

Humpback Whales of Tonga



WhaleSwim Adventures offers you a rare opportunity - to enter the world of the humpback whale.

Due north and east of New Zealand on the International Dateline lie the scattered tropical islands of the Kingdom of Tonga. Each winter, these spectacular South Pacific humpback whales return to the sparkling clear waters of Vava'u, Tonga's northern-most group of islands. These 15 m, 40-ton giants of the ocean come to these protected coral islands to court and breed, after a long migration from the rich feeding grounds in Antarctica's icy seas.



Come and join them in the calm lagoons of the Vava'u & Ha'apai islands. Be there - in the water - in one of just 3 locations in the world that offer such whale encounters under strict managed conditions.

Snorkeling close to these gentle giants is an inspirational, even life-changing, experience. However, if you would prefer to just watch from the boat - this can be just as exciting and fulfilling!

WhaleSwim Adventures offers eleven expeditions in Vava'u, Tonga and 2 in Ha'apai Tonga during the humpback whale season August - October.

Our expeditions include varied accommodation - our *Whales in*

Paradise expeditions include 5 nights at the Paradise Hotel and 5 nights at the Blue Lagoon Resort on Foeata Island, our Paradise Islands Adventure expedition includes 4 nights at Treasure Island Resort on Eu'eiki Island and 4 nights at Toula Harbour View Resort and our 3 *Paradise Islands Experience* expeditions are at Treasure Island and Blue Lagoon Resort.

Our *Photography/Small Group* expeditions are based at the Toula Harbour View Resort and our *Whales in Tranquility* expedition, takes place on the island of Foa, in the Ha'apai group of islands south of Vava'u, at The Sandy Beach Resort.

The different islands and accommodation choices determine the price of the expedition. Accommodation choices range from excellent economy rooms with ensuite bathrooms to single super deluxe rooms with ensuite bathroom. (See page 2 for information.)

Neiafu is the main town in the Vava'u group of islands, on the edge of the beautiful natural harbour - the Port of Refuge and has great bars, cafes and restaurants, gift and craft shops, banks, a post office and a bustling morning fresh fruit and vegetable market.

One night we share a traditional Tongan Feast & Dance night - follow by a kava ceremony some will be at at Hinekaeua Beach and another out on the islands.

In Ha'apai, we are based 15kms from the town of Pangai, there is a

few shops, an internet café and Tongan Visitors Bureau. There are no bars or restaurants other than at the resort.

These tours offer more opportunity to be in the water with the whales than any other on the market, as our expeditions are a 'whole experience' plus they are limited to just 5 - 12 people.



Specially equipped and expertly operated (licensed) whale-watch boats will be ready each day to take you on your day's adventure.

Your WhaleSwim Guide will not only have you swimming with the whales whenever possible, but take you snorkeling through caves & coral gardens, bring you together with new friends, or leave you free to just comb un-spoilt tropical beaches

In-the-water whale encounters can't be guaranteed every day, but every day will be unforgettable whale watching, exploring idyllic uninhabited islands and cays and being rewarded with coconut juice fresh from the palms.

This is an opportunity of a lifetime - to swim with humpback whales in a tropical paradise.

Give yourself the gift!



What you will need

You must be confident in the water and competent with mask, snorkel and fins in water where you may not see the bottom. While sheltered, shallow waters will be sought, the expedition may follow the whales to deep open water and surface currents. You might also need a little patience, as we cannot guarantee that you will be in the water with the whales each day, some days we whale-watch, but on such days you can still be assured of opportunities to go snorkeling coral gardens that rival those of the Great Barrier Reef. Photographic equipment can be as simple as a waterproof disposable camera, or as sophisticated as a specialized underwater camera. Once you have confirmed your booking – you will be sent Trip Information to assist you on preparing for your adventure.

How you will get there

Your WhaleSwim Adventure begins with commercial jet flights via Auckland, Honolulu, Apia or Nadi, and on to Nuku'alofa, Tonga's capital and international airport. From Nuku'alofa, it is a short 1hr 15min commuter plane flight with Royal Tongan Airlines to Vava'u, where you will be met by one of the WhaleSwim TEAM.

Where you will stay

Each tour has different accommodation – here are your choices.

Toula Harbour View Resort



This is a great little resort with the rooms scattered around the lush gardens all with en-suite bathrooms – and views of the natural harbour – the resort has a great restaurant Pierre's table, with wonderful French cuisine! The bar is a great palce to met and have a cold berer after a wonderful day out with the whales. The owners, Nadya and Pierre offer wonderful friendly service and excellent prices for their accommodation.

The Paradise Hotel



This well-established hotel offers twin/double rooms, all have ensuite bathroom overlooking the harbour. There is a swimming pool and bar surrounded by flowering gardens and an international restaurant. Just a 10 min walk to the market, shops and cafes in Neiafu.

Treasure Island Resort



This island resort is on the beautiful island of Eu'eiki, 50 minutes by boat from Neiafu - right in the middle of the humpback whale nursery. All twin/double traditional fale have an ensuite bathroom and the Al Fresco restaurant overlooks the whale nursery!. Some days you can watch the whales play from the restaurant!! A pristine coral reef is just off the beach – perfect for snorkelling!

Blue Lagoon Resort



This exquisite resort is on Foeta Island, 45 minutes by boat from Neiafu. There are seven Twin/Double and family fale all with ensuite bathrooms – they all overlook the perfect lagoon and has the best restaurant in Tonga.

The Sandy Beach Resort



This beautiful resort is located right on a beautiful white sandy beach overlooking a crystal clear turquoise lagoon. Each bungalow has an ensuite bathroom and verandah just behind the beach The restaurant and bar are the meetings place each evening for guests from all over the world.



What you will eat and drink

Breakfast is provided each morning and lunch on most days. If your expedition is based near Neiafu, then we eat at different restaurants night and when staying on an outer island resort or in Ha'apai, all your meals are catered by the resort restaurant.

Most of the restaurants specialise in European- style food of fresh reef fish, lobsters, chicken, beef and lamb, Italian pizza and pasta and Asian curries and local delicacies, are also available. Most cafes and restaurants have well-stocked bars and offer a wide range of beverages including wines and cocktails. Some of our expedition also includes a Traditional Tongan Feast and Kava ceremony. (Some special diets can be catered for - please advise if you have a special diet).

How you will see and swim with the whales



In Vava'u, each morning the whale-watching boats will collect the groups

from the jetty nearby and head out to the whale sanctuary for a day's encounters with the Humpback whales. In Ha'apai as the whales are closer to the resort we head out with the whales each afternoon from the beach in front of your resort. At all times in the water, the group will be supervised by the expert whale-watching guide and the WhaleSwim TEAM will be on hand to help you get the most out of each encounter with the whales, both in and out of the water. You will be returned to the town, between 4 & 5 pm each afternoon.

Your whale encounters will take place under guidelines modeled on internationally recognized standards, designed to ensure both non-harassment of the whales and safety for whale-watchers – with just 4 people and the guide in the water with the whales at one time.

On your leisure mornings/days there will be opportunities to scuba dive, kayak, go surfing, sail, hike, visit a

village, snorkel, shop, leisurely lunch or just relax with a book!

What should you expect of Ha'apai and Vava'u

The pace of life in Tonga is leisurely and without television, or clocks. Tongan people are very friendly and enthusiastically share their strong community spirit with visitors.

However, keep in mind - that Tonga is a 'developing' country and most of its inhabitants live from day to day in a very simple way. – very different to a 'developed' country.



Vava'u is everything you would expect a tropical paradise to be - rich, green vegetation, stunning blue seas surrounding turquoise lagoons, and

white sandy beaches lined with coconut palms.

You will leave with memories of floating in warm azure sea with magnificent gentle giants, brilliant sunsets reflected in calm lagoons, the sound of beautiful singing in village churches drifting across the water each morning as the sun pops over the horizon.

Contact us for all this, plus one of the rarest privileges on earth - to snorkel with humpback whales!



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Terms & Conditions

Our online reservations will be held for 14 days. An AUD\$1500.00 or AUD \$500 (for 3-Day WhaleSwim's) non-refundable deposit per person is required within 14 days to confirm your reservation. Full payment must be received 70 days prior to departure to confirm your place, otherwise 'wait-list' persons will be substituted and your deposit forfeited. Re-scheduling and substitution of guests is permitted with approval of WhaleSwim Adventures.

Travel/Accident Insurance - which includes trip cancellation and accident - is strongly advised at extra cost.

All rates and conditions are subject to change. If payments are not received at the designated times, WhaleSwim Adventures, reserves the right to sell those spaces in question with forfeiture of all monies to date. The booking is binding and all payments are non-refundable. Prices may change due to currency fluctuation, schedule changes or circumstances beyond the control of WhaleSwim Adventures - refunds and discounts are not considered.

Aquatic Abilities:

Minimum requirement: Ability to swim, snorkel with fins and mask and be confident in the water.

PLEASE NOTE: The level of your fitness, agility, swimming and snorkelling skills will determine the standard of your encounters with the whales in the water. If the WhaleSwim Team Leader and/or the whale-watching guide is not satisfied with your snorkelling ability, then they have the right to refuse your entry to the water with the whales as your lack of ability may endanger the lives of others. Therefore, we would recommend that you improve your skills and level of fitness before the tour to ensure fulfilling encounters. If you do not have these skills you are very welcome to join the expeditions each day for wonderful boat-based whale-watching experiences.

A buoyant wetsuit (shortie), snorkelling or flotation vest AND mask, fins & snorkel MUST BE WORN in the water at all times.

Please note:

These expeditions are not suitable for guests over 60 years old unless you are extremely fit and agile.

Very important to consider. . . Tongan lifestyle is in a slow 'time-zone' - if you are expecting fast service, telephones in your room, television and everything to be available 'on time'- you may want to consider another WhaleSwim Adventure destination.! This wonderful whaleswim in Tonga is an opportunity to relax, go with the flow and have a laid-back cruise-y holiday with the humpback whales!

After receiving your deposit, we will supply you with Trip Information – outlining snorkelling gear etc will be sent to you. When our final payment is made a detailed preparation package with particulars concerning, transfers, what to bring, where to meet the tour and numerous details to assist you in making your adventure smooth, comfortable and a fun experience.

1. Payment by transfer or International Telegraphic Bank transfer:

Credit Union of Australia
175 Eagle St, Brisbane QLD 4001
Account Name: Rae Gill T/A WhaleSwim Adventures
BSB: 804 050
Account #: 30283742
Reference: (your name)

Swift Address: //AU804050 (International ONLY)