints

### Passage 1: Apia, Samoa to Pagopago, American Samoa

* **Port of Departure: 013°049.900' S, 171°045.400' W**
* **Port of Call: 014°016.523’ S, 170°041.667’ W**
* **Distance:** Approximately 80 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** less than 1 day (12-14 hours)
* **NAVIGATIONAL HAZARD:** A fish accumulating device (FAD) with buoys and a 3 meter pole with shredded remnants of a flag was sighted at GPS coordinates: 013° 047.173' S 171° 035.693' W. Unsure if lit.
* **General Plan:** Begin with an early pre-sunrise departure, crossing into American Samoa's waters by noon. Enjoy scenic coastal cruising views and deep water fishing along the way, anchor before dark.
* **Anchorages:** 
  + **Unintended stop option:** Fagoloa Bay (north coast of Upolu toward SE), nothing on Am. Samoa.
  + **Destination:** Harbor at Pago Pago has deep and well-protected waters, known as one of the safest natural harbors in the South Pacific, IF the anchor is holding well. Also known for storm debris on the sea floor that fouls ground tackle and the mountain topography amplifies the winds considerably. No marina but small floating dinghy dock at the northwest-most point, south side. Plenty of local shopping.
    - Aggressive bull sharks have attacked near the Starkist Tuna docks. Take precautions and be mostly still when diving the anchor. Likely not allowed to anchor anywhere else.
* **Formalities:** 4-7 agencies will arrive at the dock for all the paperwork. No fees to enter, $185USD to leave. Bribe them with fresh cookies. The port control will likely direct us to tie onto the concrete slab with big black rubber fenders.
* **American Samoa Highlights:** 
  + Local currency is the US dollar.
  + After we cross the International Date Line, our time changes back by 26 hours. (Ex: 3pm Saturday in Samoa is 1pm Friday in Am. Samoa.
  + **National Park Hiking Trail:** Great view of the bay from the top. From the parking lot, walk up the old service road; there’s an opening in the fence to the right. Long trail along the ridge that loops back to the lot. Visitor Center is in town just down from the Port Captain’s office. Expect 4 hours if walking from the dinghy dock and back, shorter if you catch a bus. Free entry.
    - Location: 014°017.260' S, 170°041.402' W
  + **Taupes PF Sunia Ocean Center:** Marine sanctuary showcasing local sea life and conservation efforts. Learn about MPAs and book a free tour of the site. Open Mon-Fri 8am-4pm. Admission is free.
    - Location: 014°016.920' S, 170°041.255' W
  + **Mount Alava:** A popular hiking destination with a panoramic view of Pago Pago Harbor at the summit. The hike takes about 3-4 hours round trip. No entrance fee.
    - Location: 014°017.912' S, 170°040.332' W
  + **Two Dollar Beach:** Beautiful relaxing beach, soft sand and calm waters. Entry fee $2 USD.
    - Location: 014°019.193' S, 170°041.837' W
  + **National Park of American Samoa:** Explore tropical rainforests, volcanic peaks, and coral reefs. The park offers several hiking trails, wildlife spotting, and cultural experiences. Admission is free.
    - Location: 014°020.105' S, 170°043.240' W
  + **Ofu Beach:** Pristine, white sand beach known for its crystal-clear waters and stunning coral reefs. Part of the National Park of American Samoa, it's ideal for snorkeling and swimming. No cost.
    - Location: 014°011.835' S, 169°040.962' W
  + **Lower Sauma Ridge Hike:** Short hike with breathtaking views of the coast and National Park. Free.
    - Location: 014°018.630' S, 170°042.842' W
  + **Matafao Peak:** Highest point on Tutuila Island, this is a challenging hike with a rewarding view. The trail can be steep and rugged, bring good shoes, water, and sunscreen. Access is free.
    - Location: 014°018.705' S, 170°042.258' W
  + **NOAA American Samoa Observatory:** One of only four NOAA scientific observatories in the world. Arrange a tour in advance, catch the bus to Tula, then walk 20 minutes. Climate change and greenhouse gasses research center. The view from the observatory is phenomenal. No cost.
    - Location: 014°14.844’ S, 170°33.864’ W
  + **Flag Day Crash Memorial:** Nice walk to historical site commemorating the tragic crash. Free to visit.
    - Location: 014°016.430' S, 170°041.078' W
  + **WWII Heritage Trail:** Whale watch from a gazebo from the high vantage point over the harbor. Take the road past the Department of Education and behind the high school. Follow the road with heritage trail and tsunami escape route signs. Free access.
    - Location: 014°016.178' S, 170°041.590' W
  + **Cost-U-Less:** Closest thing to Costco in the South Pacific. Great place for bulk shopping. Free entry.
    - Location: 014°016.472' S, 170°042.315' W

### Passage 2: Pagopago to Faleasao, Manu'a (American Samoa)

* **Port of Departure: 014°016.523’ S, 170°041.667’ W**
* **Port of Call:** **014°016.523’ S, 170°041.667’ W**
* **Distance:** Approximately 60 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 0.5 days
* **Highlights:** 
  + Special permission must be granted for this stopover.
  + Explore the serene Manu'a Islands, known for their unspoiled beauty and rich cultural heritage.
* **Recommended Anchorages:** Anchorage at Faleasao provides good protection from the easterly trade winds, with a calm and scenic setting. If they allow it, this could be a nice spot to get ready for the next weather window.

### Passage 4: Faleasao to Suwarrow Atoll, Cook Islands

* **Port of Departure: 014°016.523’ S, 170°041.667’ W**
* **Port of Call: 013°14.900' S, 163°06.400' W**
* **Distance:** Approximately 490 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 4 days
* **Highlights:**
  + “Kia Orana!” = “Hello” in Kiwi
  + A new ranger was just stationed from NZ in August 2024. No facilities, must be fully self-sufficient.
  + This leg of our voyage will challenge our sailing abilities and reward us with the untouched natural beauty of one of the most secluded places in the Pacific.
  + This remote atoll has 30 small islets (moths) is a pristine marine and nature preserve renowned for its bird sanctuary important breeding ground for seabirds and habitat for sharks, turtles, and thousands of species of fish, some of the rarest in the world.
  + This was the setting for Tom Neale’s classic book, An Island To Oneself, detailing his hermitage life.
  + Anchorage within the atoll offers excellent protection from most wind directions, especially the prevailing southeasterly tradewinds. The lagoon is well sheltered, making it a calm and safe stopping point for sailors seeking serenity and a unique connection with nature.

### **DECISION POINT**

The direct passage from Suwarrow to Bora Bora is a shorter/faster route than from Suwarrow to Bora Bora via Aitutaki.

**Suwarrow to Bora Bora (Direct Route)**

* Distance: Approximately 770 nautical miles
* Estimated Time at Sea: 6-7 days

**Suwarrow to Aitutaki to Bora Bora**

* Suwarrow to Aitutaki: Approximately 420 nautical miles
* Aitutaki to Bora Bora: Approximately 480 nautical miles
* Total Distance: Approximately 900 nautical miles
* Estimated Time at Sea: 8-9 days (assuming similar sailing speeds and conditions)

***The route via Aitutaki adds around 130 nautical miles to the journey, which translates to roughly an additional day or more at sea, depending on sailing conditions. Each time we stop we must wait for the next weather window to continue.***

### Passage 5: Suwarrow Atoll to Aitutaki, Cook Islands

* **Port of Departure:** 013°014.900’ S, 163°006.400’ W
* **Port of Call:** 018°051.150’ S, 159°046.150’ W (Aitutaki)
* **Distance:** Approximately 420 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 3-4 days
* **Highlights:**
  + ***Stay vigilant for coral reefs as we approach the atoll.***
  + Arutanga, the main village located on the west side, has the only harbor on the island and is a port of entry. Currently it is one of only two ports of entry in the Cooks, the other being Avatiu Port, Rarotonga.
  + Aitutaki is known for its beautiful lagoon and challenging entrance.
  + The atoll measures just 20 square km, yet is the second most-populated island in the Cook Islands next to Rarotonga. There are 15 small islets within the lagoon.
* **Recommended Anchorage**
  + Aitutaki Lagoon: Offers protection from most wind directions, particularly the prevailing easterly winds. Entering the lagoon requires careful navigation, especially at the narrow pass, with depths of around 1.4 meters (4.6 feet) at low tide.
    - Location: 018°51.150’ S, 159°046.150’ W

### Passage 6: Aitutaki, Cook Islands to Bora Bora, French Polynesia

* **Port of Departure:** 018°051.150’ S, 159°046.150’ W
* **Port of Call:** 016°029.900’ S, 151°045.100’ W
* **Distance:** Approximately 480 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 4 days
* **Formalities:**
* **Highlights:**
  + Bora Bora is one of the most famous destinations in the South Pacific, known for its stunning lagoon, iconic Mount Otemanu, and vibrant marine life.
  + Bora Bora Lagoon offers excellent protection from all wind directions, particularly the prevailing easterly trade winds. The lagoon provides several options for anchoring near the motus (small islets) or closer to the main island for easier access to facilities.

### Passage 6.1: Aitutaki to Rarotonga, Cook Islands *(Only if needed, otherwise to Bora Bora)*

* **Port of Departure:** 018°051.150' S, 159°046.150' W
* **Port of Call:** 021°012.300' S, 159°046.200' W
* **Distance:** Approximately 140 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 1.5 days
* **Highlights:**
  + Rarotonga is the capital and largest of the Cook Islands, with the most developed facilities, including provisions and repair services for yachts.
  + The island is surrounded by a protective reef, creating calm, clear waters ideal for anchoring and exploration.
* **Recommended Anchorages:** 
  + Rarotonga Lagoon: Well-protected from most wind directions, particularly the prevailing southeasterly trade winds. The entrance to the lagoon is straightforward, but care must be taken when navigating near the reef.

### Passage 6.2: Rarotonga, Cook Islands to Bora Bora, French Polynesia

* **Port of Departure:** 021°012.300’ S, 159°046.200’ W
* **Port of Call:** 016°29.900’ S, 151°45.100’ W
* **Distance:** Approximately 590 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 5-6 days
* Highlights:
  + Rarotonga, as the capital and largest island of the Cook Islands, offers full provisioning and yacht services. It’s an essential stop before heading to French Polynesia.
  + Bora Bora is an official port of entry into French Polynesia, making it a key stop for customs and immigration formalities. Also one of the most iconic islands in the South Pacific, known for its stunning turquoise lagoon, luxury resorts, and the dramatic Mount Otemanu.
* **Recommended Anchorages:**
  + Bora Bora Lagoon: Excellent protection from all wind directions, particularly the prevailing easterly trade winds. The lagoon provides multiple anchorage options, either near the main island or closer to the motus (islets) for a more secluded experience.

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### Passage 7: Bora Bora to Raiatea

* **Distance:** Approximately 40 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** half a day
* **Highlights:** Sail through the Leeward Islands, explore ancient marae, and experience local culture.
* **Recommended Anchorages:**
  + Raiatea’s western side provides good protection from the easterly trade winds, with several sheltered anchorages.

### Passage 8: Raiatea to Huahine

* **Distance:** Approximately 25 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** less than half day
* **Highlights:** 
  + Known as the "Garden Island," Huahine offers lush landscapes and a tranquil atmosphere.
  + The main anchorage in Fare offers protection from the prevailing easterly winds, with calm and clear waters.

### Passage 9: Huahine to Moorea

* **Distance:** Approximately 90 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** 1 long day *(sunrise to before sunset)*
* **Highlights:** 
  + Moorea's jagged mountains, blue lagoon, and traditional villages offer a perfect blend of adventure and relaxation.
* **Recommended Anchorages:** 
  + Opunohu Bay
  + Cook's Bay on the northern side offer good protection from the prevailing easterly winds.

### Passage 10: Moorea to Tahiti

* **Distance:** Approximately 15 nautical miles
* **Estimated Time at Sea:** less than half day
* **Highlights:**
  + Port Authority for checkout at Papeete
  + This is the vibrant capital of French Polynesia, has markets, rich history, and nightlife.
* **Recommended Anchorages:** 
  + Marina Taina and the anchorage off Papeete provide good protection from the prevailing easterly winds and are conveniently located near amenities.