



Solomon Islands

Trip Information

- Arrival airport: Honiara International Airport (HIR)
- Departure airport: Honiara International Airport (HIR)

Flights and Transfers

For your convenience, a transfer between Honiara airport or a local hotel and the boat will be provided free of charge on embarkation and disembarkation days. Pick up from hotels is generally between 17:30 and 18:00 on embarkation day. If you are staying in a hotel in Honiara before your liveaboard our reservations team will provide pick up and embarkation transfer details in your departure pack.

Guests arriving in Honiara on the day of embarkation will be met at the airport by a representative of Master Liveaboards and/or Coral Sea Resort upon arrival of their flight and transferred to Coral Sea Resort where they can spend the afternoon relaxing, or visit one of the local museums, until it is time to board Solomons Master.

PLEASE NOTE: Most of our itineraries operate back to back on the same day; therefore *early embarkation or late disembarkation is not possible* as the crew are on a tight schedule to turn the boat around. Disembarkation will be no later than 09:00, after a light breakfast.

Advice on International Flights

Ideally, you should plan to arrive in the Solomon Islands one day before the start of your liveaboard itinerary to allow for potential flight schedule changes and to ensure that you

start your diving holiday well rested.

Book international flights to and from Honiara International Airport (HIR); Flight routes include:

- Via Fiji (NAN) – flights with Fiji Airways, Solomon Airlines, Air Niugini
- Via Brisbane (BNE) – flights with Solomon Airlines (codeshare with Qantas) and Virgin Australia

- Via Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby) with Air Niugini

IMPORTANT: Guests travelling via Australia, Fiji or PNG may require a transit visa.

Travellers who do not have the required documents for the countries they will be travelling through will be denied boarding by their airline.

Visa and Passports

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the period you intend to stay in Solomon Islands and you should carry an onward or return flight ticket.

Citizens of EU countries, U.K., the U.S., Canada, and most other Western countries do not need a visa to enter the Solomon Islands. Upon arrival they will be issued with a visitor's permit with 3 months validity.

We are happy to provide assistance with Solomon Islands visa applications for guests who need one. However, at least 8 weeks' notice is required and a handling fee will be charged for this service in addition to the cost of the visa, regardless of the outcome of the application.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the proper entry permits for the entirety your travels, including transit.

We suggest referring to the IATA Travel Centre website for current visa requirements for the countries you will be travelling to (including transit): [www.iatatravelcentre.com/Solomon Islands passport and visa requirements](http://www.iatatravelcentre.com/Solomon%20Islands%20passport%20and%20visa%20requirements).

Transit requirements

via Australia

Guests travelling via Australia may need to apply for a transit or visitor's visa before travelling, if the time between connecting flights is more than 8 hours, or if they wish to leave the airport during their transit period.

To check which visa you may need, please refer to the visa section of the Australian Immigration website: www.immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder/visit.

Australian visa applications can take up to 14 days to process.

via Papua New Guinea

If you will be at Port Moresby Airport for more than 8 hours, or will be exiting the airport for any reason during your layover, you will need to apply for a Visitor Entry Permit prior to travelling. Certain nationalities can apply on-line for an e-Visa through the PNG government's immigration website, here: <https://evisa.ica.gov.pg/evisa/account/Apply>. Processing time is usually no more than 3 business days.

Please check with your nearest Papua New Guinea embassy, high commission or consulate for further information if you are not eligible or unable to apply for an e-Visa.

via Fiji

Depending on your nationality, and if your transit period in Fiji is more than 3 hours, you may need to apply for a visitor visa prior to travelling. Please check with your airline, home country government advisories, Fiji embassy or consulate in your home country, or Fijian immigration to see if this applies to you.

If you are travelling with medication, please ensure to bring your physician's prescription with you.

Solomon Islands Travel Authorisation (SI-TA)

The Travel Authorization trial which was introduced by the Solomon Islands Government in November 2022 has been *suspended until further notice*. However, all incoming travellers to Solomon Islands still need to comply with the health requirements under the current Health Travel Advisory issued by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

All COVID-19 vaccination and test requirements have been lifted although all returning or visiting travellers are required to complete a Health Card which will be made available either in flight or at the port of entry.

Airport Tax

Currently there are no airport taxes to pay in Solomon Islands.

Insurance

Insurance which covers scuba diving is mandatory. Your insurance must cover all of your scuba diving and snorkelling activities, including the costs for recompression chamber treatment and emergency air evacuation. We strongly recommend purchasing diving-specific insurance to cover any diving related eventuality.

All guests are also required to carry full travel and cancellation insurance. We cannot be held liable for delays occurring during the cruise, nor any delays or cancellations of flights, accommodations, or tours and transfers that we organise on your behalf.

Dirty Dozen Expeditions act as a referrer for DiveAssure who offer dive and travel insurance policies, including short term and multiple trip policies. Their comprehensive 'Dive & Travel Plus' plan has been specifically developed for diving liveaboard holidays and covers expenses in the event of missing your liveaboard departure due to flight delays or missed connections, and also provides cover for lost diving days if for any reason the boat is required to abort the cruise; for instance, due to a guest injury, mechanical breakdown of the ship, air supply failure, inclement weather conditions, etc.

Please consult our webpage for details and direct link to DiveAssure's booking portal:

<https://thedirtydozenexpeditions.squarespace.com/liveaboard-insurance-solomons>.

Diving Information

While we are happy to welcome all diver levels on board, some of the dives offered may not be suitable for inexperienced divers. Diving conditions vary based on the season, currents and time of day. Our Cruise Directors will make decisions regarding maximum depths, time limits, and dive profiles based on environmental conditions and diver experience. The Cruise Directors' and dive guides' directions must be followed at all times.

Visibility is usually 25-40m (85-100 feet) but can sometimes be less due to influxes of nutrient rich waters.

Wreck Diving

On our Best of Solomons itineraries, we dive a few wrecks and light penetration is possible on those. However, guests wishing to do any wreck penetration must be certified to do so and be prepared for the risks which it involves. We do not have technical dive guides on the Best of Solomons itineraries so guests are required to follow proper buddy procedures and safety protocols.

Solo Diving

We can support Solo Divers who have the proper training, certification and equipment. Please bring your certification card with you if you would like to Solo Dive. You will be required to dive with a redundant air supply, redundant computer and redundant mask. This additional required equipment is available to rent on board.

Fit to Dive

All divers are responsible for ensuring that they are fit to dive, and are required to complete a medical statement before commencement of their liveaboard itinerary. Guests who have any medical conditions or symptoms that could be restrictive to diving will need to obtain a doctor's note clearing them to dive, prior to travelling.

If you are unable to complete the statement as directed, or provide a current doctor's certificate (less than 1 year old) clearing you to dive, you accept that you may not be able to take part in certain aspects of the holiday you have booked with us.

Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperatures average around 28°–30°C (82°F to 85°F) all year round. The majority of our guests will find a 3mm wetsuit provides sufficient warmth. However, you may feel chilly after multiple dives per day, so may wish to bring a 5mm wetsuit, or additional thermal protection with you.

Rental wetsuits on Solomons Master are 3mm, full-length. **We do not allow the use of dive gloves.**

Diving Equipment

Use of a dive computer and surface marker buoy (SMB) is compulsory for all divers; Both are available on board for guests who do not have their own.

Although we do not allow the use of dive gloves, you are welcome to bring a reef hook or pointer stick should you wish to do so.

Diving Safety

Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and must stay within the limits of their certification, follow dive guide's and computer guidelines and make a safety stop at the end of each dive.

Flying after Diving

Current studies indicate that you should wait at least 24 hours after multiple days with repetitive diving before flying. Please keep this in mind when you book your onward international or domestic flights.

Diving Emergencies

Due to the volunteer manned chamber in Honiara being damaged beyond repair, the nearest recompression chamber is in Brisbane, Australia. In the event of a diving emergency, a light aircraft or helicopter will be required to evacuate the patient from the ship to Honiara, and from there additional evacuation via a low-level flight to Brisbane may be required the cost of which can easily exceed \$30,000 USD.

General Information

To save some time, and to ensure you have no pre-existing conditions that could affect your diving, you can download the forms from the above link, fill in, and bring them along. By completing and signing the forms, you are confirming that you have read, understood, and agree to the conditions outlined in the forms

If you are unable to complete the forms as instructed, you accept that you may not be able to take part in certain aspects of the holiday you have booked with us.

Country Information

Time Zone

The local time in Honiara is + 11 hours UTC (GMT).

Money Matters

The local currency is the Solomon Island dollar (SBD). Currency from other countries can be exchanged at Honiara Airport, or at any of the banks in town. The majority of established hotels and restaurants will accept credit card payments, usually with the addition of a surcharge, although smaller establishments often only accept cash payments.

We suggest carrying a small amount of SBD to make purchases when we visit villages or local markets. The exchange rate is approximately 8 SBD to 1 USD. Most guests find that \$750 SBD to \$1,500 SBD is adequate to cover incidental costs.

There are a number of options to obtain local currency:

Honiara Airport - Currency Exchange: There is an exchange desk available as you exit customs and immigration. Most major currencies can be exchanged (including USD and AUD cash) for SBD cash. The exchange rate is within 3% to 5% of the bank exchange rate.

Honiara Airport - ATM: There is a CIRRUS bank system ATM in the departure hall of the airport (exit arrivals and turn right) where cash can be withdrawn for a fee. However, this ATM is often out of cash once the first few flights of the day have arrived.

Honiara Town - ATMs: There are two major banks in the Solomon Islands - Bank of South Pacific and ANZ. Both have ATMs widely available throughout the city centre. Ask your driver to stop on the way into town and you should be able to withdraw cash at any of the ATMs. Many of the major hotels also have ATMs available.

Honiara - Bank Withdrawal: You can visit any of the local banks to withdraw cash from your account or credit card. However, you should be aware that the queues are often in excess of 2 hours so this is not the best option.

Health

Generally, healthcare in Solomon Islands is very basic and medical supplies are limited. There are only 8 public hospitals in the entire country, the largest and most modern of which is the National Referral Hospital in Honiara although it is by no means up to Western standards. Additionally there are 4 church-funded hospitals, as well as area health centres, rural health clinics and nurse aide posts providing basic medical services across the islands.

Please make sure routine vaccinations are up-to-date, use insect repellent and cover exposed skin to prevent any insect borne diseases. Malaria is present, as are other tropical diseases such as Dengue Fever, TB, hepatitis, and typhoid.

We recommend consulting your doctor or nearest health care professional or travel clinic for the latest medical travel advice and vaccination recommendations well before departure.

Please note: Some malaria prevention medications including mefloquine (brand name Lariam) have side effects which can mimic decompression sickness.

In order to prevent stomach ailments, we advise travellers to follow normal precautions with food and drink bottled water only when on land. Water on board is safe to drink.

Measles

All passengers entering the Solomon Islands are required to complete a health declaration form regarding exposure to / immunisation against measles. The forms will be made available at check-in counters and on board your flight.

All non-residents arriving in the Solomon Islands from measles-affected countries including Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, American Samoa, Samoa, Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga are required to provide certified proof of vaccination against measles.

Passengers who are unable to provide proof of vaccination may be required to undergo medical examination by the local authorities in the Solomon Islands.

Accepted proof of vaccination include:

1. Internal Certification of Vaccination (yellow card).
2. Any official documentation/ letter from a recognised hospital or medical practitioner confirming that the holder has been vaccinated against measles. Vaccination should be given at least 15 days prior to arrival.

3. Blood test results showing positive for measles antibodies which indicates immunity to measles. This may be expensive but can be done a few days prior to arrival and should be positive for someone who has been vaccinated in the past.

Travellers who have not been vaccinated, or who do not have proof of vaccination against measles are required to provide a contact address and phone number in the Solomon Islands and report to the local authorities immediately if they develop any symptoms.

Language and Religion

The official language of the Solomon Islands is English, while the local language is Pijin.

The religion of the Solomon Islanders is mainly Christian (about 92% of the population) with approximately 5% of the population adhering to aboriginal beliefs.

Climate and Weather

The Solomon Islands has an equatorial climate typical of many tropical areas, meaning it is usually hot and humid all year round. Average air temperature is around 27° Celsius with only

marginal changes from season to season. However, there are two distinct seasons – a dry season from May to October and a wet season from November to April, with the wettest months being January and February.

Although uncommon, cyclones can occur in the wet season, but they usually bypass the Solomon Islands and veer toward Vanuatu or down the coast of Australia.

Mobile Phone Coverage

International SIM cards will not work in the Solomons. Guests who wish to have phone or internet service while in the Solomon Islands will need to purchase a local SIM card and data package. This will allow mobile and internet coverage within the major towns although connectivity in smaller towns and remote areas may be patchy, or non-existent.

Local SIMs can be purchased in Honiara at most major hotels and/ or directly at one of the Our Telekom or BMobile offices. Each provider has their own coverage area which will be available for about 25%-30% of your time on board Solomons Master. Be sure to buy a SIM that has data capability and install it and test it prior to leaving Honiara.

Life on Board

The main features of the vessel can be reviews on the Solomons Master page of the Master Liveboards website: www.masterliveboards.com/boats/solomons-master/

Safety and dive briefings will be given in English. If you do not speak or fully understand English, please let us know before your trip.

Accessibility

Due to the layout of the boat, the vessel is not suitable for wheelchairs and may provide challenges, or be unsuitable for guests with limited mobility. Please contact us for further details if you have any concerns.

Accommodation

Unless otherwise stated, accommodation on board is based on standard occupancy of each specific cabin type. Single occupancy of double/twin cabins may be available on request, and is subject to a supplemental charge.

Cabin Facilities

All cabins have individually controlled air-conditioning, private en-suite bathroom and lockable safety box; Towels and shower gel are provided free of charge to all guests.

Food and Drink

Meals are provided on a full board basis including a light breakfast, full breakfast, lunch and dinner served buffet style in the indoor dining area. We offer a choice of International and locally inspired cuisine and can cater to most special dietary requirements with advance notice.

A complimentary range of carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices and teas are available at all times as well as instant and fresh brewed coffee, snacks and fresh fruit.

Guests may also select beer, wine, or spirits from our bar for an additional charge.

Please note: In accordance with local law, there is a ship's-only bar policy, meaning guests are not permitted to consume alcohol on board which they have bought with them.

Special dietary requirements:

Should you have any special dietary needs, please inform our reservations team at the time of confirming your liveboard booking so we can do our best to make provisions for those.

It can be very difficult to find low-fat or soya products that are common elsewhere. While we always do our best to accommodate dietary requests, please consider bringing some of your

own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk or seriously compromise your enjoyment of your holiday.

Clothing and Footwear

For your time on board we recommend casual, lightweight and comfortable clothes; swimwear, shorts, t-shirts and a sweater for cooler nights, particularly after multiple dives. We kindly ask guests to respect local customs and the wishes of others by donning appropriate clothing for meal times.

Most guests prefer to walk barefoot on board our vessel but sturdy sandals or cross-trainers are suggested for island visits.

For island village visits, modest clothing is recommended, i.e. covered shoulders (t-shirt rather than tank top) and long shorts (that cover the thighs) are considered appropriate for both men and women.

The boat is equipped with laundry facilities and our housekeeper is happy to launder your clothes during the trip. A nominal fee of 1.00 USD per item is charged for laundry, irrespective of size/ weight.

Electricity

The majority of power outlets on Solomons Master are 110V 60Hz US/ European style although there are some 220V sockets provided at the camera tables in the dining area.

European, and most other non-US electrical equipment generally require 220V at 50 hz so guests are advised to bring power converters and plug adapters with them to avoid potential damage to their equipment and ensure it charges correctly.

A limited number of universal plug adapters are available for guests to use onboard but we advise bringing your own to ensure you have the amount and type necessary.

Staying Connected

We regret that we are unable to provide internet/ Wi-Fi service on board.

Should you wish to have limited connectivity during your liveaboard, local SIM cards with data plans can be purchased in Honiara from either BMobile-Vodafone or OurTelekom. However, cell service and internet access is very limited throughout the Solomon Islands and there are many areas where the signal is very weak or not available at all. With this in mind, you should plan to be disconnected for the majority of your time on board Solomons Master.

There are satellite phone communications on board which guests can use to make outgoing calls in case of emergencies, the cost of which is \$4 per minute.

Should your family need to contact you in the event of an emergency back home they can do so via our office on the numbers at the end of this document. We will pass on a message, which can take up to 48 hours to be relayed depending on where the boat happens to be.

Smoking

Smoking on board is permitted in designated outdoor areas only.

Underwater Photography and Videography

Master Liveaboards vessels are equipped with specialised features for underwater photographers and videographers, which include:

- Indoor and outdoor work stations for the preparation and maintenance of cameras.
- Individual storage drawers for cameras and peripheral items.
- Large rinsing tanks with frequently changed fresh water.

Our crew are thoroughly briefed in the handling of delicate camera equipment and will offer to assist you when entering and exiting the water. However, each diver bears the sole responsibility to look after and care for their own camera equipment and fully assumes the risk of any loss or damage to such equipment.

Environmental considerations

Although there are recycling programs and facilities in place in the Solomons, they are very limited and are only able to process a small amount of recyclable plastic materials. We therefore ask our guests to consider the following to help with our mission to reduce our environmental impact.

Batteries

We kindly request that you take all used batteries home so that they can be recycled or disposed of properly as there are no such facilities in the Solomon Islands. Alternatively, consider using rechargeable batteries rather than single use but, don't forget to bring the charger with you.

Water Bottles

If you own a sports bottle, please bring it with you, or you can purchase one on board. If you don't have one and you don't want to purchase one, we have plenty of cups on board which you can use to ensure you remain well hydrated.

Plastic bags and wrappers

We do not provide plastic bags for purchases made on board, although reusable canvas bags are available for sale. Please help us minimise plastic waste by removing plastic wrappers and packaging from items before travelling. If you bring plastic bags with you, please reuse them, and take them home.

Toiletries

We kindly ask that guests consider the type of products which they are bringing with them and, where possible, to bring environmentally friendly toiletries for use on board, and to take partially or unused products home with them.

When selecting sun protection, please consider a rash guard or other cover as your primary defence. If you do require sunscreen, look for Reef Safe products which do not contain oxybenzone or other chemical ingredients that have been shown to damage corals.

Underwater

We operate a glove free boat as there should be no need to touch the coral or reefs while diving. However, you are welcome to bring a reef hook or muck stick/ nudi-pointer, should you wish to do so.

Pack for a Purpose - Books & Library Supplies

Solomons Master is a proud member of the [Pack for a Purpose](#) charitable organisation. You can help support our Literacy League program by bringing books and library supplies to Solomon Islands; You can find more information about our involvement and immediate supply needs in our blog: [Pack for a Purpose in the Solomons](#).

Please remove packaging from any products that you choose to bring to reduce plastic waste in the country.

Payments on Board

Marine and Port Fees & Taxes

The waters surrounding the Solomon Islands are vital to local communities. They provide food, transport, and form the backbone to the local way of life. Communities own the water surrounding their land from the high-tide mark out as far as the villagers can paddle. As part of their ownership rights, chiefs from each village collect Marine Kastom fees from all who use their waters.

The Kastom fees apply to all guests on board and are currently \$25 USD per night. The fee is tracked by our Trip Directors and distributed among the villages where we dive, snorkel, anchor or participate in village visits.

Please refer to your itinerary details for the amount payable for your trip. The applicable amount will be added to your invoice to be paid on board.

Optional Extras

Extras such as laundry, alcoholic drinks, and Master Liveboards merchandise, as well as equipment and nitrox which has not been paid for in advance can be paid for on board in cash or by credit card.

All prices onboard are quoted in USD. For cash payments we prefer USD or SBD; Due to a lack of banking facilities, exchange rates on board for payment in other currencies (EUR, GBP, AUD and NZD) are very unfavourable. We therefore recommend guests bring USD with them or withdraw SBD when they arrive. We suggest 300–500 USD (or equivalent currency) for any optional extras.

We can accept payment by Visa and Mastercard onboard for which there is a 3% surcharge.

PLEASE NOTE: For credit card payments on board, the total USD amount will be converted and charged in SBD using the prevailing rate as listed on Bank of South Pacific website on the day of embarkation. This may mean that the final amount charged to your card will be slightly different to your onboard invoice total due to exchange rate fluctuations, and exchange rate fees imposed by the card issuer.

Items that are paid in advance do not incur additional charges; we therefore strongly recommend adding equipment rental and nitrox costs to your liveboard booking to be paid prior to commencement of your holiday.

Tipping

We believe that tipping is a matter of personal choice. Should you feel that the crew has made your holiday extra special, they will certainly appreciate a tip which you can leave in cash. An envelope will be provided for your convenience by your cruise director for cash gratuities which will be divided equally amongst all the crew, including the captain and dive guides.

As part of the Solomon Islands culture is to work collectively, individual tipping is discouraged.

Safety on Board

Emergency Management & Equipment

All crew members have been extensively trained in emergency management procedures. A thorough boat safety briefing will be provided by your cruise director at the start of your trip, during which all guests will be requested to participate in a life jacket drill. Further practice scenarios may be performed during your cruise to assist our crew in keeping their skills sharp.

The vessel is equipped with many modern safety features including automated life rafts, EPIRB, satellite communication and emergency pumps.

First Aid

There is a fully stocked medical first aid kit for treating minor injuries and ailments, as well as for assisting trained medical professionals in remote locations. We have a full complement of medical grade oxygen on board which can be administered to divers through DAN kits or unit specific attachments.

Our dive teams are all qualified emergency responders. Should you feel unwell at any point during your cruise, please seek the advice of your cruise director who will be able to assist you.