



# Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

## Fiji - Vitu Levu

### Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Suva
- ✓ **Language:** English, iTaukei, Hindi
- ✓ **Population:** ± 837,271
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 10,429 (*island*)
- ✓ **Currency:** Fijian Dollar (FJD \$)
- ✓ **Country code:** +679
- ✓ **Visa:** Some countries – [check!](#)
- ✓ **Emergency phone:** 911 (*fire & ambulance*), 917 (*police*)
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Hep-A, Hep-B, Typhoid, Yellow Fever, Zika Prevention (*mosquitoes*)



### History Recap Over 1 Drink

1643: Dutch Abel Tasman visits islands. 1830s: Western missionaries. 40-50s: Christian Cakobau gains control western Fiji, Ma'afu east. '71: Eur settlers organize government → Cakobau king. '74: British crown colony upon request king. '75-'76: Measles wipes out 1/3 population. '79-1916: 60,000+ Indian workers brought in: sugar plantations. '04: Legislative Council (*Eur/Fijians*) advises UK. '20: Fiji vote. '70: Independent, prime minister (*PM*): Mara of Fijian Alliance Party. '85: Bavadra starts Fiji Labour Party. '87: Indian-dominated coalition (*Bavadra*) wins. Army coup: Rabuka → aim: indigenous Fijians politically dominant. Later 2<sup>nd</sup> coup: proclaims Fiji republic, Ganilau president (*pres*), Mara PM. Fiji expelled from Commonwealth (*CW*). UK/US/Aus suspend aid. '89: 1000s ethnic Indians flee Fiji. '90: New constitution: dominance indigenous. '92: Rabuka PM. '94, Ganilau dies, Mara pres. '97: Non-discriminatory constitution → enter CW again. '99: Chaudhry (*Indian*) PM. 2000: 2 men (*Speight / Ligairi*) storm parliament / PM & cabinet hostage → want indigenous political dominant. CW suspends Fiji. '01: Democracy restored. In CW. '02: Privatization sugar industry. '04: Iraq. '06: Coup Bainimarama → later PM. '07: State of Emergency. '09: Suspended from Pacific Islands Forum for not holding elections. '15: Plans to remove Union Jack from flag. '16: Cyclone Winston.

### Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wet											start	summer
Dry					start	winter						
Budget												

Altitude: 935m. Climate: Tropical Jungle Climate (Af) & Tropical Monsoon Climate (Am).

### Bucket List For Free

- ☺ **Sights:** Sigatoka Sanddunes (*check blog for free entry*)
- ☺ **Beaches:** Natadola, Denarau, Paradise, Wailoaloa.
- ☺ **Activities:** Snorkeling & swimming.
- ☺ You can enter any resort for free as a day guest and use their facilities.
- ☺ The inland of Vitu Levu Island is a hiking paradise! Don't miss Koroyanitu Nature Reserve (*with tour expensive*), Namosi and Nausori Highlands and Colo-I-Suva Forest Park, or climb Mount Tomaniivi.

### Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 Go scuba diving! Try the shark dive at Beqa Island. Snorkelling at Coral Coast.
- 👍 **Natural spa:** Sabeto Hot Springs and Mud Pool.
- 👍 **Experiences (very expensive!):** [Sigatoka River Safari](#), Kayaking, Parasailing, Jetskiing, Golf, Ziplining, Skydiving, ATV, [Big Bula Waterpark](#), [Fiji Museum](#).
- 👍 Book in an (*expensive*) meal at a resort, and enjoy the firedancing and firewalking.
- 👍 Go Island-Hopping (\$\$\$).

## Budget Bites

⌘ **Big supermarkets:** Nadi has its bigger supermarkets around the market and bus station, or along Queens Road up to the airport.

⌘ **Markets:** There are many, usually one in every town next to the bus station. The Sigatoka Saturday morning market is famous for its variety.

⌘ **Local food:** Sila (*corn on cob boiled in sea water*), Taro & Taro Leaves in Coconut Cream / Palusami (*kind of potato / kind of spinach*), Kava (*traditional drink*), Nama (*"vegan caviar"*), Breadfruit (*potato-style*), Kokoda (*ceviche*), Lovo (*underground oven*), Duruka (*kind of asparagus*), Indian Curries, Coconut Bread, Baigan Valo (*eggplant stuffed with fish, topped with coconut cream*), Purini (*stuffed pudding*).

⌘ **Go vegan:** Being vegan can be a bit of a challenge in Fiji, but it's not impossible. Supermarkets don't generally have typical vegan products, but fresh produce can be bought cheaply at the markets, with big variety. Fijian Indians own many fully or partly vegetarian restaurants: [Happy Cow – Fiji](#).

## Mama Said

⌘ Fiji is generally a safe place with friendly and helpful locals and a low crime rate. Still, always practice general awareness and keep an eye on your belongings.

⌘ Boycott places like Kula Wild Adventure Park if you care for animals at all, that is.

⌘ Tap water isn't drinkable. Boil it first.

⌘ Don't cash out at the airport ATM. They charge FJD \$15, opposed to everywhere else.

⌘ Wi-Fi doesn't work so well outside of Nadi and Suva. You can buy a weekly simcard with plan... but *not* at the airport: you'll pay 3x as much for 10x as little data. Buy it in the nearest town you're staying.

⌘ Don't wear shoes in buildings.

⌘ Traffic drives on the left. Max. speed in town is 50 km/h, 80 km/h on the open road. Legal driving age is 17.

## Sleep Cheap

❖ Accommodation is very expensive in Fiji. You can book slightly cheaper if you book via [this Booking.com link](#) and receive a \$15 discount. [Air BnB](#) offers many homestays that are generally cheaper than hotels, but still quite expensive for the true budget traveler.

❖ Camping is possible but can be too hot or too wet, depending on the season. Check weather conditions.

❖ Free! Go [Couchsurfing](#) or Housesitting. Also check [WorkAway](#).

## Nights Best Spent

◆ Nightlife areas: Nadi, Suva, the resorts.

## Free-Riding?

■ Viti Levu is very big, distances between villages are large. Except of downtown, there aren't any sidewalks, which makes walking dangerous.

■ Cycling is not recommended due to large distances and the heat. Renting a motorbike is in theory quite handy, but it's very expensive in Fiji and you'll be likely to be pulled over by the police (*bribe-alert*).

■ Bus travel is by far the cheapest transport option. The drivers generally don't accept cash payment, you'll have to buy a disposable transport card with a desired amount of money on it at a Vodafone store. You can hail down a bus at a bus stop (*the express buses only stop in the cities at the main terminal*), destinations are displayed on the front. Tell the driver your destination so he can charge you the correct amount (*ask locals before how much it should cost, they may overcharge you as you're a foreigner*). If you're wondering which bus to take or where, ask the helpful locals.

■ Taxis are widely available in the cities. Rates vary a lot and should always be negotiated upfront.

■ Airport: Nadi International Airport (NAN) / Suva: Nausori International Airport (SUV).

■ Hitchhiking is a very common way of transport in Fiji but it is NOT free. You're supposed to pay the bus fare or higher to the driver (*negotiate up front*).

## Next?

➔ In Fiji: Taveuni, Vanua Levu, Kadavu... ±300 islands.

➔ International destinations close by: Wallis & Futuna, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Niue, Australia, New Zealand.