



SAMOA TOURISM EXCHANGE

MAY 2018

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Kiwis Seeking Samoan Sun

Kiwis' love for Samoa has seen consistent growth over the past few years, and current forward bookings show this trend is set to continue, say the retail chains.

First travel Group has reported a 30% growth to the destination, while Flight Centre says it saw a 84% increase in Kiwis travelling to Samoa this Mar.

The growth, the trade sources say, can be attributed a number of things, such as the island nation's wide range of properties and the appeal of NZ's 787 product.

Upolu remains top on Kiwis' travel lists. "Upolu is the most popular destination for Kiwi travellers where we generally see an average stay of five to seven nights," says Sean Berenson, Flight Centre New Zealand gm product.



"Recently we've noticed customers opting for both resort and traditional fale options during their stay so they can have the best of both worlds."

Also attracting Kiwis to the islands is its natural attractions, says House of Travel commercial director Brent Thomas.

"To Su'a trench, Lalomanu Beach, Togitogiga Waterfalls, Papase'ea Sliding Rocks and Piula Cave Pool are highlights for many travellers," says Thomas.



Taumeasina Has Kiwi Appeal

For five-star luxury, agents are advised to recommend Taumeasina Resort. Located in Apia the resort offers three restaurants, two bars, an array of activities, the Foho Spa & Sauna, tennis court, a business centre and meeting rooms. Pictured enjoying the view at Taumeasina is from left Sharma Smith from House of Travel, STA's Lillian Lu and Anna Smith and Fran Matthews from Our World.

Trenches & Rocks

Highlights for the Kiwis on a Samoa Tourim Exchange pre-famil included To Sua trench (where some of the Kiwi trade group took the plunge). Entry to the clear water swimming hole is WST20pp and is accessed via a ladder. As well as Lalomanu Beach the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum was also a hit. Located in the author's restored home, the Kiwi group toured the historical home, (at WST20 for adults and WST5 for those under 12.)

Calling Lovebirds

The luxury Sea Breeze Resort on Samoa's South Coast is a go-to for those looking for a romantic getaway. The 18+ only resort features ocean and reef view couples villas as well as a honeymoon suite complete with a private spa pool.

The property offers private deck dinners, as well as dining from its waterfront bar and restaurant restaurant. Prices start at \$418 per night, see seabreezesamoa.com



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Kiwis Discover The Real Samoa



Known as the real Samoa, Savaii is the largest of Samoa's islands, but one of the less populated making it a popular holiday destination for those wanting to avoid the crowds, including Kiwis. "We are starting to see the island of Savaii grow in popularity as Kiwis seek to explore the less touristy island of Samoa," says Sean Berenson, Flight Cen-

tre New Zealand gm product. House of Travel too has noted increased Savaii demand, and encourages travellers to spend time in both Upolu and Savaii. "Savaii is a gem within itself," says HoT commercial director Brent Thomas. "By adding three nights in Savaii customers can really immerse themselves into the culture and how Samoa was 20 years ago," he adds.



Natural Wonders

Our World's Fran Matthews and Eilish Third from Momento Hamilton explore Savaii's Afu Auu Falls.

The Samoa Tourism Expo pre-famil kicked off in Savaii. Those in the Kiwi delegation explored the island including its famed Alofaaga Blowholes and Afu Auu Waterfall. Adele Tara of Think Change Roar

described her visit to the blowholes as a powerful experience. "It's a must do, I haven't been to anything like this before," says Tara. The blowholes cost WST5 pp for entry, and the money goes back to the locals, an aspect which appealed to Tara. "It's nice to see something that's important to the village."

Where To Stay

Savaii offers a number of accommodation styles, the common theme being a beachfront location. Foodies are recommended to stay at Amoa Resort, which offers garden villas, while those looking for a little more luxury should head to La Lagoto, which features both beachfront and garden villas with a Samoan twist. Clients who want a more rustic experience are advised to try a traditional open fale, such as the Tanu Muese Beach Fales.

Getting There

Savaii is a one hour ferry ride away from Samoa's main island, Upolu. The Lady Samoa 3 departs every two hours 0600-1600 Mon-Fri to Savaii. Meanwhile the Samoa Express ferry operates the same times sailing to Upolu. Economy fares start at WST12 and business fares, which include tea, coffee, and snacks are WST30.



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Trade Comes Together To Grow Samoa

The Kiwi trade is coming together to grow leisure travel to Samoa—and Air New Zealand says it is already seeing the results.

The national carrier increased its year-on-year capacity to the island nation by 20% from Nov 2017 and says it has been working with the key stakeholders to grow Samoa's awareness as a leisure destination.

Part of that increased capacity was made possible by utilising NZ's 787-9 Dreamliners on the route. While the current global engine issues affecting some 787-9 have had some impact on NZ's Samoa operation, looking forward the carrier is confident.

"We've been working well with Samoa Tourism on some awareness campaigns and together we're doing a lot more to increase destination awareness," says an NZ spokesperson. "The wholesalers are doing a lot more to promote the destination, and we can see that it is paying off. Leisure travel to Samoa is up, and that's despite increased air capacity to destinations

such as Honolulu, Bali and the like—in fact in general the Pacific Island markets are doing well for us."

Saletoga For Families



Saletoga Sands Resort's recently added lagoon bungalows are said to be proving a popular option with Kiwis. The family friendly resort features 17 dedicated family rooms, a kid's menu in the restaurant and there's also evening entertainment suitable for children as well as a day-time kids activity programme. For parents there's also a spa, a bar and fishing charters on offer along with car rentals. The resort is set to open three new beachfront villas and roll out its own island tours.

Samoana Expands

Samoana Rental Cars has expanded its offerings, opening up accommodation last Dec. The Samoana Hotel and Apartments offer 23 rooms, all with kitchen facilities and Samoa's 'comfiest beds'. The hotel is within walking distance to Apia, as well as supermarkets. Prices start at WST150 for a standard room and WST350 for a family room. See samoanahotel.com

Fitness Camps

Samoana Beach Bungalows, which has recently completed a complete refurbishment, is set to launch boxing and fitness retreats this Aug/Sep, known as UnderWraps. The week-long retreats will be designed for two people, offering accommodation, gym and personal training sessions. More details will be released in due course.



Samoa Tourism Exchange's Hot Start

The Samoa Tourism Exchange officially kicked off at Taumeasina Island Resort earlier this week. Those in the Kiwi delegation were treated to cocktails and canapes while watching performances by Samoan cultural groups and famous drag queen Cindy from Samoa.

Pictured from left is Fran Matthews from Our World, STA's Anna Smith and Lillian Lu and Think Change Roar's Adele Tara.



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STA's Exchange The Best Yet

The Samoa Tourism Exchange has concluded, and STA's New Zealand marketing representative Sonny Rivers says this marks the start of what will hopefully be Samoa's biggest year yet for tourism.

"All the appointments were booked out one-two weeks in advance, it's a really good sign," says Rivers. "It was very successful compared to previous years, we've seen a huge improvement and more buyers and seller."

The Samoa Tourism authority has an annual target of 5-7% growth, and in 2018 Rivers says the NTO hopes to exceed those figures by consistently being in the market and working with trade partners.

There will be more famils later on in the year adds Rivers, as well as the annual roadshow in Aug.



While the 2018 roadshow will be in Wellington, Tauranga, Hamilton and Auckland this year, Rivers hopes that in 2019 they can target other regions.

"We want agents to know beautiful Samoa is the place to send their clients to," says Rivers.

... Closing Night

Pictured above at STE's closing night at the Sheraton Samoa is Eilish Third from Momento, Once Upon a Trip's Ben Lepage and STA duo Lillian Lui and Anna Smith.

Going To The Chapel



Return to Paradise is increasing its offering, with 12 new villas and a new ocean view chapel opening soon. Three of the new two- to three-bedroom villas are opening this month, with three more opening Jul/Aug. The final six are due to be completed by the end of the year.

The villas are located at the edge of the resort, meaning construction is causing minimal disruption. The new chapel is set to be open by the end of the month. Pictured at Return to Par-

adise is Rebecca Goodin from Flight Centre, Fran Matthews from Our World, Momento's Eilish Third and Sharma Smith from House of Travel.

Orator For Schools

Orator is the ideal location for those booking school groups for Samoa, for both sports and cultural experiences. The 27 villa property has a number of offerings to keep children entertained, including arcade games, ping pong, a pool and trampoline as well as cultural activities and classes such as weaving, how Samoan koko is made, herbal living and natural remedies.

Orator is located 10 minutes from Apia town, 25 minutes from the airport and five minutes from Samoa's sports complex.

Top Tip

Clients planning on self-driving in Samoa are recommended to hire a 4WD says Samoana, as some of the inner roads of Samoa can be rugged.



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