

The Vanuatu Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports



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Rev 2024.v4 Date 26 April, 2024

Keep the Vanuatu Compendium alive by being a contributor!
Submit updates on atolls, islands, anchorages, businesses, snorkel spots, etc...
It's easy to participate and will help other cruisers for years to come.

Email Soggy Paws at sherry@svsogypaws-dot-com.

You can also contact us on Sailmail at WDI5677

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Revision Log

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the years!!

Rev	Date	Notes:
2024.4	26 April 2024	Various updates from Eastern Stream on The Banks Islands, Maewo, Port Vila, Lolowai Bay, and Naone Waterfalls.
2024.3	12 April 2024	Various updates from Vanuatu WhatsApp and Facebook group.
2024.2	15 February 2024	Updates from Katoa 2 on several islands. Various updates from social media groups.
2024.1	2 January 2024	Reorganization of entire guide by Sugar Shack. Various updates from several sources (Vanuatu WhatsApp Group, Vanuatu Facebook Groups, and Yacht MIZ MAE's guide to Vanuatu by Nicola Rhind) listed "As reported to Sugar Shack." Numerous updates from cruisers on Complicite, Reflection, Dandelion, and Eastern Stream
2019.4	June 2019	Updates on clearing in at Aneityum, some weather and volcano info. Indigo II's anchorages coming from the north.
2019.3	May 27, 2019	Various updates from Sloepmouche (SSCA) during their 5-year stay
2019.2	April 13, 2019	Various updates
2019.1	Feb 21, 2019	Updates North through Vanuatu from Wandering Waterhorse, and Several Others
2018.001	Dec 15, 2018,	Bits from Verite's FB posts as they passed through Vanuatu in mid-2018. Field Trip blog posts from 2016 and 2017
A	July 4, 2010	Creation of Compendium by Soggy Paws

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1	ORGANIZATION OF THE GUIDE.....	11
1.2	CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION	12
1.2.1	<i>Ports of Entry</i>	12
1.2.2	<i>Clearance Procedure</i>	13
1.2.3	<i>Domestic Cruising</i>	14
1.2.4	<i>International Clearance</i>	14
1.2.5	<i>Immigration</i>	15
1.2.6	<i>Customs, Biosecurity, and Quarantine</i>	15
1.2.7	<i>Yacht Length of Stay</i>	16
1.3	GETTING VISITORS IN AND OUT	17
1.4	NAVIGATING AROUND CORAL	17
1.4.1	<i>KAPS and mbtiles (used by charting programs like OpenCPN)</i>	17
1.4.2	<i>Anchoring in Coral</i>	17
1.5	WEATHER	19
1.5.1	<i>Volcano Alerts</i>	19
1.5.2	<i>General Weather Conditions</i>	19
1.5.3	<i>Weather Sources - with Onboard Email / SSB</i>	19
1.5.4	<i>Weather Sources – Voice</i>	20
1.5.5	<i>Weather Sources - Internet</i>	20
1.5.6	<i>Tropical Weather & Cruising During Cyclone Season</i>	21
1.5.7	<i>Tsunami Information</i>	21
1.6	OVERVIEW OF VANUATU	21
1.6.1	<i>Time Zone</i>	21
1.6.2	<i>Currency</i>	22
1.6.3	<i>Protocols for Visitors</i>	22
1.6.4	<i>Forbidden Anchorages and Zones</i>	22
1.6.5	<i>History and Customs</i>	22
1.6.6	<i>What is Kastom?</i>	23
1.6.7	<i>Local Languages & Phrases</i>	24
1.6.8	<i>Traditional Economy</i>	25
1.6.9	<i>Land Diving (Naghol)</i>	25
1.6.10	<i>Festivals</i>	25
1.6.11	<i>Kava</i>	26
1.6.12	<i>Fishing</i>	26
1.6.13	<i>Dugongs</i>	27
1.6.14	<i>Sharks</i>	27
1.6.15	<i>Malaria and Other Health Issues</i>	27
1.7	YACHTSMEN SERVICES – OVERVIEW	27
1.7.1	<i>Cooking Gas (Propane & Butane)</i>	27
1.7.2	<i>Fuel (Diesel & Gasoline)</i>	28
1.7.3	<i>Trash and Recycling</i>	28
1.7.4	<i>Water</i>	28
1.8	GENERAL SERVICES – OVERVIEW	28
1.8.1	<i>Banks & ATMs</i>	28
1.8.2	<i>Boat Bottom Cleaning</i>	28
1.8.3	<i>Boat Parts and Repairs</i>	29
1.8.4	<i>Haul Out, Storage, Repair Facilities</i>	29
1.8.5	<i>Marine Services</i>	29
1.8.6	<i>Medical & Health</i>	29
1.8.7	<i>Provisions</i>	30

1.8.8	Shipping Parts & Mail	30
1.9	COMMUNICATIONS	30
1.9.1	Internet & Cell Phone Coverage	30
1.9.2	VHF	31
1.9.3	SSB Radio Nets	31
1.9.4	Real Time Tracking	32
1.10	CRUISING INFORMATION SOURCES	33
1.10.1	Local Websites	33
1.10.2	Digital Guide & Apps	33
1.10.3	Pacific Rally	33
1.10.4	Noonsite	33
1.10.5	Seven Seas Cruising Association	33
1.10.6	Pacific Puddle Jump Yahoo Group	34
1.10.7	Facebook Groups	34
1.10.8	WhatsApp Group	34
1.10.9	Ocean Cruising Club	34
1.10.10	Cruiser Reports	34
2	PASSAGE REPORTS	35
2.1	SAILING TO / FROM VANUATU	35
2.1.1	From Australia to Vanuatu	35
2.1.2	From Vanuatu to New Zealand	36
2.1.3	From Fiji to Vanuatu	37
2.2	PASSAGES WITHIN VANUATU	37
2.2.1	Port Vila to Santo	37
2.2.2	Tanna to Port Vila	37
2.2.3	Aneityum to Tanna	38
2.2.4	Between Islands	38
3	MYSTERY ISLAND	38
4	ANEITYUM (ANATOM)	38
4.1	ANELGHOWHAT BAY	38
4.1.1	Anchorage	39
4.1.2	General Services	39
4.1.3	Activities	40
4.1.4	Cruiser Reports	40
4.2	ANAMNET BAY	40
4.2.1	Anchorage	41
4.2.2	Cruiser Report	41
4.3	ITCHEPTHAY BAY	41
4.3.1	Anchorage	41
4.3.2	Cruiser Report	41
5	TANNA ISLAND	41
5.1	PORT RESOLUTION	41
5.1.1	Pass	41
5.1.2	Anchorage	42
5.1.3	General Services	42
5.1.4	Formalities	42
5.1.5	Provisions	43
5.1.6	Restaurants	43
5.1.7	Yacht Club	43
5.1.8	Activities	43
5.1.9	Cruiser Reports	45
5.2	SHARK'S BAY	45

5.2.1	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	46
5.3	LENAKEL.....	46
5.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	46
5.3.2	<i>General Services</i>	46
5.3.3	<i>Activities</i>	47
5.3.4	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	47
5.4	EVERGREEN RESORT BAY.....	47
5.4.1	<i>Pass</i>	47
5.4.2	<i>Anchorage</i>	47
5.4.3	<i>Activities</i>	47
5.4.4	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	48
5.5	BLACK SANDS / LONALOMO.....	48
5.5.1	<i>Anchorage:</i>	48
5.5.2	<i>General Services</i>	48
5.5.3	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	48
6	ANIWA	49
6.1	ANCHORAGE	49
6.2	CRUISER REPORT	49
7	ERROMANGO ISLAND	49
7.1	DILLON'S BAY (WEST SIDE)	49
7.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	49
7.1.2	<i>Activities</i>	50
7.1.3	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	50
7.2	PONAMIAS BAY	50
7.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	50
7.3	SOWKI BAY.....	51
7.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	51
7.4	PORT NARVIN	51
7.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	51
7.4.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	51
8	EFATE ISLAND	51
8.1	TUKUTU BAY (SOUTH WEST SIDE OF EFATE).....	51
8.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	51
8.2	PORT VILA.....	51
8.2.1	<i>Pass</i>	51
8.2.2	<i>Anchorage</i>	51
8.2.3	<i>Yachtsmen Services</i>	53
8.2.4	<i>General Services</i>	54
8.2.5	<i>Provisions</i>	56
8.2.6	<i>Restaurants</i>	56
8.2.7	<i>Activities</i>	56
8.2.8	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	57
8.3	BLACK SANDS BAY	57
8.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	57
8.3.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	57
8.4	MELE BAY	57
8.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	57
8.4.2	<i>Provisions</i>	58
8.4.3	<i>Restaurant</i>	58
8.4.4	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	58
8.5	PORT HAVANA (HAVANNAH) HARBOR IN NW CORNER.....	59
8.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	59

8.5.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	59
8.6	NGUNA / PELE ISLANDS	59
8.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	60
8.6.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	60
9	EPI ISLAND	60
9.1	CAPE KAMBIOKA	60
9.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	60
9.2	MAPOUNA BAY	60
9.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	60
9.2.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	60
9.3	LAMEN BAY	60
9.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	60
9.3.2	<i>Restaurant</i>	61
9.3.3	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	61
9.4	REVOLIE BAY	61
9.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	61
9.4.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	61
10	MASKELYNE ISLANDS	62
10.1	MASKELYNE ARCHIPELAGO	62
10.1.1	<i>Pass</i>	62
10.1.2	<i>Anchorage</i>	62
10.1.3	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	62
10.2	SANKO (SAKAO) ISLAND	62
10.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	62
10.3	AWEI ISLAND	63
10.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	63
10.3.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	63
10.4	UILENDEUV ISLAND	63
10.4.1	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	63
10.5	ULIVEO ISLAND	63
10.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	63
10.5.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	64
10.6	LUTES	64
10.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	64
10.6.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	64
10.7	AVOKH ISLAND	65
10.7.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	65
10.8	PESCARUS	65
10.8.1	<i>Pass</i>	65
10.8.2	<i>Anchorage Uliveo</i>	65
10.8.3	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	65
10.9	AKHAMB ISLAND	65
10.9.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	65
11	MALEKULA	65
11.1	WILLEKH BAY	65
11.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	66
11.1.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	66
11.2	LAMBOUMBU BAY	66
11.2.1	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	66
11.3	TAVENDRUA AND DIXON REEFS	66
11.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	66
11.3.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	67

11.4	MELIP BAY	67
11.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	67
11.4.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	67
11.5	METENOVOR BAY (SOUTHWEST BAY)	67
11.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	67
11.5.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	68
11.6	MALUA	68
11.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	68
11.6.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	68
11.7	BUSHMAN'S BAY	68
11.7.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	69
11.7.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	69
11.8	PORT SANDWICH	69
11.8.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	69
11.8.2	<i>Provisions</i>	69
11.8.3	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	69
11.9	BANAM BAY	70
11.9.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	70
11.9.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	70
11.10	PANKUMU BAY	70
11.10.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	70
11.10.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	70
11.11	CRAB BAY	70
11.11.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	70
11.12	NUNBECKEN BAY	71
11.12.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	71
11.13	PORT STANLEY	71
11.13.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	71
11.14	NORSUP ISLAND	71
11.14.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	71
11.15	WALA ISLAND	71
11.15.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	71
11.15.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	72
11.16	VAO ISLAND	72
11.16.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	72
11.16.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	72
12	AMBRYM ISLAND	72
12.1	CRAIG'S COVE	72
12.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	72
12.1.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	72
12.2	HOT POOLS	73
12.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	73
12.2.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	73
12.3	RANVETLAM	73
12.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	73
12.3.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	73
12.4	RANON	73
12.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	73
12.4.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	74
12.5	NOBUL / NEBUL	74
12.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	74
12.5.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	74
12.6	LONWOLWOL LAKE	75
12.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	75

12.6.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	75
13	PAAMA	76
13.1	ANCHORAGE	76
14	AORE ISLAND	76
14.1	ANCHORAGE	76
14.2	PROVISIONS.....	76
14.3	ACTIVITIES.....	76
14.4	CRUISER REPORTS	77
15	RATUA ISLAND	77
15.1	ANCHORAGE	77
15.2	CRUISER REPORT	77
16	ESPIRITU SANTO (VANUATU) AKA "SANTO"	78
16.1	PORT OLRV	78
16.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	78
16.1.2	<i>Provisions</i>	78
16.1.3	<i>Restaurants</i>	78
16.1.4	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	78
16.2	HOG HARBOR / CHAMPAGNE BEACH.....	78
16.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	78
16.2.2	<i>General Provisions</i>	79
16.2.3	<i>Provisions</i>	79
16.2.4	<i>Restaurant</i>	79
16.2.5	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	79
16.3	BIG BAY	79
16.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	79
16.3.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	79
16.4	TURTLE BAY	80
16.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	80
16.5	PETERSON (PATERSON) LAGOON	80
16.5.1	<i>Pass</i>	80
16.5.2	<i>Anchorage</i>	80
16.5.3	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	80
16.6	SURUNDU (SURUNDA) BAY.....	81
16.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	81
16.6.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	81
16.7	PALIKULO BAY.....	81
16.7.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	81
16.7.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	82
16.8	LUGANVILLE (PORT OF ENTRY)	82
16.8.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	82
16.8.2	<i>Yachtsmen Services</i>	82
16.8.3	<i>General Services</i>	83
16.8.4	<i>Activities</i>	83
16.8.5	<i>Diving</i>	83
16.8.6	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	85
16.9	WUSI BAY	85
16.9.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	85
17	OYSTER ISLAND (MALWEPE)	85
17.1	ANCHORAGE	85
17.2	CRUISER REPORT	85

18	AESE ISLAND	85
18.1	ANCHORAGE	85
19	MAEVA ISLAND	86
19.1	PASS	86
19.2	ANCHORAGE	86
19.3	CRUISER REPORT	86
20	PENTECOST	86
20.1	MARTELLI BAY (SOUTH PENTECOST).....	86
20.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	86
20.1.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	87
20.2	BAY HOMO / HOME BAY (SW SIDE).....	87
20.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	87
20.2.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	87
20.3	WALI (LAND DIVING)	88
20.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	88
20.3.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	88
20.4	LEMOT.....	88
20.4.1	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	88
20.5	LONDOT BAY.....	88
20.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	88
20.5.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	88
20.6	WATERFALL BAY (WEST SIDE).....	89
20.6.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	89
20.6.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	89
20.7	LOLTONG BAY (NW SIDE)	89
20.7.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	89
20.7.2	<i>Provisions</i>	89
20.7.3	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	89
20.8	LAONE BAY.....	90
20.8.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	90
20.8.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	90
21	AMBAE.....	90
21.1	VOLCANO ALERTS	90
21.2	VANIHE BAY (NW SIDE)	90
21.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	90
21.2.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	90
21.3	LALOWAI / LOLOWAI BAY	91
21.3.1	<i>Pass</i>	91
21.3.2	<i>Anchorage</i>	91
21.3.3	<i>Restaurant</i>	91
21.3.4	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	91
21.4	LOONE BAY (WEST SIDE)	91
21.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	91
21.4.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	92
21.5	DEVIL'S ROCK (WEST END).....	92
21.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	92
21.5.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	92
22	MAEWO	92
22.1	ASAANVARI BAY	92
22.1.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	92
22.1.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	93

22.2	MBENAVUI POINT (MOON CAVE)	93
22.2.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	93
22.2.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	94
22.3	NAROVOROVO	94
22.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	94
22.3.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	94
22.4	NAONE BAY	94
22.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	94
22.4.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	94
22.5	SANASOM BAY	94
22.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	94
22.5.2	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	95
23	BANKS ISLANDS	95
23.1	GAUA (SANTA MARIA) ISLAND	95
23.1.1	<i>East Side</i>	95
23.1.2	<i>Lakona Bay</i>	96
23.1.3	<i>Lesalav Bay</i>	96
23.1.4	<i>Losalava</i>	96
23.1.5	<i>Ngre Aro Point</i>	97
23.1.6	<i>Pwetevut Bay</i>	97
23.2	VANUA LAVA (PORT OF ENTRY)	97
23.2.1	<i>Port Sola (Port of Entry)</i>	97
23.2.2	<i>Port Patteson</i>	99
23.2.3	<i>Vureas Bay</i>	99
23.2.4	<i>Twin Waterfall Bay</i>	100
23.2.5	<i>Single Waterfall Bay</i>	100
23.3	MOTA LAVA	101
23.3.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	101
23.4	UREPARAPARA	101
23.4.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	101
23.4.2	<i>Yachtsmen Services</i>	101
23.4.3	<i>General Services</i>	101
23.4.4	<i>Provisions</i>	102
23.4.5	<i>Cruiser Report</i>	102
23.5	ROWA (REEF) ISLANDS.....	102
23.5.1	<i>Anchorage</i>	103
23.5.2	<i>Cruiser Reports</i>	103
24	TORRES ISLANDS.....	103
24.1	LO ISLAND	104
24.1.1	<i>Ngerein Bay</i>	104
24.1.2	<i>Tutumel Bay</i>	105
24.2	TEGUE	105
24.2.1	<i>Hayter Bay</i>	105
24.3	HIW	105
24.3.1	<i>Yeu Metenia Bay</i>	105

1 Introduction

We started creating compendiums for the Tuamotus in French Polynesia as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and a few friends to organize notes and various internet sources. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we've learned to other cruisers.

We have since created over 25 compendiums all the way across the Pacific and in to SE Asia. Including, Panama, Ecuador, French Polynesia, Cook / Samoa Islands, Tonga, Solomon's, Fiji, New Caledonia, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Hawaii, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea. Plus, we have received updates from cruisers since 2011 (please send us yours!).

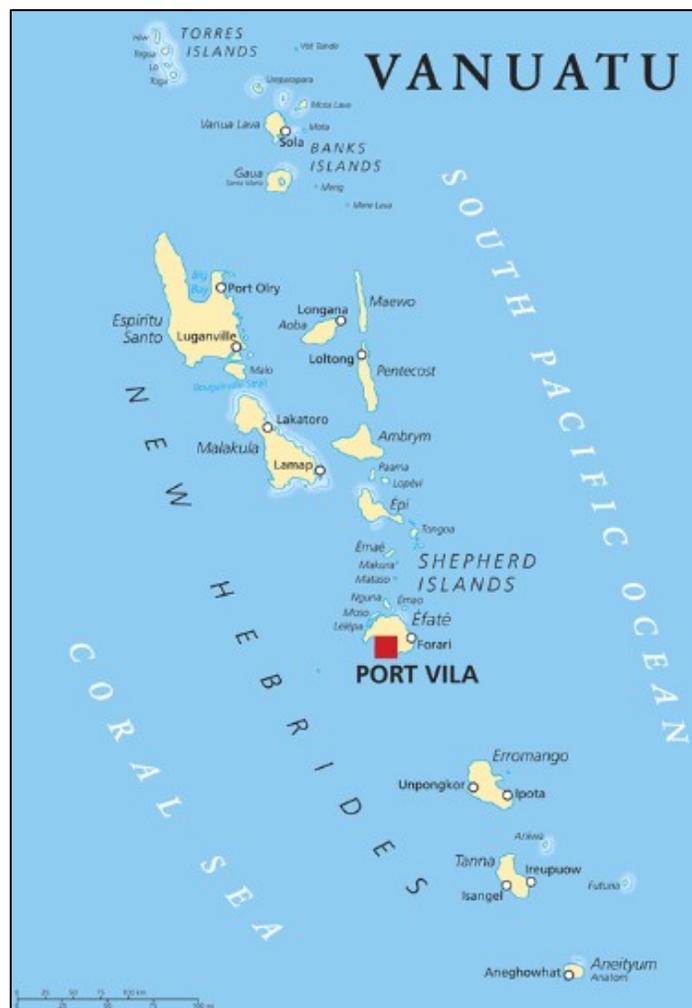
If you haven't found our other 'Compendiums', they're free at www.soggypaws.com/files.

This is not intended to replace the guidebooks or charts, but to supplement out-of-date guides with recent cruiser first-hand reports, and fill in information on places that the guides don't cover.

This 'compendium' contains cruiser feedback from personal experiences, some website content, and information from our own experience. Source and date of information are noted.

1.1 Organization of the Guide

This guide is loosely organized south to north starting in Aneityum (Mystery Island) and up to the Torres Islands. Photo courtesy of Geology.com



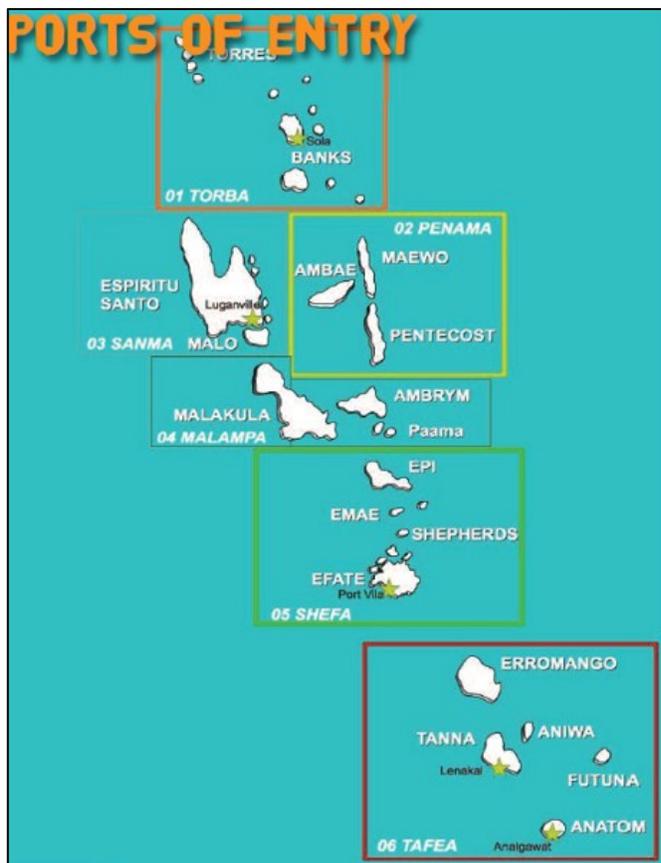
1.2 Customs & Immigration

Best to double-check the respective government websites before you make landfall, to make sure you are aware of the latest government requirements.

- Vanuatu Customs Yachts & Small Crafts: <https://customsinlandrevenue.gov.vu/index.php/travellers/yacht-clearance>
- Noonsite: <https://www.noonsite.com/place/vanuatu/view/clearance/#:~:text=If%20a%20yacht%20wishes%20to,fee%20charged%20for%20weekend%20clearance>
- Rocket Cruising Guides: <https://rocketcruisingguides.com/>
- Yachting World: https://yachtingworld-vanuatu.com/clearance_yachting_cruising_world_vanuatu.html

1.2.1 Ports of Entry

- Vanua Lava Island: Port Sola
- Espiritu Santo Island: Port Luganville
- Efate Island: Port Vila
- Tanna Island: Port Lenakel
- ** Tanna Island: Port Resolution (only with Special Arrangement)
- ** Mystery Island (Aneityum/Anatom) (only with Special Arrangement)
 - Time your arrival with the cruise ship <https://cruisedig.com/ports/vila-vanuatu>



Vanua Lava: **Port Sola**

Espiritu Santo: **Luganvill**

Efate: **Port Vi**

Tanna: **Lenak**

Tanna: **Port Resolution** (with special permission)

Aneityum/Anatom: **Analgawat** (with special permission)

Port Sola has reopened as a Port of entry as of Oct. 2023. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0800-1200, 1300-1700. The official stated that he is available to issue a departure clearance certificate and all other departure clearance formalities.

However, they have limited resources at Sola and he suggested coming to Sola prepared with local currency and fuel as there are no fuel services and no services available to exchange currency.

Please note that credit cards are not accepted and clearance during non-operating hours will incur additional fees. Port use fee is \$8,065VT.

The two ports listed below are not “official” ports of entry. However, you can receive approval if you make special arrangements prior to arrival. They will not allow you to clear in without prior approval. Email CustomsBorder@vanuatu.gov.vu to request special permission to enter Port Resolution in Tanna and/or Aneityum.

There will be an additional fee to cover the costs to bring the officials to these ports which must be accepted before permission is granted.

- Tanna Island: Port Resolution
- Mystery Island (Aneityum/Anatom)
 - Time your arrival with the cruise ship <https://cruisedig.com/ports/vila-vanuatu>

IMPORTANT:

Vessels may not call at Mystery Island (Aneityum) or Port Resolution (Tanna) or any other place in Vanuatu, prior to entering one of the ports nominated above for customs clearance, unless prior written permission is granted by the Director of Customs & Inland Revenue.

The Master of vessels who visit these places prior to obtaining customs clearance, being issued with an “Inter-island Cruising Permit”, or obtaining written permission may be subject to fines and/or prosecution.

It is an offense to come ashore in Vanuatu unless having undergone customs clearance procedures on arrival.

1.2.2 Clearance Procedure

1. You must provide a minimum of 24 hours advance notice of arrival with the following information to Customs: CustomsBorder@Vanuatu.gov.vu.
 - the name of the vessel; and
 - the voyage (last 3 ports); and
 - the estimated date and time of arrival in Vanuatu; and
 - the appointed port or other place where the craft will land or berth; and
 - the name of the master or skipper of the vessel; and
 - the name and contact details of the person providing the information; and
 - the names of passengers on board; and
 - list of goods to be landed (if any)
 - Photo of your boat.

Submittal Forms can be found: <https://customsinlandrevenue.gov.vu/index.php/customs/forms-2>

Along with the above information, you must submit the following:

- Inward Report
 - Vessel Arrival Declaration
 - Maritime Declaration of Health
 - Passenger Arrival Card (one per person)
 - Inter-Island Cruising Permit Application
2. Fly the Yellow Quarantine Flag as soon as you enter Vanuatu waters (at least 200nm out)
 3. Call on VHF 16 (if entering at Port Vila and Lenakel) to arrange for clearance
 4. You’ll need to visit Customs, Quarantine and Immigration authorities in the port of entry
 - a. Officials have the right to visit the yacht for inspection and will expect a dinghy ride to the boat

1.2.2.1 Fees:

- Port Fees: \$7875vt for 30-days (and \$100vt per day thereafter) Paid at Ports & Harbour Office
- Immigration: \$4800vt (extensions over 30-days \$6000vt/pp)
- Quarantine: between \$5700-8000vt depending on amount of rubbish).

1.2.2.2 Clearing in at Port of Anelcauhat, Aneityum

After you receive special permission to clear into Aneityum, be sure to check the cruise ship schedule at [Cruise Time Tables](#) so you can time the official visit accordingly.

Officials may ask you to hold all rubbish onboard until you can properly dispose of it in Port Vila.

Immigration services may have to be completed in Port Vila.

1.2.2.3 Official's Operating Hours

All attempts will be made to board vessels arriving from overseas as soon as possible after their actual arrival. Outwards clearance may be obtained within 24 hours prior to the actual departure. Customs normal operating hours are listed below.

Monday-Friday: 0730-1200 and 1300-1630. Except Sola

Sola Operating Hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1200 & 1300-1700.

Any attendances by customs outside these hours for either arriving or departing vessels will be subject to overtime attendance fees. The charges for these are as follows:

Monday – Friday:

0600-0730 and 1630-1800 VT1000 per hour per officer with a 3-hour minimum payable

1800-0600 VT1500 per hour per officer with a 3-hour minimum.

Saturdays, Sundays, and [Public Holidays](#): VT2000 per hour per officer with a 3-hour minimum.

1.2.3 Domestic Cruising

Vessels wishing to visit multiple islands in Vanuatu must apply for an “inter-island cruising permit” which is valid for up to 6 months. A copy of the cruising permit is held by the master who absolves the vessel from reporting to customs until the port of departure for overseas, or for application to extend the permit. The permit will be in a sealed envelope so be sure to ask for a copy.

Oct. 2023: Your cruising permit will include all of the ports and islands you want to visit including the specific port where you will be clearing out of Vanuatu. The envelope will be sealed so be sure to request a copy so you can see what is on the permit.

You will not need to clear in/out of each island, but you will need to hand the sealed envelope to the final port of call prior to departing the country. – As reported to Sugar Shack

1.2.4 International Clearance

All yachts leaving Vanuatu for a foreign port or place are required to obtain an outward clearance from Customs at the final port of departure (i.e. Lenakel, Port Vila, Luganville, or Sola).

Unless approved by the Director, a vessel having granted a certificate of clearance must depart for overseas within 24 hours of its issue and must not go to any place in Vanuatu.

Vessel wishing to obtain a certificate of clearance at places other than Lenakel, Port Vila, Luganville, or Sola should obtain permission from Customs and Immigration in advance. If such a request is granted, vessel may be required to pay for the official(s) to travel.

Alternatively, certificate of clearance from undeclared places can be issued from the last declared port in Vanuatu, provided that a request is made via email or a note to Customs at least 24hrs prior to departure from

the declared port. Once the approval is granted, the certificate of clearance will be issued with the ETD from the undeclared location. Port dues will be calculated and paid up to the ETD from Vanuatu while fuel exemptions will only be granted for the outward journey as per current practices.

Interactive Outward Reporting forms are available on the Customs website under Forms. To facilitate clearance, filled out forms can be emailed to the address provided on the form prior to departure.

A “Certificate of Clearance” issued by Immigration must also be obtained prior to departure.

1.2.5 Immigration

Passports must have at least 6 months validity beyond your intended period of stay. All crew passports must be presented at check-in.

This visa has a duration of **one month** and requires that you live on your boat and are prohibited from working in the country. An entry tax will have to be paid to formalize your entry into Vanuatu.

1.2.5.1 Fees

2023 fees listed below during standard business hours at approved ports of entry:

- \$5500-8000vt for Quarantine
- \$5500vt for the Customs
- \$4800vt for immigration

If you wish to stay longer, you must submit your visa extension request at least 4 weeks in advance (upon arrival) in any port of entry except Sola in Vanua Lava.

The maximum length of stay is 4 months, with the possibility of extending to one year on request and with payment.

If a crew member is to disembark in Vanuatu, the skipper, who is responsible for his crew, will have to present the return air ticket to his home country immediately.

1.2.5.2 Cruiser Reports on Immigration

Oct. 2018 - We cleared immigration at Port Resolution in August with no problem, but customs had to be done in Port Vila when we got there some weeks later (the officials in Tanna told us not to worry about the delay and officials in Port Vila also had no problem with that).

Friends who tried to clear Vanuatu immigration into Tanna EITHER in Lenakel or Port Resolution a few weeks ago however, were told it is no longer possible. There was a sign on the door in Lenakel saying go to Port Vila.

Check the current status before you go. Stanley in Port Resolution can help +678 68791. – Golden Glow

1.2.6 Customs, Biosecurity, and Quarantine

1.2.6.1 Allowance of Alcohol, Tobacco

These allowances are being granted per person and applicable only for persons aged over 18 years;

- 250 cigarettes or 50 cigars, or 250 grams of tobacco
- 2 litres of wine, and
- 2 litres of spirits, and
- 9 litres of beer, and
- 250ml of eau de toilette and 100ml of perfume

1.2.6.2 Prohibited Goods

The laws of Vanuatu prohibit the importation of narcotics, obscene publications and materials (books, magazines, DVDs, computer stored images and videos, and video cassettes), and certain firearms such as automatic weapons. These have severe penalties for any breach of these prohibitions.

1.2.6.3 Quarantine

Live animals, reptiles, birds of any description, fresh meat, fruit or vegetables imported by yachts must not be taken ashore. Additionally, some restriction on whether such goods will be permitted to remain on board after the arrival at a Customs port may be enforced by officers of Bio-security. No foreign garbage may be landed in Vanuatu without permission from Bio-security.

1.2.6.4 Arms and Ammunition

On arrival all arms and ammunition must be declared and surrendered to the Customs Officer for safe keeping. If Customs are satisfied that firearms and ammunition can be safely secured under seal on board the importing vessel this may be allowed. In cases where no suitably secure sealing arrangements exist, the goods will be detained by Customs throughout the vessel stay in Vanuatu. At least 48 hours' notice of intended departure from the finale port of clearance must be given in such cases.

1.2.6.5 Duty Free Fuel and Stores

Duty-free goods may be shipped on board any vessel which has cleared outwards, or which is about to clear outward for a foreign port or place. Duty free fuel may also be purchased on for the outwards leg of the voyage after customs clearance for overseas has been granted. Full details of the duty-free schemes available may be obtained from the nearest Customs office.

1.2.7 Yacht Length of Stay

Visiting yachts entering Vanuatu under their own power on a voyage from a foreign port or place may enter and remain temporarily in Vanuatu without payment of duty for a period not exceeding 18 months in any period of 24 months save for reason of circumstance (including a change of residence) accepted by the Director of Customs.

Customs will issue an initial 6 months period. Vessels may seek permission to remain in Vanuatu for more than 6 months. The person responsible for such vessels is required see Customs prior to the lapse of the 6 months period to extend its stay in Vanuatu.

The subject vessel must be intended for their personal use only. It shall not be used for any commercial purpose in Vanuatu and must not be sold, lent, hired, pledged or otherwise disposed of in Vanuatu.

1.2.7.1 Yachts Liable to Pay Duty

A yacht will become liable to duty if:

- a) it is disposed of in Vanuatu for financial consideration or not; or
- b) it is put to commercial use whilst in Vanuatu; or
- c) it remains in Vanuatu for a period or periods exceeding six (6) months in any period of two (2) years, unless an application is made to Customs for an extension as per paragraph above; or
- d) it is imported by a resident of Vanuatu or a person taking up residence in Vanuatu after the 6 months concession period of obtaining residency permit as outlined in section 2(3) of schedule 3 of the Import Duties (Amendment) Act.

1.3 Getting Visitors In and Out

Efate: Port Vila is where the international airport is located and the easiest place to change crew. The airport is not far from the anchorage and you can catch a taxi or the bus.

Another option is Espiritu Santo: Luganville. There are regular flights between Port Vila and Luganville.

The Rocket Guide lists 29 airports spread throughout Vanuatu, most smaller airports only serviced by Vanuatu Air.

It is easiest if your crew purchases a round trip ticket with the ability to cancel one portion as opposed to having them fly in on a one-way ticket. However, if they cannot do that then be sure to visit the immigration site that clearly outlines the procedure for one-way ticket entries:

<https://immigration.gov.vu/index.php/border-control-unit/entry-departure-requirements>

A letter from the ship's captain (crew's personal details including name, nationality, passport bio page, arriving date, flight details) and Captain's details (same as crew), and ship details (arrival date & port, departure date & port), along with boat registration, and it would probably be helpful to include copies of the ship's clearance paperwork.

Many smaller islands have air strips that are for small planes. Be aware that the luggage allowance for these planes is only 10kg.

1.4 Navigating Around Coral

May 2018: Though we found both the CMAP (CM93 v2) and Garmin charts to be fairly accurate), your ability to explore coral-laced atolls is greatly enhanced by acquiring high-resolution satellite images.

1.4.1 KAPS and mbtiles (used by charting programs like OpenCPN)

There are a number of sources of satellite charting/imagery.

- [Migration's Charts](#) Pacific Mexico, French Poly, Pitcairn Island, Easter Island mbtiles 2020
- [Zen Again's Charts](#) Pacific Ocean, SE Asia, Crossing to S Africa, S Atlantic, Brazil
- [Soggy Paws' Charts](#) Pacific Ocean, SE Asia, Red Sea
- [Jacaranda's Charts](#) French Polynesia
- [Valhalla's Charts](#) SE Asia and Western Pacific
- [Ocelot's Charts](#) SE Asia, Western Pacific, and Indian Ocean

Make Your Own: You can make your own, look for the Sat2Chart program here: <http://gdayii.ca>

There is a Facebook Group called GE2Kap that provides support for Sat2Chart (formerly GE2KAP).

OpenCPN is a free fully functional navigation program, downloadable from <http://opencpn.org> It runs on Windows 7-11, many flavors of Linux and Raspberry Pi, and Apple Macs (but not iDevices).

1.4.2 Anchoring in Coral

Please remember, we are guests visiting this country, islands, and backyards of the lovely locals. We must take responsibility to protect the lagoons and bays.

Often lagoons are not clear and many times you are anchoring without knowing if there is coral on the bottom. Jacaranda has found the use of a fish finder to locate clear spots on the bottom invaluable in murky situations. We have a cheap one with the transducer stuck to the inside of the hull with silicon.

Each year sail boats cruising in get into trouble at anchor: They get trapped on lee shores after a shift in the wind direction and/or foul their anchor and/or chain in coral. The results are stressful maneuvers to get the

anchor back up, bent bow rollers, and ruined or even ripped out windlass. Of course, the fragile coral structures get badly damaged with each of these messed up maneuvers as well.

It is **easy to avoid damage** to the coral and your boat if you:

- Anchor in conditions with **good visibility** (don't drop your anchor blindly)
- Try to find a **big, sandy spot** to drop your hook
- Anchor in **shallow** water...
 - ...where you can see the bottom clearly
 - ...usually fewer coral heads grow on sandy shelves, and
 - ...you only need a short chain.
- **Float the chain** so that the boat can swing around in shifting winds without getting the chain caught in coral heads
- Keep an eye on the **weather forecast** and move to a safe anchorage before the wind shifts

There are many ways to float your chain. Some people set their chain first, then pull back on it to ensure it is set properly. Once set, they will slowly pull up the chain to install the floats and then pull back again. Another way is listed below.

Floating the chain is a simple procedure. You just need:

- (3) or more medium-sized fenders or buoys
- (3) or more carabiners that fit into your chain

1. Drop the anchor in the middle of the biggest sandy spot you can find,
2. Pay out chain while reversing gently,
3. Look around at the surrounding coral heads and estimate your swinging radius,
4. Hook in the first fender/buoy before the chain could touch any of the coral heads,
5. Pay out some more chain and set the anchor gently pulling in reverse,
6. If the scope is still not sufficient, additional floats can be added followed by more chain.

The general rule:

The first float should be inserted at double the depth. If you drop the hook in 5 meters, put the first float on at 10 meters. Then add another float every 7-15 meters. If you have small floats/fenders, then add them every 7-10 meters. If you have a larger float/fender, then add them every 12-15 meters. The goal is to keep the chain off the surrounding coral heads. For more information, visit www.pitufa.at

If your chain does get wrapped...

If you are in a storm situation, it is critical to maintain some free chain. Boats have successfully weathered bad storm situations by going to a really long really strong snubber and/or letting out more chain as their chain gets wrapped (having a spare buoy rigged for this would make a lot of sense).

In some deep anchorages inside the lagoon, it can be difficult to see the bottom snorkeling, and therefore difficult to see what's going on when your chain seems stuck. It is USUALLY possible to unstick your chain without diving on it—patience and calm weather are helpful. A snorkeler in the water can be helpful. But this is a time where having a dive tank can be a big help.

Another very useful resource about Floating Your Chain can be found here:

<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/floatingyourchain>

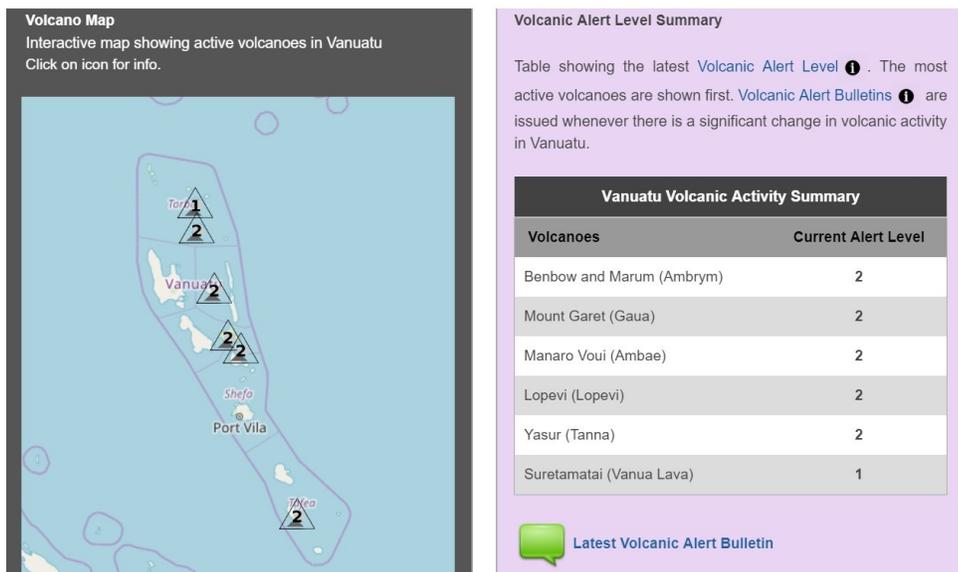
1.5 Weather

1.5.1 Volcano Alerts

There are active volcanos in Vanuatu. The best place to monitor volcanic activity and alerts is on the [Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department Facebook page](#).

Vanuatu Meteorology & Geo-Hazards Department: +678.24.686, www.vmgd.gov.vu.

Vanuatu volcanic activity here: www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php/geohazards/volcano/



The screenshot shows two main sections. On the left is an 'Interactive Map' of Vanuatu with several volcano icons marked with alert levels (1 or 2). On the right is a 'Volcanic Alert Level Summary' section containing a table of active volcanoes and their current alert levels.

Vanuatu Volcanic Activity Summary	
Volcanoes	Current Alert Level
Benbow and Marum (Ambrym)	2
Mount Garek (Gaua)	2
Manaro Voui (Ambae)	2
Lopevi (Lopevi)	2
Yasur (Tanna)	2
Suretamatai (Vanua Lava)	1

Here is an example of a volcano alert posted on that page:

AMBAE VOLCANO ALERT BULLETIN No7 issued by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department on 25th July 2019 at 9:07 AM:

Ambae volcano is continuing in the major unrest state. The Volcanic Alert Level remains at Level 2. Imminent eruption could occur in such major unrest state. The Danger Zone at the caldera remains at 2 km radius from the active vent. An additional Danger Zone is located within the area of flowing creeks during heavy rain.

1.5.2 General Weather Conditions

Vanuatu has a wonderful sub-tropical climate with loads of sunshine year-round. You can enjoy mild temperatures and clear blue skies for most of the year.

Summer is from November to March with average temperatures of 28°C. It can be hot, wet, and humid. These warmer months (December-April) will be the wettest with good rain in every month.

Winter is from April to September with average temperatures of 23°C and sea temperatures between 22-28°C. Southern Vanuatu sees less rain and less humidity.

The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department publishes a monthly climate summary, which can be found here.

<https://www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php/climate/reports-and-summaries/vanuatu-climate-update>

1.5.3 Weather Sources - with Onboard Email / SSB

Soggy Paws - 2019: In our transit through this area, what we used most of the time for watching the weather were these files (via the free service Saildocs). You send the request to saildocs at the address query@saildocs.com, with the coded request in the message body, and Saildocs will email you the response.

- Text forecasts (): send Met.10ne

This returns the forecast from the Australian Met Office which covers the High Seas Forecast for North Eastern METAREA 10:

NORTH EASTERN AREA: COAST AT 142E TO 0S142E TO 0S170E TO 25S170E TO COAST AT 25S

- A spot forecast for the location we were in—every 6 hours for 10 days
send spot:07.1N,171.3E|10,6|PRMSL,WIND,WAVES,RAIN,LFTX
- A 'local' GRIB file that gave a fairly detailed forecast for a reasonably small area for about 5 days, and included sea state information
send GFS:6N,10N,173E,165E|.5,.5|0,6..144|PRMSL,WIND,HTSGW,WVDIR,RAIN
- A 'wide range' GRIB that watched conditions approaching us. The area we request while in transit was a pretty wide area on a 3x3 grid, for the next 10 days. This is about a 25K GRIB file. This provided a decent long range forecast.
send GFS:0N,30N,160E,175W|3,3|0,12..240|PRMSL,WIND,RAIN
- During times of tropical activity, we also found these sources useful for additional perspective:
I couldn't find a subscription on Saildocs that included the tropical weather for the SW Pacific. What we do is go to <http://www.tropicalstormrisk.com/> and subscribe to their weather updates by email. As soon as something is brewing in the tropical SW Pacific, you will get an email from Tropical Storm Risk.

1.5.4 Weather Sources – Voice

The best source of voice weather for the Solomons and Vanuatu is the new **Gulf Harbor Radio** net, which is on 8752 kHz or 8779 kHz or 8297 kHz. (In that order, depending on interference).

This broadcast is available at 0515 UTC / 17:15 NZST May 02 - 25 Nov.

Daily during passage making - otherwise weekdays only

David Sapiane (s/v Chameleon) is located in Gulf Harbor, NZ (or out cruising in the Western Pacific) and is easily receivable by boats in the western South Pacific islands, and enroute to/from NZ.

The latest info on Gulf Harbor Radio scheds and frequencies is available on this website: www.ghradio.co.nz.

Aug. 2023: The number of yachts with radios has diminished over the years so in 2022, Gulf Harbor Radio will be on air daily during passage making but will review their schedule at other times to accommodate their hobbies.

Contact GHR prior to going on passage, and see what they will be able to do for you. Make sure you have a working marine radio or a way to receive a text email. Contact: www.ghradio.co.nz/contact.html

1.5.5 Weather Sources - Internet

Soggy Paws & friends have created a “[French Polynesia Weather Compendium](#)” for overall Pacific weather systems which is very useful for all cruisers. Here are a few additional sources specific to Fiji.

Color Satellite View of Entire SW Pacific: www.goes.noaa.gov/sohemi/sohemiloops/shirgmscol.html

Bob McDavid's Weather Blog: <https://metbob.wordpress.com/>

New Zealand Met

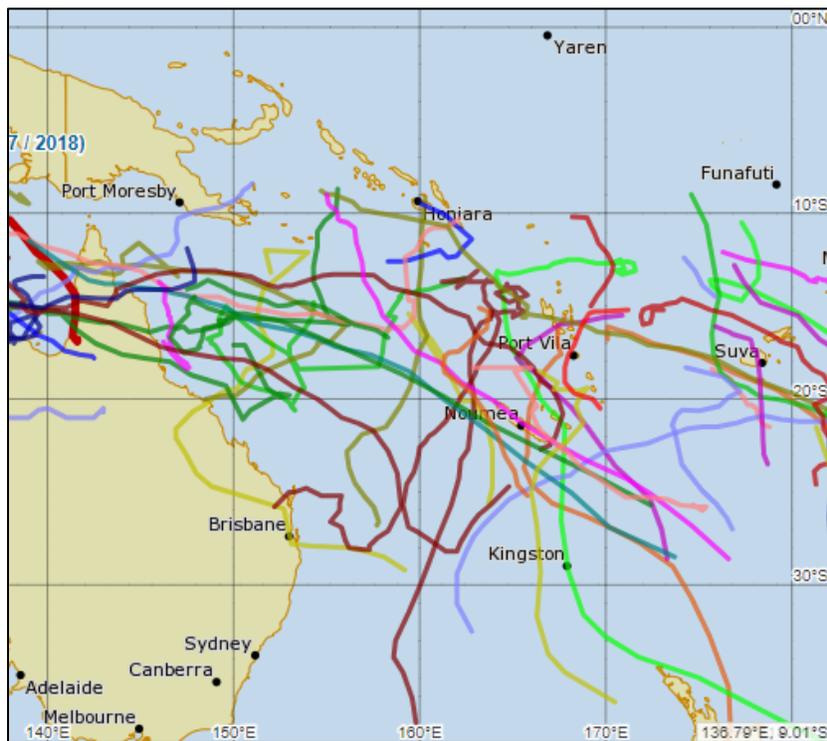
Current surface analysis: www.metservice.com/maps-radar/surface-pressure/tasman-sea-new-zealand

Surface Forecast Series (30, 48, 72H): www.metservice.com/maps-radar/maps/southwest-pacific-low-bandwidth

These are great maps in small (PNG) format--about 16K per map. But not easily downloadable via email (appears to be no fixed product name for the graphics, unlike other offices' websites).

1.5.6 Tropical Weather & Cruising During Cyclone Season

Vanuatu is covered by Australia's Met Service, with regard to tropical cyclone forecasting. Below is a capture from the Australian tropical weather page, showing cyclone tracks in the Solomons from 2016-2022.



To check on individual storms, dates, etc, visit: www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/tracks/index.shtml

Another good source for tropical weather tracking in Vanuatu is this one:

<http://www.tropicalstormrisk.com/>

1.5.7 Tsunami Information

The entire Pacific Basin is subject to tsunamis. Since we have been in the Pacific (5 years), there have been 4 significant tsunamis which have affected cruising locations (American Samoa and Tonga in 2009, South America, Galapagos & Panama in 2010, Hawaii & Mexico in 2011, Tonga in 2023).

The tsunamis originate in various locations, but the worst origination locations were Japan and Chile, however, many 'tremors' happen in these locations that do not cause widespread tsunamis.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center website is located here: www.tsunami.gov/ and also check

http://itic.ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=1153&Itemid=1153

If you have onboard email, it is a good idea to subscribe to tsunami warning emails while you are in the Pacific, which you can do on the above website. It might be useful to first subscribe from your internet email for a little while, to understand what messages might be coming your way, and how often, before you chance clogging up your onboard email.

1.6 Overview of Vanuatu

1.6.1 Time Zone

Vanuatu operates on Vanuatu Standard Time, which is +11 UTC (Same as the Solomons).

1.6.2 Currency

Cash is highly recommended, but ATMs can be difficult to find. Credit cards are not widely accepted. The conversion rate as of Dec. 2023:

VATU	USD	NZD
\$100	\$0.83	\$1.35
\$1000	\$8.35	\$13.56
\$10,000	\$83.58	\$135.59

Sola: The National Bank of Vanuatu in Sola will exchange currency if the bank notes are dated between 2013 and 2023. They will not accept foreign currency older than 2013.

1.6.3 Protocols for Visitors

When you arrive into a new bay, you should introduce yourself to the local village and ask permission to anchor, swim, snorkel/dive, fish in the bay, walk the beach, etc. Occasionally, there may be a tabu on the reef. If there is a tabu on the reef you will not be allowed to fish, dive, or swim. Villages own 200m out into the bay.

Dress Code: The dress code is very casual; shorts and tank tops are acceptable. Avoid bikinis when going to a village and no nudity is allowed when locals are around.

Oct. 2023: The dress code is very conservative so be respectful in your dress code. No bikinis in town. The locals are very welcoming so let's try to keep it that way. – Dandelion

Swimming: A tabu exists in Malekula which forbids men to swim under a boat or canoe with women or girls onboard. There is a substantial fine to the village chief.

Trade: Locals like to trade with visitors and are usually in need of building materials (nails, screws, tools) for fruits and vegetables. Good items for trade: flour, sugar, salt, rice, fuel, school supplies, clothing, fishing supplies, reading glasses, building materials, tarps.

Do not trade alcohol or tobacco. Alcohol is banded in the remote islands.

Gifts: Suggested gifts as "thank you items": school supplies, fishing gear, snorkeling gear, kitchen supplies (pots, pans, utensils), clothing, toys, hats, sunglasses, prescription glasses. Not alcohol or tobacco.

1.6.4 Forbidden Anchorages and Zones

Anchoring is forbidden in the Reef Islands which are just north of Vanua Lava in the Banks Group.

The entire area surrounding Bokissa Island is a marine sanctuary and yachts are forbidden to anchor anywhere on the reef shelf within the 60km depth contour line.

1.6.5 History and Customs

The history of Vanuatu begins with the Lapita people. They sailed to the islands, about 3500 years ago in longboats, and are famous for their pottery. They brought pigs, chicken, yams and tarot root on their boats.

They lived in small autonomous clans, separated by ravines, jungles, and sea. And they lived in the shadow of their ancestors who could be controlled by magic. It was important to get the ghosts to the good (your) side or they could be hostile and ready to haunt with disasters, famines, and military defeat. Even today many ni-Vans believe their ancestral spirits and demons populate the world. The ghosts of the recently dead are especially potent, and can also be potentially malicious even to their own family. Practice of magic can help and most adult men (magic is taboo for women) in the traditional parts of Vanuatu know some useful spells. These can be used for getting the ghosts to your side, or to produce good crops. For more special missions, like calming storms, healing the sick or controlling the volcanoes, a true magician is needed.

Vanuatu is also a country where the old beliefs still live by the side of the Christian church. Wherever we were and whoever we asked the ni-Vans always answered that the spirits still live by them. When we were on Wala we were invited to a walk to the old, inner part of the island, where the ni-Vans lived before the missionaries influenced and changed their beliefs. This is where the spirits of the old powerful chiefs still are. Here are areas where you are not allowed to walk, the sacred planted Namele palm shows where the taboo is. And this is where Loren introduced us to his grandfather's grandfather.

Loren's grandfather's grandfather was once the chief of the village. When he reigned, the island was known for their fierce fighters. Other chiefs could sometimes ask for help from the men in Wala, it was politics that decided if and what side they would support. If they got in to fights, they always showed how many they had killed by bringing their penises back. Some of their victims were eaten by the men who had killed them. Women could be taken from the conquered and be given to men who wanted them as their wives, or really as slaves.

When Loren's ancestor died, he was buried by a Namele palm since he was the chief. Body down in a deep hole and his head above the ground. After seven days his head was taken off and taken to the sacred place where other chiefs in the family were buried before him. This is where Loren took us.

At a sacred place you must be quiet, Loren prayed and talked to him silently, he told him we would support with a pig and made a dance around the burial ground. His great great-grandfather gave permission for us to walk and to hear the history, but he also said that we must not talk to anyone on the island or in Vanuatu about it. Then we were introduced to the skull of his ancestor.

We walked by some Nakamal trees. Loren told us this is where the spirits stay. The spirits can be the same size as us, or they can be small as dwarfs. When there are people on the island the spirits climb up the trees where they can keep an eye on what is happening, they only walk the ground if the island is empty or at night.

We also walked by the old place where the chiefs used to be crowned, and where men who want to earn statues through grade-taking ceremonies could, and still can, bring and slaughter pigs. If this is happening, they need a thousand pigs. Five hundred tied on one side of the trail and five hundred on the other. One side is for the men, the other for the women. The men and the women may not be together, or talk to each other, during the ten days of ceremony. They must kill and cook the pigs on different sides of the trail. This is the only time men do any cooking. Once the boys get into puberty they are on the men's side.

It was a long time since this was used for ceremony, almost a hundred years, in his grandfather's time.

The men in the early history earned their statues through grade-taking ceremonies, each grade closer to becoming a chief. The more grades a man had earned the more powerful his defense of black magic would be, and the more potent his spirit would be after death. One way to show a man's wealth in life was the number of his pigs. The tusks from the pigs provided currency (now they are a symbol on the flag), and the pigs were the 2nd most important in the family. But who was responsible for the pig's well-being and the man's statues? Their wives...who came as number three. Loren told, with a smile on his face, that thanks to Christ and church women have upgraded and are nowadays considered more important than the pigs. – Nordic Breeze (2016)

1.6.6 What is Kastom?

Kastom is a pidgin word (Bislama/English) used to refer to traditional culture, including religion, economics, art, and magic in Melanesia. It is passed down from generation to generation through teachings and stories (it is not written down).

It is a truly traditional lifestyle where tourism and the modern world have no part. There are many Kastom villages in Vanuatu and it is a tremendous blessing to be able to visit one to experience this pure way of living.

It is concentrated through:

- Kastom House - sites where objects and rituals are stored.
- Kastom stories - myths, legends and communal histories.

- Kastom tabu - objects of special power, significance and symbolism.

The use of the word is slightly different in the different countries and cultures of Melanesia. There are designated Kastom villages in Vanuatu which are open to tourists, dedicated to preserving Kastom.

The people of 'Vanuatu', a name which means 'Land Eternal', are largely Melanesian and the people are called Ni-Vanuatu (meaning 'of Vanuatu'). Recognized as one of the most culturally diverse country in the world, dances, ceremonies, status and systems of authority, artistic styles, animal and crop husbandry can vary from island to island, known as 'kastom'.

Kastom way of life

In cultures where language is unwritten, oral traditions of the kastom way of life, have been faithfully passed down from generation to generation. Throughout the middle and southern islands of Vanuatu, there existed the story of a great and powerful chief Roimata who united the warring and cannibalistic tribes of the area into a unified, and peaceful group of tribes, a first in ancient Vanuatu. That kastom way of life exists today called 'naflak'.

1.6.7 Local Languages & Phrases

Vanuatu boasts 113 distinct languages and innumerable dialects. Out of the three official languages, Bislama is the most spoken in Vanuatu, followed by English, and lastly French. Symbols and items used day to day especially in the outer islands which highlight the Kastom way of life:

Bislama is an English-based Melanesian pidgin that was developed in the 1870's-1880's.

ENGLISH	BISLAMA
Hello	Halo
How are you?	Olsem wanem?
What's your name?	Wanem nem blong yu?
My name is...	Nem blong mi...
Pleased to meet you	Gud mitim yu or Mi glad blong mitim yu
Good morning	Gudmorning
Good afternoon	Gud afternun
Good night	Gudnaet
Good bye	Tata or Ale tata or Baibai
See you later	Lukim yu
Cheers	Jis!
Yes	Yes or Si
No	No
Excuse me	Ekskius mi
How much is this?	Hamas long hemia
Thank you	Tangyu or Tangkyu tumas

Understanding Bislama:

- nakamal / men's house or meeting ground
- namele leave / signs for taboo
- pigs tusk, red mat / signs of chiefly hood
- Nangol / land Diver first step from child hood to become man
- Circumsion / During the time of circumcise it is taboo to go near the place custom believes

- Navenue leave / someone holding a navenue leave working through into the village on which she or he left long ago the message is to say that he / she belongs to the place / that village
- Bamboo leave / when someone gives you a bamboo leave it means you belong to the tribe
- Basket with a bush knife holding in hand / going to the garden
- A woman in a village with a tattoo sign or a broken front tooth / the girl is engaged
- Tattoos in the village/ symbol customary origin eg: spider, sharks, turtle, etc...
- Also a coconut leave or navele palm leaf across a beach / taboo sign
- Sand Drawing/ passing of messages and stories through kastom art on sand and song

1.6.8 Traditional Economy

Naturally, traditional societies' economies are based on produce from the land and staple foods like yam, taro and manioc. And in places where there is plenty of water, taro is grown in complex terraces hand built from earth and rocks. Pigs are a mainstay of the economy not just as food but as a form of money and prestige.

1.6.9 Land Diving (Naghol)

Land Diving is a ritual performed by the men of Pentecost island. The village will spend 5-6 weeks creating the tower which is reflective of the human body. Men will jump off these wooden towers which are 20-30 meters in height with two vines wrapped around the ankles. Jumpers can reach speeds of around 45mph.

Land diving typically occurs annually with the yam harvest (each Saturday during April, May, and June). A good dive helps ensure a bountiful yam harvest.

Villagers believe that land diving can enhance the health and strength of the divers. A successful dive can remove the illness and physical problems associated with the wet season. Land diving is also considered as an expression of masculinity as it demonstrates the boldness of a warrior.

It is a rite of passage for young boys. When a boy is ready to become a man, he will perform a land dive in the presence of his elders.

One of the most well-known Vanuatu traditions is the Naghol. Legend has it that the first jumper was a woman. She was trying to escape from her abusive husband, climbed a tree and jumped. He followed her, leapt and died, unaware that his wife had secured liana vines to her ankles. For some time, only women participated in the dive until the male elders decided that they should dive to address their shame and prove their courage.

This awe-inspiring ancient tradition, is known as the land diving, is the role model for the modern bungee jumping. Each year, land diving happens from April to June on Pentecost island every Saturday. They invite observers to witness the events.

1.6.10 Festivals

Vanuatu hosts a variety of festivals. Be sure to visit [Vanuatu Tourism](http://www.vanuatu.travel/en/lokol/events-festivals). (www.vanuatu.travel/en/lokol/events-festivals)

The 2024 Calendar of Events and Festivals is posted at www.svSoggypaws.com/files.

April – June:

- Nagol (Land Diving) on North Pentecost every Saturday in April, May and June

July:

- Fanla Festival on North Ambrym

August:

- [Nalawan Festival](#) on Malekula Island
- [Back to my Roots](#) on North Ambrym Island

- Cultural Exchange on Aneityum Island

September:

- Vanuatu Made Market Day in Port Vila-Efate
- West Coast Arts Festival in Espiritu Santo
- Vanua Lava Arts Festival in Vanua Lava Banks

October:

- [Volcano Talefa Run](#) takes place on a different volcano each year

Other Festivals:

- Fest' Napuan Music Festival
- Fete De La Musique Music festival
- Rodeo and Rally Races
- [Pacific Trail Run](#)
- Mi Tumoro Vanuatu travel show happens in June in Luganville and Port Vila.

1.6.11 Kava

From Vanuatu Tourism Website: Kava is not just a food crop; it is a significant part of Vanuatu's kastom, usually drunk to seal an agreement between people after a long meeting. Kava is a derivative of the pepper tree family traditionally cut and chewed into a pulp, then spat into a bowl. The mushy pulp is squeezed and the resultant liquid drunk in. On some islands, both men and women may drink kava after a hard day's work. On Tanna however, it has become more ritualized as a 'men only' pastime and women dare not pass near nakamal's (men's houses) at the time kava is being drunk.

Kava is part of the Kastom culture and it is a privilege to participate in a kava ceremony.

1.6.12 Fishing

Fishing in the lagoons and bays is prohibited unless you get prior approval from the chief.

Ciguatera. Download a comprehensive look at ciguatera ("[You Gonna Eat That Fish?](#)" Info about Ciguatera):

From Wikipedia: Ciguatera fish poisoning, also known simply as ciguatera, is a foodborne illness caused by eating reef fish whose flesh is contaminated with certain toxins. Ciguatera Fish Poisoning commonly occurs in tropical and subtropical areas, particularly in the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea.

Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, numbness, itchiness, sensitivity to hot and cold, dizziness, and weakness. The onset of symptoms varies with the amount of toxin eaten from half an hour to up to two days. The diarrhea may last for up to four days.

Any reef fish can cause ciguatera poisoning, but these species: barracuda, grouper, red snapper, moray eel, amberjack, parrotfish, hogfish, sturgeon fish, kingfish, coral trout, and sea bass are most commonly affected

The toxins do not affect the taste, texture, or odor of the fish and cannot be destroyed by cooking, smoking, freezing, salting or any other method of food preparation. Outbreaks can occur seasonally or sporadically, particularly after storms. Not all fish of a given species or from a given area will be toxic.

Preventive efforts include not eating reef fish, not eating high-risk fish such as barracuda, and not eating fish liver, roe, or fish heads. Ciguatoxin has no taste or smell, and cannot be destroyed by conventional cooking. There is no specific treatment for ciguatera fish poisoning once it occurs. Mannitol, Gabapentin or amitriptyline may be used to treat some of the symptoms. Gastrointestinal decontamination with charcoal has also been used. Intravenous fluids may be necessary to control nausea and vomiting.

1.6.13 Dugongs

The Dugong is a protected marine mammal (similar to a sea cow or manatee) and is largely dependent on sea grass. They are very nervous and skittish by nature. They frighten easily and will swim away if you approach them, swim too fast, splash, and make noise (even with your flippers).

There are very strict rules protecting the dugongs in Vanuatu. You must stay a minimum of 2m from them at all times. If you are lucky enough to encounter a mother and baby, you must stay a minimum of 5m from both of them and never, ever get between the mother and baby.

Never feed them as they only eat sea grass. Don't touch them (stay 2m away from them at all times). Don't swim towards them head on. Stay in one place and let them come to you. Here is a lovely video for you to watch <https://youtu.be/6yq45eagMZY>.

1.6.14 Sharks

Sharks are a serious problem and a danger to swimmers. Especially around Port Sandwich on Malekula.

Swimming off black sand beaches should be avoided.

Ask the village if it is safe to swim in their bay.

If you see a red float close to shore do not swim in the bay. The locals put bait on this float to catch sharks.

1.6.15 Malaria and Other Health Issues

Malaria is still present in Vanuatu especially in the northern islands. It is also considered a high risk on Efate where locally transmitted cases have been reported in the capital of Port Vila. In 2022, Vanuatu declared an outbreak in four different islands across four different provinces.

Malaria is a serious problem in Vanuatu - and it is only one of several diseases you can get from mosquito bites. The further north you go, the worse the risk of malaria. There have been cases of malaria that originated in Efate and even in Port Vila, but these probably came from carriers of the disease from more northerly islands.

Malaria is deadly and depending on when and where the symptoms start you can be in very big trouble very quickly. In addition to Malaria, mosquitoes in all the islands of Vanuatu can infect you with one of several varieties of blood virus commonly called dengue fever.

Of the two major mosquito borne diseases malaria is by far the most dangerous but dengue fever also kills people and is much more common - and therefore a greater risk. Dengue fever is carried by "domestic" mosquitos that thrive near villages. They also bite during the daytime, but are more likely to attack during dusk and dawn.

We had a friend who took one of those prescription anti-malaria prophylactics for two weeks. She wound up in the hospital in Sydney with her face swollen to twice it's normal size and serious problems with her liver. These drugs can have serious side effects and many of the drugs that used to be effective against malaria no longer work. Plus, none of them help with Dengue Fever. – Cruising-Vanuatu.com (Dec.2018)

1.7 Yachtsmen Services – Overview

1.7.1 Cooking Gas (Propane & Butane)

Efate Island – Port Vila has cooking gas refills. You may also be able to find refills at Tana Island – Lenakel.

Most services will NOT fill fiberglass propane bottles so come prepared to gravity fill or purchase a new tank.

1.7.2 Fuel (Diesel & Gasoline)

Efate Island – Port Vila at the Yachting World Fuel Dock at Paray Bay. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0800-1600, Sat: 0800-1200. The Yachting World only sells diesel and drinking water. However, you can buy oil, grease, and gasoline at the service station across the road. Yachting World is the only fuel dock in Vanuatu.

There is 2.3m depth alongside at the lowest tide and 4m at high tide. Yachts with masts exceeding 20m in height must enter the inner harbor via the southern channel.

Espiritu Santo Island: Luganville has diesel that can be purchased by jerry cans.

Sola does have fuel but it is for locals and they respectfully ask all yachts to refuel prior to arriving in Sola as there is always a shortage of fuel.

DUTY FREE FUEL: Only during the clearing-out process at Customs can you secure a special permit to purchase duty free diesel fuel (22% discount off the regular price). This will greatly reduce the price of each liter of diesel fuel. Full price must be paid for gasoline at all times and locations.

You must pay full price for fuel (diesel and gasoline) prior to clearing-out of Vanuatu. It is very unlikely that you will find fuel for sale outside of Port Vila and Luganville. If you do locate fuel at a remote island it typically sells for over \$2.90 USD per liter (greater than \$11 USD per gallon).

1.7.3 Trash and Recycling

Efate Island:

April 2024: In the shops you can purchase special yellow garbage bags and leave them on the side of the road (where there are other yellow garbage bags (ask the locals if there are none on the road). It is an easy way to get rid of your garbage. – Eastern Stream

Port Vila at the Yachting World Fuel Doc offers trash disposal for free to yachts using their moorings. If you are not using their moorings, the fee is \$500vt.

There is no trash disposal in the outer islands. Please hold on to your trash until you can properly dispose of it in Port Vila.

1.7.4 Water

Efate Island – Port Vila the Yachting World Fuel Doc offers water for free to yachts using their moorings. If you are not using their moorings, the fee is \$1000vt for water

1.8 General Services – Overview

1.8.1 Banks & ATMs

See section "[Currency](#)" for exchange rate.

There are not many banks or ATMs in Vanuatu. You can find banks/ATMs in Tana Island: Lenakel and one in Efate Island: Port Vila. Most ATMs will have a small limit per day, so be sure to get enough cash to last you throughout your stay.

Credit cards are not widely accepted in the outer islands. You can use them at resorts and retailers in Port Vila and Luganville. Most merchants will add an additional 3-5% surcharge on credit card purchases.

Sept. 2023: You can acquire Vatu in Nadi, Fiji at GCC Exchange. +679.932.7700, gccfiji@gccexchange.com. Hours: Mon. 0900-1730, Tues-Fri: 0800-1730, Sat: 0800-1500. –Sugar Shack

1.8.2 Boat Bottom Cleaning

Oct. 2023: Amos will swim out to the anchored yachts and inquire about cleaning the bottom of your boat. He does a good job and is very reasonably priced. +678.736.1835. – Marianda Dupie

1.8.3 Boat Parts and Repairs

Efate Island: Port Vila has boat builders, marine shops, and other repair facilities.

Yachting World Port Vila Boatyard

+678.23 417, +678.34.579, <https://port-vila-boatyard.business.site/>

Hours: Sun-Fri: 0800-1700

Full service marine repair and hardstand storage center. Cyclone moorings, marine chandlery.

Services: repair, cleaning, anti-fouling, glassing, joinery, welding.

Sub-contractors: engine repairs

2018: Getting work done: Port Vila offers good services for yachts. Port Vila Boatyard has haul out facilities, marine electricians and mechanics, and cyclone certified moorings. Many spare parts can be found in Port Vila and Luganville or can easily be ordered and flown in from Australia, NZ, or USA and brought in Duty and VAT free for visiting yachts. – Noonsite

Jan. 2017: Cruising the whole of Vanuatu, one can safely say there are more mechanical spare parts available in Luganville than Port Vila. – Bold Spirit

1.8.4 Haul Out, Storage, Repair Facilities

Efate Island: Port Vila has boat builders, marine shops and other repair facilities.

Port Vila Boatyard

+678.23 417, +678.34.579, <https://port-vila-boatyard.business.site/>

Hours: Sun-Fri: 0800-1700

Full service marine repair and hardstand storage center. Cyclone moorings, marine chandlery.

Services: repair, cleaning, anti-fouling, glassing, joinery, welding.

Sub-contractors: engine repairs

1.8.5 Marine Services

Yachting World Vanuatu Facilities (<https://yachtingworld-vanuatu.com/port-vila-marina-facilities.html>). See above [Boat Pars and Repairs](#) for contact info. Services offers:

- Sea Wall Marina
- Swing Moorings
- Diesel Fuel Wharf
- Dinghy Wharf
- Bar and Restaurant
- Laundry
- Yacht Mail
- Internet / Wifi
- Serviced Apartments

Best Marine Engineer is JT or John Turner available on: +678 7101766

1.8.6 Medical & Health

There are 5 public hospitals and one private hospital with 27 health centers located across the islands. The two main hospitals are in Efate: Port Vila and Espiritu Santo: Luganville. There is a medical center on Santo and Malekula.

Keep in mind that resources are very limited and can be expensive. Most will require immediate cash payments.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites as malaria and dengue fever are prevalent in Vanuatu.

Wash all vegetables prior to consuming.

Talk to the locals about which fish are safe to eat. Avoid all reef fish as there is a high risk of ciguatera.

1.8.7 Provisions

Efate Island: Port Vila is the best place to provision. There are a few large supermarkets, bakeries, and a few butchers.

Espiritu Santo Island: Luganville also has a supermarket, but the Provisions opportunities are much smaller. Bon Marche supermarket is a good value with a French influence and Australian products.

The outer islands can trade fresh fruit and vegetables and some of the islands will have small stores with basic supplies. But these supplies are for the locals so please resist buying their supplies.

1.8.8 Shipping Parts & Mail

Post Office recommends that Visiting yachts have their mail delivered to Yachting World Marina. Prior to sending anything, verify that Yachting World is still receiving parcels.

Also verify if a TIN (Temporary Import Number) is required prior to shipment.

THE ADDRESS IS:

Your Name

(NAME OF YOUR YACHT) - Yacht in Transit

C/O Yachting World

PO Box 1507

Port Vila

Vanuatu

Oct. 2023: If you have to order a part from abroad and have it delivered to Vanuatu; you can ask for an import exemption at customs. You have to be a ship in transit then. In Port Vila, we visited both customs and FedEx a few times to get all of the information and make arrangements.

First, write a letter explaining your situation (what you ordered, why you ordered it, why you didn't buy it in Vanuatu, and how urgent is it.). You will also need to provide a copy of your boat paperwork, and the receipt of what you ordered, with tracking number.

After the package arrives, your local agent (FedEx-Dhl etc) will ask for the exemption for you. This is not done before hand.

In the end we got the exemption and only payed a handling fee of 1.000 vatu to the shipping agent. With the exemption you do not pay import duties. It goes on Island time, but we got our package sent by express from China and it took two weeks.

Please verify shipping instructions on the exact procedure before ordering, as it can change. – Eastern Stream

1.9 Communications

1.9.1 Internet & Cell Phone Coverage

The international dial code is +678.

There are two carriers in Vanuatu: Vodafone and Digicel. Much like other countries, one carrier works better than the other depending on your location and the time of day. If you require connectivity all the time, the suggestion is to purchase SIM cards from both carriers.

Vodafone: Works well in Port Vila, but varies in the outer islands. SIM card costs about \$10vt as a Visitor Pack with \$10 data included. You have to purchase top up scratch off cards so be sure to purchase several as they are not readily available in the outer islands. Topping up can be tricky, best to have a local help you.

Digicel: Works well in Port Vila, but varies in the outer islands. SIM Card costs \$500vt, call 122 to activate and you get 200mg data, 200 on-net minutes, 200 on-net SMS for 3 days. Digicel typically is less expensive in the long run and you can top up using an app or their website.

It is recommended to purchase both Vodafone (scratch off cards) and Digicel (app to top up) to receive continuous service throughout Vanuatu.

Interesting Link on both carriers on Rocket Guide: <https://cruising-vanuatu.com/mobile-internet-vanuatu.html>

1.9.2 VHF

General VHF Advice that applies to all areas: Be aware that on high power, a good VHF will transmit 25 miles. So, if you are only doing within-anchorage communications, switch to low power. On the flip side, if you are trying to call across island, or to the next island, use high power, low squelch. Make sure you are aware which channels are automatic low power (i.e. 17), and stay away from the low-power channels for long distance conversations.

Though widely spaced in channel number, channels 16, 68, and 18 are very close to each other in frequency. Most VHF antennas are 'tuned' for channel 16, so long distance communications will work best on 18 or 68. Conversely, in a crowded anchorage, transmission on high power on channel 18 or 68 may 'bleed' over to 16 (and almost any other channel, if you're close enough). You don't need high power to talk to the boat next to you, so turn your radio to Low Power!

Be aware that some channels that Americans use frequently are 'duplex' channels in International mode. You may have trouble communicating with a European boat, or an American boat whose radio is in International mode, on Channel 18. (see any VHF guide for the full list of international and US channels and frequencies). Make sure you ask in each port what the local channels are--both so you know how to reach someone ashore and so you know not to use those channels for your off-channel conversations.

1.9.3 SSB Radio Nets

Vanuatu Cruisers Net: 8230mhz or 8188 at 0730 local time. It is a voluntary net, so if it is not on, feel free to jump in and get it started.

The Vanuatu Net operates daily at 0830UTC, which is 7:30 a.m. local time in Vanuatu. Primary frequency is 8230 kHz USB and there is an alternate frequency of 8188 if needed for clearer communication. Coverage area is normally around Vanuatu but extends to New Caledonia, Solomons, and Fiji.

Check-ins are about Vanuatu but can come from any of the neighboring countries with propagation.

The purpose of the Vanuatu Net is to facilitate communication between cruisers and exchange information to get the most out of your adventure.

The Vanuatu Net is for cruisers and relies on someone starting the net at the start of May and others sharing the load through the season by volunteering to do a day or two a week. It is not difficult and we all use our radios anyway so please help out.

Gulf Harbor Radio: David Sapiane on s/v Chameleon (and his wife Patricia), run Gulf Harbor Radio. On at 1915 UTC (7:15pmFiji time) on 8752 USB (alternate freq 8779 and last alternate freq 8297). They offer check-ins, weather, and news. They typically run the net between April-Nov. It is best to contact them prior to your journey to ensure they are up and running. www.ghradio.co.nz/contact.html

Pacific Seafarer's Net: Time: 0300 UTC frequency 14,300 KHz, pacseanet@gmail.com, If you're a ham, for longer passages, we always checked in with the Pacific Seafarer's Net. This is also a good frequency to have saved in case of emergency—the Hams on the PacSea net will move heaven and earth to help any boat with a

true emergency—ham operator or not. Even when there is no net going on this frequency, there are often hams monitoring the frequency for emergency traffic.

They start with a ‘warmup session’ at 0300, where you can call in and chat, and maybe hook up with someone who will make a phone call to the US for you. The “Roll Call” (boats who have checked in regularly and indicated they are underway) starts at 0310 UTC, and when they finish (30-60 minutes later), they call for boats getting ready to go on passage to get on the Roll Call list for tomorrow’s net.

It’s always a good idea to listen up on a structured net for a day or so to get the rhythm of the net, before calling in. You can call in for a radio check during the warmup period, or just after the formal net ends. There are usually people on the net who will do a “phone patch” for you—just ask.

The net control is usually in Hawaii, but there are always relay stations on both sides of the Pacific to help with weaker signals.

Northland Radio: Northland Radio ZMH292 offers a tracking check in service for vessels underway (fee required). Northland Radio is located in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Peter recently installed a new large antenna and has been able to work boats throughout most of the South and Central Pacific and as far as Alaska from New Zealand. Learn more and contact Peter Mott peter@northlandradio.nz. And www.passageguardian.nz.

Emergency Frequencies: 2182 4125 6215 8291 12290 16420

NZ Maritime Radio monitors all emergency frequencies 24/7 see below for working frequencies

tel. 0800 MARITIME, 0800 627 48463 maritime@kordia.co.nz

tel . 0064 (0)4 9148333

RCC NZ tel 0064 (0) 4 577 8030 rcc@maritimenz@govt.nz

JRCC Honolulu Tel 001 808 535 3333 JRCCHonolulu@uscg.mil

NZ Maritime Radio SSB WEATHER

UTC	UTC	FREQ	FREQ
0303*	1503*	6224	12356 *warnings only
0333*	1533*	8297	16531
0903	2103	6224	12356
1003	2203	8297	16531

NavArea XIV includes: Islands- Equator to 25S, 160E to 120W

Subtropic- 23S to 40S, Australian Coast to 120W

Pacific- 25S to 55S, 170W to 120W

NZ Wx Fax Frequencies

5807.0 9459.0 13550.0 16340.1, Subtract 1.9 for SSB RX

(and 3247.4 between 0945 and 1645UTC at the 16340 time)

1.9.4 Real Time Tracking

Passage Guardian, Peter Mott +64.21.279.4995, www.passageguardian.nz, peter@passageguardian.nz

The Passage Guardian offers free monitoring. It is a global (free of charge) safety service for recreational vessels conducting ocean passages. Peter Mott will track your vessel using Marine Traffic satellite AIS, with notifications, GMDSS Weather reports. If sailing single handed, alerts to traffic expected to cross your track overnight, and rescue coordination.

Dec. 2023: We've used The Passage Guardian for the last 4 passages and have found him incredibly reliable, easy to work with and very professional. He has alerted us of a Chinese fishing fleet in our path and diverted us, helped us in extreme weather conditions, and has provided such immense peace of mind. – Sugar Shack

1.10 Cruising Information Sources

We are indebted to the people and organizations below for documenting their experiences and sharing them with us. Every section is a mix of several sources.

A few details about the boats are included, where we know them, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

1.10.1 Local Websites

Vanuatu Tourism is www.vanuatu.travel/en/

Visit the "yachting" page on this website, here:

<https://www.vanuatu.travel/nz/component/search/?searchword=yachts&searchphrase=all&Itemid=246>

1.10.2 Digital Guide & Apps

Rocket Guide to Vanuatu: <https://cruising-vanuatu.com/index.html>

The **Rocket Guide to Vanuatu** is a digital, interactive nautical guide with detailed information on navigation, passages, weather, tides, ports, culture, hospitality, key points, and local foods. With over 170 surveyed anchorages, 160 personally verified GPS routes and up to date information.

Works on PC or MACs. Requires Windows XP or later, MAC OSX 10.7 or later. It works on windows tablets but not on Android or iPad tablets (yet).

Once you download, internet is not required.

Sail South Pacific App - www.sailsouthpacific.com

All of the route and destination planning resources from Panama West across the Pacific, all in one easy to use iOS app for iPad.

Not available on the iPhone.

1.10.3 Pacific Rally

Island Cruising organizes an amazing rally across the Pacific. You can join from just about anywhere (Panama, French Polynesia, Tonga, Fiji, New Caledonia, Minerva Reef, Vanuatu, Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands. Rally members receive a comprehensive guide to cruising the Pacific, all check in/departure paperwork, crew help, communication tools, tons of discounts, and a bountiful of events. Cruise with the group or do your own thing, come and go when you please. – www.islandcruising.nz/our-rallies.

Dec. 2023: We have been a member of Island Cruising for several years and have had the pleasure of participating in (2) of their rallies. They provide an immense amount of required documentation, tons of communications, loads of fantastic discounts, and a wonderful community with fellow cruisers. Well worth the money. I highly recommend sailors join if they plan on cruising in the Pacific. – Sugar Shack

1.10.4 Noonsite

www.noonsite.com

Originally started by Jimmy Cornell, this site is a great repository of information for all those out-of-the-way places. Made possible by YOUR contributions.

1.10.5 Seven Seas Cruising Association

www.scca.org

The SSCA is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a monthly publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. They also have a good website and a well-attended bulletin board. Membership is reasonable, and the monthly publication and indexed back issues are available electronically.

1.10.6 Pacific Puddle Jump Yahoo Group

www.pacificpuddlejumps.com

This group is where the people gathering in South and Central America meet to share information about crossing the big puddle. A good source of information, but not very organized, and it can be full of bloat from people who ask the same questions without doing any research of their own.

You must be a member to read or post anything on this site, but if you are getting ready for a Pacific crossing, it is well worth a few minutes to sign up for Groups IO and then sign up for this group. Explore Files and Links pages, for great information.

1.10.7 Facebook Groups

There are several Facebook groups:

- Cruising Vanuatu
- Sailing & Cruising in New Caledonia, Vanuatu & Beyond
- Sailing (Cruising) West Pacific: Tonga/Fiji/Vanuatu/NCal/Solomons/PNG
- Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department

1.10.8 WhatsApp Group

There are a few WhatsApp groups where cruisers share valuable information and insights. If you join the Island Cruising Pacific Rally you'll have access to one of the best WhatsApp groups in the Pacific!

1.10.9 Ocean Cruising Club

<http://oceancruisingclub.org>

The OCC is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a website and bi-annual publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. Membership is reasonable, and the publication is available electronically. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

1.10.10 Cruiser Reports

We are indebted to the people and organizations that have documented their experiences and shared them with us. We can't do this alone. We rely on cruisers sharing updated information. So, please be sure to document and email us your notes at sherry@svsoggypaws.com.

Every section is a mix of several sources: A few details about the boats are included, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

For most of the earlier sources, we have gleaned the information off the internet (cruiser's websites, blogs, and online forum postings) or out of a Seven Seas Cruising Association bulletin. For the sources reported below, much of the info came directly from cruising friends, helping to round out the information in our various Compendiums.

Sugar Shack extrapolated information from the Vanuatu WhatsApp group and or had information reported to them where indicated "As reported to Sugar Shack."

Another source for earlier information was the YIT (Yachts in Transit) website from NZ. Member yachts post their updates and anchorage information on YIT. And Gulf Harbor Radio monitors the current location of yachts on YIT to give out weather information. <https://www.yit.nz/>

Dandelion (2023): John and Bev on Dandelion, having travelled from Mozambique crossed the Atlantic, Caribbean, through Panama, crossed the Pacific, visited the Marquesas, Fiji, on to NZ, then to Vanuatu. John and Bev cruised from June to October 2023 across the Vanuatu islands. It is one of their favorite places, besides Cuba and Columbia. Dandelion is a Leopard 47, 14.3m long, 7.4m wide, 1.35m draft.

Eastern Stream (2023): Jaap and Minke left the Netherlands in 2016 on their steel ketch Eastern Stream. The boat has a length of 15 meters, width of 4 meters and a depth of 2 meters. From Panama they sailed to Chile, Easter Island and Pitcairn. The last few years they cruised the Pacific. The Eastern Stream crew loves to explore the more remote places and anchorages.

Katoa 2 (2024): Katoa 2 is a Ron Given Voyager, built by Bob Huntington, (owner/operator) at home in a large shed and launched in 2019. It is 14.5m x 7.3m with a draft of 1.2m. Ron and Judith have sailed around the North Island of NZ, the Marlborough and Pelorus Sounds, Abel Tasman, Fiji, Minerva Reef, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Currently the boat is in Australia.

Sugar Shack (2023): Matt and Christine on Sugar Shack have sailed from Turkey to the Caribbean, ABCs, Panama, Costa Rica, Galapagos, Chile, French Polynesia, Fiji, New Zealand, Minerva, Tonga. They plan to sail Vanuatu in 2024. Sugar Shack is a 47' Catana catamaran: 15m long, 7.7m wide, 1.3m draft. Sugar Shack was instrumental in the reorganization and update of the Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, and French Polynesia Compendiums in 2019-2023. www.svsugarshack.com

Eagle's Wings (2014-2019): Eagle's Wings is a 60 ft Sundeer (monohull). They are avid divers and have been making the annual trip from NZ to Fiji, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia every year. Most of the info posted attributed to Eagle's Wings comes from their YIT posts. <https://www.yit.nz/yacht/eagleswings>

Field Trip (2017-2018): <http://svfieldtrip.blogspot.com/search/label/Vanuatu>

Wandering Waterhorse (2018): <http://wanderingwaterhorse.com/uncategorized/vanuatu-to-the-solomon-islands/>

Adina (2015): Adina is a Hylas 46 with 6'4" draft. <https://yachtadina.co.uk/>

Alba (2015): Alba is a Halberg-Rassey 42F with a 6 foot draft. <http://thehowarths.net/alba-chronicles>

Sloepmouche (May 2006 – Nov 2010): Sloepmouche is a 46' Norman Cross trimaran - 5' draft. Most of the info on Vanuatu from Sloepmouche was taken from a series of articles from the Seven Seas Cruising Association Bulletins (ssca.org). www.tropicalsailinglife.com. They are typical low-budget, off the grid sailing adventurers, slowly working their way around the world. They have a ton of videos of their cruising adventures on their website.

2 Passage Reports

2.1 Sailing to / from Vanuatu

2.1.1 From Australia to Vanuatu

May 2019: We arrived in Port Vila from the Gold Coast after 8.5 days, 7 days in total sailing and a rest stop of 1 1/2 day.

We arrived in New Caledonia in the early morning hours and entered the reef at 0652h 16th of May just North of Noumea. Two cruise ships entered before us, so we had to wait.

Confused seas in combination with wave heights of 3-4 m stopped us from taking full advantage of THOR's capacity for speed during the crossing from the Gold Coast, and despite slowing down we were whacked a fair bit, making it difficult to rest or sleep when not on watch.

Our passage onwards to Port Vila on the other hand was terrific. First motor 'sailing' (wind on the nose) to the Havannah passage - out of the reef. After that we had a fabulous sail to Port Vila, 300 nm in 30 hours. Max boat speed was 21.2 kts and max true wind speed was 28.6 kts. True wind speed was very consistent SE 17-22 kts for the most part. On the final approach to Port Vila, we had to drop the sail in about 19 kts as the land to the South was not providing much shelter before the entrance.

We found the Quarantine buoy and two other sailing boats, anchored at 1830h in 7m of water, anchored easily and then drew a collective breath of relief. – Thor

2.1.2 From Vanuatu to New Zealand

Nov. 2016: Port Vila to Marsden Cove: We left Port Vila early morning and slowly made our way SE. We had quite a variety of conditions as we left Port Vila but things settled down once we got away from the island. We headed for a waypoint to the SE above 22S where we hung out before continuing on to NZ. Conditions were beautiful.

Day 2: Another benign day with lots of sun, no waves, but also no wind. We went through some large areas of brown particulate matter for most of the day and are not sure if that is due to volcanic activity. It didn't look like pumice.

Day 3: Sunny skies today but big cloud banks developed during the day. Many squall cells overnight, some with heavy rain. Mix of motor sailing and sailing. Moving slowly to SE. Slight swell started to appear today and expect that to continue to build. Sailed by several round markers in the water probably placed here by the fleet of fishing boats we passed. Water cleared up and we were able to use the watermaker.

Day 4: Low clouds developed during the day to the west, but then receded later in the day. Wind held all day and had very nice sailing under double reefed main and staysail. We're moving gradually to the ESE to get a better angle to NZ (as the wind is predicted to switch around to the SE late tomorrow). No squalls today and wind has been very steady.

Day 5: Continued to sail to the ESE with triple reefed main for most of the day as the seas and wind built (most we saw was 25 knots of wind). No squalls, though. Made the turn back to the SW this evening as the wind shifted to the SSE. Shook out a reef and are sailing slowly under double reefed main. We are curving a gradual arc toward NZ as the winds back around to the SE and E. We're sailing slowly to avoid pounding into the big seas and because we're steering toward Tasmania, rather than New Zealand (the winds are still too southerly).

Day 6: Winds have backed around over the past 12 hours allowing us to make a better course to NZ. We had good wind all day and are able to make good progress as the seas come down. We had expected to be motoring on this leg of the trip, but the winds have continued to hold.

Day 7: The seas subsided and the winds backed nicely and we were able to sail with full hoist and jib during the day. The wind died off early Sunday evening and clocked around so we were heading off toward Tasmania again. We'd also been contending with a .75-1.25 knot adverse current for most of the day, so we fired up the motor to head more south easterly to get out of the current.

Day 8: We have been making good progress for the last 24 hours as the winds came up and backed. We've even had a favorable current at times. The skies cleared overnight and the southern cross is beckoning. Water temps are slowly dropping, but it is really incredibly pleasant. The waves built again and they created rough conditions earlier in the evening. The waves are now more well-formed.

Day 9: Had a wonderful day of sailing until about mid-day yesterday when we lost the wind and had to turn on the engine. The sky was a beautiful blue all day and the air temp very comfortable. The stars splashed across the sky overnight in a dazzling display. There is barely a ripple on the water and the phosphorescence in our bow wave is mesmerizing. What an unusually calm final approach to New Zealand. We decided to continue on to Marsden Cove.

Day 10: We are zeroing in on Marsden and expect to arrive at the mouth of the river around dawn. We had a beautiful, placid motor down the coast. A super end to a challenging, but excellent passage.

Day 11: We arrived at Marsden early this morning, cleared in and went up the river on the afternoon tide to Riverside marina in Whangarei, where we are now safely moored. This passage was unique in that we never had the wind on the beam or aft of the beam the entire trip. – Eagle's Wings

2.1.3 From Fiji to Vanuatu

Early Sept. 2016: Left Vuda Point, Fiji early afternoon time for Port Resolution. Benign trip out to the pass but then winds picked up to 25-30 (gusting higher) after we got through the pass. At least they were behind us. Sailed with triple reef main only until this morning when we shook out one reef. Conditions have lightened up this morning with winds 20-25 and seas not so big. Nice and sunny! Very pleasant temps.

Day 2: Winds built again yesterday to 25-30 with 3-meter seas. Boat handling it all just fine. The wind backed more overnight and is diminishing. The seas are also subsiding. No traffic at all since leaving Fiji waters.

Day 3: Had a nice day of sailing yesterday to Port Resolution. Wind and waves lightened as we got close to Tanna. Could see volcano in the night vision scope 30 miles out with awesome bursts of light. Volcano spewing out large plumes. We got the anchor down about 9am. Anchorage very protected but rolly. – Eagle's Wings

Sept. 2012: We left Denarau at just the right time. Reestablished our lost sea legs as we sailed 7-8kt in 20kt wind and 1-2m swells from the South and confused seas. We took several big waves into the cockpit - time for foul weather gear. Sunday was a beam reach and smooth sailing downwind. Monday, we motored half the day with current against us then the wind kicked in to 20kt and we sailed 8-9kt (!!) beam reach with 2 reefs and small jib blasting us through the water in -2mt seas late Monday through our arrival Tuesday. There was plenty of water over the bow and a little in the cockpit and 2-2.5kt current against us. We made up for the slowness and arrived in Anatom at 2pm Tuesday. – Chesapeake

Aug. 2012: Our Passage to Vanuatu from Momi Bay at the southwest corner of Viti Levu, Fiji was a good one. As we exited Navula Pass we headed off on a beam reach with twenty knots of wind.

Over the next two days the wind crept further astern but the trip continued to be pleasant and dry. On Sunday morning with thirty odd miles to Port Resolution the wind dropped and we worked hard for each mile gained, finally resorting to the engine when we were ten miles out. As we approached the island, we could see Mt. Yasur belch large clouds of smoke into the otherwise clear blue sky. – Shango

Sept. 2011: All of those that we had met, who had cruised this area before, had stressed the need to start in the South and work north; this was very sound advice and I pass it on!

One of the big attractions of Vanuatu is the Tanna Volcano Experience and most of the year this is a hundred (plus) miles dead to windward from Port Vila; thus, it would be logical to head either directly to Tanna or to Aneityum in the south.

It was 493 miles from Lautoka and took us a very pleasant four days of broad reaching. – Mr. John

2.2 Passages within Vanuatu

2.2.1 Port Vila to Santo

Sept. 2016: We had many squalls as we were leaving Port Vila. 1-1.5 knots adverse current for most of the trip, so the trip was slow going. Had some stretches of nice sailing in benign seas. Motor sailing now with wind dead downwind.

Day 2: Arrived Espiritu Santo this afternoon. Had some unexpected nice wind starting mid-morning. We are in a beautiful spot off Aese Island. – Eagle's Wings

2.2.2 Tanna to Port Vila

Sept. 2016: Underway to Port Vila and getting close. We hove to for a few hours this morning to time our arrival when we are both up. We had a few squalls on the trip. Wind has been all over the map strength-wise from 10 to 32 to knots. Seas were a bit confused, but not too large (1-2 meters). – Eagle's Wings

2.2.3 Aneityum to Tanna

Sept. 2011: The passage from Aneityum to Tanna should be a Trade Wind Reach and with a good current pushing you along. From Anelghowhat anchorage into the Port Resolution anchorage is 49 miles.

We left at 0600hrs and were happily at anchor by 1400hrs, departing from NW Bay would cut another hour off that so there seems little point in doing an overnight.....Those that do seem to spend their early morning hours trying to slow down however they can be treated to some nice displays from the Tanna Volcano.

After spending some time in Kiribati and the Marshall's we were surprised by the extent of the wind shadow in the lee of Aneityum. We had to go ten miles downwind to find clear air. This is a good introduction to all the islands in this group where the mountainous nature and geography of the islands in relation to the pervading wind conditions, can cause some very unexpected wind directions quite some way offshore. – Mr. John

2.2.4 Between Islands

2010: Lumpy sailing is generally the case between islands during normal cruising season. There are often strong currents running around points of land and between islands. Can be very nasty in strong wind. Don't underestimate. One large catamaran trailing their dinghy for the short trip from Havannah Harbor to Vila broke the painter in big waves and the seas were so rough, they dared not try to recover it and just had to watch it drift away with the expensive outboard. Last season three boats went up on reefs and were lost. Always ensure 360 deg. swinging room at anchor and do NOT navigate at night and stand way off if you heave to. The Charts are off in most places. – Sloepmouche

3 Mystery Island

Southernmost island just off Aneityum Island

Nobody lives on Mystery Island and it is considered Tabu to do so. Locals come by boat when the cruise ship is in Aneityum Island.

Mystery Island got its name when it was used as an airstrip by Allies during WWII. The island's tiny size and remote location prevented the Japanese from figuring out where the planes were coming from so it was called the Mystery Island.

There are no formalities here, but you can try to obtain prior approval to clear in to Aneityum when the cruise ship is in port. The cruise ship schedule can be found here <https://cruisedig.com/ports/mystery-island-vanuatu>.

Mystery island is a pristine marine ecosystem that has been a marine protected area for over a decade. You will discover some of the healthiest marine life in the archipelago.

4 Aneityum (Anatom)

4.1 Anelghowhat Bay

Southern end of the island. Facing Mystery Island.

Be sure to give the reef a wide berth (beyond **20°15.300S / 169°45.100E**)! Best to enter from the west side. Some southerly swells break along the reef.

The Cruise ship tenders have an area marked by buoys that they use for their guests. Do not block it.

Oct. 2012: This port is located on the southwestern corner of the island. This anchorage provides very good protection from all winds and waves except those from the southwest. – Yolo

4.1.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2012: 20°14.195S / 169°46.583E. This is a large calm anchorage open to SW wind but protected from swells by a reef, it is very calm. The sandy bottom has good holding and the entry is very wide. – Chesapeake.

Sept. 2012: This anchorage provides good protection from all winds and waves except from the SW. – Yolo

Sept. 2011: 20°14.277S / 169°46.730E. The best anchorage is in the center of the bay. You can find protection here in everything but westerly blow. We tried to anchor near **20°14.396S / 169°46.752E** but the SW swell bounced off the reef causing a rolly anchorage.

20°14.858S / 169°46.4W. Do not anchor here when the cruise ship is in port as their tenders use this area. This is an ok anchorage in a fresh southerly wind. – Mr. John

4.1.2 General Services

4.1.2.1 Bank & ATMs

The National Bank of Vanuatu has an office here but they do not always exchange currency. If you are clearing in here you have to come prepared with Vatu (local currency) as they will not do a currency exchange and they do not take credit cards.

Sept. 2019: The bank has plenty of money and didn't balk at us handing them AUD \$800. – Sea Nymph

Sept. 2012: Banking services are available. If you have not already obtained Vanuatu currency (Vatu), try to get enough of it here to cover the cost of the volcano trip at Tanna Island and everything else you might need before reaching Port Vila. – Yolo

4.1.2.2 Formalities

Clearance at this port requires special prior permission. It is often easier to get approval if you time your arrival with a cruise ship. Here is the cruise ship schedule: <https://cruisedig.com/ports/mystery-island-vanuatu>.

If you receive prior approval and you arrive when there is no cruise ship you may be charged fees to transport and house the officials.

From the Customs website: *Master of all yachts entering Vanuatu from a foreign port or place must first report to the Customs, Quarantine and Immigration authorities at either the port of Lenakel or Port Vila or Luganville or Sola.*

Vessels may not call at Mystery Island (Aneityum) or Port Resolution (Tanna) or any other place in Vanuatu, prior to entering one of the ports nominated above for customs clearance, unless prior written permission is granted by the Director of Customs & Inland Revenue. The Master of vessels who visit these places prior to obtaining customs clearance, being issued with an "Inter-island Cruising Permit", or obtaining written permission may be subject to fines and/or prosecution.

Oct. 2023: Several cruisers in the South Pacific Island Cruising Rally cleared in to Aneityum Island, but it took a lot of patience and many, many emails trying to get the pre-approval. – As reported to Sugar Shack

April 2019: We had no problem clearing in in Aneityum. Helpful, quick replies from Vanuatu officials. We did check cruise ship schedules and coordinated our arrival there. We got Vatu in Fiji before we sailed. – Amarulla

July 2017: Clearing in was very easy. I previously filled out the PDF forms for customs etc online. My email was answered within 30 mins but many other yachties did not receive a reply. This is common and not a problem just as long as you have written ahead. The man I corresponded with was Walter Oli. woli@vanuatu.gov.vu

On arrival our night time entry was easy in the big lagoon. we arrived Friday night but didn't go ashore until Monday as we didn't want to pay weekend rates for clearance and didn't want to do the wrong thing. As it happened, we found we'd been over cautious...

We went ashore Monday thinking C&I would be there and they weren't. The bank has plenty of money and didn't balk at us handing them AUD \$800.

The customs, immigration and quarantine officials flew in to nearby Mystery Island to clear in a cruising ship and cleared us in as well.

They asked what food I had onboard and told them I had a few fresh vegetables and would eat them onboard that night also that I had a little cryo vacuum packed meat from Aus. He was happy with that.

Total cost for clearing in was 14, 800 vatu. We did not get the extension and will do that at Tanna or Port Vila. The extension will be 5000 vatu. I think our mates on Kitikana was able to pay for the extension at Aneityum but on our day the immigration man said he forgot the stamp for the extension.

When we arrived in Pt. Vila we paid 6000VT (approx Aud\$67) each person for the inter-island cruising permit for the rest of Vanuatu as the one you apply for in New Cal before you leave will only give permission to cruise the southern islands – Sea Nymph

Sept. 2012: FIRST GOVERNMENT OFFICE VISITED: When clearing-in at Anatom Island raise the Q flag and wait on board your vessel for the Customs official to arrive. He will arrive by small boat during business hours. He will complete the Customs, Cruising Permit, and Quarantine paperwork. He will then collect the Quarantine Service fee. He wears more than one hat so to speak. He will advise you to clear-in with Immigration when you visit one of the other clearance ports, since he typically does not provide this service.

Usually the only government visitor to your boat will be the Quarantine Officer. In our case all paperwork was completed in the cockpit and the inspector never entered YOLO. – Yolo

4.1.2.2.1 Post Office

2012: There is a post office located in Aneityum. – Yolo

4.1.3 Activities

Sept. 2023: 20°14.453S / 169°46.79E. There are 2 mooring balls indicating fairly decent snorkel sites: a very old ship wreck and underwater crevices. Shallow water snorkel. There is no fishing allowed in this bay.

Aneityum is known to be a playground for nature lovers. Lots of bird watching, forest walks, waterfalls, floral walks, and mountain top views. – As reported to Sugar Shack

4.1.4 Cruiser Reports

July 2017: There are no fresh vegies available on the island. You can occasionally buy fish from a fisherman who drags a gill net around the lagoon each day. And there is a fish co-op that is open island time.

Mystery island is about 500 meters away and the cruise ships have been in every few days. We went over and it is the total opposite to Aneityum. It is purely commercial for the cruise ships. No one actually lives there. 95% of the items they sell is from Indo and china.

The people on Aneityum are friendly, honest and totally delightful...we have been to scores of islands in our travels and found the people here to be our favorite. They won't take money for anything and I was offered paw paw and pamplemousse and a basket so later returned with a lovely book for the young woman who said she liked to read. – Sea Nymph

Sept. 2011: Ashore there were some nice little walks, a store with a few basics and a couple of schools; Mystery Island has some nice beaches and is really very pretty when there's no Cruise Ship in; it was also fun to go and see the Cruise Ship operation when one pulls in.....the entertainment was 'tacky' in the extreme but none of the passengers seemed to notice. – Mr. John

4.2 Anamnet Bay

On the eastern side of Anatom island

4.2.1 Anchorage

July 2019: 20°08.017S / 169°49.619E. Moved to the north side of the island yesterday and anchored in Anamnet Bay. Very beautiful and peaceful. – Eagle's Wings

4.2.2 Cruiser Report

July 2019: Hope to dive on the nearby reefs today. Noke, the chief's son, paddled out to us in his dugout outrigger. He returned later in the afternoon with loads of fruit, a pumpkin, bok choy, and an unusual vegetable called a snake bean. The bean is almost a meter long! – Eagle's Wings

4.3 Itchepthay Bay

On the north tip of Anatom Island

4.3.1 Anchorage

2012: 20°08.572S / 169°46.608E. Anchorage is sand 8-10m. Exposed to wind and swell from West-North-East. Anchor in the center of the bay. Great for an early morning start to Port Resolution. – Yolo

2011: 20°08.52S / 169°46.62E. This is a nice quiet spot and you are unlikely to be disturbed; the holding is good and you can pick your depth in sand / mud. – Mr. John

4.3.2 Cruiser Report

2011: When headed North out of Anelghowhat you can break up the passage to Tanna by calling at Itchepthay Bay, located up on the NW coast of Aneityum. The only drawback is the bullets of wind that drop down into the anchorage, especially when the trade winds are developed.

Whilst it only takes seven miles off the distance to Tanna, it does mean you can get around Inmat Reef in good visibility.....This reef is nearly always breaking. – Mr. John

5 Tanna Island

5.1 Port Resolution

5.1.1 Pass

Sept. 2011: When arriving in Port Resolution be aware that the early Rocket Guide had an incorrect waypoint so best check everything and know where you are.

The C-map that I was using was almost in a different ocean; best be careful with all electronic devices; this is another reason for not rolling up here in the dark or early morning hours!

Route: Port Resolution inwards from south

1. 19°30.879S / 169°30.897E
2. 19°31.011S / 169°29.956E
3. 19°31.322S / 169°29.805E
4. 19°31.565S / 169°29.777E

Provided by Mr. John

5.1.2 Anchorage

Sept. 2023: The anchorage is very good. It is well protected from anything other than a northerly component of swell which can make it roly. The anchorage is not good during a strong east to north winds. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 19°31.530S / 169°29.764E. Anchored in 4-8m black sand. Exposed to SE to N winds and swell. Anchor as far to the south in the bay as possible but watch out for the small reef. – Reflection

Sept. 2012: 19°31.532S / 169°29.702E. This anchorage is very roly as swells wrap around the corner so we put out a stern anchor, bay is open to the NE. Black sand bottom, easy anchoring, good holding. There is a reef and bommies as you approach shore, but didn't see anything in the middle of the anchorage. There is room for 10+ boats in this anchorage.

Shore access: easy sand beach by dinghy. – Chesapeake

Aug. 2012: The anchorage in Port Resolution had a reputation for being roly and it seemed to be well earned. We dropped a stern anchor for the first time in two years. – Shango

Sept. 2011: 19°31.565S / 169°29.745E. Anchored in 16' of water with good holding. In retrospect we could have moved a little further ESE to 'tuck in' a little more but as you move into the shallower water there are more scattered coral heads and 'coral junk' on the bottom. It is however worth it to move in as far as you dare as the swell wraps around the headland (as can be seen on the Google shots) and this anchorage can be quite uncomfortable. – Mr. John

5.1.3 General Services

5.1.3.1 Banks & ATMs

Dec. 2023: GCC Exchange in Nadi, Fiji has Vatu and will exchange Fijian, US, or Euro for Vatu. +679.932.7700, gccfiji@gccexchange.com.

Sept. 2014: There are NO ATMs that will work with foreign cards. Full stop. None. You MAY be able to find OEM guest-house or other business on the other side of the island in Lenakel that MAY have enough cash in their 'till to help you out, but DON'T count on it. If coming from Fiji, go to the airport with your passport, and, most important, your customs paperwork -- and you can exchange whatever dollars you might have for Vanuatu Vatu. Clearing in at port resolution will cost v\$10,000 (\$100.00). Bring lots more V\$ with you as everything will cost money. Going up the volcano, visiting custom villages, etc., all require vatu. And every penny spent is worth it! – Segue

5.1.4 Formalities

Sept. 2023: In order to clear in at Port Resolution you will need to receive prior approval through special pre-arrangements. You may email customsborder@vanuatu.gov.vu to inquire about necessary documents and arrangements that need to be made. In addition, it would be good to find out what additional fees will be applied prior to arrival.

Other helpful officials: Ruth: rladam@vanuatu.gov.vu; Paul: pwnalau@vanuatu.gov.vu; Brian George +678 735 4854, and ituan@vanuatu.gov.vu.

Once approved and once you arrive, put up your Q flag, drop the hook and contact the Yacht club. The Yacht Club will call out on VHF 16 when the officials will arrive (the officials come from Lenakel).

There is no ATM in Port Resolution so you will need to have Vatu prior to arriving. GCC Exchange in Nadi, Fiji has Vatu. Special clearance costs \$17,000VT

Officials will drive over from Lenakel and you will be responsible for this extra service.

Several boats prefer clearing in Port Resolution over Lenakel because the anchorage is much better.

5.1.5 Provisions

Sept. 2023: There are no provision facilities. – As reported to Sugar Shack

5.1.6 Restaurants

Sept. 2012: We found a small café, Avoca which sells Tanna coffee. For \$300v they serve French press coffee and cookies in a traditional hut. It is truly delightful and a great way to learn more about their culture. – Chesapeake

5.1.7 Yacht Club

The Nipikinamu Yacht Club (aka The Port Resolution Yacht Club) accepts donations at <https://portresolutionyachtclub.com>.

The Port Resolution Yacht Club (also known as Nipikinamu Yacht Club) is a great stop as they are very helpful. Register your vessel with Werry Narua at wnarua@gmail.com. He is up the path to the top in a concrete house. Stanley will help you arrange officials and a volcano tour. His name +678.769.1375. Stanley can also be reached on VHF 16.

5.1.8 Activities

Sept. 2023: There are lots of wonderful things to do in this area. The volcano is a highlight for many visitors, including the Blue Hole (NW side of the island near Lenakel), Rockwater Resort (south of Blue Hole), and a Marine Sanctuary.

Volcano Tour: Bring jacket with hood, good hiking shoes, something to cover your face, torch/headlight, warm clothes as it gets chilly at night.

In the village, ask Stanley to organize the volcano tour. Also try +678.54.48.751. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Sept. 2016: Went up to volcano on Monday and it was amazing to see the volcano spewing out giant billows of blue, gray, white, and black plumes. Lots of fiery rock shooting up like fireworks. The guides wouldn't let anyone to the rim, as they were concerned about safety (volcano quite active that day). They do allow you to the rim if the activity is lower. They make a decision about which areas to open at 3 pm each day. Volcano trip costs: 2500 vatu/person for truck trip to staging area near volcano, 7500 vatu/person for volcano excursion. Be sure to have exact amount for each segment of trip (you pay separately for trip to staging area) as they don't seem to have change. Port Resolution beautiful, but quite rolly. Very friendly local fishermen came out to visit in dugout canoes. Wonderful bananas and papaya. – Eagle's Wings

Sept. 2012: Snorkeling was not possible off the beach by the point because of the waves. The trip to Yasur volcano was well worth the expense. At the Yacht Club you wait for the truck to drive to the volcano park (\$1500V pp, \$3350V park entrance fee pp). It was very chilly and windy when we went and a long hike up the cement stairs and a further hike up the sand hill. Be sure to bring a good flashlight. – Chesapeake

Sept. 2012: Viewing the Yasur Volcano on the island of Tanna is one of the spectacular highlights of the South Pacific. Don't pass this opportunity by, under any circumstance.

When you are anchored in Port Resolution on the southeastern corner of Tanna, the round trip four-wheel drive truck ride to/from the volcano will cost you 1,000 VATU (\$11 USD) per person and the admission fee to the volcano is 3,350 VATU (\$37 USD) for adults and half that for children under the age of 12.

The truck ride takes about 45 minutes to get to the volcano. The cost of the ride is negotiable, some tourist paid 2,000 VATU or more for the round trip. VATU is the only currency accepted by John, the truck driver. The truck departs the Port Resolution Yacht Club which is located on the bluff at the northeast corner of the bay. You can walk to the volcano. The hike will take you 2.5 to 3.0 hours one way. Walking back from the volcano would be a big challenge for most yachties since the road and trails are rough and there are no lights to guide you in the dark.

The one-day volcano park pass is paid at the entrance to the park. The cashier prefers VATU, yet will take U.S. or Australian dollars, discounting their value as much as 15%!

Keep in mind the following points when taking the volcano tour:

1. Visit the volcano on a clear weather day when the wind is NOT blowing from a western direction. On cloudy days, rainy days, or western wind days you will have a very difficult time viewing the volcano, if you see it at all.
2. Make sure you take bug repellent, a flash light, plenty of camera batteries, good footwear, and clothes to stay warm and dry. The walk from the parking lot to the rim of the volcano is about one hundred meters long on a concrete path. It gets very cool at the rim of the volcano after the sun sets. Plan on taking hundreds of photos and videos. You will be walking around the rim of the volcano and down the path in the dark, so a flashlight will come in handy.
3. You should see the volcano in both daylight and at night time. Doing both gives you a totally different perspective. So, you want to arrive at the volcano just before sunset. This REQUIRES that the truck leaves the yacht club at or before 1630. Make sure the truck driver knows your requirements and do not pay him until the truck is ready to depart. If the truck is not moving at 1631 tell the driver that you will view the volcano some other day. Historically, some truck drivers work on island time and their clients only see the volcano at night because of a late departure.
4. The volcano is shaped like a figure 8. It has two calderas with a low wall of rock between them. The southernmost caldera is near the parking lot and is the most active. However, from the rim of this caldera you can NOT see the bottom of the volcano where much of the continuous action is. Most tourists only view the southernmost caldera.

Make sure you walk the rim of the volcano several hundred meters to the north and look down inside the northern caldera. You can look directly into the mouth of the monster from the rim of the northern caldera. From this location you can also view the massive destruction of the volcanic lake that once existed on the western side of the volcano.

If you are an adventurer, walk the entire rim of the volcano, plenty of people have done so in the past. Just be sure to do so in daylight hours with good footwear.

Other Vanuatu islands have active volcanoes. They require very, very long hard hikes, have higher fees, and the volcanoes are often hidden from view by clouds and rain. Do Yasur on Tanna Island, then place a big check mark next to "volcano." -- Yolo

Aug. 2012: Tuesday we made a trip to the volcano. We once again piled into the Toyota truck with numerous others and at five p.m., headed to Mt. Yasur. As we climbed the steps to the rim of the crater the sun was setting, making the glow of the lava increasingly more brilliant. When we reached the summit we were able to peer over the edge (no fence) into the bowels of the earth. Molten lava boiled away below us. Occasionally a rumble began beneath the surface and steadily grew until there was a huge explosion sending lava bits flying high into the air above us. It was all pretty impressive. We were told by other cruisers later that instead of lava bits they watched large rocks flying through the air. I think the lava bits were sufficient. – Shango

2011: Tanna has one of the world's most accessible active volcanoes in the world and whilst it has other fine points and a very interesting culture, it is 'Yasur', the Volcano, which is a MUST SEE if passing this way.

You should go and see "Stan the Man" for this.... Stanley lives just past the school on the way into the village-- he likes to have a group of six or more so it helps if you arrive with a couple of other yachts. We made an agreement to visit the volcano the next day and fixed a price (5,000Vatu/per head – about US\$100 for the two of us), which included the 3,250Vatu per person entry fee.

If you do this trip you need the following equipment:

Good footwear (Hiking Boots)

Warm Clothing....its cold up there when the sun goes down also its windy so wind-proof and water-

proof may work better than an umbrella!!!

Thermos of something Hot to drink (optional)

Supply of water

Something to munch / eat...it's a long day

Spare batteries and spare cards for the camera

Flashlights...one each (at least)

Kneeling / sitting mat... bum padding for riding in the back of the pickup

Camera Stand /Tripod

Don't forget to leave your anchor light on for your return trip back to the boat. – Mr. John

2006: There are many more things to do than the volcano. Dinghy to the base of the cliff on the N side of the bay to see hot water churning and boiling up from the rocks, and a small hot water cascade steaming into the sea. You can swim close and chose your temperature for a hot soak! By arrangement, you can see Kastom (Custom, traditional) villagers who still wear the G-string penis shields called nambas do thundering chanting dances under the roots of an immense ancient banyan tree, see firewalking and “magic leaves”, horseback ride to the volcanic plain or the cave at the base of Mt Melon, the highest mountain, or trek 3 hrs each way to the sacred Kefar waterfall, guarded by jungle villagers who believe this fall houses spirits and magical rocks, and who have opened this sacred cascade to visitors only since mid-2005. – Sloepmouche

5.1.9 Cruiser Reports

Dec. 2016: Port Resolution is known as the anchorage to pull into when you want to take the Mt. Yasur volcano tour, but there is more to this location than what they tell you in Trip Advisor. Stanley at the Yacht Club is happy to help organize your volcano tour, but make sure to leave some time to visit the villagers, watch them weaving, browse the handicraft stall, and have a coffee at the café. That's when you'll be greeted with the warm friendliness that is the true glow of Tanna.

A teacher from the village paraded us around and introduced us to some of her family members. She told us that her 8-year-old son was still up in the bush (and had been for two weeks) as part of his circumcision ceremony. Messengers had been running food from her to him, and sending news of his well-being. I imagined what it would be like to send Michael up into the bush to fend for himself as he prepares to step into his manhood. Yikes. I'd be a wreck!

It was quite a sight to see two women sitting on the floor in the handiwork shop, sewing curtains for the school with a fancy old-fashioned manual sewing machine from China! We giggled together at how life is so similar everywhere in the world in so many ways, enjoying the connection we could share. – Field Trip

2006: This area is beautiful, and a fitting introduction to the unique islands of Vanuatu. The principal village, Irepow, is almost entirely traditional thatched huts constructed of natural materials paneled with different weaves of bamboo or rush. The paths are lined with tropical flowers and trees like a botanical garden. Walk through the village to the beautiful white sand beach. There's a cute thatched “restaurant”, where you can have a meal prepared by Lea, who makes some of the best food of local ingredients.

This island was our first landfall, as cruising NW to see the Northern islands will be easier than the other way around! – Sloepmouche

5.2 Shark's Bay

South of Port Resolution

5.2.1 Cruiser Report

2006: A place we had never heard or read about that's very unique is Shark's Bay. From about June thru about March every year, this tiny rock-strewn bay plays host to dozens of sharks that wallow around in the shallows and even come up on to the beach with the waves. We, unfortunately, were there in May, too early.

The Waiwai family, who own the land, are guardians of the bay, and they will tell you the legends their ancestors had about the sharks, the sacred shark stones, and the tabu (taboo) beach. The newest thing at Shark's bay, is the Tree House bungalow built about 50ft high in a giant spreading banyan tree.

We scrambled up the "staircase" to the really cute bungalow and saw the smoke bellowing from Mt Yasur, and from another window, Mt Melon. Even without the sharks, the sea views are breathtaking. – Sloepmouche

5.3 Lenakel

West side of Tanna island

5.3.1 Anchorage

It has been reported that this is not a good anchorage as it is exposed to lots of weather and the holding is not very good. The new concrete dock can be dangerous to your vessel so use it with caution and lots of fenders. A strong surge comes through the anchorage so be sure to time it wisely.

Sept. 2023: Nice anchorage, but has a small roll in front of the beach. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 19°32.054S / 169°15.945E Anchored in 6-16m broken coral. Exposed South thru West to North winds and swell. Be careful of the reef on the southern tip of the anchorage. Don't be tempted to tie up to the concrete wharf as there is constant swell. – Reflection

Sept. 2012: This anchorage is considered a poor overnight anchorage by most sailors and it is exposed to north, south and western weather. – Yolo

5.3.2 General Services

5.3.2.1 Banks & ATMs

Sept. 2012: Banking services are available here. – Yolo

5.3.2.2 Formalities

Sept. 2023: Customs asked to clear ashore under a banyan tree. No visit to the boat. Forms all good and \$9800vt were paid. They did ask about alcohol and tobacco. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 19°31.90S / 169°16.01E Immigration office is a couple hundred meters north of the market following the road, walk in the gate to the fish market and you will see the building. – Reflection

5.3.2.3 Provisions

Sept. 2023: There is a small grocery store here and a large fresh produce market on the waterfront. There is a butcher where you can buy a small pig. – As reported by a cruiser

5.3.2.4 Transportation

Sept. 2023: A trip to Port Resolution from Lenakel is about \$4,000vt. – As reported to Sugar Shack

5.3.2.5 Wifi / Internet

Sept. 2023: There is a Vodafone here.

5.3.3 Activities

There are lots to do and see in Lenakel, the largest village on Tanna. Mount Tasur is an active volcano that you hike up to the top; beautiful black sand beaches, and waterfalls.

Dinghy up to a cave where you enter at low tide (look for the ladder on the rocks and posts). There is a buoy to tie the dinghy to.

Volcano Tou

- Isso +678 544.8751 (recommended by Tom Pole) from Black Sand Beach.
- Kalti +678.767.5841 kaltigeorge90@gmail.com

5.3.4 Cruiser Reports

Sept. 2012: Very few goods or services are available at this location. Most yachts anchor in Port Resolution (southeast corner of the island) to visit the nearby spectacular live volcano, Mt. Yasur. A few sailors have hired a very expensive 4-wheel drive truck to take them from Port Resolution to Lenakel to clear-in. The round-trip truck ride will take about six bumpy hours and is expensive. – Yolo

5.4 Evergreen Resort Bay

West side of Tanna island

5.4.1 Pass

2006: The safest way to enter the bay is to stay well off shore until just in front of the White Grass Resort, easily recognized by the bright pink bougainvillea flowers, and large thatched buildings on the white colored heights.

Approach waypoint (19°26.406S / 169°12.979E).

Proceed to waypoint (19°26.485 S / 169°13.217E)

This will bring you mid-way between the shore reef and an isolated blind breaker reef marked by two hard red fishing buoys. From there proceed to the new yacht moorings, each with 3 yellow foam floats, at approx. 19°26.589S / 169°13.27E. – Sloepmouche

5.4.2 Anchorage

2006: Since the bay is pretty small, we built 2 strong moorings for them. The small bay is protected by reef systems extending from the north and south points, and by some shallow reefs, which almost enclose the bay. There is still some swell that gets in, but a lot less than Lenakel. Swelly in strong S winds, good in SE, great in E (even in very strong trades), pretty good in NE.

The moorings are complimentary for patrons. Please check the mooring to ascertain it is well maintained and safe for your vessel! They hope to add another mooring in the future if the response is good. The bay is otherwise pretty deep for anchoring, 60-70 ft. Dinghy landing can be tricky with the tidal difference and the uneven hard shore that dries, but they are hoping to make a dinghy channel up to the high tide line. – Sloepmouche

5.4.3 Activities

2006: There's a waterfall/surfing beach tour, cultural tours of South Tanna, and one of the more unique tours, a boat trip up north to the Blue Cave pool, and a very interesting land cavern. This was our favorite. The shoreline all the way up is very scenic, and geologically intriguing. The Blue Cave pool is accessed by swimming to the rock wall, duck diving a mere half meter (or just swimming in at low tide), into a gigantic dome-shaped cavern with a small round opening in the top where you see the green forest overhead, beams of sunlight streaming down striking the water's surface, and aqua blue water below you illuminated, like a lighted swimming pool, shimmering bright blue from the sun shining through the water from the outside. Magic! The

land cave appears as a giant black hole in the white cliffs from a mile off. From the beach, you see it is an immense open cavern cut deep into the hillside, beautiful with the contrasting colors of light and dark, green vegetation and barren cliffs, bright flowers and somber shadows. You must do this on a sunny day for the best effect. Even with strong trade winds blowing, the shoreline is protected and the cave pool entrance was calm. There is interesting snorkeling and scuba diving (if you have your own gear) right in front of Evergreen along the drop-off of the shore reef system, or on the towering formations that create the isolated shallow reefs a few hundred meters from shore. – Sloepmouche

5.4.4 Cruiser Report

2006: While in Lenakel, we met Iaken, Chairman of the Tanna Tourism Association, and Merian (Maryann), also an active member. There is a small bay that they felt might be a good anchorage for yachts in front of Tanna Evergreen Bungalows, which they run in partnership. They were keen for us to come with the boat to give our opinion, as they would like to welcome yachts to the resort for drinks, meals, easy transport into Lenakel, and tours to attractions on this side of the island. We were interested too, thinking that this could be a good alternative to Lenakel Wharf area, which has a bad reputation as an anchorage.

Merian and Sam, the active managers, are very gracious and welcoming.

The resort has good basic facilities, good home-cooked meals, beer, and hard liquor bar. White Grass Resort, a short walk away, has a fancier restaurant and bar, more upscale landscaping, a small pool, and putting greens. – Sloepmouche

5.5 Black Sands / Lonalomo

Located on the north west side of Tanna

5.5.1 Anchorage:

Sept. 2023: The anchorage has good holding. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2006: Locals told us that when the winds are too rough for boats coming to Lenakel wharf, local boats go up to Black Sand beach, on the northwest side, where it's calmer. The approach is hazard free, and except for the rock in the middle close to the beach, which is easily seen since waves break on it, the area is all pure black sand bottom until just before the beach. We anchored fairly far out in about 35ft, south of the rock, and saw later we could have gone in closer, as the depth stays over 20ft quite close to the beach. There is still the ubiquitous swell, but not bad for a multi-hull. Apart from the scenery and the good holding, there is not much to do, and only a very primitive road with almost no traffic. – Sloepmouche

5.5.2 General Services

Sept. 2023: You will find the following here:

- Grocery store
- Bank
- Vodafone
- Fresh veg and fruit market near the wharf
- Butcher

5.5.3 Cruiser Report

Sept. 2023: There is a village close by that offers kava ceremonies (they chew, then spit) and a lovely beach. You can also dinghy 3-4km up the coast to a cave, enter at low tide (look for the ladder on the rocks and posts in the water). There is a buoy to tie the dinghy to.

You can take a volcano tour with Iso +678.767.5841 or you can ask Kalti George +678.767.5841, kaltigeorge90@gmail.com. – As reported to Sugar Shack

6 Aniwa

This small island is located north of Erromango and east of Tana Island.

6.1 Anchorage

2009: The anchorage indicated is 50ft or deeper, the bottom mostly hard rubble; any sand patches are tiny and superficial. Since the weather was flat calm, we anchored on a dead coral plateau area, also hard rubble, but only 10-20 ft deep, put out minimal chain, since the anchor and first part of the chain would catch in the rubble and hold, then buoyed the rest to keep it from sinking and tangling on the bottom.

Landing the dingy is not easy anywhere along the coast from the anchorage to the lagoon entrance, as it is jagged rock with barrier reefs and rock. We did find a way to get on the beach nearest to the anchorage. We took the dinghy into the lagoon at high tide, where you can get over the barrier reef anywhere where it wasn't breaking. There is a small dinghy pass on the north side of the entrance for lower tides. – Sloepmouche

6.2 Cruiser Report

2009: The lagoon is very shallow inside; we thought we saw a local rowing to us in his dugout, but closer, saw he was walking across! Not much of interest in the lagoon waters. The man walking was Miak (Mike), the manager of the lagoon area, who told us that anyone doing any activity in the lagoon area were supposed to pay 1000 vatu/person. Money only, no gifts or barter. If this fee was not paid, there was a fine, or if refused, they would “come take things from the boat”. What a nice welcome...such a contrast to Port Resolution.

Why?? Because this is a Cruise Ship stop, and the ship pays the fee for its passengers. We agree that they should, since they impact resources, make money from using these resources, and they should pay the villagers to build facilities and groom the beaches. But because of this, the fee is imposed on everyone. Not only that, but if Miak is not in the area to collect, you are supposed to walk 30 minutes to Isavai village (good luck to find the path) or go by boat on the outside (but the village is not visible from the sea!).

We elected not to go back to the boat to get money to pay the fee. From what we could see, there was nothing special about the area. It may be worth to pay on a cruise ship day when the villagers put on entertainment and sell arts and crafts. The water clarity on the outside was great, 70-80ft, but the snorkeling was just so-so from the anchorage to the lagoon entrance. – Sloepmouche

7 Erromango Island

7.1 Dillon's Bay (west side)

Locals sometimes refer to Dillon's Bay as “William's Bay”. This is the largest of the villages on the island.

7.1.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2023: Anchorage can be a bit rolly and it's not good during WSWesterly. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 18°49.06S / 169°00.72E. Anchored in 6-16m sand. Exposed South thru West to NW. There is plenty of room to anchor in sand in any depth you wish and access the village is via the river mouth. – Reflection

Sept. 2012: 18°49.271S / 169°00.696E. Anchor north of the river off the big beach. Wind protection from N to S, exposed to the W. 10m depth. The wind funnels through V of the land. Very calm but windy. – Chesapeake

2010: Dillon Bay harbors the largest of the villages on the island. The anchorage has constant swell, more or less exaggerated depending on wind and swell outside. There can be accelerated gusts sweeping down the river valley.

The calmest place to anchor is on the south corner of the rocky beach, it's all black sand bottom, and at least 20ft deep close up to the beach. Those that anchored farther out and in front of the river mouth rolled a lot more. – Sloepmouche

7.1.2 Activities

Sept. 2014: We stopped in Dillon's Bay on the west side of Erromango. David, our local village guide took us on a hike to some nearby skull caves. We scrambled over rocks, crossed a stream and through the forest on a steep ascent for fifteen minutes to reach the cave.

In the first cave, handprints are painted all around the cave, with human remains at the end of one of the passages.

The second cave was a more sacred burial site for chiefs. David stopped for a prayer and then showed us the original location that is now too difficult and dangerous to enter following a landslide that destroyed most of the cave. We climbed up a banyan tree to a small opening in the rock where the skulls of chiefs and their wives have been relocated.

We saw skulls of two chiefs and their wives. David told us one of the chiefs was his mother's grandfather. The area around the cave is a special family place where they often come on Sunday afternoons to relax and barbecue around a firepit. – Sophie

2010: Joseph told us about a **waterfall** that he had never visited, but would like to make a tour for visitors to earn a little money. It turned out a very feasible tour: less than 2 hr walk over flat ground, some shallow river crossings, passed gardens and wild fruit trees with stops to sample, passed clear deep pools, and only the last 10 mins climbing up a small gorge to the fall and large pool. The fall isn't especially large, but is pleasant and a nice picnic setting. Joseph is a good storyteller who remembers a lot of history and legend. For the very adventurous, climbing to the top of the fall, there are more pools and falls.

Joe, the chief's son, guided us, in our dinghy, to some burial caves up the coast about a mile and a half. After some incantations to ask the spirits' permission, we entered to see many human bones and skulls. One flat stone was used as the "death bed" for the dying. There are also "treasures", possessions that were buried with the owners. Joe and others are hoping for government funding or archeologists to come and carefully excavate and preserve these burial caves as museums. There are caves further up the coast with ancient handprints painted or stenciled on the walls. – Sloepmouche

7.1.3 Cruiser Reports

Sept. 2023: There is a lovely village that grows lots of vegetables. There is a small yacht club that offers village tours. Ask for David and he will take you to the cave of bones, the rock table that Rev. Williams was cooked up on and more. He was asking \$500VT/pp. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2017: The village is in great need of supplies, clothing, kitchen items (pots, pans, cups, utensils), school supplies, books, torches, fishing gear, staples (flour, milk, sugar), toys. – Navigator

7.2 Ponamias Bay

Located at the top of the island.

7.2.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2023: Small bay with a gentle roll. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2019: 18°37.822S / 169°02.79E. The anchorage at Ponamias Bay is very small but surprisingly well protected from trade winds. We had trouble setting the anchor, though. Took 4 tries. We thought the holding would be good as there is a river at the head of the bay so there should have been good mud. But if it is soupy mud the Rocna doesn't grab so well. – Eagle's Wings

7.3 Sowki Bay

7.3.1 Anchorage

2014: 18°43.42S / 169°00.07E. Anchored in 6-16m in sand. Exposed South thru West to NW winds and swell. Anchor in front of the small river under the cliffs, the reef will be to both your port and starboard but there is plenty of swing room. – Reflection

7.4 Port Narvin

7.4.1 Anchorage

2014: 18°44.72S / 169°12.53E. Anchor in 6-16m of sand. Exposed East thru North to NE wind and swell. Anchor as far in the bay as possible watching out for the coral reef the farther in you get go.

7.4.2 Cruiser Report

2014: Port Narvin does not get many visitors, but the villagers are extremely friendly. Be sure to ask to see the stone carvings about Captain Cook and the FIRST Shells of Kava from the legend of the marriage of Kava and the Coconut Palm in the village Ranulevie. – Reflection

8 Efate Island

8.1 Tukutu Bay (south west side of Efate)

8.1.1 Anchorage

2009: 17°42.58S / 168°10.67E. In about 25' between coral heads. Favor the east side of the bay. Good light needed to see the coral reef that sticks out quite a bit from the shore. A convenient anchorage just west of the infamous Devil's Point.

Waters can be very rough as strong trade winds and currents can make it quite choppy. If you want to take a rest before rounding Devil's point (going to Port Vila) this is a good spot. The whole bay is pastureland with a few new constructions going on. – Sloepmouche

8.2 Port Vila

8.2.1 Pass

2010: Approach to Port Vila from south: The Pango Pt lighthouse is not operational; so, don't expect to see it. There is a giant wind generator with a red light for air traffic about halfway along the arm of land between Mele Bay and Devils Point that may confuse you if you don't know what it is. There is a leading light into Port Vila. If the light is white, it is clear to go straight for it. If you are off the line, the light will be red or green. – Sloepmouche

8.2.2 Anchorage

Quarantine Area: 17°44.275S / 168°18.597E. When you first arrive here you must go to the quarantine area near the yellow buoys. This is north of the lead markers in 8-20m of depth.

Yachting World has available moorings. You can reach them on VHF 16 or +678.23.273, yachtingworldmarinaportvila@gmail.com. Hours: Mon-Fri: 0800-1600; Sat. 0800-1200. It is best if you make arrangements before you arrive as the moorings may be full.

Some boats opt to go into the main bay to tie up to the concrete wall. Be aware that it will be noisy and can invite crime.

Aug. 2023: 17°44.31S / 168°18.64E. We anchored for three weeks in the “quarantine area” in front of town. You have to search a bit on the satellite maps for a good, not too deep but sandy spot. There were 10 boats in the anchorage when we arrived. The dinghy area is at the concrete dock in front of the park. – Easter Stream

Aug. 2023: The staff at Yachting World Marina (Roselyn and her team) were very helpful with the mooring and formalities.

The quarantine bay is fine with some good anchorage. This bay can be a bit noisy with clubs and jet skis. Once in the marine it is quite peaceful. – Dandelion

Dec. 2018: Anchoring in Port Vila harbor is difficult. The protected area behind Iririki Island is small and usually crowded. Holding is not good in most of the shallow parts of the outer harbour. The inner harbour is deep with the only available anchoring areas in 35 to 40 meters of water. The bottom is excellent holding but the black mud somehow manages to strip galvanizing from anchor chains and the remains of old ships can trap your anchor.

You will probably elect to pick up one of Yachting World's yellow moorings in the inner harbour or, if you prefer to have water and electricity and step-ashore access. Get a mooring float by the Yachting World sea wall and tie up to the mooring cleats ashore. Call Yachting World first on VHF 16 and they will help you get settled.

Yachting World crew in Yachting World's yellow boat will assist you to the seawall or mooring. Yachting world has planks you can use to walk ashore and there are electrical outlets, water taps, and garbage bins within easy reach. – CruisingVanuatu.com

June 2018: Cyclone Season in Port Vila: Sadly, there are very few well protected and safe places in the event of a Cyclone, and Port Vila harbour while it would not get sea action, the potential risk from local boats is considerable.

This Cyclone season every week for about 6 to 8 weeks winds 35-45knots came through with Cat 1 cyclone's coming within 50-100nm and they alternated between going down the East or West sides.

In the lead up to one of these events, a yacht dragged its mooring, and they simply dragged it back with a tender, mooring and all, so that boat is NOT real secure. When the wind switched, I spent all night up with the radar on keeping an eye on it, as it was suddenly upwind of me. – Screensaver

June 2018: For yachts visiting Port Vila, Vanuatu. During cyclone Pam 2015 a number of yachts were sunk in the inner harbour. They were abandoned and left to Vanuatu authorities to salvage and remove. It is now the Maritime authorities' policy for all foreign yachts anchoring or on a mooring in Port Vila inner harbour to have a watch on board at least overnight and yachts must have insurance that includes salvage recovery. In case of a cyclone all vessels are to leave the inner harbour area. This was conveyed to us in a very friendly manner by the Office of Maritime Regulators when they were doing their inspection of our ownership and insurance paperwork. – Sirius

2014: 17°44.203S / 168°18.604E. Anchor in 6-15m of broken coral, not very good holding. Exposed South thru West to North. This is simply a short stay anchorage while you clear customs. – Reflection

Sept. 2012: Well-marked narrow channel into anchorage with mooring buoys. A power line you cross under to get into that area, our mast is 67ft and we were okay. Dinghy dock at Yachting World. – Chesapeake

Sept. 2012: We anchored just west of the yellow quarantine buoy, right off the large shoreline Port Vila city park which has several dinghy dock locations. Mooring balls were rented for \$15USD/day. – Yolo

Aug. 2012: On arrival, we picked up a Yachting World mooring and were surveying our surroundings. Ashore were a variety of large buildings with lush green hills as a backdrop. In the harbor there were dozens of yachts on moorings and tied along bulkheads. Just behind us (a matter of meters, depending on the tide) was Iririki Island, home to a large resort. – Shango

Sept. 2011: There is actually quite a lot of room and it is by far the best anchorage in normal trade wind conditions. There is coral and some of the heads are quite large, we picked the shallowest spot we could find

and had about eight feet under the keel, I got the chain well wrapped round some large heads to the extent that we were 'well secured'; I slept well knowing I could recover my gear easily from that depth.

Most of the inner harbor is taken over by moorings however there are times during peak periods that they are all taken, which can be a problem. Best not anchor anywhere in the middle of the inner harbor as it is deep and any spots without moorings on the surface are still likely to have mooring gear all over the bottom (along with an accumulation of other junk)!

There were spots available for anchoring with a line ashore along the inside of Irriki Island, this would let you anchor on the up-slope in a depth where you could see / retrieve your anchor however it may be a little buggy so close to shore. We did similar further south on the spit, using an anchor instead of a line to a tree.....it worked but only as a stop-gap whilst it blew a fresh westerly in the outer harbour.

Boats on the Yachting World Marina Dock went bow or stern too and had to use their own anchors, there MAY be someone available to help you doing this but from what we heard on the radio...don't count on it! It wouldn't be my ideal choice of venues, you get some heavy wakes from passing traffic, the holding is tenuous and side winds can be strong.....seemed to me to be a great place to destroy a vane gear!

In normal conditions you can tie your dinghy to the seawall along the esplanade if you are in the outer harbour, not at night though! If you want to go ashore in the evenings or overnight it would be better chained to the dinghy dock at Yachting World but even there, they are not immune. In just about all cases, you need a stern anchor or weight to hold her off. There are plenty of ladders but watch out for the kids playing, particularly near the water slide, you can end up with a very wet dinghy. – Mr. John

8.2.3 Yachtsmen Services

8.2.3.1 Cooking Gas (Propane & Butane)

Jan. 2024: Vanuatu Gas on Wharf Road, Port Villa, 25.959, 774.2844, vanuatugas@vanuatu.com.vu will refill AU and NZ bottles. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Sept. 2023: LPG would not fill a fiberglass bottle. They instructed the cruiser to go to Port Vila hardware up near the grocery store. – As reported to Sugar Shack

8.2.3.2 Fuel (Diesel & Gasoline)

Yacht World Port Vila Boatyard +678.23 417, +678.34.579, <https://port-vila-boatyard.business.site/>

Hours: Sun-Fri: 0800-1700. They sell diesel, but gasoline has to be purchased across the street at the petrol station.

Oct. 2023: There is a nice fuel and water dock along with a lovely dinghy dock. – Dandelion

Dec. 2018: The fuel wharf is directly in front of the Yachting World office. You can fill up any time during office hours as the water alongside the wharf is deep (there is a tide gauge indicating depth on the wharf). Their fuel is clean and the nozzle fits into normal sized yacht fuel ports. A water hose is available for cleaning up afterward or filling your water tanks (there is a small fee for water if you are not using the Yachting World harbour moorings or sea wall moorings). Be sure to take advantage of the Duty-Free price for Diesel when you fill up prior to departure. You will need to tell Customs you want to buy Duty Free fuel and they will give you the necessary forms.

If you have a large motor yacht needing a large amount of fuel or if your yacht's mast is too tall to go under the overhead wire of 24-Metre safe clearance you must get your fuel via mini-tanker at the main wharf. Yachting world will assist you with this by getting the required permission from the harbour master and checking with the oil companies to find the best price for you. This will save you a considerable amount of time and effort at making all the arrangements is often complex and time consuming. – CruisingVanuatu.com

8.2.4 General Services

8.2.4.1 Bottom Cleaning Services

Oct. 2023: Amos will swim out to the anchored yachts and inquire about cleaning the bottom of your boat. He does a good job and is very reasonably priced. +678.736.1835. – Marianda Dupie

8.2.4.2 Duty Free Supplies

2018: While in Port Vila 2018 we investigated the procedures for duty free alcohol intake in Villa, even though we would be clearing out of Sola in several weeks'/ months' time. Customs said it can be done, but they have to physically come to the boat to "seal" the goods & the inter-island cruising permit would have to be amended/ re-issued (in order for Luganville to check the goods). We would then have to get another new cruising permit in Luganville to check out of Sola. We decided not proceed. – Noonsite

Sept. 2012: DUTY FREE FUEL: Only during the clearing-out process at Customs can you secure a special permit to purchase duty free diesel fuel (22% discount off the regular price). This will greatly reduce the price of each liter of diesel fuel. Full price must be paid for gasoline at all times and locations.

You must pay full price for fuel (diesel and gasoline) prior to clearing-out of Vanuatu. It is very unlikely that you will find fuel for sale outside of Port Vila and Luganville. If you do locate fuel at a remote island it typically sells for over \$2.90 USD per liter (greater than \$11 USD per gallon).

Unfortunately, most yachts do not depart Vanuatu from Port Vila so duty free prices are seldom paid. – Yolo

8.2.4.3 Formalities

Quarantine Area: 17°44.275S / 168°18.597E. When you first arrive here you must go to the quarantine area near the yellow buoys. This is north of the lead markers in 8-20m of depth.

Immigration: You need to go to the commercial port. Immigration in town will not be able to help you

Aug. 2023: Clearance is next to the commercial dock, where you find Customs, Immigration, and Bio Security. As customs did not answer their VHF, we went over there by dinghy. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: Call Customs on VHF 16 upon arrival. If they don't answer, then call Port Vila Harbor Control and if they don't answer try calling Yachting World.

Customs, Immigration, and Bio are on the wharf. They sometimes will come to the boat and other times they require you to go in by dinghy.

Officials Hours: Mon-Fri: 0730-1200 & 1300-1630. After hours 0630-0730 and 1630-1800 requires an additional \$1,000vt/hour and 1800-0600 is \$1500vt/our. Holidays and weekends are \$2000vt per officer with a minimum of 3-hour charge for all clearances outside of normal hours. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: We cleared in at Port Vila as comms were down at Tanna (right after the storm) Customs is a dinghy ride from the quarantine bay. The staff at Yachting World Marina were very helpful with formalities and Rosalyn is a hive of information. – Dandelion

Dec. 2018: Call "Yachting World" on VHF Channel 16 when you arrive in Port Vila. They will help you arrange for inward clearance and make arrangements for a mooring or marina berth at the same time. If you want to contact them in advance to assure a place on the wharf, call them on International + 678.23.273 or email them from their website at www.yachtingworld-vanuatu.com. – CruisingVanuatu.com

Nov. 2012: The following clearance and cruising information is provided to help sailors who visit Vanuatu. This information is based on two U.S.A. citizens on the 42-foot catamaran "YOLO" with no pets. Note that bays, islands, villages, and cities can have several different names and/or spellings throughout Vanuatu.

ARRIVAL PORT: Anelghowhat, Anelghowhat Bay, Anatom (Aneityum) Island, September 2012

DEPARTURE PORT: Port Vila, Baie De Vila or Paray Bay, Efate (Efata) Island, October 2012

If you have been waiting for the Quarantine Officer to contact you for several business hours when clearing-in at non-Anatom ports, visit the Customs office to start the ball rolling.

When clearing-out visit Immigration, Customs, Ports and Harbours, and then return to Customs to get your Certificate of Outward Clearance Permit and Duty-Free Fuel Permit (optional).

BOAT INSPECTION REQUIRED: Ports and Harbours, Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine Services do not REQUIRE an inspection upon arrival. However, they have the option to complete an inspection. Quarantine Services will most likely visit your vessel upon arrival to Vanuatu. In most cases a Quarantine Services Officer will expect a dingy ride to your vessel, Anatom Island being the exception, to complete his inspection, related paperwork, and collect his fee.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S.A. CITIZEN: None, most visitors are granted an automatic 30-day tourist visit. For an additional fee you can extend your visit an additional four months through the Immigration office.

DECLARED: You must declare the usual items. I.e., guns, ammunition, obscene publications and materials, illegal drugs, "hidden compartments," pets, spear-guns/slings, etc.

PORTS AND HARBOURS: Regardless of where you travel or anchor in Vanuatu you will be charged a one-time Ports and Harbours fee. Customs will not issue your Vanuatu Certificate of Outward Clearance Permit until this fee is paid. This fee is paid on the day you clear out of Vanuatu. – Yolo

Sept. 2011: If you are going to "Clear In" then you must anchor near the Yellow Buoy in the Outer Harbour and make contact with the Port Authorities.... The best and easiest course of action is to contact Yachting World Marina on VHF and let them know you are there; they are most helpful in making the arrangements.

If you are looking for a swing mooring or require to berth on their dock you may want to tackle this at the same time, even if you do not like the 'Marina Idea' it is worth it in this case to have their assistance and at least one night on a mooring to get more familiar with the area before going your own way.

Can't say we thought a lot of the showers but the availability of water and a pontoon to tie the dinghy were worth the \$12. – Mr. John

8.2.4.4 Haul out, Marina, Repair Facilities

Port Vila Boatyard

+678.23 417, +678.34.579, <https://port-vila-boatyard.business.site/>

Hours: Sun-Fri: 0800-1700

Full service marine repair and hardstand storage center. Cyclone moorings, marine chandlery.

Services: repair, cleaning, anti-fouling, glassing, joinery, welding.

Sub-contractors: engine repairs

Dec. 2018: Yachting World will be your home port in Port Vila for moorings (includes water), sea wall marina services (with water and electricity), furnished 2 bedroom air conditioned apartments with kitchen, laundry, internet, for some shore leave right in front of your yacht, diesel fuel, laundry, assistance with clearing in, and internet access. Yachting World is a distributor of the Cruising Guide to Vanuatu (available in the Connect Cafe). – CruisingVanuatu.com

Sept. 2014: They offer a full range of repair and caretaker services including cyclone certified moorings. The small repair job they did for me was carried out very expertly and at reasonable cost. All the employees are long serving. I watched them haul a catamaran and they had two divers in the water to ensure that everything was OK.

Efate is not somewhere you would automatically think of when getting work done but my experience demonstrates that it is a location that should be on your list. – Noonsite

8.2.4.5 Laundry

Oct. 2023: Yachting World has laundry facilities. – Dandelion

8.2.4.6 Medical

Aug. 2023: Vanua Medical Clinic (just across the road from Yachting World) is a wonderful facility. We were told not to go to the public hospital. Dr. Benito and Carine Marchioi (they are French in spite of their Italian name). +678.75.23.911. The clinic is well equipped, all brand-new equipment including the gear to do blood tests, ultrasounds, and heart monitoring. The treatment did reinforce the need to carry health insurance as the bill was over \$5,000 for 3 visits. – Dandelion

Aug. 2023: The pharmacies sold us over the counter medicines when we brought in our old medicine boxes. – Easter Stream

8.2.4.7 Wifi & Internet

Dec. 2018: Yachting World has a brand new "WiFi" Connect Cafe Cyber Yacht Centre where you can check out the latest Vanuatu weather information, surf the web or get your email. WiFi works for any boat at the wharf and on closer moorings (and out front and inside the cafe). – CruisingVanuatu.com

8.2.5 Provisions

This is the best and really the only place to provision. There are a few bakeries and bottle stores.

Sept. 2023: There are two markets here. Au Bon Marche and A B Marche Nambatu which is a walk over the hill to the south (it is much better than Au Bon Marche) and they carry Carrefour items (cheese, deli) but it can be expensive. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: Bon Marche is a nice supermarket just 15-minute walk up the hill. – Dandelion

Aug. 2023: The best supermarket for Provisions on the more western stuff, is Au Bon Marche, just outside the city center. Pass the marina and follow up the road until you see the supermarket. There are a lot of small buses that can bring you back to the town center. All the other supplies and main staples (rice, sugar, trading goods) can be purchased at the town center. – Easter Stream

8.2.6 Restaurants

Aug. 2023: For a treat, visit the Stone Grill restaurant as it is very good. It is at the southern end of the township in Port Vila, off Route de la Teouma on the road opposite the NZ Embassy. Once on the road, it is easy to find – at the end on the left. We shared a fish and beef stone grill platter that you cooked on a hot plate at the table. Good service and a nice view over the harbour. Reasonably priced. – Katoa 2

Oct. 2023: The restaurant at Yachting World is really good. – Dandelion

Aug. 2023: There are several restaurants in the town center. We spent a lot of time at Rossi Restaurant for the happy hours. We went to Banyan Beach Bar for the pizza and their happy hour and we visited the Thai food place at Pad Thai Port Vila. – Eastern Stream

8.2.7 Activities

Dec. 2023: [Vanuatu Eco Tours](#) offers 15-25% discounts for [Island Cruising Members](#). – Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: Don't miss the Cultural Center Museum, which is a bit tired and rusty, but the tour and the lecture by the guide is well worth it.

The next bay to the north, Mele Beach and Hideaway island have great fire shows on weekends, well worth the visit. There is good diving around the island but you must pay a fee to the lodge prior to diving. – Dandelion

Jan. 2018: Friends had kindly offered to take us for a bit of drive around the North and Eastern side of Efate (Port Vila mainland) which was nice to get to see the other side and away from the main tourist area.

It turned out to be a bit of a relaxed resort crawl with a tourist slant which suited me 100%. We stopped at a number of other places as we wandered along the coast road. On one outing, we stopped at a turtle farm. There is also at least one waterfall and fresh water lagoon where we stopped for a swim. – Screensaver

2011: There is a very good and active tourist office down town and this should be one of the first places you visit as you have to 'not miss anything'. It is a good idea to make up some sort of schedule as to what you want to see in the outer islands and be ready to get away from Vila in plenty of time to get there. – Mr. John

2009: While in Port Vila, visit the Cultural Center Museum and find out about the Chief Roi Mata Heritage site. It may be possible for a group of yachties to pre-arrange a guided tour of the Cave (Lelepa Island) and the burial Site (Hat Island) while in Havannah Harbor. – Sloepmouche

8.2.8 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: The town is very functional with just about anything available. A good boardwalk with artisanal market and restaurants and a dive center. – Dandelion

Dec. 2018: The Yachting World and Waterfront Bar and Grill complex, with its sheltered location and deep-water access provides a lively and attractive yachting center and between the two complementary businesses, they make Port Vila one of the Pacific's most comfortable and hospitable destinations for cruising yachts.

The staff at the Yachting World office are very helpful and can assist you with information, fuel, water and laundry. Just ask if you need help with anything. – CruisingVanuatu.com

June 2018: Pricing has also gone through the roof and now pretty much ether aligns with Sydney or is more expensive. Over and above the \$80aud for the boat on arrival, they also charge \$1.10aud/day just for being in Vanuatu waters (anywhere) add to that Visa costs @ about \$20aud/month, internet at least \$20/month, a mooring about \$30aud/day, and you won't get much change out of \$1k/month, definitely no change for the 1st month.

Depending whether you're going or coming, Port Vila is the best place to restock your food supplies in many miles. While it is expensive, most things can be bought here if you're patient. I was nearly ready to depart here when I discovered another leaking skin fitting. While it wasn't bad, pulling Screensaver out of the water after I leave here would be a long way off, so reluctantly I made plans to haul Screensaver out.

I could have got the new Skin fittings here but decent hose was not readily available and out of the US, would have taken longer along with bigger freight bill so in the end they came out of Ozy and it only took 4 days before it was in my hand. – Screensaver

8.3 Black Sands Bay

8.3.1 Anchorage

2014: 17°42.625S / 168°17.426E. Anchor in 6-16m of broken coral. Exposed South thru west winds and swell. There is good holding in the black sand and it is better to anchor close in to the beach bar. But, be mindful of the fact that they have powered water toys in use around this area. – Reflection

8.3.2 Cruiser Report

2014: There is a resort with a restaurant, bar, small market, and secret garden. Lovel walk to the Mele Falls. Friday night they have fire dancing. -- Reflection

8.4 Mele Bay

8.4.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2023: 17°41.54S / 168°15.92E. Anchored in sand close to the shore and behind a reef. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: This is a good protected anchorage. It is just north of Port Vila and has a beautiful white sandy beach. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Jan. 2018: Anchored in 5m of sand. This anchorage is about 18nm from Port Vila. Mele Bay is one of the few easy anchorages with good holding on sand and relatively well protected.

Many of the other spots you might want to anchor are either too deep at 30+ meters or there are moorings there. – Screensaver

Mar. 2017: Mele Bay - Hideaway Island is not a safe anchorage. While it's fine in good weather overnight or as a day anchorage, unless one gets very close to shore it's actually too deep to anchor there, then if a westerly comes through a vessel will then get dangerously close to shore. Not a place to leave a vessel unattended. Beach Bar is great fun but they now do have a jet-ski operator there.

We actually rescued that large red catamaran from the beach a few years ago after it was washed ashore in the night when it was left unattended. Had it not been for the immediate assistance of Vanuatu Yacht Services and Marine Surveyors and Consultants with the help of the people of Mele village that we organized to help, the vessel would have been a total loss. I am concerned that the information presented on Noonsite regarding Mele bay being a safe anchorage will lead to another yacht being washed ashore there. – Port Vila Boatyard

Oct. 2014: I recommend Mele Bay as an anchorage. It is much better holding than Port Vila and has good protection from SE if you tuck into the corner near the big red racing cat mooring. – Pelican

8.4.2 Provisions

Sept. 2023: Cruisers have reported that Provisions was ok here. – As reported to Sugar Shack

8.4.3 Restaurant

Sept. 2023: There is a restaurant / bar and grill that is really good and on the beach. They do an impressive fire dance every Friday at 1900. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Jan. 2018: There is a nice beach, bar, food, and you can also sit and watch to sun go down. They have a few different themes going on at the Beach Bar with a movie night shown on a big screen outside on the beach, a fireworks night, live music. – Screensaver

8.4.4 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2023: There is a fire dance show on Friday nights at the Beach bar. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: There are beautiful waterfalls just north of the Mele anchorage. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2014: Beach bar has good food & entertainment. Port Vila market is only 15 mins away by public bus at 150 vatu. Quiet anchorage without all the jet skis. – Pelican

Oct. 2011: They claim to have the only underwater post office. You can tuck in to the NW of the island and then swim on the reef, which is a Marine Sanctuary..... you do, of course, have to pay for this and/ or landing on the island / using any facilities. It is possible to land on the main beach and I believe there is a very good 'Pizza Place' down here. You can also walk from here up the road to The Cascades or The Botanical Gardens (Secret Gardens). We did a half day at each and it worked as a nice day out. – Mr. John

2009: Hideaway Island has some nice snorkeling along its reef, a marine sanctuary, and also home of the Underwater Post Office.

The American owners like yachties, and waive the 1000vt entry fee if you arrive by yacht to visit the island, which has a dive center, gift shop, and beach bar and restaurant (copious plates of hearty food). From the beach landing on the main island, you can also catch a local bus back into town, if needed, for 200-300vt pp. It's also easy to go by bus to the Mele Golf Course, Mele Waterfalls, Benjor Beach Resort (good restaurant), and Island Dreams (kayak and good snorkeling).

The complete upgrading of the road around the island is now almost completed and you can now enjoy a very comfortable and faster ride around! – Sloepmouche

8.5 Port Havana (Havannah) Harbor in NW Corner

8.5.1 Anchorages

Nov. 2023: 17°36.2S / 168°14.62E. Anchor in 13-15m on sand and coral blocks. Watch for bigger coral heads closer to shore. Protection from NE through to S to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: There are a few good anchorages up the river, there is also an anchorage outside but you need to take care with the bommies. – Dandelion

Sept. 2023: Cruisers have reported that here is a sandpit where you can get permission to anchor. Totally calm and super protected from prevailing winds. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: The anchorage at the top of the harbour between Moso island and the mainland is very good. – Katoa 2

June 2018: 17°36.235S / 168°14.61E. Anchor in 18m. – Screensaver

Sept. 2012: 17°33.493S / 168°16.457E. Anchored in 15-30' with good protection, fine coral sand bottom. Not much to see ashore. – Chesapeake

Sept. 2012: Ai Creek in Havannah Harbour was only twenty miles north of Vila but would allow us to make the island of Epi in a long day sail. Unfortunately, the weather closed in on us and we were stuck in Ai Creek for four long blustery days with the dinghy up and nowhere to go. – Shango

2009: Ai Creek is a tricky anchorage in 50' good sand with coral heads and the bottom slopes quickly to 70-80'. – Sloepmouche

8.5.2 Cruiser Reports

Nov. 2023: Ashore you will find the wreckage of a light aircraft which having run out of fuel, crash-landed on the road to Port Vila some years ago. You can get to Port Vila on the road leading to the bay and you will find many tourist buses bring day guests to the beach. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Sept. 2023: Cruisers have reported that there is a resort, [Havannah Hotel Resort](#) that offers drinks and dinner. They are very yacht friendly. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: We found Port Havannah to be a great place to take visitors who flew into Port Vila. It is an easy sail north, although you have to pass through the Devil's Point twice! Once you arrive in the harbour it is calm waters.

The passage is lovely to just do a dinghy ride through or snorkel through with the current (and good for kids too). There is a little sandy spit away from the villages that you can have a fire and BBQ on and watch the sunset. Our friends loved visiting the villages. We also took them for a trip to the village opposite the passage to see the super yacht "Blue Gold" left high and dry after a cyclone made for great conversation. – Katoa 2

2009: Take your dinghy into the river estuary (at the point of land behind the moorings of Coongoola Cruises) and leave your dinghy at the bridge. Cross the road and walk in the riverbed for 30-45min. You will find several nice swimming holes and mini Jacuzzis in crystal clear water. – Sloepmouche

8.6 Nguna / Pele Islands

Located north above Efate.

8.6.1 Anchorage

2009: Anchoring near the pass between Nguna (pronounced noo-nah) and Pele was very nice in white sand between widely scattered, easily-seen and deep-enough coral heads in around 25 ft depth. Even in moderate Northerly winds we didn't roll too much. – Sloepmouche

8.6.2 Cruiser Report

2009: The snorkeling out from the guesthouse bungalows on Nguna was some of the most colorful and diverse that we've seen in Vanuatu. You can ride the current holding on to your dinghy in the pass between the two islands. Both have beautiful white sand beaches and swimming pool blue water. NW Nguna, Nawora Matua bay: We anchored here twice just for a rest stop without going ashore to the village. If you use this, go in carefully with good light, because the chart doesn't show there are some isolated bommies too shallow for comfort. Bottom is coral and hard plateau. – Sloepmouche

9 Epi Island

9.1 Cape Kambioka

9.1.1 Anchorage

Jan. 2008: 16°50.37S / 168°28.20E. Anchor in 20-30' good black sand. Exposed to southerlies.

16°48.16S / 168°23.06E. In Sakao Village Bay. 20-30' good black sand. Exposed to southerlies. – Sloepmouche

9.2 Mapouna Bay

Eastern Side of Epi

9.2.1 Anchorage

Dec. 2007: 16°35.85 S / 168°12.66 E in about 40' of coral with sand channels. – Sloepmouche

9.2.2 Cruiser Report

Dec. 2007: Dugout canoes came shortly after our arrival to welcome us and ask if we needed any help getting in. Chief Pharmacopee invited us to his village the next morning. Little did we expect a royal welcome with flower leis, fresh fruits and lots of smiles from his extended family! Very nice to be genuinely welcomed. We're glad we had some gifts with us to offer. – Sloepmouche

9.3 Lamén Bay

Western Side of Epi

9.3.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 16°35.75S / 168°09.9E Anchor in 4-10m of sand with excellent holding. Protection N through S to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: Lamén Bay is safe and beautiful with caves and rock formations on the rock faces. – Dandelion

Sept. 2023: Large, wide open anchorage where you can anchor in 5-7m of sand. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2023: 16°35.784S / 168°09.886E Anchor in 5m, Black sand, good holding and fair protection from SE trades. Very roly but a stern anchor makes it bearable. – SV Complicite

June 2018: 16°35.784S / 168°09.886E Anchor in 5m, Black sand. – Screensaver

2014: 16°35.773S / 168°09.893E Anchor in 4-8m black sand. Exposed South thru West to North. Anchor close to the beach. Avoid anchoring too far to the south east corner as the Dugongs and turtles feed here. There are some large bommies towards the center of the bay. – Reflection

Dec. 2007: Lamén bay is the most popular anchorage on the island. – Sloepmouche

9.3.2 Restaurant

Oct. 2023: Bennies Restaurant will do a traditional dinner on the beach for you upon request.

Sept. 2023: Cruiser said that Benny's Restaurant has really good food and prices. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2023: Benny's bungalows has a small café restaurant with cheap meals, coffee and freshly baked bread. Book in advance so Benny can prepare. Benny is open to trading – seeds, bedding, crockery. – SV Complicite

9.3.3 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: Snorkeling with the dugong was fantastic. They spook really easily with the slightest sound so be calm, don't swim towards them, and just enjoy their beauty. There are several walks around the surrounding villages (1-1.5hrs) and a longer walk to the east coast going up over the hill through the jungle. This is an all-day hike and you should be prepared with water and good shoes. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: The village is clean and interesting. There is great canoeing! We could have easily spent weeks here and highly recommend a visit. – Dandelion

June 2023: Resident dugong in the bay, we saw at high tide/sunset a few times. We did a hike along the concrete road to the windward side of the island. The walk was steep but easy, very beautiful walk through the quaint houses and coconut plantations. Lamén Island is a 5-10 min dinghy ride away with some great snorkeling and dugongs. – SV Complicite

Sept. 2012: We saw a pod of dolphins and several large turtles inside this bay. – Screensaver

Dec. 2007: Meet Tasso at Paradise Sunset Bungalows. He is a very nice fellow who organizes lots of activities for his guests. He often organizes a barbeque or pig roast. We did a nice, but long, day hike to a large, high waterfall (about three hours one way for good hikers). The transport to the starting point of the hike was itself an adventure with some great views of the bay and Lamén Island. Tasso's son, Douglas, has a small boat to go deep-sea fishing or to take you to Lamén Island where the dugongs are staying mostly now. – Sloepmouche

9.4 Revolie Bay

Western side

9.4.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2023: 16°43.74S 7 168°08.71E. We anchored as far behind the reef as possible to provide the most comfortable anchorage. We stayed several days here. – Eastern Stream

June 2018: 16°43.64S / 168°08.69E. Anchored in 6m, black sand. OK on entry but the next morning the swell started coming in, so rather than hanging around for another day, left in crappy weather. – Screensaver

Sept. 2012: The anchorage was well protected by a reef and was lined by a long sand beach. – Shango

Dec. 2007: Calm anchorage as described in Rocket Guide, good holding in volcanic sand in 10m.

9.4.2 Cruiser Reports

Aug. 2023: There is a nice, small village here. – Eastern Stream

Dec. 2007: You can do your laundry in the river, but it's not deep enough to swim in. – Sloepmouche

10 Maskelyne Islands

Southeast end of Malekula

The Maskelyne Islands are a nice cruising area and the place to search and find dugongs (sea cows). Be aware that they are protected animals and you must follow the strict protocols. See [Dugong section](#).

10.1 Maskelyne Archipelago

10.1.1 Pass

June 2017: The entrance to the anchorage was a bit of a nail-biter with one section narrow and quite shallow (3m) edged by reef. We used satellite images to plot our course and also cross-referenced the course with the waypoints given in the guidebooks. Highly recommend someone on the bow to keep a lookout for hazards below. – sv Field Trip

10.1.2 Anchorage

Aug. 2023: Choose your anchorage with care, might want to avoid anchoring behind the reef as the high tide creates a rolly night. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2017: The anchorage was rather deep. We took care to put out 5 to 1 scope in the 20+m, leaving plenty of swing room between us and other boats. – sv Field Trip

10.1.3 Cruiser Reports

Sept. 2023: Cruisers have reported these islands are on the south east corner of Maleuka Island and are considered a real highlight.

Swam with lots of dugongs and there is a village ashore. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Warning: June 2009: A caveat about the Masquelynes, especially around the Pescarus anchorage: many boats and land tourists complained about being conned or ripped-off by one or more young men who propose to act as guides to areas like the Giant Clam reserve or to organize a custom dance and/or feast, and who later ask for more money or more than the customary fee or even take you to the wrong area if they don't feel they're getting enough money for the effort. They are a well-known gang in the area, but the custom chiefs and villagers seem unable to control them.

Two of the main guys are Jimmy and another name like Jeffery. Kalo runs the bungalows on the beach at Pescarus and can probably tell you whom to avoid in any dealings. This situation is unfortunate because it gives all the Masquelynes a bad name.

There are many very nice people who have been to legitimate workshops for tourist guides and have certificates, but yachties are suspicious that they may be forgeries. – Sloepmouche

10.2 Sanko (Sakao) Island

10.2.1 Anchorage

Gaspard Bay

Nov. 2023: 16°29.9S / 167°48.34E. On SW tip of Sakau island well off the beach in 25m of water. Protection from N through E to SSW with no swell and well sheltered from the trade. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: 16°29.92S / 167°48.34E. Gaspard Bay. We went here to get some protection from a weather system. No clear water and lots of mangroves surrounding the bay. Often you hear the sound from the dugongs coming to the surface to breathe. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: Many dugong have been spotted here. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 16°28.115S / 167°48.764E Anchor in 4-6m sand/mud. Carefully make your way into the back of the bay and anchor close to the mangroves, watch the sticks marking the reef as it comes up quickly. Great sheltered bay with Dugongs constantly surfacing especially in the early morning and late afternoon. – Reflection

June 2009: Gaspard Bay is good spot and a definite cyclone hole if you go all the way inside. We checked the depth by dinghy, and it is possible to go in with 6' draft, and we would even feel safer than inside Port Sandwich. – Sloepmouche

10.3 Awei Island

10.3.1 Anchorage

June 2015: The anchorage is very nice and very sheltered being completely land locked. – Alba

2014: 16°32.042S / 167°46.217E Anchor in 6-15m of sand/mud. Exposed North East wind and swell. Anchor in the center of the harbour. This is deceptively large bay and we have seen nine boats anchored here in a strong westerly. Great sheltered bay and fantastic option if a westerly comes up. – Reflection

June 2009: This is a well-protected anchorage behind the reef. The reef is high enough to break any waves, so you are in a smooth pond while the wind generators are producing. Amazingly there were 13 boats here coming back from the SW Bay festival! – Sloepmouche

10.3.2 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: Unlike M. Cook below, we had a very positive experience with Jimmy. He took us snorkeling and spear diving on the reef and arranged for a local style dinner on the beach at Sank Bay. I think we paid \$1000VT/pp for 3hrs snorkeling with 3 guides. We ate all that they speared and had additional vegetables and fruit from the village garden for an additional \$500VT/pp. – N. Smith

Oct. 2023: Awei was one of our favorite spots. The family on the island is wonderful. However, beware of Chief Jimmie who reportedly is chief of all of the village, but he is a "money-taker." He will show up in a long boat with a few men and pressure you to take a tour for \$2500VT/pp. They promised us all kinds of things, took us on a blah snorkel and then we never saw them again. He will say how the village children need medicine, etc... There is at least one dispute between him and the locals on Awei over the land. – M. Cook

June 2015: There is a small village on the other side of the island that has 15 people living there. The villager's gardens are over on the main land and we are anchored directly in their path, so we had a constant stream of people passing by in their pangas. – Alba

June 2009: At low tide you can walk across the sandbar between the small island and the main island for a nice coastal walk. – Sloepmouche

10.4 Uilendeuv Island

10.4.1 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: Dugongs were plentiful in this bay located near **16°30.694S / 167°48.240E**. But you have to be patient and quiet. You can't splash around as it will scare them away. – Starlight

10.5 Uliveo Island

10.5.1 Anchorage

June 2015: 16°31.87S / 167°49.77E. We anchored in 15m of water, just past the sandbar. It is a deep lagoon that has a maximum of 20m and shallows very fast at the edges.

The approach into the anchorage was a little tense, but the minimum depth of water that we saw was 4m, so no problem at all. (Our track was bang on the recommended waypoints of 16°32.180S / 167°49.777E, 16°31.965S / 167°49.802E.) – Alba

2014: 16°32.169S / 167°50.202E. Anchored in 10-14m of sand/mud. – Reflection

10.5.2 Cruiser Report

June 2015: We went ashore to watch some Kastom dancing. The men were dressed in their traditional Nambas, which are penis pouches made from banana leaves. In this area, the men are known as Smol Nambas (which means small penis pouch). In the north of Malekula, live the Big Nambas who (errrr) have big penis pouches - I'm not sure if the men from the north are better endowed...

The dance is performed only by men and the local ladies are not allowed to even see the performance (female tourists are exempt from this restriction). In addition to their smol nambas, the men wear ankle bracelets made from nuts called Navake, which rattle as they dance. The dances all enact traditional stories including pig hunting, the flight of a hornet and even child birth. Along with the rhythmical drumming on traditional bamboo instruments, it was interesting and enjoyable.

It seems like they've only recently started to re-perform these kastom dances and there were three old guys who played the drums and are teaching them the traditions. It was a fun half an hour for only \$20US each.

After the dancing, we went for a walk to one of the other villages called "Pescara". Most people were walking around in bare feet and all were dressed in worn out clothes - the men in tattered shorts and t-shirts and ladies in their Mother Hubbard dresses. Women were carrying buckets to the well to lift water using a hooked pole; men were repairing the thatched roof of a traditional hut and two ladies were sat on the earth next to their open fire making laplap. It's all quite humbling.

There are three villages on the island each with 500 people, so there's quite a population here. In between the villages is extensive bush containing coconut trees and the villager's gardens, with pleasant dirt footpaths joining everything. We spent an enjoyable two hours walking around and chatting to people. – Alba

10.6 Lutes

10.6.1 Anchorages

Jan. 2017: Deep anchorage, 20+M, we put out 5 to 1 scope, leaving plenty of swing room between boats. – Bold Spirit

The entrance to the anchorage was a bit of a nail-biter with one section narrow and quite shallow (3 m) edged by reef. We used the satellite images to plot a course and also cross-referenced the course with the waypoints given in the guidebooks. Still, I stood up on the bow, keeping a lookout for hazards below and cringing as the crystal-clear water made things look so close to the surface! Mark carefully monitored the depth sounder over the shallow bit, and we were fine.

2014: 16°32.169S / 167°50.202E Anchored 10-14m of sand/mud in center of harbour. Exposed from the south wind and swell. Arrive at high tide and have a lookout on the bow. 2.4m deep at low tide and narrow. – Reflection

10.6.2 Cruiser Report

Jan. 2017: We were excited to explore the clam sanctuary and to participate in the Vanuatu Independence Day celebrations. We paddled in authentic outrigger canoes, and had a chance to snorkel in shallow waters over extravagantly colored clams. The sanctuary had been set up by a local man, seeing the need to protect these vital sea creatures. Although Cyclone Pam depleted the population of clams, many are still thriving.

The big news in Lutes, though, was that only 3 weeks prior, a sandspit had risen up suddenly from the shallows. A new island had been pushed up from below by some sort of tectonic plate movement, and the

owners of that portion of the reef were preparing to have a dedication and naming ceremony for this new piece of land. It was quite the event and somehow, we all were invited as the honored guests - the first white men to set foot on the dry sand. The Ni-Vans sure do love any reason to create a full-on celebration! – Bold Spirit

10.7 Avokh Island

10.7.1 Anchorage

2014: 16°30.974S / 167°47.151E Anchor in 6-15m loose coral. Exposed North to east winds and swell. The coral offers very little holding and you will need constant eye on your position. – Reflection

10.8 Pescarus

10.8.1 Pass

Oct, 2007: We made sure we would arrive in good daylight as the approach is tricky due to numerous reefs way off the low-lying islands. With good waypoints from the Rocket Guide, it is no problem as long as you can eyeball for confirmation! – Sloepmouche

10.8.2 Anchorage Uliveo

Aug. 2009: We went back to Pescarus Village (Uliveo anchorage) and still found some demanding folks, and our Peace Corps guide was attacked by the same dog that had bitten our friend Commodore Jean on Quest just two weeks before! Something about this particular village! But the rest of the Masquelynes has no problems! – Sloepmouche

Oct. 2007: Well protected anchorage. We also anchored behind the reef (Mamu AB on Rocket Guide), but did not find the good sand at 6m – it must have shifted away and left only coral rubble. – Sloepmouche

10.8.3 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2007: We did some bartering for fruits (grapefruits, papaya, lemons, mini-apples, and more) and lobsters. Being spoiled by many cruisers, they were quite demanding, but with patience and good will you can have a good relation. There is local music, kava-drinking and a small resort aspiring to develop tourism.

An unfortunate event over a year ago (the looting of a local yacht that went aground at night on the outside reefs) kept some cruisers away. Villages are often jealous of each other, and each tries to lure yachties' money and goods their way. We are all the same on the planet.

Ask Kalo to show you the best snorkeling spots around. There is also a giant clam and marine reserve they can show you. – Sloepmouche

10.9 Akhamb Island

10.9.1 Anchorage

2014: 16°30.858S / 167°38.936E Anchor 6-14m sand/coral. Exposed South to Southwest wind and swell. Anchor close to sand bar north of the island. If the wind moves to the south, move to the other side of the sand bar. Delightful wee island that rarely sees visitors. – Reflection

11 Malekula

11.1 Willekh Bay

Western side of Malekula

11.1.1 Anchorage

2014: 16°06.917S / 167°10.545E. Anchored 10m sand and rubble. Exposed N – W – SSW. Stay clear of the isolated rock on the south side to clear the reef. Beach landing on the south side at low tide and anywhere at high tide. – Reflection

July 2009: The anchorage is protected from the wind, but you get a swell—amazing how swell rounds any point to get at you! – Sloepmouche

11.1.2 Cruiser Reports

Sept. 2023: A cruiser reported that there are 4 islands just off Malekula which are beautiful and worth the stop if you are heading north. The best anchorage is the island of Rano where there is a traditional Ni-Vanuatu village. They will do a dance and tour for you including dancing, snorkeling, weaving, sand drawing. Call Tom +679.512.1670 to schedule. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2019: Just a bit of a caution. We were North of South-West Bay in Willkeh Bay, supposedly an uninhabited bay a few weeks ago. DH was approached by a guy in a dugout offering to sell him a bag of dope. DH promptly informed him that he was a policeman, which quickly got rid of him. – Thor

July 2009: You will be quite isolated as there's no village. There's good snorkeling with lots of turtles at the reef around the isolated rock on the southern part of this little bay. – Sloepmouche

11.2 Lamboumbu Bay

Western side of Malekula

11.2.1 Cruiser Report

July 2009: The copra pier is now gone, but you can still put your dinghy at the stone jetty and walk to the small settlement (Presbyterian Church school). There's some swell despite being tucked in.

We met Amil Setla, a chief of a small village in the “neck” of Malekula (where, unfortunately, there is no anchorage). He belongs to a tribe of the Middle Nambas. We had only heard of Small and Big Namba tribes. He showed us a fascinating area with many custom stories and taboos and spiritual powers. He, as the eldest son of the paramount chief of the area, had been initiated to all the custom ways.

We saw human bones and an ancient overgrown ceremonial nasara. In the afternoon he took us to a beautiful waterfall at the end of a 1.5-hour walk up the river past crystal clear natural terraced pools. That's the beauty of Vanuatu: by talking to locals, you can just chance on fantastic, spontaneous opportunities to get glimpses of an endangered ancient culture. – Sloepmouche

11.3 Tavendrua and Dixon Reefs

Southwest side of Malekula

11.3.1 Anchorage

July 2018: 16°20.09S / 167°22.73E. Anchored in a very serene spot near Dixon Reef. – Eagle's Wings

July 2009: 16°20.102S / 167°22.821E. Anchored just north of Lamendranga Point near the mouth of a little river. Villagers said that most yachts anchor in the north corner of the bay in front of a black sand beach. It looked calm.

We also anchored on the south side behind the reefs, but found the holding only fair in the 20' depths. Next day we went into the bay and could easily see the channel around the reefs, even in black cloudy weather. Keep a good watch for a few isolated reefs indicated on the charts inside the bay. – Sloepmouche

11.3.2 Cruiser Reports

July 2018: We spent a wonderful week of diving on Dixon Reef and meeting the welcoming locals of Tavendrua. – Eagle's Wings

11.4 Melip Bay

Southern end of Malekula

11.4.1 Anchorage

June 2015: 16°34.67S / 167°29.42E. The sandy sea bed shallows very slowly and we anchored in 5m with a small swell. We eyeballed our way in and found that there was lots of depth all the way into the lovely bay with no hazards. The Navionics charts only have a little detail - the mainland is correctly positioned, but there's a small island shown in the middle of the bay, which is actually further south at the edge of the bay. – Alba

July 2009: 16°34.694S / 167°29.4421E. You can dinghy up the river seen in the satellite photo in the RG quite a long way. Go at high tide as the bar at the mouth is very shallow, and you may have to walk the dinghy in or time the swells for an exciting surf-riding entry. You can dinghy to Tomman if you have a good motor. There is a small channel cut through the reefs; ask the islanders who paddle across daily to go to the gardens or the Catholic school. Very interesting island with complex, ancient culture.

The water between Tomman and the main island as you travel to/from SW Bay is deep enough to pass without problem. With good light you will see the isolated reefs clearly. – Sloepmouche

11.4.2 Cruiser Reports

June 2015: Tomman Island is owned by two families (hence "To - Mann") and the land is split in two. Priscilla belongs to one family called Jimmy and Angela married into the other family called Aisoh. As Angela showed us around, she told us which family owned which land. The ground is obviously very fertile and we were shown through coconut groves and gardens containing banana, taro, papaya, etc. – Alba

July 2009: We were due back in Port Vila in a few days, and a window opened, but before we took off, we gave a ride to Longel, the principal chief of Tomman island, about 10-12 miles from SW Bay.

In pre-missionary times, male children had their heads bound so that they developed elongated heads. The last one died some years back, but we saw photos. The chief told us that the third week in July there would be a three-day grade-taking ceremony on the island, a very special event, the last one being in 1998.

They would allow visitors to attend and take photos for a fee that would help offset the costs of the ceremony, which for them is quite expensive. They were so keen that they gave us the program and quickly organized a women's and a men's dance for Luc to film as a promotional preview. That same afternoon just about sunset, we pulled up anchor, and 28 hours and a bunch of tacking later, we were in Port Vila, just making it in before the weather window closed. Later we returned to the Melip anchorage shown on the RG and took some GPS points requested.

It looks tricky, but you can get in close to the beach in front of the village in very good black sand bottom; otherwise, you'll be exposed to the swell rolling in. – Sloepmouche

11.5 Metenovor Bay (Southwest Bay)

11.5.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2018: 16°29.42S / 167°25.78E. The SW Bay anchorage is very protected from SE trades. – Eagle's Wings

June 2015: 16°29.59S / 167°25.74E. Anchored in 5m near Lembinwen village over dark sand. – Alba

2014: 16°29.583S / 167°25.876E. Anchored 6-18m sand. Exposed West thru to North. Anchor in the bay to suit wind direction. It's a big bay. – Reflection

July 2009: 16°29.56S / 167°25.54E. Anchored in 20' of good sand. There are no dangers anywhere around, so we felt safe in strong winds. As there was no swell in SE winds, we had restful nights. – Slopemouche

11.5.2 Cruiser Reports

June 2015: We went for several lovely walks and hikes with the locals. – Alba

Aug. 2009: The Labo Festival (Aug.12-14) which is a 3-day festival in three villages and is great fun. The small French community of Bennorce (10 Stick) welcomed us nicely again, but because of rainy weather, very few went snorkeling or diving. Day three of the festival happened in Labo. The Nalawan dancing was really good in the very nice setting along the beach. And this year the lunch was great (with a reduced fee for the day).

We also visited the small French community of Bennorce at the SW point of the bay in front of Ten Stick rock (which earned the natives ten sticks of tobacco during WWII so U.S. planes could use it for target practice.)

After a nice visit of the community, we snorkeled with Chief Ronald on the reefs surrounding the rock. What a surprise for us to discover some of the nicest reefs we have seen in Vanuatu!

We saw five eagle rays, a small Napoleon wrasse, two huge groupers that would have fed 30 people and countless other fish amongst lively, colorful corals of all kinds. We had a GREAT dive during the three-day festival, swimming through the numerous crevasses lined with the most colorful fans. Saw a huge tuna that liked our silvery bubbles, a school of giant parrots and lots of action with good-sized fish.

South of Ten Stick, there is a waterfall that you can see from the sea. You can go most of the way by dinghy at medium tide up along the beach, inside the reefs. Halfway, we met Kali, who sometimes lives isolated with his small family in a small valley. He is a Vanuatu boxing champion and has competed overseas. He wants to build a stone dam at the foot of the fall so visitors can bathe under the fall. Nice people! – Sloepmouche

11.6 Malua

Southern end of Malekula

11.6.1 Anchorages

Nov. 2016: 15°59.47S / 167°10.93E. We sailed to Malua Bay on NW side of Malakula Island. – Eagle's Wings

June 2009: Comfortable anchorage. You can anchor very close to shore to avoid any swell. – Sloepmouche

11.6.2 Cruiser Report

June 2009: We were welcomed by one of the three schoolteachers from the Seventh Day Adventist primary school in the bay. The school (as all schools in Vanuatu) is always in need of any materials. We had nothing left except scrap paper, and they were happy for that.

After visiting the school, Fredrick, one of the teachers, guided us to a nice swimming hole on the river that flows to the anchorage. There is also a nice swimming hole only about 100 yards from the beach just where the road crosses the river.

Natives paddled in their canoes to speak to us and to offer us fruits. Chief Don came with the yachtie's gold book to sign.

We also walked with Rodrick and Alfred to the Lekhan Spirit Cave described in the Lonely Planet guide (about 45 minutes one way). It is a big cavern where the top caved in, letting the light through. Some pictograms can be found on the walls, and some bats inhabit part of the cave. – Sloepmouche

11.7 Bushman's Bay

Eastern side of Malekula

11.7.1 Anchorage

June 2018: Anchor in 10m, Sand some rock/rubble, No Internet.– Screensaver

2014: 16°09.593S / 167°30.344E. Anchored in 9m sand/coral. If you move too close the bottom turns to rocks and bommies. – Reflection

11.7.2 Cruiser Report

June 2018: This place is not in any of the books and I picked it straight out of Google. I crept right up the head of the bay as it did open out a bit, however it just seemed a little squashed and shallow for the looming bad weather. Deciding to anchor just a bit further out as the bullets came through and a ratio of 3:1 I could not get a firm hold and Screensaver slowly crept backwards.

The end in order to get a decent hold and better anchor ratio I had to move out where Squander was and anchored where the bigger purple blob is. Sure enough the wind came in gusting to around 35-38 knots, but at least here there was no swell and we were relatively comfortable.

The local village and the people were all very nice giving us a tour around and introductions. – Screensaver

11.8 Port Sandwich

Eastern side of Malekula

WARNING: Do not go swimming in this bay, not even to check your anchor. The locals dispose of carcasses and they attract sharks which might mistake you as dinner.

11.8.1 Anchorage

June 2023: 16°26.340'S 167°46.997'E Anchored in 16m mud, good holding. The flattest, calmest anchorage we've ever experienced. Felt like we were in a marina. A very beautiful and peaceful area. Lots of spaces to anchor and protected from strong winds in all directions. – SV Complicite

June 2018: Anchor in 16m mostly mud, very poor. – Screensaver

June 2015: This is a long deep bay. We went 3 miles up the bay in an isolated anchorage near a wrecked ship on the west side of the bay. It was so peaceful, being surrounded by jungle and coconut trees, with one small hut just visible on the shore. – Alba

2014: 16°26.302S / 167°47.202E. Anchored in 8-10m sand/mud. Exposed West thru to North. Excellent, sheltered anchorage in most weather. It can get noisy close to the wharf. – Reflection

Oct. 2007: This would be a good hurricane hole if ever needed. Although there is a three-mile fetch if the winds are out of the north. There are majestic views as you enter. – Sloepmouche

11.8.2 Provisions

June 2023: There is a shop 'Rainbow Shop' a very short walk from the anchorage. Fresh bread on Mon, Wed and Fri. other basic supplies available. A 45-minute easy walk through the quaint houses to the small town of Lamap. Wednesday mornings they have fruit veg markets, you need to go early around 8am. There is a bank, another store that makes very delicious bread and places to buy more Digicel credit. – SV Complicite

11.8.3 Cruiser Reports

June 2009: If you anchor close to the old Ballande wharf, don't miss a visit to Rock, who welcomes cruisers at his house behind the beach. He created a book exchange/public library for the locals. You can do your laundry, fill water, and he can organize a pig roast for cruisers. Nice guy!

Snorkeling in the bay is not recommended because of low visibility and past shark attacks but it is nice on the outside of the bay around the Lamap area. Bread is available at Lamap, a nice walk away. It's a little depressing

to see remains of the French pre-independence time. Their quality of life was better in the outer islands in those times with better communications, schools and health care. – Sloepmouche

11.9 Banam Bay

Eastern side of Malekula

11.9.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 16°20.27S / 167°45.43E. Give Bangoon point a wide berth and negotiate your way to the SWS corner of the bay. Come in the bay with good light and satellite charts. Be aware of the coral heads. Protection ESE through SW to NNW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 16°20.34S / 167°45.44E Protected except from the north (unusual). Vellela

Oct. 2007: Banon Bay offers a great anchorage in normal trade winds with friendly natives. – Sloepmouche

11.9.2 Cruiser Reports

Nov. 2023: There is good snorkeling around the coral heads in the bay. The outer reef is adventurous with a good variety of fish. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: Interesting diving but infested with crown of thorns. Good walks ashore to Aulua Mission Station. – Vellela

Oct. 2007: No fees, no begging. The chief of the small community near the beach can organize some very interesting custom dances for a group of yachties (the dances involve the whole community). There's also a pleasant little waterfall where you can stand under the cascade in the fresh water. It's about a 20-minute walk away. – Sloepmouche

11.10 Pankumu Bay

Eastern side of Malekula

11.10.1 Anchorage

June 2018: 16°16.12S / 167°39.53E. Anchored in 11m sand and coral rubble. – Screensaver

2014: 16°16.151S / 167°39.539E. Anchored in 6-12m sand/coral. Exposed NW – N – E. Anchor between the two reefs don't get too close as the bottom turns to broken coral, rocks, and bommies. – Reflection

11.10.2 Cruiser Report

June 2018: This place is just a place to stop rather than motor on up and in these flat conditions it was just fine. – Screensaver

June 2009: The Pankumu Bay anchorage was as described in the RG and a bit rolly due to strong SE winds. We did get into the river with our dinghy, but we had to cross the shallow bar with breakers (very exhilarating!). Alas, we were only able to navigate the first half a mile.

Even though this is the second largest river of Vanuatu, there are too many shallow rapids shortly after you get in to safely navigate. – Sloepmouche

11.11 Crab Bay

Eastern side of Malekula

11.11.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: The entrance needs to be carefully negotiated but it is worth the stop. – Dandelion

Sept.2023: Really beautiful, isolated Bay. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 16°10.074S / 167°31.959E. Anchored in 5-12m sand/coral. Exposed North winds and swell. Anchoring is general between small reefs, take care navigating in good light.

June 2009: We anchored just in front of the sand spit. Not a lot of room, but each of the three anchorages mentioned in RG can accommodate a boat, though there is not much point weaving around reefs to get in further. It is also possible to anchor just inside behind the protection of the first reef before you arrive in the anchorage area and still be protected from swell. It's calm here in 20-25kt E-SE.

The mangrove area is now a protected park and, thus, no fishing or collecting allowed—but they might collect 500 VT/person if you visit. We didn't see any natives at all. – Sloepmouche

11.12 Nunbecken Bay

Eastern side of Malekula

11.12.1 Anchorage

June 2009: 16°07.44S / 167°29.48E in 22' on foul ground but had a very calm anchorage despite the trade winds. As at Crab Bay, you can just duck in behind the first reef and get out of the swell without going all the way in. On the aerial photo it looked like you could go all the way into the mangroves, but when we explored by dinghy, we found it was almost too shallow for the dinghy in some places. – Sloepmouche

11.13 Port Stanley

Eastern side of Malekula

11.13.1 Anchorage

June 2009: Port Stanley offers several anchorages. We anchored off the eastern end of Uri Island (see RG) where we were welcomed by the small community. We toured their clean village and snorkeled in the marine park, where we took underwater photos of very vibrant corals and the giant clam shells they protect there.

We also anchored temporarily on rubble off the dock in Lislits in order for one of us to walk to Lakatoro to get bread. – Sloepmouche

11.14 Norsup Island

Eastern side

11.14.1 Anchorage

June 2018: 16°03.532S / 167°24.305E. Anchored in 7m, sand. Again, just a quick stop, but there is a lot of protection within this 1-mile area. – Screensaver

2014: 16°03.320S / 167°24.486E. Anchored in 9-14m sand. Exposed N-ESE winds and swell. Search for the sandy patches in the sheltered part of this bay. – Reflection

11.15 Wala Island

Eastern Side

11.15.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°58.650S / 167°22.00E. The anchorage can be accessed from either the north or the south. It is located on the western shore of the island. You anchor in 4-5m of sand and coral and hang in 10m. It is best to creep up towards the right end of the beach and drop the hook. The drop off is steep so be sure your anchor is set and not dragging off the ledge. Protection ENE through to E to S. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: To the left of the concrete jetty is good holding (for a catamaran). There was plenty of depth so a mono should be fine as well. – Katoa 2

2014: 15°58.597S / 167°22.443E. Anchored in 6-18m sand. Exposed west thru north east winds and swell. You will be surprised how close you get to the beach before dropping anchor. – Reflection

11.15.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: Organize a guide to walk around Wala as it is a very interesting and unique island. Walk the beach at low tide as you can't get to the other side at higher tides. It takes about an hour to walk around the entire island. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: There is a local boat bus that goes from the village to the mainland and back (taking kids to school). It was a gold coin payment to use it.

There is very good snorkeling around the northwest corner of the island.

On Wala Island we met Elizabeth and Mike and their 3 daughters, who were very hospitable. Mike took us for an island tour up to where the old village was before they moved to the beach front. It had some interesting features and Mike was very good at explaining things. Along the way we came across local fruit that he offered us. I think it cost 100 Vatu. Elizabeth is very warm and communicative. She organized a 'kastom' dance put on by the village on the mainland opposite Wala Is. There were only 3 of us attending but they seem to be able to put it on, on request for a group. I think I paid 11,000 vatu which Elizabeth thought was too expensive, but they did go to the effort for 3 people. It was a very good display with both men and women dancing in traditional costume, traditional fire making, traditional food preparation and cooking that you got to try, weaving and sand drawing. It was set just on the beach edge with caves so was very picturesque. – KATO A 2

11.16 Vao Island

Eastern Side

11.16.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°54.07S / 167°18.16E. Protection from NE through E to SE. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 15°54.114S / 167°18.158E. Anchored in 6-12m sand/rubble. Exposed to anything from the north. Tuck in behind the small spit of sand and wait for the parade of canoes. – Reflection

11.16.2 Cruiser Report

June 2009: At Vao Island we were lucky to meet Juliette, a very nice, enterprising lady who gave us a tour of the island after we charged the batteries of her mobile phone.

There is a large French Catholic school there. We took lots of photos/video of several nasaras (ceremonial dance areas) and local artists, who do nice wood and coral carvings. – Sloepmouche

12 Ambrym Island

12.1 Craig's Cove

12.1.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 16°15.28S / 167°55.26E. Anchor in 8-15m black sand and rock (just an "ok" anchorage). Anchor further north in the bay in about 20m. Protection from N through E to SSE. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: The anchorage here in Craig's Cove is not the greatest, but it is adequate. – Dandelion

12.1.2 Cruiser Reports

Nov. 2023: There is great snorkeling at the rock on the right of the bay. The diving at the southern corner is wonderful with clear water 20-30m. Lots of wonderful walks. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: The Ni-Van were so very friendly! They often yell the only English phrase they know "I love you." We distributed some clothing, glasses, and toys. They are grateful for anything. – Dandelion

12.2 Hot Pools

12.2.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2023: 16°11.69S / 168°01.80E. Not sure the name of this spot so we named it Hot Pools. We were here just for a few hours as weather conditions changed and we were on the lee side. – Eastern Stream

12.2.2 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2023: We swam to shore and you can feel the water temperature shift. The hot pool is no longer connected to the sea via a stream. The hot pool water can be a little green, but you can clean up a little space on the side of the pool and make your own private pool. – Eastern Stream

12.3 Ranvetlam

12.3.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 16°09.08S / 168°06.45E. Anchor in 10m in black sand with good holding. Protection in NE through S to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: 16°09.13S / 168°06.42E. Anchored in sand with good holding. – Eastern Stream

12.3.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: Land your dinghy ashore on the western end of the beach where you will find stakes to fasten your painter. Walk west along the track to get to the village (5min) where they have great carvings and will take you on guided walking / hiking trails to the volcanos.

The stunning volcanic cliffs that form the beachfront make for spectacular diving. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Aug. 2023: A nice friendly village to visit. We came here to hike to the crater of the volcano. Jaap did this in 2011 or 2012 when the crater lake was still lava. With the earthquake in 2018, the implosion caused the lake to disappear. However, the views were still incredible and the crater was very impressive. Be aware that it is a hike 25-30km. We did it in one day, but it is also possible to do it in two days and have an overnight in a shelter. You can arrange a guide in the village. – Eastern Stream

12.4 Ranon

12.4.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 16°08.549S / 168°07.00E. Anchor in 4-10m. Ranon is a big bay with heavy black sand and good holding. The wind swings round about -- so give yourself lots of swing room. Protection NE through S to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: The anchorage in Ranon was much better than at Craig's Cove. – Dandelion

June 2015: The sea bed shelves slowly from over 100 metres deep and we anchored in 10 metres on black sand 50 metres off the beach. The village of Ranon is spread out along the shore. – Alba

2014: 16°08.511S / 168°06.936E. Anchor in 4-10m black sand. Get as close to the shore as you are comfortable, either get far north or south, but avoid the middle. – Reflection

12.4.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: The village is lovely and has a lot of beautiful carvings. Several dugongs and turtles have been spotted here. But the black sand can make it difficult to see. It is advised not to swim at night. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: We met the chief and bought carving that is unique to this island. They also offer you a chance to see the ROM dance. They also have volcano tours. – Dandelion

June 2015: We went ashore and walked for 45 minutes up to the village of Fanla, which is a Kastom village where they put on ROM dances for tourists. There's a dirt road which heads north along the edge of the shore and after about ½ mile, there's a small path off to the right, which goes up steeply following a small gorge. We walked past it thinking that it led to someone's garden, so had to walk a bit further and follow another dirt road that branched off ½ mile further on. (The small path is a shortcut back up to this road.)

As we walked into Fanla, we met a guy called Freddy, who said that he could arrange a ROM dance tomorrow. It's going to cost us \$50US each, but we agreed and arranged to be back at nine o'clock tomorrow.

Our man Freddy met us on the beach. Freddy is the brother of one of the chiefs in Fanla and he's one of the few people allowed to make the traditional masks for the ROM Dance.

Fanla is a traditional Kastom village steeped in tradition and "Majick". Having a volcano on the island gives great powers to sorcerers and Ambrym is the magic capital of Vanuatu. The men in the village go through a grading process over many years and have to perform various rituals to increase their grade, which seem to mostly involve killing pigs.

Most of the men have a large number of pigs - Freddy has 19. On some animals, they remove the top teeth to allow two of the lower teeth to grow abnormally in a six inch diameter circle. It takes five years to grow a complete circle and these "Tuskers" are greatly prized for grading rituals.

Many of the more powerful chiefs/sorcerers cook and eat their meals alone in tabu places, where women are not allowed to go. Freddie showed us around the village and pointed out a number of places that were tabu - one belonging to his father who is buried in the place where he used to prepare his meals.

The ROM dance was good - it's a traditional dance and ritual that is one of the levels in the grading process. Some of the dancers are dressed in large masks and costumes made from Pandanus leaves, while the others dance in the middle chanting and drumming, wearing only nambas (penis pouches). There were only 4 dancers in ROM masks, so I suspect that they were a little short-handed for our display, but it was enjoyable. – Alba

12.5 Nobul / Nebul

12.5.1 Anchorage

2015: Anchored in 11m in front of white sand beach. Land on beach. Walking tracks to Ranon and around the northern point where there are quite a few villages. – Vellela

Aug. 2008: 16°06.6S / 168°07.7E Anchored in 13-20m in black sand. We came back at the end of August to assist with the famous "back to my roots" festival.

We were lucky to anchor close enough to **Olal** to be able to walk to the new North Ambrym Yacht Club and Bungalows. The anchorage is not mentioned in guides and is much more protected than the small exposed anchorage just north of Olal.

From the beach there, it is an easy 45-minute walk past several villages to Olal or a five-mile dinghy trip best done only in mild conditions. You can ask Chief Johnson from Nebul Bay village. –Sloepmouche

12.5.2 Cruiser Reports

Aug. 2009: Thirty yachts attended the 8th Back to My Roots Rom dance, a three- day festival (7,000 vatu/person). Like years before, we think this is one of the best cultural festivals in Vanuatu.

This year, Norbert (a school principal) took his sixth chief's grade. There were more dancers this year including the new generation. Money is raised to help kids with the school fees, and several cruisers sponsored some students. Don't miss this annual event at the end of August in Olal.

Chief Sekor in Olal now has a handheld VHF, so you should be able to hail him from the anchorage if you want to arrange dinner or custom dances. We were lucky to be there for the inauguration of the first Rom Nakamal. Be sure to ask Chief Sekor to explain this to you. One young Czech cruising couple even had a custom wedding while we were visiting. A memorable experience! Nice villagers here too.

It takes a little effort, but to witness one of their festivals and Rom Dance is definitely worth it. Unique to the northern region of Ambrym, the Rom dancing truly gave us the feeling of stepping into a living National Geographic magazine. There's a long, complicated cultural significance to the dance. The high chief decides who can dance. Men pay high prices in pigs and goods for the privilege. Some of the dancers disguised themselves with layers and layers of dry banana leaves and wore elaborate tall conical masks, the design of which is closely guarded by each clan and passed along to initiates who pay. The masks are destroyed after the ceremony, which is why ancient masks that exist in collections are so rare.

The other male dancers were clad only in nambas, a woven sheath that covers only the penis and is attached to a wide bark belt holding it straight out or erect. Women danced in grass skirts only. The rhythm was primitive and compelling to the deep bass reverberation of a gigantic three-meter tam-tam, accented by the energetic higher pitched beats of smaller tam-tams and handheld bamboo models. The dancers sang and chanted and stamped, vibrating the ground around them. This was the first dancing we witnessed where we could believe they were actually dancing the dance for its original spiritual purpose, not as a show to entertain tourists. Very powerful! Pigs were killed and the nakamal was revealed with its painted tiki guardian and giant masks.

Back at the YC, where burgees and flags donated by yachties gaily flitted on bamboo poles, everyone dived into the abundant kai-kai feast with the dancers and villagers. Chief Sekor and his village recognize the great resource that yachties can be to isolated islanders. Don't expect cold beer and watching the World Cup finals on the big screen at this YC as there is no electricity yet. Do not miss the festivals each year in July and August.

In 2008 the Magic Festival is scheduled for July 22-24 and the Back-to-Your-Roots Festival with Rom Dance on August 20-22. – Sloepmouche

12.6 Lonwolwol Lake

12.6.1 Anchorage

Feb. 2024: This is a good anchorage with good protection from the easterlies. Quite striking to sail into and out of this bay with the two volcanoes dominating the island. – Katoa 2

Sept. 2023: Cruiser reported this is a calm and picturesque anchorage. It is well protected behind a huge volcano. – As reported to Sugar Shack

12.6.2 Cruiser Report:

Feb. 2024: Jessie and his family have a yacht club and run educational, history, and cultural tours with a walk around the lake. He can also include "Kastom" dances and cultural activities. There are bungalows and canoes to hire as well. On 18 July 2024, the village runs an event on the traditional livelihood of the people. On 8 August 2024 there is an exhibition of Dippoint Volcano which erupted in 1913. – Katoa 2

Sept. 2023: Jessie has a vegetable/fruit farm. There's a festival in Sept. which is reported to be really fun and educational. There is a day hike up to the top of the active volcano which is impressive. Check in with Dept. of Tourism Rollyne Liu +679.540.2121, rollyneliu@gmail.com (Lakatoro, Malekula) – As reported to Sugar Shack

13 Paama

Paama is a small island at the south end of Ambrym

13.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2007: Tahi anchorage: 20-35' over good volcanic sand bottom. There is a wreck on the northern end of the beach (copra boat that caught fire in 2000). This is a small, shy, but welcoming community. – Sloepmouche

14 Aore Island

Aore Island is located on the south side of Espiritu santo (across from Luganville)

Pronounced "Owree"

14.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°32.362S / 167°10.739E. North facing side of Aore Island directly opposite the river in Luganville. As you come in the Segund Channel between two islands, you can't miss it. Protection NE through S to NW from wind and swell. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: There are a few buoys available for mooring. Anchoring at the island is near impossible but a ferry can take you twice a day departing from Starfish Restaurant (10min from Beach Resort) on Santo. – Dandelion

Sept. 2023: Cruisers have reported that the Aore Adventure Sports and Lodge has installed 3 moorings which are maintained meticulously. Cost \$2000vt per day. A very protected place. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2015: 15°31.46S / 167°09.80E. We arrived in Luganville at four o'clock and picked up a mooring off the Aore Resort. It costs \$15 US per night, but what the hell. The anchorage is okay, but I guess that it will be very rolly and choppy when the wind is strong from the south-east. – Alba

2014: Aore Resort: 15°32.315S / 167°10.707E. Exposed West thru to NE wind and swell. Aore restaurant offers many moorings for visiting yachts at a reasonable rate. – Reflection

2014: We anchored in several bays on Aore Island.

Ratua Bay: 15°36.697S / 167°10.570E. Anchored 6-12m sand. Lovely tranquil anchorage.

Aisari Bay: 15°34.368S / 167°12.196E. Anchored 6-12m sand. Exposed north to east wind and swell. Only attempt to thread your way in when the sun is high and visibility is good. – Reflection

Sept. 2012: Four mooring balls for around \$15 USD per day are available at Aore Resort which is located across the Segund Channel south of Luganville. It may be impossible to locate the mooring balls during high tide and swift running currents since they may be pulled under water during these events. – Yolo

14.2 Provisions

June 2015: The hotel provides a small ferry service to get guests to the mainland across the 1-mile channel. We caught the eight o'clock ferry then walked to the vegetable market and checked out some of the supermarkets. There's a very good supermarket called LCM, which has most of the stuff that we needed. We bought enough food to last us for a week and caught the ferry back to the resort. – Alba

Aug. 2008: Aore Resort. While the resort does not really seek to attract cruisers, it still offers over ten moorings at 1,200 VT/night. We explored the area on both sides of the resort and found no suitable anchorage as the bottom drops so quickly to 80' from shore. – Sloepmouche

14.3 Activities

Nov. 2023: A lovely walk to the top of the plantation gives you beautiful views of Santo and has a collection of banyan trees.

[Aore Resort](#) is very welcoming to yachts. They would allow rubbish disposal, water, laundry, happy hour and use of resort facilities. This was several years ago, best to inquire first. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: We highly recommend a visit to the Clearwater Plantation. It is privately owned but they accept guests and it is really worth a visit. They have a freshwater spring in the seabed in front of the property and you can see an amazing bat cave and formations of stalactites. – Dandelion

Sept. 2023: Aore Adventure Sports & Lodge run by Paul White offers great dives. – As reported to Sugar Shack

14.4 Cruiser Reports

June 2015: Aore Resort. As a treat, we went ashore to have burger and chips at the hotel. It's a very nice place with comfy chairs in the lounge area, tiled floors, cold beer, wireless internet and a swimming pool.

The hotel is very yacht friendly with free internet and they charge a reasonable price for laundry (\$8US per load).

It was hot and humid in the afternoon, so we lurked about sweating. I dropped off 3 or 4 loads of laundry at the hotel then tried to use the hotel's internet, but it was painfully slow. – Alba

Sept. 2012: There is a 100 VATU (@ \$1.11 USD) charge per person per way to use the ferry that runs several times per day from Aore Island to Luganville. Very few sailors dingy across the wide and rough Segond Channel. – Yolo

Aug. 2008: When the tradewinds picked up and kicked a sea in the anchorage at Beachfront, we moved across the channel to Aore Resort. Meals, laundry, Internet and garbage disposal are available at both Beachfront and Aore Resorts. – Sloepmouche

15 Ratua Island

Just south of Aore Island

15.1 Anchorage

June 2015: 15°36.69S / 167°10.5170E. There's a small holiday resort here with two moorings, but they looked to be in a poor state of repair. We ignored the moorings and anchored in 14 metres of water away from the various reefs in a sandy patch. It's a nice-looking anchorage. – Alba

15.2 Cruiser Report

June 2015: We took some time off boat jobs to go snorkeling and first tried a spot about ½ mile to the west of the anchorage where the reef sticks out from the coast. I was hoping that it could be a dive site, but the reef quickly runs out to sand and isn't as steep as it looked on the chart. The snorkeling there wasn't too good as the water was very choppy and murky.

In the afternoon, we went for a **snorkel** on the south side of the island, but again it wasn't too good. The seabed was mostly dead coral rubble with the odd live coral head sticking up. I spotted many Crown Of Thorns Starfish, which cause major damage to reefs by eating the coral polyps. These starfish produce millions of larvae, which grow in the coral rubble. If there are insufficient fish to eat all the larvae, then huge aggregations of starfish grow on the reef and decimate the coral. It's a vicious circle because an unhealthy reef has less fish, so more starfish grow into adults.

In many places throughout the Pacific, dive operators actively kill Crown of Thorns starfish, by injecting them with a poison, to reduce their numbers and protect their reefs. I believe that these starfish can also be killed by collecting them in a large flour sack, then leaving them out of the water for a day. The starfish need a flow of water over them, so die in the confines of a sack - they can then be tipped out to feed the fish. Perhaps I should start doing my bit. – Alba

16 Espiritu Santo (Vanuatu) aka “Santo”

This island is mostly known as “Santo”

16.1 Port Olry

East Coast

16.1.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: 15°02.16S / 167°05.02E. Anchored behind Thion Island and had a great time here. – Eastern Stream

Oct. 2023: 15°02.00S / 167°05.00E. Approach from the north. Anchor in 10m on sand. On the southeast corner of Thion Island you can anchor at **15°02.48S / 167°05.00E**. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: 15°02.119'S 167°05.052'E Thion Island anchorage: anchored in 8m sand, very clear blue water. Pass over a few bommies to reach this sandy patch but easy to see with good light/satellite. Protected from SE trades. Excellent holding. – SV Complicite

June 2019: 15°02.2788S / 167°04.2012E in 8m sand. – Indigo II

June 2018: 15°02.2818S / 167°04.1541E. Anchor in 10m Sand. – Screensaver

2014: 15°02.061S / 167°04.871E. Anchor in 9-10m white coral sand. Exposed to N – NE winds and swell. There is an inner anchorage with fantastic shelter, but thread your way carefully. – Reflection

16.1.2 Provisions

Oct. 2023: There is a little market close to the village shop. – Eastern Stream

July 2023: In the village there is a basic store (blue and white – ask a local where it is) which sells fresh steak for a 500VT per kilo, as well as eggs, onions, potatoes, sometimes bread and other basic supplies. Across from this store is a small fruit veg market selling whatever is available for a very good price. – SV Complicite

16.1.3 Restaurants

July 2023: There is a small restaurant and bar on the beach. – SV Complicite

16.1.4 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: We did some BBQ's on the beach, walked to the lakes, and had some dinners and drinks in the locally owned restaurant near the beach. – Eastern Stream

July 2023: Excellent snorkeling from the boat. A sandspit beach very close by with nobody there. A short walk to a fresh water lake. A short dinghy ride to the main Port Olry beach. Port Olry beach is extremely picturesque. Not many tourists around. – SV Complicite

June 2018: We went into the inner anchorage across the coral/sand shelf and into the river mouth. A very safe and comfortable anchorage especially in the SE trades. – Screensaver

16.2 Hog Harbor / Champagne Beach

East Coast

16.2.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2023: Anchorage is reported to be clear water with good holding. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: 15°08.684'S 167°06.878'E Anchored in 20m. Very protected from SE, E, S trades. Good holding. Some roll at high tide. – SV Complicite

June 2019: 15°08.410S / 167°07.259E in 15m sand & coral. – Indigo

June 2018: 15°08.409S / 167°07.272E. Anchor in 12m, Sand Coral knobs. Can be a bit roly with more than 10-15knts from any direction. – Screensaver

2014: 15°08.654S / 167°06.952E. Anchor in 8-10m in white coral sand. Exposed to N-NE winds and swell. Add plenty of scope, there are several potentially good anchorages in this bay. – Reflection

16.2.2 General Provisions

16.2.2.1 Laundry

Sept. 2023: A cruiser reported that Lonoc Beach Bungalows assists with laundry, trash, & water. – As reported to Sugar Shack

16.2.2.2 Trash Disposal

Sept. 2023: A cruiser reported that Lonoc Beach Bungalows assists with laundry, trash, & water. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: We disposed rubbish here for a small fee. – SV Complicite

16.2.3 Provisions

July 2023: The village has a small store with basic supplies. – SV Complicite

16.2.4 Restaurant

Sept. 2023: The Lonoc Beach Bungalows have a restaurant and bar. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: A few restaurants with basic but delicious food. – SV Complicite

16.2.5 Cruiser Report

July 2023: Beautiful beaches and snorkeling. – SV Complicite

June 2018: 3g TVL. The trip up got quite sloppy and the swell gave my new auto pilot its first good stern quarter following sea work out. I must say I'm pretty impressed with it thus far.

On my first trip to Champagne Beach the Cruise ships used to come here. The local village setup a lot of village type infrastructure to cater for the western tourist on what is a very beautiful beach certainly in the top couple for Vanuatu. As time passed the village got greedy with their charges per person to the Cruise ship grew and eventually the cruise ships pulled the pin. So now the cows enjoy the paradise and for the moment the infrastructure remains a vacant reminder. – Screensaver

16.3 Big Bay

In the south eastern tip of Big Bay you will find a well-protected, picturesque anchorage off the village. The area around the anchorage is part of the National Park, the "Vatthe Conservation Area".

16.3.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°09.57S / 166°56.43E. Anchor in the very SE corner of the bay. Protection from ENE through S to W. – As reported to Sugar Shack

16.3.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: There are two villages in this bay and lots to do. Loads of snorkeling and diving and lots of walking tracks that will take you to all corners of the park. We suggest hiring a guide to share with you his local knowledge of the flora and fauna and their different uses within the village. – As reported to Sugar Shack

16.4 Turtle Bay

Eastern side

16.4.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: We were lucky enough to have friends on land who had a private mooring in Turtle Bay. You can enter this bay either from the south or the north. Both can be tricky, however, stick to the coordinates and eyeball the bommies (reference Rocket Guide and Navionics). – Dandelion

16.5 Peterson (Paterson) Lagoon

16.5.1 Pass

July 2019: We entered the inner Peterson bay lagoon via the North entrance 2 hours before high tide a saw min depth of 2.1m. The entry was a short but tricky path, and satellite navigation is essential to get it right. We exited by the southern lagoon and the NAVIONICS community layer port / starboard marks are spot on. – Berzerker

16.5.2 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: 15°22.22S / 167°11.39E. Eyeball your way through the reefs to find yourself a protected spot in the bay. We anchored in mud opposite the entrance to the blue hole. We saw a lot of catamarans anchored closer to the resort, but it seemed more rolly over there as the reef is not that high and does not give the protection needed for a calm spot. – Eastern Stream

July 2019: 15°22.339S / 167°11.463E. Anchored (with Berserker) in Peterson Bay at in 10m sand. – Indigo II

July 2019: We anchored last night outside Peterson's Bay, Espiritu Santo Vanuatu. We elected to not go over the shallow coral into the more protected area. Of note is that the Oyster Island resort is no longer there-bought and bulldozed, the markers for the "channel" over the coral are incorrectly placed. This outer anchorage would perhaps have held two boats easily, but no more. It was a little bit swelly at high tide. – Thor

June 2018: Anchor in 14m, Coral/sand rubble. – Screensaver

Oct. 2016: 15°22.89S / 167°11.66E. Another beautiful anchorage. Beautiful anchorage. – Eagle's Wings

Sept. 2012: About 10 miles north of Luganville is Peterson Bay which provides protection from all sides, great holding. – Yolo

16.5.3 Cruiser Reports

Oct. 2023: With the incoming tide we paddled up the river to visit one of the blue holes, the Matavea Blue Hole. The owners ask for a fee which you can give to the caretaker or put it in the special box at the entrance (close to the parking lot). Even on cloudy day the water was an incredible blue. – Eastern Stream

June 2018: 4G TVL. The first time I came here back around 2011, the resort in the Lagoon behind Oyster Island was open and was happy to meet yachties and take their money. Now it's owned by the Chinese and if you're pushy and get the easy-going security guard, you might if you're lucky, get to set foot on the island and take a few steps. While it is true yachties run on a limited budget, almost all of them can find money for a beer and some more, so this narrow-minded view is not good for their business either.

The river and Blue Hole on my first trip was excellent and free, then 6 months ago sadly when Kim and I went there the water was murky and they wanted 5000VUV. This time it did at least live up to its name as you can see and dare, I say he did not get his 5000vuv for what nature provides.

Cecile & Jamie came well prepared to make the most of the fresh water and had a very refreshing bath.– Sloepmouche

Sept. 2012: Wi-Fi at Oyster Resort on Malparavu/Oyster Island, snorkeling on a WWII airplane just south of the island, very good outer reef snorkeling, and several fresh water blue holes, complete with rope swings. – Yolo

16.6 Surundu (Surunda) Bay

Surunda (Surundu or Suranda) Bay is on the east side and is just over the hill 3 miles north of Luganville.

16.6.1 Anchorage

2014: 15°27.581S / 167°13.283E in 4-10m of sand. It is tricky to get in so be sure you have the sun high, the water clear, and have a lookout on the bow. – Reflection

Sep 2012: This anchorage is exceptionally good, sand bottom, provides all round protection, clear water, and very good snorkeling on the outer reef. We spent over 10 days here waiting for a good weather window. A family of dugongs and numerous turtles live in Surunda Bay. – Yolo

16.6.2 Cruiser Reports

July 2019: We got this from a cruiser we met a few weeks ago: “I have been for two weeks in extremely peaceful Surunda Bay in Santo; one night as I was at anchor in the middle of the bay, I was awakened by some noise, and found a man in the corridor of my port hull; there was no aggressiveness, in fact I think he had been smoking too much pot!

I led him back to the cockpit, vainly tried to understand his rambling discourse, and eventually locked myself inside (I had not even closed the door before going to sleep), and he eventually left... with my little dinghy; but I had phoned a Frenchman living ashore and with whom I’d made friends, and he sent three of his workers who found the guy more or less adrift, and brought him to the police. So, nothing lost, and as I said, no violence nor threats, and I got my dinghy back. So, better lock the doors in the evening, although everybody tells me that was a very rare occurrence in this area. – Thor

Sept. 2012: Getting to Luganville: The main north/south paved island road runs past the head of the bay. Countless buses, taxis, and cars travel to and from Luganville. Buses cost 100 VATU (\$1.11 USD) per person, we negotiated the same rate for one taxi ride, and hitchhiked other trips for free. Vehicle license plates which start with a “B” for bus, “T” for taxi, and “PT” for public transportation will charge you for the ride. We never spent more than 5 minutes standing by the road. It is a good idea to agree on the cost for a ride before getting into any vehicle. – Yolo

16.7 Palikulo Bay

Eastern side

16.7.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2023: 15°29.56S / 167°14.81E. A nice and protected bay with a sandy bottom in most places. Check your satellite charts for entering the bay. We use SAS planet and came in at night which was ok. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: 15°29.50S / 167°14.90E. Protection NE through S to NW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: 15°29.554'S 167°14.885'E Anchored in 10m in between reef. We dinghy sounded it first before moving over the bommies in good lighting. The shallowest we saw was 4m. Satellite imagery is very beneficial here. Very large bay with several different places you can anchor. Very flat anchorage with excellent holding. – SV Complicite

June 2018: 15°29.5736S / 167°14.8903E. Anchor in 8m behind 2 reefs. If you try to go to this anchorage be extremely careful and I strongly suggest you do not attempt it without a good image and or a good lookout up front watching for reefs.

It is quite a nice spot and as you would imagine calm. The SE trades had made the prior anchorage at the Beach Resort uncomfortable and a lee shore.

There are many wrecks around this area both above and below the water. As you come through Diamond Passage and turn to port you will see a jetty and a rather large wreck. The charts will suggest you can anchor there, but I could not find a spot anything like the chart suggested. I guess in its day it was dredged to accommodate what I believe was a fish cannery factory. In the SW corner of the bay lies another wreck and in total around this area there are about 5 above water alone. – Screensaver

Sept. 2012: Palekulo Bay has been reported as an excellent anchorage, except in strong northerly winds which are rare. Few cars and taxis travel out to this anchorage area. – Yolo

16.7.2 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2023: From Palikula Bay it is a 20-minute ride to Luganville. We hitchhiked but you could wait for a taxi. It is not a main road and there are not a lot of mini buses or taxis. However, we had no problems making this trip as we did it several times. You can easily catch a taxi from Luganville back to Palikulo Bay. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2023: 2-hr walk to town but you will most likely be offered a lift from a local. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2023: Dugongs, turtles, dolphins in the bay. Snorkeling closer to shore. Wrecks to check out. Great fishing. Friendly villages. Very easy to get into town from here – wait on the main road and a bus/car/taxi will pass every 15 minutes. Taxi back to the bay is 1500 VATU. No shops nearby that we could find. Very close to the airport, a great place for any crew changes. – SV Complicite

16.8 Luganville (Port of Entry)

16.8.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: A good, sheltered anchorage with a beach resort. – Dandelion

July 2019: 15°31.323S / 167°09.939E in 6.5m sand in the Segund Channel. – Indigo II

June 2018: Luganville Bay Beachfront Resort: Anchor in 4m, Sand. – Screensaver

2014: 15°31.390S / 167°09.804E in 4-10m sand/mud. Exposed to anything from the south. Anchoring close to the spit of land before the Sarakata River affords the best shelter.

15°30.926S / 167°10.949E in 10-15m sand/mud. Exposed to anything from the south. Anchor close to the corner of the concrete wharf in front of the small dinghy landing (not a good place to take your dinghy). – Reflection

Sept. 2012: Anchor just west of the large Luganville river in front of the yacht friendly Beachfront Resort. Good holding, yet exposed to trade winds, waves, and strong current. You have numerous anchoring options here. Officials do not care where your vessel is located when you clear in or out. – Yolo

Aug. 2008: Luganville's Beachfront anchorage, just south of the Sarakata River, might be a bit bumpy in trade winds but is closest to town. You can either land your dinghy at the Beachfront (yachties really welcome) or dinghy into the river (mid to high tide) and tie off just off the public market. – Sloepmouche

16.8.2 Yachtsmen Services

16.8.2.1 Fuel (Diesel & Gasoline)

Sep 2012: It is only practical to jerry can fuel to your vessel. Taxi drivers typically charge you extra to transport jerry cans. If you are purchasing over 400 liters/100 gallons of diesel you can make arrangements for a fuel truck to meet you at a wharf and top off your tanks. In this case you will be required to pay an additional fee to the wharf owner. The length of your vessel in meters times 294 VATU (\$3.27 USD) is the fee for tying up to a government wharf for less than 24 hours. So, a 13-meter (44 foot) boat would cost 3,822 VATU (\$43 USD) per day to use the wharf. The Vanuatu rough concrete wharfs are not yacht friendly. – Yolo

16.8.3 General Services

16.8.3.1 Bank & ATMs

Sept. 2023: There is a bank and ATM in town. – As reported to Sugar Shack

16.8.3.2 Formalities

Immigration: **15°43.828S / 167°11.058E** is the location of the immigration office.

Sept. 2023: You can clear out of Vanuatu in Luganville and request permission to cruise the Banks Islands. Departure fees \$7,000VT plus \$1,000VT/Day in Vanuatu/yacht. – As reported to Sugar Shack

16.8.3.3 Provisions

Oct. 2023: There is an LCM supermarket in town. – Dandelion

Sept. 2023: There is a decent supermarket where you can buy some New Zealand/Australia products as cheese, wine, and beer. There is also a good butcher close to the market (I think it is the first building in Rue Cook, but best to ask a local). – Eastern Stream

16.8.3.4 Restaurants

Oct. 2023: There are two small coffee shops in town. – Dandelion

16.8.4 Activities

Millennium Cave Tours - <http://millenniumcavetour.weebly.com>

WWII history, dive the US Airforce bomber wreck and see another wreck in the jungle just off the main road.

Ferry to Aore island and visit the Clearwater Plantation

May 2018 – Hiking, Caves, Waterfall: (*Millennium Cave is situated in South Central Santo, a 45-minute drive from Luganville town.*)

We had a 5km trek through the jungle to the mouth of The Millennium Cave, Santo Island, Vanuatu.

Fabulous, huge cave with bats and swallows and a river running right through.

Lunch at a waterfall and then 30-minute swim in cool, flowing river running through a deep canyon with beautiful rock faces and more waterfalls. It was like being in the movie Jurassic Park or Indiana Jones.

Then more climbing out of the canyon and more trekking back to the village and onward to the waiting vehicle.

A magic day had by all 6 of us. Fantastic adventure highly recommended to anyone (with a reasonable level of fitness) visiting Vanuatu. – Verite

Aug. 2008: One place that needs to be visited is the village of Vunaspef where they have the famous Millennium Cave Tours. If you like hiking, walking and swimming in rivers and caves with rivers, you will be thrilled. It is possible to stay overnight there too.

The best way to go there is to arrange your own transportation: hiring a taxi for the day (he waits while you tour) cost about 5,000 VT for up to 3-4 people. The tours cost 2,000 VT or less per person.

If you go with a local tour operator, they will charge you 6,500 VT/person! You can call Samuel direct at +678.547.0957. – Sloepmouche

16.8.5 Diving

Oct. 2023: The town offers lots to do and see, especially the good dive sites including “Coolidge and Million Dollar Reef” which has great history. There is a small museum which holds artifacts from the wrecks.

We highly recommend hiring a car and touring Santo. There is one main road out of Luganville (very potholed) but you will see so much more. There are nine blue holes to choose from Riri and Matevula were our favorites

and they are all different. There are restaurants, lodges, and other sites along the way north. Be sure to stop in Champagne Bay and Port Olry as they are very special.

Turlte Bay Lodge runs tours to see the dugongs and other dive sites. Allan Powers Tour is a friend of ours and runs a good show. Their offices are opposite the supermarket in town. Pacific Dive are also good.

Tuffenturi waterfall is a good visit but you need a 4x4 to access it. You can also schedule a traditional village visit called Lewiston Cultural experience. Lots to do here: canoeing, sailing, sunbathing, traditional living, wreck diving (even aeroplane) – Santo has it all. – Dandelion

Sept. 2012: Espiritu Santo, locally known as Santo is the largest island in Vanuatu. It is home to the country's second largest "city", Luganville. Santo first came to the attention of Americans during World War II when it was a staging point for the American military. Men and equipment left here for the battlegrounds of the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. From a diving perspective the war left two famous sites.

As the Americans were preparing to leave Vanuatu (then known as the New Hebrides) at the conclusion of the war in the Pacific, they offered to sell their surplus equipment for almost nothing to the British & French powers who jointly ruled the country. Thinking that the Americans would be forced to abandon the equipment and they would eventually get it for free the ruling powers said no deal. Much to their shock the Americans proceeded to build a long pier out into Segond Channel east of Luganville and dumped all of the equipment into the sea. This spot is now known as million-dollar point and it is a very popular dive.

The second, and to me the more interesting dive, is on the wreck of the President Coolidge. The Coolidge was built in Seattle as a luxury liner. When war broke out in the Pacific she was pressed into service as a troop ship. As the Coolidge arrived in Luganville on October 26th 1942 she hit two "friendly" mines and began to sink in Segond Channel. It took her several hours to go down so almost the entire crew was saved by the time the ship went to the bottom.

The day before we dove on the Coolidge, we met a man on the beach of the sparsely inhabited Tutuba Island, at the mouth of Segond Channel. He told us that his father, who is still living, had stood on the very same beach seventy years ago and watched the ship sink. I told him that on the same day seventy years ago my Grandfather had been on the deck of the Coolidge as it sank below him.

On Monday we were picked up at the boat by Santo Island Divers and headed out the Channel to the Coolidge dive site. David, our dive master from the previous day, took us down for our first dive. The ship is lying on its side almost completely upside down with the bow higher than the stern. We swam along the bow and past a heavily encrusted three-inch gun. Continuing on we passed the giant anchor winch and two cargo bays, the second of which was full of tires attached to what might have once been jeeps. David showed us an old cook pot into which he had put a variety of goodies such as old shoes and a comb. Rifles and helmets are strewn about as are ammunition shells, small and large.

On our second dive we went inside the ship. We followed David on a circuitous route through the bowels of the Coolidge; past the barbershop, past a long row of toilets, past sinks with handles which still turned and to the pharmacy which still had jars of powders and liquids of astonishing colors on its shelves. There was more ammunition as well as airplane drop tanks looking like gigantic eggs abandoned in their nest. For a somewhat unnerving thrill David had us turn off our flashlights and we floated in complete watery darkness except for the glowing flashlight fish which loomed around us. – Shango

Aug. 2008: We went with Santo Island Divers and dove the beautiful reefs north of Tutuba Island. Crystal clear water and healthy reefs were the order of the day.

We also dove with Aquamarine on Million Dollar Point where you see the tons of WWII equipment dumped in a pile. Most of it is below 50', so you won't see much if snorkeling.

More interesting were the several dives we made on the famous Coolidge wreck with both Aquamarine and Alan Power Diving. They all pick you up at the Beachfront and offer special rates for yachties. – Sloepmouche

16.8.6 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: Espiritu Santo is pronounced just “Santo” by the locals. The beach resort has very yacht friendly staff and it is close to town. – Dandelion

June 2018, 4G. It’s all very good to say “gentleman never goes to windward” but sailing downwind in 6-8 knots is quite painful and I personally would sooner not be a gentleman. It was not my intention to make these sorts of stops, but the weather has been raining hard, and no wind or too much wind. At least my water tanks are full, but the lack of solar means the genset is draining my diesel. – Screensaver

Sept. 2012: This is the second largest Vanuatu city (9,000 people) and most goods and services are available, including Wi-Fi Internet. You have numerous anchoring options at Luganville. Customs, Ports and Harbours, Quarantine Services, and Immigration officials do NOT care where your vessel is located when you clear-in or out. – Yolo

Aug. 2008: Two restaurants to recommend in town are the Nemo (French chef in 2008) and the Deco Stop Lodge. Both are a 200 VT/taxi ride away.

Coral Quay Resort: Contrary to what is stated in the RG, there are no moorings, and the anchorage is more exposed than the Beachfront. It’s further away from town. – Sloepmouche

16.9 Wusi Bay

16.9.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°21.721S / 166°39.300E. Anchor outside the village on heavy gray sand/mud. Protection NE through E to SE. The bay offers little shelter from the swell and wind that tends to funnel up the coastline but the holding is good. – As reported to Sugar Shack

17 Oyster Island (Malwepe)

17.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: The Northern Reef into Peterson’s Lagoon is not recommended for boats with more than 1.8m draft. All other boats should arrive only during high tide. Sometimes there are buoys marking the entrance, but they are missing more often than not.

Southern Reef Anchorage at **15°22.8S / 167°77.7E.** If you draw more than 1.8m or come at the wrong tide you can anchor at the Southern Anchorage. The entrance is 6m and brings you in behind the small island and the outer reef. Some swell comes over at high tide, but it is not bad. – As reported to Sugar Shack

17.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: There are many areas to explore both by land and sea. You can take the river to the Blue Hole (north of the jetty), and explore the many areas of snorkeling. – As reported to Sugar Shack

18 Aese Island

Located on the east side of Espiritu Santo.

18.1 Anchorage

Oct 2016: 15°26.56S / 167°14.95E. Beautiful spot. – Eagle’s Wings

19 Maeva Island

Located on the east side of Espiritu Santo

19.1 Pass

Aug. 2008: We arrived at the pass south of Mavea Island around 4 p.m. with the sun right in the eyes and intermittent clouds, but were able to go through a double set of red and green markers without problem and anchor inside. Piece of cake!

After one yacht grounded earlier this season and spent the night on its side, the yachties and Grant, the new manager of Oyster Island Resort, put in the markers: long pieces of PVC pipe painted red and green and designed so that at low tide, the pipes fall over and lie on their sides, and at high, when water in the pass is deep enough, the pipes float upright clearly marking the safest way in. This channel is not where the RG waypoints indicate the way in, but if they are still there in future seasons, the markers take the uncertainties out of getting into the inner bay.

At least two-thirds high tide, we never saw less than 9' of depth. – Sloepmouche

19.2 Anchorage

2014: 15°22.425S / 167°11.413E in 10-14m sand/mud. If there is any bad weather about this is not the best place to be. – Reflection

Aug. 2008: Once inside, you have a number of totally flat-water areas to anchor, the most popular being near Oyster Bay Resort. – Sloepmouche

19.3 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2008: The two rivers to the blue holes are easy to find and beautiful. The landowner of both is Orbet, which was confirmed by Grant. You can find him near the copra dryer on the main island. He may or may not ask for fees (it's nice to thank him with some small token).

If you dinghy up, there may be people at the bridge that will ask a fee up to 1,000 VT, but they may not be the landowner or a family member. As throughout Vanuatu, there's often more than one who may claim to be landowner.

The resort recently acquired a vast forest area where cascade and river tours will be organized in the future.

Cave diving in underwater river holes is already done occasionally by a local dive center.

In a few months, a digger is going to excavate the pass leading into the lagoon so most yachts will be able to get in even at low water! – Sloepmouche

20 Pentecost

20.1 Martelli Bay (South Pentecost)

Anchorage is only good in N/W winds

20.1.1 Anchorage

April 2008: 16°00.4S / 168°13.5E. We anchored on the side near the church, not getting any closer than 30' depth, and found good black sand unencumbered by reef. Any closer, though and the reef rises to just under the surface. We sheltered from a northwesterly, so we went into this south-facing bay.

The bay is huge, and there are many places to anchor. It is very picturesque with wild, tall cliffs and jungle on one side and, on the other, a beautiful, gleaming green-blue church perched on a hill overlooking a small

inviting beach that is protected by giant rock outcroppings forested with trees and pandanus. Steep, jungled hills form a backdrop and reminded us of the Marquesas.

There looked to be a reef extending out from the rocky cliff area that separates the bay's two black sand beaches. – Sloepmouche

20.1.2 Cruiser Reports

April 2008: From the church there is a beautiful view of your boat in the bay, and from the anchorage is a view of the beautiful bay and beaches and seaward, a beautiful view of Ambrym and the cone shaped Lopevi Island. If the wind goes N or W, hopefully you'll have a chance to visit this lovely place. – Sloepmouche

20.2 Bay Homo / Home Bay (SW side)

20.2.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: We anchored in Homo bay to access the land diving tour. – Dandelion

Oct. 2023: 15°56.83S / 168°11.36E. In the northern corner of the bay in 5-10m of black sand. Protection N through E to SSE. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2023: 15°57.163'S 168°11.515'E. Anchored in front of the village in 6m black mud. very protected from SE winds, sandy bottom, no bommies seen, no roll. – SV Complicite

April 2008: Anchor in 25' of good black sand with good holding just south of the old pier. – Sloepmouche

20.2.2 Cruiser Reports

Oct. 2023: We made a contact in Port Vila for the Land Diving Tour so that when we arrived, we just had to reach out to Josef. They took us to the event up the mountain, which was an adventure in itself. The land diving was spectacular, authentic, and very brave! The history and tradition are well worth reading up on prior to attending the event. – Dandelion

June 2023: The land diving occurs on Saturday and it is recommended that you arrive on Friday to organize the event. Land diving occurs every Saturday between April and July. The spokesperson comes to see you and organizes transport for the next day. We got picked up at 7am and got back around 1:30pm, 1000 VUT for transport p/person, 9500 for entry to land diving, cash only - the inland village where the Nagol is very basic, they would appreciate any donations/trading (they didn't ask, just noticed it was a lot more basic than other villages).

Email or text the spokesman if you are going next week and how many people so he has a rough idea of how much lunch and transport to prepare. Spokesperson as of June 2023: Bartholomew Garae 7310690 melsulbetu@gmail.com. – SV Complicite

July 2015: Land Diving. We recently witnessed the phenomenal land diving on Southern Pentecost Island with a number of other yachties. The villages are quite poor in Vanuatu, and finding recovery from Cyclone Pam is challenging. We asked if the 10,000 vatu (about \$125 Aud.) per person ticket to the land diving was helping the village and beyond. We were told by a local that the chief who collects this money does not use it to contribute to the health and education for the village, but uses it instead for personal gain.

We suggest asking the village people and the chiefs where fees are going before paying. – Honey

April 2008: Chief Luke is as welcoming as his father. He believes in offering fruits to visitors instead of asking fees or begging. He knows that cruisers are helpful folks always ready to assist when they can.

We took a walk (90 minutes one way) to Ratap Cultural Village. Alas, the whole community but one was gone to Bunlap for 100 days of mourning. No custom dancing, but a nice walk back following the river this time. Nice swimming holes and a pleasant hike with Chief Luke.

Being here in April gave us the great opportunity to witness the famous Pentecost land diving. That traditional ceremony happens every year in April-May-June to start the yam harvest season and as an initiation ritual. Most of the ceremonies are only for the communities themselves, but a few can be seen by visitors. They will put on a performance for a minimum cost of 30,000 vatus (VUV) or just over \$300 USD any day of the season, but for a group or on a regular performance day (every Saturday), it will be about 8,500 vatus per person. Extra fees for video filming might be demanded.

This year there are three different towers for public performances. The tallest is the one near Pangli Village at the north end of Homo Bay. There is another near Wali Bay and one near the Airport of South Pentecost. The confusing thing was that Donald Wayback (telephone: 38107) lives in Pangli but organized viewing the jump near Wali Bay, and Luke Fargo of Wali Bay organized viewing the jump at the tower near Pangli.

Men, if you can, ask permission to go to the tower the day before the jump and see the jumpers preparing the vines and the platforms. Very interesting. Women are not allowed to go to the tower until the day of the jumps and cannot go near the base until the native women dancers go up there. Chief Luke will organize land dives at the tallest tower for yachties to view for 8,000 vatus. -- Sloepmouche

20.3 Wali (Land Diving)

20.3.1 Anchorage

June 2015: We dropped anchor just north of Wali, village. The anchorage is more of a roadstead being on a long straight beach. It's sheltered from the main brunt of the prevailing south east winds, but there's still some swell and wind waves bouncing us around a bit. – Alba

20.3.2 Cruiser Reports

April 2008: Wali Bay: We met Luke Fargo, who organizes land diving shows for tourists (including cruise ships a few times in the season). He is a great host, running the Londot Garden Beach Resort (telephone: 38120/38444). With the first cruisers we saw this new season, we had garden visits, hikes to the hot springs, a kava break (women allowed) and a meal. His whole family was very welcoming. We also were lucky to be invited to a double wedding in the village nearby with about 200 guests. – Sloepmouche

20.4 Lemot

20.4.1 Cruiser Report

May 2018: Lemot, Pentecost, Vanuatu. Village of the land dive. Young men from the village jump headfirst from the 120-meter tower with a vine attached to their feet. only. Women can observe but no touching the tower or the vines. – Verite

20.5 Londot Bay

20.5.1 Anchorage

2014: 15°54.78S / 168°11.277E. Anchor in 7-10m brown sand. Exposed S – W – N winds and swell. Small round rocks on the bottom if you get too close to shore. – Reflection

20.5.2 Cruiser Report

2014: Great access to land diving April – June. Hot water springs, snorkeling on WWII planes. – Reflection

20.6 Waterfall Bay (west side)

20.6.1 Anchorage

2014: 15°47.197S / 168°09.720E. Anchor in 4-10m Sand. There is a constant, but not horrible roll in this anchorage. – Reflection

April 2008: 15°47'.2S / 168°09'.7E. – Sloepmouche

20.6.2 Cruiser Report

April 2008: You will see the waterfall as you approach the anchorage off the nice beach. We met Jeffrey, who guides visitors to their two attractions: the Madiut waterfall (an easy 15-minute walk to a bubble bath pool and big waterfall) and the worthwhile Rell Waterfall Cave (an easy 15- minute walk to a waterfall inside a two-chamber cave; bring a waterproof light).

Jeffery and his community decided to clear a path and beautify those two areas for the pleasure of visitors. The 500-vatu fee can probably be negotiated for a DVD or other trade items. A 20-minute walk on the main road brings you to the High School (Wadi College) on the hill, where you can buy bread loaves. – Sloepmouche

20.7 Loltong Bay (NW side)

20.7.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°32.80S / 168°08.80E. The center of the bay should be free of obstructions where you can anchor in 4-8m of heavy white sand. Strong gusts accelerate down the mountain frequently but the holding is excellent. Protection N through E to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2018: We visited Loltong Bay which is a very secure sand bottom reef anchorage for any winds from the east. Note that the buffeting winds around the very tall steep mountains does cause accelerated bullets from all directions which jolt on the chain but provided you have set the anchor well is still secure (we had 40 knot gusts). It is important to note where the reef is on all sides & how close you will be if the wind comes from a different direction to how you set the anchor. While most of the western coasts of Maewo & Pentecost are affected by the south east swell wrapping around in developed conditions, Loltong Bay & Asanvari on SW Maewo are calm & swell free. – Noonsite

2014: 15°32.716S / 168°08.857E. Anchor in 4-6m sand. Exposed SW – W – NW winds and swell. Anchor in the center inside the enclosing reefs. – Reflection

April 2008: 15°32.81S / 168°08.79E. This bay is protected from all directions but west. You will find a calm anchorage in 15-20' of good sand behind the reef seen in the Rocket Guide aerial photo. Follow the alignment of the two triangular markers on the beach (70°T) as you approach the shore to anchor.

We found the anchorage waypoint in the Rocket Guide slightly off, putting you in the shallow corals to the south of the sandy anchoring area, so beware! There's not much room for more than two to three boats, and the transport boat uses the channel and lands on the beach. – Sloepmouche

20.7.2 Provisions

2014: There is a small market, bakery, and restaurant. – Reflection

20.7.3 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: There are many different walks that range from one hour to several days. Ask the village to show you the way. The high surrounding hills offer great views. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2018: The family that runs the Vatulo Yacht Club here on the left-hand side of Loltong Bay are Matthew & Marie (Tel: +678 5344714) with their 5 adopted children. They were the kindest & most welcoming people we have met here in the friendliest country on earth! The rest of the village were equally friendly.

In Sept 2018 both Maewo & Pentecost received heavy unseasonal rain & the Yacht club collapsed. They used to offer yachties meals, a book swap, and tour bookings, but with no physical shelter for the club they have put all services on hold.

While we were there Marie created a wonderful meal for us out of the tiny hut next door over a fire in exchange for help fixing their sailing dingy. We encouraged them to still offer meals to yachties despite not having a permanent shelter, so anyone visiting here please support them. Maybe they will have rebuilt already by next 2019 season but if not, I am sure that any help would be very much appreciated in getting them back on their feet. Also, if anyone has a sailing dingy, the kids are eager to learn & race too! – Noonsite

20.8 Laone Bay

20.8.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°28.2S / 168°08.2E. There is a reef which comes out a long way from the beach in the middle of the bay. You can choose to anchor north or south of it. We have anchored south in 10-15m on coral and sand. You need good light and satellite charts to see your way around. Protection ENE through E to ESE. Very limited protection – this is a fair-weather anchorage. – As reported to Sugar Shack

20.8.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: The main reef is Tabu and you are not allowed to snorkel, swim, or dive. Walk through the village to the airport will take about an hour and offers lovely views of the bay. – As reported to Sugar Shack

21 Ambae

Navionics has this island listed as Aoba.

21.1 Volcano Alerts

Posted July 25, 2019 on the [Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department Facebook page](#):

AMBAAE VOLCANO ALERT BULLETIN No7 issued by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department on 25th July 2019 at 9:07 AM:

Ambae volcano is continuing in the major unrest state. The Volcanic Alert Level remains at Level 2. Imminent eruption could occur in such major unrest state. The Danger Zone at the caldera remains at 2 km radius from the active vent. An additional Danger Zone is located within the area of flowing creeks during heavy rain.

Read more here: www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php/geohazards/volcano/

21.2 Vanihe Bay (NW Side)

21.2.1 Anchorage

2014: 15°16.599S / 167°58.418E. Anchor in 4-10m sand. Exposed to winds and swell from the North. There is a slight roll most of the time in this anchorage. – Reflection

April 2008: 15°16.6S / 167°58.45E. We anchored in majestically scenic Vanihe Bay as we wanted a little solitude. – Sloepmouche

21.2.2 Cruiser Report

April 2008: There's no village or easy access from shore, so we saw no locals there. The bottom is perfect volcanic sand with no corals or rocks. Pick any spot, even very close to the cliffs or the beach, in order to avoid the swell and waves created by the wind bursts coming from behind Lolowai Point. The towering brown cliffs, about 150 m high, form a dramatic backdrop as they rise out of the clear blue waters, and swallows and flying

foxes flit and dive and soar past the sheer walls. The scenery is more reminiscent of the Sea of Cortez than Vanuatu. – Slopemouche

21.3 Lalowai / Lolowai Bay

21.3.1 Pass

April 2024: You have to sail over the reef to enter the inner bay of this beautiful anchorage. We came in about 2 hours after high water and saw a minimum of 3.3m. There was a little marker on the shallows near the entrance on the reef. Still study your satellite charts to come in. – Eastern Stream

Nov. 2023: To enter Lalowai Bay you must come over the volcano crater, which encloses the anchorage. Be sure to use satellite charts and your eyes. The pass is narrow and shallow so come during high tide. Once you enter the anchorage the depth drops to 8-10m.

21.3.2 Anchorage

April 2024: 15°16.83S / 167°58.729E. Depth 12m. You have to sail over the reef to enter the inner bay of this beautiful anchorage. We came in about 2 hours after high water and saw a minimum of 3.3m. There was a little marker on the shallows near the entrance on the reef. Still study your satellite charts to come in. The anchorage is open to swell and wind from the NW to NE. – Eastern Stream

Nov. 2023: 15°16.830S / 167°58.780E. Depth 8-10m. Protection from NE through S to NW from wind and swell. Many used to consider this one of the best hurricane holes in the area. – As reported to Sugar Shack

2014: 2014: 15°16.880S / 167°58.748E. Anchor in 7-10m sand/mud. Exposed to winds and swell from the North. Be careful of the reef as you come in, enter at high tide and use the transit markers. – Reflection

July 2008: 15°16.88S / 167°58.88E. Isolated and less noisy anchorage. – Sloepmouche

21.3.3 Restaurant

July 2008: There was one bright spot in this unappealing town: Lucky Joes Restaurant, which is run by Joe's sister, a very sweet lady named Celia. There is no sign on the building; we found it by accident asking around if anyone with a garden would barter for fruits and veggies. The tiny restaurant is clean and neat inside, and a plate is 200 VT. The chicken curry and rice looked delicious. Too bad we'd just eaten! – Sloepmouche

21.3.4 Cruiser Report

April 2024: Onshore, there are little shops with basic island supplies. We found fresh eggs. – Eastern Stream

July 2008: It is an easy and short dinghy ride into Lalowai Bay from Vanihe Bay where the village is located. You have two leading markers to get you inside the old crater bay. Nice people, as usual (small limited stores—bread and eggs available).

It was probably an important center at some point, but now is sadly untidy and shabby. There are no doctors at the hospital, only volunteers that pass through. There is a bank and a post office. – Sloepmouche

21.4 Loone Bay (west side)

21.4.1 Anchorage

July 2008: 15°24.594S / 167°45.687E. Exposed to that eternal swell running along the island. Not a great stop for a monohull.

Access to shore was difficult as the coast is quite rugged, and the surge makes even going up on the steep boulder beach difficult. There is an easier dinghy landing on sand in the tiny bay just east (under a derelict turquoise building on the cliff). – Sloepmouche

21.4.2 Cruiser Report

July 2008: We moved about a mile north in front of Jerome Bani's house (in Sarramundi) as he guides people up the volcano crater lakes. But five hours going up with two hours return discouraged us to go up. Like the crater in Ambrym, it's much harder to reach than the easy Tanna top. – Sloepmouche

21.5 Devil's Rock (west end)

21.5.1 Anchorage

July 2008: 15°26.874S / 167°40.610E. In 20' of good volcanic sand. What a surprise it was to discover a well-protected, calm anchorage in a very dramatic picturesque bay with a red sand beach! – Sloepmouche

21.5.2 Cruiser Report

July 2008: Always curious about out-of-the-way anchorages, we decided to check out Devil's Rock at the West end of Ambae as the description in the RG made the snorkeling there sound interesting and adventurous, and Lonely Planet's mention of sharks was intriguing.

After RG's warning of swirling currents and "unsurveyed waters."

We might have been lucky that there were light wind conditions those three days and that the moon was in mid-phase, but can say that it was delightful. Easy access on the beach and nice reception from James, a son of the old chief. It appears the father has divided the "rights" to the sea front between his two sons. James has rights to the windward side, and his younger brother has the Devil's Rock and anchorage side.

James ended up being our guide. He showed us his surprisingly beautiful and horticulturally-rich garden. Along with a good variety of vegetables, he has bush medicine plants and a species of orchid endemic to one of Ambae's volcanic lakes. We hiked with him on the edge of the cliffs overlooking Devil's Rock. We went snorkeling around Devil's Rock twice and discovered an underwater arch that we could free-dive through. And there's a "pancake ceiling" underwater cavern around the other side of the point. Visibility was incredible, and we even encountered a huge grouper and seven dolphins while snorkeling (but not one shark). – Sloepmouche

22 Maewo

22.1 Asaanvari Bay

22.1.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 15°22.607S / 168°07.899E. Inside the bay, anchors and directional arrows are painted on rocks to the north and south of the best anchoring area. The sandiest ground is closest to the waterfall. Protection NE through S to SSW. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2015: Asaanvari Bay is a lovely sheltered harbour, just around the most southern headland of Maewo. It's very deep and we had to motor around for a while to find a spot where we could anchor in 15m of sand, but far enough away from the shallow reef surrounding the shore. There was only one other boat in the anchorage, but the wind swirls around and made it a challenge to know where their anchor was.

I had a look at our anchor chain, which was wrapped around a few coral heads. I'd tied a fender on the chain when we anchored, but it wasn't in the correct place and had been dragged down to the sea bed at 15 metres, collapsing with the water pressure. Glenys pulled up 20 metres of chain and I tied two fenders higher on the chain at 35 metres. When Glenys let out chain to a total of 50 metres, it seems to better - the chain is now suspended above the coral heads. – Alba

2014: 15°22.585S / 168°07.932E. Anchor in 10m sand. Exposed to SSW – W – NNW winds and swell. Anchor close to the reef, there are three moorings serviced by ICA, pay at the Yacht club. – Reflection

2008: This is a well-protected anchorage with occasional frequent rainstorms. The anchorage is deep: 50' dropping quickly to 70' on coral bottom.

ICA did install three moorings in that deep anchorage, for which the YC charges a 500 VT fee (always snorkel or dive moorings to check them). We all found a place, and despite the fluky intermittent gusts from all directions and a giant barge that anchored and tied ashore at the waterfall at 3 a.m. one night, we all happily co-habited the bay.

We met Chief Nelson and his son Nixon at the well-known yacht club. They've been welcoming yachts here for a long time and are well organized in doing so. A small green light marks the dinghy landing at night. – Sloepmouche

22.1.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: The reef that lines the bay makes for excellent snorkeling with good fish and coral life. It is a beautiful walk through the village to the ocean side on the southern coast of the island. The waterfall is accessible by dinghy and is excellent for swimming. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2015: Don't miss the land diving April, May, and June which happens on every Saturday. There's a big waterfall ashore and guy called Alex has built a lovely little bar right next to it, so we enjoyed a couple of beers. We went on a long (2.5-hrs one way), muddy hike, to a bat cave with Barry which was pretty amazing. – Alba

2008: A hydro-generator powers the village with 220VAC-500W, so there are several lights ashore at the yacht club (cold beer, DVD movies), nearby houses and in the nakamal where you will drink kava.

We did some hiking (with swimming in waterfalls and rivers) and snorkeling around the bay, so we slept well at night. The waterfall does not fall right into the sea, but is so close that we enjoyed seeing and hearing it from the anchorage and swam in the refreshing water every day.

There's another smaller fall up above the main fall. There's lots of rain as Maewo is the wettest island in Vanuatu with over 175 inches of rainfall a year! Luckily, we had no rain during our all-day hike to the tabu bat cave. Be careful not to slip on the muddy tracks!

There's a lot of climbing during the first hour of the hike on sometimes slippery mud; the second hour follows the river itself, and there are several nice swimming holes. You enter a long, large chamber and quickly are engulfed by darkness with thousands of small bats and lots of smaller stalactites hanging in places where rain drips through the ceilings. Take a strong light to get the full effect.

The village is one of the prettiest we've seen in Vanuatu, all-natural thatch and bamboo, flowers and colorful plants all around and lots of space between houses. They are welcoming, do many things, organize custom dances, hikes, dinners, laundry, etc., for very reasonable fees.

From the amount of help and compliments showered on the chief and village from yachties, we can see that there is a special bond formed on both sides. Unfortunately, their very welcoming nature is also the very thing that could bring big changes to their lives and create jealousies where before there were none.

Nixon did a great job providing activities, bread delivery, fruit and vegetable and a handicraft market, and the delicious dinner. The yachties once again troubleshot the ever-fickle hydro generator, which once again works—for now. – Sloepmouche

22.2 Mbenavui Point (Moon Cave)

22.2.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2008: 15°14.073'S / 168°06.848'E. A strong SE wind set up a good southerly swell. When we looked at the anchorage suggested in the RG with our own eyes, we decided to anchor instead in the most southern bay visible on the satellite photo behind a rocky outcropping. In fact, from where we anchored, we could see the big black opening to the Moon Cave and were as close, or closer, to the other caves as RG's anchorage.

At low tide the swell was minimal, but it increased at night with the tide. Therefore, we would suggest visiting the caves as a day stop and continuing 3nm more to Narovorovo, which is calmer. – Sloepmouche

22.2.2 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2008: We saw people on the beach near us, so asked to visit the caves. They said two children would go with us in the dinghy and guide us into the Moon Cave and then show us where to land to see the other caves and petroglyphs. In one cave they are making their own stalagmites, a fun game that actually could teach us about how long the process takes. Another cave serves as a tunnel for the actual coastal walking track. No one asked for fees—how refreshing! We gave the children some gifts as a thank-you. – Sloepmouche

22.3 Narovorovo

22.3.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2008: 15°11.039 S / 168°06.406E. If you anchor close to the beach, it's better protected from the swell going up along the coast. – Sloepmouche

22.3.2 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2008: We hiked with Winifa (one of the trained tour guides—they have workshops) across the island to see the other coast. It took us about two hours to get to a great spot overlooking the east side. We didn't go down to the beaches as it added another 90 minutes before taking the same path back. – Sloepmouche

22.4 Naone Bay

Home of the biggest waterfall of Vanuatu.

22.4.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2008: 15°00.718 S / 168°03.805E. In good sandy bottom in front of the river. – Sloepmouche

22.4.2 Cruiser Report

April 2024: We anchored near the Leleveia village and had to walk 5km to Naone to visit the waterfall. First, we found the Naone village chief to ask permission to visit the waterfall and paid 1,000 vatu per person. The chief gave us 3 guides to show us around. It was a great experience to walk up the waterfall and jump down in the cold and fresh water. Definitely worth a visit. – Eastern Stream

Aug. 2008: The cascades and waterfalls here are the best we have seen in Vanuatu! Alas, the swell along the coast cannot be avoided as there is no indentation in the coastline to protect you.

You can go with your dinghy up the creek and tie up at the first cascade that is the road. From there, after getting permission from the chief, Maurice took us up to, around and through the cascades. You walk in the running water that sheets over the rough textured rocks above you, below you, around you, under you, and then plunges over the edge in a giddy roaring rush. There are at least three different complexes of cascades, each with names and different custom stories.

The normal fee is 1,000 VT, but they will also accept gifts. The tour takes 2 hours, so you can easily plan to arrive here early morning and take off for a better-protected anchorage for the night. We left mid-day for Ambae, Lolowai, and had a lively sail in winds gusting to 25-30 (acceleration in the channel). – Sloepmouche

22.5 Sanasom Bay

22.5.1 Anchorages

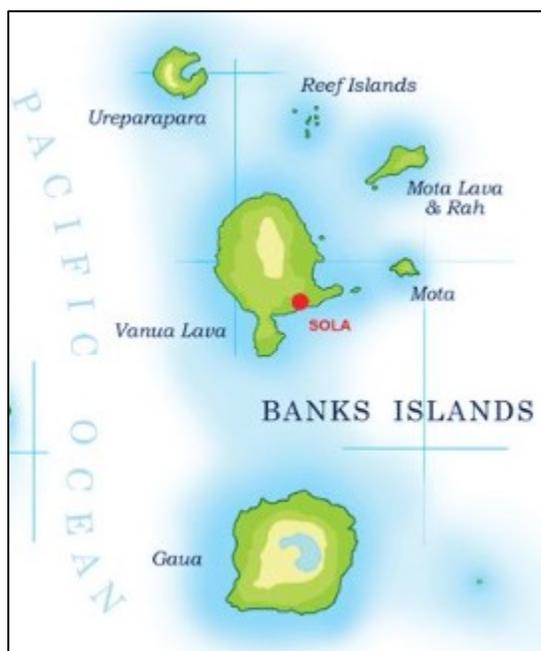
2014: 15°13.325S / 168°06.729E. Anchor in 10m sand. Exposed SSW – W – NNW winds and swell. Anchor in the sand between the bommies. – Reflection

22.5.2 Cruiser Report

2014: The famous Moon Cave and Tavasusu Caves are here. See the village chief. – Reflection

23 Banks Islands

The Banks Islands consists of: Gaua, Vanua Lava, Mota, Mota Lava, Ureparapara, the Reef islands and numerous islets.



Aug. 2009: In retrospect, to get the best sailing conditions, we recommend cruising the Banks in the following order: Gaua (Losalava), Vanua Lava (Sola), Mota Lava, Reef (Rowa) Islands.

Ureparapara, Vanua Lava (Waterfall Bay, and then Vureas Bay for festival). We did it clockwise (and it was much easier than we would have guessed as we were lucky with the winds as we arrived from the Ambrym Festival direct for the festival in Vureas Bay), but you could time your visit to finish with the festival—that is if you don't mind missing the Malekula and Ambrym Festivals in August. – Sloepmouche

23.1 Gaua (Santa Maria) Island

23.1.1 East Side

23.1.1.1 Cruiser Report

July 2019 – Eastern Side: The most tradable items here now is fuel for their outboards. Transport is problematic for them after the copra boats stopped coming. They used to be able to hitch a ride for free or paying very little. We visited in the Eastern side, and for these villages it takes women, children and elderly up to 3 days to walk across to the airport - and it is really too expensive for them to fly anyway. Hitching a ride with a yachtie is also something they appreciate if they have to get to Espiritu Santo.

Be prepared to be considered a free resource in terms of supplying repairs of various equipment electrical and mechanical. Also, the villages have several chiefs, and each one of them will attempt to get gifts from visiting yachties as well as not being shy from asking for various thing they in particular need (eg a rope for a boat for

one chief, baby's clothing for another chief's 2 month old grandchild - chief's wife doing the asking). There is no way of figuring out what to take for trading as that differs and they also seem to expect to just get gifts.

Overall, we were told by a Paramount Chief that things like rice, sugar, salt and flour (and now also fuel) are the best for trade as they have to pay for these. Money for school fees and taxes are their main concern. In one Village the Anglican priest was organizing a "scholarship" fund, asking visiting yachties for donations- they then try to pick the brightest to send to school s they can't find the money for school fees for all the kids - I think this is mainly about secondary school and onwards. – Thor

23.1.2 Lakona Bay

23.1.2.1 Anchorage

June 2018: 14°18.8 S / 167°25.96E. Anchor in 5m, black sand some rock, no internet.

Last time Watusi and I were in this anchorage it was horrifically bad in terms of swell. When the scotch won't stay on the table at anchor it really is time to move. Last time I was here the gimballed stove couldn't even cope, but that was NE trades, so I was hoping the SE trades would be better. So, I crept as far into the SE corner as I dare, and pushed the boom as far out as it would go. While it was far from comfortable at least my scotch didn't end up on the floor. In the morning the anchorage was becoming more roly and it seemed weather conditions were getting worse, so time to find a comfortable hole. – Screensaver

23.1.2.2 Cruiser Report

June 2018: The bay has two villages, one at the NE end that last time charged a few thousand for their water music display and one at the SE end which interestingly didn't want money, but more down to earth things, clothes, hats fishing hooks or in my case 4L of two-stroke.

So, I got another water music rendition by the local ladies, all pretty cool and much of the rhythm was common to other villages performance. The building on the right was the first of these I have seen and was effectively the Boys club i.e. only for men and complete with carvings. – Screensaver

23.1.3 Lesalav Bay

23.1.3.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 14°12.407S / 167°34.114E. Lesalav Bay offers good protection from most swells. Protection NW through S to ENE. We stayed here through a north-westerly pretty comfortably. The outside reef broke nearly all of the swell. The further into the corner you go the more protection. – As reported to Sugar Shack

23.1.3.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: Lemot village is a 10-minute walk from the anchorage. Be sure to visit the Sulphur lake of Mount Garet which is about a 3-hr walk. – As reported to Sugar Shack

23.1.4 Losalava

23.1.4.1 Anchorage

2014: 14°12.478'S 167°34.234'E. Anchor in 11-13m dark sand. Exposed to W – N – E winds and swell. Navionics charts are inaccurate here. – Reflection

Aug. 2009: Losalava has a protected anchorage. – Sloepmouche

23.1.4.2 Cruiser Report

Aug. 2009: All yachts are now invited by Chief Edgel and his small community as they arrive. After string band welcome songs we were given flower leis and fruits and invited to sign the guest book. It was all fun for

everyone and a good way to introduce each other for trade together and activities to do on the island. There's plenty of hiking and cultural activities here. We made a day hike to the lake and volcano (Robert and his son are great guides) and another day hike to the Siri waterfalls. Make sure you leave early (6:30 a.m.) as you otherwise risk coming back after dark.

We had more traditional dancing and the famous water music. Chief Edgel also organized a Melanesian feast that was very nice! – Sloepmouche

23.1.5 Ngre Aro Point

23.1.5.1 Anchorage

July 2023: 14°13.4356S / 167°26.6510E. Anchored in 6m of black sand. Protected from SE tradewinds. Rolly but stern anchor made it bearable.

Second Anchor Spot: 14°13.350'S 167°26.557'E Anchored in 10m sand, clear water. Some bommies but easy to see with good light and satellite. Large sandy area to anchor in. Excellent holding. Protected from SE trades but katabatic winds at times. – SV Complicite

23.1.5.2 Cruiser Report

July 2023: The village is very welcoming. The chief arranged the water music ladies to perform for us. It was incredible! We took a lesson from them. The chief and other men took us for a walk to waterfall, it was about 45 minutes. The waterfall was beautiful and you could swim in the fresh water. We traded clothes, fishing gear, soap and sugar for lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.

2nd Anchor Spot: Beautiful snorkeling here. The reef is so colourful and vibrant. The village is very friendly. They get very few boats visit as it does not look like an anchorage on Navionics. You can hike to the volcano from here, the chief's son can guide you there. The water music ladies did a performance for us in exchange for women's clothing. Any donations or trades are extremely welcome. We traded fishing gear, clothes, soap, sugar, flour for a huge amount of fresh fruit and veg. – SV Complicite

23.1.6 Pwetevut Bay

23.1.6.1 Anchorage

Oct. 2023: 14°18.74S / 167°25.90E. Anchorage has good holding. – Eastern Stream

23.1.6.2 Cruiser Report:

Oct. 2023: If you want to see the local traditional village and meet friendly people, go visit this anchorage. This is also one of the places they do the water dance. Friends of ours walked to a waterfall. – Eastern Stream

23.2 Vanua Lava (Port of Entry)

23.2.1 Port Sola (Port of Entry)

23.2.1.1 Anchorages

Nov. 2023: 13°52.40S / 167°33.20'E. Anchor in 5-8m white sand/clay/mud. Holding is very good. Protection ESE through N to S. – As reported to Sugar Shack

June 2019: 13°52.428S / 167°33.1905E in 6m sand. – Indigo II

Oct. 2018: We checked out of the country in the Northern port of Sola. This was an experience in itself as the wind direction was coming right into the bay that we had to anchor in to go ashore, so the boat was bucking all over the place while trying to anchor. – Watering Waterhorse

July 2018: 13°52.322S / 167°33.236E (SE Anchorage) Anchor in 5m sand/mud, TVL GSM when the sun shines.

Nousa Point Anchorage: **13°49.584S / 167°33.152E**

Dinghy Landing: As I approached the shoreline all be it the swell crashing onto the beach wasn't that large, I have yet to master a beach landing in these conditions in style or in fact in any manner that is not embarrassing. Locals pointed me to the left end beside a small break wall as do most guides. Not a wise move I should have followed my earlier landing here 6 months ago. So, after collecting a rock with the outboard and getting dunked in 1/2m of water as I exited the tender, I made it.

Making tracks back to Screensaver as soon as possible I at least exited the beach nicely and was soon heading to the Northern end of the bay which is totally illogical in these big SE conditions, but past experience suggested it was the right choice for reasons I don't understand. The SE corner of Sola... the so-called recommended anchorage has never been good for me in any season.

The Northern end which unfortunately is a Lee shore and in 30 knots this doesn't do a lot for ones relaxation at night, but holding is good and the scotch stays on the table, plus you don't need to sleep with your head on one wall and feet on the other to remain in bed. – Screensaver

2014: 13°52.424'S / 167°33.198E Anchor in 5m dark sand with good holding. Exposed NNE – N – NW winds and swell. This can be quite a roly anchorage but there is less swell close to the wharf. – Reflection

23.2.1.2 Yachtsmen Services

23.2.1.2.1 Fuel (Diesel & Gasoline)

Oct. 2023: The customs agent reported that the fuel station in Sola is more often than not short or completely out of fuel. He requested that all vessels refuel prior to arriving in Sola. – As reported to Sugar Shack

23.2.1.3 General Services

23.2.1.3.1 Banks & ATMs

Oct. 2023: The customs agent reported that the National Bank of Vanuatu will exchange foreign currency but only if the bank notes are dated between 2013 and 2023. The bank will not accept bank notes older than 2013. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2018: We had hoped that the small bank in Sola would be able to change the last of our Vanuatu Vatu into Solomon Dollars, but we were out of luck. They held very little other currency. – Watering Waterhorse

23.2.1.3.2 Formalities

Oct. 2023: The customs agent, Jaysen is reportedly stationed in Sola through 2028. If you are departing from Vanuatu, he can issue the departure clearance certificate and completion of other departure clearance formalities. Jaysen can be reached at mjaysen@vanuatu.gov.vu.

Sola does not have refueling services and cannot exchange currency. So, you must arrive with fuel and local currency in order to clear out.

Office hours in Sola: Mon-Fri: 0800-1200 & 1300-1700. After hours, weekends, and holidays will incur overtime charges.

Port fee is \$8,065vt.

Credit cards are not accepted at the Customs Office. You must have vatu. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2018: Check out went smoothly, if not a lengthy process. The Customs guy had gone home for lunch. We waited and waited, and he didn't seem to be coming back. One of the local guys ended up giving him a call for us and he came down to sort the process.

Once done, we were out of there as fast as a robber's dog. The swell was so bad coming in the bay and the weather was not predicted to be very nice for a couple of days so we headed to the Reef Islands to tuck out of the wind for the night and make a plan on when to leave. – Watering Waterhorse

Sept. 2012: E. Sola, Sola Bay, Port Patteson, Vanua Lava Island, is also a clearance port. The Banks Islands Group is the northern most Vanuatu clearance port: This village is located on the east side of the island and very few goods or services are available here. – Yolo

23.2.1.3.3 Provisions

Oct. 2018: There were 2 'shops' and a market, that had nothing left to buy. – Watering Waterhorse

23.2.1.3.4 Restaurants

Sept. 2009: Enjoy the hospitality of the Sola Yacht Club. Robert and Serah, gracious hosts, welcome cruisers at their small restaurant and BBQ and provide services for trade like laundry, book swapping, water and trash burning.

Land your dinghy on the beach or at the jetty, and follow the road to the right to find the government buildings, then continue walking along the road to find Lemerous Bungalows (Sola YC). – Sloepmouche

23.2.1.3.5 Cruiser Reports

July 2018: The locals here are very nice and were only too happy to see us, take us on a bit of tour. Arthur was able to give us a bit of the local history and was clearly focused on improving the place. They built quite a long fence that effectively cuts the northern peninsula off. The idea being to stop the wild pigs eating their crops. Next step is to dig a decent size hole and turn the tables on the pigs to become dinner.

As for crocodiles, there are a few croc stories from the past and it seems now the limited crocs and people have agreed to coexist. The crocs (only a couple it seems) have the ocean side, and the people have the bay, both leaving each other alone, or so they say.

The ladies were out fishing and while they were small by our standards the bucket was 3/4 full and each fish would probably feed 1 person. – Screensaver

Sept. 2009: This is the northernmost port of entry of Vanuatu. Walk up to the big white cross on the hill to get a magnificent view of the bay and surrounding area. You can fly crew in/out from the nearby airport (three flights a week from Santo).

A tour by boat to the crocodile river and mangrove is worth it for the tour itself, even if you do not see any alligators (they are alligators and not crocodiles!) – Sloepmouche

23.2.2 Port Patteson

The Port Patteson bay has two anchorages. One in the northern end and one in the southern end (Port Sola). You can find protection from all wind directions between these two anchorages.

23.2.2.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°49.57S / 167°33.159E. Anchored in 5-6m on heavy brown sand. The holding is excellent and is accessible by night. Protection ESE through N to S. – As reported to Sugar Shack

23.2.3 Vureas Bay

23.2.3.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2009: 13°55.19'S / 167°26.80'E. Anchored in 10m in good sand, by the black sand beach. During the festival it got very roly when the wind went more SE. Some monohulls found less rolling in the S end behind an arm of reef. – Sloepmouche

23.2.3.2 Cruiser Report

Sept. 2009: Chief Godfrey's community is just inland of the beach. Men came on the beach to help haul our dinghies above high water line on the steep beach.

This four-day festival was well worth it at 1,000 vatu (VUV) per person with lunch included on the last day. The 14 yachts attending were quite happy they came. All stayed for the four days despite the rolly conditions. We were delighted with the variety of the program, which included very well-rehearsed new and old custom dances, singing, traditional games, demonstrations, handicrafts, historical tours and stories. This year's organizing committee did an exceptional job, especially in looking after our needs. There were food booths and a very economical lunch offered by Christina in the cute "restaurant."

One thing we noted about the dances and songs presented was a creative and happy—almost mischievous—feeling to many, unlike the seriousness and rigid ritualistic feel of most other custom dances in the islands to the south. The women especially seemed to have a lot of fun and didn't seem repressed. The most magnificent dance with the most colorful pageantry and complex choreography was the Mag dance. – Sloepmouche

23.2.4 Twin Waterfall Bay

This is a beautiful place to stay on the western side of Vanua Lava. It is one of the two most frequented anchorages in the area and the locals have certainly learnt to benefit from the yachts. You can't miss the twin waterfalls on the right on the southern point of the bay.

23.2.4.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°49.644S / 167°22.912E. In normal trades this is a flat anchorage. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: 13°49.68S / 167°22.94E. We were not sure what this bay is called so we called it the waterfall bay since there were twin waterfalls that drop directly into the sea. – Eastern Stream

Sept. 2009: This was a nice sail in the lee of the island with a much calmer anchorage! – Sloepmouche

23.2.4.2 Cruiser Report

Oct. 2023: There is a small village on the other side of the waterfall. You have to ask permission to swim in the waterfall and pay a little fee. We paid with some products they needed. A local took us on a hike to the top of the waterfall and it was lovely. – Eastern Stream

Sept. 2009: We met Chief Kereley and his family at the small yacht club. The twin falls are beautiful, especially with the late afternoon light giving them a special glow. Do not miss a look at the Paintings Cave. You can enjoy a good bush/garden tour with Chief Kereley.

We happily traded for fruits, vegetables, lobster, fresh water prawns and coconut crabs. – Sloepmouche

23.2.5 Single Waterfall Bay

23.2.5.1 Anchorage

Sept. 2009: Not mentioned in the RG (Rocket Guide), this is another anchorage only a few miles north of Twin Waterfalls, just off a beautiful waterfall. – Sloepmouche

23.2.5.2 Cruiser Report

Sept. 2009: Access ashore is not very easy as the shore is lined with shallow reefs, but worth the effort if you like waterfalls like we do.

If you take your dinghy north from here following the shoreline, you will find a large cave carved in the high cliff rocks that you can drive the dinghy into. Take a light as after you turn the corner, you'll be in the dark, and it's difficult to see how much farther you can actually go. – Sloepmouche

23.3 Mota Lava

23.3.1 Anchorage

Aug. 2009: The Rocket Guide is correct when mentioning deep water all the way to the fringing reef.

Access to the island anywhere is indeed difficult at low water since the fringing reef dries. The easiest seems to dinghy around the SE point before Ra Island.

Milli Bay anchorage is about a four-hour walk from the villages, but is very picturesque if you like solitude.

In the south, on Ra Island, you can have a delicious meal at Seaside restaurant (ask a day before for lobsters or coconut crabs) and see some of the Banks dances like the Snake Dance.

There are very welcoming and energetic people on Ra Island. – Sloepmouche

23.4 Ureparapara

Diver's Bay has one of the most spectacular geographic scenery entrances! The old volcano blew a north eastern wall allowing the bay to form and you really do get the feeling of sailing into a volcano.

23.4.1 Anchorage

Diver's Bay

Nov. 2023: **13°32.493S / 167°20.237E.** The best anchorage is at the very end of the bay close to the village. Anchor in 4-6m of white sand with good holding. Protection ESE through S to N.– As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: **13°32.49S / 167°20.49E.** We anchored in a volcano! What a great experience. – Eastern Stream

June 2019: **13°32.482S / 167°20.3125E** in 10m sand. We did an overnight from Vanikoro in the Solomons to Ureparapara. – Indigo II

Oct. 2018: It has to be one of the most uncomfortable anchorages we have ever been in. We ended up staying in Ureparapara for 2 nights as there was a howling gale out in the ocean and it was making itself well known in the bay with large rolling waves and bullet winds ripping down the long bay to where we and 2 other boats were anchored. – Wandering Waterhorse

2015: Anchored in 4m off Lahrop village. This island is a volcano where the rim has blown out. Anchored in the crater. Wind funnels in, but tucked in is ok. Still very isolated and need supplies from outside. First anchorage in the Banks Group. – Vellela

2014: **13°32.525S / 167°20.262E.** Anchor in 4-6m white sand. Exposed to NE winds. Anchor as far in between the two bommies as possible. – Reflection

Sept. 2009: **13°32.478S / 167°20.516E.** Chief Nickelson advised us to anchor here as there is a lot less swell. Contrary to what we read, we had two quite comfortable nights in the anchorage without bullet winds or heavy swell. Outside there were 15-20 knots from ESE, and inside we had 10-15 knots steady from the N as the wind funneled through this deep bay. – Sloepmouche

23.4.2 Yachtsmen Services

23.4.2.1 Trash and Recycling

2014: Rubbish facilities are here. – Reflection

23.4.3 General Services

23.4.3.1 Formalities

Feb. 2024: You cannot clear out of Vanuatu from Ureparapara. You must sail back to Sola. – Eastern Stream

23.4.3.2 Laundry

2014: Laundry services are available here – Reflection

23.4.4 Provisions

2014: Fruits and vegetables are available here – Reflection

23.4.5 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: There is some great diving and snorkeling in the bay. Ask the locals about the crayfish spots. If you are into hill climbing, there are loads of paths to explore. You can walk up to the crater rim and to several sacred sites (get permission prior to visiting the sites). – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct. 2023: The men and women of the village showed us their custom dances which were beautiful. You can hike to the ridge of the volcano, visit the kavabar and more. – Eastern Stream

Sept. 2023: This is the most northerly island which looks like a large volcano with a chunk missing. Very beautiful, remote island with a small village. – As reported to Sugar Shack

Oct 2018: Ureparapara is a volcano that has had the middle worn out of it by the sea over the years, creating a Pac-Man shaped island.

We did, however, spend the time in the bay trading tuna and other bits and bobs off the boat for all kinds of fruit and veggies.

The village in the bay (the same people that had been moved off the Rowa/Reef Islands had a multitude of gardens dotted around the area behind the beach and in the surrounding hills, so the amount of produce was exceptional. Capsicums, tomatoes, beans, kumara, pamplemousse, island apples, eggs and mangos were all traded for tuna, fishhooks, and some of the last Vatu that we had all made for excellent deals.

Getting out was an interesting experience, as there were quite large almost standing waves at the narrow entrance for the bay. It was half an hour of holding on tight and being incredible grateful that we have such a strong and capable boat and captain to get us out.

We had a great sail heading toward the Torres Islands. These are the last in the tip of the Vanuatu Island chain and by far the most remote. Not many boats make it up to these islands and even we were only stopping as an overnight to break up the trip. – Wandering Waterhorse

Oct. 2009: Titinson Yacht Cultural Centre offers several tours and activities. We enjoyed the Megel and Qwat custom dances for the beautiful hats the dancers were wearing. We ordered bread from the baker and traded for more lobsters and fruits/vegetables. There's no airport here, so if you're looking for really isolated people, this is one place where people are very friendly and hope for more visitors!

They have to go about 20 miles by speedboat to get to Sola, so you can guess they do not see many visitors at all except for a few yachties. This is an easy stop on your way to the Solomons and an easy island to reach, even if you only visit the Banks before going back down to Santo or Vila! – Sloepmouche

23.5 Rowa (Reef) Islands

These islands are small, low lying and uninhabited, situated behind a giant reef that provided excellent protection from the swell and waves. Not only that but they were incredible to see.

There are 15 coral cays as part of the Reef Islands including: Anwet, Enwot, Lomeur, Moie, Wosu, Wotana, Rowa (the main island), Ro, Sanna, Peten, and Lavap.

The islands used to be inhabited but they ran out of fresh water, so the people that had lived there were moved to nearby Ureparapara Island (which is another incredible place in itself!)

Navigating in this area is challenging. Suggest using satellite charts and your eyeballs on constant watch.

23.5.1 Anchorage

2014: 13°37.680S / 167°30.393E. Anchor in 10-12m white sand. Exposed to SW – W – NW winds and swell. Beautiful calm anchorage in less than 15kt. – Reflection

Aug. 2009: 13°37.636S / 167°30.393E. In 30' of water. We found the anchorage quite good despite some swell (it was blowing 15-25 knots from ESE). – Sloepmouche

23.5.2 Cruiser Reports

Oct. 2018: After clearing out at Sola, we headed to the Reef Islands to tuck out of the wind for the night and make a plan on when to leave.

We spent several hours there the next morning, wandering the length of the larger of the group and marveling at the paradise we had found. – Wandering Waterhorse

2014: Fantastic private beach, great snorkeling. Get permission from Chief Reuban or his son Brian from Vatop Village on Vanua Lava (777.3274 or VHF 16) – Reflection

Aug. 2009: This is another place that is actually much better than it was described in some guides.

The dinghy ride over the lagoon to reach the islands was a little long for our friends with a 5 hp outboard, but was not a problem for our RIB 15 hp. If you like pristine beaches and clear water, you'll enjoy the Reef Islands (some yachts spend over a week here). We saw some fishing charters in this area. – Sloepmouche

24 Torres Islands

Torres Islands: Hiw Island, Metome Island, Tugue (Tegue) Island, Linua Island, Lo Island, and Toge Island



Aug. 2009: I (Luc) flew to the Torres Islands and visited all islands during one week of a filming assignment. I did not see too many calm anchorages except for a few spots on the western coast. You are then quite isolated as, for some reason, most villages are on the windward side.

Even more remote than the Banks, you won't see any vehicles here at all.

Metoma Island is managed by a mini family. A visit of their coconut crabs and megapodes conservation area will be remembered! The fishing was excellent between the islands as we traveled by speedboat—don't forget to troll!

The sole airport is located on Linua Island. You can walk across from Loh Island. Do stop in the Torres on your way to the Solomons. You will enjoy the contact with the friendly islanders, and you will have a good opportunity to taste some excellent coconut crabs as they still abound here! – Sloepmouche

24.1 Lo Island

Home of the only airport in the Torres Island group. Located at Linua on Lo Island.

24.1.1 Ngerein Bay

24.1.1.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°20.21S / 166°38.778E. Anchor in 10m on white sand close to the south shore or behind the reef by the airport on the northern shore. Protection SSE through S to NNE from wind and swell. In settled SE conditions it is possible to anchor but the swell does come into the bay. – As reported to Sugar Shack

24.1.1.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: There is a very small village that only receives supplies every few months. They are often short of school supplies and basic food staples. There is great snorkeling in the bay and a lovely walk around the island. Lo is a very low, thus the name. – As reported to Sugar Shack

24.1.2 Tutumel Bay

24.1.2.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°21.60S / 166°38.52E. Anchor in 10m on sand with coral patches. Some of the coral patches are 300m off the shore line. Protection NE through East to SE. – As reported to Sugar Shack

24.1.2.2 Cruiser Report

Nov. 2023: Beautiful 20 min walk to windward side. – As reported to Sugar Shack

24.2 Tegue

24.2.1 Hayter Bay

24.2.1.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°14.79S / 166°35.75E. Anchor in the south side of the bay in 15m. You will have to find a sandy patch in the coral. – As reported to Sugar Shack

July 2018: 13°14.81S / 166°35.65E. Anchored in 18m sand/coral rubble no internet. Having been there a couple of times before I had an entry track so I wasn't overly concerned with my arrival time which ended up being in the dark. Clearly this must be the windy season because once again I got more than my fair share. While I was running with it one gust in excess of gale-force (apparent wind) caused Screensaver to over correct, my poled-out Jib backed and well that was the end of my whisker pole. It bent in excess of 90 degrees and murphy tried to take my sail as well, but that battle I won as I got it back under control. – Screensaver

24.3 Hiw

24.3.1 Yeu Metenia Bay

Located on the western side of Hiw island (North island). This is a wide bay with a modest white sand beach. Be aware of the shallows between Hiw and Tegue!

24.3.1.1 Anchorage

Nov. 2023: 13°06.60S / 166°35.65E. Anchor in 12m on sand before you reach the coral field well off shore. Approach in good light to the deepest point in the bay. The reef fringes the beach a very long way out. There is northeast to south to southwest protection. – As reported to Sugar Shack

24.3.1.2 Cruiser Reports

Nov. 2023: There is a 5km walk to the windward side of the island that takes around 2-2.5 hours. – As reported to Sugar Shack