



# Getting around



## DRIVERS' LICENCES

To drive in Samoa, visitors need to validate their foreign driver's licence at the Land Transport Authority in Vaitele near the Samoa Breweries/Vailima factory. Cost for validation is ST\$12 and some rental car companies will also assist in getting your client's licence endorsed.

A few years ago, Samoa switched from driving on the righthand side of the road to the left. Most vehicles are lefthand drive, and drivers should be cautious if they are not familiar with driving on the left side of the road.

## RENTAL CARS

There are many rental car companies to choose from and clients can hire everything from sedans and soft top 4WDs to 12-seater vans.

## TAXIS

Taxis are available throughout the islands and are not metered so it pays to have an idea of what the journey will cost. Clients should agree on a price with the driver before setting off.

Trips from the Faleolo International Airport to Apia cost around ST\$50, whereas small trips around town will be between ST\$3 and ST\$12 depending on the length of the journey.

## BUSES

A fun way to explore the islands is to take a map and board a local bus. Buses come in a variety of colour schemes and all the seating is wooden.

There are no bus stops around the islands, so clients need to wave down a bus if they want to get on. When they want to get off, they simply pull the cord to ring the buzzer. Passengers pay the fare as they leave the bus.

## PASSENGER/VEHICLE FERRY

The passenger/vehicle ferry runs between the main islands of Upolu and Savaii. The ferry departs from the Mulifanua Wharf on Upolu near the international airport, so if clients are travelling from Apia, they should allow 45 minutes for the journey. The ferry departs from the Salelologa Wharf on Savaii for the return journey. The trip takes just over one hour each way and it pays to arrive early at the wharf to purchase tickets.

One-way passenger fares are ST\$6 for a child 2-12 years and adults ST\$12. Vehicle charges (depending on the size of the vehicle) are between ST\$80 – ST\$110 each way. The full fare list is also available online.

To get to Manono Island, boats operate from the Manono-uta at the western end of Upolu, just down the road from Mulifanua Wharf. One-way fares cost ST\$1 for children and ST\$3 for adults one way.

## AIRPORTS

The main entry point into Samoa is Faleolo International Airport, 35 km from Apia on the island of Upolu. Polynesian Airlines operates daily flights between Apia and Pago Pago out of Fagalii Airport, which is located about 5km from the central business district.

Upon arrival currency exchanges are open for all international flight arrivals and departures.

Duty free allowances are one litre of alcohol, wine or spirits and 200 cigarettes per person. Airport shuttles are provided to the major hotels which can be booked prior to arrival or organised when clients arrive after clearing customs.

Taxis are also available and a ride to Apia will cost about ST\$50. If your flight is arriving during the day, then you can catch a local bus into Apia from the main gate of the airport. There are no set timetables and the fare will cost you about ST\$5 one way.

## Toolkit

### ALCOHOL

Vailima is Samoa's local brew and can be found all over Samoa. Originally set up by the Germans, Vailima now produces one of the finest lagers in the South Pacific and it can be purchased almost anywhere on the islands throughout the week, though on Sundays alcohol is strictly prohibited for sale except in hotels and restaurants.

### BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS

There are many bars and nightclubs providing entertainment, but be aware there is a 10pm curfew on loud music and doors close at 12pm.

### BANKS

ANZ and Westpac are two international banks found in Samoa. Both have branches at the international airport, in Apia and at Salelologa on Savaii. ATMs are located in and around Apia and on the island of Savaii. Clients can use credit cards in the machines but they are required to have a PIN number to withdraw cash.

### CLIMATE

Samoa's climate is tropical all year round, with two distinct seasons – the dry season running from May to October and the wet season from November to April. Average daily temperature is 29 degrees celsius and ocean temperature is in the low 20s.

### CURRENCY

The Samoa decimal currency is the Tala (dollar) and Sene (cent). All major foreign currencies may be exchanged in Samoa. Samoa Tala can also be purchased outside the country from a few selected banks. Major credit cards are widely accepted in

hotels, restaurants and stores. Travellers' cheques are also widely accepted at major banks and hotels. Eftpos machines are found throughout Upolu and Savaii in major hotels, resorts and supermarkets and accept the following cards – Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus, Amex, JCB and Plus Cards and Access International Debit Card.

### DEPARTURE TAX

Departure tax of ST\$65 applies to all travellers 12 years and over who depart from Faleolo International Airport. For travellers who are 2-11 years, the tax is ST\$15. Travellers who are less than two years are exempt.

### DOCTORS

There are many medical clinics in Apia. The Tupua Tamasese Meaole II National Hospital is located in Apia. There are private dental clinics and pharmacies.

### DRESS

Light summer clothing is appropriate all year round and packing a light sweater for the cooler evenings is recommended. As Samoa has a strong cultural structure and Christian faith, tourists are asked not to wear bathing suits in Apia or in villages. Nude swimming or sunbathing is prohibited and when leaving the beach to venture into the villages, guests are asked to wear a lavalava (sarong), pants or shorts and t-shirt. If attending church on Sunday, women are asked to wear a dress or blouse and skirt and men trousers and shirt.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Visitors to Samoa are not required to obtain an entry permit for stays of less than 60 days. Clients must have a return or onward ticket and passports must be valid for six months or more at the time of entry into the country.

### INTERNET CAFES

There are eight broadband internet cafes to be found around Apia and one on the island of Savaii. Major hotels and resorts also offer internet terminals for guests in their business centres. WiFi is also available at many hotels around Samoa.

### MOBILE PHONES

There are two main telecommunications providers in Samoa, Digicel and Bluesky. Both providers offer coverage to most areas with over 95 per cent geographical coverage. Prepaid SIM cards are available at the airport and around Apia.

### POST OFFICE

The main Samoa Post branch is located in the central business district, across from the main branch of the ANZ Bank.

### RELIGION

Samoa is predominantly a Christian nation and the main denominations are Congregational, Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Assembly of God, Seven Day Adventist, Bahai, Latter Day Saints and Jehovah's Witness. Visitors are welcome to attend church. Clients should check with their hotel reception for service times.

### TIPPING

Tipping is not practiced or expected in Samoa. However, if a guest wishes to leave a gift for good service then they are welcome to do so directly with the employee or the hotel reception.

### GETTING THERE

Virgin Samoa, Air New Zealand, Air Pacific and Polynesian Airlines operate international flights. Samoa Air operates daily domestic services between Fagalii Airport on Upolu, and Maota and Asau Airports on Savaii.