



## Introduction

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Bula! Thank you for choosing a Madventurer project in Fiji. This pack is designed to give you an overview of the programme and help you to prepare in advance for your trip.

If you have any questions, or just want to talk to us about your trip, please feel free to give me a call or email at any time:

**Elaine Lawler**

**Email: [elaine@madventurer.com](mailto:elaine@madventurer.com)**

**Tel: 0845 121 1996 (local rate call from a UK landline)**

Note - To find out the latest travel advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, look at: [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel)

The itinerary is correct at time of printing.

**Please note: Occasionally our itineraries and placement information is updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research.**

**It is VERY IMPORTANT that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that might affect your plans.**

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## Madventurer in Fiji

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Madventurer creates opportunities for volunteers to teach overseas in local community schools embracing the cultural side of the communities as well as assisting with the education of the local people.

### **Where We Work**

Our Madventurer programme is based in Lautoka, the laid-back second city of Fiji. Lautoka is situated on the west of the main island, Viti Levu, about 30 Km from Nadi, which will be your arrival point into Fiji. Famous for being the centre of the sugar industry in Fiji you will be warmly welcomed to the 'Sugar City' on arrival.

Lautoka has a great mix of the Fijian and Indo-Fijian culture. Being away from the tourist trail it is a great place to live and discover how those on the island actually live in an urban environment.

Lautoka has everything you need from shops that stock practically everything, internet facilities, plenty of sports pitches, a swimming pool, cinema, good transport links, numerous eateries and plenty more to discover!

Lautoka is warm all year-round, with the hottest months being from December to April. Unfortunately though these are also the wetter months but tropical showers can happen any time, to keep the palm trees looking lush and green! There will definitely be no shortage of blue sky!

At weekends there will be the opportunity to leave Lautoka (independent travel) and visit some of the islands and beaches that Fiji is famous for. As Fiji is a tourist destination, there are plenty of activities on offer, such as diving, jet skiing, kayaking and snorkeling, or you could choose to get down to some serious relaxation on a beach.

### **MAD teachers in Fiji**

Given the key role in which education can play in achieving Fiji's vision of a '**peaceful and prosperous Fiji**', education is recognised as a core and essential service of the government. One of the greatest challenges facing the government is to ensure that young people leave school equipped with the skills and understanding to become responsible, informed and involved members of society, providing the human resource required for the labour market.

Fiji's education system is complex where schools and education have been set up under the guidance and administration of various religious organisations, this leads to a cross-cultural and multi-racial experience within the schools. However due to increased prices in text books, transport and tuition many families are unable to give their children the best education possible.

### **Teaching in Fiji**

"I have found my experience in Fiji amazing. I was really thrown in at the deep end being given a free reign with all the teaching and being trusted with whole classes at once"

**Ali Su, MAD teacher**

The Madventurer programme for 2010 is structured on what has been achieved in previous years. In 2009 we successfully completed 30 teaching placements in schools around Lautoka. Our partnership schools are all within a short distance of the Madventurer House, where you will be living alongside other venturers doing sports coaching.

Our main focus will probably be with two schools, Drasa Avenue Primary and Sunshine Special School. However we may also work in a few other schools in the local area.

## **Drasa Avenue Primary School**

Drasa Avenue is one of the best primary school in Lautoka. Popular with a lot of students from a very mixed background, you will find that teaching here offers opportunities not found in other schools. The mix of students at Drasa Avenue range from local Fijian & indo Fijian, to East Asian and many students from expatriate families, with backgrounds from Australia and New Zealand. A very proud school with strong academic success, and one that is more than happy to have Madventurer assist them, both in the classroom and on the sports field.

Working in Drasa Avenue school will offer more potential for personal development and toward being responsible for and leading your own class of students – which can sometimes be more than 30!

## **Sunshine Special School**

Sunshine is a small local school offering a fun place of learning and education. With an enrolment list of 100 students, it operates classes of 10 students with learning difficulties including those with Down syndrome, autism, hearing impairments and physical disabilities.

We first partnered with the school in 2007 offering a small number of placements, and in 2009 Madventurer volunteers were responsible for producing the schools first ever musical showcase to raise much needed funds for a permanent music teacher and to buy a variety of musical instruments for the children.

In just 4 weeks a small number of Mad volunteers were asked to organise a promotion of Arts & Performance, with the main aim of boosting the students' confidence and self-esteem – and to raise money for the school. Check our Maurice Speers' blog for his experience of it all on our website! The event was a huge success and made a profit of \$1,400 for the new music department. It is likely that we will be asked to host another similar event for 2010 also, so if you have any creative talent that you wish to share, then please let us know!

Please bear in mind though that teaching may be unavoidably cancelled due to school trips or litter picks (!) (please see "Fiji time" below).

### **Note: Half Term Holidays – First 2 weeks of May 2010**

In week 1 - In the half term breaks we switch location to our rural project base for the first week away from the Madventurer house, and combine living the rural Fijian lifestyle with some organized half term games with the kids of the village.

In week 2 - We head back to Lautoka for our holiday PE lessons. There will be restricted sports options for this week. You can get involved in more general sports as part of the clinics but again this will be restricted due to the school holidays during this week.

Please be advised that in the final week or two of term time then some teaching may also be restricted due to exams and revision time in the schools. The Fijians have a wonderful way of taking each day as it comes and this can extend to not mentioning school will be closed!

### **Registration**

At the beginning of your placement you will be required to register at the Ministry of Education (teachers and sport coaches). Our overseas crew will guide you through the registrations forms and accompany you to the Ministry of Education office. You will be given more details during your orientation meeting. Madventurer will cover the cost of the registration fee.

## **The Aim of our Fijian Teaching placements**

The main focus is to provide extra assistance to the students who need support with their class work. Ideally, you will aim to have a small group of students in your allocated class with whom you will offer more specialist attention and assistance during lesson time, particularly at Sunshine Special School. Sometimes assistance may be one to one, but you will be supported by the full time staff at the schools.

During your placement, then you may want to progress and offer teaching support whereby you will be responsible for a complete class, directing their studies each day, in cooperation with the school curriculum – but this is dependant on personal development and is encouraged to be initiated by yourself.

Development during your placement will depend on your goals & objectives and the requirements of the Principal and the school.

There may be times when you will need to offer more general classroom support, for example, taking the register, compiling test papers, marking and exam monitoring.

A typical day will follow a structured syllabus of topics similar to a British school, interspersed with enough recess/tea breaks to keep you well fed and watered, and offer time spent with other teachers who can offer assistance.

When it is time for PE, then you might find that it is your fellow venturers that will be there to lead the sports on the field. You are encouraged to join in too, or this is your time for admin work in the classroom!

As a teaching volunteer you will find that you will be one of the first to be up and out the house, and sometimes the last to return home! Evenings can then be spent socialising in the house with other venturers, drinks in town, and other sports and swimming at the local clubs.

As an active member of the school community then you will be encouraged to get involved with all aspects of school life, be it the schools Bula Night, Fancy Dress Fundraiser etc. Don't worry though, as you will find most Sport venturers will want to come along too!

### **The Mad Foundation**

The MAD Foundation is a UK Registered Charity (Reg. No. 1111805) which was founded in 2000 to support development projects contributing to healthcare, education, sports coaching and building projects for basic infrastructure such as schools, sanitation facilities and clinics in deprived communities all over the world. The money donated will go directly towards underprivileged communities and will fund sustainable development programmes, such as buildings materials and labour, sports coaching facilities or equipment, medical supplies and health equipment, educational supplies or scholarships.

Madventurer pays all administrative costs of the Mad Foundation, to increase the amount of funds available for development projects and placements overseas. By doing this we ensure that every single pound that goes into the Foundation is put to good use on development projects, rather than being absorbed into running costs. The Mad Team are also keen to do their bit by helping to organise extra events and fundraising activities which can help us to fund larger scale projects.

## Accommodation

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While on your placement you will be living in the Madventurer house in the suburbs of Lautoka overlooking the crystal blue waters of the Pacific Ocean. The house is set on two floors with a large open area and a small pool to cool off in. You will be sharing a room with up to 5 others, with 3 communal bathrooms in the house.

Evening meals are prepared by our Fijian Staff combining local dishes and western food. Breakfast is a relaxed affair and venturers are encouraged to serve themselves and sort themselves out with whatever they fancy from the kitchen. As a teaching volunteer you will find it is probably easier for you to prepare your lunch in the morning and take this with you, or perhaps try what is offered at the school tuck shops!

There should always be plenty of food in the house, although it may not be exactly what you are used to back home. Crew will be responsible for keeping the food stocked in the house but please assist them by letting them know if certain supplies are running low. You will be expected to wash up after yourselves, either individually or as a group.

## Arrival and Departure Procedures

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### **Pre-Project Accommodation (If you arrive early)**

If you arrive before Saturday then we recommend Nomads Skylodge for **pre-project accommodation**. It is a popular stop for backpackers, offers good priced dorm rooms and is close to the airport. They normally offer a free airport pick-up however it's best to check this before booking as it can depend on arrival dates/times. This will be classed as pre-project (also known as pre-tour) accommodation and you will need to budget separately for this. Please remember to take the number for the backpackers with you before you set off. If you have any problems you can contact them directly when you land. You will also have our overseas crew's mobile number as well for any emergencies, just remember to take this off the website before you head off.

You can follow the link below and book a room direct from the Madventurer website. Just select Country "**Fiji**" then City "**Nadi**" and this will bring up a list of accommodation. Nomads Skylodge should come up easily. Remember this is where you will be collected from on the Saturday so it's easier to book this accommodation. Please contact us if you have any problems booking!

<http://reservations.bookhostels.com/madventurer.com>

You will need to be available for pick up from Nomads Skylodge, Nadi, at **no later than 3pm on the Saturday**. Your crew will then take you to our Madventurer house base in Lautoka, where you will receive your orientation meeting to help you settle into the house and country.

### **Saturday Arrivals**

#### **Airport Pick-up (Free airport pick-up before 3pm on Saturday)**

If you fly in on the Saturday morning **your flight must get into Nadi Airport before 3pm** in order to clear customs and be available for the orientation meeting and airport pick-up. Please do not book any flights to arrive in after this time on the Saturday as our crew will not be able to collect you and you will incur an airport pick-up fee.

**Very Important - If you can't get a flight to arrive in before 3pm on the Saturday we suggest you arrive a day early and spend 1 night at the Nomads Skylodge instead, we also suggest you do this if your flight options include an arrival before 6am as it will be best to be fresh for the first day with us.** This will give you more time to get over any jetlag from your journey, and means you will get collected as a group and taken back to our Madventurer house in time for your orientation meeting. All pre-tour accommodation/transport/food must be budgeted for separately and the Nomads Skylodge is very reasonably priced.

### **Last day of Placement & Post-tour accommodation**

#### **Check-out of the Madventurer house for all volunteers is at 1pm on the Friday.**

Your placement will finish on a **Friday**, when transport will be provided back to Nadi the finishing point. All costs incurred after being transferred to Nadi will be at your expense. We normally find that volunteers will share a taxi back to the airport, or go on to do some independent travel, or spend 1 night, or the weekend in Nadi before flying home.

For those flying home on the Friday night our crew will arrange a drop off into Nadi the finishing point. From here you will need to make your own way back to the airport. For those who are flying home after Friday (Sat or Sun) you will still need to check out of the house at 1pm. This will give you time to check in to your post-tour accommodation.

Our overseas crew can help you to organise any post-tour accommodation in-country. Please make sure you request this early in your placement as hostels can get booked up fast.

### **Overview**

When you arrive in Fiji you need to make sure that you have the following:-

Passport

Travel Insurance details

Money to change (either travellers' cheques or cash) into Fijian cash, or a bank card

Immigration Details for form (given below)

Overseas crew Emergency Contact number (see [www.madventurer.net](http://www.madventurer.net))

(Nomads Skylodge number should you need it)

### **Important - Customs and Immigration**

When you are on the plane you will be given an entry form that you must complete and hand into Immigration when you have your passport stamped. The form is self-explanatory but you must write **'Tourism'** for your reason for entry and **'Nomads Sky Lodge, Nadi'** as the place you will be staying.

**Madventurer are not responsible for any other costs incurred at immigration so it's important that take a note of what needs to be written in advance of landing. If you fail to include the correct details you will incur additional costs.**

### **Emergency Contact Details**

**If you have any flight delays its important that you try and let our overseas crew know as soon as possible. You can call them or drop them a quick text with any delay info. All emergency contact details for our overseas crew are on the website under "About Mad" then "Contact Details", these can also be found at [www.madventurer.net](http://www.madventurer.net) . Please make a note of the emergency contact number before you head off.**

**In the event of an emergency, relatives should contact Madventurer HQ on 0845 121 1996. Outside of normal office hours, all emergency calls should be made to our overseas crew (number given on the link above). You can also leave a clear message on our HQ answer machine, with name, number and reason for calling.**

## Flights

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Madventurer work in partnership with STA Travel to offer you the best prices, flexibility and knowledge for all of your travel needs.

Use this opportunity to see the world! STA Travel can tailor-make your trip to suit your needs, so if you want to go travelling after your project with Madventurer or maybe visit friends or family in another country, let STA Travel know and they will organise it all. From Round the world tickets to discount cards, flights, accommodation and bus tours, STA Travel have it all.

For a flight quote email [madventurer@statravel.co.uk](mailto:madventurer@statravel.co.uk) or call STA Travel on 0871 468 0668 with your travel dates and airport details, along with your full name as printed on your passport (the one you will travel on) and telephone number.

**Please note that under our terms and conditions we will not cancel a Trip less than 60 days before departure except for unforeseen circumstances outside of the Company's control. This means that you should not be booking any non-refundable flights more than 60 days ahead of departure incase we do not have sufficient numbers (usually a minimum of 4) to run the trip. We recommend refundable flights.**

## Visas

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Please be aware that visa requirements may change, so you should check before applying to ensure that this information is still correct.

You must be in possession of a full passport (not temporary) with at least six clear sides in it, valid for at least six months after the project. If this is not the case, or if there is too much of a difference between your appearance now and your appearance on your passport photo, then you should apply for a new passport and allow plenty of time for the processing of your application. The visa is obtained once you arrive in Nadi airport off the flight, the '**Arrival Procedure**' section of this document (Above) will guide you through how to fill out the form correctly. It's very important that this is filled out correctly or you can incur extra costs.

If you do not hold a British Passport please consult the Fijian Embassy in your country for Visa assistance. Please allow plenty of time to make sure that before you fly, you are aware of your own visa situation.

## Insurance

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Madventurer has joined forces with STA TRAVEL to bring you low cost insurance. With access to a variety of tailored products they strive to offer insurance policies to suit all needs and pockets. Give STA TRAVEL a try now and see how much you could save - 08714680686.

Please make sure every activity you are going to be taking part in is covered on the policy. There are 3 different policies to choose from, here is a brief over view of the policies. If you are doing independent travel at weekends, before or after your placement then you need to be covered for this as well.

### **Budget Insurance**

Every trip and traveller is different, so we offer different types of cover to help you find the most appropriate...

The Budget cover is ideal for anyone travelling light and on a tight budget. Your basic essentials are covered, giving you enough protection to feel safe and secure on your travels.

### **Standard Insurance**

Our standard cover gives you an extensive range of cover at a competitive price.

It's our middle-of-the-road cover for those that want the comfort of extra protection but without all the bells and whistles.

### **Premier Insurance**

The premier policy offers our most extensive protection featuring higher levels of cover, some additional benefits and an even wider range of hazardous sports/adrenalin activities. All elements of our Standard and Budget policies are included as well as some additional benefits.

### **Valuable or sentimental items**

**You are strongly advised not to take items of a valuable or personal nature like ipods, expensive jewellery/clothing etc. If you do decide to take digital cameras or phones please make sure these are covered in your travel insurance policy. Every policy will differ slightly so it's best to enquire about personal item cover.**

## The Role of Crew

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You may have a 2 or 3 Crew Leaders (depending on date of travel) who will live alongside you in the Madventurer house. Your crew leader is responsible for ensuring you have all the information, support and help you need to make sure you get the most out of your project. Typically, your Crew were probably once a venturer in Fiji too, but decided to return because they love it so much! Crew will be there to set things up, ensure the smooth running of the project and deal with any problems that may arise.

Here are a few points highlighting what you can expect:

Crew are there to liaise with local partners who may be involved, to ensure the smooth running of your project. Crew are the in-country representatives of Madventurer.

### **Problems or Issues on your Placement**

If you are unsatisfied or unhappy with anything whilst on your placement in Fiji then it's very important that you speak to your overseas crew first, in order for them to help rectify the problem. Please don't leave this until a few weeks into your placement, or the end, or until you get home, **as its very difficult for us to be able to do anything about it then.** You can, of course, always contact Madventurer HQ in Newcastle by phone or email from overseas at any time if you wish to, however your overseas crew would be the first port of call for any placement issues.

Crew are not responsible for organising weekend activities. On occasions they may decide to arrange a trip. However venturers are expected to organise weekend trips themselves as part of the experience and they can seek advice from the Crew for this. Crew are trained and equipped to deal with any emergency situation which may arise but they may not be near you when you travel independently. It is always advisable to let you crew know where you are going and when you are expecting to return.

Finally, Crew are there to make sure you have a good time and get the most out of your project. If you have any ideas, please talk to the Crew (e.g. if you want to start extra activities, introduce new sports etc.). Your Crew will be more than happy to assist you in channeling your enthusiasm and helping your ideas reach fruition.

If you accidentally break something in the Madventurer house you will be asked to replace this right away. If this is not done our Madventurer crew will replace the item/s and you will need to pay the given amount to our crew. Failure to do so will mean that you will be asked to leave the Madventurer house and placement without refund.

## Documents

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You must bring the originals listed below. We strongly recommend that you also bring photocopies of each item. Keep photocopies in a separate file/wallet, along with items such as your Travellers Cheques receipt [see 'Money']: A good travel tip is to scan a copy of each document then attach them to an email, and email yourself a copy of each. You can also email a friend/family member as well.

Passport

**IMPORTANT:** Your passport must be valid for at least six months from your return date back home

Air tickets / E-Ticket printout

Insurance certificate

Insurance details

Any student cards

Passport Photos [as backup and for any onward travel]

Vaccination record form [for your own reference, and in the case of an emergency]

Immigration Details for form (given in this document)

Overseas crew Emergency Contact number (you can get this from the website – madventurer.net)

## Medical Kit

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We provide First Aid kits on all projects, for use by crew in emergencies. We recommend that you also take your own medical kit for personal use as well, including any medication that you know you are likely use, especially if you intend to do independent travel.

Here is a guideline:

Paracetamol/Ibuprofen

Adhesive plasters

Antiseptic wipes

Sun Block cream (bring a range including high protection)

Aftersun / moisturiser

Insect repellent

Bite & sting relief ointment

Diarrhoea treatment and rehydration sachets

Support bandages or strapping (if you need any)

It is easy to stock up your medical kit from the many pharmacies in Fiji, so just bring enough to start off with.

Please see the InterHealth Information on our website. Once you book up with us you can logon to the online info, Inter Health will just ask us to confirm your booking first. They you will have access to their general health advice online. It is also very important that you visit your own doctor or travel nurse for individual advice as well. They are the only one's who can recommend individual information as they will have your medical records and details of any allergies.

## Clothing

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Travel light. Remember that it is easy to lose things when travelling, and valuable items can get broken. It is also likely that you will want to bring back Fijian curios/memorabilia so leave some room in your bag! Its best to also check your luggage allowance before you fly with your airport.

In general, clothing should be lightweight, tough and casual. The days in Fiji vary from warm and breezy to hot and humid. Evenings can get quite chilly so depending on your tolerance of weather bring a couple of good jumpers, and a raincoat is always useful. Note that anything white will not stay that way; Fijian mud is particularly permanent! Women should dress modestly out of respect to local sensitivities. T-shirts and long shorts are fine but avoid anything too revealing. In tourist resorts, bikinis and skimpier clothing are accepted.

You may want to bring some going out clothes for nights out. Bear in mind that flip flops and shorts are not allowed in the bars on Friday and Saturday nights, but generally it is quite casual.

You will no doubt buy a sulu (Fijian sarong) whilst out here, and possibly a Bula shirt, both of which will be appropriate to wear when visiting villages.

### **Our suggested clothing list is as follows:**

- Semi formal wear for classroom teaching i.e. White shirt/blouse, trousers/skirt, leather sandals/shoes
- Shorts
- T-shirts/tops
- 1 pair sandals/flip flops
- Underwear including socks
- Long-sleeved top [for evenings when mosquitoes are out]
- Fleece/sweatshirt [for cooler evenings]
- Lightweight trousers
- Hat/cap for protection against sun
- Sunglasses
- Swimming gear
- Lightweight rainproof jacket
- 'Going out' clothes

### **Other Equipment**

- Watch
- Alarm clock
- Backpack [60-80 litre capacity should be enough]
- Day bag / small rucksack
- 2 towels – one for washing, one for the beach
- Insect repellent
- Bite/sting relief ointment
- Torch with spare batteries
- Sun cream [with high protection factor]
- Aftersun / moisturiser
- Toiletries
- Camera [if digital bring cable to put photos/videos onto cd at internet cafés or 4/5 rolls of film per month otherwise]
- Memory cards for digital camera, and spare battery
- Pack of cards/books/music [avoid obvious displays of wealth in public]
- Guide book
- Australasian adaptor if any electrical equipment
- Mobile (unlocked if you want to buy Fijian sim card) and charger – optional

## Money

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The currency in Fiji is the Fijian Dollar, and currently £1 will buy you about 3.1 Fijian dollars. This rate will fluctuate but is a general guide. Please check for up to date exchange rates.

**£1 = \$3.1 Fijian**

**Rate correct as of Sept 2009**

### **How to take your money**

It is a good idea to bring some Fijian dollars with you to have some local currency when you arrive. It is possible to exchange money or make an ATM withdrawal immediately inside the arrivals terminal if you would rather do that.

You can withdraw cash from a number of ATMs across Fiji with the following cards: Cirrus, Maestro (usually with a SWITCH card), Visa and Mastercard. There will normally be a small charge of about £1.50 for each withdrawal. Check with your UK bank before leaving how much they charge for withdrawals, and whether ANZ or Westpac ATM's are cheaper when you get to Fiji. You will be charged interest when using credit cards for ATM withdrawals so it is better to use a debit card. It would be a good idea to organise internet banking, as you may not be able to check your balance from the ATM's.

It is also a good idea to use traveller's cheques as back-up if cards are lost or stolen. Your traveller's cheques should be in pounds sterling. Traveller's cheques should be purchased from well known companies such as American Express or VISA/Barclays for ease of replacement if they are lost. Traveller's cheques receipt(s) and a copy of the numbers should be kept separately from your traveller's cheques for security reasons.

### **Emergency Funds**

Please also make sure you have access to additional emergency funds, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, civil unrest or an outbreak of swine or bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned programmes. This change may have to be decided prior to departure. This can be through credit or debit cards. The amount will depend on your length of stay and any pre or post tour travel. We also recommend using Western Union for emergency cash when you are overseas ([www.ukmoneytransfer.com](http://www.ukmoneytransfer.com)).

### **Changing on Arrival**

When you arrive you will have the opportunity to change money in the arrivals hall if you need to. Alternatively there are places outside the arrivals hall in Nadi, or when you get to Lautoka where you can change money with the aid of your crew. Your crew can advise you as to what you will need, where exchange/banks etc are available as you travel.

**The following should help you to work out what you will need to pay for once you are in Fiji:**

#### **What We Cover:**

An airport pick-up if arriving on the Saturday before 3pm

Transfer from Nomads Skylodge to Madventurer house for Orientation meeting

All accommodation & food whilst at the Madventurer house on your designated project (Friday, last nights accommodation is not included)

Transfer from Madventurer to Nadi at the end of your placement (Friday)

## **What We Do Not Cover:**

Accommodation/transport and food prior to the project start date

Travel, accommodation and food at weekends if you choose to leave the Madventurer house to travel to the islands etc, which most venturers do.

Costs of any mid-project breaks you may take - costs will vary considerably depending on what you intend to do.

Accommodation, food and travel beyond the end date of the placement

**Your placement will finish on a Friday and accommodation for this night is not included. You will need to budget separately for a transfer back to the airport.**

## **Personal spending money**

The amount of spending money that you need in Fiji can vary greatly depending upon your own personal budget! Travelling on local transport, eating local food and being prepared to rough it a bit can get you by on a lot less than if eating in western style restaurants, staying in nice hotels, going out every night and doing activities such as scuba diving as these will increase costs significantly. From past experience we recommend the following budgets for personal spending money to the typical madventurer as £80-150 per week.



## **Communication**

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### **Internet**

Internet access is readily available and relatively cheap and reliable. The cheaper places tend to have a slower connection. As a rule the more rural you get the slower the access will be, and the more expensive.

Yahoo accounts are generally faster to download compared to Hotmail. If you use internet banking ensure that you have friends or family to manage things for you back home. It is advised that you set up address books to your friends, and delete any unwanted emails before you arrive. This will save download times.

Some internet cafés have CD burning facilities for photos etc. Bring any cables to link up your digital camera to a computer.

### **Mobile Phones**

If you wish to take your mobile then you can buy a local sim card in Fiji for about \$50 that will reduce call costs significantly, and give you cheap texts. It is easiest to get your phone unlocked before you depart the UK so it will accept the local sim card. Mobiles are definitely not a necessity but are handy for arranging to meet up with other venturers when coaching at different times, or on weekends away, or for emergencies. Please check that your travel insurance covers items of a personal/expensive nature (phones/cameras).

### **Phone calls**

A \$20 overseas phone card gives you about 30 minutes talk time to a UK landline. Public phones all need phone cards.

## Post

In Lautoka we can collect post marked clearly to Madventurer. The address is:

Name  
c/o Madventurer  
PO Box 4555  
Lautoka  
Fiji

A few tips:

- Ask the sender to put their name on the reverse of the envelope.
- Letters from the UK take approximately 10 days (however post has been known to take up to 2-4 weeks)
- Please do not have anything of value posted to Fiji for you, including credit cards or prescription drugs.
- Heavy or bulky sports equipment can be posted to the Madventurer house in advance of your placement (depending on departure date) but we can not guarantee its safe arrival or delivery. Please be aware there will be a postage charge to collect your items, for which Madventurer are not responsible.
- We therefore recommend that you bring all essential items with you when you travel.
- Our crew are not responsible for collecting posted items.

In an emergency if something needs to be delivered to you, the office should be contacted for further advice on 0845 121 1996.

## Emergency Communication

If somebody needs to contact you in an emergency while you are in Fiji, they should call Mad HQ on **0845 121 1996**. Out of office hours, please use our emergency contact details for our overseas crew. You can also leave a clear message on our HQ answer machine with name, number, date and reason for calling.

### **Crew Mobile Phones**

All of our Crew carry mobile phones, which can be used in an emergency. These are not available to make or receive routine calls for madventurers.

## Security

It is worth splitting your money between various places and keeping a small amount of cash as a reserve in case of emergencies. Many venturers use a money belt to contain the bulk of their money and keep daily amounts in a wallet. If the money belt is visible, then it is USELESS. **The money belts/purses worn round the neck or as bum bags should NEVER be worn, as they could make you a target for mugging.** Please check your travel insurance for how much money you are covered for carrying.

Please don't carry your important documents such as passport/insurance and tickets on your body while walking around.

You can use your wallet to pay for daily items so that you don't need to expose the money belt. Some venturers choose to carry two wallets for increased security / bargaining ability at markets [claiming to only have a certain amount of money left].

In most areas there is little to fear from violence, although foreigners can be a tempting target for pickpockets and con men. Be wary of anyone with a hard luck story, asking for assistance, soliciting sponsorship (particularly education) or anyone offering a deal to change money at favourable rates – these are often con artists. Never leave things lying around since they will certainly be stolen and be alert at all times, particularly in crowded areas or after changing money.

Please be careful with your valuables, i.e. do not leave anything valuable (purse/camera etc.) lying around or wear any expensive watches/jewellery. We advise that it is best not to bring any expensive jewellery, cameras, watches etc. with you at all.

Make sure the house is kept locked at all times, as opportune burglaries are not uncommon.

Be careful when you walk after dark and never walk alone at night, particularly in unlit areas. Take taxis in cities at night and around unfamiliar areas. Try to stick with other people.

## Cultural Sensitivity

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Please remember that you are a guest in the local community and are representing your country as well as Madventurer. Always take time to treat people with respect and, although things may not happen as quickly and easily as they would back home, be patient and understanding. An ability to keep calm when frustrated will win you many friends in Fiji and will also improve your time on and off the project site.

Fijians are a reserved and soft-spoken race who consider politeness and respect very important. Saying “Bula” to anyone and everyone works well, as does “vinaka” (thank you) said as many times as possible! Be prepared to embrace the concept of Fiji time, and enjoy the stress-free island life.

**Madventurer has a strict zero-tolerance policy on the use of illegal drugs. Penalties are severe if you are caught with drugs in Fiji, and there is very little either Madventurer or the British High Commission can do for anyone convicted of a crime under Fijian law.**

### “Fiji Time”

The native Fijian community like to live a little, how shall we say, erm, ‘slower’, than perhaps you might be used to in the Western World – more so if you head to the villages!

Fiji has an amazing culture, and ‘Fiji time’ is just one small piece to this amazing nation.

Fijians tend to live their lives very much in the ‘now’ – tomorrow is the day to think about and plan, well, you’ve guessed it – tomorrow! Therefore, trying to plan ahead in Fiji can be quite a challenge, and frustratingly, sometimes it can happen very easily, other times very hard – there seems to be no balance.

Things in Fiji tend to happen on the day they say it will happen, just nowhere near the time they said it will – but it will happen eventually!

And unfortunately this affects how Madventurer operates in Fiji. During your time as a venturer you will experience a lot of Fiji time! If it’s classes running late, or even last minute cancellations (the weather!), buses running later (!), waiting for meals, training sessions late or cancelled or any form of customer service, or just waiting and sitting it out....you’ll see it happening all over the place, plain old Fiji Time.

Madventurer say, ‘embrace & enjoy it’ – it is a way of life that once you have returned home then you will probably be desperate for a dose of ‘Fiji time’. You will get out exactly what you put in!

Your crew will try and balance 'Fiji time' when in the house.....so a mix of western expectations with what a relaxed nation dictates....we'll try our best, but once you understand and embrace 'Fiji time' you will have a better time in Fiji! Just remember – the coup in December 2006 was the Military taking over the Government. However, it was delayed because of you've guessed it – a rugby match!.....between the Military & Police no less!!! ...and then it was the weekend, and that, as the coup initiator, the Leader of the Military says "is a time for celebrating and communities to drink kava"...so 4 days later than planned, the Military peacefully took over the Fijian government! Classic Fiji Time.

## Language

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English is the national language in Fiji, but Fijian (with many dialects) and Fiji-Hindi are commonly used by locals. Fijians love to hear you saying a few words in their language, and appreciate the effort you make. Below are a few of the most useful words to know, to get you started:

### **English**

Hello  
Good morning  
Yes  
Thank you  
Thank you very much  
Good bye

### **Fijian (*pronunciation*)**

Bula  
Yadra (*yandra*)  
Io (*eee-o*)  
Vinaka  
Vinaka vaka levu  
Moce (*mothey*)

## After Your Project

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### **Feedback**

We may ask you to complete a questionnaire at the end of your project and/or expedition to give us some feedback as to how you found your experience. Positive and honest feedback is appreciated by all members of staff and crew.

### **Fiji Island Safari**

If you would like to get involved in an adventure after your placement then check out details of our very own Fiji Island safari on the Mad website, just follow the link below. You can experience traditional Fijian life in remote villages, raft grade IV rapids, kayak through lush mountain rainforests, relax on some of the world's most beautiful beaches, trek in ancient volcanic highlands, snorkel with Manta Rays and even get a PADI qualification all during the course of this action packed yet totally relaxed experience.

<http://www.madventurer.com/madventures/fiji-island-safari-21-days>

### **The Mad Tribe**

After completion of your placement you will be an official member of the Mad Tribe! This will ensure that you stay in touch with the rest of the Crew and venturers from your project group, us here at Madventurer HQ, and the wider family of madventurers who have been involved in projects and placements around the world. If you change your telephone number/email address then please feel free to let us know.

You may also receive a monthly newsletter with updates on previous projects and information about exciting new development projects around the world, in fact, everything that's going on in the Madventurer world. There are also opportunities to follow and support our development work around the world through our registered charity the Mad Foundation.

### **We want your Blogs, Photos and Videos!**

**Make Friends with the Chief!** If you have not joined our '**Madventurer**' facebook group yet do it now!!! Our Founder – Chief Togbe Mottey I (aka '**John Lawler**') would love to see your photos of your trip and so will the guys who work hard back at Mad HQ in the UK – send him a friend request and he'll be sure to confirm you!

Before you depart you can set up your own MAD Tribe Blog ([www.madtribe.com](http://www.madtribe.com)) by going to <http://www.madtribe.com/register> and following the online instructions. This is an excellent way to keep friends/family updated on your travel. You can even upload photos and create a travel journal.

At any point during your trip or when you return you can access the Mad Tribe Blog allowing you to keep everyone back home and us here in HQ up to date with what your doing or have been doing whilst on a Madventurer project.

Our volunteers are always kind enough to let us have access to their placement photos. It would be great if we could get a few copies of your photos from your time in Fiji for our blog/brochure/posters. You can email a few copies over to our Mad HQ or pop a disc in the post as well.

We hope you enjoy your time in Fiji and please don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any further information on 0845 121 1996! Happy Travels!

**VINAKA VAKA LEVU!**  
**SEE YOU IN FIJI!!!**