



Tropical treats

Banish the winter blues with an island escape where the most stressful activity you'll face is choosing a poolside cocktail.

Unearth the best holiday you're ever likely to enjoy on these sumptuous, sun-drenched treasure islands

Pack your swimmers, sunscreen, hat and, for the adventurous, some hiking boots – we've found the best islands to explore. All you need is your ticket to paradise.

So if you feel you need to thaw out, follow the sun... it's just a tropical island-hop away.

FIJIAN FLING

Affordable and so close, Fiji evokes idyllic picture postcards. Perennial sunshine and friendly locals make these Pacific isles perfect for a romantic escape or family holiday. Denarau Island offers lots of resorts to choose from.

Best for couples: The Pearl South Pacific

WHERE IS IT?

The Pacific Harbour resort is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Nadi.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

Relax by the pool, stroll along the

beach or go to extremes – big-game fishing and diving with sharks. Do as much or as little as you like. For the keen golfer, take on the challenge of the 18-hole Pearl Championship course, set among tropical rainforests and winding canals. The spa offers an extensive range of body wraps, such as the aroma spa: a seaweed wrap to detox plus a pressure-point facial and scalp massage. Feeling revitalised? Try whitewater rafting, sea kayaking or the fishing or shark dives in Beqa Lagoon. The friendly staff will arrange these.

WHERE CAN I EAT?

Dine at one of the four restaurants. Watch the sunset with a lychee cocktail in The Beach Bar, to a soundtrack of traditional Fijian music. For fine dining, head to The Mantarae Restaurant for modern cuisine and sea views.

BEST FEATURE

Views of Nanuku, Yanuca and Beqa islands.

TO GO Visit www.thepearlsouthpacific.com.

Best for families: Sheraton Fiji Resort

WHERE IS IT?

The resort is 20 minutes from Nadi Airport near Port Denarau Marina.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

If you're hankering for a one-stop-shop when it comes to holidaying in Fiji, look no further than the Sheraton. You can enjoy the facilities of all three resorts: Sheraton Fiji Resort; Sheraton Denarau Villas and The Westin Denarau Island Resort and Spa. There are four swimming pools to relax in and kids four to 12 will love the Kids Club all-day



You'll love meeting the local people in Fiji.

PICK OF THE BEST THINGS TO DO IN FIJI



Sigatoka River Safari is an absolute must. Jetboat up the river where you'll be met by a tribal chief and welcomed by the entire village. Their hospitality means you'll be treated like an old friend. Sample traditional food, dance with the locals and try some kava. On the way back you'll see villagers going about their daily lives - fishing, swimming and farming. You'll feel you've stepped back in time. Visit www.sigatokariver.com.

Zip Fiji is an exhilarating flying fox high in the rainforest canopy (below). Not for the faint-hearted, it's an experience you're never likely to forget. Visit www.zip-fiji.com.

TO GO: Air Pacific, 1800 230 150 or www.airpacific.com. Air Pacific operates daily flights from Brisbane and Melbourne to Nadi, and Melbourne to Nadi, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday. For more information visit www.fijime.com.



program that includes fish feeding, dancing and even Fijian language lessons.

WHERE CAN I EAT?

There are 17 restaurants and bars - you'd need a few weeks here just to sample them all! If you've got the taste for fresh local seafood, try Flying Fish Restaurant. It offers beautiful views, mouth-watering dishes and sometimes a song from the staff.

BEST FEATURE

Take time to rejuvenate in the Heavenly Spa at the Westin. The therapy rooms are set in the open air, so the gentle waft of fragrant oils and the sound of birdcalls make it a massage experience like no other.

TO GO: Visit www.starwoodhotels.com.

BIG ISLAND, HAWAII

If you're heading to Hawaii don't miss out on visiting the aptly named Big Island. At 10,500 square kilometres, it's larger than all the other islands combined! Give yourself at least a couple of days to explore The Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the eastern side of the island. It's home to the world's most active volcano Kilauea. It began erupting in 1983 and hasn't stopped. At Halemaumau Crater, legend has it that the Hawaiian Goddess of Fire Pele has set up home. You'll notice lots of offerings left by visitors.

Back on the Kona coast, stroll the volcanic black-sanded beaches, famed for large green sea turtles, and snorkel the pristine waters. Stay at the Volcano House Hotel, complete with crater-view rooms. If that sounds too red hot for your tastes, try the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort and Spa by the beach.



✈️ TO GO

Visit www.nps.gov/havo and www.sheratonkeauhou.com. Hawaiian Airlines operates three flights a week from Sydney to Honolulu, with connections available to Big Island. For more information, visit www.hawaiianair.com.au. For more details on the islands and various attractions Hawaii has to offer, visit www.gohawaii.com.au.

KOH CHANG, THAILAND



Dive right in to the Dusit Princess Hotel at Bai Lan Bay, Koh Chang.

It's the second largest Thai Island and is fast becoming a tourist favourite, but Koh Chang's surroundings remain unspoilt. Most of Koh Chang is a national park, of which 75 per cent is virgin rainforest. Imagine having a whole beach with emerald sea views to yourself! Perched over Bai Lan Bay, the new Dusit Princess Hotel (right) affords great views at a good price. At Bang Bao, a small, pretty fishing village, you'll see how the locals live. On the pier, sample Buddha View restaurant's tasty cuisine and sensational sunset. Take a speedboat to Koh Wai and swim at Koh Lao Ya. At Koh Wai, snorkellers see parrotfish, clownfish and urchins among the coral.



✈️ TO GO

Check out the Dusit Princess Koh Chang at www.dusit.com. Fly to Thailand with Thai Airways, visit www.thaiairways.com.au. For more information on Thailand, visit www.thailand.net.au.