



The Kingdom of Tonga

Tonga is untouched and largely undiscovered. That means it's a holiday destination where you can still encounter a world as nature intended. Un-spoilt by big resort complexes and modern development, Tonga remains as close to authentic Polynesia as you'll find. In fact, with its sheltered beauty and cultural authenticity, the Kingdom of Tonga is often described as the 'jewel in the pacific'.

Tonga is the oldest and last remaining monarchy of ancient Polynesia. Located in the heart of the South Pacific, between Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands; Tonga comprises 176 islands, of which only 42 are inhabited. The tiny Islands are spread across 700,000 square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean and divided into 4 main groups.

Tongatapu, where the capital Nuku'alofa is situated, is the international gateway to your Tongan holiday experience. The relatively flat raised atoll has a network of bitumen roads making it easy to get around. The eastern side of the island has beautiful beaches and historical sites including, the ancient royal tombs of Mu'a and the Ha'amonga-'a Maui Trilithon. The western side of the island boasts many natural landmarks and striking limestone formations along the south coast. Tongatapu offers a variety of hotels, resorts, shops, restaurants, banks, markets, as well as a range of activities and cultural tours.

The People

The Tongan population of approximately 100,000 is predominately Polynesian. They are a friendly and welcoming people who have retained many of their ancient traditions customs and culture. They enjoy a laidback pace of life that is very appealing. Tongan people are devout Christians and consider Sunday a sacred day for attending church services and perform family duties.

The Environment

Tonga offers a variety of spectacular landscapes including; low-lying coral atolls, pristine coral reefs, magnificent sandy beaches and blue lagoons, crystal clear water, dramatic volcanic landscapes and tropical rainforests home to a unique array of flora and fauna. Water temperatures of 23-30C, with visibility of up to 70m in some places, ensures spectacular swimming, snorkelling and diving in Tonga. There is also trekking, nature walks, horse riding, scenic and historical tours to enjoy.

The Whales

Each year from June through to November, hundreds of humpback whales arrive in Tonga. The whales spend winter in the warm seas of Tonga, mating and bearing their young, before returning with their new born calves to their summer feeding grounds of Antarctica. Tonga is one of two places in the world where you can swim with the whales, an experience to remember forever.

Dive Tongatapu

Diving is possible all year round in Tonga and the average water temperature is 24 Centigrade (75F). The stunning coral reefs off the smaller outer islands of Tongatapu, some of the best in Tonga, are very healthy and feature a vast array of pristine untouched hard and soft corals. The reefs that fringe these deserted islands provides home to more than 1,500 species of fish and 700 species of corals and sea



anemones. Below the surface, divers and snorkelers are treated to a paradise of marine bio-diversity including fabulous walls, blue holes, canyons and Humpback calves during the breeding season.

Dive Eua

The diving in Eua Island offers some of the best cavern dives you will experience anywhere in the world. You'll see drop-offs, sea mountains, caves and swim through tunnels. The legendary Cathedral cave is about 100 meters long, 50 meters wide and 30 meters deep. The entrance is at 28 meters, as you come into a big hall there is three large holes above you. Light pours in as if spotlights have been turned on. The last hole in the cathedral is nearly on the surface and directly in front of the Eua cliff. When you look up through the hole you can see and hear the breakers.

In the end wall there is a 20 meter tunnel that allows you to dive up into a big cave which goes up almost to surface level and facing the ocean. On the way back to the entrance you pass sharks and groupers, and after leaving the cave you come to a drop-off full of all kinds of coral and school fish. The second dive of the day in the "Tuna" cave speaks for itself where up to 100 Tuna can be seen residing inside the cave at times.

Whale Swim & Dive Ltd

The Tongatapu region is one big dive site, and our location on the main island means you can experience the very best diving Tonga has to offer. All our whale and dive guides are trained and qualified. We have over 20 + years local knowledge and experience, meaning you won't dive the same site twice; unless you want to of course.

You will dive in small groups of up to four divers per guide and our dives normally last up to one hour. We never rush our divers on the boat or in the water and we do not impose time limits on your dive time. Dive profiles are within PADI limits and our dive plans are always tailored to meet the experience levels and the requirements of our guests.

Whale Swim & Dive located at Fua Wharf in Nuku'alofa, is Tongatapu's professional dive and whale swim tour operator. As well as whale swim and dive trips to the outer islands and reefs, we also offer dive day trips to the island of Eua (minimum of 4 passengers).

We have dozens of amazing sites that we dive on a regular basis, each one markedly different from the next. Come and see the real kingdom of Tonga for yourself beneath the waves!

Further information visit www.whaleswimtour.com or contact infoatwst@gmail.com