

Pacific Romance

YOUR GUIDE TO WEDDINGS, HONEYMOONS
AND ROMANCE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS



SOLOMON ISLANDS

A couple in white wedding attire walking on a beach, framed by a large, out-of-focus foreground object. The bride is holding a bouquet of colorful flowers. The background shows a clear blue sky and turquoise water.

Nurtured by nature

The Solomon Islands offer a minimalistic travel experience with maximum potential for romance. An unspoiled archipelago of 992 tropical islands and atolls just waiting to be explored – and relaxed upon – coated with lush rainforest and surrounded by pristine lagoons rich with history and life. With rustic accommodation, empty beaches and birdsong chiming, the Solomon's have the makings of an unforgettable romantic escape.



Tying the knot



There have been discussions around amending the current Solomon Islands Matrimony Law – to allow overseas couples to conduct religious marriages in the Solomon Islands and have their weddings legally recognised in their country of origin. However, at the time of printing, the law remains unchanged. Civil unions are permitted and recognised internationally, but they can only take place in Honiara.



UNTOUCHED ISLAND ADVENTURES

Travel is subjective. What suits one person can be the complete opposite of what suits someone else. The Solomon Islands are a case in point. If your idea of romance is 5-star glitz and glamour, other destinations will satisfy your need. The Solomon Islands is different. It's for couples that appreciate a destination that has remained in its natural state, untouched by the hands of mainstream tourism.

Surrounded by vast lagoons rich with tropical marine life and vibrant coral reefs, the Solomon Islands is heaven for couples who love the water. From the oceans natural wonders to hidden relics of World War II, there is an abundance of underwater adventures to be had.

The emerald waters of the Roviana Lagoon are an especially popular diving spot as they are full of life and historical treasures; such as the mysterious artefacts left by the Roviana people of the 19th century including the 'skull shrine' found on the aptly named Skull Island. This lagoon is surrounded by barrier reefs and islands, which form what is essentially a closed-off natural underwater city.

The reefs of Munda are equally spectacular. At the bottom, the wreckages of war have become a hauntingly beautiful feature of the environment. These waters have a rich history that will provide the platform for rich stories to take home. The Cave of the Kastom Shark

can be found inside the lagoon on one of the islands, where a little freshwater pool leads into two large connected chambers.

For couples that prefer to stay on the water, the Solomon Islands have fantastic surfing spots with virtually non-existent crowds. Truly a surfer's dream. Ride the waves of Malaita Province, which is ideal for novices as well as veteran surfers. Santa Isabel and Western Province are other tremendous spots that offer stays in local villages and wilderness tours.

Due to its magnificent lagoons, kayaking is another must-do for couples. The Marovo Lagoon, for instance, is the largest saltwater lagoon in the world. This unspoiled environment is filled with remarkable creatures that can be seen floating above. It's like looking down into an aquarium. Various tours will take kayakers around the lagoon and provide chances to experience the culture and warm hospitality of the locals.

Back on dry land, there are many opportunities afoot. Hiking is a great way for couples to submerge themselves in landscapes as rich as the lagoons that surround them. The most well-known hikes are along the Mataniko River – which was crucial in the Battle of Guadalcanal – and the Mamara Spring Water Walk, a three-day trek across striking scenery and rugged terrain.

There are also mountains and volcanoes aplenty in the Solomon's, providing Instagram-worthy views from all angles. For extra adventurous couples, a hike through the jungle and rainforest of Kolombangara in the Western Province could be precisely the experience you're looking for. The name is roughly translated from 'water lord', in reference to the immense rainfall it receives!



PLACES TO STAY

Tavanipupu Island Resort, Marau Sound – the ‘place of the Trigger Fish’

Such a beautiful romantic escape, it’s unsurprising that the Royal couple, Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, stayed at Tavanipupu Island Resort in 2012. It was a visit that put the resort into the headlines. And not surprisingly, the cavernous bungalow ‘Wills and Kate’ stayed in quickly became the most sought after room in the resort. After all, how many people can boast they shared the same bed as the future King of England and his wife.

This resort is located on a private tropical island, just a 25-minute plane ride from Honiara. Surrounded by crystal blue waters and pristine reefs, Tavanipupu Island Resort is pure picture postcard. ‘Paradise’ is the first word that springs to mind as you walk through the abundance of palm trees – it was a former coconut plantation.

Tavanipupu Island Resort’s restaurant is renowned for serving fresh seafood and traditional Solomon cuisine. Once a week their experienced chefs serve up a special feast for visitors using a traditional oven called a ‘motu’. There are also plenty of activities for couples to take advantage of on the island such as snorkelling, fishing and diving.



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Fatboys Resort, Mbabanga Island

Named after a Charles Dickens character who spends his life drinking, eating, sleeping and avoiding work, Fatboys Resort is a top spot for couples wanting to enjoy life's pleasures. This Mbabanga Island resort offers beautiful bungalows for couples. The Honeymoon Bungalow features a large veranda, fitted with a hammock, overlooking the ocean – perfect for unwinding. Alternatively, the new Over the Water Deluxe Bungalow is an equally romantic getaway pad, where you can dive into the turquoise waters from your deck.

Despite being the perfect place to do absolutely nothing, there are many adventures to be had for those looking. Go snorkelling or diving over spectacular reefs and marine life. If you're itching for a hike, head across to the Kolombangara Island. Here you can trek through its diverse ecosystem and around its steep cliffs.

Sanbis Resort, Gizo

If you're a couple looking for a private romantic retreat, Sanbis Resort is the answer. Located on a secluded island near the Gizo runway, this adults-only resort is home to private beaches, stunning sights and an array of activities for those wanting to explore. Each of its six bungalows with overwater balconies has been crafted from local materials and fitted with the bare essentials. An environmentally friendly setup offering true tranquility. Of course, there are plenty of snorkelling, fishing, surfing and diving opportunities for water-loving couples. One of Sanbis Resort's claim to fame is the fact it is the only resort in the entire South Pacific boasting an over-water, wood-fired pizza oven.

Uepi Island Resort, Marovo Lagoon

If you're exploring Maravo Lagoon, this is a great base. The diving is quite simply world-class, plus the resort runs a dive operation that caters to the full range of diving abilities. The 'learn to dive' course is perfect for couples wanting their first taste of underwater exploration.



EXPLORE THE UNEXPLORED

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The snorkelling around the resort is also fantastic. There's a 50-metre drop just off the shore – get ready for huge schools of fish, coral gardens, sponges, lion fish, anemones and more! With only six bungalows, two units and two guest rooms, maximum capacity sits at just 26 beds, so needless to say, the vibe is relaxed!

Ginger Beach Retreat

Located just 40 minutes from the hustle and bustle of Honiara, the recently-opened Ginger Beach Retreat is a hidden gem. Offering the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle and tucked away in the heart of a lush tropical garden, just three luxury beachside bungalows look out over Iron Bottom Sound, the resting place of some forty World War II ships and aircraft, across to the mysterious and highly volcanic Savo Island. 🌿





GUADALCANAL WATERFALL © CHRIS MCLENNAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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