

# Tonga, '16



The Whales of  
Vava'u, 2016

## Swimming with Humpback Whales

Annual tours to Vava'u, Tonga

One of the Ocean's Greatest Wildlife encounters

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Three days Snorkelling with Humpback Whales and their Calves in Vava'u. Warm, clear water, friendly people, great food, Tongan feast, Tropical island snorkelling & cultural experiences

**Duration:** 9 days

**Includes:** 3 Whale Days (+ optional 4 SCUBA Dives for qualified divers)

**Tour Leader:** Geoff Martin **Trip Code:** 2V16

**Dates:** 8<sup>th</sup> August – 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

**Cost:** from \$3, 190 Whale Swimming Package - twin share, incl. Airfares  
from \$3, 490 Whale + SCUBA package - twin share, incl. Airfares



*Join Quest Tours' renowned Whale and Dolphin experts and enjoy one of Nature's greatest interactive Wildlife experiences. We are the longest running LICENCED Travel Agent escorting tours to Vava'u.*

*The privilege of Swimming with these gentle, intelligent mammals is truly life altering. To have a mother Humpback Whale, weighing 50 tonnes, nudge her precious baby towards us, showing off her newly born calf, is beyond belief, let alone description.*

*This experience is guaranteed to be remarkable and unique. 2016 will be our 15<sup>th</sup> season escorting our valued travellers to Vava'u to swim with the Humpback Whales*

# The Whales of Vava'u, 2016



## Your itinerary

### **Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

Depart Sydney SYD 18:40 on VA183

### **Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

02:10 arrive *Nuku'alofa – Tonga*. (*Total flight time, 4 hours, 30 minutes*)

We will then wait in a comfortable hotel foyer nearby until we need to proceed to the domestic terminal.

07:30 depart *Nuku'alofa* on Real Tonga Airlines flight arrive *Vava'u* 08:40 (*Total flight time; 1 hour, 10 minutes*)

You will be transferred to your accommodation for 7 nights' standard, twin share accommodation including breakfasts.

### **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August to Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

**For everyone:** Enjoy three days Whale Watching around the beautiful islands of Vava'u. These days are our opportunity to enjoy the privilege of snorkeling with Humpback Whales.

Light lunch, fruit platters & refreshments are enjoyed whilst anchored off white sandy beaches. There will be many opportunities for snorkelling over tropical reefs and in open sea caves in the crystal clear water. It all adds up to being the best days out on the water imaginable.

**For SCUBA divers:** Enjoy a 4-dive package including the use of tanks, weights, dive guide services, fruit, tea and coffee

**For non-divers:** Book another opportunity to snorkel with the Humpback Whales, this can be done, weather permitting, whilst you are there. You may wish to try some of the other options below or just relax and enjoy Vava'u

**Other Optional Activities:** Kayak and mountain bike hire

**Sunday:** By law Sunday is a day of rest. Going to one of the local churches on Sunday morning (not compulsory) is very special; this singing will be one of your fondest memories of Vava'u. On the Sunday afternoon we will enjoy a traditional Tongan feast and kava ceremony.

### **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

Today we bid a fond farewell to Vava'u and begin our journey home. We depart Vava'u around 08:00, arrive Tongatapu. (*Total flight time; 1 hour*)

Depart Tongatapu at 12:15, arrive Sydney at 15:00 hours. (*Total flight time; 5 hours, 45 minutes*)

*(Flight times are as at August, 2015 and subject to change at the whim of the airlines).*

## The Whales of Vava'u, 2016



# The Humpback Whales of Vava'u

## What to expect while on tour...

You will be accompanied by one of our conscientious, experienced guides to ensure your holiday runs smoothly.

Our Whale Watching days will begin early in the morning to be first out to the whale calving grounds, departing usually between 7 and 8 am.

There will be a maximum of **EIGHT** or **TWELVE** passengers onboard, plus the Whale Guides, depending on which whale watch boat we are on. Only 4 swimmers plus a guide are allowed in the water at any one time. And with no more than 2 or 3 groups of swimmers onboard, you will have the maximum chance of enjoying the best possible experience.

You will be snorkelling with the Whales in open-ocean. You should have or attain adequate snorkelling skills, and undertake as much open ocean snorkelling experience before travelling to Tonga, to ensure you enjoy your time to the maximum. You will need your own snorkelling gear; ask us for advice on this, as it is essential that your equipment is suitable for the tour.

The water will be around 24- 26 degrees, depending on currents and air temperature.

Air temperature will be around 28-30 degrees, and quite humid. This being said, some seasons we have had cooler weather, around the 25 degree mark.

## What to expect from Quest Tours prior to your tour...

We will book your airfares, both domestic and international, and organise your accommodation, transfers and Whale experiences.

You can expect a detailed packing list and travel updates in the weeks leading up to your departure date.



# Vava'u

Vava'u is an island group of one large island and 40 smaller islands in Tonga. Vava'u rises 204 metres above sea level at Mt Talau. The capital is Neiafu, and has a population of around 6000 people.

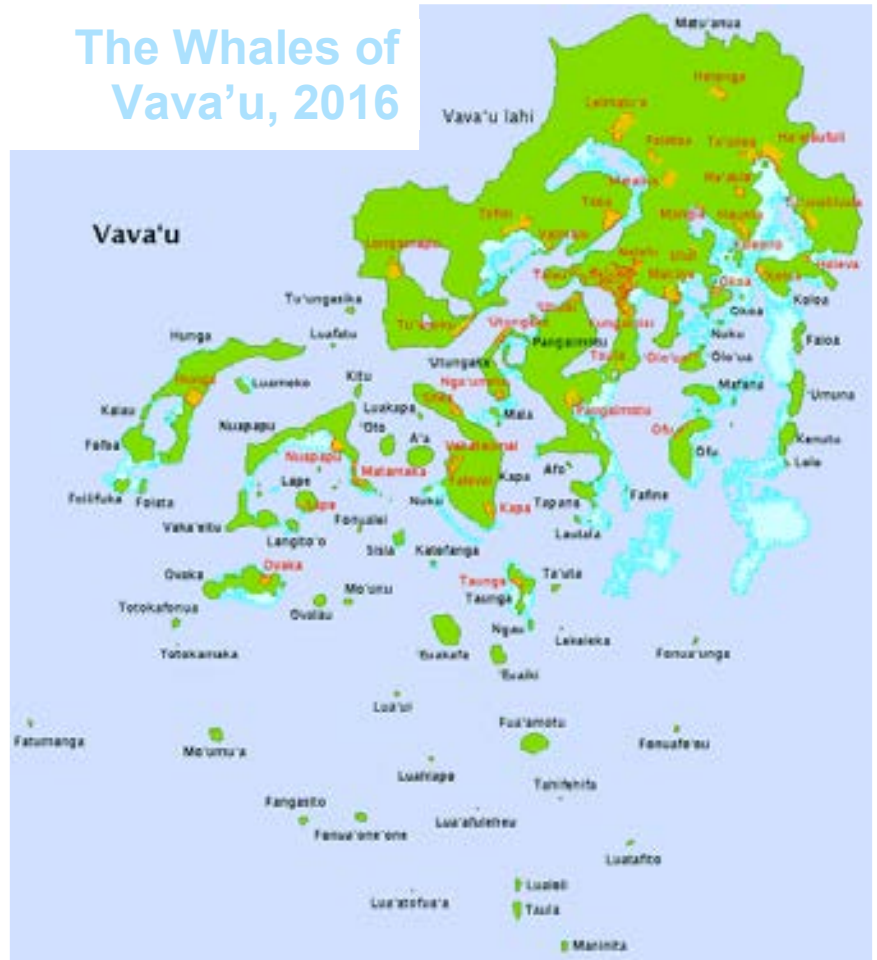
We will be operating out of the Port of Refuge harbour, which is one of the best, most protected harbours in the world.

The Vava'u Island group in the Kingdom of Tonga is a spectacular tropical island paradise in the Pacific Ocean. It has a year-round climate suitable for swimming, snorkeling, diving and sailing. Some islands are ringed by white sand beaches while others have tropical forests, sea-level caves, and dramatic limestone cliffs with breathtaking vistas.

Remote and truly unspoiled, the waters around Vava'u are crystal clear with visibility exceeding 30 metres. Most of the islands are uninhabited, a few have villages, a few have very small unique resorts with exceptional food. There is abundant sea life with over 100 species of colorful tropical fish, giant clams, manta rays, sea turtles, spinner dolphins, and July-October the Humpback whales!

Truly a paradise, with the only Polynesian Monarchy, this is a remarkable place to explore.

## The Whales of Vava'u, 2016



There are 3 different accommodation types to choose from – please indicate your preference on the booking form.

**\$3,190 Whale Snorkeller**

**\$3,490 SCUBA Diver + Whale Package**

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### *The Puataukanave International Hotel*



**\$3,290 Whale Snorkeller**

**\$3,590 SCUBA Diver + Whale Snorkeller**

This is a waterfront Hotel right in the centre of town. Rooms in this package are Superior top floor, with private balconies and spectacular views of the Port of Refuge Harbour, as pictured to the right.

Room amenities include air conditioning, ensuite with toilet and shower, TV, mini-bar and 2 double beds. These hotel rooms are twin or double occupancy.



### *The Tongan Beach Resort*

**\$3,990 Whale Snorkeller**

**\$4,290 SCUBA Diver + Whale Snorkeller**

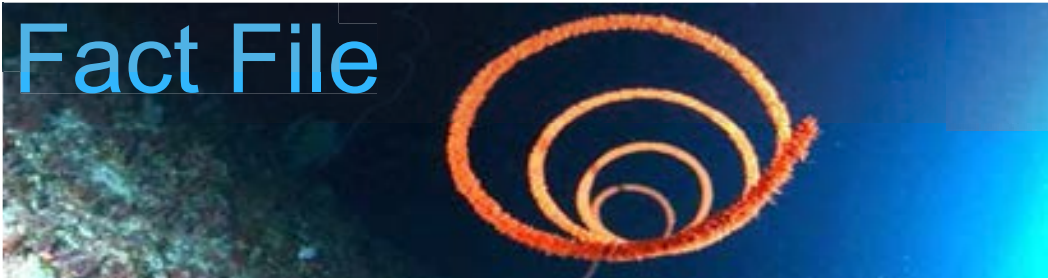
The resort is nestled on the beach front of the island of 'Utungake. There is safe swimming at all tides and a water taxi service to Neiafu and back.

This resort spans 180 metres of beachfront, with all rooms enjoying views of the golden sand beach and the Port of Refuge Harbour.

This resort is located out of town, and you will be picked up from the Resort's private jetty for Whale Swim days and SCUBA Diving.



# + Fact File



## The Whales of Vava'u, 2016

### Included:

- ☺ International / Domestic airfares ex. Sydney (Domestic flights to Syd can be organised)
- ☺ Airport to hotel transfers
- ☺ Accommodation twin share incl. Breakfasts
- ☺ 3 days Swimming with Humpback Whales incl. Lunches onboard
- ☺ Traditional Tongan cultural day and “Umu” feast
- ☺ Services of PADI Divemasters and Instructors
- ☺ Renowned SCUBA diving and Whale guides

### Not included:

- ☹ Meals & drink other than specified on itinerary
- ☹ Gratuities and Personal Travel Insurance

### Single Supplements

Puataukanave International Hotel – add \$500

Tongan Beach Resort – add \$900

Unfortunately there are no single supplements available for The Boathouse Accommodation, sorry.



*It is important to note that for international departures check in is no later than two hours prior to departure. Please ensure that all departure / arrival timings indicated are correct, as these are subject to change without notice.*

*Your passport must have a minimum of 6 months validity from day of departure*

## + The fine print...



Costs and flights are as at August, 2015 and are subject to fluctuations in exchange rate - **\$AU 1.00 = \$TOP 1.40**

### Quest Tours – General Diving and Snorkelling Rules

Obviously on all dive and snorkelling tours, safety is our main concern. The quality of diving is guaranteed. Tonga has incredible reef diving, however, it is relatively remote compared to much of the developed world. The following guidelines will help you enjoy your tour and stay safe on your holiday

#### For Snorkellers

Good quality, well fitting snorkelling fins (not kick fins) are essential. A well-fitted mask that has been treated so it does not fog will keep you comfortable, and we strongly recommend a high-quality snorkel with a splashguard and a purge valve.

Please ask us for advice regarding all of this equipment. We have packages exclusively available for our tour participants at \$120.

Your guide on the tour will be trained for in-water rescues and emergency first aid.

#### For Divers

The use of a computer, octopus and SMB are mandatory. If you don't have these, let us know in advance and we will prepare them for you. There is some spare rental gear at the dive centre in Tonga, however we strongly recommend that you have your gear checked before the trip.

#### Bookings:

To book onto the tour you will need to supply a completed booking form, together with a photocopy of your passport and a \$1500 non-refundable deposit.

We have booked the whale watch and diving operation for the height of the whale watch season, early bookings are essential and will ensure your spot on the tour. Before booking please read thoroughly the **BOOKING CONDITIONS** as published on our websites.

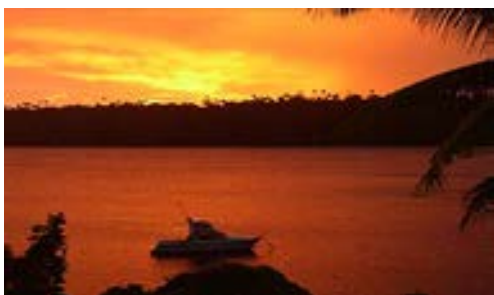
Late bookings may incur a flight surcharge

#### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours. We strongly recommend taking out travel insurance at the same time as paying your deposit. SureSave, our recommended insurance provider, will cover you at the time of taking out your policy and until your tour's return date. We can arrange a quote for you, please let us know at the time of booking if you would like this.

We suggest carefully checking conditions of any other travel insurance you may be considering.

Please note that DAN Insurance does not cover you for things such as flight cancellations, lost baggage or similar. They only cover you for diving related injuries. We recommend and insist on additional, comprehensive insurance to cover cancellations, airline changes and baggage in conjunction with DAN.





+ The Whales of Vava'u, 2016  
*Unparalleled in-water Experience*



Photo © Paul Parker 2005



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